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THURSDAY, NOV 01

## Scene @ WNBA 90th Anniversary Celebration



Top row: **Beverly Swerling, Laura Dave, and Carol Fitzgerald**  
Bottom: **Adriana Trigiani and Wally Lamb**

The **Women's National Book Association** was founded in 1917 by fifteen women booksellers who had been banned from membership in the all-male trade association. In the 90 years since then, the organization has been open to women in every corner of the book world, and has also opened its ranks to industry men sympathetic to its aims. Monday night, the WNBA celebrated its anniversary with a panel discussion closing out "[National Reading Group Month](#)," a tribute to "the joy of shared reading and the appreciation of literature as a civilizing influence on society." **Amanda ReCupido** went to the event and—in addition to taking the pictures above—filed this report.

"Before the discussion began," Amanda writes, "the evening received a 'blessing' from Mayor Bloomberg, whose spirit presented itself in the form of a letter read aloud by WNBA National Reading Group Month Committee Chair **Jill A. Tardiff**. Then **Carol Fitzgerald** of [BookReporter.com](#) led the conversation with authors **Laura Dave, Wally Lamb, Matthew Sharpe, Beverly Swerling** and **Adriana Trigiani**. So what do you do with all that talent sitting in one room? Well, talk about **Oprah Winfrey** and **Katie Couric**, for one."

"Lamb joked about how Oprah first contacted him while he was in the middle of doing laundry. 'She told me that I owed her two nights of sleep for my book,' he mused. Sharpe discussed the calming, soothing effect of Couric when he made his appearance on the *Today* show: 'Here I was doing live television, and I had never even been interviewed by a newspaper! Luckily, Katie was a pro.' (He also may or may not have divulged about a certain

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pre-show ritual of Couric's, which may or may not involve her banging her hands against her head.)

"Trigiani discussed spending the summer in Italy as a shoemaker to feel out a character for her new book, *Bella Rosa*, which will be published on Halloween 2008, and Dave—whose second novel, *The Divorce Party*, also comes out next year—lamented losing 200 pages of her first novel to a spilt glass of water on a Dell computer. Lamb also has another novel in the works; he is currently finishing up the final chapters of *The Hour I First Believed*. Swerling indulged the audience in the amount of historical research required for her books. 'Someone once told me that if I was their history teacher, they would have paid better attention,' she said. And we would have too! Our schools certainly didn't teach us about crotchless pantaloons and that the largest slave trade in the colonies was held on Wall Street (though we probably could have guessed)."

Posted by Ron | 08:02 AM | [Lecture Circuit](#)

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