

Biblio File

Michael Raleigh's five Paul Whelan novels in his mystery series were reissued Feb. 17 in ebook, print, and audiobook format by a new publisher,



Michael
Raleigh

Diversion Books of New York. They are *Death in Uptown*, *A Body in Belmont Harbor*, *The Maxwell Street Blues*, *A Killer on Argyle Street* and *The Riverview Murders*. Michael also has two new books coming out (See New Books, Page 4). ...

Mahmoud Saeed has returned safely from Iraq and attended the SMA February program. He was just a couple of miles from the fighting. ... Jim Reiss and Beverly Offen gave a poetry reading Feb. 22 for the Illinois State Poetry Society at Brewed Awakening in Westmont, Ill. Jim read from his recently published book, *The Novel*. ... ABC-TV on Feb. 11 quoted Eldon Ham, who wrote a book about cheating in baseball, saying Little League has grown to be as competitive as high school sports, which has long had a problem with ringers. ...

Keir Graff writes to say, "I sold a book!" Publishers Marketplace wrote: "Booklist Online Editor and author of *The Other Felix* Keir Graff's *The Matchstick Castle*, pitched as merging a bit of Lemony Snicket with some Roald Dahl, a boy at his strict uncle's house for the summer kicks a soccer ball into the woods and discovers *The Matchstick Castle*, home to the marvelous, odd, Van Dash family, whose unique views of the world, their inventions and sense of adventure, turn a grim month full of summer school into the adventure of a lifetime." ... Greg Borzo is looking for outdoor fountains in Chicago for his next book. If you know of an obscure one, let him know. ... In the

Turn to Page 3

Join the Midland Authors for centennial celebration

BY ROBERT LOERZEL

The Society of Midland Authors is celebrating its 100th birthday with festivities on May 1 and 2 in Chicago.

On Friday, May 1, the Society will hold its annual awards banquet, honoring the best 2014 books by Midwestern authors, at the Cliff Dwellers Club, 200 S. Michigan Ave., 22nd floor, Chicago.

The master of ceremonies will be Robert K. Elder, the author of six books including *Last Words of the Executed* and *The Film That Changed My Life*. He is also the director of digital product development and strategy at Crain Communications Inc., a journalist and founder of Odd Hours Media, LLC.

The awards night starts with a cocktail hour at 6 p.m., followed by dinner at 7 p.m. and then the awards banquet.

Tickets are \$75 and can be reserved by mailing a check with a reservation form – via PayPal (with an extra \$1 fee) at:

midlandauthors.com/online_banquet_form_14.html

As in past years, attendees can expect to take home free copies of many of the award-winning and finalist books. (Please note that that awards banquet is on a Friday this year rather than the typical Tuesday schedule we've followed in past years.)

On Saturday, May 2, the Society will celebrate its centennial with a day of literary speakers and panel discussions from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at University Center, 525 S. State St., Chicago. Admission is free, and the event will be open to the public.

Our tentative list of authors who are



Edward
Burke



Blue
Balliett



Haki
Madhubuti



Christine
Sneed

planning to speak includes Carol Anshaw, Blue Balliett, Timuel Black, Steve Bogira, Edward Burke, Ilene Cooper, Jonathan Eig, Rick Kogan, Haki Madhubuti, Martin Marty, Harry Mark Petrakis, Marc Kelly Smith and Christine Sneed, with more festivities and a full schedule to be announced.

If you're thinking about traveling from out of town to attend the awards banquet, we encourage you to stay through Saturday to catch all of these events.

And watch *Literary License* and the Society of Midland Authors Book Blog at:

(<http://midlandauthors.com/blog/>)

in the coming weeks and months for articles on our 100 years of history.

New Members

Thomas J. Gradel, co-author with **Dick Simpson** of *Corrupt Illinois: Patronage, Cronyism and Criminality* (See Literary Landscape, right), is a freelance writer, researcher and former communications consultant for political campaigns, non-profit organizations and labor unions. Since 2009, he has supervised research for and co-written several corruption reports with Simpson.

Elizabeth Wheeler, author of *Asher's Fault* (Bold Strokes Books, 2013) and *Asher's Shot* (Bold Strokes Books, 2014), teaches English in rural Illinois.

Asher's Fault was winner of 2013 Young Adult Creative Fiction Book of the Year award given by the National Federation of Press Women and Illinois Women's Press Association.

A former Chicago model and actor, Wheeler is a graduate of the University of Florida and the novel-writing program at the University of Chicago's Graham School. She has spoken internationally as well as at educational conferences in Illinois and is director of her school's drama program. Also, she is a contributing writer to a Classical Kids production, Gershwin's Magic Key, debuting at the Kennedy Center with the national symphony on April 26.

Lynn Sloan is the author of *Principles of Navigation* (Fomite, 2015), a novel set mostly in small town Indiana. The book tells the story of young couple whose decision to have a baby cracks open their marriage and launches them on separate and complicated journeys.

Sloan's short stories have appeared in *American Literary Review*, *The Literary Review*, *Nimrod*, *Puerto del Sol*, *Sou'wester*, among other journals, and they have been nominated for the Pushcart Award, and finalists for the Dana Award, the Katherine Anne Porter prize, and the Faulkner-Wisdom Competition.

Sloan received her master's degree from the Institute of Design, and taught in the photography department of Columbia College Chicago. She lives Evanston, Ill.

James W. Graham, author of *Victura: The Kennedys, a Sailboat, and the Sea* (ForeEdge, 2014), worked for some of Illinois' highest-ranking elected officials, including former Gov. Jim Edgar, and

Authors tell sordid history of Illinois' venal system

Not many states would honor a governor caught cheating the state by naming a village after him.

But in Illinois, that wouldn't surprise anyone reading the new book by **Thomas J. Gradel** and **Dick Simpson** titled *Corrupt Illinois: Patronage, Cronyism, and Criminality* (February 2015, University of Illinois Press).

Joel Matteson, the 10th governor of Illinois, left office in 1856 with \$250,000 that he amassed from selling fraudulent scrip to the state, Gradel said at the Feb. 10 Society of Midland Authors Program at the Cliff Dwellers club in Chicago. But the south Chicago suburb of Matteson is named for him, nevertheless.

Matteson was forced to pay back his ill-gotten gains, but his chicanery shows the roots of corruption in Illinois are deep, Gradel said.

"Our state history of political corruption goes back before the Civil War," Gradel said.

And it's a history that's unrelenting, he said.

"In 1970, Illinois Secretary of State Paul Powell died, leaving \$800,000 in shoe boxes in his hotel room closet. ... What most people don't know is that he had about \$3 million more stashed away in bank accounts," Gradel said.

In fact, since 1973, four of Illinois governors, 16 state legislators, three Illinois congressmen, 19 Cook County judges and 33 Chicago aldermen have been convicted for public corruption, Gradel said. Last year, Illinois even had two former gover-

nors in federal prison at the same time.

All told, corruption costs Illinois taxpayers \$500 million a year, he said. In the forward, former Illinois Gov. Jim Edgar wrote, "*Corrupt Illinois* is the most comprehensive account of corruption in our state ever published. It proposes cures, which will take decades to implement fully, but which deserve our attention now."

Simpson said much of the corruption has roots in Machine politics, which created a culture of corruption, that has lasted for more than a century and a half.

"The people of the state were continuously exposed to outrageous corruption scandals," Simpson said.

Since the 1980s, the FBI and U.S. attorneys throughout the state have stepped up their efforts to combat public corruption, he said. They have employed wiretaps, moles, sting operations and informants.

"The most successful of their operations was Operation Graylord. Operation Graylord was the famous federal probe into the Cook County court system," Simpson said. "In 1988, they brought convictions and guilty pleas from 87 court personnel and attorneys, including 15 Cook County judges."

Although Chicago and Cook County get most of the headlines, corruption stretches throughout the state, he said.

"We have a whole chapter just on suburban corruption in this book," he said.

The only answer is unrelenting pressure for reform, Simpson said.

Literary Landscape

Literary License

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

Crossover lit: Author writes about Chicago's bridges

Patrick T. McBriarty will tell the story of Chicago as seen through its bridges at the Society of Midland Authors March 10 program

From the first wood footbridge built by a tavern owner in 1832 to the fantastic marvels of steel, concrete, and machinery of today, Chicago has quite a story to tell.

McBriarty's book, *Chicago River Bridges* (October 2013, University of Illinois Press), shows how generations of Chicagoans built a thriving city trisected by the Chicago River and linked by its many crossings.

"This first comprehensive guidebook of these remarkable features of Chicago's urban landscape was awarded the 2013 Henry N. Barkhausen Award for original research by the Association for Great Lakes Maritime History and received an Honorable Mention in the Chicago Writer's Association 2014

Book Awards in the traditional nonfiction category," the publisher wrote.

The SMA's **Greg Borzo** wrote, "After reading Patrick McBriarty's impressive and thoroughly researched Chicago River Bridges, no one could ever again overlook or take for granted Chicago's bridges. Thanks to this comprehensive book - filled with a treasure trove of stunning photographs, drawings, and maps - we now know that designing, funding, building, operating, maintaining, moving, and rebuilding Chicago's bridges was vital to the development of the Windy City. To

March 10, 2015, program

**Cliff Dwellers
200 S. Michigan Avenue
22nd floor**

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

Free - donations accepted

'stacker of wheat' and 'player with railroads,' we must now add 'designer and builder of bridges.' "

The book "describes the structure and mechanics of various kinds of moveable bridges (including vertical-lift, Scherzer rolling lift, and Strauss heel trunnion mechanisms) in a manner that is accessible and still satisfying to the bridge aficionado, and it explains how the domi-

nance of the 'Chicago-style' bascule drawbridge influenced the style and mechanics of bridges worldwide. ... Throughout are the human dramas that played out on and around the bridges."

Upcoming program

Tuesday, April 14: Poet **Roger Bonair-Agard**, winner of the Society of Midland Authors Award for his 2013 book *Bury My Clothes* will read from his work.

The program will be at 6 p.m. social hour, 7 p.m. talk, at Cliff Dwellers Club, 200 S. Michigan Ave., 22nd floor, Chicago,

Martin is set to be published March 18. ... **Cristina Henriquez's** novel *The Book of Unknown Americans* is the Target Club Pick for March. ... **Arnie Bernstein** was interviewed Feb 23 on the radio show *Codes & Conspiracies: American Nazis*. ... **Amelia Cotter's** latest is featured in Robert Epstein's *The Sacred in Contemporary Haiku*. ... **Candace Fleming's** middle-grade Buffalo Bill biography will be published in spring 2016.

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March 1 online Chicago Sun-Times, Moraine Valley Community College professor Spencer Michael Farmans wrote that **Harry Mark Petrakis'** new book *Song of My Life: A Memoir* "is a work of lyrical power and poignancy that may prove to be among the most important works Petrakis has produced." ... **Ray Boomhower's** biography of John Bartlow

New Members

Continued from Page 2

also has been a public affairs consultant to major corporations and industry associations.

History and sailing are his passions. He has sailed and sometimes raced small sailboats on Lake Michigan for 20 years, the last five on the 24-foot sloop *Venturous*, somewhat smaller but similar to the 25-foot Kennedy sailboat *Victoria*.

Susan Croce Kelly, author of *Father of Route 66: The Story of Cy Avery*, and *Route 66: The Highway and Its People*, grew up in the St. Louis area near Route 66 and worked as a newspaper reporter in St. Louis and Springfield, Mo.

She later worked and raised her children in Chicago and has written dozens of historical articles in the general press about Route 66.

Kelly holds a master's degree in American History from Saint Louis University and a B.S. degree from Purdue University. She is former editor and publisher of *Ozarks Magazine*, a travel and general interest publication about the Ozarks region.

As president of Kirkpatrick International, she produces executive speeches, annual reports, brochures, newsletters, web content and corporate magazines.

Kim Scipes, author of *AFL-CIO's Secret War against Developing Country Workers: Solidarity or Sabotage?* and *KMU: Building Genuine Trade Unionism in the Philippines, 1980-1994*, is an associate professor of sociology at Purdue University North Central in Westville, Ind., who writes about labor-related issues. He was named the "Outstanding Full-time Teacher" for the College of Liberal Arts for the 2006-2007 academic year.

Scipes says, "I got politicized fighting racism and white supremacy while on active duty in the US Marine Corps," where he was a sergeant.

He also says he is "a long-time labor activist, working on both domestic and global labor issues, and have long fought the AFL-CIO's foreign policy program."

Besides his books, he has written more than 170 articles published in 15 countries.

New Books

IN THE GARDEN OF LUXEMBOURG

Rosina Neginsky's new book, *In the Garden of Luxembourg* (l'Harmattan, 2015), is in three languages, English, French and Russian.

In this collection of poems, Neginsky "reveals concepts and images that shimmer and captivate us." In her poetic universe, love and death coexist; fairy tales play an important role: grey wolves, mermaids and tsarinas who rule over islands appear in her poems.

CONSTRUCTING A NEW NORMAL

Helen Reichert Lambin's new book, *Constructing a New Normal: Dealing Effectively with Losses Throughout Life*

(Jan. 26, ACTA Publications), guides readers on the path to reclaiming a normal life after losses that catapult them into chaos.

Readers learn to live with such losses as a broken arm, a missing child, advancing years, the death of a spouse. Lambin's book tells how such ordinary moments as sound of rain that ends a drought, the voice of someone we love, the hug of a child, the nearness of an animal companion, a shared meal or a quiet cup of tea can help someone transition to living life to the fullest.

PEERLESS DETECTIVE

DOC LOGAN'S MUMMY

Michael Raleigh has two new books coming out: *Peerless Detective* (Aug. 4, Diversion) and *Doc Logan's Mummy* (summer, Leo Publishing)

Peerless Detective is a coming-of-

age/crime novel set in Chicago in the 1970s.

In it, Billy Fox, a young drifter, has come to Chicago looking for his childhood sweetheart, on the run from her drug pusher husband. In Chicago Billy encounters a streetwise but eccentric private detective named Harry Strummer, who takes Billy under his wing, hires him, and teaches him about the detective business and life in general.

The book details their adventures together, some humorous, some serious, and one potentially deadly.

Doc Logan's Mummy is a young adult novel is set in the small Illinois town of Helvetia in the 1890s and tells the story of Dolores Wainwright, a lonely 13-year-old girl, who has just suffered a loss.

Into her life comes Professor Jacob Logan, a traveling showman and magician with a painted wagon full of curiosities, one of which is believed to be the mummy of a pharaoh of Egypt.

Logan is also on the run from several people who believe the mummy is worth a great deal of money.

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