

Spring 2024

2/7: John Shuchart

Thanks to Steven Spielberg's Oscar-winning movie, most of us know that Oscar Schindler saved 1,100 Jews during World War II by employing them in his factory. We are less familiar with Irena Sendlerova, a Polish Catholic woman who saved 2,500 children from certain death in the Warsaw Ghetto. Her story was hidden for years, until four students from the small town of Uniontown, Kansas and Kansas City history teacher John Shuchart discovered that Sendlerova was still alive!

Her story will keep you glued to your seat. How did Sendlerova manage to sneak 2,500 children out of the Ghetto? How and where did she hide them once they were out? Who helped her? Why did she risk her life every day? How did the four students from Uniontown discover her and what happened when they visited her in Warsaw? And, how did she go from anonymity to being nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize (she lost to Al Gore)?

Internationally known speaker John Shuchart was there, met Sendlerova, and he tells her story in remarkable detail. You won't want to miss learning about this incredible woman.

2/14: Liz Scheier

Liz Scheier's debut memoir, **Never Simple**, tells the story of her mother – a charming, brilliant, serial fabulist – who, in the grips of lifelong mental illness, lied about such small matters as her own last name, the identity of Scheier's father, and Scheier's Social Security Number. As her mother's health failed, she became increasingly dependent on her daughter, who asked herself: What do we owe those who have failed us? How do we show empathy in the face of abuse? And how can we break the cycle with our own children?

Scheier is a product strategist and author living in Washington DC with her husband, two children, and an ill-behaved cat. Her work has appeared in the *New York Times*, *Slate*, *Publishers Weekly*, and other platforms. Her debut memoir, **Never Simple**, has garnered praise from reviewers, as well as authors Augusten Burroughs, Jenny Lawson, Isaac Mizrahi, and others. It was chosen as a Best Book of March by Amazon and Apple Books, a People Picks by *People Magazine*, an Indie Next pick, and a Barnes & Noble Top 10 Favorite Ebook of 2022. *Good Morning America* featured it as one of "15 March Reads to Get You Through the Month." It was a finalist for a Lambda Award. **Book Event**

2/21: Helena Andrews-Dyer

"White girls made me do it." That's how Helena Andrews-Dyer began her latest book, **The Mamas: What I Learned About Kids, Class and Race From Moms Not Like Me.**

Why? Her neighborhood's all-white moms group convinced her to join them to sing songs with their two-year-olds. But the moms also confronted topics Andrews-Dyer thought she knew well – race, class, gentrification, home, and the definition of “best.” Her discussion will dig into how motherhood can bring women together and connect them across divides – but only if they are willing to truly see one another.

As a *Washington Post* reporter, Andrews-Dyer covers the intersection of popular culture, race, politics, and art. In 2020, she won two National Association of Black Journalists' Salute to Excellence Awards for her longform feature “This Isn't Another Horror Story About Black Motherhood.” Earlier books include **Reclaiming Her Time: The Power of Maxine Waters**, and **Bitch is the New Black**, a memoir-in-essays optioned by Shonda Rimes as a feature film. Andrews-Dyer has written for national publications such as *Oprah Magazine*, *Marie Claire*, *Glamour*, *The New York Times*, *Essence*, and *OUT*. She has appeared on *Good Morning America*, *Morning Edition*, *Washington Post Live*, CNN, MSNBC, SiriusXM, and NY1. She lives in Washington DC with a husband whose laugh can be heard for miles and two equally carefree daughters.

Book Event

2/28: Dana Marlowe

The words “homeless women need bras” changed Dana Marlowe's life forever. This lightbulb moment occurred during a bra fitting in 2015. Marlowe asked the saleswoman what she could do with her old bras, and the saleswoman gave Dana a donation suggestion. Thus began an eight-year journey in neighborhood teamwork, international collaboration, and the creation of a global non-profit organization called I Support the Girls, which stands up for vulnerable individuals by donating bras, new underwear, and menstrual hygiene products to promote a healthier and more dignified lifestyle. Marlowe will discuss the founding story and encourage others to get involved in their communities.

Marlowe is also the founder and principal partner of Accessibility Partners, an IT company making technology accessible for people with disabilities. When she is not sorting tampons or striving for inclusivity, she can be found at sports games with her sons, walking her Silver Labrador Retriever, or attending early morning dance raves.

3/6: Mindi Jacobsen

Mindi Jacobson co-founded Future Link 15 years ago to reduce the opportunity divide faced by first generation college-bound young adults. Her goal is to empower these young adults to succeed while addressing workforce development, educational access, and inequity issues. As Future Link's Executive Director, she devotes most of her time to capacity building activities for resource acquisition, partner relationships, and program scaling. Her work philosophy combines vision, leadership, and

humor. Jacobson honed her strategic thinking, proposal writing, and program development expertise working in academic administration and project management in New York metropolitan area hospital systems and Montgomery County nonprofit organizations.

Jacobson holds a master's degree in public health from Columbia University and an undergraduate degree in health services management and business from the University of Rochester. Montgomery College awarded her an honorary degree in May 2019 for her commitment and dedication to students and to the community at-large. She has received recognition and service awards for outstanding contributions to the community from the Collaboration Council, the Community Action Board, the Montgomery County Executive, the Maryland General Assembly, the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, the Commission on Children and Youth, and the Harry K. Wolpoff Award of Distinction.

3/13: Steven Dettelbach

President Biden appointed Steven M. Dettelbach as the Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF); he was sworn in on July 13, 2022. The ATF is charged with protecting the public by enforcing laws and regulations related to firearms, explosives, arson, and alcohol and tobacco trafficking. Prior to his current position, Mr. Dettelbach served as the United States Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio where he oversaw high-profile investigations and both managed and personally handled large-scale, crisis-level litigations. In his 30-year career, he has been involved in nearly every type of criminal, civil or regulatory investigation. He has also served in several senior policy roles at the Department of Justice. Mr. Dettelbach received his JD from Harvard University in 1991 and his BA from Dartmouth College in 1988.

Director Dettelbach will discuss his personal experiences in law enforcement, as well as the work and challenges currently facing the ATF.

3/20: Henry Farrell and Abraham Newman

Henry Farrell and Abraham Newman believe that Washington, slowly but surely, has turned the world economy's most vital pathways into tools of domination over foreign businesses and countries, both rivals or allies. In the process, they say the US has sleepwalked into a new struggle for empire. Using true stories, field-defining findings, and original reporting, Farrell and Newman will show how the most ordinary aspects of the post-Cold War economy have become realms of subterfuge and coercion, and what we must do to ensure that this new arms race doesn't spiral out of control.

Henry Farrell is the SNF Agora Professor at Johns Hopkins SAIS, the 2019 winner of the Friedrich Schiedel Prize for Politics and Technology, former Editor-in-Chief of *The Monkey Cage* at *The Washington Post*, and co-founder of the popular academic blog, *Crooked Timber*. A member of the Council on Foreign Relations, Farrell has written for

The New York Times, the *Financial Times*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *The Washington Monthly*, *The Boston Review*, *Aeon*, *New Scientist*, and *The Nation*.

Abraham L. Newman is a professor at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service and Government Department. Known for his research on the politics of globalization, he is a frequent commentator on international affairs, appearing on news outlets ranging from Al Jazeera to Deutsche Welle and NPR. He has written for leading outlets such as *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *Nature*, *Science*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *Harvard Business Review*, and *Politico*. **Book Event**

3/27: no meeting

4/3: Nancy Horan

Nancy Horan's most recent book, **The House of Lincoln**, takes readers on a journey from the buildup to Lincoln's presidency through the the Civil War and the war's aftermath, as seen through the eyes of three characters: a Portuguese immigrant girl who works for the Lincolns, a free Black minister whose family members shelter and conduct escaped slaves through town, and Mary Lincoln. The events that unfold in Springfield chronicle the making of a president during deeply divisive times, events that ultimately reshaped America and continue to reverberate today. The author will discuss the book and her journey in writing it.

Horan grew up in Springfield, Illinois, the setting for **The House of Lincoln**. Her first two novels were *New York Times* bestsellers. **Loving Frank** (2007) remained on that list for over a year and won the Society of American Historians 2008-2009 prize for Best Historical Fiction. **Under the Wide and Starry Sky** (2014) was a *Today Show* Book Club pick, and was chosen as one of the year's best books by *The Washington Post*. **Book Event**

4/10: No meeting

4/17: Dr. Marsha Novick

Obesity is one of the most common chronic medical conditions in the US, affecting 40% of American adults. Obesity is a complex and relapsing disease; successful, sustainable weight loss has proven to be elusive. Over the past decade, however, anti-obesity medications have become more effective, gradually bridging the gap between lifestyle intervention and bariatric surgery. Dr. Marsha Novick, M.D., is the Medical Director of Weight Management & Wellness Online (www.weightwellnessonline.com), a private weight loss practice. She will discuss obesity as a chronic disease, illustrate the epidemiology and risk factors related to obesity, and synthesize evidence-based concepts of lifestyle intervention and medication with the fundamental understanding that treatment is based on biology rather than willpower.

Prior to private practice, Dr. Novick directed the Penn State Hershey Medical Center's Healthy Weight Program for Children and Teens. She is board-certified in family medicine and serves on The Obesity Society's Ethics Committee, the American Academy of Pediatrics' Section on Obesity, and the Pennsylvania Obesity Advocacy Group. She has collaborated with national research experts in the field and has published over 20 scientific papers on obesity. Over two decades of experience, she has treated thousands of adults and children with weight problems.

4/24: Henry Horenstein and Leslie Tucker

When Leslie Tucker set out to learn about the Wesort family of Southern Maryland and determine whether she was related to them, she asked photographer Henry Horenstein to chronicle this intriguing but mysterious multi-ethnic community before it disappeared. The book **We Sort of People** emerged from Tucker's obsession to investigate, document, and preserve the stories of her ancestors, the Proctors, whose roots reach back to the founding of the first Catholic colony in America. Three races – White, Black, and Native American – were combined in one clan, creating a fast-disappearing fourth race on the margins of the nation's capital. Although the project started off as a story about the origins of race in America, it morphed into a series of collaborations not only between Tucker and Horenstein, but also between Tucker and the women she interviewed, between images and voices, and ultimately between history and time.

During her print and broadcast media career, Tucker worked at *Rolling Stone*, helped bring Thomas the Tank Engine to American children's television, and reported on the return of Ferdinand Marcos's body to the Philippines. After the Soviet Union collapsed, she managed reporters and producers across Russia, teaching journalists how to produce Western-style programs.

Photographer and filmmaker Henry Horenstein, whose photographs are exhibited internationally, has published over 35 books. His subject matter includes nightlife in Buenos Aires, boxing in Caracas, burlesque and drag performers in Los Angeles, camel breeding in Dubai, Cajun bars in Louisiana, and thoroughbred breeding in Kentucky. He wrote **Black & White Photography, Beyond Basic Photography, and Digital Photography**, used in thousands of high schools and colleges. He earned his BFA and MFA at the Rhode Island School of Design, where he is now a professor. **Book Event**

5/1: Lance Hoffman

While earning his PhD in computer science at Stanford University, Lance Hoffman studied artificial intelligence with one of the legendary founders of the field, John McCarthy. Little did he know at the time how useful that knowledge would be today. He will discuss public policy issues concerning artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and privacy, including improving our cybersecurity and applying AI to current events.

Hoffman is an emeritus professor of computer science at The George Washington University, where he directed cybersecurity scholarship programs. In 1970, he

developed the first regularly offered university course on computer security, at the University of California, Berkeley. He has published five books and numerous articles on cybersecurity and privacy, recently focusing on the many policy issues associated with widespread internet access. He directed and advised local and national cybersecurity scholarship programs and served on advisory committees for the Federal Trade Commission and the Department of Homeland Security. He served as an elected Council member of the Town of Chevy Chase.

5/8: Cyndi Bryant

Research suggests that 85 percent of sensory input (how we perceive the world) is through sight. Yet sight allows us to judge our world from afar without a full perspective. As a blind person, Cynthia Bryant challenges these perceptions and interactions, suggesting that the critical need to move in close and use all senses to master our stories can be a catalyst for understanding and change. She will explore empathy, sensory mindfulness, the joy of being blind (through a mental walk with her guide dog), and solutions on how we move beyond our visual 85 percent.

Bryant chairs the Board of Trustees for The Seeing Eye, a guide dog school. A mediator, a negotiator, a coach for *CliftonStrengths* (an online talent assessment system), and a DEI practitioner, she regularly speaks and trains on empathy and active listening. Her 20+ year federal career service included Special Counsel for Alternative Dispute Resolution in the Federal Communications Commission's Office of Workplace Diversity. Other FCC accomplishments include investigating and adjudicating anti-fraud and anti-competitive telecom carrier behavior and tackling telecom barriers affecting Tribal communities. Prior to joining the FCC, she worked on President Clinton's presidential task force ensuring employment for people with disabilities.

5/15: Judith Waxman

From ancient times to the present, women have tried to control their own bodies. This is also true for women throughout US history, starting with indigenous women. Judith Waxman, one of the nation's leading health care and reproductive rights law and policy experts, will present evidence of practices, social customs, and laws that have impacted women's ability to determine their own reproductive lives, ending with a discussion of the state of reproductive freedom today.

For more than 40 years, Waxman worked at the National Women's Law Center, Families USA, the National Health Law Program, and the US Public Health Service to improve the health of women and other vulnerable people. She served as a senior policy analyst at the US Bipartisan Commission on Comprehensive Health Care ("the Pepper Commission") that proposed a universal coverage health care plan that anticipated the Affordable Care Act. She has taught Health Law at Georgetown University Law Center, and Reproductive Health Policy and Law at George Washington

University's Milken Institute School of Public Health. She was a long-time board member of Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington.

Since retiring, Waxman has continued to serve as a national expert and speaker on enhancing access to health care and reproductive health services. As an oral historian, she has interviewed health care providers and advocates around the country.

5/22: Andrew Seidel:

Andrew Seidel, a leading expert on health care and reproductive rights law and policy, will discuss the weaponization of religion in American political life and how the Supreme Court uses religious freedom to violate or impact other people's rights. Citing recent Supreme Court cases, he will show how the Court has turned a hallowed legal protection – freedom of religion – into a tool to advance privilege and impose conservative Christianity on others. He hopes through his talk that we gain not just a better understanding of the threat posed by Christian nationalism, but of our entire political environment and the threats that we are seeing and facing right now.

Seidel is a constitutional and civil rights attorney and Vice President of Strategic Communications at Americans United for Separation of Church and State, the largest organization fighting for that founding principle. He has written two books: **The Founding Myth: Why Christian Nationalism Is Un-American** and **American Crusade: How the Supreme Court is Weaponizing Religious Freedom**. He is a Senior Correspondent at Religion Dispatches, and a prolific author of op eds and scholarly articles. He organized and contributed to the groundbreaking report, "Christian Nationalism at the January 6, 2021, Insurrection," published by the Baptist Joint Committee and the Freedom From Religion Foundation. He has appeared on Fox News, MSNBC, and other media outlets. **Book Event**

5/29: Jody Gelb

Actor and author Jody Gelb will discuss how she found a path toward writing, decided to publish a micro-memoir at the age of 67, and pulled it off. She'll also talk about how she survived having a first child who suffered from brain damage during birth, as well as her transition from Broadway actor to mother of a baby with severe disabilities.

Gelb has been an actor in New York and San Francisco for more than 40 years and a mother for almost 30. She appeared on Broadway in *Wicked*, *The Who's Tommy*, *Big River*, *Titanic* and *Wrong Mountain*. She wrote two solo shows: *Past Lives*, and *Does the Noise in My Head Bother You?* **She May Be Lying Down But She May Be Very Happy** is Gelb's first book. Author Martin Moran described the book this way: "This astonishing memoir lives in the sacred space where life and death meet. From its first startling sentence to its last, Gelb's extraordinary story grips us and never lets go."

Book Event

6/5: Laura Soto-Barra

Laura Soto-Barra, NPR's Vice President for Research, Archives, and Data Strategy (RAD), will discuss how she transformed the RAD team to meet NPR's need for digital information and innovation, as NPR itself was evolving from a broadcast network to a digital media institution. RAD is unique in the media industry and in the archives sector because its strategy – addressing content, networks, culture and revenue through a variety of services – achieves and reflects NPR's distinctive research needs and data demands. Soto-Barra created and developed RAD to meet NPR's news-driven demands, including those beyond the newsroom. She built a business strategy to create an additional revenue stream for the company. Her efforts to digitize content and develop strategic plans has enabled the RAD group to build a world-class, digitally enabled, and nimble archive that supports and mirrors NPR's growth as a highly respected media institution.

Originally from Chile, Soto-Barra began her career as a chemical and mining engineering librarian at the Universidad de Chile. She earned her Master of Library Science and Information Services in Toronto, and moved to the US in 1997.

6/12: Sandi Marra

Established in 1925, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) is the leading organization protecting, managing, and advocating for all 2,190 miles of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail and surrounding lands. As ATC's President and CEO since 2019, Sandra "Sandi" Marra is responsible for ensuring the longest hiking-only footpath in the world continues to be a source of recreation and inspiration for generations to enjoy through ATC's conservation, stewardship, and educational initiatives. After nearly a century of service, and in an increasingly fractured society, the mission of the ATC has never been more ecologically or socially relevant.

Marra's love for the Appalachian Trail spans four decades, during which she served in numerous roles for both the Trail and the Conservancy. A Trail volunteer for over 35 years, Marra is an Honorary Life Member of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC). She holds a Master of Science in Personnel and Human Resource Management from American University's Kogod School of Business. She and her husband oversee three miles of the Appalachian Trail in Northern Virginia and co-manage PATC's Blackburn Trail Center. Sandi lives in Harpers Ferry, just a short walk from ATC Headquarters and the Appalachian Trail itself.