



Award-Winning Journalist Headlines Annual Dinner

We are very excited to have Hank Phillippi Ryan as speaker for the WNBA Boston annual dinner, to be held on Sunday, June 28th, at 6 p.m. at the Hilton Boston Back Bay, 40 Dalton Street.

Many of us know Ryan as a consumer investigative reporter for Channel 7 (WHDH) in Boston. She is highly regarded as a reporter and has won prestigious awards and honors from news organizations, including eleven Emmys, 10 Emmy nominations and 6 Associated Press awards.

Ryan is also the author of award-winning mystery novels. Ryan's first book, *Prime Time*, won the Agatha Award for best first novel, was a finalist for the Daphne du Maurier Award, was the winner of the *Romantic Times Magazine* Reviewers' Choice Award, and

was a *Boston Globe* bestseller. Her second book, *Face Time*, was a *Book Sense* Notable Book. Her third mystery, *Air Time*, will be available this September.

Ryan's main character in her books is Charlotte McNally, a television reporter. Readers not only get an excellent mystery with each book but also, as one reviewer commented, a "fascinating background about television news."

Ryan is on the board of directors of New England Sisters in Crime and the New England Chapter of Mystery Writers of America. She demonstrates her interest in theater by serving as vice-president of the board of the Lyric Stage of Boston.

Please be sure to sign up for the dinner to have the chance to hear this engaging speaker. Her books will be available for purchase.



Hank Phillippi Ryan

Tweet, tweet, baby! Writers Tweet, Blog, and Post to Build An Audience

"Should I be on the web?" This question was answered roundly in the affirmative by the two speakers at WNBA/Boston's program at the Brookline Public Library on April 14.

Co-sponsored by the National Writers' Union/Boston chapter and the Brookline Authors Library Collaborative, the program was geared toward writers and other interested book people to give an overview of how the web can be useful in promoting writing and building an audience.

Sarah Sogigian, a librarian who is

trainer/consultant for the Metrowest Regional Library System, gave everyone a look at Facebook, Twitter, and some selected blogs and explained how writers can use them. Sogigian also distributed handouts listing examples of each and naming the "2008/2009 Top Ten Blogs for Writers," as compiled by Michael A. Stelzner of Stelzner Consulting.

Jason Pramas, editor/publisher of Open Media Boston and a member of the steering committee of the Boston chapter of the National Writers Union, talked about building a website and

the cost of each of three levels of sites. The first he mentioned is a simple, information site which is flat, with no interaction possible with the user, and which uses old technology with the basic function of getting information about you and your work out to the public. He said this kind of website can be done for about \$70 a year plus the cost of design.

The second level is a modern, interactive site which is lively, at-

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Susan Manning Dines With History



I have the good fortune to be married to an academic, Patrick Manning, PhD, whose field of study is World History. Pat's line of work requires him to travel frequently,

so, if I'm inclined to accompany him on any of his travels, I do.

I enjoy many perks while traveling with Pat. Some that immediately come to mind are meeting and socializing with scholars, touring historical locales, and experiencing the customs and the cultures across the world. Since I love to read, I have enjoyed browsing through academic book exhibits at conferences. I have purchased books that I would never have even seen in traditional bookstores.

Last summer I accompanied my husband on the first leg of one of these trips. He was to attend two conferences in the United Kingdom and then go to Germany and the Czech Republic to conduct other business. We spent two days in Cambridge and six in London.

The first of the two conferences was held on the campus of Cambridge University. I checked out the book exhibits, chatted with new and familiar scholars, and toured some of the campus's historical buildings. Just a short walk from the meeting, Cambridge's village-like center, offered a variety of restaurants and stores to browse in and shop. To my surprise, I came across a Barnes & Noble bookstore.

The highlight of our UK trip occurred while we were in London. On the second day of the conference, at London's Queen Mary College, a reception was held in honor of British historian Felipe Fernández-Armesto, who recently released a

book. After the reception Pat and I were to join him for dinner, but we didn't know where we would be eating. The e-mail invitation from Professor Fernández-Armesto had suggested "business attire," with no mention of the restaurant's location.

Along with two other invited historians, Pat and I traveled with Felipe to our destination via the Tube, the subway system. After several train stops and a brisk walk, we arrived at the famous Athenaeum Club. I am embarrassed to confess, I did not know of the Club or its history. As we approached the building, I could see high above the facade a gold statue of Athena holding a spear. The next few hours were amazing. Awaiting our arrival in the reading room were Felipe's wife and two of their friends. After sitting and chatting over drinks it was time for dinner.

As we ascended the glorious staircase to the dining room, I tried to imagine who might have walked it. In the Club's smoking room, where our group settled down for after-dinner cordials, our host gave us a brief history lesson.

The Club was designed by the 24-year-old architect, Decimus Burton. It was founded in 1824 as a club for men of "spiritual thinking," but has evolved as a "gentlemen's club" for those in varied fields: the sciences, literature, engineering, medicine, academics, law, the arts, politics, civil service, business, and theology. Some notable past literary members include Robert Browning, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Rudyard Kipling, T. S. Eliot, Charles Dickens, Sir Walter Scott and Robert Louis Stevenson. In 2002, members voted to accept women.

To cap off the evening, our host took several of us into the members-only south library, filled with books and manuscripts. In the middle of the room sat a very long table with high-back chairs. Felipe

explained that the library was the favorite spot for many great minds who wrote some of their most famous works there. He causally mentioned that he too has used the room to author some of his historical works.

Keeping with the age of the 21st Century, I noticed several computers on smaller tables set off to the side of the room. On the way out of the room our host pointed to a chair that was roped off. He told us it had belonged to Charles Dickens.

—Susan Manning

Susan Manning has been a member of WNBA-Boston since 1998. From 1999-2007, she was the Teen Project Coordinator for the Boston chapter's Teen Outreach Literacy Project. Also during that time, she was a member of the Advisory Board and the chapter's vice president (2003-2004). Early on, Susan designated herself the unofficial event photographer thereby putting together two memorable photo albums of Chapter's memories. In 2007, she moved to Pittsburgh to join her husband, Patrick Manning, who had accepted a position at the University of Pittsburgh. She still maintains a membership in Boston's chapter and says "I miss all of you."



Athenaeum Club

WNBA/Boston Reaches Out to The Women's Lunch Place

In March 2009, WNBA/Boston contacted the Women's Lunch Place to start a conversation about how the chapter could help the Boston-based organization by designating it the recipient of the chapter's literacy outreach efforts. In an e-mail reply Executive Director Sharon Reilly said, "Thank you so much for considering the Women's Lunch Place for this special opportunity. We are honored that you would consider us and we humbly accept the offer. Books are quite important to our guests and we are always looking for new sources to keep our library stocked."

Beginning with the WNBA annual dinner in June 2009 and other

upcoming events including the annual Holiday Tea in December, the chapter will gather donations of new and gently-used books for the women and children who visit The Women's Lunch Place. For more than 25 years, it has been a daytime community in Boston for poor and homeless women and their children. Open six days a week, year-round, it offers food, friendship, and a spectrum of advocacy and support services.

The Women's Lunch Place is one of the few sites where many of the guests can find comfort and sustenance during the day. During

the past 6 months, the organization has seen a 24 percent increase in services. It served 200 more breakfasts and 435 more lunches in May of 2008 than in May of 2007.

In the organization's recent newsletter, Sharon Reilly commented, "We consider ourselves fortunate to work with so many donors, volunteers, and staff who are dedicated to treating women with dignity and respect." WNBA/Boston is delighted to support the Women's Lunch Place in its mission.

For more about the Women's Lunch Place, visit <http://www.womenslunchplace.org/>.

Adventures in Community Access Television

Google the phrase *Community Access Television* and 15,800,000 hits come up. That's overwhelming. Less overwhelming, but still a surprise to me, is that 700 non-commercial local access television programs exist in Massachusetts alone. From Amherst to Winthrop programming is taped for airing or broadcast live. Thanks to the *Cable Franchise Policy and Communications Act* of 1984 virtually every community that grants a cable franchise also gets training in and access for its citizens in a studio set up in the community for local use.

I didn't think much about this resource and rarely watched Channel 3, Brookline's Community Access Channel, on my local cable service until the fall of 2007. I certainly never thought of visiting the studio. But my life has changed since then, and I can now add the designation *television producer* to my resume.

The trustees of the Brookline Public Library sponsored a weekend of readings by Brookline authors at the Library in January of 2007. The event brought inconsistent turnout and did not accomplish what the trustees had

hoped for in building support for local authors. It did, however, enable

many local writers to meet each other. As a result, a writers' group

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From left to right: Peggy Hogan (moderator), Jessica Keener, Jonatha Ceely, and Sarah Smith on the BATV set of "Brookline Writes."



Sarah Sogjian (left) and Jason Pramas spoke to attendees following their presentation.

tractive, provides two-way communication and helps you find your public and your public find you. This kind of site can interact with social networking services and enable someone to build a "cloud" around the website to bring in people from Facebook, Twitter, and

blogs. The cost would perhaps be more for the design but about the same yearly amount as a flat site.

He also described a third level which would be built on an up-to-the minute open source content management system. This would be heavily interactive with a large

number of potential features but also more expensive, \$12,000 or more a year.

Author Events

Stellina Restaurant, at 47 Main Street, Watertown, hosts readings by authors. For more information, contact Dick Haley of Haley Booksellers at dick@haley-booksellers.com. For more on Stellina, or to sign up for the e-newsletter, visit www.stellinarestaurant.com.

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began to gather at the Library on the last Monday of each month to discuss common interests. The difficulties of generating publicity were a dominant theme, which led to the idea of a monthly show on Brookline Access Television (BATV)

We decided on a themed panel discussion format. Three panelists led by a moderator would exchange ideas and mention their own work in the process. We found a wonderful moderator, the publisher Peggy Hogan of Flying Point Press. We decided to call our program *Brookline Writes*.

Our first season began in February 2008 with a half-hour discussion of *Writing as a Second Career*. We went on to episodes on *The Writing Process*, *How to Get Published*,

and *Marketing*. Our second season has included panels on *Writing Mysteries* and *Science Fiction*.

I organize the panel, and the set so there is consistency in each episode. I've also run studio camera when an intern did not show up. Is it worth it? Community Access Television does not have a large audience. Viewers must be cable subscribers. They must be people who forgo the usual television fare in order to search out programs of local interest presented by their neighbors—who may turn out to have talents they did not suspect. The writers who have given time and energy say it is definitely worth it. They enjoy meeting each other, and the experience before the television camera and the

confidence it gives them. One of our panelists benefited because when Oprah called she had a DVD demonstrating her poise on camera to send to the producers. For me it has been frustrating, educational, and a pleasure. Television is in its nature a collaborative medium and working with others to promote books and readings is very satisfying. But see for yourself. Our "prime time" slot for *Brookline Writes* is Wednesdays at 8:00 p.m. You can go to batv.org for a full schedule and to view selected programs on streaming video.

Questions? E-mail me at communicate@jonathaceely.com.

—Jonatha Ceely

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Madness, Mayhem, and Murder: MASTERPIECE MYSTERY! ON PBS

If you're an Agatha Christie fan, get ready for *Six by Agatha*. British actress Julia McKenzie has taken over the iconic role of mild-mannered super sleuth Miss Marple in four new episodes of the popular series. David Suchet will reprise his signature role as the suave Belgian super sleuth Hercule Poirot in two new episodes. *Six by Agatha* includes:

June 21: *Cat Among the Pigeons*
(Poirot)

June 28: *Mrs. McGinty's Dead*
(Poirot)

July 5: *A Pocket Full of Rye*
(Miss Marple)

July 12: *Murder is Easy* (Miss Marple)

July 19: *They Do It With Mirrors*
(Miss Marple)

July 26: *Why Didn't They Ask Evans?* (Miss Marple)

Inspector Lewis returns in August with four brand-new episodes and two re-broadcasts.

The MASTERPIECE web site at pbs.org/masterpiece is rich with resources. The site contains interviews, behind-the-scenes footage, and more. If you love to talk about films & books, check out the MASTERPIECE Book and Film Club at pbs.org/masterpiece/book-club. If you are an educator, you can find over 22 teacher's guides at pbs.org/masterpiece/learn. The Book & Film Club resources and teacher's guides are edited by WNBA member Cyrisse Jaffee.

MASTERPIECE has been presented on PBS by WGBH since 1971. Rebecca Eaton is executive producer. Alan Cumming is the host of MASTERPIECE MYSTERY! The Corporation for Public Broadcasting and public television viewers provide funding for MASTERPIECE.

POETRY CORNER

Ode to Cecil Bruner

Tangles of cobwebs woody
thicket
Catches sweaters, scratches
hands.
Dull bundle invites spiders,
small birds.
Winter weary.

April warmth coaxes tiny buds
From dry joints. Pale pink
brightens limbs
Like little Christmas lights
Or the silk rosebuds ringing the
collar
Of a child's pink leotard.

Cecil Bruner, that rosy harbinger
Promises nothing less than
weddings, romance;
A change of heart.

Come May, the sun close and
warmer still,
Little lights bloom.
Paper thin petals open as
flamboyantly
As a bon vivant
Strolling down Rue St. Louis
A handful of girls swooning.

In May, gray branches
disappear,
Covered by a riot of blossoms,
A bouquet of happiness.

Under Bruner's profusion you fell
in love,
Warmth returned, as your heart,
that pink bud, opened.
Under perfumed scent of hope
You bloomed to begin love
anew;
Again and again, and again.

Joan Gelfand

Joan Gelfand is national WNBA president and a member of the San Francisco Chapter