



# Literary License

September, 2005

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## SMA WELL POSITIONED AT PRINTERS ROW BOOK FAIR

BY R. CRAIG SAUTTER

The first thing book lovers streaming down Dearborn St. from the Chicago Loop saw as they entered this year's Printers Row Book Fair was "Society of Midland Authors" printed in large white letters on the blue canopy of the festival's first tent.

Thousands streamed by and hundreds stopped for a glance, to pick up some of the SMA books on display, or to carry on a conversation with the SMA authors who appeared at the two SMA tables in two-hour slots over the two-day event. This year, 20 people signed up to appear at the SMA booth, June 11-12.

Neal Samors and his co-authors, Richard Cahan and Michael Williams, led weekend sales, hawking 44 copies of *Real Chicago* and *Chicago in the Fifties* during the very first two-hour stint.

Cynthia J. Olson displayed hand-made dolls to go with her two adolescent books, *Twanna Underground* and *Cherise's Christmas Wish*. Kate Noble promoted several of her picture books including *The Dragon of Navy Pier*.

Lisa Reardon delighted children and adults by writing page-long poems for a dollar each, after the recipient gave her four words with which to work. Many then bought copies of her books, *The Mercy Killers* (Notable Book of the Year 2004 in both the *Chicago Tribune* and

*Washington Post Book World*) and *Billy Dead*.

Novelist Billy McCarthy signed copies of *The Devil of Shakespeare* behind a large poster of the book.

Charles Blackstone, author of *The Week You Weren't Here*, attracted lots of admirers.

Billy Lombardo, author of *The Logic of a Rose*, stories of growing up in Bridgeport, signed books before he rushed off to appear on a panel called "My Kind of Town: Chicago Stories" held in the Nelson Algren tent.

Novelist Paul McComas, author of *Unplugged*, *Twenty Questions* and *First Person Imperfect* was visited by many of his students and other eager readers.

## A Portrait of American Policy in the Middle East

**Speaker:** Gregory Harms, co-author (with Todd M. Ferry) of *The Palestine-Israel Conflict: A Basic Introduction* (London: Pluto Press, 2005). As a freelance writer and independent researcher, he lectures on the Middle East and U.S. foreign policy, and is co-editor of the soon-to-be-launched online political journal, *Argus Piper*. Introduction: Tom Frisbie, SMA president; Jim Schwab, program chair.

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

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

**When:** 6 p.m. social hour, 7 p.m. program, Tuesday, Oct. 11.

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

### Other Coming Events

Nov. 8-Program to be announced.

Jan. 10-Program to be announced.

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

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

April 11-Program to be announced.

May 9-Annual awards dinner.

### Board Meetings

Usually on the third Wednesday of each month:  
Sept. 21, Oct. 19, Nov. 16, Jan. 18, Feb. 15, March 15, Apr. 19, May 17.

Non-fiction writer John G. Raffensperger, M.D., talked with interested visitors about his monumental history, *The Old Lady on Harrison Street: Cook County Hospital, 1833-1995*, and his *Ward 41: Tales of a County Intern*.

*Sun-Times* reporter and new SMA board member Cheryl Reed carried on many lively conversations about her timely exposé, *Unveiled: The Hidden Lives of Nuns*.

Kim Gordon traveled from Peoria and got lots of laughs with her *Woof-Man: A Woman's Guide to Her Man's Inner Canine*. (Kim's book tour began at the end of June and she has two books going straight to DVD movies.)

Mark Eleveld sold copies of *The Spoken Word Revolution*. His EM Press poet, Michael Kandela, sold out of the copies of *1 hundred hiccups* he brought and displayed a fresh-off-the-press copy of *Thresholds*, the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of DePaul U.'s literary journal.

EM Press also invited Gregory Harms, who sold out his copies of *The Palestine-Israel Conflict: A Basic Introduction* (with Todd M. Ferry). Gregory is heading back to the Middle East and starting a political journal at [arguspiper.com](http://arguspiper.com). (EM Press is working on three new books for this fall, see [empress.com](http://empress.com).)

Alice Ryerson Hayes sold copies of her *Journal of the Lake, Water: Sheba's Story* and *Ragdale: A History and Guide* almost before she sat down at the SMA table. (She founded Ragdale.)

Meanwhile, Craig Sautter kept time slots straight and was drawn into conversations provoked by his *26 Martyrs for These Latter Perilous Days* (co-authored by Curt Johnson).

Kevin Boyle, winner of this year's SMA's nonfiction prize for *Arc of Justice*, stopped by the SMA tent to say hello on his way to speak at the new University Center.

Other authors passing the tent inquired about how to join SMA.

#### Other SMA members at the Fair:

Arnie Bernstein signed *The Hoofs and Guns of the Storm* at the Lake Claremont Press tent.

Thomas O'Gorman signed his latest book, *Frank Lloyd Wright's Chicago*, at

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the Border's tent.

Sara Paretzky spoke at the Harold Washington Library auditorium.

Glennette Tilley Turner, author of *Running for Our Lives*, signed books at the Border's tent

Esther Hershenhorn conducted a workshop for adults on writing for children at University Center.

Joel Greenberg was part of a panel on "Warblers to Ivory-Bills."

Robert Loerzel helped sales at the University of Illinois Library booth next to SMA's.

Stuart Dybek, whose latest book of poems is *Streets in Their Own Ink*, appeared at two separate events.

All in all, the 2005 Printers Row Book Fair gave SMA and its authors lots of visibility and welcome contact with the book-reading public.

#### PREPARING YOURSELF FOR RADIO INTERVIEWS

BY TOM CIESIELKA

TC PUBLIC RELATIONS

*(Because we don't publish in the summer, this article is a summary of the publicity tips for June and September. Full text is available at [www.midlandauthors.com](http://www.midlandauthors.com).)*

Get ready for some sad news: Radio hosts have a full plate, and reading an entire book prior to an author interview is often impossible.

Besides having a press release for your book, you should also have a list of suggested questions for radio interviews. These are given to the host or the show's producer in advance of your interview.

**Write questions that will interest listeners.** Radio interviews are about providing the listener with information and entertaining them. So a suggested question related to which libraries you

visited to do your research could be dull.

**Have the questions lead along a clear path.** If the listener knows nothing about you or your book, then the questions need to help guide the listener down a path that leads to a better understanding of your book.

**Format for questions.** Usually about 10 numbered questions are plenty. Frame a few questions with a local angle. These could relate either to the radio show host's personality or to where the program is aired.

**Practice makes for wonderful answers.** After you've prepared your sample interview questions, have someone play "radio interviewer." Ideally, ask someone who has worked in some form of journalism.

**Audiotape the Mock Interview.** When you practice, be sure to have a tape recorder handy. As you review your interview, ask yourself whether you gave answers that were too long? Were you able to make your point in a few sentences? Did you pause too long or fill the space with "well umms?"

**Think listeners, not book sales.** One of the worst things you can do is come across like a used car salesperson (no offense, it's an honorable profession). While making references to your book's name and content is reasonable, avoid hawking it.

*(Next month: To Blog or Not to Blog.)*

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#### Carol's In-Basket

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BY CAROL JEAN CARLSON

#### On the Interdependence of Things

*Earth Mother* (Walker Books for Young Readers) is an original folktale by award-winning children's author Ellen Jackson. *Earth Mother*, a beautiful African woman in elaborately designed robes, travels the earth keeping watch over all creation. As she travels, *Earth Mother* meets three of her creatures—Man, Frog and Mosquito—each with a complaint and a purpose. *Earth Mother* is exquisitely illustrated with watercolors and colored pencils by Leo and Diane Dillon.

#### Happy Birthday, Bernie!

On Aug. 5, the Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) Foundation hosted a

75<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration for Dr. Bernard Brommel, SMA director and former president. And what a party it was! First there was a reception in Beck's Courtyard, then dinner in Alumni Hall. NEIU President Salme Harju Steinberg and Bernie's family, colleagues and former students offered congratulatory remarks. Partygoers then adjourned to the Recital Hall for a musical program followed by cake and coffee.

Dr. Brommel, professor emeritus, communication, media and theater, has been with NEIU for over 30 years. He recently endowed 11 scholarships, including one in history named for SMA member Richard C. Lindberg, and a faculty excellence award to promote and award NEIU students, faculty and alumni of distinction and to enhance the public image of NEIU.

Earlier he presented the university with a challenge grant that enabled the university to raise more money in three months than at any other time in the school's history.

#### **A Model to Be Followed**

In his most recent book, *Henry Adams and the Making of America* (Houghton Mifflin), Garry Wills presents Henry Adams's oft-ignored history of the United States from 1800 to 1817 as "a nonfiction prose masterpiece" and a model for researching and writing history.

Wills claims that Adams changed how history was written by doing actual archival research in repositories here and abroad for the nine-volume work, in which Adams places the U.S. in the broader context of the Napoleonic Wars. Like Adams, revisionist Wills seems to be charting new ground.

#### **Kicking a Rhyme**

Earlier this summer, hip-hop poet Kevin Coval returned as star and artistic consultant on HBO's "Russell Simmons Def Poetry Jam." Growing up in Northbrook in modest circumstances, Coval now travels the world teaching, writing and reciting his poetry. He has appeared all over the U. S. as well as in South Africa, England, Jamaica and India.

Kevin works for Chicago Young Writers and helped form the Chicago

Teen Poetry Festival: Louder Than a Bomb, which attracts over 5,000 people from the area annually. Why hip-hop? "It was politically conscious, socially aware" and "knowledge was king," says Coval.

In his work, Coval celebrates the working man—the underdog. Coval's new book of poems, *Slingshots*, comes out later this year. His work appears in *The Spoken Word Revolution* (Sourcebooks), a book of slam, hip-hop, performance art and contemporary poems edited by fellow SMA member Mark Eleveld.

#### **A Bird's Eye View**

*Revealing Chicago: An Aerial Portrait* (Harry N. Abrams) by acclaimed aerial photographer Terry Evans with text by SMA member Charles Wheelan contains 120 spectacular four-color photographs of Chicago and its surroundings in all four seasons from the air. The photos and accompanying text not only give the reader a view of present-day Chicago but also put forth the environmental, economic and social challenges to the city in the new century.

Eighty enlarged photos from the book with the appropriate text are on display in Millennium Park through Oct. 10.

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### **Other Member News**

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#### **Last Century Saga**

Beatriz Badikian-Gartler writes, "My first novel, *Old Gloves: A 20th Century Saga*, was just published by Fractal Edge Press in Chicago. The book spans almost the entire 20th century with stories of immigrants, refugees, and exiles, moving from Turkey to Greece, then Argentina, and ending in the United States."

She earned her doctorate in creative writing from the University of Illinois at Chicago and has been the recipient of numerous awards and grants in the language arts.

Now teaching at the University of Illinois at Chicago, she was recently named one of 100 Women Who Make a Difference by *Today's Chicago Woman*.

#### **Wake-Up Call for 2010**

Edward E. Gordon sounds a "wake-up call to overcome the twin economic shocks of baby-boomer retirements and too few younger well-educated people" in his new book, *The 2010 Meltdown*. He argues that these trends are creating a labor shortage while high-skill, technology-related jobs need to be filled.

The book challenges Wall Street's cultural obsession with short-term returns that results in cost-cutting rather than long-term training and education.

Gordon details "solutions in community development, training and education from around the world as models for positive action."

He is the author also of *Skill Wars*, *FutureWork* and *Literacy in America*.

#### **First Book Wins Awards**

Rebecca Meacham's first book, *Let's Do*, a short story collection published in December, has already been featured in Barnes & Noble's "Discover Great New Writers Program," won a Bronze Award in *Foreword* magazine's Book of the Year competition and was a finalist for the Paterson Fiction Prize.

Closer to home, the collection won the Anne Powers Fiction Book Award from the Council of Wisconsin Writers and was one of 10 books awarded Outstanding Achievement Recognition from the Wisconsin Library Association.

She read her work at the Wisconsin Book Festival Oct. 14-16 in Madison, Wis. She will also be part of a panel of "Award-Winning Wisconsin Writers" at the Midwest Modern Language Association conference, in Milwaukee Nov. 10-13.

The book was published as the winner of the University of North Texas Press Katherine Anne Porter Prize in Short Fiction (judged by Jonis Agee).

#### **Broadcast Trail Revisited**

Tom Frisbie has been making broadcast appearances in connection with the publication by Northwestern University Press of his new book, *Victims of Justice Revisited*. Co-authored with Randy Garrett, it's a complete update of their earlier

book, *Victims of Justice*.

WGN's *Extension 720* explored one of the darker aspects of the American criminal justice system--people who have been wrongly convicted of crimes.

With Tom on the panel were Rob Warden, director of the Center on Wrongful Convictions at the Northwestern University Law School, and Gary Gauger, who was convicted of killing his own parents and sentenced to death in 1994 before being exonerated in 2000 and pardoned by Illinois Gov. George H. Ryan in 2002.

On WBEZ's *848* show, Tom explained the intricacies of the Jeanine Nicarico case still in the headlines after 22 years.

She was a 10-year-old girl, taken from her home, raped and murdered. Three men charged with the crime turned out to have been innocent, but only after Rolando Cruz had spent 11 years on Death Row.

Besides revealing much new material not previously published anywhere, the revised edition carries the story forward through the trial of prosecutors and police officers known as the "DuPage Seven."

### Still "Ain't Ready" for Reform

Commenting on recent political scandals in Chicago, James L. Merriner wrote a long piece for the *Chicago Sun-Times* arguing "we've been here before."

As author of *Grafters and Goos: Corruption and Reform in Chicago, 1823-2003*, he was well-qualified to recall such episodes as the famous quote from Alderman Paddy Bauler: "Chicago ain't ready for reform."

Merriner wrote: "So why do so many of our elected officials preside over corruption of such depth and breadth? ...Could it be that it's because we keep voting these people into office?"

### Prolific

Marlene Targ Brill reports she has several new books coming out:

*Veteran's Day* (in Spanish and English), children's nonfiction from Lerner Books.

*Bronco Charlie and the Pony Express*, in Spanish, children's historical

fiction from Carolrhoda Books. (The English edition was honored as a Children's Choice book by the International Reading Association/Children's Book Council.)

*Alzheimer's Disease*, children's nonfiction from Marshall Cavendish.

*Lung Cancer*, children's nonfiction from Marshall Cavendish.

*Illinois*, 2nd ed., children's nonfiction from Marshall Cavendish.

### Makes New Personal Plan

Stuart Meck, formerly of the American Planning Association in Chicago, has been appointed director of the Center for Government Services in the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, N. J.

Meck's most recent publication was "Zoning and Anti-Semitism in the 1920s: The Case of Cleveland Jewish Orphan Home v. Village of University Heights and Its Aftermath," in the May 2005 issue of the *Journal of Planning History*. The article concerns the first federal lawsuit involving zoning and religious discrimination.

### Photo Coverage

Among the many coups immediate past president Craig Sautter scored at the 2005 annual dinner was helping to obtain photo coverage of the evening by *Lake Magazine*, which circulates in northwest Indiana.

The magazine noted that the Society was celebrating its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary with guest speaker Richard Norton Smith, executive director of the Lincoln Library and Museum. There were several photos by Wendy Cohen of SMA members, including director and past president Richard Lindberg,

The magazine also reported: "It was an event so honorable that Mayor Daley declared May 10 "Society of Midland Authors Day in Chicago."

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## Recent New Members

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BY TOM FRISBIE

**Susan Aizenberg**, an assistant professor of English and creative writing at Creighton University in Omaha, is also a contributing editor to the

*Nebraska Review*. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in many journals. She is author of a collection of poems titled *Muse* (Southern Illinois Press, 2002).

**Steve Bogira**, a prize-winning reporter for the *Chicago Reader* since 1981, is author of *Courtroom 302*, the story of one year in one courtroom in Chicago's Cook County Criminal Courthouse, the busiest felony courthouse in the country. He graduated from Northwestern University and is a former Alicia Patterson Fellow. He lives with his wife in Evanston.

**Shane Gericke**, a former *Chicago Sun-Times* editor and writer, is author of the novel *Blown Away*, the story of a police search for a serial killer. He grew up in south suburban Frankfort and went to Northern Illinois University. Before working at the *Sun-Times*, he worked at the *Herald-News* in Joliet.

**Beth Lordan** is the author of the novel *August Heat*, the short-story collection *And Both Shall Row and But Come Ye Back: A Novel in Short Stories*. Her short fiction has appeared in *The Best of American Short Stories 2002*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, and *Gettysburg Review*, as well as on NPR's *Selected Shorts*. The recipient of a creative writing fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as an O. Henry Award for her short fiction, Lordan teaches fiction writing at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. She lives in Carbondale, Ill., with her husband.

**S. L. Wisenberg's** essay collection, *Holocaust Girls: History, Memory & Other Obsessions*, was published in 2002 by the University of Nebraska Press. Her short story collection, *The Sweetheart Is In*, was released in 2001 by TriQuarterly Books/Northwestern University Press. *Booklist* said: "With her lucid style and power of observation, Wisenberg's insightful essays are gems not to be missed."