

The plaque outside the newly renamed Bernard J. Brommel Hall

Biblio File

The Science Building at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago was renamed Bernard J. Brommel Hall on Nov. 17 for former Society of Midland Authors President **Bernard J. Brommel**. Brommel, who taught at Northeastern for more than 30 years, is professor emeritus in the university's communication, media and theater department and has written numerous books and scholarly articles. ... **Lynn Voedisch** in November signed a book contract with Fiction Studio, a new imprint for e-books with print-on-demand support. *The God's Wife* will be out as soon as Lynn shepherds the manuscript through the copyediting and cover design processes, probably a couple of months. And



Lynn Voedisch

here's another sign of how authors' lives are getting complicated: *The God's Wife* will go into a traditional book printing if sales are good enough – but if that happens she'll actually make less money! (Biblio File is stunned.) *The God's Wife* is

Turn to Page 2

Hit or myth? A new book puts Capone lore under microscope

BY THOMAS FRISBIE

If **Jonathan Eig** ever wondered why he chose Al Capone as the topic of a biography after focusing on sports stars Jackie Robinson and Lou Gehrig, a young student answered that for him.

"I was speaking at an authors week at the British School [of Chicago]," Eig said Nov. 9 at the monthly Society of Midland Authors program at the Cliff Dwellers in Chicago. "I asked them, why do you think a guy like me would be interested in Al Capone, and what does he have in common with Lou

Gehrig and Jackie Robinson? And one of the things I wanted them to talk about was that these are all people who tell a piece of American history.

... But one of the kids, when I asked them what these three characters have in common, raised his hand and said, well, they all used baseball bats."

Capone, of course, was portrayed by Robert De Niro in the 1987 movie "The Untouchables" as suddenly pulling out a baseball bat at a dinner party and beating one of his men to death.

Eig, though, doubts the incident occurred quite that way.

"Unfortunately, one of the things I do in my book is that I bust a lot of the myths about Capone," said Eig, whose new book

is titled *Get Capone: The Secret Plot that Captured America's Most Wanted Gangster*. "I suggest that he probably didn't do the baseball bat scene quite as graphically as Robert DeNiro. ... And that's one of the real obstacles that you come up with when you are writing history, and when you are trying to tell a story to set the record straight. You come across these great anecdotes you really want to use and you just cannot find any evidence whatsoever that they could possibly have happened."

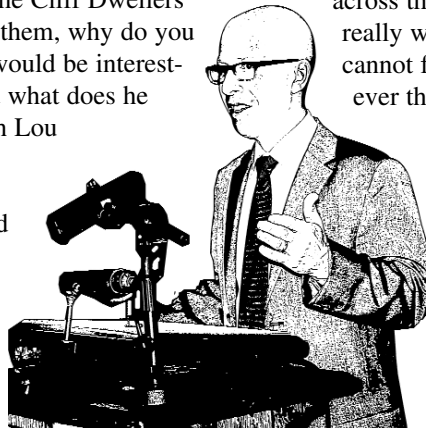
The earlier books by Eig, a graduate of Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, are two New York Times best-sellers: *Luckiest Man: The Life and Death of Lou Gehrig*, and *Opening Day: The Story of Jackie Robinson's First Season*.

Why are all three of his books biographies?

"I like the biography format a lot," Eig said. "As a journalist of many, many years, I find it easier to work from notes and to work from research than to make things up. The biography format? I mean let's face it, it's almost always chronological. You don't have to do a lot of thinking about at least one part of your writing.

"So as I began looking for other charac-

Turn to EIG, Page 2



Jonathan Eig speaks Nov. 9 to the Society of Midland Authors

Q&A
with Dick Simpson

PAGE 3

New
Books

PAGES 4-5

Literary Loudspeaker:
Tom Ciesielka

PAGE 8

Biblio File

Continued from Page 1

a historical fiction based in ancient Egypt about a young girl who takes on the real role of God's Wife of Amun, the chief God of Thebes. Egyptological research recently has uncovered a great deal about the role of the God's wife, a priestess who in some dynasties was second only to the pharaoh in power. The book adds an overlay of a modern woman who is fascinated with Egypt and in a Chicago production of an Egyptian-themed dance. Power up your e-book reader. ... **Dan Dinello** had two essays published recently: "Island of Lost Souls" in Quarterly



Catherine Kenney

Review of Film and Video and "Spirits in the Material World" in the Journal of Need & Want. ... **Catherine Kenney** has been editing an Internet magazine for boomers and seniors called Mature Resources: The Positive Aging Network at

www.matureresources.org since July and would welcome submissions from SMA members. ... **Thomas Lynch's** *Apparition & Late Fiction: A Novella and Stories* has been named a Michigan Notable Book for 2011. The titles were chosen by a panel convened by the Library of Michigan. ...

Turn to Page 4

Literary License

©2010, Society of Midland Authors
P.O. Box 10419, Chicago IL 60610

Editor: Thomas Frisbie
tomfrisbie@aol.com

Copy editor: Steve Huntley

Image of Jonathan Eig on Page 1
from photo by Gerry Souter

www.midlandauthors.com

EIG: Characters who changed America

Continued from Page 1

ters [to write about], I started to think, who are the big characters who really changed America? Who ... don't [we] understand as well as we should?"

As happened with the baseball bat scene, Eig found little evidence connecting Capone to Chicago's Prohibition-era St. Valentine's Day Massacre, in which seven men were gunned down.

"As a writer, when you get into these sections of the book you get excited: OK, I am going to have the biggest crime coming up," Eig said. "[Then] your research starts to slowly suggest to you, that, OK, Houston, we have a problem here. I can't connect Capone to the Valentine's Day Massacre."

As any experienced book researcher might expect, that wasn't the only letdown.

At the Newberry Library in Chicago, Eig saw a hand-written letter from Capone authorizing Chicago newspaper columnist Howard Vincent O'Brien to write his autobiography.

"I imagined as I was going through these boxes that I was going to find the unpublished biography of Al Capone," Eig said.

That didn't happen. But what he did find was about 30 pages of notes on O'Brien's meetings with Capote and a letter saying the New York publishers were more interested in Capone's crimes than information on his family life and his charitable donations.

"Can you imagine publishers, today, being so crass?" Eig joked, getting a chuckle from the audience of authors.

Eig also said he got off to a false start by toying with the idea of writing a book that followed both Capone and Louis Armstrong.

"I thought: I love the Jazz Age. I love the '20s. I'm a huge fan of Louis Armstrong – I wonder if there was a way to put the two of them together in a book?"

The men had met, Eig noted. They arrived in Chicago at about the same time

and rose to fame at about the same time.

But ultimately, "it didn't hold together for me," he said.

Eig, who said he's a big fan of the Society of Midland Authors because former SMA President Leon Forrest was "one of my great mentors in life and in college," said he struggled to tell the story in a meaningful way to get at the truth of Capone's life.

"I asked myself, who are the other characters who would be in this book? Who is going to be the foil to Al Capone? Who is going to be the good guy?"

Eig said he was fortunate to learn through the son of investigator George E.Q. Johnson that the son had given a

vast archive of documents to a Nebraska professor who was interested in writing a book, but never did. Among the documents were transcripts of wiretaps of the Capone gang typed by Eliot Ness and top secret memos from the attorney general.

"I had thousands of pages of original documents ... yellowing, crispy, crunchy, just delicious –

the smell of them gets me excited thinking about it, and you know you are in too deep in our business when you feel that way, but I do," Eig said.

And for authors setting out on biography projects, Eig pointed out that gathering such a storehouse of new information helps to pique the interest of publishers.

"This was a great a stroke of luck," he said. "I was able to get a decent advance from Simon and Schuster that I never would have been able to get without it."

Luck also plays a role. In response to a letter he sent, the IRS gave him Capone's tax records – documents that a Texas professor earlier had unsuccessfully sought in a court case that went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

"Sometimes it's better to be stupid than good," Eig said.

The Society of Midland Authors' 2010-2011 programs may be heard in their entirety at www.chicagopublicradio.org amplified.



Jonathan Eig

Last week he might have been sleeping/through the lecture on Samuel Johnson/being given in his honor, had he not/opened his eyes occasionally/to laugh his walrus laugh/his whole body shaking/tossing some fruit and vegetables/toward the orator on the stage. – *For a Limited Time Only*, **Ronald Wallace**

'Chicago always has been home of great writers'

Dick Simpson, head of the political science department at University of Illinois at Chicago, former alderman and author of books including *Rogues, Rebels, and Rubberstamps* is one of the authors who will discuss Chicago's upcoming mayoral election from a historical perspective (see Page 6 for the other authors on the panel).

Literary License recently caught up with Dick Simpson for a Q&A.

Literary License: *What underlying themes do you see that will play out in the upcoming Chicago mayoral race?*

Dick Simpson: The most important theme in the mayoral race will be the vision and plan that the mayoral candidates present on Chicago's economic future. Their proposals will need to include not only how we will develop our position as a global city as the capital of the Midwest global economy but also how the wealth from that economy can be spread more evenly so that many more people can benefit. Generally, global cities have a greater gap between rich and poor than other places.

The second issue will be dealing with the city's budget gap of roughly \$600 million and what the inspector general estimates is a structural budget deficit or gap of \$1.5 billion. A part of that will have to be a pledge to end patronage, corruption and waste in government. The other critical issues will be crime, education and immigration issues like the Dream Act.

Literary License: *How has Chicago stacked up in the past against other cities as a source of literary inspiration?*

Dick Simpson: Chicago has always been the home of great writers and it continues to be. Many of the great writers like Saul Bellow and Studs Terkel have

January 11, 2011, program

Cliff Dwellers
200 S. Michigan Avenue
22nd floor

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

Free - donations accepted

died but Chicago still provides great inspiration. In my own field of urban politics, Chicago is the most studied and written about city in the country because its politics is both stark and emblematic.

In my own case, I have just completed with Dennis Judd an edited volume that overturns the great theories of the Chicago School of Urban Studies, which has dominated the field since the 1920s (See New Books, Page 5). With many other scholars we have created a new set of theories of urban politics. And of

course, Chicago politics has always inspired great books, the Mike Royko's *Boss*.

Literary License: *You've been both a politician and an author in Chicago. Which is more challenging?*

Dick Simpson: The challenges are very different. In many ways it is harder to be a politician – you have to act in the moment without editing or revisions which authors can enjoy. I have had death threats as a politician but never as an author. As a politician you have to deal with real folks' service needs, budgets and ordinances, political campaigns, elections, and a great number of matters with real consequences for people. As a politician you make history. As an author you record history. However, there are challenges for authors as well. Some of my books like *Rogues,*

Rebels, and Rubber Stamps have taken literally decades of work whereas most politicians work on a much shorter time frame. As one author humorously put it, "literary is a work hard to do."

Literary License: *What great books remain to be written about Chicago politics?*

Dick Simpson: A book that many of us have tried to write but haven't finished (and in my case may never finish) would be *From Daley to Daley*. Such a book would have not only have biographical insights but would chronicle the vast political changes in the 20th and 21st centuries.

I am still working on a different version about the story of democracy as seen from the different vantage points of Chicago and Sierra Leone, West Africa. I hope to finish this book about the struggle between democracy and tyranny before my death. Chicago is a great template for all the forces of these two centuries. Dozens of books will yet be written to explore Chicago's politics, society, economy, and government to mention only a few of the books that need to be written.

Literary License: *What's the topic of your next book?*

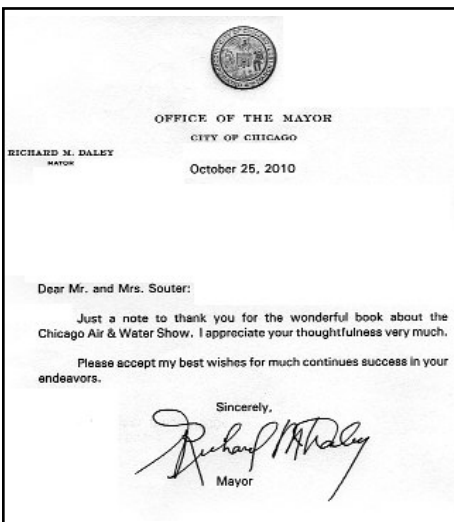
Dick Simpson: Besides the book to be published in January, *The City Revisited*, with my co-editor Dennis Judd and a dozen of the best urban politics scholars in the country, I have a book with my colleague Connie Mixon, *21st Century Chicago*, to be published in June. It is a collection of documents and essays (about 40) which focus on key aspects of Chicago politics, government, society, economics, globalization, and regionalism during the last fifty years. My next book to be published will be *Development and Democracy in Post-War African Nations*. Three other books underway are: *Corruption in Illinois* and new editions of *Winning Elections* and *Struggle for Power in Cities and States*.

Once again, the Administration asserts the power associated with the laws of war, but accepts none of the restraints. – *Guantanamo and the Abuse of Presidential Power, Joseph Margulies*

Biblio File

Continued from Page 2

Here's what GB Book Club (on Gapers Block) wrote on Nov. 2: "The Society of Midland Authors hosts a great monthly lecture series, all open to the public." ... **Ray Boomhower** won \$7,500 as a regional finalist for the Eugene & Marilyn Glick Award for Indiana authors. The award recognizes a "writer who is well known and respected throughout the State of Indiana." ... The Chicago Sun-Times ran an article on Dec. 26 by **Harry Mark Petrakis** about his long-deceased father titled "A dream brings a message of love." ... Like all mayors of major Midwestern cities, Chicago's Mayor Daley likes to correspond with Midland authors. Here's a letter Daley sent to **Gerry and Janet Souter**: "Just a note to thank you for the wonderful book about



the Chicago Air & Water Show. I appreciate your thoughtfulness very much. ... " **Whitney Scott** (See New Books, Page 4), president of the TallGrass Writers Guild, recently accepted a seat on the board of directors of the Chicago-based NewTown Writers. ... News "bullet-in": **Marcus Sakey's** next book, *The Two Deaths of Daniel Hayes*, comes out June 9. It's a love story and a meditation on memory and an exploration of identity. "With," Sakey says "you know, bullets." Also, Sakey's short story collection *Scar Tissue*

Turn to Page 5

New Books

SEASONS OF CHANGE

The latest book from **Whitney Scott's** Outrider Press, *Seasons of Change*, came out in October. It includes poetry, essays and short fiction on the topic of seasonal change in the natural world as well as significant socio-political, regional and personal change.

CHRISTMAS IN ILLINOIS

Christmas in Illinois: A Collection of Holiday Memories, Recipes and Images (University of Illinois Press), edited by Bradley University professor emeritus **James Ballowe**, came out Sept. 1. Rick Kogan wrote: "For those of us for whom the meaning of Christmas has been all but lost in an increasingly nasty blizzard of commercialism, this book provides a lovely and even necessary antidote."

RESEARCH NOTES FOR WOMEN AT PLAY

Barbara Gregorich has published *Research Notes for Women at Play: The Story of Women in Baseball, Vol. I: Maud Nelson, Margaret Nabel*. It is an 8x10 notebook-sized book of 114 pages, consisting of newspaper articles written between 1875 and 1935. Most of the articles are quoted in their entirety, some are summarized. They are part of the research notes from which she wrote *Women at Play* back in 1992.

Gregorich put the volume together for baseball researchers, women in baseball who want to know their history, baseball fans who enjoy reading old articles, novelists looking for the flavor of the times, and high school and college English teachers who assign research papers. It is available through Amazon: \$12 for soft-bound, \$5 for the Kindle format.

WRITING BROADCAST NEWS

The new edition of Merv Block's *Writing Broadcast News*, which has been called the bible of broadcast news writing, has been released.

The book's full title is *Writing Broadcast News Shorter, Sharper, Stronger: A Professional Handbook, 3rd Edition*. (CQ Press, a division of Sage Publications).

CHICAGO'S LAKE SHORE DRIVE: URBAN AMERICA'S MOST BEAUTIFUL ROADWAY

Neal Samors and Bernard Judge's new book (Chicago's Books Press, an imprint of Chicago's Neighborhoods) has more than 250 black-and-white duotone and color photographs representing the past 150 years of Lake Shore Drive's progress from a pleasant horse and buggy pathway in front of the Gold Coast mansions of Potter Palmer and his friends to the eight-lane hybrid boulevard of today.

The book contains the pictorial history of how the road was carved from swamp-land and lakefront using a combination of sand, landfill and debris from the 1871 Great Chicago Fire. Over the years it would become the exceptionally designed asphalt and concrete guardian of stunning public parks and sandy beaches along uninterrupted mile after mile of lakefront.

The book includes interviews with more than 20 well-known Chicagoans, including Blair Kamin; Abner Mikva; U.S. Rep. Janice Schakowsky; Irma Tranter, president of Friends of the Parks; Daniel Walsh, president, the Walsh Group; Potter Palmer, Skidmore, Owings, and Merrill architect; Philip Enquist; Thomas O'Gorman, noted Chicago author; Daniel McCaffery, president, McCaffery Interests; Neil Hartigan, and John Norquist, president and CEO of the Congress for the New Urbanism.

Turn to Page 5

Once, a thousand years before Columbus discovered America, and when Rome was still the greatest city in the world, there lived a brave and beautiful youth whose name was Arthur. His home was in England, near London. – *King Arthur and His Knights*, **Mary Radford Warren**, 1905

New Books

Continued from Page 4

THE CITY REVISITED: URBAN THEORY FROM CHICAGO, LOS ANGELES, AND NEW YORK

Dennis R. Judd, a professor of political science and senior scholar in the Great Cities Institute, University of Illinois at Chicago, and **Dick Simpson** edited this book (University of Minnesota Press). It traces an intellectual history that begins in 1925 with the publication of the influential classic *The City*, engaging in a spirited debate about whether the major theories of 20th century urban development are relevant for studying the 21st century metropolis.

WATCHING TV: SIX DECADES OF AMERICAN TELEVISION

This expanded second edition by Harry Castleman and **Walter J. Podrazik** (Aug. 31, Syracuse University Press) updates

their 1982 edition, telling the story season-by-season from TV's inception up until 2009. Publishers Weekly said, "Castleman and Podrazik have put together a well-researched, tightly written documentary on the development of the television industry and the individuals involved."

Library Journal said, "The authors have meticulously documented an in-depth survey of the entire world of TV trends and programming from the industry's beginnings, presenting along the way some very judicious critical analyses."

CLEVER JACK TAKES THE CAKE

Candace Fleming's new book (Schwartz & Wade, Aug. 24) is a modern fairy tale starring a determined boy and a story-loving princess with a good sense of humor. The School Library Journal called it an "entertaining adventure ... packed with action." Booklist called it "an original fairy tale that has the makings of a story-hour classic. ... Fleming writes with rhythmic repetition and delicious word choices that lend themselves perfectly to dramatic narration. ... This standout picture book emphasizes resourcefulness and the power and pleasure of a well-told tale."

Program Update

We've added some panelists for the Society of Midland Authors programs in January and February. Here is the new lineup:

Jan. 11: "The Chicago Mayoral Race." Authors will discuss the election from a historical perspective. The panel will include Chicago Ald. Edward Burke, co-author of *Inside the Wigwam* and *End of Watch*; **Dick Simpson**, head of the political science department at University of Illinois at Chicago, former alderman and author of books including *Rogues, Rebels, and Rubberstamps*; **Richard Lindberg**, author of many books on Chicago history, including *The Gambler King of Clark Street*; **James Merriner**, author of books

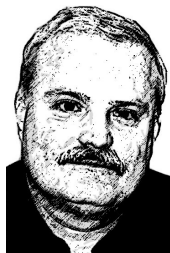
including "*Grafters and Goo-Goos*." (Note: This discussion replaces a previously announced discussion about e-books.)

Feb. 8: "A Discussion on Gangs" will feature Natalie Y. Moore and Lance Williams, co-authors of the new book "*The Almighty Black P Stone Nation: The Rise, Fall, and Resurgence of an American Gang*," and John Hagedorn, author of "*A World of Gangs: Armed Young Men and Gangsta Culture*." Moore is a reporter for Chicago Public Radio. Williams is an associate professor at Northeastern Illinois University. Hagedorn is a professor of criminal justice at the University of Illinois at Chicago. (Note: Moore and Williams are new additions to this event.)

Biblio File

Continued from Page 4

is available exclusively for e-readers. It features seven of his all-time favorites. ... Sakey, **Laura Caldwell**, and two other authors scheduled a holiday party Dec. 2 at Sheffield's Beer Garden in Chicago to sell personalized books for gifts. ... A Love Is Murder "mini-con" was scheduled for Nov. 20 with authors **Raymond Benson**, **Shane Gericke**, **Libby Fischer Hellmann**, and Conference Local Guest of Honor **Michael Allen Dymmo**ch at the Vernon Area Public Library in



Shane Gericke

Lincolnshire, Ill. ... On Nov. 22, Richard Lindberg was scheduled to talk to the Nineteenth Century Charitable Association about "Chicago's Forgotten Gaslight Era." ... A July review of **John Raffensperger's** 2008

book, *Diamonds of Death*, in the Midwest Book Review, said, "I was surprised at how much I liked this book ... This book took me for a wild ride that I never expected." (Raffensperger's pen name is John Luck, M.D.). ... **James Ballowe** was scheduled to sign and discuss his book *Christmas in Illinois: A Collection of Holiday Memories, Recipes and Images* (See New Books, Page 4) at the Chicago State Street Border's on Dec. 14. The Chicago Tribune called it "a lovely book." ... The Pittsburgh Post Gazette called Scott Turow's *Innocent* "a very engaging sequel." It also listed

Snakewoman of Little Egypt by **Robert Hellenga** as one of the "books we liked in 2010." ... Author and illustrator **Scott Gustafson** recently won a Silver Award from Spectrum 17

Fantasy Magazine for a piece titled "A Confabulation of Dragons." ... **Richard Baer's** *Switching Time* was among the recommended nonfiction titles about mental illness by the online site The



James Ballowe

Turn to Page 6

Biblio File

Continued from Page 5

Straight Dope. ... Writing in the Washington Post, Jay Matthews on Dec. 24 said his favorite children's book is *The Shrinking of Treehorn* by **Florence Parry Heide**. ... **Bryan Gruley's** *The Hanging Tree* was one of the Greenwich (Conn.)



Florence Parry Heide

Citizen's recommended books for holiday gifts. It also was named Michigan Notable Book for 2011. ... In a Dec. 16 guest blog, **Fran Baker** explains how she came to write her first original e-book (*Romeo, Romeo*, 2009): "As a former court reporter who's

married to a now-retired judge, I'm always up for a good legal story. So when, a couple of years ago, I saw that TCM was running 'Adam's Rib' for the umpteenth time, I settled in for the umpteenth time to watch it. But this time, when Adam (Spencer Tracy) tells Amanda (Katharine Hepburn) that he's been asked to run for judge and she asks him who will run against him, I was struck by an idea ... what if a contemporary couple of married attorneys wound up opposing each other for a judgeship? I had the perfect expert to ask pertinent questions of, and I'd been in enough courtrooms myself to know how the legal system worked. Why not write my own romantic legal comedy? That's how *Romeo, Romeo*, my original e-book novel, came to be." ... **John Wasik**, author of *The Cul-de-Sac Syndrome*, *The Merchant of Power* and *The Audacity of Help*, will discuss successful models of community organizing and outreach from 6:30-8 p.m. on Jan. 4 in Room C003 at the College of Lake County's Grayslake (Ill.) campus. ... In a Dec. 16 blog Q&A, **Deborah Blum** talks about how she weaves chemistry into her writing: "We live in such a chemical web and I want to make people see that, figure out ways to navigate it." ... **Sean B. Carroll** wrote a Dec. 13 article for the New York Times titled, "In a single-cell predator, clues to the animal kingdom's birth." ... **Stuart Dybek** traveled to

Iowa City Dec. 2 to do a reading as an Ida Beam visiting professor at the University of Iowa. ... **Michael Williams** and **Richard Cahan** were scheduled to lead a tour Dec. 29 of "The Lost Panoramas: Chicago and the Illinois Valley a Century Ago." The authors will discuss the exhibition and expand on one of the greatest engineering feats of the 20th century – the reversal of the Chicago River with never-before-seen plate images from the 1900s (accidentally discovered in the Chicago Water Reclamation District Archives) at Chicago's Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum. ... **Jean Bethke Elshtain** was scheduled to speak Dec. 1 to the Baylor, Texas, community about the importance of a liberal arts education. ... **Jan Spivey Gilchrist** is scheduled to be on Indiana University's Northwest campus at 10 a.m. Feb. 2. She will read several of her books to a group of fourth through sixth-graders who attend a local grade school. The event will be at Bruce W. Bergland Auditorium in the Savannah Center on the southeast corner of the main campus parking lot at 33rd Avenue and Broadway in Gary. ... **Rita Emmett** is scheduled to speak at 1 p.m. Jan. 22 at the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 1600 Somerset Lane in Wheaton, Ill. (topic: "Blast Away Procrastination and Get It Done Now") and at 2:45 p.m. ("Conquer Your Clutter"). All proceeds go to the Sisters of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary. ... Beth El: The Heights Synagogue's short stories group (in Cleveland) on Dec. 12 discussed **Joseph Epstein's** latest book, *The Love Song of A. Jerome Minkoff: And Other Stories* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, June 14). Booklist said, "In his newest short story collection, Epstein is at his skewering best, audaciously combining his incisive take on Jewish life in Chicago with acerbic views of



Stuart Dybek



Rita Emmett

academia and, most arrestingly, the writing life." ... The New York Post recently asked George Wendt (Norm Peterson on "Cheers") for the "books he thinks Santa might enjoy in his downtime" because Wendt has played Santa many, many times and also is a big reader. At the top of his list: *The English Major* by **Jim Harrison**. In the Post's Dec. 25 story, Wendt said: "This is about a six-tysomething guy who gets dumped by his wife and decides to go on a cross-country journey. He has a jigsaw puzzle map of the U.S., and every time he goes through state X, Y or Z, he takes that piece of puzzle and tosses it in the river or whatever the state line is. I think Santa can relate to the travel — and since it's by Harrison, it's just awesome, hilarious fun." ... In October, www.book-club-queen.com invited **Paul McComas**, who has a new book coming out in February, to write an essay for its monthly "Life Between My Pages" feature. Read it at <http://bit.ly/a3U3ak>. Also, Paul has moved back to Evanston from Madison, Wis., "for good." And in September, his short film "Rumpus Room of Horror" took Best Original Teleplay and was a finalist for Best Entertainment Program at the Alliance for Community Media - Central States Region's annual Philo Award. ... The Chicago Tribune on Dec. 24 said **Libby Fischer Hellman's** *Set the Night on Fire* (Allium Press), "creates a fully-realized world of ... idealists, complete with everyday details, passions and enthusiasms on how they yearned for connection, debated about ideology and how they came to believe in taking risks to stand up for what they believed" ... Among the authors showcased by DePaul University at a Chicago "book tasting" event on Dec. 8 were **Rebecca Johns**, **Patricia Monaghan**, **Haki Madhubuti** and **Achy Obejas**. ... **Gary W. Moore's** new book, *Hey Buddy: In Pursuit of Buddy Holly, My New Buddy John, and My Lost Decade of Music* is due out Jan. 20. Moore will be at Anderson's Book Shop in Naperville at 7 p.m. that day.



Jim Harrison

academia and, most arrestingly, the writing life." ... The New York Post recently asked George Wendt (Norm Peterson on "Cheers") for the "books he thinks Santa might enjoy in his downtime" because Wendt has played Santa many, many times and also is a big reader. At the top of his list: *The English Major* by **Jim Harrison**. In the Post's Dec. 25 story, Wendt said: "This is about a six-tysomething guy who gets dumped by his wife and decides to go on a cross-country journey. He has a jigsaw puzzle map of the U.S., and every time he goes through state X, Y or Z, he takes that piece of puzzle and tosses it in the river or whatever the state line is. I think Santa can relate to the travel — and since it's by Harrison, it's just awesome, hilarious fun." ... In October, www.book-club-queen.com invited **Paul McComas**, who has a new book coming out in February, to write an essay for its monthly "Life Between My Pages" feature. Read it at <http://bit.ly/a3U3ak>. Also, Paul has moved back to Evanston from Madison, Wis., "for good." And in September, his short film "Rumpus Room of Horror" took Best Original Teleplay and was a finalist for Best Entertainment Program at the Alliance for Community Media - Central States Region's annual Philo Award. ...

The Chicago Tribune on Dec. 24 said **Libby Fischer Hellman's** *Set the Night on Fire* (Allium Press), "creates a fully-realized world of ... idealists, complete with everyday details, passions and enthusiasms on how they yearned for connection, debated about ideology and how they came to believe in taking risks to stand up for what they believed" ... Among the authors showcased by DePaul University at a Chicago "book tasting" event on Dec. 8 were **Rebecca Johns**, **Patricia Monaghan**, **Haki Madhubuti** and **Achy Obejas**. ... **Gary W. Moore's** new book, *Hey Buddy: In Pursuit of Buddy Holly, My New Buddy John, and My Lost Decade of Music* is due out Jan. 20. Moore will be at Anderson's Book Shop in Naperville at 7 p.m. that day.

*Note: At press time, the final list of judges was not available.
Check www.midlandauthors.com for updates.*

AWARDS ENTRY FORM

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION: February 15, 2011

Duplicate this page. Make three copies for each book entered. Send one book and one copy of this completed form to each of the three judges in the book's category. Please type or print clearly.

Name of book: _____

Publisher: _____

Publication date: _____
(If publication date differs from copyright date, please explain in "Comments" section below.)

Author: _____

Author's address: _____

Category of entry (circle one). Entries improperly categorized will be disqualified.

ADULT FICTION

POETRY

CHILDREN'S FICTION

ADULT NONFICTION

BIOGRAPHY

CHILDREN'S NONFICTION

I nominate the above work for a Society of Midland Authors Award. (An author may nominate his or her own work.)

Your name: _____

Signature: _____

Company and business title: _____

Telephone and/or email address: _____

Address: _____

Comments:

A Note from Our President

The Society of Midland Authors extends its deepest condolences to member Aleksandar Hemon on the death of his 1-year-old daughter, Isabel Esther Boyd Hemon. Our hearts go out to him and his family.

**Robert Loerzel, president,
Society of Midland Authors**

Letters to the Editor

Thank you so much for the wonderful [October 2010 Literary License] article on Allium Press!

I've already been contacted by an author wanting to submit a manuscript, after she read your article.

Thank you again for writing such a thoughtful article about the press.

**Emily Victorson,
Allium Press of Chicago**

Board Notes

At the November meeting, the Society of Midland Authors Board voted to hold the annual dinner next May at the Chicago Bar Association. Board member Carol Carolson said the room is long and has no obstruction and seats exactly 100. The garage next door costs \$14 and drinks are \$5 a piece which is significantly cheaper than last year.

Correction

In the October 2010 Literary License, the name of the author of *Beautiful Dreamer* was misspelled. It is Joan Naper.

Clarification

A quote in the October 2010 Literary License from a New York Times review of Jonathan Eig's book *Get Capone*, did not mention the writer of the review. It was **James McManus**.

Feeling trapped in the Web? Two ways to get unstuck

Here are two social media tools you can find on the Web that might help you research or promote your books:

MentionMap is a Web-based application that visually shows what and whom a specific Twitter user is tweeting about most often.

This application can be used to see what hashtags and topics are the most popular, and also which people are the most followed. No login to Twitter is required since it is a browser-based application. When a username is searched, a Constellation Framework appears, which displays the data in an easily identifiable format (similar to a web graph). Thicker connection lines indicate a particular topic/person is tweeted about most often.

MentionMap is a great tool to find out what topics reporters are talking about.

One of the biggest complaints the media have is that they hear from people who don't actually know what they typically cover or what the specific reporter or editor is interested in. Well, if that reporter or editor is on Twitter, you're in luck. All you need to do is find out their Twitter username (easily accomplished via Twitter's search function, or a reporter's bio) and enter that username into MentionMap's search box. Hit "Enter" and you will see a diagram come to life of the topics and other tweeters that are the most mentioned. You will be able to get an idea of what they are interested in, which will help you when you come to them with your own story idea. Tell them what they want to hear in your own way and soon you may see your business's name on the MentionMap!

Twellow. In the age of Twitter, with its 190 million users, looking for someone in particular can feel like finding a needle in a digital haystack.

“Think of Twellow as the Yellow Pages of Twitter.”

Twellow is a directory of Twitter accounts that enables users to search for other users by area of expertise, profession, location or other characteristic posted in tweets and public profiles on Twitter.

Think of Twellow as the Yellow Pages of Twitter. Using hundreds of different categories and search features, users can find Twitter users with shared interests and expertise, and also create their own profile to help tweeps find them.

Twellow is an easy way to help businesses cut through the clutter and maximize the value of using Twitter. Twellow creates opportunities to connect with categories of users that matter to you, and puts the "network" back in "social network."

You can find industry experts, top competitors, reporters writing on your area of expertise and even fans of your books. The service also enables users to link their Twitter accounts to other social networking sites, such as LinkedIn and Delicious, expanding your online presence and creating richer communications exchanges. Additionally, Twellow has branch sites that offer opportunities for local research and statistical analysis. Twellowhood makes it possible to geographically target users in your area, helping you focus on your local friends, fans and readers. Twellow Pulse monitors Twitter conversations in up to 20 different categories, a great way to tap the influencers in whatever genre your books happen to be in.

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

*Literary
Loudspeaker*
Tom
Ciesielka

