



62nd Annual

Creative Living Series

Take Your Curiosity Out For A Talk

PO Box 225, Woodstock, Illinois 60098



Photo by Dave Yacker
Streeterville Productions

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 to the Woodstock Opera House for *Stinky Cheeseman and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*.
- Awarded \$14,000 to seven high school seniors accomplished in the arts from high schools throughout McHenry County.
- Received a \$7,000 operations grant from Community Foundation for McHenry County.



Please visit us: www.woodstockfinearts.org

IMPORTANT:

Order by June 1 to retain your 2024-2025 series seats. New subscriptions available June 3.

BOX OFFICE INFORMATION

- Phone: (815) 338-5300
- Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. and Sunday, 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m., Closed Monday
- Visa, MasterCard and Discover accepted
- www.woodstockoperahouse.com

☐ Please send ____ series tickets @ \$139* each: \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Telephone _____

Please make check payable to: **Woodstock Opera House**
MAIL TO: Woodstock Opera House
121 Van Buren • Woodstock, IL 60098

**Season
Subscribers
SAVE 30%**

Total Due: \$ _____

Series tickets are non-refundable

Single tickets may be available and can be purchased through the Box Office for \$33* after September 9.

*\$5 Opera House fees included

Creative Living Series

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



Bonnie Blair

The Most Decorated US Woman in Winter Olympic History
October 16, 2025

This kick-off program is dedicated to the memory of Becky Kent Medins, beloved WFAA board member.

Bonnie Blair never set out to become famous. She simply loved speed skating. Time after time she met the pressures and challenges of competition to win five gold medals and one bronze. She shares her Olympic experiences and her formula for success to inspire anyone to achieve their personal best. Blair is a 2025 recipient of The Order of Lincoln, Illinois' highest civilian honor for professional achievement and public service.



Photo by Neil Burger

Leigh Omilinsky

Beyond the Butter and Sugar: A Pastry Chef's Passion, Perseverance, and Persistence
February 19, 2026

Omilinsky, a 2025 James Beard semifinalist for Outstanding Baker/Pastry Chef and executive pastry chef and partner at Chicago's Daisies, shares the sources of her prodigious passion. By day, she stocks her Logan Square café with sought-after treats that marry nostalgic flavors rooted in her own childhood experiences and Midwest traditions. Come evening, her career in legendary kitchens like TRU, Nico Osteria, and three Michelin-starred L20 are on display with desserts that mirror works of art. A dedicated mentor and educator, she advocates for the advancement of women and working mothers in the industry, championing the balance between a thriving career and a fulfilling home life.



Tommy Walton

Fusing Fashion Design and Culinary Arts
November 20, 2025

Tommy Walton is a multi-faceted fashion designer, culinary artist, educator, and *MasterChef* Fan Favorite. In a captivating multimedia presentation, he shares insights on creativity, cuisine and celebrity, topped off with a delectable tasting of one of his favorite desserts.



Joseph Luzzi

A Grand Tour of Italy: Art, Music, Film & Literature
March 19, 2026

"You may have the universe, if I may have Italy" is Giuseppe Verdi's oft-quoted praise of *il Bel Paese*, the Beautiful Land. In an immersive tour of Italy's cultural masterpieces, Dr. Luzzi delves into what is behind Italy's remarkable appeal and explores what makes it such an inexhaustible place of discovery. With passionate insight, he shares how art, literature, and the humanities can change our world. Dr. Luzzi, is a teacher, scholar and award-winning author. His *Botticelli's Secret: The Lost Drawings and the Rediscovery of the Renaissance* was a New Yorker Best Book of 2022.



Shelby Van Pelt

Remarkably Bright Creatures: Lessons I Learned from the Fictional Octopus in My Head
December 11, 2025

Van Pelt's debut novel about a beguiling octopus she saw one day has become a word-of-mouth sensation and a "Read with Jenna" pick for the *Today* show's book club. She recounts her unexpected creative journey – from financial consultant to *New York Times* bestselling author – and what she learned along the way about friendship, reckoning and hope.



Photo by Linda Maraniss

David Maraniss
Four Legs of the Table: How a Pulitzer-Winning Biographer Searches Out Truth
April 16, 2026

Drawing on vivid anecdotes from his travels around the country and the world, David Maraniss illustrates his approach to research and writing. In his 13 books on politics, sports, and social movements, his method has taken him beyond prevailing lore in search of dramatic true stories—from Bill Clinton to Jim Thorpe, from Barack Obama to Vince Lombardi.



Past Speakers: Jonathan Eig, 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