

Biblio File

Marc Davis' financial thriller *Bottom Line* (Permanent Press, June) was named one of the Ten Best Business Books of 2013 by WealthManagement.com. ... Try saying this in 140 characters: On Oct. 31, Newcity magazine named Society of Midland Authors Vice President **Robert Loerzel** "Best Chicago Twitterer for News." Newcity said, "Loerzel tames a mighty firehose of newsbreaks, concert news, booze clues, and all matter of oddities and quiddities, local, literary and international. A typical posting day for Loerzel, Oct. 22, produced 85 entries by the end of the workday." ... The Chicago Tribune on Oct. 30 described **John F. Wasik** (See New Books, Page 5) as "a known enemy of zombies," zombies in this case being scammers who try to collect phantom debts. John's probably an enemy of the other kind, too. ... **Scott Turow's** new book, *Identical*, was People magazine's pick of the week for the first week of November. Scott's one-word comment: "Nice." Also, Scott told USA Today on Nov. 15, "I am a big believer in the fact that all authors really write only one book." ... **Judith Bloom Fradin** flew to St. Louis Nov. 22 to accept the 2013 Carter G. Woodson award from the National Council for the Social Studies for *Stolen into Slavery* (National Geographic Children's Books, 2012) the following day. She co-authored the book with the late **Dennis Brindell Fradin**. Also, she writes to say their recent book *The Price of Freedom*, illustrated by Eric Velasquez (Walker, 2013), "is receiving wonderful press." ... **S.L. "Sandi" Wisenberg** lectured on "Creative Nonfiction Without the 'I'" Nov. 21 at Brown University in



Judith Bloom Fradin

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Curiosity led author to book about nearly forgotten group

BY THOMAS FRISBIE

Arnie Bernstein had no intention of writing a book when he started researching a pro-Nazi group that sprang up in 1930s America.

"I was just curious," Bernstein said at the Society of Midland Authors' Nov. 12 program at the Cliff Dwellers club in Chicago. "I was just poking around looking for stories, and this little Bund thing kept popping up here and there. And it wasn't much, it was just a small thing here, a small thing thing there [but] it was much more involved than some of these books would have you believe."

Those "small things" added up to become Bernstein's latest book, *Swastika Nation: Fritz Kuhn and the Rise and Fall of the German American Bund* (St. Martin's Press, Sept. 3). Bernstein said he eventually found so much information that he realized a book-length story was waiting to be told.

His idea for recounting the full tale of a nearly overlooked but important footnote of history, he said, was partly inspired by *Alchemy of Bones* (University of Illinois Press, 2003), **Robert Loerzel's** account of the 1897 disappearance of Louise Luetgert and the subsequent trial of her husband, Adolph.

Much of Bernstein's research came from contemporary newspapers. Also, the FBI had thousands of pages of information, including newspaper clips and handwritten notes from Kuhn, the controversial leader of the German American Bund.

On Facebook, Bernstein found the grandson of Meyer Lansky, a major organized crime figure who played an

important role in the story. And he tracked down Kuhn's grand-niece for an interview.

"She gave me some good insight," he said.

He also reviewed the writings of newspaper and radio gossip commentator Walter Winchell, an early critic of Kuhn.

"I spent two days at the New York Public Library going through Winchell's [work]," Bernstein said. "I was blind [after] eight hours two days in a row going through microfilm, but it was fun."

The various pieces of research added up to an intriguing story, he said.

"It was like this this enormous puzzle. I had all these puzzle pieces in front of me, and I knew what the picture looked like, but I had to figure out how all these pieces fit together."

In the opening scene of the book, Bernstein described how 20,000 American Bund adherents

packed themselves inside Madison Square Garden to listen to Fritz Kuhn while 100,000 people "who wanted to kill them" gathered outside, deterred by 17,000 police officers.

"That's not a blip that's two lines in a book," Bernstein said. "That's a whole book in and of itself."

The Bund had its own version of a Hitler Youth program and ran a camp in Grafton, Wis., near Milwaukee. It also operated a popular family retreat camp near Milwaukee, Bernstein said.

Many Americans of German descent were susceptible to Kuhn's message because they had felt alienated by World War I and were ostracized, Bernstein said.



Arnie Bernstein

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Providence, R.I., sponsored by the university's Nonfiction Writing Program in the English Department. ... **Christine Sneed** appeared at the Dec. 4-8 Words & Music 2013 in New Orleans. ... At the Hallo-



Christine Sneed

wen Book Festival in Hollywood on Oct. 18 (an "annual competition honoring the best and scariest work"), the 2013 prize winners included **Paul McComas'** two latest books, the 2013 novella *Fit for a*

Frankenstein, co-authored by Greg Starrett, which took first prize in the "Fan Favorites" category and the 50-story collection *Unforgettable: Harrowing Futures, Horrors, & (Dark) Humor* (First Prize in "Alternate Futures"). ... **Barbara Gregorich** will serve as one of the Illinois Humanities Council Road Scholars for the 2013-14 term, speaking on the subject "When Women Played Baseball: The Story of Margaret, Nellie, and Rose." The presentation recounts the story of three teens who played on Maud Nelson's last Bloomer Girl baseball team in 1934. ... **Arthur Plotnik** earned an honorable mention in Glimmer Train's September 2013 Fiction Open for his short story "Shards." Also, his tale "Monica Before Bolivia" has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize by Split Lip Magazine, which published it in its November-December 2013 issue. His other 2013 publications include an essay in Milo Review and poems in Glass: A Poetry Journal, Off the Coast, and San Pedro River Review. ...

Joey Korom has five new paintings posted at ugallery.com. ... **Gerry and Janet Souter's** *The Constitution* arrived early from Baker & Taylor, "and is at Barnes & Noble as you read this." ... As part of the Untold Stories Project, **Richard Cahan** recently traveled to the Mideast's West Bank. On Dec. 1, he gave a talk in Evanston, Ill., about what he saw and – you knew this already – displayed photographs. ... A Thanksgiving Day documentary on HBO, "Sport in America: Our

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"Some of them ... liked what was going on in Germany," he said. "There was a climate that was open to a group like this to grow. ... They wanted to be their own Nazi party and just take over the way Hitler took over, by force and by elections."

Also, the Bund may have had broader support than was known at the time.

"There is some thought that [Henry] Ford may have been involved with this group and helped to finance them," Bernstein said. "I couldn't find a smoking gun, but there were a lot of warm pistols lying around."

But an unlikely alliance that included Winchell, prosecutor and New York Gov. Thomas Dewey and New York Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia took a stand against the Bund.

Not only was the alliance unusual – "I'll never have a cast of characters like this again," Bernstein said – it also was effective. In the end, Kuhn, who thought he would one day see a swastika flying over the White House, was sent to prison for tax evasion.

"The Bund effectively was over in 1939 when Kuhn went to prison," Bernstein said.

Bernstein, who also is author of *Bath Massacre: America's First School Bombing* and three books on Chicago history, said he has found he seems to specialize in "the history of forgotten characters, those people who have fallen through the cracks but made an enormous impact."

He said he focuses on making those stories come to life and be relevant.

"Half the fun is bringing them to life. I want my books to be the definitive story," he said.

"You don't find your stories, your stories find you."



Upcoming programs

Tuesday, Jan. 14, 6 p.m., at Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State St., Chicago: **James L Swanson** (See Literary Landscape, Page 3). A talk by Chicago native Swanson, author of the New York Times best-seller *Manhunt: The 12-Day Chase for Lincoln's Killer*.

In *End of Days: The Assassination of John F. Kennedy* (William Morrow), he reveals Lee Harvey Oswald's bizarre history of violence and follows John and

Jacqueline Kennedy's wildly successful swing through Texas and their fateful Dallas motorcade ride.

This talk will begin promptly at 6 p.m., followed by a book signing.

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 6 p.m. social hour, 7 p.m. panel discussion, at Cliff Dwellers Club, 200 S. Michigan Ave., 22nd floor, Chicago: "Independent publishers."

Representatives of four local presses will talk about their craft and their business: Victor David Giron of Curbside Splendor, **Emily Victorson** of Allium Press, **Sharon Woodhouse** of Lake Claremont Press and Ian Morris of Fifth Star Press.

Tuesday, March 11, 6 p.m. social hour, 7 p.m. talk, at Cliff Dwellers Club, 200 S. Michigan Ave., 22nd floor, Chicago: "A Tribute to Leon Forrest."

Chicago novelist Chicago **Leon Forrest** (1937-1997) served as president of the Society of Midland Authors. The Chicago Literary Hall of Fame's Donald Evans will present a panel discussion about Forrest's life and literature.

Forrest's novels, set in a mythical Forrest County that closely resembles Chicago, are an oral history of a fictional place and time.

Literary License

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Author takes new look at JFK's last day

James L. Swanson, author most recently of *End of Days: The Assassination of John F. Kennedy* (William Morrow), will present the Jan. 14 SMA program. Here's what he tells Literary License:

Literary License: *Over the years, a web of conspiracy theories has taken over the story of JFK. How did you avoid getting tangled up in that?*

James L. Swanson: For 50 years, we have been distracted by exotic, multiple and contradictory theories involving tales of grassy knolls, umbrella men, magic bullets, second gunmen, Oswald impostors, doctored films, fraudulent photographs and secret, all-powerful government cover ups involving the CIA, the FBI, Naval Intelligence, the Secret Service, the mob, pro-Castro communists, anti-Castro Cuban exiles, the Soviet Union, Texas oilmen, the U.S. military and even Lyndon Johnson. We have lost the emotional connection to Nov. 22. We have strayed too far from the human truths of that day: a wife lost her husband, two little children lost their father, and a nation lost its president. Dozens and dozens of pieces of evidence prove that Lee Harvey Oswald assassinated President Kennedy and then murdered a Dallas police officer. To this day, none of the conspiracy theories have been proven true with hard, concrete evidence.

Literary License: *Fifty years later, no one new is out there to interview. How do you make a book about the JFK assassination feel fresh?*

James L. Swanson: To avoid getting tangled up in this, and to make my book fresh, I did not write a technical, back and forth analysis of all the theories. Other writers like Vincent Bugliosi and Gerald Posner have done great books that rebut the conspiracy theories one by one. Instead, I used what we do know happened to write a nonfiction thriller that takes readers back to Nov. 22, 1963. I used the same methods to write *End of*

Days that I used in writing *Manhunt*. I write my books as true crime thrillers, with an hour-by-hour, minute by minute, ticking clock pace. I want them to read like exciting novels, but with this difference: in my books everything is true. I don't make up scenes, and every quotation or piece of dialogue comes from original sources. I show readers what did happen, and save my brief treatment of the conspiracy theories for the epilogue and the notes. There is great material that had never been tapped, and it has been hidden in plain sight for half a century. I did find people who had never been interviewed, or who had never asked the questions I wanted to ask. And I discovered a number of hitherto unknown letters and documents.

Literary License: *With so many people challenging every conclusion over the years, did you feel extra pressure to be accurate?*



Literary
Landscape
James L.
Swanson

James L. Swanson: I did feel extra pressure to be accurate, in part because I discovered that many people, including a large number who say they believe there was a conspiracy, are ignorant to so many key facts. One of the most common misconceptions is that Dallas was a conservative or "right wing" city of hate that killed President Kennedy. That's absurd. Lee Harvey Oswald was a communist, not a conservative. He spent more time living in the Soviet Union than he ever did in Dallas. Even Jackie Kennedy described him as a "silly little communist." Another misconception is that people fail to remember how strong the evidence against Oswald really is. Just a few examples: seven months before Oswald killed JFK, he tried to murder a U.S. Army general in a nighttime sniper attack using the same rifle he would later use on Nov. 22, 1963; On the day JFK was shot, Oswald was seen carrying the rifle in a brown paper bag to work that day; Several witnesses on Elm Street saw the barrel pointing out from a sixth floor window of the Texas School Book Depository; Three of

Jan. 14, 2014, program

Harold Washington Library
400 S. State St.
Chicago

6 p.m. - Program

Free

Oswald's coworkers looking out the fifth floor windows directly below him heard the three shots above their heads, and even heard the empty brass cartridge cases bounce on the wood floor above them. And the so-called "magic bullet," which conspiracists claim is in "pristine" condition, is deformed and damaged. Dozens of other pieces of evidence point to Oswald.

Literary License: *Why are people still obsessing about JFK's assassination today?*

James L. Swanson: Several things explain the modern obsession with the JFK assassination. First, more than 60 percent of the American people believe there was a conspiracy and that the murder is an open case that must be solved. Of course, once upon a time 100 percent of people believed that the world was flat. That didn't make it true. Second, JFK was only 46 years old when he died. We wonder what he would have done had he lived, and how the future might have been different. Half a century later, we long for his optimism and unfulfilled promise. JFK was a great patriot who believed in American greatness and exceptionalism with every fiber of his being. He might have set the 1960s on an entirely different course.

Literary License: *What's your next book?*

James L. Swanson: My next book is for young adults, and is about Martin Luther King Jr. Whenever I've written an adult book, I've always also done a separate volume for young people on the same subject.

The King project is the first time I'll be writing a young adult book without doing an adult book on the same subject.

Biblio File

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Defining Stories,” included an interview with **Jack Ridl**. ... **Ann Durkin Keating** talked about her latest book, *Rising Up from Indian Country: The Battle of Fort Dearborn and the Birth of Chicago*, Dec. 4 at the First Division Museum at Cantigny Park near Winfield, Ill. ... **Craig Sautter** wrote 15 short stories in August and September before he got bogged down in teaching fall classes. The first, “The Walker,” was just published in the Chicago Quarterly Review, Volume 17, 2014, “The Chicago Issue.” Other SMA authors in the issue include **Bill Lederer**, **Jack Fuller**, **Don De Grazia**, **Joe Meno** and **Christine Sneed**. Also, “after a prolonged search” Craig found Gianna Jacobson, a St. Louis writer and editor to succeed Curt Johnson as editor of december magazine. In December, Jacobson published Vol. 24, the “revival issue,” filled with contributions from many writers who appeared in the first issue 55 years ago, plus others. The volume includes Craig’s essay, “Curt Johnson’s December.” ...

Linda Nemeč Foster was honored as first runner-up in the New Letters’ Poetry Award competition. She was also a runner-up for the Gary Gildner Poetry Prize sponsored by I-70 Review; her poems were published in the fall issue of the journal, and one, “The Cypress Trees in Croatia,” was nominated for a Pushcart Prize (her 27th nomination). Her collaboration with Hungarian musician Laszlo Slomovits, “Cry of Freedom,” was the subject of a featured interview on Michigan Public Radio in April. Ever since, they have been performing at colleges and art centers throughout Michigan. Linda’s poetry was published in a major anthology by New Issues Press titled *Poetry in Michigan/Michigan in Poetry*. The collection also includes work by **Jack Ridl**, **Stuart Dybek**, **Marc Sheehan** and **Susanna Childress**. Last June, she was invited to participate at a book signing at the American Library Association’s convention at Chicago’s McCormick Place. But perhaps Linda’s biggest news occurred on the other side of the world. On Nov. 17, her poetry (along with that of **Stuart Dybek** and several others) was

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Teaching the art of memoir at a library in a small town

BY CAROL ASCHER

Unlike many younger writers, I neither attended nor taught in a professional writer’s program, but supported my writing habit over the years by working as a researcher. Hearing such rules of the trade as, “show, don’t tell,” I would momentarily question my own work, though not the books I loved. When my local library responded to the 2008 publication of my memoir, *Afterimages*, by asking me to teach a memoir workshop, I gulped and said yes.

That first six-session workshop, I began by assuring everyone that all lives are worth writing about, which I deeply believe. I also defined memoir as a genre with one important condition: veracity. If you wrote about your three brothers, but were an only child, people would feel cheated. Then I set three rules to guide our process:

1. What happens in the workshop would stay inside the workshop. Since memoirs are the fruit of private, often disturbing memories, I assumed the writing would often be raw, and our feedback sometimes painful to the writer.

2. Our job was to discuss the texts before us. As this was not therapy, we would discipline ourselves to comment on the characters and events described – not “what really happened.” (Although this rule is regularly broken, as writers enthusiastically rush to fill in the gaps, seasoned members have learned to stop themselves, or gently remind the writer: “What you say is interesting and should be in the piece!”)

3. We would be appreciative and respectful of each other’s writing, even while honestly reacting to problems of clarity, repetition, characterization, word usage, time confusions, and so on.

Over the years, I’ve limited enrollment to eight or nine members, half of whom read aloud each session – usually four to six pages. Since simultaneously hearing and reading the work creates a richer experience, readers bring in copies for everyone, enabling members to respond with both admiration and suggestions. As comments help improve work, the same

“I began by assuring everyone that all lives are worth writing about.”

piece is often brought back to the group through several successive drafts.

I usually begin our biweekly sessions with a five-minute “mini-lecture” on issues raised by last session’s readings – the “I” as a character, or the narrative arc. I also bring in published memoirs, articles on memoir, as well as Poets and Writers and Writers Chronicle, showing calls for memoirs and personal essays. A spring public reading at our library, and the opportunity to read memoirs over our local radio station, WHDD FM, adds to the seriousness of members’ endeavors. With most of the women (ages 50-90) in the workshop for two or more years, several memoirs have been inching toward book length. To respond to problems raised by long manuscripts, I’ve added

supplementary sessions, scheduled whenever a member is ready with a big chunk.

Pieces are emailed a week in advance, and everyone arrives ready to discuss the work.

What strikes me now is the uniqueness of each project. A middle-aged lawyer adds unemotional detail after detail to depict her prosperous, bohemian, and drunken extended family; a Realtor, raised in a nearby small town, is both humorous and lyrical about her father’s trucking business, and her zany efforts to get attention in a Catholic family of nine children; a financial regulator, a recent Manhattan transplant, is our group’s philosopher-comedian with her self-mocking stories that slide back and forth in time; a biologist turned painter remembers graduate school, marriage to another biologist, and exile in Canada during the Vietnam War in warm tones. Nourishing these and other unique memoirs has made me more attentive to the choices I can make in my own writing, even as the growth of my adult students as writers gives me regular and deep satisfaction.

Literary Legwork

New Books

WORLD WAR II: THE RADIO WAR

During the Depression and two world wars, radio was vital to the nation's morale. People turned to radio, then in its golden age, for soap operas, adventure stories, news reports from the front and FDR's fireside chats.

In his new book (AuthorHouse, Sept. 19), **R. Leroy Bannerman**, a former radio writer, a World War II veteran and a member of the telecommunications faculty at Indiana University, describes how the medium contributed to the war effort during World War II.

WRITE TIGHT, EDIT TOUGH

Joan Kufrin's new writing guide, based on her 25 years of experience, is "for any and all of you who wrangle words for a living."

Its 72 pages spell out the six essentials that have consistently worked for her; "common-sense, proven essentials that transform the minute, the complex, and often the mundane, into lean, muscular copy which speeds to the point."

RADISHES AND STRAWBERRIES

Margery Frisbie, author of *An Alley in Chicago* and other books, has written a touching tale of a young girl who, after the death of her mother, is left to contend with a distracted father and an embittered aunt. Judith Burns attends a Catholic

school back in the days when all the teachers were nuns.

They can be strict at times. Is their love and concern for their pupils strong enough to help Judith overcome the tragedy and get through a difficult time?

Younger readers, for whom this short novel is intended, will respond to Judith's difficulties dealing with her friends as well as the adults in her life. The story is told in Judith's authentic voice against a background that evokes the Catholic schools of yesteryear and will seem nostalgically familiar to anyone who remembers them.

ALIEN QUEST

After nearly 25 years of writing mysteries, **Mark Zubro** has published his first science fiction book.

In *Alien Quest* (MLR Press, Aug. 30), a gay Chicago waiter falls in love with a sexy, mysterious alien who asks for his help to save Earth from a mad scientist. The waiter, Mike Carlson, stumbles into intergalactic intrigue and romance as he becomes involved with Joe, an alien cop, who lands on Earth in pursuit of a dangerous mad scientist bent on taking over our corner of the universe. As Mike joins Joe on a wild adventure beyond anything he dreamed of in his life, Mike must balance his obligations to his nephew and his first lover – with a little help from a drag queen in sequins and spandex and the well-dressed patrons of a leather bar.

A SINGULAR EDUCATION

A Singular Education: A German Bachelor in New York (1964-1974) by **Gunter Nitsch** (AuthorHouse, Nov. 25)

recounts the turbulent first decade that German-born author Nitsch spent in New York City.

Fresh off the boat in April 1964 as an idealistic 26-year-old confirmed bachelor with just \$400 to his name and no prospects, his journey of discovery eventually takes him to elegant receptions and white tie events at fine hotels, as well as to a Head Start classroom in Harlem, to the home of an unrepentant Nazi on Staten Island, to a wild clothing optional party in Greenwich Village, to sit-ins at Hunter College, and even to a cockfight in the South Bronx. With self-deprecating humor and the unique perspective of a recent German immigrant, *A Singular Education* is set against a backdrop of the prejudices – against African-Americans, Jews, anyone, in fact, considered "the other" – that remained deeply ingrained in the American psyche at the time.

KEYNES'S WAY TO WEALTH

Keynes's Way to Wealth: Timeless Investment Lessons from the Great Economist (McGraw-Hill, Oct. 28), **John Wasik's** new book, tells a side of Keynes many people don't know, that of a daring investor who made millions in the stock market.

Wasik told U.S. News and World report: "I realized that a lot of economists who are familiar with [Keynes] work had no idea what he invested in. I approached Paul Krugman (at a book signing), one of the biggest Keynesians, and asked him, and he said he didn't know!"

The markets of Keynes' time were hammered by panic, inflation, deflation, widespread unemployment, and war – sound familiar? – and he developed principles to prosper in every climate. Those principles still work, Wasik, writes, and he outlines them in the book.

Letters to the Editor

I am enjoying being a member of the Society of Midland Authors. It's a fantastic organization.

Artie Knapp

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:

Beverly Friend, Owen Hurd, Michael Norman, Carolyn Splear Pratt and Sue William Silverman

SMA authors at book expo

The Society of Midland Authors participated Nov. 24 in the Chicago Book Expo, a pop-up bookstore and literary extravaganza at St. Augustine College in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood.

Several of our members sold their books at our tables throughout the day, including **Christine Sneed, David J. Walker, Allen Salter, Mahmoud Saeed, Jim Bowman, Gunter Nitsch, Mike Raleigh, Sel Yackley, Bill Yarrow, Craig Sautter and George Levy.**

Other SMA members had their own tables, including **Gerry and Janet Souter, Greg Borzo, Dennis Byrne and Emily Victorson's Allium Press.**

The expo also featured authors talking about their books, including SMA members **James Finn Garner, Samantha Hoffman, Ted McClelland, Michael Corcoran, Arnie Bernstein and Paula Kamen.** Two-time SMA Award winner **Aleksandar Hemon** read from his most recent work, *The Book of My Lives*. After the event, Sautter remarked, "We met a lot of interesting authors, and got a good overview of some of the current writing community."

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featured in the annual Poetry Salon at the historic Teatr Polski in Warsaw, Poland. ... **Achy Obejas** is a Pushcart Prize finalist. ... **David Von Drehle** wrote a Nov. 25 article for Time headlined: "John F. Kennedy's Assassination and the Conspiracy Industry: Fifty years later, doubts endure. Here's why the case will never be closed." ... In a Dec. 6 Globe and Mail interview, Wally Lamb recalled learning about the importance of reading ancient stories from "a wonderful writer called **Gladys Swan.**" ... **Harry Mark Petrakis** wrote a Nov. 15 essay for the Chicago Sun-Times headlined "Journeyman lecturing fuels the writing life." ... **Anne-Marie Oomen** was among the authors scheduled to

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New Members

Anton DiSclafani is author of the New York Times best-selling book *The Yonahlossee Riding Camp for Girls*. She received her MFA from Washington University, where she teaches creative writing. She lives in St. Louis.

The Yonahlossee Riding Camp for Girls was an Indie Next pick and was on the Flaherty-Dunn First Novel Prize 2013 long list. It was named a most anticipated book of the summer by the Wall Street Journal and Publishers Weekly, and was a summer book pick by USA Today and National Public Radio.

The New York Times said, "What makes Yonahlossee emotionally engaging in its own right – this summer's first romantic page turner – is Ms. DiSclafani's sure-footed sense of narrative and place, and her decision to portray her heroine, Thea Atwell, in all her complexity: fierce, passionate, strong-willed, but also selfish, judgmental and self-destructive."

Dennis Byrne is author of the historical novel, *Madness: The War of 1812* (Tate Publishing, 2012). Byrne's byline has been appearing in Chicago's daily newspapers for more than 40 years, first at the Chicago Daily News, then at the Chicago Sun-Times and now the Chicago Tribune.



Dennis Byrne

At the Sun-Times, he was transportation writer, science and technology reporter, special projects reporter, editorial board member and op-ed page columnist.

Besides being a weekly Tribune columnist, he writes at The ChicagNow.com (a Chicago Tribune blog) and Facebook. His commentaries have appeared in several national publications, including the Wall Street Journal, Real Clear Politics and Human Events.

Madness is a story about ordinary Americans who fought in or were affected by the war, which Byrne says may have been one of America's most ill-conceived, poorly executed, least remembered and badly understood wars.

Kelly O'Connor McNeas, author of *The Lost Summer of Louisa May Alcott* (Putnam, 2010) and *In Need of a Good*

Wife (Penguin/Berkeley, 2012) is a former editorial assistant and English middle school teacher who was born and raised in Michigan. The Washington Post wrote of *The Lost Summer of Louisa May Alcott*, "Devotees of *Little Women* will flock to this story with pleasure."

Clare O'Donohue is author of the *Someday Quilts* series of five books and two e-novellas, including *The Lovers Knot* (Plume, 2008), *The Devil's Puzzle* (Plume, 2011) and *The Double Wedding Ring* (Plume, 2013). She also is author of two Kate Conway mysteries and *Life Without Parole* (Plume, 2012). She is a TV producer/writer, and the president of the Mystery Writers of America, Midwest Chapter. She lives in Chicago.

Amelia Cotter is an author and storyteller with a special interest in the supernatural, history, and folklore. Her top selling books for children and adults include *This House: The True Story of a Girl and a Ghost* (Black Oak Media), *Maryland Ghosts: Paranormal Encounters in the Free State* (Black Oak Media), and *Breakfast with Bigfoot* (ages 3-6, Black Oak Media), illustrated by Charles Swinford. She is also a tour guide for Chicago Hauntings Ghost Tours and a haiku poet with more than a dozen published haiku.

Shannon Stoker is author of *The Registry* (William Morrow Paperbacks, June 13), her first novel. She received her undergraduate and law degrees from Northern Illinois University, where she now is a licensed attorney assisting students and staff with research integrity. She was born in Clawson, Mich., and grew up in Elgin, Ill.

Patrick McBriarty, a former businessperson and consultant, over a decade ago discovered a new focus and fascination for Chicago's bridges. His first book *Chicago River Bridges* published by the University of Illinois Press (October 2013) is a coffee-table history and companion book to the Chicago Drawbridges, which was broadcast several times this year on Chicago Public Television. Patrick co-produced this one-hour documentary with director and Chicago filmmaker Stephen Hatch. He is currently working on a series of children's picture books.

Joseph Gustaitis, author of *Chicago's Greatest Year, 1893: The White City and*
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2013-14 contest rules

The Society of Midland Authors literary awards recognize excellence – the best books of their kind by Midwestern writers. Our judges will select one winner in each category and may also select one or two finalists as worthy of recognition. Each winner will receive \$500 and a recognition plaque, and each finalist will receive a plaque, at an awards banquet on May 13, 2014, in Chicago.

A book may be nominated by its author or publisher. Please read the following rules carefully before submitting:

An entry form must accompany each book to each judge for a total of three forms per title (three judges, three forms, three books). Books unaccompanied by completed entry forms will not be considered.

There is no entry fee and the author need not be a member of the SMA.

The book must have been published in 2013 (with a corresponding copyright date) and the author must reside in, be born in, or have strong ties to one of the 12 Midland states: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin

At this time, we do not consider e-book originals unless there is a corresponding print edition.

Books by deceased authors are eligible, provided they meet the other requirements.

Submissions must be postmarked by February 1, 2014. We strongly encourage early submissions.

To enter this year's competition, print out the entry form posted at http://www.midlandauthors.com/contest_form.html and include a completed copy with each nominated book mailed to the judges (again: three judges, three forms, three books). Or copy the form on Page 10. Make sure that you enter the book in the proper category (Adult Fiction, Adult Nonfiction, Biography & Memoir (adult), Children's Fiction, Children's Nonfiction, or Poetry). Books entered in improper categories will be disqualified. Should you have any questions, or to confirm that judges have received submitted books, email Society President Meg Tebo: awards@midlandauthors.com.

JUDGES

Adult Fiction

Billy Lombardo, 13 Bergman Ct., Forest Park IL 60130

Patricia Ann McNair, Fiction Writing Department, Columbia College Chicago, 600 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago IL 60605

Bayo Ojikutu, 6238 South Ellis Ave Unit #3, Chicago, IL 60637-2975

Adult Nonfiction

John Hallwas, 404 S. Edwards St., Macomb IL 61455

Re'Lynn Hansen, 14388 Lakeshore Road, Lakeside MI 49116

James Merriner, 530 Michigan Ave. #3E, Evanston IL 60202

Biography & Memoir (Adult)

Ray Boomhower, Indiana Historical Society Press, 450 W. Ohio St., Indianapolis IN 46202-3269

Diane Diekman, Realty Center, 3023 E. 10th St., Sioux Falls SD 57103

Gerry Souter, 905 E. Frederick St., Arlington Heights IL 60004-5737

Children's Fiction

Charlotte Herman, 6623 N. Monticello, Lincolnwood IL 60712

Marianne Malone, 408 E. Oakbrook Circle, Urbana IL 61802

Gary Schmidt, Department of English, Calvin College, 1795 Knollcrest Circle SE, Grand Rapids MI 49546

Children's Nonfiction

Ann Bausum, 613 Monroe Street, Janesville WI 53545-1783

Marlene Targ Brill, 314 Lawndale, Wilmette IL 60091

Andrew Medlar, Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State St., 10-S, Chicago IL 60605

Poetry

Mark Eleveld, 305 Brooks Ave., Joliet IL 60435

Dr. Haki R. Madhubuti, c/o Third World Press, 7822 S. Dobson Avenue, Chicago IL 60619-0730

Donna Seaman, 4159 N. Lawndale Ave., Chicago IL 60618

New Members

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the Birth of a Modern Metropolis, is a freelance writer and editor living in Chicago. He is the author of many articles in the popular history field. After working as an editor at Collier's Year Book, he became the humanities editor for Collier's Encyclopedia. He has also worked in television and won an Emmy Award for writing for ABC-TV's FYI program.



Joseph Gustaitis

He has also worked in television and won an Emmy Award for writing for ABC-TV's FYI program.

Stan "Tex" Banash is author of three books, most recently *Roadside History of Illinois* (Mountain

Press, 2013).

Banash grew up in Niles, Ill. He served in the Air Force and then obtained his bachelor of philosophy degree in political science from Northwestern University and a Master of Arts degree in Urban Studies from Roosevelt University.

Banash has also reviewed books for *Wild West* magazine, *The Tombstone Epitaph*, *Western Historical Quarterly*, *Journal of the West*, and *Roundup* magazine. In 1987, he wrote the speech that Chicago Cubs Billy Williams delivered at his induction ceremony into the National Baseball Hall of Fame, in Cooperstown, N.Y.

Biblio File

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appear Dec. 7 at the Northern Michigan Author and Artist Expo at the Leland Township Library. ... The (San Francisco) Bay Area Reporter on Dec. 12 named **Adam McOmber's** *The White Forest* one of its "hot reads for cold months." ... **Donna McCreary** gave a presentation titled "Lincoln's Scandalous Relatives" at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Jeffersonville, Ind., as part of event celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Gettysburg Address. ... **Michael Norman, Peter Geye, Mary Losure** and **Benjamin Percy** were among the authors scheduled to appear Nov. 30 at bookstores for Indies First Day.

