

Biblio File

Matthew Eck, winner of the Society of Midland Author's 2008 Adult Fiction Award for his first novel, *The Farther Shore*, will be one of the "Five Under 35"



Matthew Eck

authors honored by the National Book Foundation in November during National Book Week. ... **Richard C. Longworth's** new book, *Caught in the Middle: America's Heartland in the Age of Globalism*, (Bloomsbury), about the impact of globalization on the American Midwest, has gone into a second printing. Longworth, a former Tribune foreign correspondent and now Senior Fellow at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, has also been named Distinguished Visiting Scholar at DePaul. Longworth will give the keynote address at the second "UnConference" Oct. 23 at Waubensee Community College in Sugar Grove, Ill. ... **Mary Elizabeth Anderson** will speak Nov. 16 for the John H. Ames Reading Series at the Bennett Martin Public Library in Lincoln, Neb. The series strives to promote and recognize published Nebraska authors by giving them a forum to present their own writings to a local audience; it also allows readers, scholars, and literature buffs to learn about authors from the primary source. An interview prior to the presentation will be videotaped for Lincoln's government access channel. ... Spotted by Biblio File at a Sept. 25 gathering of Chicago Sun-Times alumni and staffers at Chicago's Billy Goat Tavern: **Marge**



Mary Elizabeth Anderson

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Amo, amas, a moose:

A post-Palin politics primer

BY THOMAS FRISBIE

Political writer James L. Merriner got right to the point Oct. 15 when he spoke to Society members at the regular monthly program at the Cliff Dwellers club in Chicago.

Taking issue with introductory remarks by Thomas Frisbie, Merriner said his most significant credential as a political writer had been omitted.

"I am possibly the only political commentator in the country, certainly the only one in Chicago, who actually has field-dressed a moose," said Merriner. "So therefore, like Sarah Palin, I am a political genius."

And that's no Bullwinkle. Merriner, who was political editor both of the Atlanta Constitution and the Chicago Sun-Times, said he was struck by the difference in political culture when he changed jobs.

Shortly before he left Atlanta in 1980, an Atlanta alderman was indicted for an infraction of the election laws – and it was front-page news.

Then, after Merriner moved to the Sun-Times, a Chicago alderman was indicted. "It didn't even make the front page," Merriner recalled.

Now president of the Society of Midland Authors, Merriner has written or co-written five books on politics, including *Mr. Chairman: Power in Dan Rostenkowski's America* and *The City Club of Chicago: A Centennial History, 1903-*

2003. His most recent is *The Man Who Emptied Death Row: Governor George Ryan and the Politics of Crime* (Aug. 19, Southern Illinois University Press).

The Ryan book project began when Merriner's publisher took him to lunch, and referred to a line in Merriner's earlier *Grafters and Goo Goos: Corruption and Reform in Chicago* that said the political history of Chicago public schools would make its own book. The publisher suggested Merriner write a book about city school politics, and Merriner countered

that a better story would be about George Ryan.

"So he said, 'Write that book,' and I said, 'How many crooked politicians do I have to write about?'"

As he worked on the book, Merriner tried to understand Ryan. On one hand, Ryan never really apologized for the deaths of six children killed in a traffic accident caused by a trucker

who paid a bribe to get a license while Ryan was in charge of the state office overseeing the granting of those licenses. On the other hand, Ryan as governor later freed four men from Death Row and commuted the sentences of all others sentenced to die.

"What do these stories have in common?" Merriner said. "[It is Ryan saying] I am not responsible for death. Blood is not on my, George Ryan's, hands. I didn't kill those kids, I do not kill convicts."



James L. Merriner

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with Craig Sautter

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Lori Andrews

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Herguth, Mark Jacob and Rich Cahan.

... A story by former Chicagoan **Frank S. Joseph**, "Our Lady of the Helicopter," appears in *New Lines From the Old State*, an anthology of the best writing by members of the Maryland Writers Association. Frank's story first appeared in the MWA literary magazine "Scribble." ...

Judith Testa, winner of the Society's 2008 Biography Award for *Sal Maglie:*

Baseball's Demon Barber, told the

University of Chicago Magazine in its September-October issue,

"Considering that I never won any prizes for the books and articles written when I was an art historian, perhaps I should have been a sportswriter." ... The Oct. 5 Washington Post wrote about **Stephen Bloom** and his new book, *The Oxford Project* (see New Books, September). "People don't get much more real than this, and there's a heartbreaking, forensic pleasure in paging through the book to stare at the pictures for minutes at a time, looking at the thousands of ways in which the years change each of us," the Post wrote. It also quoted some of Bloom's list of "Oxford Truisms" about the small Iowa town: "Everyone has the same no-fail pie crust recipe, but no one can remember where it came from. The names Grabin, Jiras, Hennes and Portwood are as common in Oxford as Garcia, Lee, Chen and Cohen are in big cities. Pliers and pocketknives are necessary tools; many men won't leave home without them. When someone dies in Oxford, big funerals are expected, as are casseroles." Also, CNN led its online news page on Oct. 7 with a story about *The Oxford Project*. CBS will air a feature Oct. 26. ... In the Oct. 16 Chicago Tribune, **Patrick Reardon** interviewed Chicagoan Aleksandar Hemon, who has been named a finalist for this year's National Book Award for fiction. Hemon won the Society of Midland Author's 2003 Adult Fiction Award for *Nowhere Man*. ... **Gary D. Schmidt** was



Frank S. Joseph

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This historian would rather be writing than president

US. presidential historian R. Craig Sautter, a SMA past president, has been on the air lately commenting on the political conventions and election. And his record as a prognosticator is good. In 2000, Sautter, author or co-author of 10 books, predicted to his DePaul University "American Presidents" class that Al Gore would win the popular vote but George Bush would win the Electoral College. On Aug. 24 this year, he said on "Beyond the Beltway with Bruce Dumont" that John McCain should pick Sarah Palin as his running mate.

Literary License: *Do you see this as a good year for authors writing about presidential elections?*

Craig Sautter: Every four years is a good time for presidential books. We live on the four-year political cycle. There's a huge appetite for good political commentary.

LL: *What are some of your favorite books in the past about presidential politics?*

CS: As a teenager, I read several books that influenced me. *They Also Ran* by Irving Stone introduced me to great losers such as William Jennings Bryan. I read *The Making of the President 1960* by Theodore White when it came out, and recently his account of 1964. Both are fine works. One favorite remains *Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail* by Hunter S. Thompson about the 1972 Nixon McGovern clash. I value H. L. Mencken's *Making a President: A Footnote to the Saga of Democracy* about 1932. I also love biographies. I read U. S. Grant's autobiography this summer and am reading Marquis James' two-volume Pulitzer Prize winner on Andrew Jackson right now.

LL: Were there any significant differences in this year's party conventions?

CS: Today's conventions are what I call "ratifying conventions," rather than "nominating conventions." Candidates run in the primaries and the people nominate them. It's basically been that way since 1972. But

with three strong candidates you could have a contested convention. By mid-primary season this time, the shake-down came. But Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama were so close, and the role of the "superdelegates" so ambiguous, that something could have happened if Hillary had pushed it. In the old days, many a front-running candidate walked into the front door of the convention and walked out the back a loser.

LL: What are you working on now?

CS: I spent a lot of time last year researching and writing two free histories of the first and only conventions held in this year's host cities: Minneapolis 1892 and Denver 1908. I posted those on my Web site, www.presidentialconventions.com. They led to many radio interviews and quotes

in the London Times, New York Times, Wall Street Journal and several others. I've also been writing TV/radio ad scripts for a couple of political campaigns with my brother and our company www.sautter-communications.com.

But mostly, I am concentrating on typing up several hundred poems I wrote and put aside the past decade while I was writing my political histories, *Inside the Wigwam: Chicago Presidential Conventions 1860-1996* (with Alderman Edward M. Burke), *Philadelphia Presidential Conventions*, and *New York Presidential Conventions: The Pre-TV Era 1839-1924*.

LL: You've been right before, so tell us, who will win this year?

CS: I hate polls and predictions. They misdirect us from the real issues and where the candidates stand. The polls are often wrong. I simply urge people to go out and work to help their candidate win. This election, like the last two, will be close, but not as close as 2000. I think Obama has run a much better campaign and will have a better ground game. My brother and I made six radio ads for Barack in 2000 when he ran for Congress. I think Barack Obama has what it takes to make a very good president.

Q&A with Craig Sautter



How to use persuasion as marketing tool for your book

Note: The November program will feature tips from **Tom Ciesielka**, president of TC Public Relations, on how to get Internet publicity for your books. The program will give authors a quick lesson in the business of blogging, with several specific items authors can implement to help accomplish the overall goal of generating buzz about a new book in the blogosphere.

Spin doctors. Cherry pickers. Flacks. These are some degrading names that refer to public relations professionals. Talk about name-calling for grown-ups! Often public relations professionals receive a bad rep for their profession. However, not every public relations specialist is a sneaky manipulator.

One of the things public relations boils down to is honest persuasion. Persuasion can involve changing negative opinions and encouraging positive ones. There are a number of things you should remember when persuading your way through your book promotion efforts.

PR Tips from Tom Ciesielka



Know who you're persuading
Would you talk to the media the same way you talk to your mother? Would you pitch the editor of *Horses and More* about your book about dogs? Sure, these are blatantly obvious questions, but it highlights the point that you should always consider your audience when attempting to persuade. Men, women, oldies, youngies, liberals, conservatives—all have different beliefs, attitudes, concerns and interests. Consider using different angles and arguments depending upon what will resonate with those you're trying to reach.

Know how to persuade
Audiences can vary, so naturally there are various ways to appeal to each. Interesting statistics and figures can be effective in receiving attention (media folk especially like this one). Knowing important or impressive statistics places

November 11, 2008, program

Cliff Dwellers
200 S. Michigan Avenue
22nd floor

6 p.m. - Social Hour
7:00 p.m. - Program

Free - members, teachers, students
\$5.00 - general public

you in the “expert” seat, which will greatly assist you in your persuading ways. People listen to experts. Emotional appeals are effective as well because they strike a chord with our human instincts. Think “speaking from the heart, to the heart.” You can also establish a need, by explaining what your book is about.

Know when to persuade

You can persuade anytime and anywhere! If people sense your passion for what you do, they will be naturally persuaded. Think about all the opportunities to

respond to local or national news. Say you've written a book about a hurricane. In the recent hurricane season (will Gustav, Ike and Hanna please stand up?), you would want to spread the word.

Our agency prides itself on practicing ethical methods of persuasion and communication, and so should you! Don't be the bad cherry. It is in your best interest to be honest, truthful and genuine at all times. There is someone out there who would benefit from what you write, and it should be your mission to help them.

And remember, when persuading youngsters on the importance of vegetables, make sure to mention that eaten or not-eaten vegetables are directly related to whether or not Santa brings presents.

Did I mention the “fear factor” is also an effective persuasion tactic?

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

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one of the speakers at Carthage (Wis.) College's Oct. 17-18 conference, “The Business of Children's Publishing,” Schmidt, winner of the Society's 2008 Children's Fiction Award, was scheduled to talk about the role of the author in the publishing process... *Talking Diamonds*, a new book of poetry by **Linda Nemece Foster**, is one of three titles to be supported by a \$9,000 grant from the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs to Western Michigan University's New Issues Poetry & Prose. The books will be published in 2008-09. ... As editor-in-chief of a Cubs fan blog,

www.justonebad-century.com, **Rick Kaempfer** was widely quoted in the news media as the Cubs season came to a close.

Rick attended his first Cubs game in 1968 and is embarrassed to report how many games he has attended since. He also has contributed an essay for an upcoming book called *Cubbie Blues: 100 Years of Waiting Till Next Year*, which comes out in early December from Can't Miss Press (an imprint of State Street Publishing).

Rick Kogan contributed an essay as well. (Kogan also emceed a Sept. 22 memorial service at the White Sox ballpark in



Linda Nemece Foster

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Chicago for Terry Armour, the former Tribune entertainment columnist, sports-writer and radio host. ... **Keir Graff** was scheduled to talk Sept. 28 with Kogan on Kogan's "Sunday Papers" radio show. ... **Scott Turow** was scheduled to give an evening reading Oct. 15, in the Frick Fine Arts Auditorium in Oakland, Pa. The event was part of the Pittsburgh Contemporary Writers Series' 2008-09 season. Turow also was scheduled to help kick off the 18th annual Novello Festival of Reading in Charlotte, N.C. ... *American Band: Music, Dreams, and Coming of Age in the Heartland* by **Kristen Laine** is out in paperback (Sept. 2, Gotham). Syndicated book critic Curt Schleier called it "a remarkable job of journalism ... filled with intimate details." ... **Ray E. Boomhower**, author of a new book on Robert Kennedy and the 1968 Indiana primary, had a "meet the authors" scheduled for Oct. 4 in Indianapolis and was scheduled to appear Oct. 14 at the Hussey-Mayfield (Ind.) Memorial Public Library. ... Biologist and author Michael Ruse stated, "Of all the scientists in the world today, there is no one with whom Charles Darwin would rather spend an evening than **Sean Carroll** (SMA 2006 Adult Nonfiction winner)." Carroll was at Case Western Reserve University last month discussing evolution with Case faculty and students. ... **Deborah Newton Chocolate's** 1992 book *NEATE to the Rescue!* was listed in the (Fla.) Ledger's Sept. 27 listing of children's books about elections. ... **Stuart Dybek** was featured on WNYC's "Live Shorts" Sept. 21. ... At 6 p.m. on Oct. 25, **David Hernandez** and the Street Sounds will perform at Blue Line Studio, 2418 W. Bloomingdale, #104, Chicago. ... **Jonathan Eig** wrote a reflection in the Sept. 18 Wall Street Journal on Yankee Stadium's final season. ... **Jean Bethke Elstain** spoke as part of a panel on the NewsHour with Jim Lehrer on the seventh anniversary of 9/11. ... **Barbara Gregorich** led a two-part workshop on writing fiction and writing non-fiction Oct. 4 at the Batavia, Ill., Public Library. ... **Ann Hagedorn** was sched-

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New Books

**HAUNTED HOMELAND:
A DEFINITIVE COLLECTION
OF NORTH AMERICAN
GHOST STORIES**

TOR BOOKS, SEPT. 16, 2008

The newest book in the "Haunted America" series of North American ghost stories by **Michael Norman** is out in a quality trade paperback from Tor Books.



Michael Norman

Haunted Homeland (448 pp., \$14.95) is the sixth in the series Norman began in 1980 with the late Beth Scott. The series also includes *Haunted Wisconsin*, *Haunted Heartland* and *Haunted America*. *Haunted Homeland*

includes tales of trapped miners from long-ago cave-ins still calling for help, a haunted castle in Alaska, phantom clergymen and other stories.

Norman is finishing an as-yet-untitled collection of Minnesota ghost stories, to be published in fall 2009 by the Minnesota Historical Society Press/Borealis Books.

**WHO WE WERE:
A SNAPSHOT HISTORY
OF AMERICA**

CITYFILES PRESS
NOVEMBER 4, 2008

Richard Cahan and **Michael Williams** have teamed up with Nicholas Osborn to write and publish *Who We Were: A Snapshot History of America*.

Williams and Cahan have collaborated on five books. Most are about Chicago – this is their first national book. Nicholas Osborn is a Chicago area writer and founder of *SquareAmerica.com*, a Web site that celebrates the snapshot.

Who We Were is the first history of the United States told through family snapshots.

Since the birth of snapshots, Americans have used simple, inexpensive cameras to

record their life stories. In the process, they have left behind millions of pictures that document the story of America. After combing through many of those photos, the authors have gathered up a selection of 350 that tells the nation's history.

"It's as close to a true self-portrait of the American people as you're likely to find between covers," wrote historian Luc Sante.

Williams, Cahan and Osborn spent the past decade at flea markets and antique stores, and went online looking at more than a million family photos to find snapshots that tell America's story. They begin the book in 1888 with the earliest snapshots and end in 1972, when a NASA astronaut placed a cherished family snapshot on the moon. In between are pictures from the homesteading years in the West, the San Francisco Earthquake, the Depression, two world wars, the Vietnam era and Woodstock.



Michael Williams

FRED ASTAIRE

YALE UNIVERSITY PRESS
OCTOBER 21, 2008

Joseph Epstein's new book, *Fred Astaire* – part of a series of books called Icons of America – traces Astaire's life from his birth in Omaha to his death in his late 80s in Hollywood. Epstein was a finalist for the Society's 2004 Adult Fiction Award for his book *Fabulous Small Jews*.

THE FLASH PRESS

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS,
MAY 15, 2008

Timothy J. Gilfoyle, professor of history at Loyola University Chicago, is one of three co-authors of *The Flash Press: Sporting Male Weeklies in 1840s New York*, which looks at short-lived tabloid magazines that were must-reads for literate sporting men in New York City. With

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New Books

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titles such as *The Rake*, *The Flash*, *The Whip* and *The Libertine*, the weekly publications covered and publicized New York City's extensive sexual underworld and featured gossip about boxing, dog fighting, and the theater scene. The other co-authors are Patricia Cline Cohen, a professor of history at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, professor of American studies and history at Smith College.

NEW ENGLAND PRIMER

CHERRY GROVE COLLECTIONS
JULY 24, 2008

Bruce Guernsey, a professor of English emeritus at Eastern Illinois University who was born in Boston and got his Ph.D. at the University of New Hampshire, has written *New England Primer*, a collection of poems about New England.

New Members

Linda A. Gerdner, born and residing in Iowa, is co-author of *Grandfather's Story Cloth* (2008, Shen's Books), a children's book about a Hmong grandfather who emigrated to America but has Alzheimer's disease. A registered nurse with a Ph.D. from the University of Iowa in nursing, Gerdner also has written for professional journals and has traveled to Hmong villages in Northern Laos.

Keir Graff of Chicago is author of *One Nation, Under God* (2008, Severn House) and *My Fellow Americans* (2007, Severn



Keir Graff

House). He also is author, under the pseudonym Michael McCulloch, of *Cold Lessons* (2007, Five Star Mystery). Graff also has written short stories for the Chicago Reader, the Portland Review, Time out Chicago!, Downstate Story and other publi-

cations. His short story, "Untitled," was a runner-up in the Chicago Crime Writers Competition. He also is a produced playwright ("Driving a Bargain," 2000) and is senior editor of Booklist Online. He was born and raised in Missoula, Mont.

Suzanne Slade, who has a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering, has written more than 60 books for children. Her works include picture books, biographies, as well as titles about animals,

sports, planets, and various science topics. Her most recent book, *Animals are Sleeping*, was published in March. Suzanne's next picture book, *What's New at the Zoo?* will come out July, 2009.

Historical novelist **Tyler B. Tichelaar** has a Ph.D. in literature from Western Michigan University and is president of the Upper Peninsula Publishers and Authors Association. Tichelaar has his own publishing company, Marquette Fiction, and owns Superior Book Promotions. He has lectured on writing and literature at Clemson, the University of Wisconsin and the University of London.

He is the author of *The Marquette Trilogy* (*Iron Pioneers*, *The Queen City* and *Superior Heritage*) set in Marquette, Mich. He also is the author of *Narrow Lives*, which focuses on minor characters from the Marquette Trilogy.



Tyler B. Tichelaar

Frances Shani Parker is a writer, consultant and former school principal. Her work has appeared in *Black Arts Quarterly* (Stanford University), *Warp-Land: A Journal of Black Literature and Ideas* (Chicago State University) and *Voices of the Civil Rights Movement* (AARP). She is author of *Becoming Dead Right: A Hospice Volunteer in Urban Nursing Homes* (2007, Loving Healing Press.)

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uled to speak Oct. 11 at the Liberty Memorial in Kansas City. ... **Patricia Hampl** was part of an Oct. 9 symposium at the University of Minnesota on the collapse and reconstruction of the Interstate 35W bridge. ... **Ronne Hartfield** is a member of the Margaret Garner Gala committee, which is staging a Nov. 2 gala at the Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University to celebrate the Chicago premiere of "Margaret Garner," a new American opera written by Toni Morrison. ... Former SMA President **Joanne Koch**, co-author of *Good Parenting for Hard Times* and a professor of English at National-Louis University, was quoted in the Sept. 16 (Allentown, Pa.) Morning Call, commenting on news coverage of celebrity babies. ... *Dead Reckoning: A Pirate Voyage with Captain Drake* by **Laurie Lawlor**, which was reissued in paperback in May, was listed on Oct. 2 by the Columbia (Mo.) Daily Tribune as one of its "great fiction books to read aloud." ... **Martin Marty's** Oct. 6 "Sightings" column was about the Rev. Theodore Hesburgh, former president of the University of Notre Dame. ... In a new study titled "Family Metaphors and Moral Intuitions: How Conservatives and Liberals Narrate Their Lives," **Dan P. McAdams** and researcher Michelle Albaugh interviewed 128 devout



Martin Marty

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Board Notes

At the Oct. 15 regular Board meeting, Stella Pevsner reported that the InterContinental, where we had last year's awards banquet, is not available on the second Tuesday of May this year, and that the Society will need to find a different location.

Also, the Board continues to look for a candidate to fill a vacancy on the Board.

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Christians in and around Chicago, asking their subjects, among other questions, to describe what their lives and the world would be like if they did not have faith. ... Two of SMA's financial experts have been quoted lately: **John Wasik** was interviewed in the Oct. 18 San Jose Mercury News to help explain why "the mortgage mess affected all types of credit." And **Charles Wheelan** was quoted in the Oct. 17 Fort Wayne (Ind.) Journal Gazette, explaining the benefits of government-funded basic research. ... On Oct. 12, the Kankakee Journal wrote "The story of [former Illinois Gov.] George Ryan's fall from the height of Illinois political power to the depths of a lengthy criminal investigation and an ultimate federal conviction is summed up succinctly by the author [**James L. Merriner**] of a new book detailing Ryan's rise and fall." On Oct. 11, the Chicago Tribune also reviewed Merriner's book. ... **Ted McClelland** dipped into his Wisconsin expertise to write for the Oct. 5 Chicago Tribune, "In Wisconsin, bigger definitely is better." ... **Donna McCreary** signed her books Oct. 4 at the Mary Todd Lincoln House in Lexington, Ky. She was also at the Northern Indiana Center for History on Oct. 19, and will be at the Scott County Indiana History Museum on Oct. 26. ... The New York Times quoted **Erin McKean**, editor of the second edition of the New Oxford American Dictionary, on such new words and phrases as cellular, regeneration, bio-stimulating and cell-strengthening. ... **Jacquelyn Mitchard** last month teamed up with the the organization Red Hot Mamas and Allergan, Inc. to unveil the Top 10 Tear-Jerker Book List and launch the Dry Eye Book Club, a national health education campaign. The campaign aims to raise awareness about dry eye syndrome. ... **Marcia Z. Nelson** wrote "Best Books for Caregivers" for Belief.net. ... A national women's bioethics group has compiled a companion guide to **Lori Andrews'** latest mystery, *Immunity*. The guide discusses

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How you can help support Midwest literature, writers

BY DR. BERNARD J. BROMMEL
PAST PRESIDENT

The Society of Midland Authors is now working to build up an endowment fund that would enable us to give larger awards and expand the programming and outreach of the SMA.

Think about leaving the SMA some amount of money to be put into a permanent endowment fund to support the budget of the organization. An easy way to do it is to set aside in your will a certain number of dollars. It can be also in the form of appreciated stock or bonds or other securities. Since few of us know how much money we will need during our lifetime, a provision that is often used in wills is to set aside a certain percentage for a charity, such as SMA, to receive after your death and all bills, medical and otherwise, have been paid out of your estate. Even a gift of 1 percent to 2 percent of your remaining assets would be most welcome. The percentage could be higher if your assets make that possible.

If you already have a will, an expedient way to amend it is to add a **codicil** to your will that sets aside some money for the SMA. Then you do not need to go and rewrite your present will, but merely add the SMA as an additional charity. This takes only a few sentences, and avoids the expense of drafting an entire new will. Be sure if you do the codicil addition to your will, to have it notarized. All gifts to the SMA are tax deductible.

Another way to help the organization financially is to gift the organization a lump sum or annual gifts over time to be placed in the endowment fund. They can

be set up in your name with an account with the organization. You can specify how you want the money to be used, i.e. for programs, speakers, the annual dinner that honors winners of our SMA awards or other projects you would like to see the organization sponsor. Remember if you do this while you are living, your gift each year or in one lump sum can be deducted from your income tax. Gifts to SMA are one way to reduce your taxes!

The Newberry Library, which we are all familiar with, as a wonderful research library has a group they call "The Blatchford Society," which has raised much-needed funds for a variety of projects. To be a member of the Blatchford Society, all you have to do is inform the Library

that you are including Newberry in your will. Periodically they host programs or luncheons to honor their future donors. (We could skip special luncheons and honor our donors at our annual awards dinner.) Estate gifts are an important part of Newberry's budgeting process. To date they have over 100 members, including 15 who chose to remain anonymous. E. Blatchford had

the foresight to set up this group to help guarantee the funding for the library. He was a close friend of Walter Newberry, founder of the library. Blatchford was the first president of the Newberry Board of Trustees. We could easily establish a like group for our Society of Midland Authors! Let's start now to form our donors society via designations of a gift to the SMA in our wills, either in the next rewriting of the will or by a simple amendment in the form of a codicil.

PS: Both Newberry and our Society of Midland Authors have been in my will for over 15 years.



**Dr. Bernard
J. Brommel**

SMA Support

The Society always needs additional money for programs such as the awards at the annual May banquet. Thanks to these

members who made contributions along with their renewals: **Arnie Bernstein, Dolores Arnold Grengg, Rich Lindberg, Katherine Shonk, Charlene Ann Baumbich and Deborah Blum.**

Clue to author's success is her high-flying approach

BY THOMAS FRISBIE

As a law professor specializing in bioethics, Lori Andrews frequently jets around the world to consult on futuristic issues. Much of the rest of the time, she's teaching her classes at Chicago-Kent College of Law or showing up as a TV guest or being quoted as an expert in news media accounts.

So Literary License sat down with her last month to ask The Question: How has she found time to write or co-author 10 non-fiction books and write three mysteries?

"I write on airplanes," said Andrews, whose latest mystery, *Immunity*, came out last month. "I'm the only person who is happy when the plane circles. And, believe me, coming into O'Hare you circle a lot."

Those high-altitude writer's refuges won't last, though, once Internet access is common on airplanes and people will expect her to keep in touch. That's when Andrews might have to fall back on a Plan B that she already sometimes uses, building extra days into her travel schedules to allow some time for writing.

"I wrote the end of *The Silent Assassin* [her second mystery] at the base of the pyramids in Cairo," Andrews said.

Another strategy? Andrews belongs to "a great group": the Society of Midland Authors.

Andrews' mysteries feature Dr. Alexandra "Alex" Blake, a geneticist who pursues clues on the cutting edge of science. Andrews said she hopes her books help illuminate rapidly changing biotechnology issues, but she's sometimes surprised at readers' reactions.

"After my first mystery [*Sequence*, 2006], I got an e-mail from someone who said: 'I was enjoying your first book until a government official threw a Coke can in the trash and didn't recycle. You know, you should be supporting recycling.'

"I was thinking, here's this character

killling women and mutilating them and that doesn't bother the reader, but not recycling does."

Andrews also saves time because her legal focus is in the same field where her main character, Alex Blake, works.

"She is geneticist, and I spend much of my time reading the newest scientific articles in genetics or responding to government agencies that have questions about genetics," Andrews said. "I can add a lot of that flavor without having to go off and do a lot of research from scratch."

How does Andrews manage to populate a fictional world on the biotech cutting edge?

"You end up putting a little bit of yourself in various characters," Andrews said.

"There is a lawyer character in my book, who's enormously prepared for things, who shows up for meetings with tons of books and so forth. That is one aspect of me. And there is Alex the geneticist, who would rather spend her

off time with musicians and artists, and that's another part of me."

The underlying themes of her books also grow out of Andrews' experiences.

"A lot of things that I am interested in, like protecting people from research abuses or social institutions using genetics in a way that discriminates against people – I smuggle some of those ideas into my mystery books," Andrews said.

Andrews said Chicago is a great place to write because there are so many experts in medicine and other fields who have generously helped her get her details right and add texture to her stories.

"People think of crime fiction in Chicago as being about corrupt politicians and judges, but it is actually a great place to write medical thrillers," Andrews said.

And the future?

"There are two book ideas I am playing around with," Andrews said. "One is another nonfiction policy book, and the other is a forensic/political/financial mystery."

Writers on Writing Lori Andrews



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the real cases and controversies behind the book and asks readers questions about how they would decide the bioethics issues that the book addresses. Andrews was in Seattle Oct. 16 to talk to the group. She was also the subject of an Oct. 19 "Chicago Lit" feature in the Chicago Sun-Times. ... **Brock Clarke** was scheduled to read from his novel, *An Arsonist's Guide to Writers' Homes in New England* (a 2008 SMA Adult Fiction finalist), on Sept. 18 at the University of Louisville. ... **Kevin Coval** interviewed Afrika Bambaataa Oct. 3 in In These Times. ... **Vicki Quade** was interviewed in the Sept. 25 Aurora (Ill.) Beacon-News about her play, "Late Nite Catechism," which is returning to Aurora's Copley Theatre after a successful spring run of her interactive show, "Put the Nuns in Charge!" ... **Suzanne Slade's** *Let's Go Camping* was included in "Fall Reads from Douglas County (Colo.) Libraries." ... **Kerry Trask** was scheduled to talk Oct. 14 about his book, *Fire Within: A Civil War Narrative from Wisconsin*, at the Manitowoc County Genealogical Society in Manitowoc, Wis. ... At 7 p.m. on Oct. 28 at Dominican University in River Forest, Ill., **Stephen Kinzer**, who has written extensively about troubled U.S. interventions, and Max Boot, who supported the Iraq invasion and has called for a U.S. attack on Iran, will debate the question: "Resolved: American military intervention usually serves U.S. interests and the cause of world peace." ... **Correction:** A typographical error appeared in James Plath's name in the September Biblio File. Literary License has not yet established whether the blame lies with Big Government or the underregulated, out-of-control financial sector.

Letters to the Editor

I sure wish the SMA would hold a "traveling meeting" up in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. Those of us up here who rarely, if ever, can attend the Cliff Dwellers meetings would welcome the visit! Maybe someday...

Michael Norman

Final Chapters

Bonnie Larkin Nims, 1921-2008

Bonnie Larkin Nims, a former board member of the Society of Midland Authors and a longtime SMA member, died of a stroke Oct. 7 after a long illness. She was 87, family members said.

Ms. Nims also was a columnist for the old Chicago Daily News and the author of several books for children. In the 1960s, Ms. Nims wrote the newspaper's "Person to Person" advice column under the name Bonnie Larkin. She was active in Chicago's poetry circles and also wrote copy for an advertising agency, wrote for the Encyclopedia Britannica and free-lanced for numerous publications.

"She had a sparkling, vibrant personality and made intelligent observations about life in general and literature and politics in particular," said SMA member Stella Pevsner, a Chicago children's author. "Her books were witty and very appealing to children."

Ms. Nims' best-known books were *Where is the Bear?* and *I Wish I Lived at the Playground*, a bilingual book whose Spanish title was *Yo quisiera vivir en un parque de juegos*. She co-authored that book with Ramon Orellana.

Ms. Nims was born in San Francisco and moved at a young age to Kansas,

where she graduated from Mount Carmel Academy in Wichita. She attended St. Mary's College in Notre Dame, Ind., majoring in English language and literature, and graduated at the top of her class, family members said.

Around 1946, she married the poet John Frederick Nims, who later was editor of Poetry magazine from 1978 to 1984. The couple moved to Chicago in 1961 after living in Italy and Spain.

While living in Chicago, Ms. Nims taught children introductory literature at the Cabrini-Green public-housing complex.

"She was very interested in getting children interested in poetry," said her son, Frank Nims.

When John Nims took a teaching job at the University of Florida in 1973, the couple

moved to Gainesville, Fla., and continued to spend winters there even after they moved back to the Chicago area. Six years after her husband died in 1999, Ms. Nims moved to Gainesville to live near her daughter and other relations.

She is survived by three of her five children: Frank Nims, Sally Martin and Keil Nims.

Planning for a memorial service is under way.



Bonnie Larkin Nims,
1960s photo

Nancy Volkman

Nancy Volkman, who judged children's fiction for the 2008 Society of Midland Authors book competition and also was a judge in previous years, died June 4 after a long battle with brain cancer.

Ms. Volkman was the librarian at Norwood Park Elementary School, a pre-K/8 school on Chicago's Northwest Side and previously was director of the Stuart Brent Children's Book Club. She also was a former board member of the Chicago Teacher Librarians Association.

"She was very good with the [SMA] judging," said Elizabeth Gray, who was on the children's fiction panel with Ms.

Volkman for many years. "She was able to discuss each book as to the appropriateness for the age it was aimed at and the scope of the content. She was quite knowledgeable about children's literature."

Gray said Ms. Volkman made it a point to attend the Society's annual dinner last May even though she already was very ill.

In a note to the community, William Meuer, principal of Norwood Park Elementary School, said, "Mrs. Volkman's particular talent was in matching each student's reading interests with 'that perfect book' which would inspire and advance the student's love of reading."

John T. McCutcheon Jr., 1917-2008

John T. McCutcheon Jr., a longtime member of the Society of Midland Authors, died Sept. 30 at his home in Saluda, N.C. He was 90.

The son of a well-known Tribune editor and cartoonist, Mr. McCutcheon Jr. oversaw the Chicago Tribune's popular "A Line o' Type or Two" column in the 1950s and spent 25 of his 49 years with the Tribune on the editorial board. He was chief of the editorial page from 1971 to 1982.

Mr. McCutcheon's father was a Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist who wrote and drew "Injun Summer," which ran each autumn for many years on the inside back page in the Tribune's Sunday magazine. Mr. McCutcheon's mother, Evelyn, was the daughter of architect Howard Van Doren Shaw.

According to the Chicago Tribune, Mr. McCutcheon was managing editor of the Crimson newspaper when he attended Harvard University and he spent a year at the City News Bureau in Chicago before joining the Tribune as a reporter. He was a Navy lieutenant commander, serving in the Pacific in World War II.

After stepping down as editor of the editorial page in 1982, he spent seven years as an archivist, organizing papers at Col. McCormick's Cantigny estate, near Wheaton, and at the Tribune, the Tribune said.

For years around Lake Forest, and later at his retirement home in North Carolina, his favorite activity was tramping through woods and fields with his dogs, making and marking trails as he went, the Tribune reported.

Mr. McCutcheon's wife died last December. Besides his daughter Mary, he is survived by another daughter, Anne Lewis; a son, John III; his brother, Howard Shaw; and three grandchildren.



John T. McCutcheon