

# Creative Living Series

All programs begin at 10 a.m. » Coffee and conversation offered at 9 a.m.



**Thomas Swick**  
**Falling into Place: The Cold War Love Story of a Would-Be Travel Writer and Almost-Spy**  
October 17, 2024

In 1978, at the height of Soviet Bloc tensions, Thomas Swick moved to Poland to be with his future wife, Hania. The young journalist and aspiring travel writer had no idea he would, in the next decade, witness the rise of Solidarity and the imposition of martial law, decline an invitation to be an informant for the regime, and walk with thousands of Poles to Częstochowa, an annual pilgrimage that blossomed into a nine-day protest march. He discovered that to be a travel writer it helps to live in a place and learn the language, but to be a good traveler all you need is curiosity and a sense of wonder.



**Patrick Bringley**  
**All the Beauty in the World: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Me**  
February 20, 2025

Grieving the loss of his older brother to cancer, Patrick Bringley quit his job at the *New Yorker* magazine and went to work as a security guard at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. His idea was to “stand still awhile,” to drink in the beauty all around him while directing visitors to the restrooms and the mummies, to find comfort with no thought of moving forward. The exquisite account of his ten years at the Met—including a tour of masterpieces and their creators—is a lesson in learning not “about art, but from it” as well as a meditation on finding joy in both the exalted and the mundane.



**Jonathan Eig**  
**King: A Life**  
November 21, 2024

Drawing on a landslide of recently declassified White House telephone transcripts and FBI files, award-winning biographer Jonathan Eig presents a revelatory new portrait of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., infusing it with the narrative energy of a thriller. Dr. King was a minister wrestling with his own human frailties and dark moods, a citizen hunted by his own government, and a man determined to fight for justice even if it proved to be a fight to the death. A deep thinker, brilliant strategist, and committed radical, he built a reform movement on the most American of pillars: the Bible, the Declaration of Independence, and the American dream.



**Phil Vettel**  
**The Golden Age of Chicago Dining**  
March 20, 2025

He could send panic through a restaurant’s staff when he arrived, but while they freaked out, he was always rooting for them. An acclaimed *Chicago Tribune* journalist who was its food critic for 31 years, Phil Vettel witnessed the evolution of the Chicago food scene, covering talents like Charlie Trotter, Grant Achatz, and Stephanie Izard. In the process, he brought attention to Chicago as one of the nation’s finest culinary destinations. For 11 years, he served on the James Beard Foundation’s Restaurant and Chef Awards Committee. You’ve trusted his reviews. Now get his ringside point of view on the Chicago food scene and the culinary giants who make it sizzle.



**Margot Shaw**  
**Living Floral: Holiday Highlights**  
December 12, 2024

Shaw, founder of *Flower Magazine* and author of *Living Floral*, presents seasonal glimpses into the flowering styles – for entertaining and decorating – of top tastemakers in interior, floral, garden and event design. She shares ideas on how to entertain with flair – from simple to elegant – always with gorgeous flowers as the centerpiece for gatherings of friends and loved ones. With practical how-tos and invaluable resources, Shaw inspires us to incorporate the joy of flowers into our everyday lives. Plus, in tune with the season, she highlights some of her favorite holiday traditions and festive floral designs.



**Heidi Stevens**  
**The Secret Power of Storytelling**  
April 17, 2025

For the past decade Heidi Stevens wrote *The Chicago Tribune* daily column “Balancing Act” and maintains a nationally syndicated column. She specializes in stories of love and belief and wonder and enthusiasm and joy and grief and hardship and down-and-outers and celebrities and everyday folks. You’ve read them. You’ve laughed and cried over them. With the wisdom that comes from listening, she shares the stories of some of those she’s written about, of her own life and experiences, and of the secret power she’s discovered in storytelling – that stories, reminding us of what we have in common, have the superpower to connect us.



**Past Speakers:** Miguel Cervantes, Judy Collins, Rebecca Eaton, Dr. Temple Grandin, Maya Angelou, Billy Collins, Carol Marin, Charlie Trotter, Phil Ponce, John Bredar, Dr. Michael Roizen, Beverly Sills, Martha Stewart, Dr. Joyce Brothers, Rick Kogan, Wally Phillips, Joan Benny, Rick Steves, Studs Terkel, Joseph Epstein, Amy Dickinson, Ann Patchett, Geoffrey Baer, Rick Bayless, John Callaway, Scott Simon, Robert Wittman, Bill Kurtis, Sarah Paretsky, Gene Siskel, Eddie Ross, Leslie Hindman, and Jeffrey Lyons

Woodstock Fine Arts Association's 61st Annual

# Creative Living Series

Six speakers who will entertain & enlighten you

PO Box 225, Woodstock, Illinois 60098



***Celebrating 61 years of bringing nationally and regionally known speakers to McHenry County.***

Woodstock Fine Arts Association, an independent, all-volunteer, non-profit organization, debuted the Creative Living Series in 1964.

**Recent WFAA projects:**

- Donated \$10,000 toward the purchase of an LED lightwall for the Woodstock Opera House stage.
- Invited grade schoolers from public, private, and home schools to the Woodstock Opera House for "Music is a Family," an entertaining and educational performance.
- Awarded \$14,000 to seven high school seniors accomplished in the arts from Classical Consortium, Crystal Lake Central, Marian Central Catholic, Woodstock, and Woodstock North.
- Received a \$5,000 Illinois B2B Arts Grant.

Please visit us: [www.woodstockfinearts.org](http://www.woodstockfinearts.org)

**IMPORTANT:**

**Order by June 2 to retain your 2023-2024 series seats. New subscriptions available June 4.**

**BOX OFFICE INFORMATION**

- Phone: (815) 338-5300
- Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. and Sunday, 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m., Closed Monday
- Visa, MasterCard and Discover accepted
- [www.woodstockoperahouse.com](http://www.woodstockoperahouse.com)

Please send \_\_\_\_ series tickets @ \$139\* each: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_



Total Due: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Single tickets may be available and can be purchased through the Box Office for \$33\* after September 10.

\*\$5 Opera House fees included

Please make check payable to: **Woodstock Opera House**

**MAIL TO:** Woodstock Opera House  
121 Van Buren • Woodstock, IL 60098