



Literary License

October, 2005

To send E-mail to the editor, use richardfrisbie@sbcglobal.net. Our former E-mail connection has been discontinued.

MIDEAST EXPERT CALLS ISRAELI GAZA EXIT A SHAM

BY RICHARD FRISBIE

Israel's disengagement from Gaza is merely "letting the prisoners run the jail," Gregory Harms said in his explanation of U.S. Mideast policy at the Oct. 11 SMA meeting in the Chicago Athletic Association. Israel will still control Gaza's airspace, seacoast, borders and economy.

Like the late I.F. Stone, who made a career of exposing government lies by reading the fine print in public

documents, Harms has followed paper trails through the thickets of the U.S., U.N. and Israeli politics.

He said that while Israel has withdrawn its settlers from Gaza, it continues to move new settlers into the West Bank, which has water and arable land. He believes the purpose is to "freeze" progress toward a Palestinian state.

He said the Middle East as we know it, with the nations of Palestine, Iraq, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, was created by Britain and France from the

wreckage of the Ottoman Empire. He traced an expansion of the Monroe Doctrine to Theodore Roosevelt, who assumed a sort of police power over governments in Latin America, justifying interference in their internal affairs. Under Eisenhower, this all came together when the U.S. turned the Middle East into U.S. protectorate.

In recent years all U.S. administrations have favored Israel as a U.S. outpost. The idea that we're spreading democracy in the region is "for U.S. consumption."

Reading, Writing and (Possibly) Saving the World

Speaker: Katherine Hannigan, now a professor of art and design in northeast Iowa, says that moving to the Midwest helped inspire her much-acclaimed new children's book, *Ida B...and Her Plans to Maximize Fun, Avoid Disaster, and (Possibly) Save the World* (HarperCollins/Greenwillow). It won last year's SMA children's fiction award.

"I fell in love with the place—the tremendous space, the hills, the woods, the people who have no idea who you are but wave anyway as they drive by. Everything opened up—not just the physical space, but what I thought was possible for my life. So, on top of the teaching and making art and exhibiting I was doing, I decided I wanted to write a book for children, and somehow it would be about this place and all of these loves that were related to it."

She'll tell how she wrote it and got it published. One reviewer said, "Ida B is a study in balance. A fearless and joyful homeschooled ten-year-old, she becomes a surly, withdrawn student when she is forced to attend school after her mother contracts cancer. Surrounded by a literally babbling brook, a beloved orchard and the shadow of a mountain, Ida B's world is crumbled, torn and crushed as the full weight of the tragedy comes to bear down. Still, with the steadfast love of her family, the quiet support of her remarkable teacher, and her own inner fortitude, exultant spirit and considerable insight Ida B remains wonder-filled and triumphant."

Where: Chicago Athletic Assn., 12 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago

When: 6 p.m. social hour, 7 p.m. program, Tuesday, Nov. 8

Reservations NOT needed. Public invited. Reception and presentation \$5 for nonmembers. SMA members and teachers and students with ID free. Snacks and cash bar.

Other Coming Events

Jan. 10-Program to be announced.

Feb. 14-Carol Albright, "Science for Public Consumption."

March 14-Dr. Martin E. Marty, "Six Years Among the Fundamentalists."

April 11-William T. McGrath, copyright/ fair use.

May 9-Annual awards dinner.

Board Meetings

Usually on the third Wednesday of each month: Oct. 19, Nov. 16, Jan. 18, Feb. 15, March 15, Apr. 19, May 17.

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He reminded his audience, somewhat larger than usual despite competition from the first game of the White Sox-Angels series, that our C.I.A. overthrew a progressive legitimate government in Iran and installed the Shah as dictator (a point made in detail at a previous SMA meeting in March, 2003, by Stephen Kinzer, *New York Times* correspondent).

Harms, co-author (with Todd M. Ferry) of *The Palestine-Israel Conflict: A Basic Introduction* (London: Pluto Press, 2005) and freelance writer and independent researcher, has traveled throughout Israel, the West Bank and Gaza.

While there in 2002 in preparation for the book, Harms spent time with people and families in Israel and the refugee camps in Gaza, as well as meeting with journalists and human rights workers. In Ramallah, West Bank, he attended a small press meeting with the late president of the Palestinian Authority, Yasser Arafat.

Harms did not mention Palestinian attacks on Israelis, except to say that violence leads to more violence, and what reduces violence is the redress of grievances.

He said he plans to return to the area soon and resume learning Arabic.

SMA WEB SITE VISITS NOW NEARLY 5,000 A MONTH

Thanks to the creative efforts of SMA's webmaster, Mary Claire Hersh, the SMA web site attracted 237,553 hits and 40,769 visits during the past fiscal year.

Recent visits have totaled nearly 5,000 per month.

These figures should remind

members of how the web site can aid your professional life. It allows you to:

- Post the cover of your new book together with a brief blurb.
- Post your résumé.
- Announce your speaking engagements, book signings and other events.

- Sign up for our on-line speakers' bureau.
- Read current and back issues of *Literary License*.
- Read tips on publicizing your books.
- Find out about upcoming SMA programs.

All these services are free as part of your membership. Check them out now at www.midlandauthors.com.

TO BLOG OR NOT TO BLOG

BY TOM CIESIELKA

TC PUBLIC RELATIONS

Blogs have become a powerful way for people to communicate and create a community around a topic, cause or book with no significant dollar investment. If you have access to the Internet you can set up your Go to www.blogger.com/start.

Before we get to specifics for authors, let's take a look at part of the general blog definition presented by <http://wikipedia.org>:

"Blogs range in scope from individual diaries to political campaigns, media programs and corporations. They range in scale from the writings of one occasional author (known as a blogger), to the collaboration of a large community of writers. Many weblogs enable visitors to leave public comments, which can lead to a community of readers centered around the blog; others are non-interactive.

"The format of weblogs varies, from simple bullet lists of hyperlinks, to article summaries or complete articles with user-provided comments and ratings. Individual weblog entries are almost always date and time-stamped (but this is not a pre-requisite for being a blog), with the newest posting at the top of the page, and reader comments often appearing below it."

When a book author wants to set up a blog, there are features to consider:

Whether it should it be about you or about your new book. If an author simply wants a place to share wisdom and musings about writing experiences, that's one angle to take. However, from a public relations point of view, laying out your blog with a focus on promoting your new book might be more important.

Use it as a place to keep information current. The web pages that publishers have for your books may, or may not, get regular updating. With your own blog you can constantly update where you'll be speaking, provide links to reviews and media coverage, and anything that will keep information on your book fresh.

Exchange links with like-minded bloggers. Much of the success of web ratings is based on who you link to and who links to you. Therefore, work to set up links at your blog with places that could help drive traffic to you.

Of course, there is so much more to blogging than can be listed here. If you've not explored what blogs are and how authors use them, I suggest that you do a little research. One author whose blog does a nice job of promoting is Jennifer Weiner. See <http://jenniferweiner.blogspot.com>.

Next month's tip: Newsletters Can Help Promote Your Books.

REMEMBER MEINE?

We have heard from Dr. Larry E. Stanfel of Montana, who writes: "I am interested in biographical information on one of your past presidents, Franklin J. Meine, especially his publication of Helen West Heller's 1928 woodcut book, *Migratory Urge*, and any other connections he may have had to that artist. I would be grateful for anything you could tell me about him or any better sources you might suggest."

His E-mail address is porcupine@direcway.com and his address is P.O. Box 348, Roundup, Mont. 59072. (No "t" in direcway.)

CAROL'S IN-BOX

BY CAROL JEAN CARLSON
Third World Press recently announced the release of the

autobiography of the early life of Haki R. Madhubuti, *YellowBlack: The First Twenty-One Years of a Poet's Life—A Memoir*. The book chronicles Madhubuti's years as Don Lee, living in the dangerous neighborhoods of Detroit's Blackbottom and Chicago's Westside in a single-parent family.

Madhubuti says the things that saved him were the music of Motown, Miles Davis and Louis Armstrong. He also discovered Black literature.

Madhubuti doesn't tell his story in straight narrative form, but rather uses prose, poetry and "the beautiful free jazz."

Madhubuti is a poet, publisher, educator, lecturer, institution builder and community activist. He is currently director of the Master of Fine Arts Program in Creative Writing at Chicago State University.

This is the 27th book that Madhubuti has either written or edited.

TUROW TRIES NEW GENRE

Scott Turow turns from the courtroom to the battlefield in his new book, *Ordinary Heroes* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux). Retired newsman Stewart Dubinsky (a character in Turow's *Presumed Innocent*, 1987) discovers the papers of his late father, a JAG lawyer attached to Patton's Third Army. Written during his father's tour of duty in WWII, the material releases a string of secrets. There are love letters written to a fiancée unknown to the family and a manuscript written in prison that reveals the father's court-martial for aiding in the escape of an OSS officer and suspected spy.

The journey Dubinsky makes in piecing together his father's past is first one of curiosity, then life-changing. As *Publishers Weekly* warns, this is a book best started on a Friday night.

OTHER MEMBER NEWS

Almost Book of the Month

Kathleen Long Bostrom reports the following books published this year:

October: *Finding Calm in the Chaos: Christian Devotions for Busy Women*, Westminster John Knox

Press, and *Josie's Gift*, Broadman & Holman.

August: *The Day Scooter Died*, Zonderkidz.

April: *The Secret of the 12 Days of Christmas*, Kiwe Publishing.

Incredible Sequel

In May, St. Martin's Press is bringing out a sequel to James Conroyd Martin's earlier book, *Push Not The River*. It told of the incredible events that befell Countess Anna Maria Berezowska and her beloved Poland in the late 18th century. The working title of the new book, which picks up where the first left off, is *Against a Crimson Sky*.

Busy Poet

Michelle True reports a busy upcoming schedule after publishing his third book of poetry, *True Identities*, in September, with e-book and audio book versions too. He also published audio book versions of his first two poetry books, *True Reflections* and *True Emotions*.

In October, comes an anthology of poetry written by members of Poetic License, the writers' group he founded in 2003.

On Oct. 26 and April 26, 2006, Poetic License Writers Group will perform a public poetry reading at Indian Trails Library in Wheeling, Ill.

In March and April, 2006, he will speak on "How to Get Your Poetry Published" for the "Inside Writing and Publishing" free seminars presented in affiliation with the North Suburban Library System, which offer people an opportunity to meet with authors to learn how to sharpen their writing skills and get their work published.

"A" Is For Apple

Glennette Tilley Turner has sold a new picture book titled *An Apple for Harriet Tubman*.

Anti-War Poems Performed

Patricia Monaghan's book, *Homefront*, a series of autobiographical anti-war poems, will be published in November to coincide with a musical performance of the poems, set to music by folk composer Michael Smith and sung by vocalist

Jamie O Reilly, as part of the Chicago Humanities Festival.

Poems in the collection have been included in the anthology, *Poets Against the War* (The Nation Books), and featured in the film, *Voices in Wartime*.

Information about the publication can be found at www.wordtech.com.

"Love and Common Sense"

Raeann Berman's new book, *Caring for Your Aging Parents*, was just published by Champion Press. In its two former versions published by Surrey Books in 1998 and 2001, the book was titled *How to Survive Your Aging Parents*.

The book covers adult children's guilt and anxiety, methods of helping parents enjoy life as they age, what to do about Dad who keeps having auto accidents, when to offer help and how to do it with love and common sense.

"Electrifying Interviewer"

Donna Seaman was the subject of a long article in the *Chicago Sun-Times* calling attention to the quality of her *Open Books* radio show on WLUP, Chicago, and the new book derived from it: *Writers on the Air: Conversations About Books*

Henry Kisor, *Sun-Times* literary editor praised her "skill at shaping transcripts," creating pieces that range from "absorbing" to "electrifying."

An editor at *Booklist*, she interviews "literary writers not mass-market pulpmeisters." Besides her radio accomplishments, Kisor added, she has assembled a book that's "extraordinarily readable."

Seaman will be a featured guest at the Writers and Readers Ball, Oct. 29, a benefit for WLUP, at Martyr's, 3855 N. Lincoln Ave., Chicago.

Reporter Advises Mystery Writers

Maurice Possley, award-winning criminal justice reporter for the *Chicago Tribune*, will speak at the Oct. 19 meeting of the Midwest Chapter of the Mystery Writers of America.

He has covered such stories as the trial of Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh, the case against Unabomber Theodore Kaczynski and

the investigation of the murder of JonBenet Ramsey.

He is co-author of *The Brown's Chicken Massacre* and *Everybody Pays*, a book about the Chicago mob.

Edits Anthology on Love

Whitney Scott has edited *Falling in Love Again: Love the Second Time Around*, the 10th in the annual anthology series from Outrider Press of Dyer, Ind. It has been called a "diverse and thought-provoking collection of poetry and short stories exploring the joy and surprise of old love rekindled, forgotten friendships restored and old haunts rediscovered.

"This invigorating and impressive collection showcases 59 contributors from around the world, all members of the TallGrass Writers Guild."

RECENT NEW MEMBERS

BY TOM FRISBIE

Jay Bonansinga

Author of 10 books, as well as two screenplays in development. His novels include *Twisted*, *Oblivion*, *The Sleep Police*, *Blood Hound*, *Head Case*, *The Killer's Game*, *Sick* and *The Black Mariah*. *Frozen* became a national bestseller in its second week of release.

The Sinking of the Eastland (nonfiction) received a Superior Achievement Award from the Illinois State Historical Society. He was a finalist for a Brian Stoker Award for best first novel and was awarded the silver plaque at the Chicago International Film Festival for his screenwriting. His books have been translated into 10 languages.

The *Chicago Tribune* said: "Jay Bonansinga has quickly and firmly established himself as one of the most imaginative writers of thrillers. His twisting narratives, with their in-your-face glimpses of violence, are set in an unstable, almost psychotic universe that makes the work of many of his contemporaries look rather tame."

The holder of a master's degree in film from Columbia College Chicago, Bonansinga lives in Evanston with his wife and two sons. He is a visiting professor at Northwestern University's Creative Writing for the Media program.

John Knoerle

In the early 1970s, Knoerle was a member of the DeLuxe Radio Theatre comedy troupe in Santa Barbara. He moved to Los Angeles and worked as stand-up comic, opening for the likes of Jay Leno and Robin Williams. He

wrote several screenplays, including *Quiet Fire*, which starred Karen Black and Lawrence Hilton Jacobs.

He wrote the stage play *The He-Man Woman Hater's Club*, a Los Angeles Times Critic's Choice. He also was fiction editor of *Mystery* magazine in the early 1980s and, in 1996-97, a staff writer for Garrison Keillor's *A Prairie Home Companion*.

John moved to Chicago in 1996 with his wife, Judie, and published *Crystal Meth Cowboys* in 2003. His novel, *The Violin Player*, won the 2003 Mayhaven Publishing Fiction Contest.

He is currently at work on *Two Jacks*, a crime novel set in Cleveland in 1945.

Rita Emmett

Professional speaker, consultant and author of three books: *The Procrastinator's Handbook: Mastering The Art of Doing It Now*, *The Procrastinating Child: A Handbook For Adults To Help Children Stop Putting Things Off* and *The Clutter-Busting Handbook: Clean It Up, Clear It Out, and Keep Your Life Clutter-Free*. She was an adjunct faculty member at Triton and Chicago City Colleges for more than 15 years.