

## Biblio File

The Illinois Humanities Council has selected **Cyndee Schaffer** to join its Road Scholars roster for 2015-16 with her presentation, "The Journey to



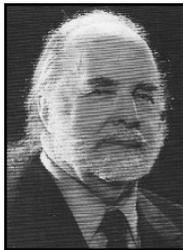
**Cyndee Schaffer**

Mollie's War: WACS and World War II." The Road Scholars Speakers Bureau sends writers, historians, living history actors, etc., throughout the state to share their programs.

... **Wesley Adamczyk**, whose book *When God Looked the Other*

Way was about the Katyn Forest massacre of Polish soldiers and the deportation of Poles to Siberia, emails to say his ultimate dream has been to present a "one-of-a-kind event in Chicago" on the 75th anniversary of the Katyn tragedy "to show the American public not only what happened to us at the hands of the Soviets, but also to show who we are and what we stand for as Polish people." The event will be on Nov. 18 at 5:30 p.m. (program at 7 p.m., with a reception to follow). The location is IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law, 565 W. Adams St., Chicago. It's free, but RSVPs are requested by Nov. 13, Chicago-Kent Alumni Association 312-906-5240 or [alums@kentlaw.iit.edu](mailto:alums@kentlaw.iit.edu).

... A reminder: The Society of Midland Authors will have two tables at the 2015 Chicago Book Expo Saturday, Nov. 21, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., at 1104 S. Wabash (Columbia College Chicago). Members who want to sell their books should pick a time slot of 11-1, 1-3 or 3-5 and contact Marlene Targ Brill at [marlenetbrill@comcast.net](mailto:marlenetbrill@comcast.net). First come, first



**Wesley Adamczyk**

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## Making sense of how people perceived world of the past

BY THOMAS FRISBIE

**S**hould people living in the 21st century care how the Chicago River smelled to people living in the 1890s?

Yes, **Adam Mack** told attendees at the Society of Midland Authors' Oct. 13 program at the Cliff Dwellers Club in Chicago.

"We should care because people in Chicago cared," said Mack, author of *Sensing Chicago: Noisemakers, Strikebreakers, and Muckrakers* and assistant professor of history at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. "That might tell us something about how they viewed their worlds. ... It gives us a much richer notion of what it was like to experience an industrial metropolis."

Mack's main field is the history of the senses, also known as sensory history. He stumbled across the field when he was considering writing a scholarly history of supermarkets for his Ph.D. dissertation.

"I realized that ... the sensory environment within modern supermarkets might tell us a lot about what the people who built the supermarkets thought about their consumers," he said.

By coincidence, Mack's predecessor at the School of the Art Institute was George Roeder Jr., who had called on American historians to pay attention to the history of the senses.

Mack said he also tries to figure out "the kinds of meanings that people attached" to those various sensory experi-



**Adam Mack talks about his book, *Sensing Chicago*, Oct. 13 at the Cliff Dwellers in Chicago.**

ences.

In *Sensing Chicago*, Mack examines the Chicago River, the Chicago Fire, the 1894 Pullman Strike, Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, and the White City amusement park.

Recreating the sensory past is a challenge, Mack admits. Historical odors, for example, are no longer around.

"There is no way to capture those smells," Mack said. "I can't re-smell them. What I can do [is research] the way that people described those sensation in print sources. ... I believe that sensory history should come from a careful examination of historical sources."

In his chapter on the Chicago River, for example, he recounted how the Chicago Tribune described "the various causes of the river stinks."

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with Mary Morris

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Robert Loerzel

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served. ... **June Sawyers** has signed a contract with Applause Books to write *Cabaret FAQ: All That's Left to Know about the Broadway and Cinema Classic*. On Sept. 11, her arts group, the Phantom Collective, presented "Down in the Flood: Flood Songs, Poetry, and Prose in Honor of the Tenth Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina" at Silvie's Lounge. Performers included John Mead, Jimmy Tomasello, Chris Walz, Colby Maddox, Andrea Bunch, Al Rose, Gary Houston and Claudia Parker. On Nov. 6, she is scheduled to present a paper, "We Take Care of Our Own? Bruce Springsteen and the Lyrics of Social Justice," at the annual Other Words Literary Conference in St. Augustine, Florida. She is also an associate producer of *Voices over the Water*, a documentary on the Scottish Highland Clearances that is currently in production. (see [www.voicesoverthewater.com](http://www.voicesoverthewater.com)). ... The Oct. 2 Wall Street Journal called **Dominic A. Pacyga's** new book (*Literary Latest*, Page 4) "an illuminating history of this Chicago industry long vital to the city and the nation." The Chicago Reader

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## Literary License

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Society of Midland Authors members can now pay their membership dues, buy tickets to the annual dinner and make donations on our website with PayPal (there is a \$1 fee to help cover PayPal's fee). To make a donation, visit our home page at [www.midlandauthors.com](http://www.midlandauthors.com) and click on the "Donate" button in the upper right corner.

## ■ Making sense Continued from Page 1

Mack said Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* was one inspiration for his book.

"It occurred to me that Chicago would be a great case study for a sensory history and it occurred to me that *The Jungle* would be the place to start. ... It is filled with rich sensory descriptions at the meat packing plants."

(Chicago's stockyards, where *The Jungle* was set, are also the topic of **Dominic A. Pacyga's** new book. See *Literary Latest*, Page 4.)

Mack said some historians who write sensory histories visit historical sites to experience contemporary sensations as a guide to what people in the past, for example the 1690s, would have perceived.

"There is a vigorous debate among historians who do sensory history about how to practice it," he said. "I believe that sensory history should come from a careful examination of historical sources. And I am a little skeptical about the ability for historians, people in 2015, to understand the sensations of the 1690s as someone from the 1690s would. There are any number of contextual factors that would shape how I might respond quite differently. ... I have come down on the side that the best sensory history relies on print sources, sources that record how historical actors

wrote down their own impressions about, in my case, the sights, sounds, smells, tastes of Chicago."

There's no shortage of historical sources, he said.

"I would say the most surprising aspect of sensory history once you start practicing it is just how much evidence there is," he said. "I was in some sense overwhelmed by the references in the case of the river to the smell and even the sound of the tugboats or steamboats on the river."

To give a sense of what historical accounts were like, Mack read from a Chicago Tribune article describing an 1869 "smelling committee" taking a tugboat trip on the Chicago River at the hottest – and most reeking – time of the year.

"They did this every now and again to inspect the various smells down different parts of the river," he said.

Another thing that surprised him about his research, he said, was how much people cared that the river smelled.

"My book is about the sensory landscape of Chicago and how it quite literally shocked the senses of visitors, of residents alike to raise interesting questions about the future of an industrial metropolis. This is the larger question that I deal with," he said.



## New SMA officers and directors

At the Society of Midland Authors meeting Oct. 13, the members present voted unanimously for the slate of officers and directors that had been published in *Literary License* for consideration by all members.

Here are the new officers and board members:

### Officers

President: **Thomas Frisbie**  
Vice President: **Marlene Targ Brill**  
Recording Secretary: **Beverly Offen**  
Corresponding Secretary: **Charles**

### Masters

Membership Secretary: **Thomas Frisbie**  
Treasurer: **Richard Frisbie**

### Directors

(terms expire 2018)

**Carla Knorowski**  
**Allen Salter**  
**Lisa Holton**

### Directors

(terms expire 2017)

**Carol Jean Carlson**  
**Walter Podrazik**

Note: We are always looking for more help. Any members who are interested in joining the board should contact one of the current officers or directors.

LITERARY LICENSE, NOVEMBER 2015

# The Jazz Palace: A story that took 20 years to tell

**M**ary Morris, author of 14 books, was born in Chicago and teaches writing at Sarah Lawrence College. Her most recent work is the novel, *The Jazz Palace*. She will be the speaker at the Society of Midland Authors' Nov. 10 program.

**Literary License:** *Why did you choose Jazz Age Chicago as the setting for your most recent novel?*

**Mary Morris:** It was my dad's era. He was born in 1902 and lived until 2005. He married late and had lots of stories to share. I loved his tales of the South Side of Chicago, the black and tans. He was also a bit of a musician and in general a rather fascinating man. The novel was initially much longer and went until 1968 but at a certain point I made the decision to focus on the Jazz Age. That's another story, but that's why it's set in the Jazz Age.

**Literary License:** *The Jazz Palace took two decades to write. Why was this book a special challenge?*

**Mary Morris:** I began with a huge cast of characters and a story that covered decades. In its initial version it was about 850 pages long and my agent couldn't sell it. I kept working on it, honing the story. Also jazz presented its own set of complexities. Jazz is very very hard to understand. I took jazz piano for four years in an attempt to do. I have a deep respect for jazz and its musicians. It was a great challenge to get that right. And there was no point in writing this book if I couldn't.

**Literary License:** *The New York Times said you have a "talent for depicting ordinary Americans living through difficult times." Do you see this as a theme that runs through your writing?*

**Mary Morris:** It's not an intentional theme – more like an accidental one that just comes from how I see the lives of ordinary people. I am interested in our everyday struggles. Of course I care about the catastrophic things that can happen in people's lives – natural disasters, wars, ill-

Nov. 10, 2015, program

Cliff Dwellers  
200 S. Michigan Avenue  
22nd floor

6 p.m. - Social Hour  
7 p.m. - Program

Free - donations accepted

ness. But I am more drawn to what happens when we lose our keys, when we inadvertently take the wrong suitcase at the baggage claim. Once we arrived in Hong Kong without a three-pronged plug. I know it sounds stupid, but a whole story grew out of that.

**Literary License:**

*You have said there's "more magnetism around the shores of Lake Michigan than the North Pole." What draws you to the Midwest?*

**Mary Morris:** Ah, so many things. I left the

Midwest to go to college and never moved back. And yet the Midwest has always remained home. I still cheer for the Chicago teams. Not to sound hokey but there is to me a kindness to the Midwest, a simple decency that I miss. Fitzgerald opens *Gatsby* with the notion that the East is a place of distortion. He implies, or perhaps even says, that the Midwest never told him a lie. Or maybe I said that. When I first moved to New York and people said let's get together, I'll give you a call, I would actually think they were going call. It took me a long time to realize that it was just something people said instead of good-bye.

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

**Mary Morris:** Oh, it's about Columbus and the history of spices and crypto-Jews and the Inquisition and a 15-year old amateur astronomer living in New Mexico in 1992. Basically it's 500 years in the story of one family. But it won't take me two decades to write and it's not as complicated as jazz though it is a very compelling story to me.

Literary  
Landscape

Mary  
Morris



LARRY O'CONNOR

## Biblio File

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did a Q&A Oct. 15 with Dominic about the book. ... Too late for the obituary in the September/October Literary License, **Michael Argetsinger's** wife, Lee, sent



Michael  
Argetsinger

along this anecdote about Mr. Argetsinger's early writing days. His first paid writing job was for a small-town local weekly newspaper writing a column about the "news about town" for which he got paid five cents a column inch. Every week he went to people's homes to find out what was happening so he could write a longer column. ... The Oct. 8 online Madison, Wis., publication Isthmus interviewed **Jonathan Eig** about the debate over Planned Parenthood. ... **Richard Babcock** wrote an Oct. 6 Wall Street Journal essay headlined, "Chicago Cubs fans dare to dream." ... A third edition of *Watching TV: Six Decades of American Television* by Harry Castleman and **Walter J. Podrazik** will be out early next year. ... On Oct. 10, *Chicago River Bridges* by **Patrick McBriarty** was awarded the 2015 Ferguson Prize for its "outstanding contribution to the history of technology that will provide the basis for future scholarship" from the Society for the History of Technology. ... **Carla Knorowski** wrote an Oct. 6 op-ed for the (Springfield, Ill.) State Journal-Register headlined, "Lincoln's legacy burns brighter than ever at library and museum." ... **Carol Fisher Saller** appeared on WGN-TV's "Chicago Tonight" Oct. 8 to discuss "zombie" grammar rules – rules that have outlived their usefulness or never really were rules at all. She also was on June 22, talking about the author-editor relationship. ... **Jeannie Morris** was interviewed Sept. 23 on Chicago's WTTW-TV (See New Books, Page 4) ... USA Today on Oct. 19 quoted **Joseph Schwieterman** in a story about a new O'Hare Airport runway. ... The Oct. 20

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Crain's Chicago Business quoted from **James Merriner's** *Mr. Chairman*. ... **George Bilgere** spoke Oct. 3, in Cheyenne, Wyo., as part of the Laramie County Community College's annual Literary Connection. ... The Oct. 21 Daily Jefferson County (Wis.) Union profiled



George Bilgere

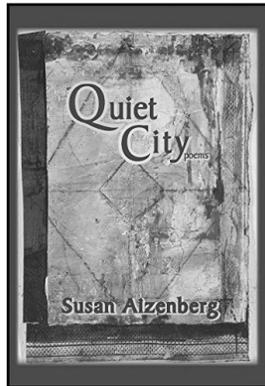
**Jerry Apps'** new book, *Wisconsin Agriculture: A History*. ... Speaking Oct 17 at the Michigan City (Ind.) Public Library's "Writing Out Loud" series, **Libby Fischer Hellmann**,

who's just published

a novella about Chicago and World War II called *The Incidental Spy*, said she is careful about her research because, "The worst thing I could imagine is someone throwing my book against the wall saying, 'She doesn't know what she is talking about.'" ... The puppet show "The Ghastly Dreadfuls," now playing in Atlanta, includes a song, "The 11:59," that is based on a **Patricia McKissack** short story about a former Pullman porter who hears a ghost train's whistle. ... **Steven Conn** wrote a Sept. 25 Huffington Post op-ed on a Republican presidential debate headlined, "Party Without a Past."

... **Susan Croce Kelly** was among the authors scheduled to appear at the Oct. 29-31 Miles of Possibility Route 66 Conference in Edwardsville, Ill. ... **Richard Nickel: Dangerous Years**, the latest book from **Richard Cahan** and **Michael Williams**, will be out in December. ... **Edward "Ted" McClelland** wrote a Sept. 28 Washington Post article headlined, "Here's what your foreign cars have done to Michigan." ... **Jim Schwab** was the guest speaker Oct. 22 for the Iowa State University Lectures Series, addressing "Holistic Approaches to a Resilient Future." He was also a guest lecturer that day for an environmental planning class at ISU. He is also about to undertake managing a new FEMA-funded project at the American Planning Association on Innovations in Planning and Public Engagement for Community Resilience.

## Literary Latest



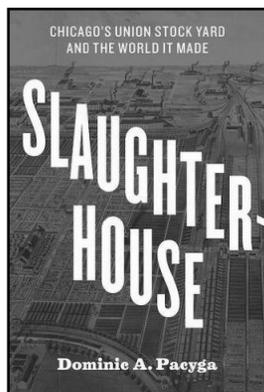
*Quiet City* (Bookmark Press, June 1) is **Susan Aizenberg's** third poetry collection, one that was written over a decade.

Former Maine Poet Laureate Betsy Sholl wrote, "The poems ... are nothing less than luminous."

me to various archives including those at the UIC, University of Chicago, Chicago History Museum, and Iowa State University. In addition the Columbia College Library provided a good deal of assistance.

"I also used a great deal of printed information in various newspapers and periodicals including the *The National Provisioner*, *The Vindicator*, *Chicago Sun*, *Drovers Journal*, *Chicago Daily News*, *Chicago Tribune*, and the *Inter Ocean*. I visited several packinghouses and sites in the stockyards and interviewed various individuals who still work in the Stockyard Industrial Park.

"I don't believe that the the stockyard's contribution to the economic development of Chicago has been forgotten. This Christmas, the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Union Stock Yards in 1865 will be marked in part by my book."

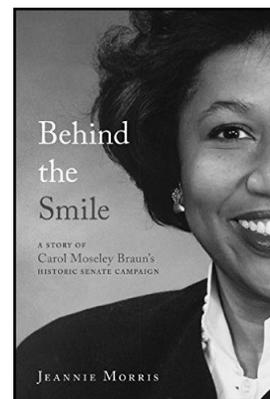


**Dominic A. Pacyga** drew on his background working summers in Chicago's stockyards to write *Slaughterhouse: Chicago's Union Stock Yard and the World It Made* (University of Chicago Press, Sept. 10).



Dominic A. Pacyga

Pacyga, who grew up near the stockyards, traces how the yards shaped nearby neighborhoods and the livelihoods of thousands of families. "I worked in the stockyards from 1969 to 1971, when the Union Stock Yard closed," Pacyga told Literary License. "My research has led



Publishers Weekly calls **Jeannie Morris'** new book *Behind the Smile: A Story of Carol Moseley Braun's Historic Senate Campaign* (Agate Midway, Sept. 8) a "gripping, fast-paced story."

Morris joined Braun's campaign to write the official story of a brilliant retail politician but had to come to grips with the shortcomings of an ascendant politician — a charismatic trailblazer whose personal relationship with a key staffer led to her undoing.

Here's what Morris tells Literary License:

"In 1992 Carol Moseley Braun invited me to join her campaign, the idea being

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# Rules for the 2016 SMA book awards

The Society of Midland Authors is now accepting submissions for its annual literary awards, which will honor books by Midwestern authors published in 2015.

Each winner will receive \$500 and a recognition award. The judges in each category may also deem one or two finalists as worthy of recognition, and each finalist will receive a commemorative award. These honors will be given out at the awards banquet the second Tuesday in May.

A book may be nominated by its author or publisher. Authors do not need to be members of the Society of Midland Authors in order to enter the contest. Please read the following rules carefully before submitting:

- An entry form must accompany each book. One copy of the book and one entry form go to each of the three judges in its category. That means a total of three forms per title (three judges, three forms, three books). Books unaccompanied by completed entry forms will not be considered.

- Each book entry must have a 2015 publication date with corresponding copyright date. The author must either reside in, be born in, or have strong ties to one of the 12 Midland states SMA represents: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

- Each submission requires an entry fee of \$10. To pay by PayPal or credit card, go to:

<http://secure.jotform.us/form/42547835755163>

You may also pay by mailing a check to Society of Midland Authors, P.O. Box 10419, Chicago, IL 60610. This payment must identify the book title, author and source of check, so SMA knows which author and book entry to confirm as a paid entry. (You may use the "comments" box to write the information for PayPal. Copy the entry form to go with your snail mail check.)

- For now, we do not consider e-book originals unless accompanied by a print



**Adult Fiction winner Robert Hellenga speaks at the 2015 Society of Midland Authors awards dinner.**

edition.

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

- Submissions must be postmarked by January 9, 2016. We urge early submissions. Send entries to the appropriate judges.

- To enter this year's competition, print out the entry form at this link: [http://midlandauthors.com/contest\\_form.html](http://midlandauthors.com/contest_form.html). Include a completed copy with each nominated book. Mail a copy of the form and the book to each of the three judges in the selected category. Do not mail the book to the Society's P.O. box. Make sure that you enter the book in the proper category. (For example, all children's books go to children's categories, rather than Poetry or Biography and Memoir, which are for adult submissions only.) Books submitted to improper categories will be disqualified.

## Judges for books published in 2015

*Please send a book and entry form to each judge in your category.*

### Adult Fiction

- Mark Eleveld, 305 Brooks Ave., Joliet, IL 60435

- Tony Romano, 23W279 Saint James Court, Glen Ellyn IL 60137

- Michele Weldon, 1419 Lathrop Ave., River Forest, IL 60305

### Adult Nonfiction

- Connie Fletcher, 521 Tenth St., Wilmette, IL 60091

- Kim Hiltwein c/o Evanston Public Library, 1703 Orrington Ave., Evanston, IL 60201

- Eckhard Gerdes, 1110 Varsity Blvd., Apt, 221, DeKalb, IL 60115

### Biography and Memoir

- Davis Schneiderman, Associate Dean of the Faculty, Center for Chicago Programs, Lake Forest College, 555 North Sheridan Road, Lake Forest, IL 60045

- Robert Remer, 5840 N. Kenmore, Chicago, IL 60660

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

### Children's Fiction

- Nancy Crocker, 2432 W. 24th St., Minneapolis, MN 55405

- Barbara A. Binns, Box 1583, Arlington Heights, IL 60006

- Judith Fradin, 2121 Dobson St., Evanston, IL 60202

### Children's Nonfiction

- Margaret McMullan, 541 East Scenic Drive, Pass Christian, MS 39571

- Ilene Cooper, 798 Judson, Highland Park, IL 60035

- Andrea Warren, 4908 W. 71st St., Prairie Village, KS 66208

### Poetry

- Jim McGarrah, 120 North Bellaire Avenue #1, Louisville, KY 40206

- Grace Bauer, English Department, Andrews Hall, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68588-0333

- Joshua Corey, Dept. of English, Lake Forest College, 555 North Sheridan Road, Lake Forest, IL 6004

### Entry confirmation

If you'd like to confirm that your entry reached the judges, please send a self-addressed stamped postcard with each book submission.

Or you can contact Marlene Targ Brill, [marlenetbrill@comcast.net](mailto:marlenetbrill@comcast.net), who will verify whether your entry arrived.

## Literary Latest

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that together, we might be able to create a book detailing what was sure to be a historic campaign to elect the first African American woman to the United States Senate.

"Carol was a wonderful candidate – honest, authentic, consistent on the issues, a sterling retail politician – but she was, like all of us, not without human vulnerabilities. She fell in love with her young South African campaign manager, Kgosie Matthews, and that dynamic affected everyone and everything in the campaign.

"Behind the scenes it was rock & roll time and in the end, while I had a completed manuscript based on my daily journals and dozens of interviews with campaign members – including Carol – I decided not to pursue publication of the book. I felt the truth might hurt her chances to become the very good senator I knew she could be. And she was a good senator, even though her judgment at times – unrelated to her legislative work – continued to be influenced by Matthews.

"I went on to other projects fully expecting someone else would write about this woman who was a historic figure, even though Carol had subsequent political problems, including losing her bid for a second term and getting herself into a rough battle with Rahm Emanuel for mayor of Chicago.

"Then sometime in 2011 I Googled Carol Moseley Braun and found nothing there that began to tell the story of the extraordinary politician I knew. I asked Carol if she would like to have another go at producing a book and she said, unequivocally, no.

"So I decided to excavate my journals, notes, press files and countless interviews and rewrite the story I'd lived, this time as what might be called an enhanced memoir. The result: *Behind the Smile: A story of Carol Moseley Braun's Historic Senate Campaign.*"

Kirkus Reviews calls the book, "A close-up look at the senatorial campaign of a trailblazing black female politician."

# A history of the Society

*This is Part Five of the history of the Society.*

In August 1915, Alice Gerstenberg invited fellow SMA members to a lawn fete at her home in Lincoln Park, featuring the Players' Workshop performing three-one act plays by Chicago authors. And on November 29 and 30, 1915, the Aldis Playhouse in Lake Forest performed an unusual one-act play by her called "Overtones," with Gerstenberg in the cast.

The script featured characters saying their internal thoughts aloud. Two actresses played "cultured women," while two others played the "primitive selves" hidden inside those women.

Harriet Monroe was in the audience. "Harriet, small, thin, serious of face, dark eyes deep and sometimes softly yearning for human warmth as she slipped her arm around my waist," Gerstenberg recalled. "She could be caustic to the point of annihilation in speech, her standards were so definite."

But Monroe was astonished by "the miracle" she had just seen. In the January 1916 issue of Poetry she reviewed "Overtones" as well as another play, "Cloyd Head's Grotesques," which the Little Theatre had performed.

"How did the Elizabethans feel when the young Shakespeare tried his first experiments on them?" Monroe wrote. "... Did these people know what was happening? Was their little personal emotion, their pleasure of the moment seized and swept on into tireless spaces of wonder and joy? A little of this larger thrill shook me twice last month."

"Overtones" was performed countless times in the coming decades. "In 1915 audiences had not been conditioned to viewing life through revealed motivations," Gerstenberg recalled. "We had had villains in plays but the reasons why they

“ [Harriet] Monroe was astonished by ‘the miracle’ she had just seen. ”

got that way had not been charted. 'Overtones' was the first, fumbling attempt to make the abstract idea concrete about the pushing of the subconscious into the conscious mind."

When Eugene O'Neill used a similar technique in his 1928 drama "Strange

Interlude," a Chicago Tribune critic said that Gerstenberg had done the same thing earlier – and better. But Gerstenberg didn't mind seeing her work copied. "Instead of resenting it, as many people have wanted

me to do, I have felt honored to have been an influence in the work of such a famous playwright," she remarked.

Gerstenberg and Goodman were also involved in the Players' Workshop, which performed in Hyde Park on the South Side. "Perhaps our audiences are good gamblers and are rewarded by a thrill of surprise when now and then a play is very worth while," Gerstenberg wrote in Theatre Magazine. "... In the Workshop they admire sincerity, simplicity, and the joy of creation."

But her fellow SMA member John Stahl was less than thrilled when he attended a September 1917 show that included "The Hero of Santa Maria," which Goodman co-wrote with Ben Hecht, and Hecht's play "Dregs." Stahl thought that "Dregs" was "the most offensive effluvia from the body pseudo-literary," filled "with the coarsest, most disgusting phrases ever chalked on alley fences or in comfort stations."

Stahl also despised the Dil Pickle Club, a bohemian literary joint where the speak-

Literary  
Lore

Robert  
Loerzel



Harriet Monroe

Turn to HISTORY, Page 7

ers included SMA members **Darrow, Sherwood Anderson** and **Ring Lardner**. The motto above its door at 18 Tooker Alley on the Near North Side proclaimed: "Step Down. Stoop Low. Leave Your Dignity Outside." Its manifesto stated: "We of the Dil Pickle believe in everything. We are radicals, pickpockets, second story men and thinkers. Some of us practice free love, and some, medicine. Most of us have gone through religion and have tired of it. Some of us have tired of our wives."

According to author Thomas Dyja, "It was Chicago Dada, an intellectual free-for-all, part cabaret, part poetry slam, part performance art." Just the sort of thing Stahl hated.

"Chicago's literary societies offered writers, intellectuals, and artists a much-needed sense of community, and a vision of what an urban culture of letters could be," Timothy B. Spears wrote in *The Encyclopedia of Chicago*. And, he added, "the city's overlapping artistic circles had a positive impact on literary production itself."

In June 1915, two months after Monroe helped get the SMA off the ground, she published T.S. Eliot's landmark "Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." Coming in the midst of American worries over the war in Europe, the poem "conveyed the feeling of emptiness that had begun to anesthetize the hearts of civilized people throughout the world," Finis Farr wrote. That same year, Edgar Lee Masters wrote: "Miss Monroe, both as editor and as creator, has done so much for the art of poetry, in the several capacities of encouraging beginners and by way of setting a high example in poetical production, that any volume of hers commands attention." Reading free verse in the pages of *Poetry* had inspired Masters



**The Dil Pickle Club building in 1937, two years after the club on Tooker Alley between State and Dearborn closed.**

to break free from traditional forms as he wrote *The Spoon River Anthology*. Monroe "felt a thrill of pride" when Masters told her this.

But Stahl believed that Monroe's magazine "has done more to corrupt those that might have been poets than anything else in all this world infested with would-be poets that think it is literary fame to become notorious by oddity." He continued:

"Nevertheless, much is owing to the editor of *Poetry*. That magazine has smashed a lot of cramping, hindering conventions and has been beautifully destructive of lifeless mannerisms and forms. Miss Monroe may write that which is far from having your approval, but she always says something and when you have read any of her pieces you are aware that she has brains and convictions and that your time has been well spent. She is of crusader stuff; and if she had lived five hundred years sooner she would have arrayed herself in white armor, mounted a white ass, and with a mammoth white steel imitation of a quill pen rampant and an ink well couchant she

would have led a fanatical band to burn, to the music of cries of 'Damn Rhyme!' all the silly stuff ever perpetrated accord-

ing to form and convention by poets up to that date. No matter how much you may differ with her, you are sure to respect Miss Monroe and you will soon have, also, the symptoms of a pure literary love."

Ezra Pound, one of the most famous and controversial poets whose work appeared in Monroe's magazine, described the critics who attacked them as a "mass of dolts." Monroe appropriated the phrase and used it often. In June 1917, as Monroe appealed for readers to renew their support of her magazine, she said that Chicago could not "afford to let it die."

Poetry magazine survived, but the Little Theatre struggled to make money, shutting down in 1917. "It was Chicago's irretrievable loss when it folded," Gerstenberg wrote later in her memoirs. "It is 1962 and Chicago still waits to duplicate the golden values she held in her hands in 1912."

Maurice Browne left Chicago and later found success on the stage in London.

“Chicago's literary societies offered writers, intellectuals, and artists a much-needed sense of community, and a vision of what an urban culture of letters could be.”

When he died in 1955, *The New York Times* and *The Times of London* called him the father of the little theater movement in the United States.

Gerstenberg would stay active in the SMA for nearly six decades, becoming a pillar of the organization. In 1971, commenting on how she'd spent her career as a dramatist in Chicago, even though New York City was where most playwrights worked, Gerstenberg wrote: "It was tough living in Chicago so far from the centre!"

*Part Six will appear in the next issue of Literary License.*



**Alice Gerstenberg**



**Ring Lardner**

## New Members

**Diane Piron-Gelman**, who writes under the nom de plume D.M. Pirrone, is author of *Shall We Not Revenge* (Allium Press, 2014), *For You Were Strangers* (Allium Press, 2015) and *No Less in Blood* (Five Star/Cengage, 2011).

She is also a freelance writer, editor, audio-book narrator, Chicago native, history buff and president of Sisters in Crime, Chicago chapter.

She was nominated for membership by **Emily Clark Victorson**.

Lawyer and historian **Jon Lauck** is author of *The Lost Region: Toward a Revival of Midwestern History* (University of Iowa Press, 2013) and four other books on Midwestern political and economic history.

He is the first president of the Midwestern History Association, which formed in October 2014, based in Sioux Falls, S.D., and is associate editor and book review editor of *Middle West Review*.

He was nominated for membership by **Robert Loerzel**.

**Jerry Apps**, author of more than 35 books, was born and raised on a Wisconsin farm. A former agricultural extension agent, he is a professor emeritus at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Among his books are *Wisconsin Agriculture: A History* (Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2015); *One-*

*Room Country Schools: History and Recollections* (Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2015); *Whispers and Shadows: A Naturalist's Memoir* (2015); *The Great Sand Fracas of Ames County: A Novel* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2014); and *The Quiet Season:*



**Jerry Apps**

*Remembering Country Winters* (Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2013). Apps has won awards for his writing from the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Library Association, the American Library Association, Foreword Magazine, Midwest Independent Publishers Association, Robert E. Gard Foundation, the Wisconsin Council for Writers, among others.

He was nominated for membership by **Joseph Gustaitis**

**Stephen M. Terrell** is an Indianapolis lawyer and writer. He is the author of three books: the legal thriller *Stars Fall*, *Visiting Hours and Other Stories From the Heart* and *There and Back: The Journal of a Last Motorcycle Ride*.



**Stephen M. Terrell**

His short story "Visiting Hours" received the Manny Award for best short fiction at the 2011 Midwest Writers Workshop. He was selected as a 2012 Midwest Writers Workshop fellow. Terrell has written numerous professional articles, including most recently "Out of Darkness: Overcoming Depression in the Legal

Profession," which appeared in the March/April 2015 issue of the ABA's GP Solo Magazine. He also writes Law for Writers blog.

He was nominated for membership by **Meg Tebo**.

**Cynthia Clampitt**, author of *Midwest Maize: How Corn Shaped the U.S.*

*Heartland* (University of Illinois Press, 2015) and *Waltzing Australia* (BookSurge, 2007), is a food historian and travel writer.

She also has written history or geography materials for almost every major educational publisher in the United States.

She was nominated for membership by **Richard Frisbie**.

**Suzan Erem** is author of *Labor Pains: Stories from America's New Union Movement* (Monthly Review Press, 2001), *On the Global Waterfront*, with E. Paul Durrenberger (Monthly Review Press, 2008) and *Do I Want to Be a Mom?*, with Diana Dell M.D. (McGraw-Hill, 2004).

Erem has worked as a union organizer, representative and communications director, and served as chair of the National Writers Union (UAW 1981) Chicago local. She is currently president of the Sustainable Iowa Land Trust and is editing an international labor anthropology collection for the University Press of Colorado.

She was nominated for membership by **Jim Schwab**.



**Cynthia Clampitt**

CAROL FREEMAN



**Suzan Erem**

## 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 book awards banquet. Thanks to **Carla Knorowski** and **Darwin McBeth Walton**, who made recent contributions.

**Note:** SMA members can get a free copy of our history, *A Century of Winged Words*, by sending \$1 for postage via PayPal or to our post office box.