



# Literary License

April, 2006

## SOCIETY SEEKS VOLUNTEERS FOR COMMITTEES DESIGNED TO FIT YOUR TALENTS

The Society of Midland Authors has endured since 1915 while many other worthy literary organizations have faded away. The explanation is that generations of leaders have succeeded not only in recruiting new members year after year but also in replacing themselves.

All of the Society's functions are carried out by volunteers. So there's always room for more workers to join committees, find they enjoy helping out and perhaps move up to become directors and officers.

One of the foundations that help fund SMA once commented that we "certainly do a lot with a little."

Activities include sponsoring annual awards in six categories, holding monthly public programs in season and an awards dinner each year, publishing eight issues of *Literary License* and a yearbook, and in general providing fellowship for Midwestern authors.

After the current season concludes with the annual dinner May 9, SMA will begin focusing on next year and forming committees to tackle the behind-the-scenes work that makes all this possible.

If you would like to join one of the committees, please tell SMA what interests you most and list your pertinent qualifications. Send this information to Thomas Frisbie, president, 12 S. Owen, Mt. Prospect,

IL 60056. E-mail: Tomfrisbie@aol.com.

## TRANSLATING "WHO CARES?" INTO SCIENCE WRITING PEOPLE UNDERSTAND

BY RICHARD FRISBIE

Writing about science is like translating languages, Carol Rausch Albright told the audience at the Feb. 14 SMA meeting in the Chicago Athletic Association.

She knows, having spent her career writing books like *The Humanizing Brain: Where Religion and Neuroscience Meet*, lecturing and editing scientific articles for non-scientists and vice versa. A former *World Book* editor, she's now executive editor of *Zygon: Journal of*

### An Expert Explains Copyright vs. Fair Use

William T. McGrath tells other lawyers what's what in the field of intellectual property, which he has concentrated on since 1976, when he co-founded the Davis McGrath law firm. He is also associate director of the Center for Intellectual Property Law at the John Marshall Law School, where he teaches courses in copyright law and copyright litigation in the graduate program.

He is past president of the Intellectual Property Law Association of Chicago, and has served as chair of the Patent, Trademark & Copyright Committee of the Chicago Bar Association. He has also served on the Board of Trustees of the Copyright Society of the USA, and is currently a member of the editorial board of the *Journal of the Copyright Society of the U.S.A.*

He is the author of dozens of articles in legal journals and a frequent lecturer on copyright law issues.

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

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

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

### Other Coming Events

**May 9**—Annual Dinner. Speaker, David Spadafora, historian and new president of the Newberry Library. Plus awards for best Midland books of 2005 in six categories.

**Apr. 19, May 17, Sept. 20**—Board meetings, held usually on the third Wednesday of each month.

## LITERARY LICENSE

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### *Science & Religion.*

It's a field attracting growing international interest, with more and more conferences, university courses and grant money. The John Templeton Foundation alone awards an annual prize currently worth more than \$1.4 million for advancing "spiritual matters, including research in love, creativity, purpose, infinity, intelligence, thanksgiving and prayer."

The trouble, said Albright is that in the debates between science and religion, neither party understands the other without help.

Writers "have to think more clearly what you're trying to say," and avoid jargon, with "compassion for students."

While scientists tend to be those who quit going to church as soon as their mothers let them, "religionists" are the ones who "avoided science classes."

Consider the human trait of anger. Scientists take an interest in measuring adrenaline and other physiological components. Ethicists try to understand the effect on personality and human relationships.

An example of misunderstanding is the statement by proponents of intelligent design that "evolution is only a theory." To scientists, a theory is an explanation of natural phenomena that was once a hypothesis but has since become widely accepted in the world of science. Gravitation is still "only a theory," but if you drop a rock it will land on your foot.

Albright conceded that seemingly established theories do change, sometimes despite resistance of older scientists, as new insights take hold. The Big Bang theory of the beginning of the universe was an example.

"Science can tell us what's out there," she said, "but it can't tell you how to live."

In the end, the challenge for science writers is make the subject seem relevant. "Why should readers care, anyway?"

## HOW TO BUILD "LOVING" RELATIONSHIPS WITH MEDIA CONTACTS

BY TOM CIESIELKA  
TC PUBLIC RELATIONS

Seldom does any serious relationship develop in a short period of time. (Wait, there is the exception of Hollywood marriages). As a writer with expertise, you likely have information that can be helpful to the media. However, the only way for them to know who you are and what you know is for you to cultivate the appropriate contacts.

"Courting" the media is like any courtship; it takes an effort to connect with another person. Here are some ways that you can build a relationship with the press:

**Decide whom you want to "date":** Major newspapers have hundreds of writers and editors. Therefore, you need to decide which reporters would be interested in meeting you. If you write books on politics, then getting to know the book editor, political writers and feature reporters would be a place to start. Watch the bylines for articles related to your knowledge base and introduce yourself to those writers.

**Be available when you are needed:** It's rare that when a reporter first learns about your expertise the reporter will say, "Hey, I need to write about you immediately." The way it normally happens is that you made a good first impression, the reporter has your information on file and when the right time comes to give you a call, your phone will ring.

**Stay top of mind:** Most reporters have several people they can call on. And most likely, they stick with reliable sources they've used in the

past. For you to break into the "preferred source list" you need to stay in front of them. This can be done by scheduling a meeting every few months or dropping the reporter an email with information that person would find helpful. The worst thing you can do is to simply annoy media contacts with calls for no reason other than to push your name in front of them.

**Stay "sweet" even when you become "bitter":** The day finally comes when you are interviewed and then when the publication comes out, your quotes or your book is not included. There are many reasons your comments got cut. However, be gracious and let the reporter know you saw the article and say, "please keep me in mind for future articles."

It's fine to remind the reporter about the title of the book you wrote, especially if it relates to the topic in the article. Most reporters are more than happy to mention your book. In fact, it gives credibility to why they chose to use you as a source.

*Next month's tip: When Your Book is "Broken into a Million Pieces" with Negative Publicity*

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## CAROL'S IN-BOX

BY CAROL JEAN CARLSON

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### Can You Top This?

Not all the winners are selected yet in this year's SMA literary competition, but we certainly know who wins for the heaviest book in the competition. *The Return of Calvin and Hobbes* by Bill Watterson (Andrews McMeel Publishing) weighs in at 23 pounds per three-volume, slip-cased set with a total of 1,456 pages.

The "limited-edition" first printing of 250,000 copies weighed 250 metric tons, and used 34,957 reams of paper and 12 metric tons of ink.

For die-hard Calvin and Hobbes fans it will be well worth it because the set includes every Watterson strip (3,160) from the cartoon's launch on Nov. 18, 1985, to its final run on Dec. 31, 1995. During its syndication, *Calvin and Hobbes* ran in more than 2,400 newspapers.

### **Chicago Architecture Wellspring**

Another hefty tome is Wilbert R. Hasbrouck's *The Chicago Architectural Club: Prelude to the Modern* (640 pages, The Monacelli Press), which documents "the history of the organization and its role in shaping architectural education and modern architectural practice."

The Club was founded in 1885 and provided a place where draftsman could learn, compete and socialize. The book is rife with photos and illustrations. Stanley Tigerman contributed the book's epilogue. Hasbrouck, FAIA, is a practicing architect in Chicago and a founder of the Chicago Architecture Foundation, as well as a former director of the Society of Architectural Historians.

His wife, with whom he works closely, is founder and president of the Prairie Avenue Bookstore.

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## **OTHER MEMBER NEWS**

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### **Golden Oldie Mysteries**

Alzina Stone Dale will discuss Golden Oldies here and abroad and their social settings then and now at 2 pm Saturday, April 29, at Centuries & Sleuths bookstore in Forest Park, Ill.

She'll describe the "Upstairs Downstairs" social scene between the wars, with special mention of the recently published Dorothy L. Sayers' short story, "The Travelling Rug" (with a female housemaid sleuth) and a biography of Josephine Tey by her cousin UK mystery writer Catherine Aird.

### **Distinguished Alum Reads**

Every month Chicago's Columbia College presents a distinguished alum in a reading series called Literature & Libations. On March 7, the speaker was Arnie Bernstein, who offered a preview of the new book he's working on.

### **Fellowship for Prose**

Barbara Croft has been awarded a 2006 Illinois Arts Council fellowship for prose, based on the submission of a portion of her unpublished novel, *Tree of Heaven*.

### **Returns for Lectures**

Kathy Stevenson writes, "I am currently dividing my time between Lake Forest and Haverford, Pa., and enjoy getting the SMA newsletter even though I can't attend meetings right now. I hope to be back in Lake Forest permanently in a few years."

She will be back in Illinois long enough to speak during National Library Week for the Lake Forest Library Cross Currents program on Tuesday, April 4, at 10 a.m. at the Deer Path Inn in Lake Forest on "How Place Informs Fiction." Also at the Algonquin Public Library that same evening at 7 p.m. on "From Idea to Publication."

She has been publishing commentary/essays regularly in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and editing her second novel, *Clear Springs*.

Kathy Stevenson's essays, feature articles and short stories have appeared in such publications as *Newsweek*, *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Baltimore Sun*, *The Writer*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Redbook*, *American Way*, *American Book Review* and many others.

She is also the author of *The Lake Poet*, a historical novel published in 2001, and *Lake Forest Moments*, a collection of essays about Lake Forest.

### **Poet Collaborates With Photog**

Linda Nemece Foster's new book, *Listen to the Landscape*, is a collaboration with fine arts photographer, Dianne Carroll Burdick. Foster's poetry is coupled with Burdock's hand-colored landscape photographs to produce an effect that writer Jack Driscoll describes as filled with "clarity and grace." The book will be published in September by Eerdmans Publishing.

Foster recently received more good news from *The National Poetry Review*. The literary journal selected her poem, "The Field Behind the Dying Father's House," as first runner-up in its national competition, The Laureate Prize for Poetry.

The poem will be published in the summer issue.

### **New Novel from Award Winner**

Robert Hellenga, an SMA fiction award winner, has just published a new novel, *Philosophy Made Simple* (Little Brown & Co.)

The publisher's blurb says, "In what he interprets as a moment of transcendent vision, Rudy Harrington buys an avocado grove in the Rio Grande Valley and takes up philosophy. The wisdom that emerges from his struggles with Plato and Aristotle, Schopenhauer and Sartre is put to the test when he enlists the neighborhood elephant to preside over his daughter's Hindu wedding and falls in love with the groom's mother."

Hellenga was scheduled to read at Barbara's Books in Oak Park, Ill., on March 16. He also recently received an Illinois Arts Council finalist award.

### **Lawyers in Love**

Alan H. Neff's new book, *Blauser's Building* (Denlinger's Publishers, Ltd.), is described as "a comic, dark and fast-moving David-and-Goliath story about lawyers in Chicago—lawyers in love (but not with the law)."

### **Two Books This Fall**

June Sawyers has two books coming out this fall. She's the editor of *Read the Beatles: Classic and New Writings on the Beatles, Their Legacy, and Why They Still Matter*, which Penguin is scheduled to publish in November, and *Tougher than the Rest: The 100 Best Bruce Springsteen Songs*, which Omnibus Press will publish some time this fall.

### **Playwright Does Novel**

Robert Vivian, whose collection of creative nonfiction, *Cold Snap as Yearning*, won the SMA Nonfiction Award in 2002, has a first novel, *The Mover of Bones*, due out from the University of Nebraska Press in fall of 2006. He also has had more than 20 plays produced on and off Broadway.

### **Reads from New Novel**

Award-winning Chicago poet Beatriz Badikian Gartler will read

from her new novel, *Old Gloves: A 20th Century Saga*, Wednesday, March 22 at 5:30 p.m. at the Harold Washington Library Center's Chicago Authors Room on the seventh floor.

### **Soupçon of Danger**

Blue Balliett, author of the much-acclaimed *Chasing Vermeer*, has a new children's book out in April from Scholastic.

*The Wright 3* is about sixth graders who foil a plot to destroy a Frank Lloyd Wright house.

*Publishers Weekly* says, "Those who enjoyed the first adventure will be quickly drawn in once more by...a sophisticated subject spiced by puzzles, codes and a soupçon of danger."

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## **RECENT NEW MEMBERS**

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BY THOMAS FRISBIE

### **Michael Argetsinger**

Michael Argetsinger is past president of the Publicity Club of Chicago and a past officer of the Chicago Area Runners Association. He is author of *Walt Hansgen: His Life and the History of Post-War American Road Racing*.

### **Bruce Guernsey**

Bruce Guernsey is a professor of English at Eastern Illinois University, where he has taught for more than 20 years. In 1992 he received the Distinguished Professor Award from the Board of Governors of the Illinois University system. He has also held two Fulbright Teaching lectureships. He is author of 11 books of poetry. Among his books are: *Soldier's Home, Canoe; The nest; The apple: Three poems* and *January Thaw*.

### **Quraysh Ali Lansana**

Quraysh Ali Lansana is director of the Gwendolyn Brooks Center for Black Literature and Creative Writing and an assistant professor of English and Creative Writing at Chicago State University. He is founder and managing editor of nappyhead press. He has worked extensively in the Chicago public schools as a teacher and a performing artist.

He is the author of *southside rain* (Third World Press, 2000), a book of poetry. His first children's book was *The Big Outside World* (Addison-Wesley, 1999). He is a board member and artistic director for The Guild Complex, and was a faculty member at Columbia College (Chicago) until 2000.

He was a co-creator of the Guild's Poetry Video Festival. He is author of *They Shall Run: Harriet Tubman Poems* (Third World Press, 2004). He is the recipient of other awards, including: the 2000 Poet of the Year Award, presented by Chicago's Black Book Fair; the 1999 Henry Blakely Award, presented by Gwendolyn Brooks; and the 1999 Wallace W. Douglas Distinguished Service Award, presented by Young Chicago Authors, Inc.

### **Alexander Polikoff**

Author of *Housing the Poor: The Case for Heroism* and--his new book--*Waiting for Gautreaux: A Story of Segregation, Housing, and the Black Ghetto* (Northwestern University Press, 2006).

He served for 35 years as lead counsel in the Gautreaux public housing litigation. He joined Business and Professional People for the Public Interest one year after its founding in 1970 as executive director, a position he held for almost 30 years.

He received bachelor's and master's degrees (the latter in English language and literature) and a J.D. from the University of Chicago.