

Biblio File

Glennette Tilley Turner was the interviewee for the Underground Railroad segment of the WTTW “DuSable to Obama” documentary scheduled to air June 7. ... The Cliff Dwellers, where the Society holds its monthly programs, was scheduled to sign a new lease effective June 1. ... The Authors Guild welcomed its new president, **Scott Turow**, with Chicago-style hot dogs (as they described them: “day-glow relish, hold the ketchup”) and beer May 26 at its booth at the Book Expo of America. Also, the online Daily Beast in May listed Turow’s five favorite pre-1980 novels about the law: *Billy Budd*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Just and the Unjust*, *Phineas Finn*, and *A Married Man*. ... **Sue William Silverman**’s craft book, *Fearless Confessions: A Writer’s Guide to Memoir* (University of Georgia Press) was awarded Honorable Mention in ForeWord Review’s Book-of-the-Year Award in the category of Writing. ... **Robert O. Harder**’s short story, “My Turn in the Barrel,” a 3,000- word effort based on his experiences in a military hospital on Christmas Eve 1967, has won an Honorable Mention in the 2010 E.M. Koeppel Short Fiction Awards contest. ... **Jim Merriner** has a website for his upcoming book: www.ponزيدotgov.com. He also was on Bruce DuMont’s “Beyond the Beltway” in May. ... On April 26, **Gerard Wozek** read poems from his book *Dervish* and an excerpt from his memoir in progress. He also screened a poetry video at Heartland Community College in Normal, Ill. ... **Sue Harrison** was scheduled to be the featured speaker May 1 at Lake Superior (Mich.) State University commencement ceremonies. She is at work on a book set in Michigan’s Eastern Upper Peninsula. ... **Leone Castell Anderson**’s children’s story “The Rascally Kitten” was shortlist-

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Jim Harrison

James McManus

Sandra Mitchell

Richard Lindberg

Christine Taylor-Butler

Kent Meyers

‘Honoring the voices that emanate from this region’

BY THOMAS FRISBIE

The Society of Midland Authors gathered May 11 at Chicago’s InterContinental Hotel to, in the words of emcee Steve Edwards, “honor the stories, voices and sensibilities that emanate from this region thousands of miles from [the] places in New York and Los Angeles that shape too much of what we get to experience in our culture today.”

At its 54th annual book awards banquet (earlier awards were not given on an annual basis), the Society honored 17 authors for works published in 2009. As master of ceremonies, Edwards – the acting program director for WBEZ-Chicago Public Radio – introduced the award judges and kept the event on schedule.

“I am always glad to be present at any gathering in which ‘Midland’ is a celebrated word,” Edwards joked. “The word ‘Midland’ ... conveys a deep, rich sense of place.”

In the Adult Fiction category, the winner was **Kent Meyers** of Spearfish, S.D. for *Twisted Tree* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt). The finalists were **Richard Powers** of Urbana, Ill., for *Generosity*:

An Enhancement (Farrar, Straus and Giroux) and **Achy Obejas** of Chicago for *Ruins* (Akashic Books).

Judge **Keir Graff** said of *Generosity*: *An Enhancement*, “It’s another tremendous accomplishment for a writer who sees this species with brilliant, uncomfortable clarity.”

Of *Ruins*, Graff said: “Obejas has created an unforgettable character ... giving us an indelible, personal glimpse at a place and time that most of us know only from headlines. ... Her prose is deceptively simple and beautiful in its simplicity.”

And of the winner, *Twisted Tree*, Graff said: “Unsentimental and unjudging, *Twisted Tree* evokes the push and pull of the landscape on the inhabitants, how its allure to one may be the ruin of another. It is rich with respect for the ghosts of the past, wry about the present, views the future with patient acceptance.

“Meyers has written other fine books and will write more, but if this were his only book it would still make a lasting contribution to Midwestern and American letters. *Twisted Tree* is a stunning achieve-

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Shane Gericke

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Tom Ciesielka

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ed for the very first *smories.com* competition from “hundreds and hundreds of submissions.” Starting on May 1, a narration by a young girl with an English accent



Leone Castelli
Anderson

was posted on the *smories* site in competition with 49 other stories. The number of hits a story received determined the winner. Anderson’s story received over 400 hits. ... Here’s **Jim Schwab’s** report from Washington, where he was hiding out as invited speaker instead of attending the SMA awards banquet on May 11: “The awards gala at the National Building Museum [honoring three organizations ‘that have advanced the quality of our built environment through their unique civic and social innovations’], with about 1,000 people or more, came off extremely well. The third batch of honorees was Wynton Marsalis, Harry Connick Jr., Jim Pate and Ann Marie Willis for their work in developing the post-Katrina New Orleans Artists Village as a means of restoring the New Orleans artistic community. These are somewhat elevated homes (for flood mitigation) with colorful exteriors and a neighborly front porch atmosphere designed to bring many of the city’s musicians home again. A band from the village played fantastic music, including Tania Wang, a young

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Richard
Powers



Achy
Obejas



Sean B.
Carroll



Leonard
Zeskind



Lawrence
Rothfield



Jane S.
Smith

Awards

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ment. It deserves all this praise and more.”

In accepting the award, Meyers recalled a “moment in my life when I had a manila envelope with 23 rejection letters that my agent sent to me all at once.” He said he spent 18 years writing before his first book was published.

“It has been a long journey for me and it is immensely gratifying to stand up here and to accept this award,” he said.

The other Adult Fiction judges were **Lynn Voedisch** and **Mark Eleveld**.

In the Adult Nonfiction category, the winner was **James McManus** of Kenilworth, Ill., for *Cowboys Full: The Story of Poker* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux). Finalists were **Sean B. Carroll** of Madison, Wis., for *Remarkable Creations: Epic Adventures in the Search for the Origins of Species* (Houghton Mifflin); **Lawrence Rothfield** of Chicago for *The Rape of Mesopotamia: Behind the Looting of the Iraq Museum* (University of Chicago Press), and **Leonard Zeskind** of Kansas City, Mo., for *Blood & Politics: The History of the White Nationalist Movement from the Margins to the Mainstream*.

Judge **Richard Bales** said *Remarkable Creations* was a “charming and enlightening” book.

He said *The Rape of Mesopotamia* was a book that “just haunted” him.

“In plain and simple prose the author describes with gut-wrenching clarity the looting of the Iraq Museum during the 2003 U.S. armed invasion of Iraq,” Bales said.

Of *Blood & Politics*, Bales said, “It is a massive book, it took 15 years to write. It is marvelously written.”

In his own remarks, Zeskind said, “While I wrote it over the last 30 years ... I wrote this book so it would be on the bookshelves in 20 years. I hope it is read

today but I foresee a period when people will need to know where the problem [of white supremacism] came from when it appears 20 or 30 years from now.”

Of the winning author, Bales said, “Mr. McManus is just one heck of a good writer.”

In accepting the award, McManus said, “This is the second book that I have written about one of my favorite things – poker. It was a wonderful opportunity. I basically spent 10 years writing two books on this subject.”

The other judges in the category were **Carol Carlson** and **Richard Prince**.

In the Biography category, the winner was **Richard C. Lindberg** of Chicago for *The Gambler King of Clark Street: Michael C. McDonald and the Rise of Chicago’s Democratic Machine* (Southern Illinois University Press). Finalists were **James Ballowe** of Ottawa, Ill., for *A Man of Salt and Trees: The Life of Joy Morton* (Northern Illinois University Press); **Paul Taylor** of Troy, Mich., for *Orlando M. Poe: Civil War General and Great Lakes Engineer* (Kent State University Press), and **Jane S. Smith** of Chicago for *The Garden of Invention: Luther Burbank and the Business of Breeding Plants* (Penguin Press).

Here’s what judge **Robert Remer** said of the finalists:

On *A Man of Salt and Trees*: “What this book does is to bring to life a man who was truly a mover and, please forgive the pun, a shaker.”

On *Orlando M. Poe*: “It’s a wonderful read about a very, very interesting person who had some importance and important contributions to make as a public servant.”

On *The Garden of Invention*: “It is a fabulous story about a really interesting and quirky guy.”

In his remarks Ballowe said, “Biography is nothing without history and history is nothing without biography.”

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James Ballowe



Paul Taylor



Gloria Whelan



Candace Fleming



Marc J. Sheehan

Awards

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In accepting the award as winner, Lindberg said he ran across a trove of information about Mike McDonald while researching earlier books, including *Chicago Ragtime* and *To Serve and Collect*.

"McDonald became the figure that I zeroed in on, that I would do my first biography of," Lindberg said.

The other judges in the category were **Joseph Morton** and **James Schwab**.

In the Children's Fiction category, the winner was **Sandra Mitchell** of Indianapolis for *Shadowed Summer* (Delacorte Books for Young Readers), and the finalist was **Gloria Whelan** of Grosse Pointe Woods, Mich. for *Waiting for the Owl's Call* (Sleeping Bear Press).

Judge **Charlotte Herman** quoted fellow judge **Deborah Abbott's** comments about *Waiting for the Owl's Call*: "Whelan weaves a story as fine as the carpets done by the children in the book."

Herman also quoted Abbott about the winner, *Shadowed Summer* – "not only a spine-tingling ghost story but ... it is also a story of teenage angst. The characters are finely edged."

In accepting the award, Mitchell said she was pleased to be honored.

"I would write whether I got paid, I would write whether I got published, although getting paid and published is really nice," she said.

The third judge in the category was **Mary Frueh-Lardie**.

In the Children's Nonfiction, the winner was **Christine Taylor-Butler** of Kansas City, Mo., for *Sacred Mountain: Everest* (Lee & Low), and the finalist was **Candace Fleming** of Oak Park, Ill., for *The Great and Only Barnum: The Tremendous, Stupendous Life of Showman P. T. Barnum* (Schwartz & Wade).

Judge **Stella Pevsner** said of Fleming's book, "She does a great overview of a lot of things about the circus."

To research it, Fleming learned how to be a clown and walk a tightrope, albeit a low one just two feet off the ground, Pevsner said.

Of *Sacred Mountain*, Pevsner said, "This book is remarkable."

In accepting the award, Taylor-Butler said even as the deadline approached she decided to start her book over with a new approach.

"In order to make a kid want to read nonfiction, which I remember as being very dry when I was growing up, you have to make it interesting to yourself," she said.

The other Children's Nonfiction judges were **Marilyn Daleo** and **Jennifer Bartoli Kalina**.

For the Poetry category, the winner was **Jim Harrison**, a native of Grayling, Mich., and a resident of Livingston, Mont., for *In Search of Small Gods* (Copper Canyon Press). The finalist was **Marc J. Sheehan** of Grand Haven, Mich., for *Vengeful Hymns* (Ashland Poetry Press).

Judge **Mark Arendt** said that in reading Harrison's book, "We encounter the astonishment of simply being in the world."

Of finalist Sheehan, who read a poem from his book, Arendt said, "Mark Sheehan's poems lead us to a greater understanding of what we can know."

The other judges were **Richard Jones** and **Anthony Burton**.

Looking to the future, emcee Edwards had this to say:

"May the Society and all of us continue to champion works of vitality and originality, in these times, in this region. May all of you continue to create them."

See Page 7 for a complete list of James Friend Award winners.

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violinist who played exquisitely on three sets at the end of the affair, but then they got Harry and Wynton to join them on keyboards and trumpet for an extended gig of 'The Saints Go Marching In,' and they brought the house down with one of the most fantastic performances I can recall seeing in years. I felt blessed extra because, due to my speaker role the following day at the Capitol, I had a VIP seat in the second row of tables.

Listening to them was like heaven on earth. Their artistry is unbelievable." ...

Michael Argetsinger's *Mark Donohue: Technical Excellence at Speed* dominated the 2009 International Automotive Media Competition awards. The book won a gold medal in biography, then won Best of Books, and finally swept all media categories to win Best of 2009. The awards were held June 21 at the Automotive Hall of Fame in Dearborn, Mich. This is the second multiple win for Argetsinger in the IAMC. In 2006 his first book, *Walt Hansgen: His Life and the History of Post-War American Road Racing*, was also named Best Book and Best Biography. ... Here's a report from **Jacquelyn Mitchard**: "Well, I've finally done it. People have said that my life should be a reality show. And now I'm actually auditioning for one. The prize is getting our own talk show. The audition tape I made is on the home site for Oprah Winfrey's world.

Oprah and 'Survivor' creator Mark Burnett will choose 20 hopefuls from the gabilion or so who auditioned online and in person to compete on a show scheduled for fall. The talk show is on the new OWN (Oprah Winfrey Network). Now, I have a strike against me – the very thing most people think is on my side, that my first novel was the first Oprah Winfrey Book Club selection. But a lot of water has gone under the



Jacquelyn Mitchard

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bridge and broken through the dam since then, and I'd really love to do this. I've always said, when the going gets tough, take more risks. And this year has been the kind of year I've needed to listen to my own advice. The week after we were approved to adopt two beautiful daughters from Ethiopia, we learned we'd lost everything in a crippling theft by a hometown boy posing as an investment counselor. The guy promised to help some of his thousand victims recover their hard-earned life savings, but he lied to the federal judges. Still, not long after we found that out, our first college graduate put on his cap and gown. Lots of pearls among the pebbles. My show, if I get one, will be about just that – picking yourself up and getting back in the game. Everyone's had to do it, for a million reasons. It'll be called 'Oh, Jackie!' and be filled with interesting people, stories, talk, books, music, dish and everything we love. There are too many talk shows. But there aren't too many really good ones. If you're with me, go to Jacquelyn's Audition: Oh, Jackie! (Reinvent Yourself. Reinvent Your World) – OWN TV and vote for me. And tell your sister, your brother and your hairstylist, too. I can't say I'll win, but I'm sure going to try! And that's what it's about." ... **Carol Felsenthal** was scheduled to be among the four authors at Lincoln Park Research Initiative's education program titled "Write On... A Conversation with Lincoln Park Authors" on June 8 at DePaul University's Cortelyou Commons. ... **Rick Perlstein** was scheduled May 26 to join James Fallows and Thomas Geoghegan in a panel discussion, "Can American Media Be Saved? Can American Politics Be Fixed?" at the University of Chicago. ... **Laura Caldwell** was scheduled to give the keynote presentation May 28 at Loyola's Women's Leadership Conference. She also was scheduled to be



Laura Caldwell

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All is not quiet on the western suburban front

BY THOMAS FRISBIE

When anyone else writes about the far western Chicago suburb of Naperville, they're likely to mention its quiet, family-friendly ambience.

Shane Gericke has a different approach. He sees his hometown as "serial killer central."

In his new book due out July 6, *Torn Apart* (Pinnacle/Kensington), Detective Emily Thompson returns to stop a bloody crime spree in its tracks.

"Naperville is such a quiet town," Gericke says. "Once in a while, something dramatic will happen, but mostly people are walking around doing their business."

Along with his two earlier books, *Blown Away* and *Cut to the Bone*, Gericke is busy creating a different image, albeit one that exists only in his imagination: a "seething cauldron of serial killers and heroic cops."

Why pick a quiet suburb instead of a gritty big-city environment as the backdrop?

"My theory is that so many people live in the suburbs now – American is a middle-class suburban environment – that people understand the suburbs," Gericke says. "They can relate to that environment."

"I have been able to capture a niche. A lot of upper-middle-class people have never walked the mean streets of the West Side of Chicago."

Not everybody is happy with his choice. When a criminal blew up the new Neuqua Valley High School to smithereens in Gericke's first book, a group of parents asked local bookstores not to stock the title or invite Gericke to come speak.

"One woman told the bookstores, this man is bringing evil into our safe city and we don't like it," he says.

"The bookstores didn't take it seriously," he says, describing his books as "life without the boring parts that happens to be set in Naperville."

“People who read thrillers want to be thrilled.”

"People who read thrillers want to be thrilled," adds Gericke, who this year is chairman of ThrillerFest V July 7-10 in New York, a time-consuming job that he admits has kept him from writing a word since January.

But he's not letting that frustrate him because he is really excited about his third book.

"I really liked the first two books because I wrote them," Gericke says. "You fall in love with your own work. But this is the first time I felt like if somebody else had written this book I would have liked it just as much. The crimes are cool, and so is the way everything came together."

To write *Torn Apart*, Gericke spent his days editing what he had written. Then, after his wife went to sleep, he would write until four or five in the morning. He was able to keep writing for so long each night because he was motivated:

"The stakes were so high, and the bad guys were so bad," he says.

Gericke says he enjoys being a writer after making a mid-career switch from newspaper editing.

"I was always an editor since I got of college," he says. "I thought: I will do this for a while and then be reporter, but editors were always in demand. You could get places faster – that's how I got to the Chicago Sun-Times. I had never been full-time reporter or full-time writer. It is a lot harder than people think – to write well on a deadline basis, even though the books are only due once a year."

Literary
Life
Shane
Gericke



Seven virtues for your author website

Writing the book is the hard part, right? Well, not entirely. To many authors, marketing the finished product can be confounding and frustrating. The construction of a book-promotion website may seem like an impossible chore.

But it's well worth the trouble to attract the attention your book deserves. Here are tips based on our experience launching a new book of historical anecdotes, *What the Great Ate: A Curious History of Food and Fame*, and promoting it with a website called *WhattheGreatAte.org*:

1. Start early. Several months before the publication of our book, we set up a website and started writing material to be posted periodically to the site. Hardly anyone was looking at the site at first, but

“Construction of a book-promotion website ... [is] well worth the trouble to attract the attention your book deserves.”

periodic postings to our authors' blog made our site look fresh and well-tended as more people began taking a look nearer the publication date. The early start also allowed us to fine-tune and add content. About three weeks before publication, we sent a blast e-mail informing friends and colleagues that our book would soon arrive in stores and directing them to our website, which features links to order the book online. By this time, we were adding blog posts daily, hoping that some readers would check back daily. We have banked dozens of potential postings that will carry us through the publication period, when we may be busy with book signings and media interviews.

2. Choose a customized URL. We considered creating our book's website using a user-friendly portal such as Blogger, but we quickly realized the pitfalls. Not having a customized URL might cheapen our book's image. In addition, we recognized

that a non-customized URL would be harder for people to find online. Another concern was that a blog-style site — without dedicated links for author bios, book publicity and other topics — would be too one-dimensional. Register a unique URL that uses your complete book title. If that name is already taken, consider a URL that adds a memorable prefix to your book title. For example: “read —.” Some authors have added the suffix “book” to create a URL when their title alone is already owned by someone else.

3. Details matter, especially with a URL.

Choose a URL that ends with either “.com” or “.org.” If your preferred URL with either of these suffixes is already taken, change the title by adding “read” or “book.” Do not settle for a suffix such as “.net” or “.biz.” These are so unusual that most people will forget them and try (unsuccessfully) either “.com” or “.org.” Using the more obscure “.net” or “.biz” can also detract from your book's status as a “serious book.”

4. Seek your publisher's guidance.

Before making key decisions about your book's website, touch base with your publisher. Most publishers have either a manual or a brief tutorial on creating an effective site. Some publishers have rules that you should know about. For example, Random House, publisher of *What the Great Ate*, will not link to an author's website if it displays photos or images that violate copyright or trademark laws. Knowing that rule enabled us to construct a site with appropriate images.

5. Choose a user-friendly content management system. Once you've registered your book's URL, you will need to find a reliable, easy-to-use content management system (CMS). This a fancy term for software that enables you to publish, store and arrange your content — including photos and graphics — in an organized and attractive manner. WordPress and Squarespace are two of the more popular CMS models. They offer a variety of

design templates. Our book's website uses Squarespace as its CMS, and we're happy with it. The few times we've run into obstacles, the Squarespace support team has responded quickly. Ask other authors which CMS they use and see whether your publisher recommends a specific software program.

6. Find ways to drive up your website's position in search results.

Unless your website shows up prominently in search results via Google or Bing, potential readers are unlikely to find your book. Simply logging into your home computer and typing in your URL several times a day won't get you very far. The king-

makers of the web who determine which websites show up as the top “hits” from a search engine assign extra value to a website when it has been visited from a high-stature network or portal. That makes it especially important to persuade mainstream websites to include a link to your book's website when they write about your book. It also makes it vital for your publisher's website to include a link to your site.

7. Don't be too flashy. Web designer Kyle Weems of *MindFly.com* warns against using a lot of Adobe Flash technology on a website. Flash-heavy websites take longer to load. And artistic flair can backfire in other ways. The website for Michael Lopp's book *Managing Humans* (<http://managinghumans.com/>) opens with 14 pages of flash-generated slides that a visitor must click through to reach the book's home page. The slides are somewhat interesting, but how many people have the patience to click through all of those pages? Consider the poetic words of public relations guru David Ogilvy: “Tell me quick and tell me true, or else, my love, to hell with you.”

Mark Jacob is a member of the Society of Midland Authors. His brother and co-author, Matthew Jacob, is a Washington, D.C., resident. What the Great Ate (See Page 6) will be in bookstores by mid-July.

Literary Legwork



Matthew Jacob
& Mark Jacob

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at the Printer's Row Lit Fest June 16 discussing crime and punishment. In March, she took "an amazing trip to Malaysia with my friend, Pam, to speak at the Kuala Lumpur Book Fair." She wasn't expecting the seven-foot-tall banners of her face. Caldwell also is busy writing "Izzy five" (about her character Izzy McNeil) and looking forward to "Izzy four" hitting the market in March of 2011. ... **Jack Ridl** was scheduled to do a reading April 27 at the Book Nook & Java Shop. ... **Paul McComas** was involved involved in two free literary events in June: He premiered his 10th literary presentation, "Words of Wisdom in Story, Saying, Speech, and Song," June 14 at St. John's on the Lake in Milwaukee (Jane Goodall to Suzanne Vega; Barack to Ike; Will Shakespeare to "King of the Hill's" Hank Hill). On June 19, he sat in on two hourlong panels at the Southeast Wisconsin Book Festival in Waukesha, Wis. ... **Jeffrey Zaslow** was scheduled to be the keynote speaker at the 61st Annual Writers' Conference in Philadelphia. ... **Michael Allen Dymnoch** will be the local guest of honor at the Feb. 4-6, 2011 Love Is Murder mystery writing conference at the InterContinental Chicago O'Hare. ... The (Chicago) Edgewater Historical Society (where SMA member and former treasurer **Bob Remer** is president) has a summerlong exhibit on "Edgewater: Community and Politics" running through Sept. 25. On June 16, **John Schmidt** was scheduled to talk about his book, *The Mayor Who Cleaned up Chicago*, about William Dever who was the nemesis of Al Capone and the bootleggers (www.edgewaterhistory.org). ... An essay about Lou Gehrig by **Jonathan Eig** is in the new essay collection *Top of the Order*. ... A Las Cruces, N.M., book club for children ages 8 to 12 is reading *Chasing Vermeer* by **Blue Balliett**. Also, the Calvert (County, Md.) Library in July will have evening activities celebrating Balliett's *The Wright 3*. ... **Janice Law** is working to establish in D.C. an American Women Writers National Museum to

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New Books

NICE GIRL DOES NOIR

Libby Fischer Hellmann's new two-volume work, *Nice Girl Does Noir*, is a collection of 15 short stories. It is published for the Kindle and Smashwords and soon will be available through other e-book retailers as well.



Libby Fischer Hellmann

William Kent Krueger wrote the introduction to one volume and Joe Konrath wrote the other.

All the stories have been previously published in print anthologies or magazines.

Volume 1 includes five stories featuring Ellie Foreman and

Georgia Davis, the protagonists of Hellman's crime fiction series. Among them is the short story that became the "prequel" for all of her books.

Volume 2 includes 10 "stand-alones." Some are noir, others are darkly comic, and one doesn't include a murder at all.

Krueger wrote: "Take it from a guy who knows her well: Libby is a nice girl. But she writes noir with a savvy edge honed on the hard, dark knowledge of the evil possible in us all."

Konrath wrote: "The stories ... offer a wide variety of styles, tones, and topics. Funny. Dark. Poignant. Exciting. Surprising. And yes, even hardboiled. You'll laugh. You'll cry."

LONG WAY HOME: A YOUNG MAN LOST IN THE SYSTEM AND THE TWO WOMEN WHO SAVED HIM

Laura Caldwell's first nonfiction book, *Long Way Home, A Young Man Lost In The System And The Two Women Who Saved Him* is in its final pre-production phases and will be released Sept. 14 (It's available for pre-order now). First feedback on the book from David R. Dow, University of Houston law professor and author of *The Autobiography of an Execution*. "So you think you would

WHAT THE GREAT ATE: A CURIOUS HISTORY OF FOOD AND FAME

What the Great Ate: A Curious History of Food and Fame by Matthew Jacob and **Mark Jacob** will hit bookstores in the coming weeks. Included are tales of astronaut John Young smuggling a corned beef sandwich into space, dictator Saddam Hussein demanding Raisin Bran Crunch instead of Froot Loops, actress Angelina Jolie munching on cockroaches, and author Vladimir Nabokov eating butterflies.

At the Jacob brothers' website at whatthegreatate.org you can find more amazing food facts, ways to order the book online, and a frequently updated list of promotional events.

Other "fun facts": Elvis Presley flew more than 800 miles just to eat an entire loaf of Italian bread stuffed with peanut butter, grape jelly and a pound of bacon.

Alexander the Great banned his soldiers from chewing on mint leaves, fearing that they would become sexually excited and unable to fight effectively.

Isaac Newton was a distracted deep thinker. A maid recalled finding Newton in the kitchen standing over a boiling pot with his watch plunged in the water, staring at an egg in his hand, baffled.

What the Great Ate (Three Rivers Press, the paperback division of Random House) is listed by Publishers Weekly as one of 13 "Books on Foodies' Beach Blankets" this summer.

never confess to a murder you did not commit, that no innocent person would? *Long Way Home* will make you think again. Laura Caldwell's riveting tale about Jovan Mosley's false confession to a crime he had nothing to do with reads like a thriller, but it's absolutely and frightfully true. This book will rattle your foundations."

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New Books

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THE WORLD OF CARNIVAL

Gladys Swan has published a chapbook, *The World of Carnival*, with Serving House Press.

It contains the opening chapters of the novels that make up *The Carnival 4*, a sequence of four novels that follow the adventures of several characters who appeared in her first novel, *Carnival for the Gods*, published in the Vintage Contemporaries Series.

The chapbook includes her poem "The Dream of Circus," which was awarded the Tate Prize for poetry by the Sewanee Review.

One of her paintings was used as the cover art.

ALWAYS LISTEN TO YOUR MOTHER



Florence Parry Heide

Florence Parry Heide's new book (Hyperion), co-authored with Roxanne Heide Pierce, tells the story of Ernest, a little boy who does whatever his mother says. But he is in for something different from what he is used to when new

neighbors ask him for help in fixing their place up.

THE PRICE OF LIBERTY

The Price of Liberty (November) is the third book in **Keir Graff's** trilogy about average people caught up in a complicated world after 9/11.

Jack McEnroe is a construction worker with an unusual job: building a prison for terrorists. Like his neighbors in Red Rock, Wyo., Jack isn't particularly concerned about politics. In a depressed rural economy, he's just grateful to have a job.

Jack's boss, Dave Fetters, is grateful, too: He has a no-bid, cost-plus contract issued by the previous administration. It's his last chance to get rich, and he's making the most of it.

But Dave is cooking the books, passing inflated costs along to defense contractor Halcyon Corp. – and Jack's ex-wife, Kyla, plans to blow the whistle. Suddenly, everyone Jack cares about, including his two young children, is in danger.

As the first winter snows fall in the rugged mountains, Jack must navigate a razor-wire labyrinth to rescue those he loves. And the true price of liberty, he discovers, is paid not in dollars, but human life.

Publishers Weekly called the book a "solid political thriller" and said "Graff's cynical take on government waste and corporate greed plays well. McEnroe is as rugged as the desolate country he lives in, and his gritty do-what-ya-gotta-do actions keep the pages turning easily."



Keir Graff

Biblio File

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honor all American women writers – historical and contemporary – whose work speaks to our culture with special voice. She is dividing material into journalists, poets, playwrights, historians, authors, etc. A D.C. law firm has volunteered to do the 501(c)(3) paperwork pro bono. She has a tentative offer of a downtown D.C. location. If any member has ideas for development or honorees, please email her at judgejanicelaw@yahoo.com

... **Haki Madhubuti**, the founder and director emeritus of the Gwendolyn Brooks Center at Chicago State University, has been named DePaul University's new Ida B. Wells-Barnett university professor. This fall he will teach two classes, lecture and conduct faculty workshops on race at DePaul. ... As he does every year, **Augie Aleksy** displayed a Battle of Waterloo diorama in the window of his Centuries & Sleuths bookshop. Each piece in the diorama has been authenticated for accuracy. The local Forest Park Review newspaper said, "Don't miss it. You could spend hours studying it." ... **Fran Baker** is among the launchers of *AWriterswork.com*, which offers to the public in e-book form authors' works whose rights have gone back to the writer or are new works. ... The Center for American Progress on June 30 said of **Bill Barnhart's** new book on former Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens, "The book provides the first biographic history of a judge who would become known as the Court's 'liberal lion' even though he was appointed by a Republican president." ... **Ray Boomhower** was scheduled in June for Author Chat at the New Castle-Henry County (Ind.) Public Library to discuss his book *Fighter Pilot: The World War II Career of Alex Vraciu*.

The James Friend Award for Literary Criticism this year was renamed the James Friend Award for Literary and Dramatic Criticism. It has been awarded at the SMA annual dinner since 2002. Here are the past winners and the present one:

1988 Robert Cromie	1996 Penelope Mesic	2004 Bill Ott
1989 John Blades	1997 Jonathan Abarbanel	2005 Eric Arnesen
1990 Henry Kisor	1998 Hedy Weiss	2006 Bill Savage
1991 Diane Donovan	1999 Lucia Mauro	2007 20th anniversary celebration of past winners
1992 Allys Budrys	2000 Andrew Patner	2008 Myrna Petlicki
1993 Gary Wolf	2001 Donna Seaman	2009 Teresa Budasi
1994 Joseph Coates	2002 Deborah Abbott	2010 Tom Williams
1995 Mark Krupnick	2003 Roger K. Miller	

SMA Support

Thanks to these members of the Society for their support:

Lynda O'Connor, Bob Remer and Steve Monroe.

Letters to the Editor

I was very sorry to miss the annual banquet but a combination of my “new” hip (car problems) and the death of an old friend made it very difficult.

I will try to get to some meetings at least! I could even talk about my adventures dealing with a publisher in Oklahoma.

Alzina Stone Dale



When asked to comment on my longevity, I echo the words of Nestor, king of Pylos, who – as he stumbled toward 90 – lamented, “What have I done that such cruel immortality consumes me!”

We stuck out the winter in Indiana, and it was a brutal one. I came to know the man who plows and salts our driveway better than I know most of my relatives. But we survived and now must begin to think of next winter and whether we need more assistance than we can receive in our lakeside home.

After completing *The Shepherds of Shadows*, my 22nd book, I wasn't sure I'd write another. But obeying the dictum of John Steinbeck, who said a book is written, “a page at a time, a day at a time,” in the fall of last year I started a series of short pieces, a sort of Spoon River of a Greek village.

About six weeks ago, with 15 stories written totaling 65,000 words, I realized I had completed another book. The title will be *Cavafy's Stone and Other Village Tales*. A small Chicago publisher, Wicker Park Press, will bring it out in November.

Now as we enter summer, I feel unmoored, both longing to keep writing and dreading another start. I suppose I am like an old firehorse who when he hears the station bell struggles to raise his aching, weary flanks and join the chase.

Years ago, I wrote a story about a poet dying in a Greek island hospital, spending his final hours refashioning an unfinished poem.

There are worse ways for an old writer to spend his final days.

Harry Mark Petrakis



Thanks always for your hard work – we all really do appreciate it!

Robert O. Harder

Three online tools that help you find a bigger audience

Here are some summertime tips for electronic tools that can be useful to authors.

Flickr is a free online photo management and sharing site where users can upload, edit, organize and share pictures. Whether the images are stored on an office computer or captured with a mobile phone, Flickr enables users to upload, share and organize these snapshots on the Web.

Photos associated with your book that are on Flickr are easily accessible to a press contact looking to include an image in his or her story.

Upload pictures from book events. Cross-post photos or include the Flickr link in your social networks, such as on Facebook.

Monitter.com is a web-based application that monitors Twitter activity for keywords/topics - up to three at once.

Anyone, even those without Twitter accounts, can go on the Monitter website and search and track keywords being using on Twitter. These words can be topics, phrases, names or hashtags (such as #networking or even #TGIF). Users enter words into the search box and instantly see relevant tweets streaming in real-time.

They can also send tweets or retweet to their accounts directly from the Monitter interface. You can download the widget for your website to keep track of what people are saying on Twitter about your book.

This tool makes it extremely easy to track what's being said about your books or anything relating to your expertise the topic you write about at large. It also can help you identify social media influencers for a certain topic or in a specific conversation.

Monitter gives businesses a simple and direct way to interact with Twitter users - you can respond to a tweet with a recommendation or answer someone's question.

In a world that is obsessed with real-time news and real-time results, this program can help you stay on top of the conversations that involve your brand and industry.

BlogTalkRadio is an online radio network that enables users to host their own live internet talk radio shows.

People use BlogTalkRadio to share their expertise, opinions and ideas on an open network of online radio shows. Because this Web-based site requires no download, it is easily accessible to all and equally easy to create.

Show creators/hosts determine every detail of their show, including times, topics and categories. Hosts can place as many as six callers on air at a time with a click of a mouse, but an unlimited amount

of callers can listen in on the home page for the program. A podcast version of the show is available for download afterward.

BlogTalkRadio integrates dozens of other social networks to make the pro-

grams and the podcasts easy to save and share – the more sharing, the better.

There are two ways you can use BlogTalkRadio to be a thought-leader and promote your book. You can create your own online radio show, and through the wonders of the World Wide Web, share your expertise and insights with the world.

Consider giving your opinion on current events, interviewing other industry leaders, broadcasting live events, and even asking your readers to participate by sharing comments and questions. Another way to use this tool is to be a guest on someone else's show.

Search show categories to find specific programs related to your industry on which you can lend your knowledge. You'll be blog-talkin' in no time.

Email tcpr@tcpr.net or call (312) 422-1333.

*Literary
Loudspeaker*
**Tom
Ciesielka**



New Members

Allen Salter, who writes as Sam Reaves and Dominic Martell, was raised in small Midwest towns and has lived in Chicago area for most of his life. He was president of the Midwest Chapter of the Mystery Writers of America from 2001-2003. He has written 10 novels, three of them under the name Dominic Martell and the rest as Sam Reaves.



Allen Salter

Salter has also lived or made extended journeys in Europe, Latin America and the Middle East and speaks five foreign languages fluently. He has worked as a translator and a teacher.

His most recent book, as Sam Reaves, is *Mean Town Blues*. The Chicago Sun-Times called *Mean Town Blues* "a gritty thriller about a man who runs afoul of the Outfit and finds himself in the middle of a bloody mob war."

He lives in Evanston, Ill., with his wife, son and daughter.

Helen Frost is a poet, with two books published with literary presses, and five novels-in-poetry published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux. She is author of *Keesha's House*, *Diamond Willow*, *Skin of a Fish*, *Bones of a Bird*, *The Braid*. Among her awards are Women Poets

Series Competition in 1993; Robert H. Winner Memorial Award and the Mary Carolyn Davies Memorial Award by the Poetry Society of America.

Arthur L. George is author of *St. Petersburg: The First Three Centuries* (Sutton Publishing) with **Elena P. George**. Arthur George is a partner at the law firm of Baker & McKenzie and worked in St. Petersburg in the 1990s. Elena George is a former English teacher in Leningrad at its Technological Institute. They live in Lake Forest.

Mahmoud Saeed was born in 1939 in the city of Mosul, Iraq. His literary debut was in 1956 with the short story "The Ominous Gun," published in the Al-Fata newspaper in Iraq. He has since written more than 20 novels and short stories and won several literary awards in Iraq and Egypt.

Since 1999 Mr. Saeed has lived in Chicago, where he teaches Arabic at DePaul University. He has contributed numerous articles to Arabic literary magazines and newspapers, as well as seven articles to Al Jadid magazine published in English.

In 2003 his novel *I Who Witnessed* was translated into English and published by Dar As Saqi in London under the title of *Saddam City*.

He currently is seeking a U.S. publisher for *Ad-donia fi aain almalaeka* (*The World in the Eyes of the Angels*, a novel).

Printers Row

BY ROBERT LOERZEL

The Society of Midland Authors continued its tradition of participating in the Chicago Tribune Printers Row Lit Fest, which was held this year June 12-13.

We had a table in the second tent south of Harrison Street on Dearborn Avenue. Despite occasional bursts of rain, the book sales went on.

SMA board members **Richard Lindberg** and **Carol Jean Carlson** kept things running, and SMA Board President **Robert Loerzel** was also present for much of the weekend. More than a dozen

SMA members displayed and sold their books during the two-day festival: **Cheryl Reed, Frances McNamara, Kim Strickland, George Levy, Jon Litweiler, Sel Erder Yackley, Libby Fischer Hellman, Deborah Nodler Rosen, Gerry and Janet Souter, Claude Walker, Larry Lane, R. Craig Sautter and Glennette Tilley Turner**.

In addition, several SMA members took part in other events at Printers Row. **Arnie Bernstein** spoke about his book, *Bath Massacre*.

And **Richard Cahan** reported brisk sales of his books at a separate table on Polk Street

Tough economy puts squeeze on Society's finances

BY RICHARD FRISBIE, TREASURER

Reflecting current hard times, for the first time in recent years the Society's expenses exceeded income for the fiscal year. We were unable to renew a \$1,250 grant from the Siragusa Foundation. Also, we experienced higher postage and printing costs. Annual dues of \$35 have not risen in many years, so the Board has voted to increase dues to \$40 effective Aug. 1 (members who renew before then can still do so at the old rate), which should be enough, along with other measures, to bring the budget back into balance.

Net Worth 6/30/2010

Checking account and CDs plus account receivable (\$264) total: \$27,142.60

Net Worth 6/30/2009

Checking account and CDs total: \$28,896.34

Net Worth loss: \$1,753.74

OPERATIONS

7/1/2009-6/12/2010

INCOME

Dinner tickets, \$4,725.00
Donations, \$2,315.00
Dues, \$10,850.00
Endowment, \$1,740.00
Interest Inc, \$497.89
Mug Sales, \$51.50
Printers Row income, \$470.00
Program Admissions, \$370.00
TOTAL INCOME: \$21,019.39

EXPENSES

Awards, \$3,206.82
Bank Charge, \$39.50
Dinner, \$6,728.54
Membership, \$1,833.72
Office, \$115.99
Postage and Delivery, \$46.00
Premiums, \$372.12
Printers Row cost, \$800.00
Programs, \$1,925.70
Publications, \$7,769.44
Transfer, -\$0.02
Utilities (web site), \$199.32
TOTAL EXPENSES: \$23,037.13
NET: -\$2,017.74

Final Chapters

Jane Howard 1925-2010

At the 2009 Society of Midland Authors annual dinner, **Jane Howard** was the emcee's favorite member of the audience: She started laughing at his jokes even before he delivered the punch line.

Ms. Howard, a former Society of Midland Authors board member and a judge for the annual book awards, died in mid-June after a six-month battle with pancreatic cancer. She was author of the 1985 classic children's book *When I'm Sleepy*, which has been translated into eight languages, and a number of plays, including "Marquee," winner of the Cummings/ Taylor Playwriting Award, and "Maria's Loom," a children's play recently published by Anchorage Press.

She also ran Apple Tree Theatre in Highland Park at one point, friends said.

"The theater was always a big love of hers," said SMA member **Margaret Herguth**. "She would drive down to Hyde Park or into the city in her little red car. ... She was a very special person."

When I'm Sleepy was rejected by more than 30 publishers before Hutton accepted it, Herguth said. A companion book, *When I'm Hungry*, was published in 1992.

Ms. Howard, who grew up in Indiana, is survived by a daughter, Nancy Dewar of Lake Bluff, Ill., and two grandsons. After she was diagnosed, she began working on her memoirs, and a copy of the uncompleted document has been sent to scholars in Indiana.

She was a member of the Monday Group, a group of writers who met every two weeks for more than 30 years and that has as members several other Midland Authors, including Herguth, **Carol Madden Adorjan**, **Marjorie Franco** and **Marion Markham. Racann Berman**, also a member, died in March.

"She was just a wonderful, terrific person," Adorjan said. "We will all really miss her."

A memorial service will be held July 28 at Kelley & Spalding Funeral Home, 1787 Deerfield Rd., Highland Park, Ill. 60035-3704 (847) 831-4260.

Lila Weinberg 1918-2010

Lila Weinberg, who served as the 38th president and a board member of the Society of Midland Authors and attended every annual Society dinner until her health prevented it this year, died May 29 of complications from pancreatic and liver cancer. Her husband, Arthur Weinberg, who died in 1989, was the 30th president of the Society.

During their years as president, the Weinbergs were considered the heart of the Society. When it came time for a mailing to Society members in those pre-computer days, board members would gather at their home for literary discussion and to address envelopes.

The Weinbergs collaborated on seven books on social history, including two on attorney Clarence Darrow. One of the books, *Clarence Darrow: Attorney for the Damned*, spent 19 weeks on the New York Times best-seller list in 1957.

This was also the first year when Ms. Weinberg was unable to attend the meeting to give out the annual Weinberg Award for the best piece of Social Justice/History writing at DePaul University's School for New Learning.

Ms. Weinberg grew up in Chicago's

Humboldt Park neighborhood. She graduated from Tuley High School and attended Wright College for a year. A resident of Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood for 45 years, Weinberg was a senior book manuscript editor and a journal manuscript editor at the University of Chicago Press for 34 years, from where she retired at age 80.

The Chicago Sun-Times said Weinberg was honored as a Newberry Library treasured author. She received the John Peter Altgeld Freedom of Speech Award from the Newberry Library Bughouse Square Debates Committee in 2001.

The Weinbergs also were honored by the Society of Midland Authors with a special body of work award in May 1987.

While both were teaching social justice issues at the

DePaul University School for New Learning, the Weinbergs raised a tightknit family. Within four years, the couple had three daughters, including twin girls. The Weinbergs raised their family in South Shore and Hyde Park. In the late 1950s, they helped begin an annual commemoration of Darrow's death by throwing a wreath on the anniversary of his death over a bridge named for him in Jackson Park, the Chicago Tribune said.



Lila and Arthur Weinberg

Eleanor Taylor Bland 1944-2010

Eleanor Taylor Bland, 65, who wrote mystery novels about an African American police detective set in a city called Lincoln Prairie that resembled her hometown of Waukegan, Ill., died June 2. She had Gardner Syndrome, which caused a series of cancerous growths.

Mrs. Bland began writing full-time about 10 years ago after writing several books, including her first, *Dead Times* in 1990, while working as a cost accountant at Abbott Laboratories.

Her female African-American homicide detective protagonist, Marti MacAlister, appeared in 11 titles including *Slow Burn* and *Scream in Silence*.

Ms. Bland also wrote short stories and edited an anthology of crime and mystery writing by African-American writers called *Shades of Black*.

"Her prose was just like velvet, simple, concise and straightforward," Libby Fischer Hellmann told the Chicago Tribune. "You could read it forever."

Her final Marti MacAlister novel, *Fatal Remains*, was published in 2004.



Eleanor Taylor Bland