



Boston Authors Club

October 2023 Newsletter

- **Fall Social on October 26 - Join Us!**
- **Welcome New Board Members Mia Wenjen and Kate Farrell**
- **November Program Preview: Writing at the Castle**
- **Author/Author: Book Launches**
- **Multicultural Children's Book Day & Diverse Books Video Montage Project**
- **President's Musings: Actually Written by the President**
- **Yesteryear: Caroline Hazard's Coast to Coast Legacy**

Join Us on 10/26 for a Fall BAC Social!

The Boston Authors' Club Presents:

"AUTHORS AFTER-HOURS" AT PETER H. REYNOLDS' BLUE BUNNY BOOKSTORE!



Sip, nibble & chat in person with
your favorite authors! Win prizes & signed books!

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26TH
7:00-9:00 PM
577 HIGH STREET
DEDHAM, MA



Join us from 7:00-9:00 p.m. on October 26th at the Blue Bunny Bookstore, 577 High Street, Dedham, MA to meet old friends and make new ones.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME

NEW BAC BOARD MEMBERS

Welcome to Mia Wenjen who blogs at PragmaticMom.com. Mia is also the co-creator and president of Read Your World, celebrating Multicultural Children's Book Day. Her debut picture book, *Sumo Joe* (Lee and Low, 2019) was selected as a Bank Street College Best Children's Book of the Year. *Changing the Game: Asian Pacific American Female Athletes* was a Kickstarter



project (Scholastic 2021); *Food for the Future: Sustainable Farms Around the World* (Barefoot Books, 2023) is a Junior Library Guild selection.

Her forthcoming books include *We Sing from the Heart: How the Slants® Took Their Fight for Free Speech to the Supreme Court* (Red Comet Press) and *Boxer Baby Battles Bedtime* (Eifrig Publishing) scheduled for 2024 release. *Postcards from Malcolm X: How Yuri Kochiyama Became a Civil Rights Activist* (Red Comet Press) releases in 2025. Follow her @pragmaticmom on social media.

Welcome back to Kate Farrell who was previously a student Board member. Kate first recognized the impact that stories can have on communities in her time as a co-administrator on a Hunger Games Trilogy fansite. She worked in publicity for the 24th Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards®, and went on to work as the director of public relations at fast-growing independent publisher Familius for over three years.

She received her M.A. from Tufts University in 2022, where she wrote her thesis on the intersection of adolescent identity development and Young Adult media. She is currently a client success analyst at content intelligence company Diesel Labs.



November is Writing Month at Hammond Castle - Register Now!

Celebrate National Novel Writing Month by joining Hammond Castle Museum and CALYX Press for a month-long writing program designed to stimulate the senses, engage the imagination, and encourage your commitment to cultivating a daily writing practice. Registration includes two guided tours of the Castle and two writing workshops. All participants will receive a 1 Volume (3 Issue) subscription to CALYX: A Journal of Art and Literature by Women, free submission to CALYX during the journal's 2023-2024 open reading period, a set of prompts designed to inspire continued writing at the Castle throughout the month of November, and complementary admission to **Hammond Castle Museum's Quills to Quest Writers' Celebration on Thursday, November 30th**. The cost of the workshop series is \$115. For more details and registration: [RESERVE YOUR TICKETS HERE](#)

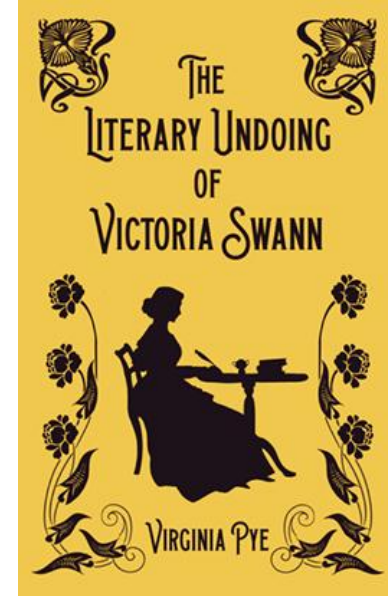


AUTHOR/AUTHOR! October Book Launches

Virginia Pye is excited to launch her fourth book of fiction, *The Literary Undoing of Victoria Swann* (Regal House Publishing), with a number of October and November events and book talks. *Victoria Swann* is a Gilded Age story of a successful author of popular romance and adventure novels who becomes a champion of women's rights as she takes on the Boston literary establishment and finds her true voice, both on and off the page. As Virginia notes, it's very much a Boston-based book lover's story and she is grateful for early endorsements and praise from well-known local women authors.

The official launch event is hosted by Harvard Bookstore in Cambridge on October 3rd. Other programs include an author talk

at the Boston Athenaeum on October 12th, the Boston Book Festival on October 14th and an on line conversation with Jan Turnquist, Executive Director of the Louisa May Alcott House, for the Concord Festival of Authors on October 26th. For all the book launch event details and more, visit Virginia's website at: www.virginiapye.com



Nancy Tupper Ling will celebrate the launch of her new work, *One Perfect Plan: The Bible's Big Story in Tiny Poems*, on October 21 at 2pm at the Blue Bunny Bookstore in Dedham.

Designed for children from 3 to 7 years, *One Perfect Plan* features a retelling of Old and New Testament stories in Nancy's short, engaging verses with illustrations by Alina Chau.

Mia Wenjen, President and Co-Creator of *Read Your World Celebrates Multicultural Children's Book Day* announces that interested readers can sign up to receive and review diverse children's books by filling out this request form: <https://multiculturalchildrensbookday.reviews/reviewer-form>

Federico Erebia is working on a video montage project featuring diverse books as a contribution to the *Let Freedom Read Day on Saturday, October 7* that will culminate this year's *Banned Books Week*. Federico writes, "I'd love to see all your books in this montage. Include any diverse book that you love, including your own. Share with

family and friends. Let's show the world that WE LOVE DIVERSE BOOKS!

Before October 3, upload a 3-4 second video with any diverse book to: bit.ly/FaveDiverseBook

Federico will splice all the uploaded videos together. For inspiration, here's a sample of the video montage in progress on Canva: [video](#)



PRESIDENTS MUSINGS

Thoughts from the president (truly written by the president!)

The month of September meant the start of school. For me, as a university professor, this has also meant the beginning of papers I assign and will have to grade. But concerns about how to evaluate students' writing are swirling around my campus, and campuses around the world.

Before the semester began, a colleague sent out a thoughtful statement they'd crafted for their syllabus. "In this course, you may use AI tools for your learning, just as you can *collaborate with your peers* (please do!) for things such as brainstorming, getting feedback, revising, or editing of your own work." But they went on to state, "AI writing platforms have become savvy enough to write essays and nearly any conceivable writing situation that relies on linguistic patterns, but AI doesn't know what it is actually being talked about nor does it "think"; it just uses language patterns to give information or to predict what an answer to a prompt should look like."

The truth is that a lot of us probably read a lot of AI-generated writing, a lot of the time. It can mimic genres and styles to a scarily accurate extent. Those of us tasked with grading student essays are trying to think of how we would even *identify* writing that emanates from someone (or something) other than the student. And as AI becomes ever more sophisticated, it is becoming more difficult to detect.

It's not just academic writing that is affected, of course. It's writing, everywhere.

Recently a group of well-known and highly regarded authors including Jonathan Franzen, Elin Hilderbrand, John Grisham, Jodi Picault, and others, sued OpenAI, charging the AI company with infringing on their copyrights. The authors claimed the company used their copyrighted books to train its ChatGPT chatbot. According to an article in *The New York Times*, the authors' legal complaint accused the company of developing a tool whose success and profitability is "...predicated on mass copyright infringement without a word of permission from or a nickel of compensation to copyright owners."

This isn't the only lawsuit recently filed. But copyright experts just aren't sure whether these types of claims will hold up in court.

Where might this all go? In the newly negotiated contract with film and television studios, the Writers Guild of America won concessions about the use of AI: AI will not be allowed to be used to write or rewrite scripts, and it cannot be considered source material, which means that writers won't lose out on their writing credits due to AI-generated content. Amazon, recognizing the rise in AI-generated books, has already taken some steps to try to stem this tide, issuing new guidelines for self-published authors. Some organizations are developing new tools to try to identify AI-generated reviews of books that might unduly sway readers or purchasers. Authors, themselves, are not only entering into legal battles but also signing petitions, trying to pressure lawmakers to step up their game in regulating AI, and simply doing what they do best: writing about the possible perils of a world of Chat GPT generated prose.

At the universities, we're doing what we can to discourage students from relying too heavily on the use of AI for their writing. In addition to syllabus statements like my colleague's, we're trying to highlight that AI platforms, however sophisticated, still have biases of different sorts embedded within them, and suggest that AI cannot use the critical thinking strategies we try to impart to students. And we point out to students that this is not only a form of high-tech cheating, but also that they are cheating themselves out of a crucial learning experience. As writers we all know, all too well, that doing your own writing can be painful, or tedious, or frustrating. But it's also ultimately a rewarding process, because it's a process that extends our thinking, pushes our creativity and can enliven our souls.

Julie Dobrow
BAC President

YESTER YEAR

BAC FOUNDER CAROLINE HAZARD'S COAST TO COAST LEGACY



Caroline Hazard (1856-1945) was a founding member of the Boston Authors Club in 1899, the same year that she became the president of Wellesley College. “Like many of our members, she was educated at home by governesses and tutors.” So writes our archivist emeritus, Mildred Buchanan Flagg, Litt.D., L.H.D., introducing Caroline Hazard in *More Members of the Boston Authors Club*. Mildred goes on to write, “...she went to Mary A. Shaw’s School in Providence and finally had private study abroad.” But Flagg’s brief educational profile doesn’t do justice to the depth and scope of Hazard’s education.

As the brochure illustrated above summarizes, the curriculum at Miss Shaw’s school included Grammar, Geography, Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, History, Rhetoric, English Literature, Art, Chemistry, Botany, Geology, Astronomy, Natural, Moral, and Intellectual Philosophy, Latin, eight years of French instruction, Gymnastics, Vocal Music, Drawing, and (optionally) Bookkeeping. After completing this rigorous list of courses, Hazard continued her education by studying with professors at nearby Brown University.

One can’t help but wonder if there are any current members of the Boston Authors Club who were home-schooled in this manner? If not, who was the last one?

Hazard was born in Peace Dale, Rhode Island, a family town established in 1793 by her grandfather, Rowland Hazard. The town was named after Rowland’s wife, Mary Peace Hazard, and was the site of the Hazard mills as well as other family enterprises. Today, it is a village of the town of South Kingstown. Caroline was a prolific, life-long author who published over 100 titles in various genres. Her first book of poetry, *Narragansett Ballads*, was published in 1894. Beside books about her own family (e.g. *The Hazard Family of Rhode Island 1635-1894: Being a Genealogy and Thomas Hazard, son of Robt call’d College Tom*), poetry books (e.g. *Mission verses, A scallop shell of quiet*), and religious tracts (e.g. *Angels roll the stone away*) there are biographies (e.g. *An academic courtship: Letters of Alice Freeman and G.H. Palmer*) and travelogues (*A brief pilgrimage in the holy land*). Unsurprisingly, the year after she became president of Wellesley, she published *Some ideals in the education of women*. Over time, she also became expert on the history of Rhode Island. There is only one official record of her contributions to the Boston Authors Club – a poem she contributed to the *Birthday tributes to Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, 27 May 1905* is noted in the Special Collections of the BAC at the Boston Public Library.

Her legacy as president of Wellesley College is notable for a significant burst of growth after a financial rescue operation at a point when the fledgling institution was deep in debt. The College website notes, “Hazard, who held no formal college degree, was responsible for putting the College back on a sound financial footing ...” Referencing Margaret Clapp’s *Notable American Women 1607-1950*, the Rhode Island Historical Society adds some gloss: “She helped save Wellesley from serious fiscal problems through her fund-raising abilities, wide acquaintance with philanthropists throughout the northeast, and substantial donations from her own savings.” During her presidency, the Wellesley College endowment grew to an impressive \$1.3 million, and enrollment doubled. Hazard also launched four new academic departments and raised funds for a building program that included five dormitories, five academic buildings, a library, a gymnasium, an observatory, a botany building, and a music hall.

After retiring from Wellesley in 1910, Hazard began spending more time in southern California, where her philanthropic work established a west coast legacy. She and Mrs. Rowland Gibson Hazard took control of

the struggling Museum of Comparative Oology and turned it into the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, which, unlike Miss Mary A. Shaw's School but quite like Wellesley College, is still thriving today. The bulk of Hazard's papers are with the Rhode Island Historical Society <https://www.rihs.org/mssinv/Mss483sg11.htm> as part of its extensive archive of material dealing with the history of Peace Dale and the Hazard enterprises. There are letters to and from Hazard during her presidency in the Wellesley College archives. One that caught my eye was from the head of the mathematics department, Ellen Hayes, welcoming Hazard to Wellesley. Hayes was from the other side of the tracks and something of a firebrand.

A final note - oology is the collecting and study of birds' eggs, a scientific discipline that has joined Miss Shaw's school in the shadows of history.

Many thanks to Jordan Goffin, Head Curator of Collections, Providence Public Library, for the background information on Miss Mary Shaw's School.

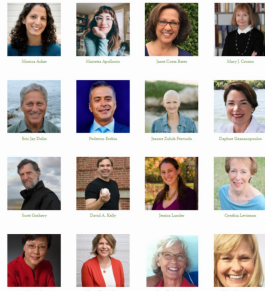
By Scott B Guthery



For inclusion in the November BAC Newsletter, send your events, news, and publications by 10/28/23 to

bostonauthorsclub@gmail.com

Claim your spot in the BAC Author Gallery!



A REMINDER THAT ALL BAC MEMBERS ARE WELCOME TO ADD THEIR INFORMATION TO OUR NEW AUTHOR GALLERY. Email us for details.

bostonauthorsclub@gmail.com

Become a member OR RENEW NOW for 2023 AND 2024 Membership! Membership dues are \$50 annually for the calendar year. You can join and renew online by [clicking here](#). If you would rather pay by check, please make your check out to Boston Authors Club and mail it to the following address:

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