

June Newsletter

June Book Event Highlights

Saturday, June 3rd, 9:30 am to 5:30 pm: Basic Bookbinding--Round Back with Tom and Cindy Hollander at Hollander's, 410 N. Fourth Ave.

Saturday, June 3rd: 10 am - 10 pm: Wonder Woman Day at Vault of Midnight, 219 S. Main St.

Thursday, June 15th-Saturday, June 17th: Ann Arbor Book Festival Book Crawls. Various locations and times. Visit aabookfestival.org for more information.

Friday, June 16th at 7 pm: Roxane Gay, author of *Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body*, at Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University. Sponsored by Literati Bookstore.

Friday, June 16th at 7 pm: Karen Dionne, author of *The Marsh King's Daughter*, at Aunt Agatha's, 213 S. Fourth Ave. (See below newsletter for an interview with the author!)

Saturday, June 17th, 12 pm - 5 pm: Ann Arbor Book Festival Street Fair, E. Washington St., between Fourth and Fifth Ave.

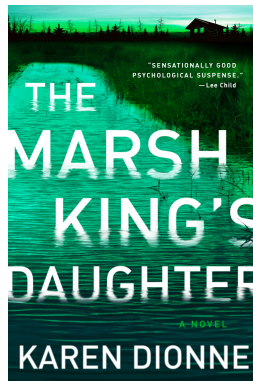
Saturday, June 17th, 11 am - 5:30 pm & Sunday, June 18th 12:30 pm - 5:30

pm: Ann Arbor Comic Arts Festival, Downtown Ann Arbor District Library, 343 S. Fifth Ave.

Friday, June 23rd at 7 pm: Pulitzer Prize-Winning author Glenn Frankel on his new book, *High Noon: The Hollywood Blacklist and the Making of an American Classic*, Westgate Ann Arbor District Library, 2503 Jackson Rd.

For more book events in the month of June, check out our all-inclusive [events calendar](#) at a2books.org.

Michigan Author Interview



Michigan author Karen Dionne is getting a lot of buzz for her new book, *The Marsh King's Daughter*, which will be released on Tuesday, June 13th by G.P. Putnam's Sons. Below is an excerpt of an interview Robin Agnew of Aunt Agatha's recently conducted with the author, which she has generously offered to share with us. **Karen Dionne will be signing her new book at Aunt Agatha's on Friday, June 16th at 7 pm. Visit Aunt Agatha's [Author Interviews](#) Page to read the interview in its entirety.**

*Karen Dionne, a Michigan native, has written several mainstream thrillers, as well as an adaptation of the TV series, **The Killing**. I was completely and unexpectedly knocked out by her new novel, **The Marsh King's Daughter**, which is set in the UP and based partially on her own experience homesteading near Newberry in the 70's.*

Robin Agnew: *Can you talk a bit about your own experience homesteading in the UP?*

Karen Dionne: During the 1970s, my husband and I moved to Michigan's Upper Peninsula as part of the back-to-the-land movement. We were city kids, and didn't know a thing about living off the land, but the idea of living close to nature really

appealed to us. We bought 10 acres of hardwoods, and moved onto our property when our oldest daughter was 6 weeks old, living in a tent while we built a small cabin, carrying water from a stream, and sampling wild foods. I've made wild apple-chokecherry jelly over an open campfire (and had to defend it against marauding raccoons) and washed my daughter's diapers in a bucket (which I promise is every bit as disgusting as it sounds). We lived in the Upper Peninsula for thirty years, so I know the area well, and drew heavily on my experiences when I wrote *The Marsh King's Daughter*. The U.P. is such a wild and beautiful place, I've always wanted to set a novel there. *The Marsh King's Daughter* is truly the book of my heart, my love letter to the Upper Peninsula.

RA: I was really intrigued by the way you aren't exactly sure, as a reader, of the time period, and time is relative, certainly according to Helena herself. How did you work out the details of the time line?

KD: *The Marsh King's Daughter* is actually set in the present day, though it's never clearly stated, so the timeline counts backwards from 2017. I think the reason the timeline seems so fluid is because the chapters that take place in the past offer no clear indication of the current date since Helena, who is narrating the story, doesn't know what year it is (and doesn't care). She and her family get up when it gets light, and go to bed when it gets dark. Because she lives so in tune with the natural world and the seasons, this is the only "time" that matters to her.

RA: I loved the Anderson fairytale being told as the book goes forward - he was a pretty harsh storyteller! Is this a story that's always intrigued you? Did you read a lot of Hans Christian Andersen as a kid?

KD: I've loved fairy tales since I was a child, the darker the better, and adore lines such as the one that ends the opening excerpt in the novel: "Great black bubbles rose out of the slime, and with these, every trace of the princess vanished." I also love novels such as Eowyn Ivey's *The Snow Child* that offer a modern take on a fairy tale. So after the character of Helena as the offspring of a kidnapped girl and her captor came to me and I was looking for a story for her, I pulled my childhood fairy tale books off the shelf to see if I could find a tale that would structure the novel. I was very excited when I came upon "The Marsh King's Daughter," because the fit was so perfect. In the fairy tale, the main character is the daughter of a beautiful Egyptian princess and the evil Marsh King. By day, the girl is beautiful like her mother, but has her father's wicked, wild temperament, while at night, she takes on her mother's gentle nature in the guise of a hideous frog. In my novel, Helena is also the product of an innocent and a monster, half good, half bad, and like the Marsh King's daughter in the fairy tale, she struggles with her dual nature.

RA: One of the things I feel as a reader that's very difficult to do is to have a character change in a believable way. It can so easily seem false or manipulated, but you really pulled this off, as Helena's story is truly a journey.

Can you talk about that a bit?

KD: While *The Marsh King's Daughter* can be read and enjoyed as a straight-up thriller, Helena's emotional journey and her relationship with her father are the heart of the story. For her first 12 years, she loves living in the marsh, hunting and fishing and foraging, and she loves her father to the exclusion of all else. Then when she leaves the marsh, she hates her father - not only for what he did to her mother, but for all the things about the outside world he didn't teach her that she needed to know. Then at age 18, when she's had all she can stand of the notoriety of being known only as "The Marsh King's Daughter," she changes her name and her appearance and moves away, in effect denying her father. And finally, at the end of the story, she has to come to terms with who and what she is. Thus the core of her journey is her love-hate relationship with her father. David Morrell once called *The Marsh King's Daughter* "a tragic love story," and I think the description fits!

As I was channeling Helena, I drew most heavily on my relationship with my own father. Like Helena, I adored my father when I was small. As I grew older, naturally, I began to see his flaws, but that didn't diminish my love for him, and this was how I wanted to depict Helena. Yes, she grows up in terrible circumstances; yes, her father is without question a monster. And yet, for a time, "before everything fell apart," as she puts it, her childhood was truly happy.

RA: I really, really take my hat off to a writer who effectively uses the setting as an integrated part of the plot. Setting is essential here and the story could be told nowhere else. Where did you start - setting? Plot? Character?

KD: Unlike my previous novels which began with plot, this novel started with the character. I actually woke up in the middle of the night with the first sentences of *The Marsh King's Daughter* fully formed in my head. I wasn't dreaming about the character, she was just there, talking to me, and telling me who she was. Middle-of-the-night ideas don't always look quite so appealing in the morning, but to my surprise, this one did. So I wrote up a few paragraphs in the character's voice - which are now the first pages of the novel.

Interestingly, as I was writing those paragraphs, I almost gave the story an urban setting, thinking of the women in Cleveland who were hidden in plain sight. But at the last moment, I decided to set the book in a place I knew well: the Tahquamenon River valley in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Now the setting and the story are so intimately connected, it's impossible to imagine this novel being set anywhere else.



With the annual Ann Arbor Book Festival quickly approaching, I recently spoke with book festival president Renee Tambeau to find out what the festival has in store for us this year. In addition to heading the board of the Ann Arbor Book Festival, Renee is the Director of Marketing, Sales, and Outreach at University of Michigan Press / Michigan Publishing. I am very grateful she was able to take time from her busy schedule to speak with me!

Rachel Pastiva: What year did the Ann Arbor Book Festival begin?

Renee Tambeau: The Ann Arbor Book Festival board was established in 2003 by the late Karl Pohrt, creator and owner of the Shaman Drum Bookstore, along with other business and University of Michigan community members who wanted to promote reading and also showcase the rich culture of the written word in Michigan. The first festival took place in 2004.

RP: What events will make up the Ann Arbor Book Festival this year?

RT: The Ann Arbor Book Festival runs from Thursday, June 15 through Saturday, June 17. We have Book Crawl events on Thursday night on the North side of Ann Arbor at Cardamom restaurant and Bookbound Bookstore. On Friday night, we move to Ypsilanti, with Book Crawls at Blackstone Bookstore & Cultural Center and the Ypsilanti District Library. Then Saturday, we take over Washington Street from 4th to 5th avenue with the street fair (outdoor tents with authors, publishers, booksellers) and Book Crawls in the downtown area at Blue Nile restaurant, Vault of Midnight Bookstore, Crazy Wisdom Bookstore & Tearoom, and Literati Bookstore! A complete list of all the fun can be found at our website: <http://aabookfestival.org/>

RP: What can participants expect out of attending a book crawl?

RT: The Book Crawl is such a great component of the Festival! It is similar to a gallery crawl where attendees go from one gallery to another exploring a wide variety of art -- the Book Crawls function the same way, attendees get to go from one venue to another and hear incredible writers reading from their work. The talented writers are essayists, Young Adult writers, poets, novelists, etc. They span a lot of genres and each has their own style. It is an intimate experience and an opportunity to stretch your boundaries. As an added bonus, the Book Crawls take place in local venues so you get to check out the richness

that Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti have to offer in those arenas, too. We have different types of bookstores, different restaurants involved. In past years, it has been one of the most enjoyable aspects for those who love the written word or want to become writers themselves (there is a Q & A session after the readings). All of the Book Crawls are free and open to the public--so there is a low threshold for checking them out. You just need to show up! The schedule has been designed to let people walk from one venue to the next with all of the readings taking place one after the other and within a block or two of each other (some venues are right next door).

RP: How many exhibitors will be at the street fair, and what kind of exhibitors will be represented?

RT: There are more than 40 vendors at the street fair this year. We aim to have as many Michiganders represented as possible and this year is no exception with almost all of the authors and publishers being local. We want this event to highlight the community of talent we have here in the Great Lakes State. Ann Arbor District Library has a tent and University of Michigan Library is also represented. We have small independent publishers as well as larger publishers like the prestigious University of Michigan Press. We have local bookstores. We have self-published authors and we have writers groups. We also have a wide variety of genres: YA, nature, history, mystery/thriller, Sci-fi, memoir, fiction, and a ton more.

RP: What aspect of the festival are you most excited about sharing with the public?

RT: Is it cheating to say the whole thing? Honestly, there is something for everyone here. It is local. It is free (thanks to our great sponsors!!). It can further your enjoyment of the written word or ignite that passion if you didn't know you had it. It, as a whole, is a valuable addition to our community. Art and finding your voice is more important now than ever. If you like mysteries, we have that. If you like YA, we have that. If you like regional books on nature, we have that. If you like children's books, we have that. If you want to talk to an author or to someone in publishing.....guess what -- we have that! AABF was described as a "secret gem" -- I want to maintain the "gem" part of the Festival and remove the "secret" since the more people know about it and engage with it, the better.

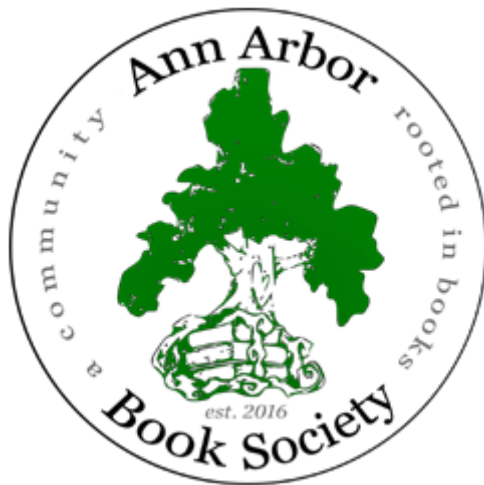
The Ann Arbor Book Festival events run from Thursday, June 15th through Saturday, June 17th.

Did you know?

[Bookbound](#) has live music!
Every first and third Saturday
from 6 pm to 8:30 pm, musician
and American roots expert
Bruce Conforth will entertain
book (and music) lovers with his
range of musical talent.

Listen up!

Literati has a podcast! In February,
Literati debuted its podcast, [Shelf
Talking](#), which features author
interviews, staff picks, book news
and more. Be in the know about all
things books and listen in!



Do you know any book lovers who
would appreciate learning about
local and regional book news?
Please pass along this email and
encourage them to sign up for our
monthly newsletter at a2books.org.

Save the Date!

July 15th and 16th:
[Friends of the AADL Book Shop
Bag Sale](#)

July 16th
[Detroit Festival of Books](#)

August 11th-12th
[Once Upon a Book](#)

September 8th-10th
[AAUW Annual Book Sale](#)

September 10th:
[Kerrytown BookFest](#)

September 24th and 25th:
[Friends of AADL Book Shop Special
Sale](#)

September 29th-October 1st:
[Harbor Springs Festival of the Book](#)

December 2nd and 3rd:
[Friends of AADL Book Shop Holiday
Sale](#)

Website Updates

Slowly but surely we're adding more
content to our website. We are
currently working on pages for Ann
Arbor's incredible [nonprofit
booksellers](#). Is there something
you'd like to see represented on our
site? We want to know! Email
rachel@a2books.org.



"Caption: Preparing a display of books which have received Jane Addams Children's Book Awards are (left) Mrs. Frances Pyle, new children's librarian at the Ann Arbor Public Library, and Miss Sarita Davis, member of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom which donated the books to the library. Fourteen books were given. Ann Arbor News, March 28, 1967." Courtesy of the [AADL Old News](#) site.

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