

## Biblio File

Former Society of Midland Authors President **Craig Sautter** and his brother, Chris, (who run Sautter Communications) made two 2½-minute videos shown at the



**Craig Sautter**

Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, S.C. One was on President Barack Obama and education policy; the other was on Obama and energy policy. (If the videos put Barack over the top, the Obama campaign has

promised to buy up the remaining stock of SMA mugs.) Craig also appeared on public radio station WBEZ-FM with **Walter Podrazik** for an hour discussion on conventions past and present with **Steve Edwards** on Edwards' "Afternoon Shift" program. (Steve has since traded in his job at WBEZ for a position at the University of Chicago's new Institute of Politics, and **Rick Kogan** is doing "Afternoon Shift.") This summer, Craig was twice on Bruce Dumont's syndicated "Beyond the Beltway," talking about the 2012 election. Now he is back to three campaigns, and DePaul University, teaching two sessions of "Chicago Politics: Bosses & Reformers" and his "Creative Ink" creative writing class. ... **Amina Gautier** took third place in the 2012 Glimmer Train

Fiction Open and won the 2012 Crazyhorse Fiction Prize. ... Remember Sherlock Holmes' "curious incident of the dog in the night time" – curious, because the dog did nothing? In August, SMA Recording Secretary **Anastasia Royal's** dog also did nothing – and she was glad of it. While



As Holmes would say, game was afoot

nothing – and she was glad of it. While

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## Between Iraq and a hard place: Author's tale of writing in Arabic

BY THOMAS FRISBIE

If you want to be a successful author in Iraq, you need to avoid three topics: sex, politics and religion.

That's what Iraqi author **Mahmoud Saeed**, who now teaches Arabic language courses, Arab culture and Iraqi political history at DePaul University in Chicago, told authors Oct. 9 at the monthly Society of Midland Authors program at the Cliff Dwellers club in Chicago.

Saeed, who was imprisoned six times and whose books were banned in Iraq, admitted he wasn't exactly an example of how to succeed as an author in the Arab literary world. Saeed was accompanied by **Allen Salter**, who helped to translate one of Saeed's books, *The World Through the Eyes of Angels* (Syracuse University Press). It was the second of Saeed's novels to be translated into English.

Saeed's story, Salter said, is a "marvelous tale, his odyssey, a young Iraqi boy who fell in love with books, began to write books and embarked on what has to be the least rewarding career path in the word, that of a novelist and intellectual in the Arab world."

SMA President **Robert Loerzel**, who introduced the speakers, said of Saeed's work, "This is a book that I had the pleasure of reading this summer. It is a really

beautifully written story, so I praise Mahmoud for his original writing and Allen for the work he did on translating in English."

Saeed has written more than 20 novels and short story collections. After Iraq's 1963 coup, the government destroyed manuscripts of two of his two novel manuscripts – *The Old Case* and *The Strike*. The government banned all his books written after 1963, including *Rhythm and Obsession* in 1968 and *Rue Ben Barka* in 1970 (it was published 15 years later in Egypt). Saeed fled Iraq in 1985.

Of Saeed's other novel to be translated into English, *Saddam City*, a New Yorker reviewer said, "For all the horror it details, this is a startlingly warm and humane book."

*Saddam City*, translated by Lake Forest College professor

Ahmad Sadri, tells of the fear and despair of a Baghdad schoolteacher as he is shuttled from prison to prison. It is based on Saeed's own experiences.

Saeed and Salter's collaboration began about six years ago, when a friend of Salter's who happened to be teaching English to Saeed asked Salter – who works as a translator – to help Saeed "negotiate the shoals ... of the American publishing industry."

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**Mahmoud Saeed**



**Allen Salter**

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on a walk in Chicago's north suburb of Wilmette, the two encountered an unexpectedly outsized feline peering out of a row of bushes. "I saw a mountain lion in Wilmette up close and personal!" Anastasia e-mailed. "I was so shocked when this happened. Luckily and uncharacteristically, my little dog, Moxie, didn't bark as she strained on the leash." In non-mountain-lion-related news, Anastasia won the "Why My Mom Is No. 1" essay contest in Wilmette. And the new book she helped her sister, veterinarian Barbara Royal, write: *Royal Treatment: A Natural Approach to Wildly Healthy Pets* (Atria/Emily Bestler Books) came out Sept. 18. ... Former SMA president **James Merriner** delivered a paper to a conference of "goo goos" Sept. 28 in which he argued that campaign financial reform is little more than a fraud and a hoax (because it hasn't worked). Goo goos, as you may remember from one of Jim's book titles, are good-government types. Jim e-mailed to say, "I said it was

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## Literary License

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of Midland Authors  
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## Author's tale Continued from Page 1

"I went down to Belmont, where Mahmoud lives, and we got together and went out for a drink and hit it off and became fast friends immediately," Salter said.

"The more I talked to Mahmoud, the more I became amazed at his experiences, his biography, the things that he had undergone, sacrificed for his writing," Salter added. "And he started giving me things of his to read in Arabic, and I read a novel of his called *The Daughters of Jacob*, which has regrettably not yet been translated into English [and] which I thought was very, very good. At some point he asked me: would you finish translating this novel of mine?, and I foolishly said yes."

Unable to find a publisher, Saeed had hired translators to start the project, but he couldn't afford to finish it.

"Mahmoud had never had the good fortune to sell a lot of copies in Arabic, partly because the Arabic market is very small," Salter said.

Salter completed work on the untranslated portion, edited "the whole thing into a coherent whole" and sent it to an agent.

Meanwhile, Saeed entered the manuscript into the King Fahd Middle Eastern Studies Award for Arabic Literary Translation, which is run by the University of Arkansas and is one of the leading prizes in the field of Arabic-to-English literary translation. The award, which Saeed's book won in 2010, includes publication of the winning book by the Syracuse University Press.

The novel tells the story of a sensitive and loving boy assailed by the cruelty of life as he grows up in Mosul, Iraq, in the 1940s. Saeed was born in Mosul, where he lived until 1985.

Life as an author was difficult in Iraq because to be published an author must submit a manuscript to a government

““ *I work washing dishes only to get some money to live and write.* ””

ministry, which has strict guidelines, including no sex, religion or politics, Saeed said.

To get by financially after coming to the United States, Saeed took on such jobs as driving a delivery truck.

"I work washing dishes, only to get some money to live and write," he said.

Another of Saeed's books, *Rue Ben Barka*, which is set during his years of exile in Tunisia and was banned in Iraq, soon will be published in English by Interlink Books.



Upcoming Society of Midland Authors programs are:

Nov. 13: **Gregory Harms**, author of *It's Not About Religion*. See Literary Landscape, Page 3.

Jan. 8: **Peter Nolan**, author of *Campaign! The 1983 Election that Rocked Chicago*. Location: Harold Washington Library, not the usual Cliff Dwellers. (See story below).

Feb. 13: **Gillian Flynn**, author of *Gone Girl* (currently No. 1 on The New York Times fiction best-seller list). Note: Because of a scheduling conflict, this is a Wednesday, not our normal Tuesday night program. Harold Washington Library.

March 12: **Gerry Souter**, *American Shooter*. Harold Washington Library.

April 16: **Edward Hirsch**, Cliff Dwellers.

*The Society of Midland Authors' 2012-2013 programs may be heard in their entirety at [www.chicagopublicradio.org](http://www.chicagopublicradio.org) amplified.*

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## Program location changes

Our normal space for our monthly programs will change from January through March because the Cliff Dwellers is shutting down for remodeling.

So we will hold our programs instead at the Harold Washington Library.

Because the library is closed on Lincoln's Birthday, the February program will be held on a Wednesday instead of the normal Tuesday. And while at the library, the talks will begin at 6 p.m. instead of the usual 7 p.m.

Normally, we have a social hour at 6 and the program at 7.

# A broader Mideast perspective

**G**regory Harms, an independent scholar specializing in American foreign policy and the Middle East, will speak at the November Society of Midland Authors program. Here's what he tells Literary License:

**Literary License:** *The title of your most recent book is It's Not About Religion. What are the chief factors people tend to overlook in the Middle East?*

**Gregory Harms:** When Americans look at the Middle East, they see what they're shown on the news. Over the decades this has created a very narrow perspective, one devoid of historical context. As a result, when we see constant instability and violence, it is assumed that the region's woes are an expression of its cultures. This is not only an inappropriate generalization, but it also removes the enormous, manipulative role Western Europe and the United States have played in the Middle East for 90 years.

**Literary License:** *You've written extensively about the Middle East. What sparked your interest in this region?*

**Gregory Harms:** I was initially just frustrated with my own ignorance on the subject. The Middle East was constantly in the news, but I had no sense of what was what. And I had heard so often that "those people have been at it forever" that I started to suspect that wasn't the case. I quickly learned the opposite was true, that the various conflicts were very much modern phenomena based on modern, nonreligious problems.

**Literary License:** *The Middle East is the focus of numerous books and constant news reports. How does an author writing about this region keep from being drowned out by all the other voices?*

**Gregory Harms:** I probably am drowned out. There are people doing excellent work on the subject, and there are people doing not-so-excellent work on the subject. But even the more well-known people in the former group only reach so many Americans. Some people in the latter group, on the other hand, can have enormous reach, and their books sell extreme-

ly well. Doing work that examines these issues more honestly and precisely makes one less welcome in general, because the facts are uncomfortable. If instead you act as a cheerleader for power, or play on people's angers and fears, it is easier to gain exposure. So it isn't necessarily the volume of literature out there as much as

**November 13, 2012, program**  
**Cliff Dwellers**  
**200 S. Michigan Ave., 22nd floor**

**6 p.m. - Social Hour**

**7 p.m. - Program**

**Free - donations accepted**

it is what one is reporting. That said, I'm a smaller voice; but I try to make a contribution anyway. Those uncomfortable facts have staying power, and over time push aside the ideological rhetoric.

## Literary Landscape: Gregory Harms



**Literary License:** *Is America evolving toward a better understanding of the Middle East?*

**Gregory Harms:** That has been my observation. The country has evolved in a number of areas concerning race, gender, and so on, and I think views of the Middle East are improving. What has made a difference is better information. News programs like Democracy Now and foreign channels such as Al Jazeera are doing good journalism. I think independent films are helping. Also, the Arab Spring has made an impact on our perspective; here were people across North Africa and the Middle East demanding freedom and political change. The language was secular and liberal, and it was coming from the populations, not a handful of militants or extremists.

**Literary License:** *What book are you working on next?*

**Gregory Harms:** At present, I have been promoting this new one as well as writing articles. So there's no fourth book in the works. However, watching the 2012 presidential campaign, I would like to produce a book titled *America is Not Divided*, or maybe *We Need a Second Viable Party*.

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time to shoot the sacred cow of campaign financial limits, and then some of the reformers wanted to shoot me instead."

**Dick Simpson** also was at the conference, speaking on "Chicago and Illinois, Leading the Pack in Corruption."

Jim also reports he "has started writing poetry for the first time since he was a lovesick fool in college." Jim will read a couple of his poems onstage at the

Viaduct Theater, 3111 N. Western, as part of a Poetry Cram on Wednesday, Oct. 24. A reception starts at 6; he will be up between 7:30 and 8. Itala Langmar of Kenilworth, Ill., will read her poetry for the third straight year. ... Former SMA



Joanne Koch

President **Joanne Koch's** play "Soul Sisters" opens Oct. 19 and runs weekends (Friday and Saturday nights at 8 p.m., Sundays at 3 p.m.) through Nov. 11 at the Clockwise Theatre in downtown Waukegan, 221 N. Genesee St. The play's characters – one African American, one Jewish – help each other through public success, personal tragedy and a rediscovery of their roots. ... Upon getting an errant check returned to her, **Alzina Stone Dale** wrote to say, "The nicest part is I think I may spend it buying myself a couple of my UK pals' mysteries. I've been very lucky to get to know Anne Perry and the Keatings – all of whom have visited us here. In the case of Anne Perry our dog went bananas about her, and I literally had to grab her to let Anne get out our front door on her own." ...

**Frances McNamara** and **David J. Walker**

were at the Centuries & Sleuths Bookstore Sept. 16 to launch their new titles (see New Books in the



Frances  
McNamara

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August/September issue). David reports: "We had a nice crowd, many of whom were in book-buying mode." Also, on Oct. 23 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Frances will be at 57th Street Books in Chicago. ... On Nov. 11, **Rick Kogan** will interview **Emily Victorson** and **David J.**



Julie Hyzy

**Walker** on his radio show. ... At 7 p.m. on Nov. 14 **Gail Lukasik** and **Frances McNamara** will appear at the Cook Memorial Library, Libertyville, Ill. Gail e-mails to say: "We decided to join forces because the majority of Frances' series is set in 19th century Chicago, and a major story line in my latest book, *The Lost Artist*, is also set in the 19th century. This is our first outing together and we're hoping to do more presentations focused on writing mysteries set in the 19th century." ... *Buffalo West Wing* by **Julie Hyzy** was named Best Paperback Original at the Oct. 6 Anthony Awards at Bouchercon 2012. ... **Richard Lindberg** (*Whiskey Breakfast*), **Libby Fischer Hellmann** (*A Bitter Veil*) and **Patricia McNair** (*The Temple of Air*) are finalists in the Chicago Writers Association's second-annual book of the year awards. Winners will be announced on or before Dec. 1. ... Ted Landphair wrote on his Voice of America blog on Sept. 7 about **Stephen Bloom's** *Postville: A Clash of Cultures in Heartland America*. ... **Sherill Bodine** is among those authors and others for whom

TalksChic, launched in July, arranges speeches. ... **Ted McClelland** asks: "Has any candidate who said, 'The only poll that counts is on Election Day' ever won the poll on Election Day?" ...

**Elizabeth Cook-Lynn** and **Kent Meyers** were scheduled to be among the presenters at this year's South Dakota Festival



Kent Meyers

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## New Books

WEIGHING ANCHORS:  
WHEN NETWORK  
NEWSCASTERS DON'T KNOW  
WRITE FROM WRONG

Literary License is exclusively learning more tonight about **Mervin Block's** major compelling never-before-seen new book (Marion Street Press).

In the book, Block, a broadcast writing coach, spotlights some of the common flaws in network newswriting: "words misused, language confused, facts abused."

"Too many newsrooms lack [an] essential, one needed to ensure a first-rate broadcast: a sharp copy editor," Block writes in this volume first discovered moments ago by Literary License.

Media critic Robert Feder writes, "When network anchors murder the language – as they do night after night – thank goodness there's Merv Block to perform the autopsy."

OUT OF ARCADIA

**Nicholas Kokonis's** second novel, *Out of Arcadia* (St. Basil's Publishers, Oct. 16) will be launched at 6:30 p.m. Oct 16 at the National Hellenic Museum of Chicago (Van Buren and Halsted).

A sequel to *Arcadia, My Arcadia*, it tells the story of Angelo Vlahos, a poor but audacious country boy finally arrives in America. [See Literary Life, Page 7.]

With all his possessions in a bundle, \$30 in his pocket, and a registration at a phony technical college, Angelo forges with hope toward his two goals: to get a college education while working and to reunite with the love of his childhood, Antigone. But unexpected obstacles throw him painfully off course. Will he ever overcome them and get out of his harrowing quandary before his family vanishes back home? While the crushing realities of his new world become quickly apparent, so does the indomitable spirit of

the family and faith. The story is a paean to the essential goodness and strength of the common man.

SMA member **Sue Harrison** wrote: "Eloquently written, fascinating...an incredible piece of work."

MONSTROUS BEAUTY

In **Elizabeth Fama's** new book (Sept. 4, Farrar, Straus and Giroux) – for which she did a six-city tour last month – the fierce, seductive mermaid Syrenka falls in love with the young naturalist Ezra, a romance that has unexpected and deadly consequences. Almost 140 years later, seventeen-year-old Hester meets a mysterious stranger named Ezra and feels inexplicably drawn to him. For generations, love has resulted in death for the women in her family. Is it an undiagnosed genetic defect . . . or a curse? With Ezra's help, Hester investigates. The answers she seeks are in the graveyard, the crypt and the bottom of the ocean – but powerful forces will do anything to keep her from uncovering her connection to Syrenka and to the long-past tragedy.

Booklist said, "Fama does not shy away from the big issues: Love, death, longing, lust, fear, and revenge all play out through her complex and multidimensional characters."

This is Elizabeth Fama's second YA novel. Her first, *Overboard*, was published in 2002.

ESSAYS IN BIOGRAPHY

**Joseph Epstein's** latest book, *Essays in Biography*, will be published this month by Axios Press.

The book contains 39 essays about various current and historical figures, including George Washington, Adlai Stevenson, Saul Bellow, Xenophon, George Gershwin, Alfred Kinsey and Gore Vidal.

Writing in the Wall Street Journal, Carl Rollyson said, "Joseph Epstein is one of the best essayists in contemporary American letters."

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## New Books

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### THREE PSYCHEDELIC NOVELLAS

Here's the story on *Three Psychedelic Novellas* (Enigmatic Ink, July 6, 2012).

When **Eckhard Gerdes'** first published book, a chapbook of the novella *Projections*, was published in 1986 in a limited edition of 200 copies, Factsheet



**Eckhard Gerdes**

Five stated, "This work lies somewhere on the borderland between poetry and dream, in an area that I seldom enter without chemical aid."

Now this collector's item has been reissued with two other novellas from Eckhard Gerdes' psychedelic period,

*Systems of Flux*, and the never-before-published *Aspic Interregencies*.

*The Sylvia Plath Cookbook: A Satire* (lulu.com, July 3, 2012) is the second in Sugar Glider Press' series of smaller works. It is the story of a writer toying with the idea of putting together a piece on the tragic poet. As his obsession seems on the verge of permanently distracting him, it is Sylvia herself who emerges from her doom to set him free.

### DEEP WATERS: RIVERS, LAKES AND SEAS

*Deep Waters: Rivers, Lakes and Seas*, edited by **Whitney Scott**, is the 16th title in Outrider Press' "Black-and-White" Series of annual anthologies.

Quiet ponds, naval warfare, creatures of the deep, river rafting, wilderness water adventures, indoor pools and all kinds of

emotional "deep waters" are some of the many subjects encompassed in this collection of poetry, fiction, essays and memoirs.

Late last year, Scott also co-authored a two-woman literary presentation - "LASER" - with Catherine Underhill Fitzpatrick that was performed at Chicago's Sulzer Regional Library and other venues.

### THE CONJUROR'S BOY

**Michael Raleigh's** new novel, his eighth book, appears Nov. 1 as both a trade paperback and an e-book, published by Harvard Square Editions.

It is the saga of Thomas Faye, a fatherless boy who enters a junk shop on a gray Chicago day in 1962 and is forever changed by the two men he meets there. Arthur Farrell the proprietor, is a sometime-magician, raconteur, wanderer, a wounded veteran of the carnage at the Somme, who can heal - and perhaps far more - with the mere touch of his hand. His belligerent friend Meyer, a seemingly indestructible survivor of the fall of the Warsaw Ghetto, lives on the street, a magnet for trouble and violence. Under the influence of these two mysterious men Thomas comes to see the world in ways he could never have imagined. As his own travels take him to Vietnam and the far corners of America, he adopts one persona after another: drifter, soldier, carny worker, detective, until he begins to understand his place in the world and his fate.

Sam Reaves (Allen Salter) writes: "Like Raleigh himself, this book is deeply rooted in Chicago, but offers a vision of a much vaster world. Raleigh's tale of outsiders looking for a way in examines the resilience of the soul by way of a tour through the catastrophes of the twentieth century."

Raleigh says, "My own take is that the book is James T. Farrell meets Rod Serling."



**Michael Raleigh**

### AGAINST FAIRNESS

**Stephen Asma** will have a new book out next month, *Against Fairness* (University of Chicago Press, Nov. 5, 2012).

Here's the publisher's summation: "The very symbol of American ethics - Lady Justice - wears a blindfold as she weighs the law on her impartial scale. In our zealous pursuit of fairness, we have banished our urges to like one person more than another, one thing over another, hiding them away as dirty secrets of our humanity."



**Stephen Asma**

In *Against Fairness*, polymath philosopher Stephen T. Asma drags them triumphantly back into the light.

Through playful, witty, but always serious arguments and examples, he vindicates our unspoken and undeniable instinct to favor, making the case that we would all be better off if we showed our unfair tendencies a little more kindness - indeed, if we favored favoritism. ... "Asma makes his point by synthesizing a startling array of scientific findings, historical philosophies, cultural practices, analytic arguments, and a variety of personal and literary narratives to give a remarkably nuanced and thorough understanding of how fairness and favoritism fit within our moral architecture."

### ON THE DAY I DIED

**Candace Fleming's** new book (Schwartz & Wade Books) tells the story of a boy who tries to return a stranger's shoes, only to be led to a graveyard where nine teenage ghosts tell their stories. The Oct 14 New York Times Book Review said, "Acclaimed for her biographies *Amelia Lost* and *The Lincolns*, Fleming has a real facility with historical fiction, which is evident here. She is at her best when recounting the rise and fall of Al Capone or the Midway Plaisance of the Chicago World's Fair of 1893.

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of Books Sept. 28-30 in Sioux Falls. ... **Roger Ebert** announced via Twitter in September that his 2011 memoir, *Life Itself*, will become a documentary produced by Martin Scorsese. ... **Gunter Nitsch** says his next book will be about his 10 years in New York, leading up to his marriage to his wife, Mary. ... **Wesley Adamczyk's** *When God Looked the Other Way* (2004) was also published in Poland where it became a best-seller. Wesley writes to say, "In the last few years, I have been very busy writing another book and doing a variety of other projects. ... The title of my new book is *The Power of Identity*. At this point in time it will be written in Polish as I have the best possible material to write on this subject that one can ever find. Hopefully after its publication I will see if it can be translated into English without doing much in modifications." ... On Oct. 9, the Baltimore Sun listed **Jaimy Gordon's** *Lord of Misrule* on its list of required reading for the Baltimore Orioles' playoffs. ... **Joseph Epstein** [See New Books, Page 4] wrote a Sept. 12 Wall Street Journal op-ed on Chicago's striking teachers. Two days later he asked in The Weekly Standard: "Who killed the liberal arts?" ... **Edward Burke** discussed the Chicago City Council Sept. 25 at the University of Illinois at Chicago's Future of Chicago series. Later that day, **Ted McClelland** and **John Wilson** discussed "Why Obama Will Win" at Uncharted Books in Chicago. ... On Oct. 5, **Thomas Frisbie** was one of three Chicago Sun-Times editorial writers to win the Sarah Boyden Award for editorial writing from the Chicago Journalists Association. ... **Reginald Gibbons**, professor of English at Northwestern University, was quoted Oct. 4 in Medill Reports Chicago saying e-books are "wonderfully convenient for readers but devastating to writers."



Ted McClelland

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# Authors' new book celebrates photographer's 'hungry eye'

**V**ivian Maier, photojournalist? The woman who was known as "the nanny photographer" has been classified many ways since her photo negatives were discovered just before her death in 2009. She was first considered a street photographer because of her gritty, city portraits of New Yorkers from the 1950s. Decades later, The New York Times called her a fashion photographer because of her documentation of midcentury street dress.

Lynn Becker, who writes ArchitectureChicago, thinks she was something of an architectural photographer. "The built environment is so strongly integrated that it's as if she's captured in a bottle the visceral essence of a city and its architecture at a set moment in time," he recently wrote.

After looking through almost 18,000 of her negatives in writing the book *Vivian Maier: Out of the Shadows*, we were surprised to learn that she fancied herself as a photojournalist, too.

Maier was never given an assignment. She photographed exactly what she wanted. Most of her photographs form a diary of her life, but her life was anything but unintentional. She had, as they have said about photographer Walker Evans, a "hungry eye," and was determined to see and photograph things that were not part of her everyday life as a domestic caring for children.

So she often assigned herself photo projects that can only be classified as photojournalist. That ranged from what we would consider community journalism – local speakers, car crashes, the local beach scene – to major events such as the presidential campaigns of John F. Kennedy, Richard Nixon and Lyndon B. Johnson in Chicago. She even fancied herself as a paparazzi: taking pictures of Zsa Zsa Gabor and Shirley Temple Black visiting the Ivanhoe Theater on the North

Side, Gloria Swanson returning to Chicago for a film festival and performers at Ravinia.

Her most compelling "photo-journalism" forms part of our book, including photographs she took around the 1968 Democratic Convention. People who knew Maier then say she went downtown most every day or night during the tumultuous week. The photographs we found in

her collection are very different from the iconic photos from those days: night-stick-wielding Chicago policemen, bashed heads, bloody noses, overturned park benches. Maier's photos that we saw show young men in polo shirts and gym shoes relaxing in Grant Park, reading newspapers and passing the days during lulls between confrontation. Few hippie radicals here. The photos

are quite different – no better, no worse – than the photo reality we have been presented in newspapers and other books.

Perhaps our favorite pictures from that year are her images of the April riots on Chicago's West Side that broke out days after Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination. Maier, who did not drive, arrived a few days after the riots started, but smoke still smoldered and National Guards troops still patrolled the streets with bayonets. She arrived by the Madison Avenue bus – photographing at first out the window of the bus, and then taking a long walk through what looked like a war zone.

For a time, Maier worked for a woman who was in charge of the photographers at the Pioneer Press newspapers. She also worked for Curt and Linda Matthews, who run Chicago Review Press, and talk show host Phil Donohue. But she never shared her work with any of them.

Why? There are no easy answers here. One other thing we learned: Vivian Maier enjoyed her role as the mystery woman.

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## Literary Legwork



Michael Williams  
& Richard Cahan

# Writing from heart's quiet center

Here's what **Nicholas Kokonis** tells Literary License about his new book (See New Books, Page 4).

**Literary License:** *Your main character, Angelo Vlahos, is from Arcadia. So were you. Is there an autobiographical element to this book?*

**Nicholas Kokonis:** Yes, a strong one. Some of the incidents I experienced in my life actually happened very nearly the way it's turned out in print. I couldn't have invented them had I tried. Yet, the story isn't a transcription of my life's experiences, only a transformation of real-life occurrences into fiction. The truth wasn't plausible enough to have been fiction.

**LL:** *Many books have told the story of a poor immigrant coming to America, trying to make it. Was it a challenge to find a fresh way to tell this story?*

**NK:** Yes and no, especially when I remembered that someone had published *The Fortunate Pilgrim* (a title I wanted for my own book but found I could not have). But I knew no one had written from my (Greek) perspective. Nicholas Gage's *Eleni* had a very political subtext, mine only poverty and an overwhelming need to get out of its grip. To my knowledge, no Greek or Greek American author, including **Harry Mark Petrakis**, had written about a Greek who wanted to immigrate because he wanted to enjoy the American Dream. My story is bathed in authenticity. I had experienced what I wrote. I know Angelo Vlahos intimately, down to his only pair of shoes.

As author José de Piérola (University of Texas at El Paso) writes: "Angelo arrives in America still imagining a New York glimmering with the last sparkles of the Gilded Age. But he is also escaping the lack of opportunities in his hometown. This familiar double force, which makes immigrants risk even their lives, is the driving force behind this compelling story. The immigration experience has been told from the point of view of the second generation. This novel takes us one step back, giving us a wider, fresher perspective."

And also, in the words of Dr. Alik

Varvogli (University of Dundee, Scotland): "The Greek voice has for a long time been absent from imaginative, fictional accounts of immigration. Kokonis makes a significant contribution to this hugely important chapter in the histories of both countries, and through the story of Angelo helps us to imagine all those other lives built on hope, but hope always mixed with sadness of leaving our Arcadias behind.

**LL:** *Dedicated teachers in Greece were part of the story of your first book, Arcadia, My Arcadia. But your new book includes a phony technical college in the U.S. Is there a lesson here?*

**NK:** The lesson will be quite clear when one reads the book. Angelo is fortunate enough to have great teachers at Roosevelt University, some of them remind-

ing him of his best teachers back home. However, the phony institute was only a means, a clever way by which Angelo could get a visa to America. And furthermore, its owner turns out to be an unscrupulous man, quite a contrast to humble, hard-working Arcadian Sam Sianis (of the Billy Goat fame) where Angelo works as busboy. It's the choice between virtue and vice Angelo himself must always make in his new world, like Hercules himself in the eponymous Carracci masterpiece: *The Choice of Hercules*.

**LL:** What do you like best about your new book?

**NK:** The second book incorporates a few new characters that have been singled out quite favorably by reviewers and has given me the chance to delineate the father-son theme that has always interested me, and makes it more clear why I wrote both books: I wrote them from my heart's quiet center to address the single large concern that has always stirred me: how one achieves a personal identity and earns a place in the world. Both books are authentic and appeal to the heart as much as the mind of the reader.

**LL:** *Out of Arcadia is a sequel. Will there be a third in the series?*

**NK:** The structure of the books is such that a third one is only a natural progression, Act III in a three-act play.

Literary  
Life

Nicholas  
Kokonis



## Biblio File

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Gibbons warns that publishers are being squeezed, and the compensation for authors is disappointing. ... **Bruce Guernsey** read his poetry Oct 5. at Sedgwick Estate at Long Hill, Massachusetts. Ellery Sedgwick was the owner and editor of *The Atlantic Monthly* for over three decades and, Bruce points



Bruce Guernsey

out, was the first to publish Hemingway's work in the United States and also published a lot of Frost's best poems. The estate is 114 acres in Manchester-by-the-Sea (north of Boston). Bruce e-mailed to say, "It's an extraordinary site, and I was very

honored to have been asked to read from my new book there. (Sold a whole bunch of copies, too!)." ... **Ann Durkin**

**Keating** spoke about the War of 1812 Oct. 11 at the Mitchell Museum of the American Indian in Evanston, Ill. ...

**David Wojahn**, who won the 1988 SMA Poetry Award, was scheduled to read from his work Oct. 10 at The College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Va. ...

**Anya Achtenberg** will read from her new novel *Blue Earth* (Modern History Press) from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the New York University Book Store, 726 Broadway, N.Y. It's her fourth book, but first full-length novel. ... **Wilbert**

**Hasbrouck** was scheduled to be on an Oct. 14 roundtable discussion on John Van Bergen's contributions to Prairie School architecture. ... Writing in the Sept. 27 Chicago Tribune,

**James Klise** told how he was dis-invited from participating in a program called "The Right to Read" because his first young-adult novel, called *Love Drugged*, about a closeted gay teen, might be too edgy for some parents in Kansas (a Midland Authors state!). "The irony



Wilbert  
Hasbrouck

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## Biblio File

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seemed like something out of – well, exactly, like something out of *Catch-22*,” wrote Klise who also manages a library in a Chicago high school. ...The Oct. 14 New York Times Book Review says **Louise Erdrich** in her new book, *The Round House* (Harper/HarperCollins), “has come back once again to her own



David J. Walker

indelible Yoknapatawpha, a fictional North Dakota Indian reservation and its surrounding towns with their intricately interconnected populations. ... **David J. Walker** offers these tips in the September *Love Is Murder* newsletter: “1) Read everything

Elmore Leonard ever wrote; 2) Take all of the dialogue you write, and read it out loud (to yourself or, better, to your critique group) and then rewrite it and punctuate it the way it ought to sound; and 3), forget the way people talk in real life, which is usually dull and boring and wordy, and write the way people talk in Elmore Leonard books, which is always cool and exciting and brief.” (And what was Elmore Leonard’s advice to authors? “Write like Biblio File.”) ... On Oct. 6, **Wayne Klatt** discussed his 2011

book *King of the Gold Coast: Capn Streeter, the Millionaires and the Story of Lake Shore Drive* at The Museums at Lisle Station Park in Lisle, Ill. ... On Oct. 3, the Lansing (Ind.) Public Library discussed *The Paris Wife* by **Paula**



Paula McLain

**McLain**. ... **Kevin Mattson** wrote Oct. on Salon, “Obama needs to drop the ‘professorial’ bit, or he’ll wind up like Adlai Stevenson in 1950.” ... **Donald Ray Pollock** has received “le Grand prix de littérature policière 2012” for his novel *The Devil All the Time*. ... Reuters quoted **Robert McClory** on Oct. 12 saying the

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# Tired of online bottlenecks? Bottlenose may be answer

If you want to want to keep track of social media, news, and online media, try Bottlenose.

What is it? A dashboard that unifies your social media networks, news, videos, pictures, and trends.

How can you use it?

Add your Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google Reader, and Buffer accounts, then link them up so that they're in a stream. You can view them in a list or newspaper format, then you can choose what to read from those streams, and create filters for certain kinds of content. You can also do a search for any phrase or topic that you're interested in, and the results will show up in various kinds of media.

If you don't want to read text, you can view your network's photos and videos, and see what the latest trends are for those, too.

One interesting feature that Bottlenose has is Sonar, which gives you a galaxy-type map of trending content online that you can view at various levels and through "rules" that you define for filtered information.

There are a lot of great features that you can read more about at their site. It's still in the beta stage now, so here's your chance to get in early before they go pro.



If you have a lecture, article, or media appearance coming up, create a share plan. A share plan is a checklist of where you will be sharing the information about your activity. It will boost your publicity and keep you organized.

Your share plan can be just a simple list, such as this:

Date of speaking engagement: Oct. 5.

One week before: send out an e-mail to your contact list and mention it on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, or other social media you use.

“The bottom line is to be organized, and you will see your publicity efforts pay off.”

A few days before: send a reminder to people who would really be interested in attending.

After the speech: send a thank you card or e-mail to the hosts of the conference and offer your services for future opportunities.

Enter interested attendees' contact information in your newsletter and contact list.

Upload the slides to Slideshare.com, or another sharing site you use, and share

the link with people in your social network.

Add the Slideshare link or any related link to your email signature.

Post any video or audio from the presentation online to YouTube, Vimeo,

SoundCloud.com, or other media sites you use.

Post any photos on Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Pinterest, Flickr, Instagram, or wherever you share photos online.

Update your website and blog with photos and links to your slides, video, audio, etc.

Create a bulleted list with important ideas from your presentation, and share it as a special "paper" in LinkedIn groups or wherever you want to share your helpful information.

You can modify the above list for other things you do, and add tasks to what I've listed. If you have other ideas, let me know. The bottom line is to be organized, and you'll see your publicity efforts pay off even more.

E-mail Tom Ciesielka at [tc@tcpr.net](mailto:tc@tcpr.net) or call (312) 422-1333.

Literary  
Loudspeaker  
Tom  
Ciesielka



# An academic struggle to revive publishing house in e-book world

Graeme Newman, Ph.D., a professor of criminology at the State University of New York at Albany, is owner of Harrow and Heston, which had been out of business for several years. It is coming back to life as a digital publisher and is republishing some back titles for the Kindle.

**Literary License:** *Is this part of a trend, bringing former publishing houses and out-of-print books back to life in digital form?*

**Graeme R. Newman:** I'm not sure. Academic publishing houses went out of business (and this continues at a rapid pace) basically because they could not make money on short run books. They would typically print only 200 to 1,000 copies, depending on their guess as to how many they could sell. The response in the industry has been for larger publishing houses to gobble up smaller ones. But even the larger ones have difficulty staying afloat these days. They used to be able to depend on libraries, especially university and public libraries, for a predictable market, but the digital world has shaken all that up.

**Literary License:** *In republishing a book as an electronic title, what value does a publisher add that authors of those books couldn't add on their own?*

**Graeme R. Newman:** In the case of Harrow and Heston, I have to admit that my business model, if you could call it that, is "not for profit"! I became dismayed when I saw that one of our old titles, *Discovering Criminology*, was selling for over \$100 on Amazon and various second hand dealers. The original print run of that book was 200 copies, so I suppose that over the years, it is technically a "rare book." (The author and editors were spread across the U.S. from New York, Florida and Wisconsin. Academics tend to move around a lot, so there is usually not much of a regional focus, especially in the criminology field.) So, I guess the value I am adding for the authors is to ensure that their book will remain easily accessible – possibly forever – to anyone who has a couple of dollars to spare, and in some cases I can make them free.

**Literary License:** *Do you plan to publish on e-book platforms other than the Kindle?*

**Graeme R. Newman:** For the moment, I am staying with Kindle because it is much cheaper to use their platform. They have made it very easy to do, and it saves Harrow and Heston establishing and maintaining its own website. Savvy users can also very easily convert Amazon e-books into any other e-book format. The free e-reader software Calibre does that.

**Literary License:** *Your niche is books about criminal justice. As a category, is this static or trending one way or another?*

**Graeme R. Newman:** The number of criminal justice books has grown exponentially commensurate with the growth of the field. When I first entered the field as an academic in the 1970s there were just two graduate programs in criminal justice. Now there are close to 40, and possibly more. And as we all know, criminal justice has become a very popular undergraduate major. However, the field is still very tiny compared with the mainstream disciplines such as sociology and psychology.

**Literary License:** *What changes do you see in coming years in the e-book world?*

**Graeme R. Newman:** I do not like to make predictions in the IT world. What changes do occur come rapidly and take turns that one simply would not have expected. In the academic field that I know best, I think that the days of big text books are numbered, and the big publishers know this, having already shifted toward the online platforms. They are going to have a hard time, because the web being what it is, will produce a lot of free information on every topic imaginable. The Wikis have done that, and have, contrary to the critics, become a reasonably accepted source of information (depending on the topic). Academia will hold out for as long as it can and try to control the information by classifying certain types of information and platforms as "acceptable" for, say, a professor who is trying to boost his or her resume with the necessary publications. Must say, I don't know where it will end up.

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## Biblio File

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stance of U.S. bishops on issues such as same-sex marriage and contraception is partly to blame for the continuing exodus of non-immigrant Catholics from the Church. ... Republicans may call the president a typical Chicago politician but **Rick Perlstein** argues in the November issue of Chicago magazine that Obama isn't Chicago enough – and that's why he faces such a tough contest on Nov. 6. ... **Alexander Polikoff** argued before the Illinois Supreme Court in September in a case about how Illinois funds public schools. ... **Jim McGarrah** was among the poets at a poetry reading Sept. 21 at A Reader's Corner in Louisville, Ky. ... At a panel of publishing industry leaders at last month's annual meeting of the Book Industry Study Group, **Dominique Raccach** said, "I expect there to be more dramatic, disruptive change ahead [for the publishing industry]." ... **Joseph C. Morton** wrote in the Oct. 8 Northwest (Ill.) Herald that "the few accomplishments of Franklin Pierce's ill-fated presidency would include the sending of Matthew Perry in 1853 to open up Japan to world trade and the signing of the Gadsden Purchase Act of 1853, which added 29,000 square miles to the country for \$10 million. The biggest single negative act was Pierce's signing of the infamous 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act, which, with its pro-slavery provisions concerning "popular sovereignty," probably hastened and made almost inevitable the tragic Civil War."

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## SMA Support

Dues cover mailings and other organizational expenses, but the Society always needs additional money for programs such as the awards at the annual May banquet. Thanks to these members who made contributions since the last newsletter:

**Michael Argetsinger, Fran Baker, Steve Bogira, Michael Ebner, Elizabeth Fama, Carol Felsenthal, Beverly Friend, Jeffrey Gusfield, Shirley Haas, Cynthia Rademacher, Darwin McBeth Walton and John Wasik.**

## New Members

**Jeffrey Gusfield**, author of *Deadly Valentines: The Story of Capone's Henchman "Machine Gun" Jack McGurn*



**Jeffrey Gusfield**

and *Louise* (Chicago Review Press, 2012) was born in Peoria, Ill., grew up in Highland Park, Ill., earned his MLS at Lake Forest (Ill.) College and got a BFA from Drake University in Iowa, where he says he learned from his mentor, Dr. W.S.E. "Doc" Coleman, that history is the best theater.

He says his obsessive interest in the Capone area began when he was 5. That's when famed Chicago photographer Anthony Berardi showed him a picture Berardi took of the 1929 Saint Valentine's Day Massacre.

Gusfield researched the history of Jack McGurn, Louise Rolfe, and the Al Capone era for more than four decades. He also has been a fine arts dealer for 35 years.

**Dennis Sven Nordin**, a retired faculty member at Mississippi State University, is author of *From Edward Brooke to Barack Obama: African American Political Success, 1966-2008* (University of Missouri Press, 2012); *A Swedish Dilemma: A Liberal European Nation's Struggle with Racism and Xenophobia, 1990-2000* (2005); *The New Deal's Black Congressman: A Life of Arthur Wergs Mitchell* (University of Missouri Press, 1997); *Rich Harvest: A History of the Grange, 1867-1900* (University Press of Mississippi, 2007); and *Mississippi Community College Football, 1922-2009: The Best Kept Secret of Collegiate Athletics*.

He also is co-author author of *From Prairie Farmer to Entrepreneur: The Transformation of Midwestern Agriculture* (Indiana University Press, 2005).

Nordin was born in Chicago, and grew up in Morton Grove, Ill. He taught at Chicago State from 1968 to 1971 and returned to live in Evanston, Ill. from 1979-1989. He also has lived in Sweden.

## Final Chapters

*Dennis Brindell Fradin, 1945-2012*

When **Dennis Brindell Fradin** was teaching second grade, his inner city Chicago school had plenty of boisterous students but few books.

So Mr. Fradin made up stories about such things as crayons in distress and birds with broken wings to hold his students' attention, and it turned out he was good at it.

At the time, he also was a free-lance writer, and he got an assignment to write a children's book about Illinois. That led to a contract to write books about all 50 states.

His wife of 44 years, **Judith Bloom Fradin** – whose job had evaporated teaching English in a program for "problem kids who had already been kicked out of other programs for problem kids" – pitched in to help.

The two, working both collaboratively and individually, went on to write nearly 300 fiction and nonfiction titles for children and young adults. Their book *Jane Addams: Champion of Democracy* (Houghton Mifflin Co., Clarion Books) won the 2007 Society of Midland Authors Children's Nonfiction Award. *Bound for the North Star: True Stories of Fugitive Slaves* (Houghton Mifflin Co., Clarion Books) won the Society's 2001 Children's Nonfiction Award. *Ida B. Wells: Mother of the Civil Rights Movement* (Houghton Mifflin Co., Clarion Books) was a finalist in that category the same year.

Mr. Fradin, 66, a longtime member of the Society of Midland Authors, died Aug. 29 after a yearlong struggle with bone cancer.

"Dennis was a brilliant thinker, a vivid storyteller and a lovely human being," Nancy Feresten, senior vice president of Kids' Publishing and Media at National Geographic Society told the Chicago Tribune. "He brought all of these qualities to his nonfiction for children, which was crisp, informative, and, most important of all, moving. It's been a joy and a privilege to work with him."

Mr. Fradin was born in Chicago and grew up in the city's Rogers Park neighborhood and the north suburb of Wilmette.

Mr. Fradin, who wanted become an author since the first grade, attended the Field and Armstrong Elementary Chicago public schools until sixth grade and later said most of what he needed to learn as a writer he learned from his experience as a Chicago public school student.

He particularly cited teacher "Mrs. Domer," whom he had for both fourth and sixth grades, for teaching her students how to work hard on projects from beginning to end and made them take note cards and make outlines for our projects

He graduated from New Trier High School in Winnetka, Ill., and got his bachelor's degree in English in 1967 from Northwestern University in Evanston.

After he graduated, he began teaching second-graders at Faraday Elementary School on Chicago's West Side.

As co-authors, the Fradins were noted for extensive research. When writing about historical figures, they often tracked down descendants and dug up new details about the lives the the people they were writing about.

On one of his research expeditions, Mr. Fradin unearthed a letter written by **Jane Addams**. In it, Ms. Addams was urging a procrastinating Society of Midland Authors member to get current with dues.

The pair even drafted their children to help out with research.

"We paid them twice what they could earn at McDonald's, but they hated it," Judith Fradin told SMA members at a March 11, 2008, monthly program.

The children were grateful later on, though, when they got to college and saw other students struggling with research assignments that they found to be "a piece of cake," she said.

Their slogan was "Research is our middle name," the pair said on one website.

Mr. Fradin was especially known for his books about the American Revolutionary period, African-American history and biography, and scientific discoveries.



**Dennis Brindell Fradin**