

## Biblio File

**Jeffery Renard Allen's**  *Holding Pattern*, a collection of short stories (and a finalist for the SMA's 2009 Adult Fiction Award), has won the \$10,000 Ernest J.



**Jeffery Renard Allen**

Gaines Award for Literary Excellence for a book published in 2009. An independent panel of five judges picked the book over 17 others for the annual award, which is in its third year. Allen will be presented the award at a Jan. 28 ceremony at the Shaw Center for the Arts in Baton Rouge.

... How's this for the ideal positive review? National Review Online said of **Bryan Gruley's** *Starvation Lake*, "It was better than the fudge we also brought home."

(The reviewer also said, "The characters are first-rate. Gruley has a bright future in the genre.") And that's probably why *Starvation Lake* on Jan. 19 was named a finalist for an Edgar Award for Best First Novel by the Mystery Writers of America. Also, Gruley is among the writers who will appear this



**Bryan Gruley**

year as part of the National Writers Series, in its second season in downtown Traverse City, Mich. His forthcoming book is *The Hanging Tree*. ... **June Sawyers** had more books released last year than a lot of people have read, including *Ten Songs that Changed the World in Australia* and a coffee table book on Bruce Springsteen that is available exclusively at Barnes & Noble stores and on online, *Bruce Springsteen: Halfway to Heaven & Just a Mile Out of Hell*. She also just published her first poetry collection, *The Water Is Wide: Celtic Poems on Time, Memory, and Loss* (See New Books). In addition, the Ger-

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# The mystery of success: Authors tell how it's done

BY THOMAS FRISBIE

**T**oday, Marcus Sakey and Laura Caldwell are successful Chicago crime fiction novelists.

But early in their careers, neither had a clue they would become well-known writers, they said at the Society of Midland Authors' monthly program Jan. 12 at the Cliff Dwellers Club in Chicago.

Sakey said he worked in advertising and marketing for television for about 10 years before deciding to become a writer.

Although he had written short stories while in school, "The only place I had been published before I finished my novel was a U.K. horror journal," Sakey said. "I don't write horror, and I don't live in the U.K."

With encouragement from a number of writer friends, however, Sakey finished a book and sent it off. He got a number of rejections, but then found an agent who was excited about it. He now has published four well-received novels: *The Blade Itself*, *At the City's Edge*, *Good People* and *The Amateurs*. His latest manuscript originally was due two days after the Society's program, although he said he had requested a deadline extension until March.

Caldwell said she started her career as a lawyer, but began writing on the side even though it was one of the "busiest

periods of my life, when I was flying around the country taking depositions of neurosurgeons and trying cases.

"I started writing just because I was practicing law as a litigator and getting a little itchy with the confines of a motion for summary judgment and a motion to dismiss," Caldwell said.

"I started out sort of in the women's fiction world – what they sometimes call, for better or for worse, chick lit," she said.

"Some people really think [the term] is derisive, that it is insulting. I was just always aware that it got me on the front table at Barnes & Noble."

Caldwell then switched to mysteries and in fact last summer published three titles – an undertaking so prodigious that Sakey jokingly called it "psychotic."

Both Sakey and Caldwell said it took a while to figure out what they needed to do to become productive writers.

Sakey recalled how, as he started his first novel, he tried to apply the 9-to-5 schedule he was familiar with in the world of advertising.

"I would go into my writing den, and I would sit down in front of my computer. I would put my fingers on the keyboard and nothing would happen," he said.

"And I would stare at the screen, and I

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**Marcus Sakey**



**Laura Caldwell**

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## SMA Program

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would stare at the wall. And then I would pace for a while. I would start the self-loathing around 9:30, 9:45, and spend the next two to three hours firmly berating myself for my lack of talent and the time that I was wasting doing this at all.”

After lunch, though, he would sit down again, and the words would start flowing.

“It took me halfway through my second book [before] it occurred to me that maybe the morning was not a good time to write,” Sakey said.

By contrast, Caldwell, whose titles include *Look Closely*, *The Rome Affair* and the Izzy McNeil trilogy (*Red Hot Lies*, *Red Blooded Murder* and *Red, White & Dead*) said she likes working in the morning.

Caldwell said she uses jott.com, which allows her to dictate over her cell phone and have her words typed up and e-mailed back to her. She prefers that to dictation software, which she said has not worked for her, although she has not tried the latest version.

“I guess I’m a mumbler,” she said.

Caldwell also said she needed to accept that she couldn’t turn out words “like a machine.”

“I think there is a certain amount of settling in,” she said. “There is a certain amount of: I’ve got to get my coffee and the pillow and get organized.”

When she’s finished, Caldwell said, “I try to read the whole book out loud before I turn it in. You really hear those clunky sentences.”

Asked for a definition of crime fiction, Sakey said the question just “leads to a lot of panels and conferences about what the difference between fiction and literature and crime fiction is.

“Some good writing takes place in inner cities,” Sakey said. “Some of it takes place in two days when there is a nuclear threat on a city. Some of it takes place on spaceships. I don’t really care that much as long as I am swept away by the story.”

Note: *The Society of Midland Authors’ Oct. 13, 2009, Nov. 19, 2009, and Jan. 12, 2010 programs may be heard in their entirety at [www.chicagopublicradio.org/amplified](http://www.chicagopublicradio.org/amplified).*

# 14th president of the SMA was real-life Indiana Jones

Former Society of Midland Authors President William Montgomery McGovern was a real-life Indiana Jones.

Few people remember McGovern now, but he made headlines with his adventures and his books in the 1920s.

I recently became acquainted with McGovern when I wrote the cover story for the December issue of *North Shore* magazine. The subject was north suburban residents, including McGovern, who went abroad in the era before airlines made foreign travel easy.

Born in New York City in 1897, McGovern spent much of his early life in Eastern Asia, graduating with a divinity degree from a Buddhist monastery in Japan.

He continued his studies at the Sorbonne, the University of Berlin and Oxford.

In 1922, McGovern disguised himself as a “coolie” and sneaked into Tibet, which had forbidden foreigners from entering the country. He traversed treacherous mountains to the capital, Lhasa, where he revealed his identity to Tibetan officials. He even met with the Dalai Lama (Thubten Gyatso, the predecessor of today’s Dalai Lama).

“He was a man who obviously was accustomed to be regarded as a god, and who, moreover, had a firm belief in his own divinity, and yet there was a great quietness, even modesty, about his manner,” McGovern wrote in *To Lhasa in Disguise*.

Reviewing the book for the *Chicago Tribune*, Fanny Butcher said it was “one of the most interesting books of travel I, for one, have read for a long time.”

(Fanny Butcher also was an early Society of Midland Authors member. She wrote about it in her biography, *Many Lives, One Love*. She also was best friends with Sen. Arthur Vandenberg’s

wife, and got him to join the SMA. Sen. Vandenberg, a Michigan Republican who participated in the creation of the United Nations, also served as an SMA vice president.)

McGovern also explored the upper Amazon basin in 1926, and for a while, people thought he’d disappeared. He re-emerged from the jungle, however, and chronicled his trip in *Jungle Paths and Inca*

*Ruins*. In one scene, McGovern describes having romantic thoughts about one of the native girls.

“Hidden as we were, in the far-off jungle, I began to dream romantic dreams and to think of a jungle mating, but the very sweetness and childish charm of the girl brought me back to the world of reality,” McGovern writes. “She

was of the forest, and her grace and beauty belonged to the forest, while I, for good or bad, belonging to the world of men, and to this I must return. So I contented myself with giving her a photograph of myself ... and – one kiss.”

In 1927 McGovern became an assistant curator of the Anthropology Department at the Field Museum. From 1929 until

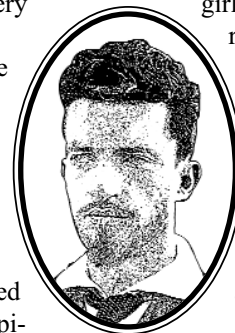
his death in 1964, he taught political science at Northwestern University, though he did take some time off in 1937-38 to cover the war between China and Japan for the *Chicago Times*. He spent much of World War II in Washington, serving as an intelligence representative to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He was the Society’s 14th president.

McGovern, who wrote another nine scholarly books after his two travelogues, was afraid of flying.

His grandchildren include actress Elizabeth McGovern and novelist Cammie McGovern.

*Robert Loerzel is president of the Society of Midland Authors.*

Literary  
Legacy  
Robert  
Loerzel



William  
McGovern

# 'A lot of work, but fun and rewarding'

**A**ugie Aleksy, proprietor of Centuries & Sleuths bookstore in Forest Park for 19 years, will be one of the panelists at the Society of Midland Authors Feb. 9 program, "The State of the Independent Bookstore." He recently shared some of his thoughts with Literary License:

**Literary License:** *You've been called the "coolest bookseller in Chicago" and "the Barnum of Bookselling." What's your secret?*

**Augie Aleksy:** I don't know if the two accolades in your question are appropriate, but I do love being a bookseller. I think (or at least I hope) it reflects in the way I manage Centuries & Sleuths Bookstore. I have masters degrees in history and in finance. I say this not (just) to brag, but because both have been helpful in planning and operating my business. I did a business plan and surveys of local book use and purchases. This didn't make me decide to specialize in history and mystery, but affirmed or practically justified my plans to open the type of bookstore I did. I think the programs we've had (Meeting of Minds, Mystery Plays, What's Cooki'n History & Mystery, history debates, mystery and history discussion groups, meetings of the G.K. Chesterton Society, Mystery Writers of America: Midwest Region and Sisters in Crime: Chicago Region, author signings, etc.) over the last almost 20 years have kept us vibrant. It is a lot of work, but fun and rewarding. Also, the support of family and friends has been a fantastic life line and reality check.

**LL:** *As it seems to be getting harder for authors to publish and sell books, what advice do you have?*

**AA:** As always, write a good book. Loyalty works two ways ... both for bookseller and author, and both should keep that in mind. When authors and their publishers want to visit Centuries & Sleuths, I want them to take the time to sit and talk with my customers and their fans. No, what I call "drive-by signings." I remember when Steve Allen was coming to the store for the first time in 1992, I already had established my policy with authors. I had the gall to tell his secretary, Christine

Gutierrez, "When authors come to Centuries & Sleuths, they don't just look down at the title page of their book(s) and sign. They speak to my customers and answer their questions." Fortunately, Mr. Allen loved talking with my customers and answering their questions and stayed until everyone's books were signed, staying about an hour and a half over his allotted time. Also, with my customers I advise them that authors like Steve Allen, Sir Peter Ustinov, John Connolly, Rick Kogan, Erik Larson, J.A. Jance, Sara Paretsky, Nancy Atherton, Michael Dymmoach, Karen Abbott, Linda Himmelstein, etc., are not only good writers, but also tremendous storytellers. By coming to see not only established authors, but also new authors, readers will be entertained with an author's live performance with stories related to and outside their writing. Although writing is a solitary calling, the present book-selling environment demands they meet with their fans. This may not have been true in the '20s or '30s of the last century for F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, Vita Sackville West, etc., but



## Q&A with Augie Aleksy

it is now. I don't know that it's a bad thing.

**LL:** *What types of new titles are your customers hungering for?*

**AA:** Because of our specialty, many are looking for well-written mysteries that are literature, but there are those looking for mysteries that are light and entertaining. We've a strong contingent that enjoys historical mysteries and novels. They want to learn something about an era and the people who lived then, but not something with a lot of footnotes. There are those looking for interesting current and old biographies. Comments by journalistic authors (Stephen Kinzer, David McCullough, Karen Armstrong, Barbara Tuchman, etc.) on history, biography and current historic events are favored over the old historians like an Arnold Toynbee. They want someone who can reward the time it takes to read, by being informative and enjoyable. Also, readers are looking for recommendations for themselves, and gifts for friends and relatives. That's when it's my job to

February 9, 2009, program

Cliff Dwellers

200 S. Michigan Ave., 22nd floor

6 p.m. - Social Hour

7 p.m. - Program

Free - donations accepted

find out a bit more about them or the individual they're buying for: what do they do for a living, have they always lived in the Chicago area, what books have they read in the past, do they like fiction or nonfiction, etc. A wonderful book published by the University of Chicago Press, *Reluctant Capitalists: Bookselling and the Culture of Consumption* by Laura J. Miller, tells of the late 19th and early 20th centuries when those who had the surplus income to afford books would get advice from their local bookseller on what to read as they would get advice from their physician on health, their banker on investments, their tailor on clothing, and their tobacconist on cigars. I think this is perhaps why the chains are closing and some of the independents are still around.

**LL:** *In an age of e-books, what keeps bookstores going?*

**AA:** The answer to this question is a good follow-up to the end of my last answer. I have sat in on a journalism class conducted by author Stephen Kinzer at Northwestern University. He wanted to expose his students interested in writing as a career, to the real side of their chosen profession: the author, the publisher, and the bookseller (which I represented). I told those in attendance (about 15-20) about what I do as an independent bookseller to expose new and regular customers to good books. However, I was a little disappointed in their reactions. They, as all us young people do, knew the answers and more importantly, they know where and how to find the answers, and quickly. Time was of the essence. They had so much reading and other types of assignments, that they couldn't waste their time consulting with a person (who wasn't a professor) for recommendations; and pleasure reading might be out of the question except what they already knew. Their answers were on the Internet, easily

## Q & A, Continued from Page 3

accessible, quick response and they didn't have to be burdened with peripheral information that would only slow them down. So it seems like many in this age range are not in my customer demographics, but once they are out of the educational/internship "rat race" they may come to the likes of the independent bookseller for advice, suggestions and recommendations with stories and the descriptions to go with them. I think it is physical and carnal nature of the book that will keep real bookstores alive. People who really enjoy a book want to possess it. They want to go to a bookshelf pick it up and open it to the particular page, map, or portrait they remembered when reading the book the first time. Sure, you can do that on the Internet, but its not really yours, you can't physically turn the pages and, yes, smell the book. The only thing that sometimes concerns me, is that only the very wealthy, as in the late 19th and early 20th century, will have access to this joy of touching, smelling and cuddling up in bed or a comfy chair with a book. So, I don't think it's a threat to the bookseller who does a good job and has "serious" readers as his customers.

**LL:** *Who are your favorite authors?*

**AA:** This is a dangerous question for a bookseller to answer, especially if a collegial group with the name The Society of Midland Authors is asking it. Let me tell you rather what I've read or am currently reading. Another joy for a bookseller, especially this one, is to be reading at least three books at one time. I have read in the last year or am reading:

*Mr. and Mrs Grassroots: How Barack Obama, Two Bookstore Owners, and 300 Volunteers Did It* by John Presta; *Pops : A Life of Louis Armstrong* by Terry Teachout; *The Sistine Secrets: Michelangelo's Forbidden Messages in the Heart of the Vatican* by Benjamin Blech & Roy Doliner; *The Age of Napoleon* by Christopher Herrold; *Dust and Shadow: An Account of the Ripper Killings* by Dr. John H. Watson by Lyndsay Faye; *Shooters and Chasers* by Lenny Kleinfeld; *Cults, Conspiracies & Secret Societies* by Arthur Goldwag; *The King Of Vodka* by Linda Himmelstein; *A President in Peril* by Robert Goldsborough; *The Story of Yiddish* by Neal Karlen.

## New Books

### THE POISONER'S HANDBOOK: MURDER AND THE BIRTH OF FORENSIC MEDICINE IN JAZZ AGE NEW YORK

**Deborah Blum's** new book due out in February, *The Poisoner's Handbook: Murder and the Birth of Forensic Medicine in Jazz Age New York*, got glowing reviews from Kirkus (in its final days) and Publishers Weekly.



**Deborah Blum**

The Nov. 11 Kirkus called the book a "rollicking story" and said, "Blum effectively balances the fast-moving detective story with a clear view of the scientific advances that her protagonists brought to the field. Caviar for true-crime fans and science buffs alike."

In a starred review, Publishers Weekly said, "With the pacing and rich characterization of a first-rate suspense novelist, Blum makes science accessible and fascinating."

### THE WATER IS WIDE: CELTIC POEMS ON TIME, MEMORY, AND LOSS

**June Sawyers' *The Water Is Wide: Celtic Poems on Time, Memory, and Loss***, written with her brother, James (who contributed four poems), is part emigration history, part family history, part cultural history, part memoir, part reflection and part meditation. It consists of poems, lyrics and a prose poem, mostly on the topics of loss and separation, remembrance and memory, movement and displacement, identity and heritage – all from a Celtic perspective. It was inspired by the death of her mother nine years ago.

### COWBOYS FULL: THE STORY OF POKER

**James McManus' *Cowboys Full*** is the story of poker, from its roots in China, the Middle East and Europe to its ascent as a global – but especially an American – phenomenon. It describes how early Americans took a French parlor game and, with a few extra cards and an entrepreneurial spirit, turned it into a national craze by the Civil War. From kitchen-table games to its influence on generals and diplomats, poker has gone hand in hand with our national experience.

*Cowboys Full* shows how what was once accurately called the cheater's game has become a mostly honest contest of cunning, mathematical precision and luck. It explains how poker, formerly dominated by cardsharps, is now the most popular card game in Europe, East Asia, Australia, South America and cyberspace, as well as on television. It combines colorful history with firsthand experience from today's professional tour. And it examines poker's remarkable hold on American culture.



**James McManus**

### CHICAGO'S JEWISH WEST SIDE

**Irving Cutler's** latest book, *Chicago's Jewish West Side* (Arcadia Publishing, 2009) contains more than 200 photo-



**Irving Cutler**

graphs of the Greater Lawndale area, which was the center of Jewish life in Chicago for half a century. Among its residents were Golda Meir, Benny Goodman, Irv Kupcinet, Shelley Berman, Elmer Gertz and Eli Shulman.

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## New Books

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### BEAUTIFUL PIECE

*Beautiful Piece* by **Joseph G. Peterson** (Oct. 1, 2009, Northern Illinois University Press) is a modern noir novel set in Chicago.

The novel takes place during a heat wave that's claiming hundreds of lives, and Robert fears he'll be the next victim. Instead, going out into the heat to gas up his car, he meets Lucy, who is trying to escape her brutal fiancé, Matthew Gliss. Lucy invites Robert to her apartment and tells him of her dangerous life with Gliss, warning Robert that if Gliss ever catches them together he won't think twice of killing him.

On Jan. 3, the Chicago Sun-Times wrote, "... minimalism, experimentalism and repetition is on display in *Beautiful Piece*, which Peterson describes as reminiscent of both Hemingway and Gertrude Stein's *The Americans*. 'You can be more adventurous in film and music these days than you can in fiction,' he laments, citing Michel Gondry's 2004 film 'Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind' as an example. With *Beautiful Piece* he challenges the 'very conservative format' of contemporary fiction. ... Certainly a novel in which the main characters have a 'long, rational argument about a non-sensical metaphor' can be considered unusual, but it's what most interests Peterson as a writer."

### Literary License

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### HENRY HOBBS AND THE CODE OF CLIO

**J. Fred McDonald's** new online book, *Henry Hobbes and the Code of Clio*, is a sequel to *The History Shoppe*.

Going on the Internet next month, it will be filled with videos of historical films, interviews, still pictures and radio broadcasts.

### BILLY THE BARBER'S MIRROR: REFLECTING ON AN UNTOLD LINCOLN STORY

### THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF SEA CAPTAIN HARRY DEAN

William de Fleurville, who knew Abraham Lincoln before either man moved to Springfield, is the barber in **Glennette Tilley Turner's** upcoming *Billy the Barber's Mirror: Reflecting on an Untold Lincoln Story* (February,



**Glennette Tilley  
Turner**

Newman Educational Publishing Co., illustrated by Linnea Carlson). De Fleurville became one of the wealthiest men in town and his barbershop became Lincoln's second home. It was there in an elegant full-length mirror that Lincoln often saw himself reflected.

Turner also is editor of *The Amazing Adventures of Sea Captain Harry Dean* (due in spring, Newman), by Harry Dean with Sterling North. This is a now-illustrated reprinted autobiography of Captain Dean (the original was titled *The Pedtro Gorino*).

Turner also has a picture book scheduled to be published in the fall.

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man edition of her *Tougher than the Rest: 100 Best Bruce Springsteen Songs* has just been released in Germany and the Italian edition of *Read the Beatles: Classic and New Writings on the Beatles, Their Legacy, and Why They Still Matter* will be published in Italy this year. ... The Washington Post picked **Beryl Satter's** book *Family Properties* as one of the top 10 books of 2009.

It was also chosen as one of the best books of 2009 by the Progressive and was short-listed for the Ron Ridenhouer Prize. And to top things off, *Family Properties* has won the 2009 National Jewish Book Award in History. ... **Dick Simpson** is now writing a monthly column for the online Chicago



**Dick Simpson**

Journal and has two books coming out this year. *The Struggle for Power and Influence in Cities and States* (Longman), co-authored with James Nowlan and Elizabeth O'Shaughnessy, is due out in May. He also is co-editor of and contributed two chapters to *The City Revisited* (University of Minnesota Press). ... **Alzina Stone Dale**, whose latest book is *When the Postwar World Was New* (see November/December New Books), recalls her trip through postwar Italy and "our constant shoving to get rid of the young Italian guys who liked to pat us! Sedate whistles weren't enough, they wanted to feel the goods! On the other hand, once I'd cleared forests in Finland, I could swing on a train's third-class compartment with my knapsack and shove any old Italian grandmother who hit me with her umbrella to get on first! I did, too. Finally, just being in London made me a 'mad' lover of British mysteries as well as history, walking all over and then reading the books which I bought cheaply on Charing Cross Road." ... **Nami Mun** received a 2009 Whiting Award for her debut novel, *Miles from Nowhere*, which was shortlisted for the Orange Award for New Writers, and selected for Booklist's Editors' Choice, Booklist's Top

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Ten First Novels, and Tournament of Books 2010, run by the Morning News, an online weekday magazine since 1999. ... **Jeffrey Zaslow's** *The Girls From Ames: A Story of Women and Friendship* was one of the most checked-out books June-December 2009 at the Corvallis-Benton County (Ore.) Public Library. Zaslow also was featured speaker at the Omaha Hearing School Guild's annual book luncheon Dec. 10 at the Hilton Omaha. And his *Last Lecture* was named the No. 1-selling nonfiction audiobook for 2009 by iTunes. ... **Scott Turow** wrote an essay titled "Long Day's Journey Into Platinum" for the Dec. 27 New York Times. Meanwhile, his upcoming sequel, *Innocent* (See New Books, November/ December) was listed among the Omaha World-Herald's "12 tempting new titles for 2010." ... **Irving Cutler** was interviewed on Chicago's WGN-TV about his latest book,



Robert Collins

*Chicago's Jewish West Side* (See New Books, Page 4). ... A poem by **Ron Offen** titled "Aubade for One Dismayed" appeared in the winter issue of *Rattle*, a 16-year-old print publication based in Studio City, Calif. The magazine editors said the poem was one of their favorites among some 40,000 they read this year. ... **Robert Collins** is now on Facebook. Feel free to send him an invite. Also, he's now blogging at: <http://robertcollins.blogspot.com/>. He plans to post at least a few times a week, writing about writing, SF&F (science fiction and fantasy), maybe some Kansas history and anything else that strikes him as worth commenting on. He also has just joined two more author social network sites, BookTown (<http://booktown.ning.com/>) and fReado (<http://www.freado.com/>). He says the interesting thing about fReado is that it allows you to read excerpts from author's books. He has listed a few of his upcoming events at BookTown including *Chronicles: The Rising*. ... **James**

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# More historical highlights from the SMA's archives

*In the November/December Literary License, former SMA President Craig Sautter recounted some of the SMA lore he'd seen while cataloging additions to the Richard Frisbie Collection of the SMA Archive at the UIC Richard J. Daley Library's Special Collection. This is a continuation of his report:*

**A** Sept. 25, 1962, Sun-Times article announced that SMA had a new home, a private dining room (on the mezzanine) of the Sheraton-Chicago, "with an alcove for books written by society members."

**Fanny Butcher** was the speaker for the "first fall luncheon." A Sept. 26, 1962, article on the meeting also said that there would be a toast to **Ernest Henderson**, president of the Sheraton Corporation of America "and himself an author, who has set the literary society up in its own quarters."

The Jan. 8, 1962, Chicago Daily News announced new SMA members, including **Ann Landers**.

An April 22, 1965, Sun-Times piece noted that SMA was inaugurated at a banquet at the Auditorium Hotel in 1915, during an era when "H.L. Mencken was proclaiming Chicago the literary capital of America..." The April



Fanny Butcher

1965 dinner drew best-selling authors such as **Saul Bellow**, **Harry Mark Petrakis**, and Pulitzer winner **Gwendolyn Brooks**. **Jack McPhaul**, "of the Sun-Times, a chronicler of Chicago newspaper history and a great storyteller" (author of *Deadlines and Monkeyshines*) was to be installed as SMA president.

The April 9, 1966, Chicago Daily News observed that the 51st annual dinner would be held at the Lake Shore Club. U.S. Steel Corporation had donated \$500 for a "Chicago Writer's Award." The arti-

cle explained that the \$500 Thormod Monsen Award had been given out for "about half a dozen years," for the best book published the previous year. "It has been supplanted by the annual James L. Dow Award of \$500, contributed by a Chicago advertising man of that name. In addition, through the agency of **Fanny Butcher**, **Adeline Pynchon**, and other society members who have sold Patron Saint memberships to wealthy sponsors, there is now a \$500 Patron Saints Award."

The April 3, 1968, Sun-Times noted the annual banquet would be held Saturday night at the American Furniture Mart, 666 N. Lake Shore Drive. **Herman Kogan**, editor of the Sun-Times "Book Week," won the Midland Distinguished Service Citation, while **Studs**

**Terkel** won the first \$500 Chicago Publishers' Award for *Division Street*. **Era Bell Thompson**, international editor of *Ebony*, won the Patron Saints Award for *American Daughter*. She wore a white orchid given

Literary  
Lore  
Craig  
Sautter



her by **Gwendolyn Brooks**. **Morris Philipson**, director of the U. of Chicago Press, won the Clara Ingram Judson Memorial Award (for children's books) for his biography of Tolstoy. SMA also awarded a Poetry Award.

And **Marcia Lee Masters** was given a citation for her weekly column, "Today's Poets" in the Chicago Tribune Magazine.

All awards were presented by **Arthur Weinberg**, SMA president. Another post-dinner article noted that the banquet went on "while ugliness of violence was defacing the city" in the wake of Dr. King's assassination, which was not mentioned.

The article said the meeting was a "testimony to the power that flows from the trinity of reason, creative talent, and man's quest for truth."

*More material from the SMA archives will appear in the February Literary License. Craig Sautter is a past SMA president.*

# Make successful publicity your New Year's resolution

Some thoughts for 2010: People have been gorging on social media. Because the online world is so extensive and rife with opportunities, companies often become involved with too many applications all at once, without fully digesting how each one works. It's time for people to cut the social media "fat." Only focus on the few applications that will truly help you promote your book instead of dabbling in many different applications. Take a step back and look at the audiences and functionalities of each platform. Less is more, if you do it right.

## Measuring success

I've seen many people who do not place much importance on the specific value of the exposure they receive. Rather, they only care that exposure WAS received. This will not last. No public relations effort will be valued unless it can be measured and lead to an increase to Web site hits or book sales. It will be expected of PR agencies to measure the value of all placements achieved and report the results to each client. It is important to determine the types of results that matter most to you – whether it is Web site visitors or products sold. Doing so early on makes it easier to assess the true value of your exposure.

## Wish lists

At our agency, whenever we first meet with a new client, we ask them what their wish list is because we want to know which specific media outlets they want to see themselves in. "Oprah" is usually a given. And as much as we would love to give Oprah to our clients, with a big, red bow on her head, we always have alternate outlets in mind that can help us work our way toward those wish list outlets. As they say, shoot for the moon; if you don't make it, you'll still land among the stars.

## Morning Radio?

If you're dying to be on a morning radio show, we suggest that you get some practice. Radio producers and hosts want to

interview people who know how to be interviewed so the more interviews you've done, the better. BlogTalkRadio is a site that serves as a platform for various talk radio podcasts covering a variety of categories; books, business and culture to name a few. Being interviewed on one of these podcasts is great because 1) it gives you practice that can be added to your interview resume, 2) it is great online exposure and 3) the interview can be downloaded and circulated to other media. Think of it as the bait to get the big fish.

## BusinessWeek?

If you're just aching for BusinessWeek, try saturating the business blog world. Not many people realize this, but media reporters and editors read blogs to get ideas for their articles and stories. You can saturate in two ways. 1) Start your own business blog.

Find your niche and stick with it, offering quality advice and unique ideas. 2) Connect with other business blogs (such as Seth Godin's) and ask if they'd be interested in hearing your business best practices or doing a Q&A with you. Being featured in a prominent business blog gives BusinessWeek a reason to come looking for you.

Business best practices or doing a Q&A with you. Being featured in a prominent business blog gives BusinessWeek a reason to come looking for you.

## Television?

If the visions of sugar plums dancing in your head are clouded out by dreams of a slot on primetime television, this may be a sign that you need to be more active on YouTube. We've all heard the stories: YouTube sensations, videos hitting the million-views mark in one day, going viral, viral, viral. But you don't need to have a million views for your YouTube video to be a successful tool. Perhaps it is a two-minute how-to. Or a business tip of the week. Or maybe you stage a mock interview with a few readers. Get creative, get in front of a camera and prepare for prime time.

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

Literary  
Loudspeaker  
Tom  
Ciesielka



## Biblio File

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Merriner is writing a book about abuses of government property-seizure powers, focusing on the Tom Petters Ponzi fraud in Minnesota. Online publication is set for Labor Day, and a trade copy will come out next spring, updated with November election trends. ... **Carol DeChant** is working furiously on a book due out September. ... In the last Literary License, Biblio File reported **Jack Ridl's** *Losing Season* would be named "Sports Book of the Year" by the Institute for International Sport at the University of Rhode Island. Here's what Dan Doyle, founder and executive director of the institute said: "Jack Ridl's collection of poems in *Losing Season* is quite likely the finest single collection of sports poetry ever written. It is a privilege to recognize this extraordinary work, for it perfectly fulfills our objective of honoring a book that has a profound impact on sport as a vehicle to educate." ... *Edgar Miller and the Handmade Home: Chicago's Forgotten Renaissance Man* by **Richard Cahan** and **Michael Williams** (See New Books, November/December 2009) was listed Dec. 19 as a Chicago Tribune "Editor's Choice." Literary Editor Elizabeth Taylor wrote, "Richard Cahan and Michael Williams go a long way rescuing an astonishing Chicago talent." Book critic **Donna Seaman** talked to Cahan and Williams Jan. 11 on WBEZ-FM. ... **Blue Balliett's** "intriguing mystery" *Chasing Vermeer* was listed Dec. 13 in the Greensboro (N.C.) News & Record among its librarian picks. ... Some broadcast writers, **Merv Block** points out, seem to think that if one "tonight" is good, a string of "tonight"s is far better. Block says a leading practitioner of using "tonight" as much as possible – accurate or not – is David Muir of ABC News, the anchor of Sunday's "World News." Block examined one recent night's worth of his "tonight"s, then wrote an article, "ABC's Muir Seems to Think Using 'Tonight' Works Miracles." You can read the article at [www.mervblock.com](http://www.mervblock.com). ... **John Wasik** was scheduled to discuss his latest book, *The Audacity of Help: Obama's Economic Plan & The*

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## Biblio File

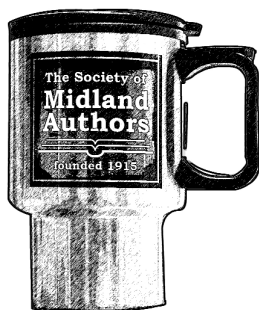
Continued from Page 7

*Remaking of America* Jan. 20 at the Grayslake (Ill.) Area Public Library. ... Besides writing this year, **Glennette Tilley Turney** conducted an Underground Railroad tour of Chicago's western suburbs as part of the Lincoln exhibition at the Newberry Library. She also produced a simulation based on Underground Railroad activities at the Graue Mill and Museum in Oak Brook, Ill., and spoke at the Delta Airlines Global Diversity and Inclusion Speaker Series in Atlanta. ... **Richard Lindberg** told the Jan. 4 Elm Leaves (in Elmwood Park, Ill.), "I've been interested in crime since the time I was a kid. ... I just fell into writing about crime. I'm interested in Chicago history." ... **Michael Raleigh** will teach "Getting Away with Murder, a One-day Seminar on Writing a Mystery" from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Feb. 20 at the Newberry Library. ... **Cheryl Reed** writes that she is busy as managing editor of publications for the University of Chicago Medical Center, where she oversees publication of the glossy magazine *Medicine* on the Midway and several other publications, including a newspaper and several e-publications. She invites members to check out her new book Web site and blog at [www.nunsunveiled.com](http://www.nunsunveiled.com). And if there are any writers out there interested in freelancing for the magazine — she's already roped **Kevin Davis** for the winter issue — please e-mail her at [cheryl.reed@uchospitals.edu](mailto:cheryl.reed@uchospitals.edu). Also, the new edition of her book *Unveiled: The Hidden Lives of Nuns* comes out March 1, and she will be doing some readings around town.

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## SMA Liquid Assets

SMA mugs are available for purchase at Society events or for \$15 plus \$3 shipping from the Society of Midland Authors, P.O. Box 10419, Chicago, IL 60610.



# Judges named for 2010 SMA book competition

The 2010 Society of Midland Authors book competition is under way. Since its inception in 1915, the Society has presented awards for excellence to authors and poets.

Here's how to enter: Send an entry form (see next page) and a copy of your 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.

The deadline for submission is Feb. 15 (the original Feb. 1 deadline reported in last month's *Literary License* has been pushed back).

There is no entry fee, and the author need not be a member of the SMA. The book must have been published in 2009 by a recognized publishing house and the author must reside in, be born in, or have strong ties to one of the twelve Midland states listed below.

Books may be nominated by the author or publisher.

Make sure that you enter the book in the proper category. Failure to do so will result in the book being disallowed.

The 12 Midland states are: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

Here is a list of this year's judges for all six categories.

### Adult Fiction

**Mark Eleveld**, 305 Brooks Ave., Joliet, IL 60435  
([eleveld\\_2000@yahoo.com](mailto:eleveld_2000@yahoo.com))

**Lynn Voedisch**, 6716 Monticello, Lincolnwood, IL 60712-3716 (isis-bastet@mac.com)

**Keir Graff**, 4900 N. Marine Drive #304, Chicago, IL 60640  
([keirgraff@gmail.com](mailto:keirgraff@gmail.com))

### Adult Nonfiction

**Richard Bales**, c/o Chicago Title Insurance, 1725 S. Naperville Rd., Wheaton, IL 60189 (balesd@ctt.com)

**Carol Jean Carlson**, 1420 West Farragut, Chicago, IL 60640  
([writercc@aol.com](mailto:writercc@aol.com))

**Richard Prince**, 1406 East 55th St., Chicago, IL 60615 (princer1@gmail.com)

### Biography

**Joseph Morton**, 4227 Weatherstone Rd., Crystal Lake, IL 60014-4521  
([demjcm@comcast.net](mailto:demjcm@comcast.net))

**Bob Remer**, 5840 N. Kenmore, Chicago, IL 60660 (chibooks@aol.com)

**Jim Schwab**, 1755 N. Campbell, Chicago, IL 60647  
([jschwab@planning.org](mailto:jschwab@planning.org))

### Children's Fiction

**Deborah Abbott**, 2800 Harrison St., Evanston, IL 60201-1218 (dkisor@comcast.net)

**Mary Frueh-Lardie**, 3511 N. Kolmar, Chicago, IL 60641  
([mefrueh@comcast.net](mailto:mefrueh@comcast.net))

**Charlotte Herman**, 6623 N. Monticello, Lincolnwood, IL 60712  
([charlotteherman@earthlink.net](mailto:charlotteherman@earthlink.net))

### Children's Nonfiction

**Marilyn Daleo**, 195 N. Harbor Dr., #3605, Chicago, IL 60601 (marroydaleo@aol.com)

**Jennifer Bartoli Kalina**, ON 220 Windemere Road. Unit 2709, Winfield, IL 60190 (bartjen@aol.com)

**Stella Pevsner**, 1111 N. Dearborn St., #807, Chicago, IL 60610  
([stelauthor@aol.com](mailto:stelauthor@aol.com))

### Poetry

**Mark Arendt**, 8641 Beech St., Munster, IN 46321  
([jlmarendt@comcast.net](mailto:jlmarendt@comcast.net))

**Anthony Burton**, University of Chicago Press, 1427 East 60th Street, Chicago, IL 60637  
([aburton@press.uchicago.edu](mailto:aburton@press.uchicago.edu))

**Richard Jones**, 913 Lois Lane, Glenview, IL 60025  
([rjones1@depaul.edu](mailto:rjones1@depaul.edu))



# AWARDS ENTRY FORM

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION: February 15, 2010

**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:

# Seven steps to a successful radio campaign

Here are seven ways to help you capitalize on any opportunity to go on radio and help promote your book:

1) When you are on the radio, be relevant to what is going on in the world. Educate and entertain your audience. Think of what people want to know and relate your book to current events.

2) Your list. If you can afford it, buy a list of radio stations and the media contacts on that list. If you can't buy the list, go to [www.radio.locator.com](http://www.radio.locator.com) and get all of the radio stations in the country. You can sort these by city, state, or format like talk radio, jazz, contemporary, etc. This had the website, producer, and contact information on it.

3) Tell your audience who you are, what you do, and why you matter. They want to know how you can help them. Piggy back on what is going on in the world. If there has been a financial crisis and you wrote a book on how to recoup your investment,

then you become someone they want to listen to.

4) Write a press release with which you can pitch the media. This will introduce you to the media, the host of the station, and the producer. Learn how to write a good release. Be concise and grab their attention in the first line. Who are you and why do you matter? What are the listeners going to learn? Go to [www.onair-publicity.com](http://www.onair-publicity.com) blog.

5) Before you go on the air, practice. Ask a friend to play radio with you so that you can give great sound bites and advice. Be animated and listen to the host. Don't hog the show. Be considerate and make the host a friend during the interview.

6) When you are on the air, be generous with your advice. Give away content from your book. This will sell yourself. Be transparent and friendly and encourage listeners.

7) Follow-up and analyze. How did you

Literary  
Leverage

Lynda  
and

Jim O'Connor



do on the air? Listen to your interview. Did you say "ahhh" too much? Did you talk too fast? Were you funny and informative? Think about how you could have done better and improve next time. Write a letter to the producer thanking him for your interview and ask him if he can tell other producers to have you on their show.

*SMA members Lynda and Jim O'Connor have a public relations firm in Lake Forest, Ill., specializing in books and authors.*

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## New Members

**Katherine McCaughan** has lived in China, Australia and Hong Kong and now divides her time between Chicago and Florida. She is author of *Natasha Lands Down Under* (Jan. 5, High Pitched Hum Publishing), a young adult book about a Russian girl who moves in 1950 from China to Australia. *Natasha Lands Down Under* (See New Books, previous page) won first place in the 2009 Moonbeam Children's Book Awards in the Young Adult-Historical/Cultural section.

**Joseph G. Peterson** is a Chicago novelist who has published numerous short stories. He was founder and editor of Story Head magazine and is author of a first novel, *Beautiful Piece* (See New Books, previous page).

Peterson grew up in Wheeling, and studied philosophy and literature at the University of Chicago. He is working on a second



**Joseph G.  
Peterson**

novel, *Wanted: Elevator Man* (due in spring 2011), about a character haunted by his larger-than-life father who helped develop the atom bomb, and a play, "Muse" about a Chicago-based playwright who co-opts his manicurist's private journals to overcome her writer's block.

**Gary W. Moore**, author of *Playing With the Enemy* (2009, Penguin), is a motivational speaker and an accomplished musician. *Playing with the Enemy* was the 2006 Military Writers Society of America Book of the Year.

A motion picture by Academy Award-winning producer Gerald Molen based on the book is in the works, and Gary's son, actor Toby, has been cast to play the role of his grandfather.

Moore, who has a degree in music education from VanderCook College of Music, is also a contributing author to *Chicken Soup for the Father & Son Soul*.

**Frances McNamara** is director of integrated library systems and administrative and desktop systems at the University of Chicago and is author of *Death at Hull House* (2009, Allium Press) and *Death at*

*the Fair* (2009, Allium Press).

McNamara grew up in Boston, where her father was police commissioner for 10 years, and she has degrees from Mount Holyoke and Simmons colleges.

Her third book in the trilogy, called the Emily Cabot series, will be set in Chicago's Pullman neighborhood at the time of the 1894 strike,

When not working or writing, she can be found sailing on Lake Michigan.

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## Printers Row

The Society of Midland Authors is planning to have a tent again this year at the Printers Row Book Fair, June 12-13.

Members will be able to sign up for two-hour time slots. The two-hour fee has not been set because we do not yet have all the registration information from the new fair organizers (and there is doubt in some quarters whether fair will happen this year).

The tent gives authors an opportunity to sell and sign their books. Literary License will have registration details as the time nears.