

Biblio File

Keir Graff's first kids' book, *The Other Felix*, was named to the Chicago Public Library's "Best of the Best" list for 2011. And it seems like it's "meilleur du meilleur" in France, too. *The Other Felix* will be published there by Bayard, with new illustrations, in the company's Estampillette series. Keir has also been invited to work with talented young writers at the Illinois Reading Council's Young Authors Conference in May.

Meanwhile, he is hard at work on his next kids' book, *The Matchstick Castle*, which will be published by Roaring Brook Press in the fall of 2013. ... **Bruce Guernsey** (See New Books, Page 4) may be the only SMA member who has twice sailed around the world. ... Illinois Gov.

Pat Quinn has appointed past Society of Midland Authors President **R. Craig Sautter** to the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Advisory Board, and his nomination has been confirmed by the full Illinois State Senate. (The only requirement is that he wear a beard and a stovepipe hat. And say "four score" whenever he means eighty.) ... 1993 SMA award winner and 2004 finalist **Carol Anshaw** has a new novel: *Carry the One* (Simon & Schuster). She was signing books March 6 at the Swedish American Museum. ... 2007 SMA Children's Nonfiction winners **Dennis Brindell Fradin** and **Judith Bloom Fradin's** new book is *Zora! The Life of Zora Neale Hurston*. ... **Adam Langer** tweets to explain what it means when a book reviewer says, "I won't reveal more." Translation: "I didn't read the whole damn thing." (For more euphemism translations, see Page 7). ... Besides her

Turn to Page 2

Historian studies presidents for clues about Americans

BY THOMAS FRISBIE

For an author who is writing his third book about an American president, historian **Rick Perlstein** has a surprising admission: He doesn't think those presidents are the focus of his work.

"I am not so much interested in these leaders," Perlstein said at the Society of Midland Authors monthly program March 13 at the Cliff Dwellers Club in Chicago. "I studied them to understand us."

For example, the shift in voter preference from Jimmy Carter to Ronald Reagan reflected a shift in the nation's mentality – a shift in the aspirations that make us who we are, he said.

Perlstein is author of the acclaimed books *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus* and *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America*. At the SMA program, he read from the second chapter of his upcoming book *The Invisible Bridge: The 1970s and the Rise of Ronald Reagan*.

In each of the books, Perlstein said, the first chapter sets the atmosphere of the period and ends by introducing the character around whom the book revolves. The second chapter is biographical – "their aspirations, their inner conflicts."

Among the biographical tidbits about Reagan in Chapter Two:

– Versions of how Reagan got the nick-

name "Dutch" clash. In one, after calling him a Dutchman upon seeing him at birth, his father, Jack, says: "Who knows he may end up being president someday."

Another has it that he got the moniker after getting a haircut his brother said made him look Dutch. And yet another person who knew Reagan when he was young could not remember ever hearing him called Dutch a single time. Reagan himself wrote that he came up with the nickname and asked people to call him Dutch. ("It's hard to make stories about

Ronald Reagan match up," Perlstein said.)

– In one of his various versions of his earliest memory, Reagan said it was hearing his father rush in to tell of the disastrous sinking of the Eastland in the Chicago River (a topic about which **Jay Bonansinga**, who will emcee the SMA dinner on May 8, wrote a book).

Perlstein said keeping track of research material has changed since the days when authors surrounded themselves with piles of paper notes and files.

"Physically, I have barely any files anymore [because] the computer allows you to do search for things in this pile of data," he said.

But that doesn't mean an author doesn't have to keep track of what's in those files, he said.

"I organize the material by never losing

Turn to PRESIDENTS, Page 2



Craig Sautter



Rick Perlstein

April
Poetry Program

PAGE 2

New
Books

PAGES 4-5

Literary Latest:
Robert Loerzel

PAGE 8

Biblio File

Continued from Page 1

Pushcart nomination from the Connecticut Review, **Linda Nemeć Foster** received nominations from three other journals. Throughout the month of February, she taught poetry workshops at the Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park in Grand Rapids, Mich. Earlier this month, she planned to attend the AWP Conference in Chicago (Hilton Hotel) where she was scheduled to do a book signing at the New Issues Press booth at the conference's Book Fair. Foster is the founder of the Contemporary Writers Series at Aquinas College; on March 14, fellow SMA member **Scott Turow** was scheduled to be the guest of honor at a gala fund-raiser for the CWS endowment. ... **Richard Cahān** was quoted in the Feb. 16 New York Times about amateur photographer Vivian Maier. He working on a book about her. On March 22, at

Turn to Page 3

Literary License

©2012, Society
of Midland Authors
P.O. Box 10419, Chicago IL 60610

Editor: Thomas Frisbie
tomfrisbie@aol.com

Copy editor: Steve Huntley

www.midlandauthors.com

Follow the Society on
Twitter@midlandauthors

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 feel to help cover PayPal's fee). To make a donation, visit our home page at www.midlandauthors.com and click on the "Donate" button in the upper right corner.

April program: Discussion, film on poetry of The Iliad

The Society of Midland Authors presents a screening of the new documentary "Poets and Profs: Looking at 'The Iliad'" followed by a discussion with the film's directors, Mark Eleveld and Ronald Maruszak, at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 10, at Theater Wit, 1229 W. Belmont Ave.



Mark
Eleveld

The 66-minute film features poets, including Robert Pinsky, Edward Hirsch and Marc Smith, performing sections of "The Iliad," as well as scholars Elizabeth Samet, Nick Rudall, James Redfield and Herman Sinaiko discussing the multitude of themes within Homer's ancient epic. A trailer for the film is at:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C_p9_rs-C14

Eleveld and Maruszak are English teachers who co-founded EM Press.

April 10, 2012, program

Theater Wit,
1229 W. Belmont, Chicago
www.theaterwit.org

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

Free - donations accepted

Eleveld, a Midland Authors board member, is editor of the books *The Spoken Word Revolution* and *The Spoken Word Revolution Redux*. Maruszak is producer of "Slam the Radio: Poetry" on Xm/Sirus' Book Channel.

The film begins at 7 p.m., but the Society encourages guests to arrive early for a social hour 6-7 p.m. in Theater Wit's bar. Reservations are not required. Admission is free, but the Society will accept donations to defray the cost of programs.

For more information, see www.midlandauthors.com.

(Note: There won't be free appetizers as we've usually had at the Cliff Dwellers.)

Presidents Continued from Page 1

sight of the story I am trying to tell, and always trying to provide forward motion in creating a narrative," he said. "... Storytelling is the most powerful way to deliver an analytical message."

All those electronic notes also come in handy for writing articles about politics, said Perlstein, a former writer for the Village Voice and the New Republic.

"The cool thing is that when it comes to the historically grounded political essays I write now, I have a big enough archive to pull [information] out of my computer and be able to apply it to contemporary politics," he said. "My 80 million references to the obscure 1960s [Michigan] governor George Romney have become prime real estate in journalism."

Also, the same story lines keep appearing, he said.

"I like to say these days that every article I wrote has been the same for 15 years and can be summarized in four words: 'Republicans crazy, Democrats stupid,'" he said.

After reading from his chapter, Perlstein told the audience they would have to wait a year to get the rest of the story.

"When this book comes out, I think it is going to be fascinating," he said.

The Society of Midland Authors' 2011-2012 programs may be heard in their entirety at www.chicagopublicradio.org amplified.

"Lisa leaned back in her chair, trying to keep calm. Major McCall shifted in his chair. The chair squeaked. Lisa struggled to prevent the noise from unnerving her. After a long moment of thoughtful silence, McCall spoke." – *Lisa's Way*, **Robert Collins**, 2011

Writing an engaging story that's historically accurate

BY THOMAS FRISBIE

Literary License recently asked **John Christgau** about *Birch Coulie* (New Books, Page 4). Here's what he told us:

Literary License: *What interested you in the Dakota War?*

John Christgau: My interest in the Dakota War began in 1972 when I was looking for the setting of a novel (*Spoon*). I was born and raised in Minnesota and my high school history teachers taught me all I wanted to know (and much I didn't want to know) about the Boer Wars and other dull historical events. I didn't discover the tragedy or the importance of the Dakota War until I left the state. Over time, it became apparent to me from my reading that the war dramatically illustrated all that was wrong with the government's policies with respect to Native Americans.

Literary License: *What don't people understand about it?*

John Christgau: This year is the sesqui-centennial of the Dakota War and the Birch Coulie battle. At the time, the Indians were characterized as ferocious savages who were determined to drive all white settlers from Minnesota. That characterization of Indians as a warlike people still persists. (The "tomahawk chop" by Atlanta baseball fans, and the fight by University of North Dakota alums to preserve their "Fighting Sioux" mascot demonstrate how abiding that image of Native Americans is.) Few understand today that in the dramatic and desperate struggle by the Dakota Indians to regain their ancestral lands, the fate of Minnesota hung in the balance during the two days of the Birch Coulie battle.

Literary License: *How did you do your research?*

John Christgau: In the months and years following the war, numerous participants gave first-hand accounts of the battle. The Renville County Historical Society, located not far from the Birch

Coulie battle site, keeps an extensive archives of those accounts in the form of memoirs, letters, and newspaper interviews. The Minnesota State Historical Society also has extensive holdings focused on the Dakota War and the Battle of Birch Coulie. The best narrative accounts of the war by Indians can be found in *Through Dakota Eyes* by Gary Anderson and Alan Woolworth. In these somewhat scattered accounts and records, a dramatic narrative line is missing. The challenge for me in writing about the battle was to present an engaging story that was historically accurate at the same time it captured the hair-raising moment-by-moment drama of the battle.

Literary License: *Where do the different spellings of Coulie come from?*

John Christgau:

Immediately after and ever ever since the battle the word coulie has been spelled numerous ways: coulee, coulie, cooley, couley, coolie, etc. In his early account of the Dakota War, Charles



Literary Landscape
John Christgau

Flaudrau acknowledges the dispute over the correct spelling of the term. He explains the the term is from the French verb "couler," meaning a slow, trickling stream. Flandrau argues that the true spelling of the word is "coulie." His argument was often ignored, as evidenced by a participant's color sketch of the battle site that appears on the *Birch Coulie* book jacket.

Literary License: *What is your next book?*

John Christgau: I have several writing projects in various stages of completion, among them a screenplay loosely based on a horse racing scandal in Los Angeles in 1941, and another an anti-war stage play set in Iraq.

The project closest to completion and publication is titled *Incident at the Otterville Station*, a dramatic nonfiction narrative of the rescue of a Missouri slave and his family by Minnesota soldiers in 1863.

Biblio File

Continued from Page 2

7:30 p.m., he will speak and sign books at Frank Lloyd Wright's Unity Temple, 875 Lake St., Oak Park, Ill. ... **Gerry Souter's** latest book, *American Shooter: A Personal History of Gun Culture in the United States*, was released nationally by Potomac Books on Feb 28. He and his wife, **Janet Souter**, have also been commissioned by their London publisher, Carlton Books (with Scholastic as their U.S. distributor), to create a proposal for the March 19 Bologna Book Fair titled *Technology in War* – a look at the changing face of warfare in light of technology replacing troops for key roles. Also, two of their other book projects, the memoir, *The Art Student: Living with Wildebeest* and *Photog! Chicago Press Photographers and 100 years of Life on the Streets* are nearing completion. Their new blog is souterauthors.blogspot. They've had to change their e-mail, too, because of technical problems. It's now avril1grp2@comcast.net. ... **Ted**



Gerry Souter

McClelland was quoted in a March 17 Los Angeles Times story about HBO's "Luck." ... The nonprofit National Society of Newspaper Columnists Education Foundation has renamed its undergraduate college scholarship program to honor SMA member **Jeffrey Zaslow**, who died last month. ... Spoken word poet **Kevin Coval** is scheduled to be at Fear No Art Chicago's March 26 dinner party. ... Former SMA member **Eric Klinenberg** (he now lives and teaches in New York) was in town March 8 to discuss his new book, *Going Solo: The*



Jeffrey Zaslow

Turn to Page 4

Biblio File

Continued from Page 3

Extraordinary Rise and Appeal of Living Alone. ... **Jaimy Gordon** made the U.K.'s Orange Prize long list. The short list will be announced April 17. ... **Jonathan Eig's** new website ChicagoSide goes daily April 2. Among the writers for the site focusing on Chicago sports will be **Joseph Epstein, Robert Kurson** and **Richard Babcock.** ... **Carol Madden Adorjan** writes with the sad news that Yuri Rasovsky, founder of the Chicago Radio Theatre and, more recently, the Hollywood Theatre of the Ear, died last month at age 67. He produced Carol's original radio plays, and he and she often worked together on adaptations. "He was a great talent and he will be missed," she says. ... **Richard Lindberg** has been engaged by his alma mater, Northeastern Illinois University, to write the first book-length history of the school, which dates back to its 1867 founding as a Cook County Normal School. The project was



Richard Lindberg

inspired by former SMA President **Bernie Brommel**, who is possibly the only Society of Midland Authors member with a university science building named after him (Bernard J. Brommel Hall, see Literary License, November/December, 2010). Also, Rich was at the Palos Heights (Ill.) Public Library March 15 to discuss his latest book *Heartland Serial Killers*, which is about Bell Gunness and Johann Hoch, two early 20th century serial killers who placed advertisements in the lonely hearts columns of ethnic newspapers advertising for desperately lonely men and women to marry, swindle and ultimately murder (they didn't put that last part in the ads). Rich also has given his talk about Gunness, Hoch and New England ax murderess Lizzie Borden to Romeoville (Ill.) Library and the Norwood Park Historical Society. A talk to the Irving Park Historical Society also is on the schedule. Rich writes to say, "I

Turn to Page 5

New Books

FROM RAIN: POEMS, 1970-2010

In simple, spare language the poetry in *From Rain: Poems, 1970-2010* by **Bruce Guernsey** examines the common objects around us as if they were clues to solving some kind of mystery. Ice, glass, stones, moss, and similar inanimate things take on meaning as the poet seeks to answer who and why we are. These poems, one of which appears below, are the detective's magnifying glass to examine our profound connection to the natural world and its disruption by war and loss.



Bruce Guernsey

In particular, the poet reflects on the disappearance of his father from a V.A. hospital in 1987. Suffering from Parkinson's disease, he vanished out the door one spring day and was never found. His wandering ghost haunts this collection. "The physical world of field and forest that I learned from my father, the very world he shuffled off into, I have been trying to grasp in these signs and symbols shaped into lines."

Arranged thematically into four sections, the poems in this collection have been published in *The Atlantic*, *Poetry*, *American Scholar*, *The Nation*, and many of the quarterlies, as well as in less traditional publications such as *Fly Rod & Reel*, *The Journal of Medical Opinion*, and *War, Literature and the Arts*.

Glove

If in this word
is love itself
then love is bone
and blood inside
the form that warms
your lovely hand—

your hand is love
and mine that takes
your love in mine
without your hand
is nothing but
an empty word.

THE CAUSE: THE FIGHT FOR AMERICAN LIBERALISM FROM FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT TO BARACK OBAMA

Kevin Mattson's latest book, *The Cause: The Fight for American Liberalism from Franklin Roosevelt to Barack Obama* (written with Eric Alterman), is an analysis of postwar American liberalism. It includes a chapter on Bruce Springsteen – the poet laureate of working-class liberalism. Springsteen's America, the book says, is "one in which working men and women were imbued with dignity, even heroism, where gays were embraced as brothers and sisters, where blacks and whites worked and played together, and where 'nobody wins unless everybody wins.'"

BIRCH COULIE: THE EPIC BATTLE OF THE DAKOTA WAR

In the days following the Battle of Birch Coulie, the decisive battle in the deadly Dakota War of 1862, one of President Lincoln's private secretaries wrote: "There has hardly been an outbreak so treacherous, so sudden, so bitter, and so bloody, as that which filled the State of Minnesota with sorrow and lamentation."

Even today, at the 150th anniversary of the Dakota War, the battle still raises questions and stirs controversy.

In *Birch Coulie* **John Christgau** (See Q&A, Page 6) recounts the dramatic events surrounding the battle, one of the most important to roil the American West.

Christgau's account of the war between white settlers and the Dakota Indians in Minnesota examines two communities torn by internal dissent and external threat, whites and Native Americans equally traumatized by the short and violent war.

Turn to Page 5

New Books

Continued from Page 4

RACHEL CARSON AND HER BOOK THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

Laurie Lawlor's new book (Holiday House, February, 2012) is for readers in grades 4-8. It celebrates the 50th anniversary of Carson's path-breaking work, *Silent Spring*. Here's what Laurie told Literary License:

Literary License: *What did you learn about Rachel Carson while researching this book?*

Laurie Lawlor: What seemed remarkable while reading her letters was her remarkable courage and unshakable belief that this was a book she had to finish. She confided to one friend, "I could never again listen happily to a thrush song if I had not done all I could."

She was totally dedicated to the painstaking research and writing of *Silent Spring*, knowing what kind of fire fight would possibly result from the book's publication. And she had real reason to be accurate and forceful. The chemical companies immediately began a very personal slander campaign against Carson in order to defend their products – DDT and other pesticides.

Throughout the creation of *Silent Spring*, she was taking care of many people in her extended family, including her niece's young son, whom she had adopted at age 50. What's most amazing to me was how she kept working on the book while suffering through the final stages of breast cancer – something she told very few people. She simply would not give up on the project.

Literary License: *Do today's elementary school aged children know who Rachel Carson is?*

Laurie Lawlor: Many fine environ-

mental activists and biologists I've met have told me that reading *Silent Spring* in their youth was key in their choice of careers. I am hoping to reintroduce Carson, who is not well-known to our younger generation, to help show what one very determined person can do to help save the planet. It's a hopeful, heroic story.

Literary License: *Will the release of "The Lorax" help build interest among kids in environmental issues?*

Laurie Lawlor: I certainly hope so! Many people – young and old – feel a sense of despair about the state of our environment. What "The Lorax" and Rachel Carson's story show is that it's not enough to take a stand quietly – but to attempt to create change right now, right in the communities where we live.



Here's what the publisher says about the book: "Once you are aware of the wonder and beauty of earth, you will want to learn about it," wrote Rachel Carson. An American marine biologist and conservationist, Carson is credited with advancing the global environmental movement. The publication of *Silent Spring* in 1962 brought environmental

concerns to the masses.

In this new, accessible biography, young readers are introduced to, and are sure to be inspired by, the widely acclaimed biologist.

Rachel Carson's fascination with and love for nature began when she was a child, but it was when she started work as a field biologist that she noticed disturbing trends in the environment. She published two best-selling books about the ocean, and in 1958 began investigating the effects of chemical pesticides. Despite criticism from the chemical industry, *Silent Spring*, her third book, was a huge success and led to further studies and to legislation designed to protect the environment.

Rachel Carson and Her Book That Changed the World depicts the life of a woman who demonstrated through the power of the written word how one person can alter an entire planet's course.



Laurie Lawlor

STEP GENTLY OUT

Helen Frost's new children's book, *Step Gently Out* (Candlewick, March 13, 2012), introduces her young readers to the many tiny creatures around them. Her lyrical text is paired with photos by Rick Lieder, a Michigan nature photographer, artist and book-jacket designer.

Kirkus Reviews said: "Breathtaking photos and an exquisite poem capture a bug's-eye view of nature. ... While Frost's lightly rhymed declarative verse encourages children to experience the natural world with care and openness to the tiny wonders of insect life around them, Lieder's richly colored intimate close ups offer every reason why. ... A dazzlingly poetic photo album of the insect world for tots on up."

Publishers Weekly said: "Captivating photography gives readers a closeup view of the world of insects, as described by a gently contemplative poem. ... The words and images achieve a Zenlike calm that also hints at the complicated web of life unfolding all around."

Biblio File

Continued from Page 4

am always amazed by the public's fascination with historic true crime.

Throughout the year I give these talks on various aspects of true crime, and most times I have a pretty good turnout." ...

Scott Turow, who is president of the Authors Guild, recently ripped a potential U.S. Justice Department antitrust lawsuit against publishers in an open letter to members. "Amazon was using e-book discounting to destroy bookselling, making it uneconomic for physical bookstores to keep their doors open," Scott wrote. (For another opinion on Amazon, see Literary Livelihood on Page 6.) ... Scheduled to take part this month in Columbia College Chicago's Fiction Writing Department's Annual Story Week were **Donna Seaman, Don DeGrazia** and **Nami Mun**.

Follow Biblio File on
Twitter@bibliofileSMA

New Members

D. Leigh Henson, author of *The Town Abraham Lincoln Warned*, *The Living Namesake Heritage of Lincoln, Illinois*, is a professor emeritus of the Missouri State University English Department, where he taught starting in 1994.

Henson grew up in Lincoln, Ill., the first town named for Abraham Lincoln before Lincoln became famous. According to legend, in 1853 when the town's founders asked their attorney, Abraham Lincoln, if they could name the town for him, he quipped: "You'd better not do that, for I never knew anything named Lincoln that amounted to much."

Henson received his B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. in English from Illinois State University. He taught English at Pekin Community High School from 1964 to 1994 and part-time at Illinois Central College from 1972 to 1976.



D. Leigh Henson

The Town Abraham Lincoln Warned examines how the town has explored and exploited its connections to Lincoln to create civic pride and strengthen its economy through tourism. Some of these community activities are success stories, but others reveal contro-

versy, irony, and missed opportunity. For nearly 10 years Henson has developed an online community history of Lincoln. The Illinois State Historical Society awarded this project its "Best Web Site" for 2004.

Henson has published articles in peer-reviewed history journals about Lincoln's political speeches in his first namesake town and about William Maxwell's autobiographical fiction set in Lincoln. Maxwell, also a native Lincolnite, was a long-time editor of the *New Yorker Magazine*.

Henson was an honorary member of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission of Lincoln, Ill.; and for the 2008 Lincoln Bicentennial Celebration there he wrote the script for a re-enactment of an 1858 political rally and speech by Lincoln the day after the last Lincoln-Douglas debate. Henson is researching the rhetorical development of Lincoln before his presidency.

Why author removed Amazon 'buy' buttons from his website

BY THOMAS FRISBIE

Jim Hanas, author of the e-book *Why They Cried* (ECW Press, 2010) recently removed the Amazon.com "buy" buttons from his website. He acted after Amazon – in a dispute with Hanas' book distributor, Independent Publishers Group – last month removed the "buy" buttons for the works of IPG's 400 indie publishers. Because Hanas' book is strictly an e-book, Amazon's action also removed reviews, reader comments and everything else.

Literary License recently interviewed Hanas, who grew up south of Cincinnati and attended Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Hanas also is author of two e-book short story collections, *Cassingle* (2009) and *Single* (2006). He was a digital pioneer, distributing e-books a year before there was a Kindle.

Literary License: *Can you describe how you are taking a stand?*

Jim Hanas: The interesting thing is that in addition to taking the buy button for Amazon off of my website, I am going whenever possible to stop buying from Amazon, which isn't easy because I have a Kindle, and I kind of always blithely purchased from Amazon.

Literary License: *You say you are making this change out of "enlightened self-interest in the IPG dispute." What's changed?*

Jim Hanas: Amazon seems willing to throw its weight around, as they did a few years ago with MacMillan, to pressure the suppliers on price. When that supplier is someone who services 400 indie book publishers, that is bound to trickle down to authors and to the publishers.

Literary License: *Will this be a blow you financially?*

Jim Hanas: As an admittedly small-time author, I don't have that much at risk. I am not liable to lose 80 percent of my income overnight if I don't go with Amazon. But for the first time, I am seri-

ously thinking what it would like to try to publish a book without Amazon. I think that is going to be a difficult choice to make. It is difficult to try to say that I will never self-publish a book through Amazon. That would be taking myself out of the 80 percent of the game.

Literary License: *Has Amazon crossed a line?*

Jim Hanas: I want to make clear, I think it's fine if they use their weight any way they want. But I want to use my weight in the ways I can, however small it might be. I think Amazon can be allowed to do what it does. But I am interested in literary and different independent presses. I don't know how IPG does financially, but I don't think independent book distribution is a get-rich-quick business.

I heard someone say once that Amazon certainly can negotiate in a tough way, but it seems that they are unnecessarily aggressive when they don't need to be against players that are not really that important.

Literary License: *Has this changed your view of Amazon?*

Jim Hanas: I think the thing that they are neglecting is Amazon had a huge amount of goodwill. I thought it was a good product. I think buying books

from them is the easiest way to buy books. All the user behavior was headed in their direction. Admittedly, that it affects me directly is enough to make me go to less user-friendly alternatives. ...

Certainly, I definitely think the dispute with IPG has to be positioned as a dispute about trying to cut out distributors. ...

E-publishing is certainly a good deal that people are making money off of in the short term. If they take out all the other links in the chain, the only place left to pressure suppliers will be independent authors. It feels for me like the chickens will come home to roost.

Jim Hanas lives in New York. His website is www.whyytheycried.com.

Literary
Livelihood
Jim
Hanas



What publishers and agents think of authors' 'epic' ideas

Ever wonder what publishers or agents are really telling you when they dash off that note? Here are some translations of publishing euphemisms that recently circulated on Twitter:

"This is too British for the American market." *I have no idea what this is about.*

"I hate the cover, too, but my hands are tied." *The publisher's niece did it.*

"It's a great local interest title!" *No one outside this town will want to read it.*

"You should hear back from us in January." *Of 2015.*

"It's a new classic." *Same as an old classic but the names are changed and it probably has vampires.*

"Just a couple of tiny changes needed." *I am about to send you 27 pages of edits.*

"Effortless prose." *Run-on sentences.*

"We changed the pub date to give the book the best exposure." *We f—ed up the schedule.*

"Epic." *Long.*

"I'm sure someone else will snap it up." *Not a chance in hell, but hope this gets you off my back.*

"I didn't feel enough empathy with the characters." *I suspect the author may be a nut job.*

"You might consider reworking the opening section." *You spelled your name wrong.*

"Brilliant roman a clef." *My name shows up 10 times.*

"A literary tour de force." *Pretentious.*

"Ambitious." *Way out of your league.*

"It has interesting literary aspirations." *We couldn't understand it, and it has no vampires.*

"I love it, but it doesn't fit our list." *I'm too much of a coward to say I don't like it.*

"Do you think we need the back story?" *I hated the first 20 chapters.*

"Your novel isn't right for us at this

“‘It has interesting literary aspirations’ means: We couldn’t understand it, and it has no vampires.’”

time.” *Or any time.*

"I asked finance to action payment weeks ago." *We have a policy of not paying until you scream at us 17 times.*

"I don't know where it would sit in the bookshop." *Our sales force is interested only in publishing celebrity blogs.*

"No holds barred." *Vicious slander.*

"Fast-paced page turner." *Lots of one-line paragraphs and short chapters.*

"There is such excitement in-house." *My assistant took the manuscript home and lost it.*

"I don't quite love it enough." *I fell asleep reading it.*

"Iconoclastic." *No punctuation.*

"We're assessing your marketing budget." *Take out a second mortgage.*

"I've never read anything like it." *It was the first manuscript that made me want to glue my eyes shut.*

"E-book sales are strong, don't worry." *Print sales are a disaster.*

"We lost no time reading your manuscript." *We just threw it away.*

"A modern classic." *Old-fashioned.*

"Urban and edgy." *We bought it for nothing, and no one has ever heard of the author.*

"You should join Twitter." *We are not spending a dime to publicize your novel.*

Final Chapters

Society of Midland Authors member **Grace Bacon Ferrier**, a one-room schoolhouse teacher who hand wrote two books on yellow legal sheets and won the SMA's Adult Nonfiction Award in 1987, died last year at the age of 97.

Ms. Ferrier's books were *Teacher, Teacher, I Done It* in 1986 and *Post Oak Sprouts* in 2001.

"I remember that Grace Bacon Ferrier came from her hometown to attend the dinner and receive her best nonfiction book award," SMA member Richard Frisbie recalled. "It was about her experiences as a teacher in a one-room school. Her publisher (from a small press) came too. Living far from any literary center, she was thrilled to receive attention from the SMA. It was a proud moment for the SMA, too, when we could reach out and find a fresh talent under these circumstances."

Grace Virginia Bacon Ferrier of Osage County in Missouri was born near Linn on Feb. 28, 1913, a daughter to the late George and Jennie (LeFevre) Bacon. In 1956 Grace married Buell Ferrier who preceded her in death in 1962.

After Ms. Ferrier graduated from Belle High School in 1931, she began a teaching career that spanned 43 years. At age 19 she began at Horseshoe Bend, a one-room rural school in Osage County. For two decades she taught in rural schools. She taught all subjects, grades 1-8; later in the city schools she taught English and social studies. She retired from teaching in 1974.

Her retirement allowed her to return to the Bacon family farm in rural Osage County, where her family had moved in 1920 on her seventh birthday.

Settled on the farm, she began to write stories of her life.

These were detailed, humorous tales of real people and events in central Missouri over 70 years, and provided the material for her books.

To receive her Society of Midland Authors honor, she traveled to Chicago and attended the awards ceremony, which was held at the Drake Hotel. While in Chicago she also was interviewed on WFMT-FM by the late SMA member **Studs Terkel**.

Literary Laughlines

Final Chapters

Longtime Society of Midland Authors member **Mary Jane Bezark** died last year at the age of 80.

Ms. Bezark, 80, a longtime resident of Highland Park, Ill., was born in 1931 and died last year at her son's home in Altadena, Calif., after suffering a series of strokes, her son, Adam, told the Chicago Tribune.

The former Mary Jane Mayer grew up in Glencoe and graduated from Northwestern University, the Tribune said. After graduating, she spent a year in New York, working as a junior editor in the poetry department at Random House.

Returning to the Chicago area, she worked as a staff writer for the Highland Park News for about 10 years into the early 1970s, then became a full-time freelancer for the Chicago Tribune and Sun-Times as well as the Highland Park Herald.



Mary Jane Bezark

Her bread and butter was writing newsletters for North Shore school districts in the 1970s and 1980s, and for The Josselyn Center for mental health on the North Shore, Adam Bezark said.

"She was always interested in education and health issues," he told the Tribune. "She took a natural springboard off of her family." She worked on the school newsletters when her son was a student.

Her husband, Leonard, died five years ago.

Printers Row

The Society of Midland Authors will have a tent at the Printers Row Lit Fest on June 9-10.

We've been officially confirmed, so contact SMA President Robert Loerzel for a two-hour time slot. The fee is \$35.

There are four slots on each day, starting at 10 a.m. More than one author can share a time slot. This is a good opportunity for authors to sell their books and meet readers.

Manage your online profile to avoid needless PR disaster

There's been a lot of press about the Chicago city clerk deciding to not use a student's design for this year's city sticker because it appears to have gang signs. The student and his mother claim he's innocent, but according to the Chicago Sun-Times, a picture on the student's Facebook page "showed youths making what appeared to be the 'pitchfork' hand sign of" a gang. Below that picture, a friend asked him if he was in a gang, which caused authorities to link what he posted on Facebook to his winning design.

Even though you are not a high school student, this serves as a warning about what you post online. Think about your profile: is there anything you don't want anyone to see? Or have you friended people to whom you don't want to expose your personal information or photos?

And what about your status updates or comments you've made on other people's pages?

If you want to see where your name appears on Facebook, in addition to a

Google search, try Foupas, which is a Facebook search engine. If a fan page or someone's personal page is public, your name will show up. Sometimes people tag us in photos and we're not aware of it until we do a search.

Avoid a public relations disaster: check your photos, remove anything you don't feel comfortable with, and make sure your privacy settings are locked down and that you actually know all your friends. You can also go a step further and delete your Facebook account, and then create a new one. However, if you delete your account, you'll have to get a new username because your old one will be retired.

So be careful out there, and consider all aspects of your public image, whether it's on Facebook or anywhere else online or offline.

“Tumblr is a free blogging platform that provides an easy way to post text, photos, video and audio online.”

Free blogging platform: Tumblr is a free blogging platform that provides an easy way to post text, photos, video and audio online.

It's easy to use because all you have to do is push a button for the type of media you want to post, and upload a file or embed code right in the editor. You can also simply write something and

publish it instantly, and make any changes with the text editor.

Your posts can be linked to your Twitter and Facebook accounts, and using tags will help you find people who are interested in your niche.

Tumblr's templates can be customized, and you can embed it on your own website.

It works on any smartphone where it is just as easy to use as on a computer. There are even Tumblr meetups around the world so that you can meet other bloggers in your area.

Tumblr was great when it started, but they've made it even better with an elegant interface and features that have really expanded it without compromising its simplicity and style.

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

*Literary
Loudspeaker*

**Tom
Ciesielka**



'I never write a character I don't love'

BY ROBERT LOERZEL

Ten thousand people spent three days in March talking about books in downtown Chicago, when the city hosted the national AWP conference. The speakers at the Association of Writers and Writing Programs event included several SMA members and award winners.

Joe Meno, SMA fiction winner for his 2005 book *Bluebirds Used to Croon in the Choir*, encouraged writers to pursue their idiosyncratic ideas. And then, he said, they should ask: "What's the best place for that kind of book this is?"

Despite all of the gloom about publishing, Meno insisted more opportunities exist than ever (which seemed true at the AWP book fair, with hundreds of tables selling books and journals from small presses). "In 2012, if you have a book, the possibility of finding a

publisher is greater than ever before," Meno said at a March 1 panel on "The Business of Publishing Your Novel with an Independent Press." When an audience member asked whether

authors should be expected to promote their books, Meno laughed off the notion that writers should stay isolated. "I don't know where this idea comes from, that writers and poets are ... frail, that we're these brains floating around," he said.

Benjamin Percy, who won the SMA fiction award last year for *The Wilding*, took part in a March 1 discussion called "There Will Be Blood: Writing Violence in Fiction." He said a minimal violence can be powerful in print.

"Sometimes the white space is the best way to show that violence," he said. "Sometimes that isn't the case. Sometimes you want the camera to linger. The question is: Is it earned?"

Percy discouraged going overboard with colorful turns of phrase. "Amp down the special effects and deliver the goods," he said. "Let the violence speak for itself."

Jaimy Gordon read from her 2010 National Book Award-winning novel *Lord of Misrule* on March 2, followed by a conversation with **Rebecca Skloot**, author

of *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, moderated by **Donna Seaman**. Gordon said her novel was inspired by her experiences working at a racetrack in the late 1960s, where she was fascinated by horse racing lingo and the other slang. "It was such a completely new language to me," she said. "More than anything, I wanted to penetrate that language."

Seaman also spoke at a March 3 discussion, "First City in Literature: A Discussion of Chicago's Past, Present and Future Writers." She said Chicago has become a more vibrant literary city in recent years, thanks to the rise of small presses and MFA programs at local universities. And how can the book scene thrive even more? Seaman urged book lovers to vocally encourage the media to run more book reviews. And support local bookstores,

she said. "We tend to be a quiet, thoughtful group, but we need to be more active," she said. "You always have to fight for what you care about and what you love."

SMA members **Stuart Dybek** and **Aleksandar Hemon** – both two-time SMA Award winners – took part in a March 2 panel discussion on "Finding Home: Immigrant Voices in American Literature," with novelist **Nami Mun**.

Asked about his literary influences, Dybek said, "The writers who influenced me the most were the actual Europeans – the Russians and the Spanish." In their writing, he said, "I could feel the fairy tale."

Dybek said his upbringing in Chicago's Little Village instilled in him a love and fascination with ethnic culture. "I admit it," he said. "If it's ethnic, I'm probably going to like it. If it's McDonald's, I'm going to hate it."

Hemon said he believes the greatest American novel of the 20th century was by an immigrant from Russia, Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*. Hemon said the English language itself is a melting pot that contains elements from other languages. "In some ways, the notion of the immigrant in American literature is nonsensical," he said.

Hemon, a Bosnian immigrant who has

lived in Chicago for 20 years, said he thinks of himself – and his books – as existing in an "overlapping space" between different places and languages. "This negotiation between the two spaces, the two languages, the two cultures, is inherently creative," he said. "It forces me to find solutions."

Achy Obejas, an SMA member who has been the SMA award finalist for her books *Ruins* and *Days of Awe*, talked about "Ambitious Fiction" on a March 3 panel that also included Jane Smiley, the SMA fiction winner for her 1991 novel *A Thousand Acres*.

Obejas' advice to writers included creating a graphic rendition of a novel, such as a diagram. "The act of trying to organize it acts on your brain," she said. Asked by an audience member about some of her not-so-likable characters, Obejas said:

"The more I write, I am more interested in characters that are dislikeable." But Obejas said she loves those characters just as much as any other. When she was writing *Ruins*, she said, "I loved my characters so much, I didn't want to hurt them" – but she knew that she had to.

Smiley said she has a trick to help her work out problems when she's writing a novel. "I write little letters to myself," she said. That act – putting down her problem in words – often leads to a solution, she said. Smiley also urged writers to eavesdrop on strangers' conversations and to watch people. "You have to gossip a lot," she said.

And if you have a lot of characters that readers might have trouble keeping straight, give them distinct names and characteristics, she said.

Marilynne Robinson, SMA fiction winner for her 2004 novel *Gilead*, took part in a March 3 discussion on "Literature and Evil" – but the very title of the event seemed to make her uneasy. What is evil? "The greatest peril is in thinking that you know what it is," Robinson said. "Too easily arrived-at definitions of good and evil do the work of the devil."

When the authors were asked how they create evil characters, Robinson said, "I never write a character I don't love, and the reason is that I'm going to spend years with this person."

Literary
Latest
Robert
Loerzel



Society of Midland Authors

Annual Dinner Early Registration Form

The Society of Midland Authors annual awards banquet will be held May 8 in the LaSalle Room at the Holiday Inn Chicago Mart Plaza, 350 N. Orleans, Chicago.

The reception with a cash bar will start at 6 p.m. Dinner will begin at 7 p.m.

Jay Bonansinga is the emcee.

Name: _____

Number of Chicken Vesuvio dinners at \$75 each. _____

Number of vegetarian (risotto with grilled asparagus) dinners at \$75 each. _____

Donation. _____

Total _____

Please clip above form and mail to: Dinner Reservation, Society of Midland Authors, P.O. Box 10419, Chicago IL 60610
 You may also download a similar form at our website, www.midlandauthors.com

SMA annual dinner: ‘A merry feast’

Here’s what **Hobart C. Chatfield-Taylor**, the first president of the Society of Midland Authors and later its historian, wrote 80 years ago about the organization’s annual gathering of authors:

“We Midlanders do assemble once a year ... [but] instead of being bored by ‘high-brow’ sapience we have been diverted by the pleasing wit of Alice French, Meredith Nicholson, Randall Parrish, George Ade, Emerson Hough, Zona Gale, and Margaret Hill McCarter.

“Even at the last annual meeting ... we just sat together in a friendly group while Clara Laughlin, Edith Wyatt, and Harriet Monroe told us human stories of James Whitcomb Riley’s loveliness and quaint-



Hobart Chatfield-Taylor

ness. “But the annual meeting is the only formal conclave of the year, and even that is followed by sufficient cheer and welcome to make what Shakespeare calls a ‘merry feast.’ ...

“Decked in paper motley, we then devour the roast beef of old England and quaff October ale; or, in more homely guise, eat pork and beans and pumpkin pie until the hard cider which has washed them down begins to tingle in our toes. Then we must needs dance a reel to the tune of ‘Old Dan Tucker,’ till the perspiring fiddler will bow no more.

“No, there is but little wisdom and false philosophy in the Society of Midland Authors, and much that is human and edi-

fyng, even our annual meetings being far from staid events. In the winter time, however, we gather at such Bohemian places as Mme. Galli’s, the Bismarck Garden, or De Jonghe’s French restaurant; while in summer we hie either to Lake Forest for a sylvan outing or to the Chicago lawn of our charming Secretary, whenever wandering Thespians raise their trestles there.

“Indeed, if the Society of Midland Authors has a just reason for being, it lies, I repeat, in its avowed purpose of bringing the writers of the Middle West together in closer association. Though a society of authors, it is nevertheless free from cant and prejudice, the creation of both friendship and goodfellowship among the men and women of the Middle West who write for a living being the object for which it was founded.”

“As the truck pulled away, I looked at our home for the last time. Though its outline faded into the darkness of the night, I could still plainly see the red stars and the bayonets reflecting the moonlight.” – *When God Looked the Other Way: An Odyssey of War, Exile, and Redemption*, **Wesley Adamczyk**, 2004

A new chapter for writing Chicago nonfiction

This is an abridged version of a speech SMA member Kevin Davis gave March 1 at the AWP conference in Chicago.

Chicago has long been associated with grit, realism and industrial labor. Does this image captures the truths about living, working and writing in Chicago today?

You bet. I think any Chicago writer trying to make a living with words would agree that it's just like industrial labor – long hours, low wages, insufferable working conditions.

But I want to talk about the portrayal of this city in nonfiction – creative nonfiction, literary journalism or essay writing. My fear is that this city's realism – which long ago shifted from Sandburg's vision – is not being captured by contemporary writers for audiences outside of this city. It is a city that is rich and dynamic, as well as gritty and real.

Trying to define a city's ethos is destined for debate. I'm sure Sandburg honked off a lot of people who weren't into hog butchering and didn't work in factories.

Sandburg's most famous description of the city is as "Hog Butcher for the World/Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat/Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight Handler/Stormy, Husky, Brawling, City of the Big Shoulders." We're not the hog butcher any longer, but we love our pork. Look at all these new pork-inspired restaurants, these foodie celebrations of pork and bacon, the wildly popular restaurant called the Purple Pig.

Stacker of wheat? More like stacker of sandwiches. Craft burger joints everywhere. Freight handler? We still have a massive railroad junction, though air freight has replaced many rail cars. Stormy, husky brawling City of Big Shoulders? Sure, look at the politics. But the stockyards and major meat packing plants have been closed for decades.

In the last two decades, we lost two great nonfiction writers (and SMA members) who helped define a more modern version of the city, writers whose voices were strong enough to reach beyond its

borders. They were **Studs Terkel** and **Mike Royko** – journalists and storytellers.

Terkel's work reinforced some of Sandburg's observations. He found the voices of working-class people throughout the city's diverse neighborhoods and let them tell their own stories of dreams and hardship. Royko was an everyman's columnist who was unafraid to take on the first Mayor Richard Daley. And one thing that hasn't changed in Chicago is political corruption. There have been 1,531 public corruption convictions in the Northern District of Illinois since 1976.

With Terkel and Royko gone, few nonfiction writers' work has tried to capture this city and bring it to a bigger audience. One of those writers is **Alex Kotlowitz**.

His breakthrough book, *There Are No Children Here*, chronicled the lives of two boys in a public housing project. Years later, he wrote the book *Never A City So Real*, a love letter to Chicago told in nine essays – from the story of a steelworker-



Literary
Lecture
Kevin
Davis

turned-union-organizer to an Albanian man who runs a Northwest Side diner. The book contains snapshots of a changed city whose grip on the past is slipping, but not quite ready to let go all the way. And that, in many ways, is Chicago.

I'm hard pressed to name other contemporary authors of nonfiction who write about this city as it is now.

Some of the most commercially successful nonfiction writers who write about Chicago mine the past. When I look for contemporary books about the city, I find mostly historical books about crime: *Devil in the White City* by Erik Larson (not a Chicagoan); *Get Capone* by **Jonathan Eig**, a Chicagoan; *Sin in the Second City* by Karen Abbott, not a Chicagoan.

Even the popular contemporary books focus on crime such as *Gang Leader for a Day* by Sudhir Venkatesh, and *Courtroom 302* by **Steve Bogira** about a year in a criminal courtroom at the infamous 26th and California. I'm guilty about that myself, having written a nonfiction book called *Defending the Damned* about public defender in Chicago who specialize in representing murder suspects.

But this is a city that's growing Internet-based businesses such as Groupon and Grub Hub. Financial services are still big, but the trading pits of the Board of Trade and Mercantile Exchange are all but silent, replaced by computerized trading. Look at the city's largest employers today: government, health care and insurance companies. Images of people hunched over computer screens and going to meetings is not gritty or romantic-sounding to a writer. So where can a writer of creative nonfiction or literary journalism go for inspiration?

Well, it's still a city that works – and it's still made to work by immigrants. This is an area rich for writers of fiction and nonfiction. This is where we're going to find stories that define contemporary Chicago, where we will find a new romanticism not rooted in industry and hog butchery, but in a new melding of cultures ... and new clashes of culture.

This is what inspires me as a writer. In my neighborhood, I walk the streets and out of curiosity went into a little storefront called the Pan African Association. I meet a man who fled Burundi and arrived in winter without a coat and find that thousands of Africans here have to be taught how to live in a cold climate. Many wore flipflops in the snow. I wrote about it in an essay.

I meet a young man who fled Iraq and moved to Chicago, leaving his family behind. He lives in along Devon Avenue, one of the most fascinating streets in Chicago, crowded with people from the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and beyond. I'm working on a piece about this young man.

What else defines Chicago? The West and South sides – Englewood, one of the most violent neighborhoods anywhere, define another side of Chicago – less romantic, but oh, so real, so gritty. There's Pilsen and Little Village, home to Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and others from Central and South America. This, too, is Chicago.

So our challenge, as Chicago writers, is to draw on what's around us and recast Chicago for what it is now. Is it possible to encapsulate this city's image in a few lines of poetry as Sandburg did? I challenge my poet friends to try and I hope that it's not just a few lines, but volumes.

SMA QUESTIONNAIRE: The Society of Midland Authors wants your feedback. Please fill out this survey to help us make plans for the future. It's also an opportunity to let us know if you'd like to help out with the SMA's activities. This survey is also online — visit www.midlandauthors.com and click on the "MEMBER SURVEY" link. Or if you prefer to fill out this paper version, mail it to: Society of Midland Authors, P.O. Box 101419, Chicago IL 60610. Please send us your completed survey or fill it out online by April 30.

WHO ARE YOU?

- Are you a current member of the Society?
 Yes No
- Are you a former member of the Society?
 Yes No
- Approximately how many years in total (consecutive or nonconsecutive) have you been a member?
 1-5 6-10 11-15
 16-20 21+
- If you not currently a member, why not?
 Too expensive Not useful
 Forgot to renew

Tell us more: _____

HOW ARE WE DOING?

- How satisfied are you with your Society membership?
 Very dissatisfied
 Somewhat dissatisfied
 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
 Somewhat satisfied
 Extremely satisfied

MISSION

- Do you believe the Society needs to clarify its mission? Yes No
- Please rank the following statements in order of importance to you personally:
___ The Society is a social group for writers.
___ The Society provides networking opportunities.
___ The Society promotes members' work.
___ The Society encourages new writers.
___ The Society supports the literary arts in the Midwest.

PUBLIC EVENTS

- Please indicate your interest in the following themes for the Society's public events: [1 = not interested, 2 = somewhat interested, 3 = neither interested nor uninterested, 4 = somewhat interested, 5 = very interested]
___ Fiction
___ Nonfiction
___ Chicago/Midwest history
___ Poetry
___ Writing craft (writing, revision, technique)
___ The business of publishing (getting published, promoting work)
___ Book reviewing
___ Social media
___ Welcoming new members
- Please indicate your interest in the following formats for events: [1-5]
___ Author readings
___ Panel discussions
___ Casual mixers/cocktails
___ Book groups

- ___ Critique groups
- Please indicate your interest in the following locations and venues:
___ Chicago neighborhoods
___ Chicago suburbs
___ Other cities/states
___ Libraries
___ Bookstores
___ Bars
___ Coffee shops
___ Member homes

PUBLICITY

- How often do you visit the Society website?
 Weekly Monthly
 Yearly Never
- How often do you visit the Society Facebook page?
 Weekly Monthly
 Yearly Never
- Do you follow the Society on Twitter?
 Weekly Monthly
 Yearly Never
- Are there any specific areas you feel we could be promoting the Society better?

- How often are you willing to receive emails from the Society?
 Quarterly Once a month
 Twice a month Four times a month
- Would you be interested in receiving Literary License as an e-newsletter instead of as a print edition? Yes No
- Please share your thoughts on the content of Literary License. What do you like? What would you like to see more of?

WEBSITE

- Please tell us how well the website does the following. [1-5]
___ Explains the mission and membership of the Society
___ Captures interest of new users
___ Promotes our authors' books
___ Promotes our authors as speakers
___ Promotes the SMA awards
___ Promotes the SMA programs
___ Promotes SMA membership
___ Shares current news about the Society and its members

AWARDS DINNER

- Have you attended the award ceremony?
 Yes No
- If yes, in which year did you most

- recently attend?
 2007 or earlier 2008
 2009 2010 2011
- Please rate the following for the ceremony most recently attended. [1-5]
___ Cost ___ Location
___ Host ___ Length ___ Food
___ Entertainment value
 - The 2012 awards dinner will follow a similar format to years past. For 2013 and future years, please rate your interest in the following ideas. [1-5]
___ Don't change a thing.
___ Seated ceremony in a hall (e.g., the Harold Washington Library auditorium), free to the public.
___ Seated ceremony in a hall (e.g., the Harold Washington Library auditorium), free to the public, followed by a ticketed reception with drinks and hors d'oeuvres.
___ Ticketed wine and cheese reception with shorter ceremony.

THE FUTURE

- In just a few short years the Society will celebrate its 100th anniversary. How should the Society prioritize its efforts in 2012? Please rank the following from 1 to 4, with 1 being the most important.
___ Creating more dynamic programming
___ Building membership
___ Broadening geographic reach
___ Enhancing value of membership

GETTING INVOLVED

- The Society thrives on member participation. If you are interested in becoming more involved, please indicate your areas of interest. [SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]
 Identify and nominate authors in your area
 Program events
 Write blog posts
 Help with publicity
 Help with website/online presence
 Represent SMA at book fairs, etc.
 Other
- Please provide your email address or telephone number. [FILL IN THE BLANK]

FINAL THOUGHTS

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your insight is truly appreciated! Please feel free to share any final thoughts below. Use more paper if needed.

