

Biblio File

Giving three examples in the July 12 Chicago Sun-Times of American authors who write “a good mystery,” Maureen O’Donnell said, “**Michael Raleigh** makes



Michael Raleigh

me hear the clatter of the El in his Chicago-based mysteries.” Tracked down by Biblio File, Raleigh said he is shopping his most recent book, titled *The Conjuror’s Boy*, among publishers. He’s also working

on a novel set in the summer of 1930 about the adventures of two characters on a houseboat going down the Illinois River. But, sorry, Maureen, you won’t hear the clatter of the El in that one. ... A new book is out about onetime Society member **Clarence Darrow**, *The Last Trials of Clarence Darrow*, by Donald McRae, who lives in London. Reviewer Steve Weinberg said in the June 21 Chicago Sun-Times, “McRae captures Chicago during the 1920s skillfully indeed.” (No word if the Els were clattering.) ... In a June 28 review, the New York Times said of

Aleksandar Hemon’s new book, *Love and Obstacles*, that Hemon “scrupulously ... assembles his apparently wild literary contraptions.” Also, Hemon will be at the Chicago Cultural Center Sept. 14 for GRANTA magazine’s Chicago Special issue. ... **Mary**



Mary Elizabeth Anderson

Elizabeth Anderson spoke for 15 minutes on the Kearney, Neb., NTV television station regarding bullying behavior and her middle grade novel, *Gracie Gannon: Middle School Zero*, and fol-

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A message from the new president of our Society

BY ROBERT LOERZEL

As an author of just one book (so far), I feel like a beginner compared with so many of the other accomplished writers who belong to the Society of Midland Authors. And now that I’m serving as president, I look back at the list of distinguished people who have held this office in years past. It makes me think: Wow, how did I end up on a list with Hobart Chatfield-Taylor, Harriet Monroe, Lloyd Wendt and Dempsey Travis? I feel humbled just to be in their company.

Of course, as the president of the SMA board, I will be just one of many authors volunteering their time to make this organization run. With the help of other board members and other Society members, I hope we can accomplish some important tasks in the next few years.

As Literary License has reported, we want to increase our endowment fund. That will make it possible to give more substantial prizes to the authors who win our awards. We know money is tight these days, but if you have any to spare, please consider making a contribution. Also think about including the Society in your will. And put in a good word for us if you personally know any philanthropists – or any literary-minded folks who have money to donate. Robert Remer chairs our endowment committee, and you can reach him at chibooks@aol.com.

“I hope we can accomplish some important tasks in the next few years.”

I would also like to see the Society attract new members. Do you know any authors who live in our 12-state region who are not members? Please urge them to join. Ideally, the Society should include

as many local authors as possible, including our region’s most prominent writers as well as newly published scribes. The board must approve nominations, so please contact me or another board member with information on any authors who’d like to join.

The SMA is based in Chicago, and we are admittedly somewhat Chicago-centric. We’d love to

get more members and involvement from authors who live outside Chicago. Let me know if you have any ideas for how to accomplish that.

Finally, the SMA should have a higher profile than it does now – more press coverage of our awards and programs, and more general awareness of who we are. If you have any ideas on how we can become better known, please let us know. And if there’s any way you can help out, your efforts will be appreciated. Feel free to contact me about any of these issues at loerzel@comcast.net.



Robert Loerzel

Q&A with
Dominic Pacyga

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New
Books

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Writers on Writing:
Jane Smith

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Biblio File

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lowed with a book signing at the local Waldenbooks. Anderson told Biblio File she was inspired to write the book “because I had watched one of my classmates being bullied from kindergarten through high school.” It’s an important topic, she says, because “160,000 children do not go to school on any given day because of bullying.” (She’s available to give presentations on this subject, particularly at schools.) ... Ohio University’s **Kevin Mattson** (See New Books, Page 4) had a nice Triple Crown of reviews for his latest book in the Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times (twice – in Books of the Times and the Aug. 2 Book Review). But where did you read about it first? Here in Biblio File, of course. The book is titled “*What*

the Heck Are You Up To, Mr. President?”: Jimmy Carter, America’s “Malaise,” and the Speech that Should Have Changed the Country. ...

Richard Lindberg [See New Books, Page 5] was the “Critic’s Choice” in the Literary Listings section of the July 31 Chicago

Reader ... **Alzina Stone Dale**’s latest book, a memoir of 1952 based on her diary, letters and more, will be out this fall. ... An essay by **Brock Clarke** is included in the new anthology *Love Is a Four-Letter Word* (July 28, Plume). ... The Winona (Minn.) Post, in an Aug. 2 profile of **Charlene Ann Baumbich** (See New Books, Page 5), wrote, “In a little

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Time to Renew?

Check the address label on this issue of Literary License. If it says your membership expired in June 2009, it’s time to renew. Please send \$35 to the Society of Midland Authors, P.O. Box 10419, Chicago, IL 60610 along with any change in your address or e-mail.

Historian unearths truths about ordinary Chicagoans

Dominic Pacyga, a member of the Department of Humanities, History and Social Science at Columbia College Chicago since 1984, has authored, co-authored or co-edited five books concerning Chicago’s history. A sixth – *Chicago: A Biography* – is due out Oct. 8 from the University of Chicago Press. Along with Richard Lindberg and Arnie Bernstein, he will be a panelist at the Oct. 13 SMA program “Chicago Writers Making History.”

Literary License: *What led you to focus on Chicago in your writing?*

Dominic Pacyga: Chicago has always fascinated me both as a teacher and a writer. Its multilayered history has provided many a topic for historians, fiction writers, poets, and others. When I was in graduate school I began to wonder how my family had come to live in the Back of the Yards. As a result I wrote a dissertation and later a book on the Polish immigrant experience in Chicago. My interest in neighborhoods also grew out of my fascination with the lives of ordinary Chicagoans.

Literary License: *You do lots of research. Any tips for other authors doing this kind of work?*

Dominic Pacyga: Doing research is like trying to solve a mystery; one needs a lot of perseverance and luck. Often an archival search will seem fruitless, but some little nugget may show up that can be used in a current or future project. Sometimes it takes time to simply figure out what you have. Primary sources come in all shapes and types, a photograph can be more important at times than a letter or a memoir. Sometimes a note scribbled on an envelope can give insight into a historical episode.

Literary License: *You’ve explored a lot of Chicago history in your earlier books. What new areas do you examine in your latest one?*

Dominic Pacyga: Unlike my other

October 13, 2009, program

Cliff Dwellers
200 S. Michigan Avenue
22nd floor

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

books, *Chicago: A Biography* is an attempt to understand Chicago’s development as a whole. It traces the city’s progress from the first European explorers to the early 21st. In many ways the book is a result of my 30-plus years of exploring the history of Chicago in the college classroom and in public lectures. While I could not tell the city’s story without

touching on the famous and infamous characters that helped shape it, I remain most interested in the lives of the not so famous and their experiences.

Literary License: *Has having a Chicago president in the White*

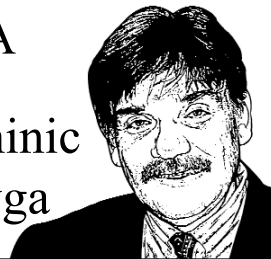
House increased interest in Chicago?

Dominic Pacyga: Chicago has always fascinated the general public. It has been called the most American city, “The Jungle,” “A City on the Make,” among other sobriquets and is one of the most written about cities in the world. The election of President Obama has again brought it to the forefront of the nation’s attention. Questions of how the Chicago experience has formed the president and how connected Obama is to the Chicago political machine will remain important for the foreseeable future.

Literary License: *What’s your next project?*

Dominic Pacyga: I am beginning to look at the Daley family and their rise to power. I am particularly interested in the role of the four Daley brothers, their mother Eleanor, and Maggie Daley as important players in the rise and continued importance of the family not only on the local, but the national political stages.

Q&A
with
**Dominic
Pacyga**



**Richard
Lindberg**

Prairie Avenue Bookshop's closing is sad day for books

Wilbert Hasbrouck is an unusual SMA member: He qualifies for membership both as an author and as a bookstore co-owner.

Or at least he did until Aug. 31, when his iconic Prairie Avenue Bookshop in Chicago's South Loop closed after more than 30 years.

The store, described as the largest architectural bookshop in the world, was a welcome center for the local architectural and design community. It also had a huge online catalog of books on architecture and design that served a global readership. But the growth of online book retailing, rising South Loop rents and the now-highest sales taxes of any major city in the country cut into sales.

Marylin and Wilbert Hasbrouck founded the Prairie Avenue School Press in 1961 to reprint Louis Sullivan's *A System of Architectural Ornament*. In 1964 the Hasbroucks established the Prairie School Review, a quarterly journal devoted to

Prairie School architecture. The Prairie Avenue Bookshop opened in 1974 and in the early 1980s was one of the first independent bookstores to move aggressively into computers, shipping books around the world. By the late 1980s, it had become a second home for architects and architectural historians, who met there regularly.



Wilbert Hasbrouck

The business moved to final address at 418 South Wabash Avenue in 1995, and Wilbert Hasbrouck, an architect as well as an author, designed the interior, patterning it after Chicago School and Prairie School architecture.

On Aug. 26, the Chicago Tribune wrote: "Wilbert and Marilyn Hasbrouck ... have given a lot to Chicago over the years. Their bookshop has been a favorite place to browse through the latest architectural titles and meet colleagues." On Aug. 31, a Chicago Sun-Times editorial said: "Wilbert and Marilyn Hasbrouck ran a Chicago treasure, and we thank them."

SMA Support

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Frisbie, Michael Argetsinger, James and Anne Barry, S. Dow Mossman, Steven E. Burgauer, Frances A. Baker, Steve Bogira, Libby Fischer Hellmann, Margaret Herguth, Richard Bales, Scott Turow, Phyllis M. Choyke, Carol F. Saller, Billy J. McCarthy, Shane Gericke, Carol B. Gartner, Fern G. Brown, Rita Emmett, Marlene Targ Brill, Sue A. Harrison, Robert J. R. Follett, L. James Binder, John Wasik, Christopher Leland, David Radavich, Shirley Christian, Jean B. Elshain, Mary Jane Bezark, Stella Pevsner, Charles J. Masters, Carol Felsenthal, Michael H. Ebner, Steven J. Monroe, Katherine M. Shonk, Stuart Meck, Alzina Stone Dale, Elsa Marston, Catherine M. Kenney, Theodore Berland, Mark E. Pulsifer, Arnie Bernstein and Cranston Knight.

Literary License

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yellow farmhouse perched high in the bluffs, creative inspiration flows like the gentle breeze that makes the curtains flutter and the cornstalks rustle. It is here in this unassuming place that **Charlene Ann Baumbich** finds her muse in the unlikely form of grazing cows and preening songbirds, a muse that brings her from five



Thrity Umrigar

hours away for the zen of the farm she calls her writing home." ... The Akron Beacon Journal on July 18 proudly pointed out that **Thrity Umrigar**, a Society of Midland Authors biography finalist for her memoir *First Darling of the Morning*, is one of its

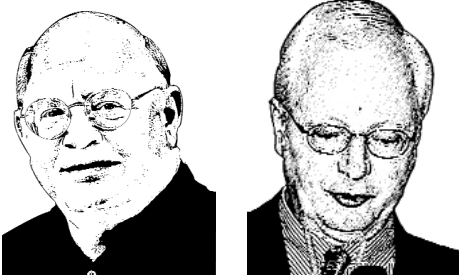
former reporters. ... **Margery Frisbie**, already a columnist for the (northwest suburban Chicago) Daily Herald has a new column, "L'Osservatore Chicago," on ChicagoCatholicNews.com (the editor-in-chief of the Webzine is Robert Herguth, son of SMA member **Margaret Herguth**). ... **Luisa Buehler** was among the authors attending the first Midwest Literary Lovefest Aug. 22-23 in Galena, Ill. ... *S is for Story: A Writer's Alphabet* (Sept. 9, Sleeping Bear Press, ages 9-12) is **Esther Hershennhorn's** latest title. ... The July 12 Chicago Sun-Times ran a profile of **Jane Smith** (see Writers on Writing, Page 6), written by **Thomas Frisbie**. It was picked up by the Associated Press and also ran on Chicagotribune.com. **Frisbie** also was on WGN radio's "Legally Speaking" show Aug. 2. ... **David Hernandez** keeps pleasing Chicago audiences by performing with his music group Street Sounds. He was scheduled to perform on July 19 at the Uptown Poetry Slam at the Greenmill Lounge on Broadway and Lawrence in Chicago. ... **Steve Bogira's** *Courtroom 302* is one of the inspirations for a new Wichita, Kan., blog called "What the Judge Ate for Breakfast" about the local courts. ... Former SMA Member-

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ship Secretary **Stuart Meck** has been appointed an associate research professor and director of the Planning Practice Program in the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers. This fall, he is teaching planning history



Stuart Meck

Jim Schwab

Who is winning the fame game?

and theory, and ethics. Through the university, he assessed the zoning and subdivision code of the U.S. Virgin Islands (and wants Biblio File readers to believe he was working every minute he was there – really). In his never-ending quest to become more famous than **Jim Schwab**, Meck also has co-authored “Smart Growth Policies: An Evaluation of Programs and Outcomes” (2009), the first comparative empirical study of states with smart growth programs. The study can be downloaded from the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy in Cambridge, Mass., at www.lincolninst.edu/pubs/smart-growth-policies.aspx. ... **Ed Gordon** gave the keynote address July 15 to the Conference for the World Future Society in Chicago. ... On Aug. 19, **John Wasik** gave NPR’s Marketplace Radio’s audience of some 9 million his thoughts on how the housing crisis could be resolved. ... **Sean B. Carroll** was awarded the Viktor Hamburger Outstanding Educator Prize for 2009 from the Society for Developmental Biology at the society’s sixty-eighth annual meeting July 23-27 in San Francisco. ... **Conger Beasley** told the Daily Camera on July 14, “I’m going to be cremated when I die and I certainly want a portion of my ashes to be scattered there in the Spanish Peaks [Wilderness in Colorado].” ... **Deborah Blum** is

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New Books

“WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU UP TO, MR. PRESIDENT?": JIMMY CARTER, AMERICA'S "MALAISE," AND THE SPEECH THAT SHOULD HAVE CHANGED THE COUNTRY

Booklist in its combined June 1 and June 15 issue said that in his new book, **Kevin Mattson** “makes a cogent argument that the speech’s words represented ‘some of the best that Carter offered the nations.’” On June 26, the Wall Street



Kevin Mattson

Journal called the book (Bloomsbury USA, June 23, 2009) “excellent” and said, “[Mattson] never lets his admiration [of Mr. Carter] get in the way of delivering a cautionary tale and a great read.” On July 15, the New York Times called the book “surprisingly tasty” and the July 12 Washington Post, in a lengthy review, called in a “feisty new book.” And, yes, the book gave Mattson a chance to mention the famous “Disco Demolition” night in Chicago: a riot of stoned kids who came out to a double header and who tore up the Comiskey Park, where the White Sox then played, and lit fires. It happened just a few days before the speech and gives the reader a sense of just how crazy the country seemed at that point.

FLYING FROM THE BLACK HOLE: THE B-52 NAVIGATOR-BOMBARDIERS OF VIETNAM

The Vietnam War-era B-52 Stratofortress carried a six-man crew. Toward the rear of the upper deck, back in its shadowy interior, there was a square breach in the deck floor leading down to

an even darker, nether region nicknamed the “Black Hole of Calcutta.” Here, the B-52 navigator-bombardiers were stationed. **Robert**

Harder’s latest book (Naval Institute Press, June, 2009) relates his own experiences as a navigator-bombardier in Vietnam, and is the only book about the B-52 air war in Vietnam from that perspective. Harder flew 145 combat missions in the war and later became a commercial pilot and certified flight instructor.



Robert Harder

AMAZING BIOME PROJECTS YOU CAN BUILD YOURSELF

Donna Latham’s new book (Sept. 1, 2009) is a nonfiction book for kids ages 9-12, published by Nomad Press.

Amazing Biome Projects You Can Build



Donna Latham

Yourself is written to inspire an interest in all corners of the Earth, from the driest deserts to the lushest jungles and everything in between. Gnarly krumholz trees, bioluminescent sea creatures, carnivorous plants and blubbery marine critters are only a few of the elements to be encountered in this handbook.

CHICAGO: A BIOGRAPHY

Dominic A. Pacyga’s *Chicago: A Biography* (University of Chicago Press) comes out Oct. 15. **Stuart Dybek** writes, “Well-paced and clearly organized, Pacyga’s *Chicago* tells the compelling story of this uniquely American city. Pacyga’s narrative provides a particularly enjoyable time-lapse view of the succes-

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sive waves of change that have seen this settlement in a swamp grow into a modern metropolis.”

Ann Durkin Keating wrote, “Pacyga gives us the singular story of Chicago in his own inimitable voice.”

NO TIME TO WAVE GOODBYE

Jacquelyn’s Mitchard’s new book

(September, RandomHouse) is a sequel to *The Deep End of the Ocean*, which was Oprah’s first book club pick. Publishers Weekly on July 13 called the story “a riveting ordeal” and said, “This action-packed and emotionally rich drama is every bit as satisfying as its predecessor.”



**Jacquelyn
Mitchard**

OVER MY DEAD BODY

Kate Klise has launched a new series for young readers with Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. The first title, *Dying to Meet You*, was released in April. The sequel, *Over My Dead Body*, will be out this October. Both titles have been named



Kate Klise

Junior Library Guild selections.

TRUE STORIES OF FALSE CONFESSIONS

Rob Warden is co-editor of this examination of some of the most critical

accounts of false confessions in the U.S. justice system (Oct. 15, Northwestern University Press). Among the more than 40 writers whose work is included are **Randy Garrett, Thomas Frisbie and Alex Kotlowitz**. The book demonstrates similarities between cases, thereby refuting the perception that false confessions represent individual tragedies rather than a systemic flaw in the justice system.



Rob Warden

The selection by Frisbie and Garrett is from their 2005 book, *Victims of Justice Revisited*.

STRAY AFFECTIONS

In **Charlene Ann Baumbich’s** new book (Sept. 15, WaterBrook Press), Cassandra Higgins, after a “flurrious” moment happens with the remarkable snowglobe, and the people she loves are swirled into a tumultuous, yet grace-filled, and life-changing



**Charlene Ann
Baumbich**

journey.

THE GAMBLER KING OF CLARK STREET: MICHAEL C. McDONALD AND THE RISE OF CHICAGO’S DEMOCRATIC MACHINE

Richard Lindberg’s latest book (Southern Illinois University Press, May 18) tells the story of a larger-than-life figure who fused Chicago’s criminal underworld with the city’s political and commercial spheres to create an urban machine built on graft, bribery and intimidation.

Lindberg paints the life of the Democratic kingmaker against the backdrop of 19th century Chicago crime and politics. SMA member Dick Simpson wrote: “This is an immensely important historical book because it fills a critical gap in Chicago and Illinois history.”

THE NEARLY DEPARTED: MINNESOTA GHOST STORIES & LEGENDS

Michael Norman’s

new book has been published by the Minnesota Historical Society Press. He writes, “The MHS Press has done a beautiful job in producing this collection of four dozen tales of the state’s haunted places, from Duluth to the Twin Cities to Elmore, Stillwater to Pipestone ... and beyond!



**Michael
Norman**

“This is a book of stories, not simply anecdotes or geographic peculiarities. I’ve interviewed dozens of individuals and traveled around the state to, er, bring to life, so to speak, tales that may intrigue, mystify, puzzle and, perhaps, frighten readers.”

FEARSOME FASCINATIONS

Whitney Scott edited this book, an October 2009 publication that is the 13th annual anthology in Outrider Press’ “Black-and-White” series. Scott also has been awarded the Bensenville (Ill.) Public Library’s 2009-



Whitney Scott

2010 writer-in-residence grant, and she has been leading creative writing workshops culminating in a public reading.

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New Books

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PRINCESS HYACINTH (THE SURPRISING TALE OF A GIRL WHO FLOATED)

Florence Parry Heide's new book (Sept. 22, Random/Schwartz & Wade) is about Princess Hyacinth, whose protective parents must weigh her down with



Florence Parry Heide

diamond pebbles and the heaviest jewels of the kingdom to keep her from floating away. Hyacinth yearns for freedom as she watches other children swimming. In an Aug. 17 review, Publishers Weekly said, "Heide possesses the ability to

tell a moralistic tale without a hint of didacticism."

DOUBLEBACK

In Libby Fischer Hellmann's new book (October, Bleak House Books), Chicago private investigator Georgia Davis returns to pair up with Ellie Foreman, the heroine of another Hellmann series. After Molly Messenger,



Libby Fischer Hellmann

age 8, is apparently kidnapped, a family friend asks Ellie for help, and then Ellie asks Georgia to get in on the case, which includes a suspicious car accident and a paramilitary training camp tied to a bank.

On Aug. 17, Publishers Weekly said, "Hellmann skillfully juggles disparate threads of bank fraud, extortion, drugs and illegal immigration."

If stories are good at root, book project can blossom

BY THOMAS FRISBIE

Before plunging into research for the book that became *Garden of Invention*, Chicago author Jane Smith did not know much about the dizzying poultry bubble that started in 1949 or the spineless cactus boom of the early 1900s.

But running across those fascinating stories was part of what motivated her to keep crisscrossing the country and to make several treks to the Library of Congress.

"What kept me going when I was writing was there is so much fun stuff there," said Smith, who has written five previous books and co-authored a sixth. Among her earlier books are *Patenting the Sun: Polio and the Salk Vaccine*, *Elsie de Wolfe: A Life in the High Style*, two long-ago murder mysteries and *Fool's Gold*, which won the Society of Midland Authors' 2000 Award for Adult Fiction.

Her latest book (the full title is *Garden of Invention: Luther Burbank and the Business of Breeding Plants*) is about a man whose scientific breakthroughs made him the world's best-

known gardener a century ago but who is less well known today.

"We know more about reality TV stars than we do about the people who are making a difference in the way we all live, and I think that is a shame," Smith said.

Smith has set out to change that. A cultural historian, she focuses on the events and people who, unlike reality TV stars, have made a difference.

"I am consistently looking at individuals and social periods where there were changes that were so fundamental that we assume that is the way it has always been," Smith says. "I try to go back and say: Where did we get this enormous change?"

And even though "for generations, my people have had nothing to do the land," Smith knew enough about agriculture to see Luther Burbank fit the definition of

someone who made a difference.

Burbank once stood with Thomas Edison and Henry Ford as an icon of American progress. A pioneer in agricultural science who lived from 1849 to 1926, Burbank was the best known gardener in the world. By crossbreeding plants, he developed a cornucopia of flowers, fruits and vegetables that were showier, faster growing, hardier and tastier. His work fundamentally changed not only American's gardens and diets but their perception of the plant world as well. The Russet Burbank potato, a variant of his Burbank potato, remains today the world's preeminent variety.

"As I found out more about him, it came to be a richer and richer story, and also an important story," says Smith, who has lived in Evanston and Chicago for more than 30 years.

"It allowed me to write about many

trends that I wanted to discuss, not only about the rise of plant breeding, but also about western expansion, the rise of science and changing attitudes toward the natural world."

One change Burbank helped to bring about by

developing fruits that traveled better and blossomed earlier was the increase in the year-round availability of fresh fruit.

"It used to be dried fruit was what you ate all winter, and in every description of domestic life in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, people are having their prunes at breakfast," Smith said.

As for the poultry bubble, it was "a dizzying upward spiral of prices for exotic chickens and their eggs that lasted several years." The spineless cactus boom was fueled by ranchers hoping a spineless cactus Burbank developed could provide feed for cattle in arid regions.

"[Today] we don't admire the inventor so much," Smith says. "We trace the profits, we talk about the ownership of things. We could do with a little more admiration of actual achievement."

Writers on Writing: Jane Smith



How to get a good return on money spent on publicity

Return on Investment. Everyone loves it, and it can apply to everything. Let's say you buy a shirt for \$50. You wear that shirt once a week and it lasts you five years. Each time you wear it, you receive five compliments on it. That's less than \$1 per month for 5 years plus 1200 compliments. I'd say that is an incredible ROI, and sadly, I've never had that with any of my shirts.

Measuring the ROI on your public relations investment can be a bit more complicated but necessary nonetheless. It can be difficult to specifically track book sales as a result of your public relations efforts. However, there are ways to ensure that the money you put into public relations is well spent.

Measuring ROI

Ms. Ad and Mr. PR are friends. But they are competitive. Mr. PR likes to show how he can get the same or better coverage for equal or less money. For example, let's say your book is featured in a two-page article in a magazine. You can calculate how much that article would be in advertising dollars by finding out how much two full-page advertisements cost in that particular publication. It is the same for radio and TV interviews and also online publicity. Instead of purchasing ad space (which anyone can do), using public relations generates awareness through a third party, which is worth more. When choosing between two action movies, would you go see the one that has an ad in the entertainment section or the one that has rave, four-star reviews from movie critics?

Count the publicity

Often clients will come to us and say that they would like to be on this TV program, in this publication or on this radio show. We encourage clients to tell us their "wishes" because it helps us know what we must achieve to make them happy.

LITERARY LICENSE, AUGUST/SEPTEMBER, 2009

“There are ways to ensure that the money you put into public relations is well spent.”

You can determine your PR ROI by counting the number of placements that an agency secures. And good public relations agencies should always be accountable for their work by showing clients what they have achieved each month. Going one step further would be to evaluate the amount of new book sales that come in while your book's name is being spread throughout the media world. It is

NOT too bold to ask readers how they heard about your book. If they say "that article in the N.Y. Times," then you should send your PR agency a fruit basket.

See (and hear) the groundswell

To add to the list of 5,643,738 awesome things about social media, there are programs available that allow us to see the effect that public relations efforts have on voices in the online world. Social media monitoring is a great way of showing what people are saying about your book in blogs, microblogs, chat rooms and other social networks. The goal of an online PR campaign is to start a "groundswell," meaning a rumble of online chatter that leads to more people talking about the book (and linking to book's Web site) and so on until the ground "swells" with publicity.

Don't be shy in asking your PR agency about ROI. Believe me, we know that it's important and we know that ROI is ultimately what it all boils down to. So please, next time you see me, compliment me on my shirt.

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

PR Tips
from
Tom
Ciesielka



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helping to spearhead a group of Madison, Wis., journalists that has just launched a citywide collaborative reporting project called "All Together Now" focused on health-care access. ... **Richard Christian-sen** was among the scheduled speakers for "Revisiting the Bard: Romeo and Juliet," a three-week salute to Shakespeare's ill-fated lovers starting July 27 at Oakton Community College in Skokie, Ill. ... The Fremont (Neb.) Tribune wrote on Aug. 4 about Jake and his pal, Angus, service dogs that children's author **Julia Cook** takes to schools across the United States. ... **J. Patrick Lewis'** new book is *Countdown to Summer: A Poem for Every Day of the School Year* (July 1, Little, Brown Young Readers). ... The Aug. 26 New York Times called **Rick Perlstein** "our premier historian of the rise of modern movement conservatism."

... **Kevin Davis** on "Chicago Tonight" July 1 and writing in the Chicago Sun-Times on June 28, told the story of how his grandfather Sol Davis, while working as a photographer for the Chicago Daily Times in 1934, was sent to cover the biggest story in town: the arrest of John Dillinger. Sol learned that Dillinger's plane had to stop in St. Louis to refuel, so he booked all the empty seats on the American Airways flight and drove 300 miles to St. Louis to get on the flight, shutting out the competition. Keeping up the tradition, Kevin Davis' wife, Martie Sanders, was cast in a small role in the Dillinger movie "Public Enemies," and



Kevin Davis

Davis was one of the extras playing reporters. Biblio File is reminded of its own Dillinger-related journalistic escapade: testing the Illinois gun-licensing system by sending in a photo of John Dillinger and asking for a license for him. Seeing the fee was paid, the state duly issued one. ... **Nami Mun** is scheduled to be at Chicago's Women & Children First Bookstore Oct. 3. ... **William Cronon** is

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interviewed in Ken Burns' latest project, "National Parks: America's Best Idea," airing Sept. 27 on PBS. ... On July 4, an article about Lou Gehrig by **Jonathan Eig** ran in the Chicago Sun-Times. Eig is author of *Luckiest Man Alive: The Life and Death of Lou Gehrig*. Eig also reviewed *Satchel: The Life and Times of an American Legend* in the July 19 New York Times. (As co-honorary spokesman, Eig will meet with entrants at the Les Turner ALS Foundation's 8th Annual ALS Walk4Life Sept. 12 at Montrose Harbor in Chicago.) Eig's new book, *Get Capone*, will be published next spring. ... Examiner.com on Aug. 7 said the Motown Writers Network's Essence of Motown Literary Meet and Greet has become "one of Michigan's premier literacy and literary events." The network was founded by **Sylvia Hubbard**. ... **Irving Cutler** was scheduled to speak at the annual membership luncheon of the Northwest Chapter Hadassah on Aug. 30 on "Chicago Jewry from Shtetl to Suburbia." ... **Eugene Kennedy** was quoted Aug. 26 on the Web site Politics Daily about the Catholic Church. ... **Mardi Link** (See New Members at right) and **Arnie Bernstein** will discuss true crime writing at the Grand Rapids (Mich.) Public Library on Saturday, Oct. 17 for the library's Celebration of the Book festival. ... *Plainsong*, winner of the Society's 2000 Adult Fiction Award, was one of five books that President Obama brought on his August vacation to Martha's Vineyard. ... **Eric Dregni** wrote a piece in the Aug. 22 Minneapolis Star-Tribune on seeing Italy by scooter. ... In the summer issue of the Claremont Review of Books, **Joseph Epstein** reviewed Mark Helprin's *Digital Barbarism: A Writer's Manifesto*. ... **Louise Erdrich** was in August named a finalist for the 2009 Dayton Literary Peace Prize for fiction for her novel *The Plague of Doves*. ... **Patricia Hampl** was quoted in the Aug. 13 Minneapolis Star-Tribune as saying memoirs are "an attempt to find not only a self but a world." ... **Kevin Coval** moderated an afternoon of poetry, conversation Aug. 1 on Chicago Public Radio. ... **Jack Ridl's**

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New Members

Carol Ascher, who was born in Cleveland of refugees from the Nazis, and raised in Topeka, Kan., is author of *Afterimages: A Family Memoir*, a story of growing up in the American heartland (Holmes & Meier, 2008). She also wrote *The Flood*, a novel about the flooding of Kansas River and a girl's discovery of prejudice (Curbstone, 1995) and *Simone de Beauvoir: A Life of Freedom* (Beacon Press, 1981). Leo Spitzer, author of *Hotel Bolivia*, said *Afterimages* is "a second-generation chronicle that offers rich intellectual insights while also stirring our deepest feelings." Ascher's short stories and essays have appeared widely, and she has received numerous literary awards. Trained as an anthropologist, she for many years studied issues of prejudice and equity in public schools. She and her husband live in the woods of northwest Connecticut.

Bryan Gruley, Chicago bureau chief for the Wall Street Journal, is author of *Starvation Lake* (2009, Touchstone), his debut novel and the first in a series of mysteries set in the fictional northern Michigan town of Starvation Lake. *Starvation Lake* was the first pick to be a Great Lakes Great Read by the Great Lakes Independent Booksellers Association. Reviewers have compared the novel favorably with Dennis Lehane's *Mystic River*.



Bryan Gruley

Gruley grew up in Detroit, and after graduating from the University of Notre Dame in 1979 he worked for Michigan newspapers in Brighton, Howell, Kalamazoo and Detroit before joining the Wall Street Journal's Washington Bureau in 1995. He shared in the Journal's 2002 Pulitzer Prize for coverage of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. He also is the author of a prize-winning nonfiction book, *Paper Losses: A Modern Epic of Greed and Betrayal at America's Two Largest Newspaper Companies* (Grove Atlantic, 1993).

Marian Volkman is author of *Life Skills: Improve the Quality of Your Life with Metapsychology* (2005, Loving

Healing Press); *Children and Traumatic Incident Reduction: Creative and Cognitive Approaches* (2007, Loving Healing Press); and *Turtle Dolphin Dreams* (2005, Loving Healing Press), a fiction book. She also has more books in the works: one fiction and three nonfiction. Volkman also does Traumatic Incident Reduction and Applied Metapsychology training workshops, both in her hometown of Ann Arbor and in other locations.

True crime writer **Mardi Link** is author of *When Evil Came to Good Hart* and *Isadore's Secret: Sin, Murder and Confession in a Northern Michigan Town*. She also writes the "Rusty Gun" blog, named after a .25 caliber semiautomatic Colt made in 1908 that was found near the Good Hart crime scene described in her book (the gun had no relation to the case's six unsolved murders).



Mardi Link

Jeffrey Zaslow is author of *The Girls from Ames: A Story of Women and a Forty-Year Friendship* (2009, Gotham). He also is co-author of the international bestseller *The Last Lecture* (2008, Hyperion) and author of *Tell Me All About It: A Personal Look at the Advice Business by "the Man Who Replaced Ann Landers"* (1989, William Morrow). Zaslow also writes the Wall Street Journal column, "Moving On," which focuses on life transitions. His column was twice named the best general-interest column in a newspaper with over 100,000 circulation by the National Society of Newspaper Columnists. In 2008, he received the Distinguished Column Writing Award from the New York Newspaper Publishers Association. He replaced Ann Landers, at the Chicago Sun-Times, writing a column there from 1987 to 2001. Zaslow also is co-author of *Highest Duty: My Search for What Really Matters*, the autobiography of Capt. Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger, set for release Oct. 13.



Jeffrey Zaslow

A trip through the Carpathians

The Society of Midland Authors' roving international correspondent Connie Goddard, who has joined the Peace Corps, wrote this on July 28 from Targovite, Romania. This version was edited for space.

I was traveling through the Carpathian Mountains after an all-night train ride through Romania. We went through Transylvania at dawn – watching the morning mist rise from the many lakes peppering that storied land. We passed through Brasov, one of Romania's more noted cities – in part because of its association the fabled Queen Marie, a granddaughter of Victoria who was married to the king here early in the 20th century. Brasov sits in the northern foothills of the Carpathians. Its history and architecture have long attracted admirers; now its proximity to great skiing has motivated it and neighboring communities to go after tourist dollars.

Abandoned factories are prevalent in and outside of Romanian cities. Railroad stations are being modernized, new hotels are under construction and signs of a major water diversion project were evident from the train.

The construction firms have German names – a sad comment on the Romanian economy.

The mountain peaks I saw from the window of my comfortable sleeping com-

partment seemed less craggy, or perhaps older, than the Rockies. Buildings I could see from the train look vaguely Swiss, rather than the Slavic style. Local architecture is one of the more intriguing aspects of the Romanian countryside – the buildings in this area, especially the newer ones, suggest a more international style. They are centered on their lots with flower-filled balconies on each of three stories.

The older homes back up to property lines so that owners can maximize the size of their gardens and enjoy their homes' graceful facades, which usually include a portico.

When I told one of my Romanian friends that I would be going to a town near the Hungarian border, she told me I'd find the people are industrious and prosperous.

The region around Bihor and Oradea has been subject to Hungarian and Austrian and German influences, and the past Turkish (the Ottomans). The friction of mixing cultures can result in greater openness toward change.

Northwestern Romania feels more like Central Europe than like Eastern Europe; it suggests a greater interest in new experiences.

The attitude seems to be – don't simply enjoy the companionship of friends and family, go explore the neighboring mountains and use your spare time finding a business to invest in.

lisher has heard of the latter.

Small presses, and even self-publishing, will have to be taken more seriously as authors use these options to overcome the "regional" label the large houses put on their works. I'm not sure how university presses will come out in this.

I'm glad Mr. Bernstein found the University of Michigan Press interested in his book. I've found that University Press of Kansas to be much less receptive to Kansas manuscripts, since they've chosen presidential biographies to be their bread-and-butter.

Robert Collins

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latest poetry collection, *Losing Season*, will be released in September. ... **Rick Kaempfer** was quoted Aug. 27 in an Associated Press story about ex-Cub Ron Santo. ... *Brothers Notorious: The Sheltons: Southern Illinois' Legendary Gangsters* by **Taylor Pensoneau** was cited on Aug. 6 on southernillinois.com as one of the standard books about southern Illinois history. ... **Patricia Kummer** wrote an Aug. 28 community profile of Lisle, Ill., for the Chicago Tribune. ... **Timothy Gilfoyle** was quoted in an Aug. 5 Chicago Tribune story about the history of newsstands. ... **Jane Kurtz** helped raise funds for the first printing of *Silly Mamma*, a bilingual Amharic-English children's book and is now president of the Ethiopia Reads Board of Directors. ... **Richard Longworth** will discuss "The American Midwest in the Age of Globalization" Oct. 20 at Ohio Wesleyan University. ... Former SMA board member **Cheryl Reed** is now senior editor, publications at the University of Chicago Medical Center. ... **Dan P. McAdams** was on an Aug. 17 CAN-TV call-in show to discuss how developing a positive story of redemption for one's own life can promote health and enhance the lives of other people. ... **Ted Kooser's** new book is *Lights on a Ground of Darkness: An Evocation of a Place and Time*. Booklist on Aug. 9 said he "achieves the near impossibility of making good, unpretentious men and women vital and interesting on the page." ... **Benjamin Percy's** 2007 "Dial Tone" was listed as a "favorite" Aug. 15 in the Kansas City Star. ... Chicago TV historian **Walter J. Podrazik** was quoted in an Aug. 11 Chicago Sun-Times on the new "The Kukla, Fran and Ollie Show" postage stamp. ... On Aug. 3, examiner.com called *Knockemstiff* by **Donald Ray Pollock** "a dark and unforgiving journey into the lives of the inhabitants of a small Ohio town." ... **Robert Remer** was quoted in the Aug. 11 Chicago Sun-Times as president of the Edgewater Historical Society in a story about a preservation battle. ... **Harry Mark Petrakis** has completed 10 of the short stories for his new collection about a modern Greek village.

Letter to the Editor

I'd like to comment on your interview with **Arnie Bernstein**. I've had talks with the head of the Kansas Center for the Book in which similar observations come up. Books either set in Kansas, or written about Kansas, are perceived by the large publishers as "small market books" and therefore aren't published by them. Generally the only exceptions are books on subjects about Kansas that are in the news, such as the BTK serial killer. The thing is, they're just as "local" a subject; it seems the only difference is that the pub-

Final Chapters

Dempsey Travis 1920-2009

Dempsey Travis, former president of the Society of Midland Authors and author of the trilogy *Autobiography of Black Chicago*, *An Autobiography of Black Jazz* and *An Autobiography of Black Politics* died July 2 in his home at age 89.

Mr. Travis also was author of his 1992 autobiography *I Refuse To Learn To Fail* and a number of other books.

As SMA president, Mr. Travis endeared himself to fellow Board members by hosting all the Board meetings with dinner at the Cliff Dwellers Club, where the Society now holds its monthly programs. Asked about his generosity, Mr. Travis said, "It goes with the territory."

The only child of a stockyards laborer, Mr. Travis was a self-made millionaire. As he rose to eminence as a South Side developer during the 1950s, the Chicago Tribune said, Mr. Travis, a 1949 graduate of Roosevelt University, fought to



Dempsey Travis

increase access to the mortgage market for blacks; battled redlining, the practice of withholding home-loan funds from risky neighborhoods; and galvanized funding for the candidacy of his high school friend and Chicago's first black mayor, Harold Washington.

"I remember having lunch with him to talk over the transition," said **Richard Frisbie**, who immediately preceded Mr. Travis as SMA president. "It was in the old Wrigley Building restaurant, which enjoyed a clientele that included broadcasters and politicians as well as ad people. During lunch, two or three of them stopped by our table to say hello to him. He was more or less holding court. It was obvious that Dempsey was well known to a lot of movers and shakers.

"I was with him one day when he had just got word that one of his books had sold 12,000 copies in South Africa," Frisbie added. "He was immensely pleased."

Mr. Travis founded Travis Realty Corp.

John Callaway 1936-2009

John Callaway, author of *The Thing of It Is: With Reflections on Chicago and the Problem Society* (Jameson Books, 1994) died June 23 at the age of 72.

Callaway also was the host and senior editor of WTTW-TV's "Friday Night" and the "Chicago Stories" anthology series. The Chicago Tribune described Callaway as "Chicago Television's No. 1 interviewer" and "the best in the business." The Atlanta Constitution said, "He is, hands down, the best on-air interviewer in the land."

Publishers Weekly said Callaway's book, a compilation of essays that included many written for the Chicago Tribune and Eleven, WTTW's monthly subscriber magazine, "is folksy and down-home, underplaying his newspaper parents' alcoholism, but is never pollyannaish, as when he explains why



John Callaway

Christmas depresses him."

Later in the book, Publishers Weekly said, "Callaway turns deadly serious with a set of powerful, hard-hitting essays on the problems of contemporary society, a splendid climax."

Booklist called *The Thing of It Is*, "A refreshing collection replete with Callaway's charm that can be read from beginning to end or in a random fashion."

A native of New Martinsville, W.Va., Callaway arrived in Chicago as a college dropout to begin his journalism career at the City News Bureau of Chicago.

He was later news director at WBBM-AM, and was named CBS Radio's vice president for development. Callaway returned to Chicago and in 1974 became WTTW's news director, the Associated Press said.

He founded "Chicago Tonight" and was the show's host for 15 years before retir-

ing from the job in 1999, but was back on WTTW a year later as host of the station's Chicago Stories documentary series. Later, he also returned to "Chicago Tonight" as host of "Friday Night," a segment of in-depth interviews with people in the news.

WTTW said, "In the course of his distinguished career in journalism, Callaway has interviewed everyone from former, current, and future U.S. Presidents, literary figures, politicians, and A-list celebrities.

"Some of his subjects, to name only a few, have included Oprah Winfrey, John Updike, Norman Mailer, James Baldwin, Mike Ditka, Andy Rooney, Tom Brokaw, Tim Russert, Henry Kissinger, Alan Alda, Aaron Copland, Helen Hayes, Leontyne Price, Howard Cosell, Mike Wallace, and Jonas Salk."

Callaway was also the founding Director of the William Benton Fellowships in Broadcast Journalism program at the University of Chicago.

He later founded Sivart Mortgage Co. and as president of both entities actively sold properties vacated during the white migration to the suburbs and worked to interest potential black buyers who were being displaced by massive urban renewal projects. His efforts are chronicled in **Beryl Satter's** *Family Properties: Race, Real Estate, and the Exploitation of Black Urban America* (Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt, 2009).

In 1957, Mr. Travis was president of the Dearborn Real Estate Board, an association of black real estate professionals in the Chicago area. Two years later, he became president of the South Side chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, coordinating a protest march led by Martin Luther King Jr. and A. Phillip Randolph.

Mr. Travis' most recent book, *Obama's Race to the White House*, was published last year, shortly before President Barack Obama's election.

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