



# Literary License

January, 2006

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To send E-mail to the editor, use [richardfrisbie@sbcglobal.net](mailto:richardfrisbie@sbcglobal.net). Our former E-mail connection has been discontinued.

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## AWARDS DEADLINE FEB. 15

Books published during 2005 may be entered in the annual SMA awards contest until Feb. 15, 2006.

Entries must be shipped directly to the judges in each category,

Because of last-minute changes, the complete list of judges was not yet available at press time.

The list of judges and complete instructions will be posted on the SMA web site: [www.midlandauthors.com](http://www.midlandauthors.com).

Information is available also

from Carol Jean Carlson, awards chairman: 1420 W. Farragut Ave., Chicago, IL 60640. (D)773/561-3999 (N) 773/506-7578. E-mail: [writercc@aol.com](mailto:writercc@aol.com).

## NEW YORKER INSPIRED TO WRITE BY MOVING TO IOWA

BY RICHARD FRISBIE

Once upon a time (well, Nov. 9, to be exact), everybody in the audience felt like wide-eyed 10-year-olds again, anxiously waiting to find out what happened to the bunny that a born storyteller rescued from her cats.

The storyteller, Katherine

Hannigan, managed to piggyback an appearance at the SMA meeting in the Chicago Athletic Association on a speaking tour associated with her prize-winning book, *Ida B...and Her Plans to Maximize Fun, Avoid Disaster, and (Possibly) Save the World*.

She explained that she had been inspired to write her book by moving to a small town in the country, Fayette, Iowa, home of Upper Iowa University, after growing up in Lockport, NY.

She wove her spell with simple materials, beginning with slides

## How to Write about Disasters Without Perpetrating One

Hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, tsunamis and other disasters can create a dramatic background for your stories. Get tips on how to make them seem authentic from experts.

**James C. Schwab**, senior research associate at the American Planning Association, is the editor or principal author of several APA publications dealing with post-disaster recovery. He also wrote *Raising Less Corn and More Hell* and *Deeper Shades of Green*. He visited the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina and Sri Lanka after the 2004 tsunami to help train recovery planners.

**Robert Olshansky**, a professor of urban and regional planning at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana, has published a dissertation on *Landslide Hazards in the United States*, and is currently co-authoring a book on California earthquakes. Olshansky has studied recovery efforts in several disaster-stricken cities around the world.

**Timothy Kusky**, St. Louis University natural sciences professor, wrote a 2003 book, *Geological Hazards*, that warned in detail what could happen to New Orleans should a strong hurricane ever hit the city. He foresaw and tried to warn about the broken dykes and the flooding.

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

**When:** 6 p.m. social hour, 7 p.m. program, Tuesday, Jan. 10

**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

Feb. 15—Deadline for SMA awards submissions.

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

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

April 11—William T. McGrath, copyright and fair use.

May 9—Annual awards dinner.

### Board Meetings

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

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### Associate Editor:

Carol Jean Carlson

showing the surroundings. Fayette, set among fields and forests near the Volga River, has one café, one street and no traffic lights. There's a country road where, on her morning run along the shoulder, she sees deer, eagles, owls, wild turkeys and other wildlife. Sometimes, she finds an injured animal or bird and nurses it with the advice of a wildlife rehabilitation expert.

"I wanted to tell myself a story about this place," she said. For months, she wrote two to four hours a night in a spiral notebook after teaching at the university while her imagination focused on a little girl she decided to name Ida B. "As soon as I knew her name, I knew the child." Sensitive to the environment, Ida B. comforted herself during hard times by talking to trees.

At first, Hannigan had no thought of publication. "I was writing for myself. It was the best time I ever had."

Eventually (there were 42 drafts), she showed the manuscript to Kate Dicamillo (author of the book that inspired the movie, *Because of Winn Dixie*), who encouraged her and steered her toward an agent

Hannigan said that dealing with publishers was like the story of the Three Bears. The first publisher said she should take out the part about conversations with trees. The second publisher had no suggestions at all. Too easy, Hannigan thought. The third publisher (Greenwillow) was just right, with a few helpful suggestions. Greenwillow also agreed to publish the book on recycled paper, appropriately for a book with an environmental theme.

After publication and a long-list of prestigious awards, including last year's SMA award for children's fiction, plus a spot on the *New York Times* best-seller list, she found that when she spoke to audiences of children they said the conversations with trees was one of the parts they liked best.

What about the bunny? When she rescued the rabbit from her cats, it seemed too traumatized to survive. Although people are advised to handle wildlife as little as possible, she decided in this case there was nothing to lose.

Several times a day she would pick it up, stroke it and talk to it. "You're a marvelous bunny, you can make it," she would say over and over.

When the rabbit seemed better, she freed it in her yard. Instead of running away, it came back for more stroking. But the next time she put it down, it hopped away into the bushes and went on with its life.

Nobody in the audience actually blurted out, "Whew!," but that's what they were thinking.

An additional happy ending: Hannigan's cousin, Joseph Hannigan of Long Grove, Ill., a Chicago suburb, saw a notice of the meeting in the paper. He brought his wife, Mary Anne, to the program and was reunited with Cousin Katherine for the first time since childhood.

## PROMOTE YOUR BOOKS WITH YOUR OWN NEWSLETTER

BY TOM CIESIELKA  
TC Public Relations

Newsletters have always been an effective way to give your clients, contacts and associates valuable information and at the same time keep your name and product or service in front of them. While the standard one-color, four-page printed newsletter format is still used, electronic newsletters and E-mails are more cost-effective ways to stay in touch with your base.

Here are some steps you can take to create and develop a newsletter:

### Make It an Option at Your

**Web Site:** Every author needs a personal web site. Period. This is in addition to the page the publisher has

for your book. Make it clear that people who visit your site can sign up for a periodic newsletter. The key is to offer something in the newsletter of value. If you write cook books, offer a free seasonal recipe or tips for the beginning chef. (I'd sign up for that in a heartbeat ☺.) Please note: The technical side of setting this up may be something you'll need to discuss with your web designer/technical person. (You can have a page on the SMA web site free.)

### Work to Add Names to Your

**List:** If your web site does not get much traffic, then you'll need to be proactive. If you speak at an event, tell people about your terrific newsletter and what it offers. Then ask people for their business cards or let them fill in a sign-up sheet with their names and E-mail addresses. Then you add them to your data base.

### Create Template Content:

Decide what should go into every issue. It can range from a personal note from you to five tips related to your book. Or it could be your comments on trends related to your book. Maybe even comments you've gotten from readers. (Be sure to ask permission to publish someone's name.) The point is to have something that's easy to fill in month after month.

### Always Give Away Valuable

**Information:** It's all about good content. If you make it just a commercial for your book, people will get off your list fast. However, by providing helpful, simple information and short tips, you are likely to keep recipients on your list.

**Don't Send Spam:** If you're sending out electronic newsletters, be sure that people on your list either signed up or know that you were planning on adding their names. And most important, be sure to include with every message a way for people to get removed from your list.

Please keep in mind the purpose of your newsletter is to creatively stay in touch with the people who are interested in your expertise. The goal is that somewhere down the road, when they or someone they know needs a book related to your topic or expertise, it will be your book they buy.

Next month's tip: *How to Be More Aggressive at Book Signings*

### **THIS COULD BE YOUR LAST ISSUE OF LITERARY LICENSE**

If your mailing label says "(Exp 2005)," that means you haven't paid your dues for the fiscal year that began last July 1. We'll be sorry to lose you, but to prevent your name from being removed from the SMA mailing list, the web site and the forthcoming membership directory, you must act promptly.

Send your \$35 dues to the Society of Midland Authors, P.O. Box 10419, Chicago, IL 60610.

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## **CAROL'S IN-BOX**

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BY CAROL JEAN CARLSON

### **Vietnam Revisited**

Michael Allen Dymmoch's fifth John Thinnos mystery, *White Tiger* (St. Martin's Minotaur), deftly recalls the horrors of the Vietnam War. The Chicago police detective is called in to investigate the murder of a Vietnamese woman, Tien Lee, an old acquaintance whose half-Asian son Thinnos fears he may have fathered.

When he is taken off the murder case, Thinnos turns to his friend Dr. Jack Caleb, a noted psychotherapist and former medic in Vietnam who now specializes in treating vets, for help in solving the case and dealing with memories of the war. As Thinnos and Caleb, who also struggles with wartime memories, search for the reason Tien Le was killed, Thinnos comes to believe that a murderous criminal from Saigon, known as White Tiger, may now be at work in Chicago.

### **Maybe We Should Exercise**

James McManus, author of the SMA award-winning *Positively Fifth Street*, has written a new book chronicling his experience with the \$8,000 executive physical at the Mayo Clinic. *Physical: An American Checkup* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux) is a sometimes funny, often terrifying, tale of one man's confrontation with the American medical system and ultimately his mortality.

### **Murder in Michigan's UP**

Henry Kisor, book editor and literary columnist for the *Chicago Sun-Times*, has written another book featuring Deputy Steve Martinez, who first appeared in 2003's *Season's Revenge*.

*A Venture into Murder* (Forge) begins with the body of an organized-crime assassin washing up on the shores of Lake Superior in Porcupine City in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

When a second body is discovered—this one over 100 years old—Martinez comes to believe there is a connection between the two corpses. Add a Chicago entrepreneur who has transformed an abandoned copper mine into an underground greenhouse and Martinez's unraveling personal relationship and you have all the ingredients for a well-crafted page turner.

### **Shifting Political Forces**

Claude Walker recently resigned as communications director and senior policy advisor for Illinois Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn. He assisted in planning and publicizing Quinn's many events promoting heritage-based and environmental tourism, particularly on the Illinois river system.

Walker cited severe burnout as the reason for his leaving. Walker made literary history with his book *Currents of Power: A Modern Political Novel* (2001, Writers Club Press), the first novel about state politics ever e-published.

### **Senior Bloggers**

Carla K. Johnson, writing for the Associated Press, recently profiled seniors who have shifted from shuffleboard to web logs or blogs. Our own Jim Bowman, 73, of Oak Park was among those senior bloggers included in the article.

Jim maintains four regular blogs—one on happenings in Oak Park, one for his many opinions, one on religion and one that gives feedback to Chicago newspapers. And he claims to be retired!

### **"I Shuddered in My Shell"**

Candace Fleming embellishes the

true story of a 1930s attempt to go over Niagara Falls in a barrel in *Sunny Boy! The Life and Times of a Tortoise* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux/Kroupa).

Originally slated for turtle soup, Sunny Boy was saved by a horticulturalist who has since passed. He goes on to live with a stamp collector, a Latin scholar, and then Biff the Brave, "a daredevil extraordinaire," who wants Sunny Boy to accompany him on his perilous adventure.

The real daredevil was George Stathakis and the real Sunny Boy was over 100 years old. While this book has a happy ending, in truth only the tortoise survived. The book is illustrated by Anne Wilsdorf.

### **Lexicographer Extraordinaire**

Dictionary editor Erin McKean recently assumed the editorship of *Verbatim*, a quarterly journal on language, written for a general audience. Originally from North Carolina but now living in Chicago, McKean is also editor-in-chief of U.S. dictionaries for Oxford University Press. She manages both jobs from the basement of her home. This year *Verbatim* ([www.verbatimmag.com](http://www.verbatimmag.com)) is celebrating its 30th volume.

### **Pull Plug on Erotic Fantasies?**

That is the question Bill Lederer's new absurdist play *Prudence of the Deep Blue Wild*, which opened to wide acclaim in November at the Prop Thtr, asks. Poet Ron Offen produced the play.

### **Go, White Sox!**

With the whole city agog over the White Sox winning of the World Series, Richard Lindberg has been asked to update his *White Sox Encyclopedia* (Temple University Press) so it will be available for sale before opening day.

Incidentally, even the Lyric Opera pays tribute to the Sox victory in their current production of *The Magic Flute*.

### **Holiday Happening**

On Dec. 18, Wes Adamczyk and Janice Nowak narrated "A Tale of Two Christmases" at the Polish Museum of America, 984 N.

Milwaukee Ave., Chicago.

The program consisted of recollections of a young boy deported from Poland to Siberia. A joyous Christmas Eve in Poland in 1938 was contrasted with the sadness of the Christmas in exile in 1941.

Polish carols by the Polonia Ensemble and classical chamber music by the Calumet Chamber Musicians led by John Wachala punctuated the presentation.

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## OTHER MEMBER NEWS

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### Correction Department

Michelle True writes: "Thanks for putting my (news) in *Literary License* (Oct., 2005). One complaint - I don't know how I got turned into a 'he' in your article, with my name being Michelle."

(Ed. note: Sorry. It was late at night. Possibly something made us think of Michelle Angelo painting his Sixteenth Chapel.)

Michelle True reports a new book, *In Katrina's Wake: An Anthology of Inspirational Poetry*, just out. All profits will be donated to the American Red Cross.

She is also publishing a non-fiction book, *The Poet's Manual: How to Go From Aspiring Writer to Published Author And Beyond*, to be released in February,

### Quiz Whiz

On WFMT radio in Chicago recently, Barth Landor was announced as the winner of the morning quiz for correctly identifying St. Cecilia as the patron saint of music.

### Busy Day

Tom Frisbie, promoting the revised edition of the book he co-authored with Randy Garrett, *Victims of Justice Revisited*, enjoyed a busy media day on Nov. 30.

In the morning he was interviewed on WBEZ, Chicago public radio. That night he appeared on WTTW-Channel 11.

In between, he wrote an update for the *Chicago Sun-Times* on the latest developments in the notorious Nicarico murder case, which were the reason for all the media interest.

Coincidentally, later the same evening he went to Chicago's celebrity-chair charity auction, for which he had made a chair bearing the signature and computer-generated portrait of movie director Spike Lee.

### Edits New Magazine

Pat Colander has a new day job as editor and associate publisher of the new *Shore* magazine, aimed at upscale readers on the southeast shores of Lake Michigan, from Chicago around to southwest Michigan.

The controlled circulation includes luxury goods dealers, restaurants and service providers.

Colander, a former writer for the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Chicago Reader*, is the author of two books. She has also held management positions with Copley Newspapers and other publishing companies in the area.

### Review Profiles Author

A glowing review in the *Chicago Sun-Times* of Eleanor Taylor Bland's new mystery, *A Dark and Deadly Reception*, turned into a profile of the author herself.

She began to write after a career as a cost accountant. St. Martin's Press liked the characters and the writing in her first mss. so much that they were glad to encourage her to continue. That's now 13 books ago.

*Publishers Weekly* called the book "well-crafted...deft use of flashbacks not only builds suspense but adds complexity to her characters."

### Wins Douglass Prize

Laurent Dubois of the Michigan State University history department has won the Frederick Douglass Prize for his book, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787-1804*.

The \$25,000 annual award for the year's best non-fiction book on slavery, resistance and/or abolition is the most generous history prize in the field, and the most respected and coveted of the major awards for the study of the black experience.

The award is named for Frederick Douglass (1818-1895), the onetime

slave who escaped bondage to emerge as one of the great American abolitionists, reformers, writers and orators of the 19th century.

### POD Not as Easy as ABC

Bruce Felkner, author of 11 previous books, reports a new book that's also a new experience. *Of Clubbable Nature: Chicago's Tavern Club at 75* was sponsored by the members of the prestigious club and produced with print-on-demand (POD) technology.

He wrote, "It is a merry romp through Chicago's history from 'the long night of Prohibition' to yesterday, revealing much about the city and its movers and shakers, many of them 'Tav' insiders."

Felkner has been the club's historian and librarian since the 1970s and the library bears his name. He found POD a "mixed blessing...the established procedure of dealing by phone with staff 'author's representatives' who spoke fluent English in heavily Philippine-Spanish accents were a major trial for a pretty deaf author."

### Regime Changes: Keeping Score

Stephen Kinzer's next book is coming out in April, titled, *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*.

The former *New York Times* bureau chief in Istanbul, he has written previous books on U.S. meddling in Central America and the Middle East, including *All the Shah's Men: The Hidden Story of the CIA's Coup in Iran*.

### Land of the Second Chance

In his "sweeping and provocative" new book, *The Redemptive Self: Stories Americans Live By*, Dan P. McAdams argues that in fact a redemption narrative is central to how the most successful Americans view their life stories. "Since the first Europeans arrived on our shores, Americans have been reinventing themselves in astonishing ways and producing second, third and even fourth acts."

McAdams, author of a dozen other books, is Charles Deering McCormick Professor of Teaching

Excellence at Northwestern University, where he holds joint appointments in the psychology and human development and social policy departments.

### **Piling Up Awards**

*The Power of One: Daisy Bates and the Little Rock Nine* (Clarion) has won several awards for co-authors Dennis and Judy Fradin in recent months.

Last August, the Fradins traveled to Los Angeles to receive the Golden Kite Honor Award from the Society of Children's Writers and Illustrators.

In November, it was the Carter Woodson Honor Award at the National Council of Social Studies convention in Kansas City, Mo.

Dennis and Judy are currently completing two other young adult books. *Five Thousand Miles to Freedom* (National Geographic Children's Books) retells the ingenious slave-escape story of Ellen and William Craft. This couple fled from Macon, Ga., disguised as a white man (Ellen) and her slave (William).

The Fradins are also finishing a young adult bio of Chicago's own Jane Addams, tentatively titled *Miss Kindheart*.

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## **RECENT NEW MEMBERS**

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BY THOMAS FRISBIE

**Donna McCreary** of Charlestown, Ind., is one of the leading Mary Todd Lincoln presenters in the nation. She is chair of the Mary Todd Lincoln committee for the Association of Lincoln Presenters. She has performed at schools, universities and festivals. She is author of *Lincoln's Table* (Guild Press).

**Jeff Griggs**, a friend and former student of the ImprovOlympic and Second City's Del Close, is author of *Guru: My Days with Del Close* (Ivan R. Dee, 2005). *Publishers Weekly* said: "Griggs, a friend and former student of Close's who assisted the ailing artist with his errands during the latter years of his life, takes readers on a jarring and otherworldly journey through the byways of Chicago."

*Booklist* said Griggs' writing is "energetic and heartfelt, honest and utterly riveting." Griggs was born in Quincy, Ill., and attended Illinois colleges before becoming a radio host and weekend TV weather forecaster. He quit the media to study improvisational theater at ImprovOlympic. He is now an actor, director and improviser in Chicago.

**Ted McClelland**, is staff writer for the *Chicago Reader*, where he writes a column called "At the Track" featuring stories from the racetrack. He wrote of *Horseplayers: Life at the Track* (Chicago Review Press, 2005), a first-hand account of a year McClelland spent "bankrolled by his publisher" trying to make a profit betting on horses. His work also has appeared in *In These Times*, *Mother Jones* and *Salon.com*.

**Billy Lombardo's** collection of short fiction, *The Logic of a Rose, Chicago Stories*, was the winner of the G.S. Sharat Chandra Prize for Short Fiction. Lombardo directs the Community Service Program and teaches fiction at The Latin School of Chicago. He has had stories recently published, or forthcoming, in *Story Quarterly*, *Cicada* and the *Bryant Literary Review*. He is currently working on a baseball novel.

**Nicholas Kokonis**, Ph.D., a professor at the College of Lake County, is author of *Arcadia, My Arcadia*, the story of a poor boy in the war-torn Arcadia of the 1950s trying to do what no one in his village ever had done: complete high school. Much like the protagonist, Kokonis is an Arcadian who came to America in 1962. He attended Roosevelt University and the Illinois Institute of Technology and for 15 years he was a regular columnist for the *Greek Press*.

**Wilbert R. Hasbrouck**, author of *The Chicago Architectural Club*, has been a practicing architect in Chicago, specializing in historic renovation, for more than 40 years.

From 1968 through 1975, he was the executive director of both the Chicago Chapter and the Illinois Council of the American Institute of

Architects. He and his wife Marilyn published *The Prairie School Review* and continue to operate the Prairie Avenue Bookshop.

In 1986 he was named Preservationist of the Year by the Chicago Coordinating Council for Landmarks Preservation. Hasbrouck was given a distinguished service award by the American Institute of Architects, Chicago Chapter, in 1975. He was elected to the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects in 1973.

**Sloan St. James** of Orland Park, Ill., author of *The Dark Plain*, says the book is "my first expedition into the surreal side of my own imagination." Baycrest Books chose the book to be the launch title for its new romance line, Sunset Rapids. *The Dark Plain* was chosen as a finalist in the Prism, Golden Quill and Booksellers' Best awards.

**Claire Zulkey**, a 2001 graduate of Georgetown University, is author of *Girls! Girls! Girls!* (stories and fictional humor pieces). *Booklist* wrote: "Zulkey imagines a new kind of chick lit, one where well-earned laughs and fierce satire dethrone cheesy dialogue and lengthy laments about not having any shoes to match a particular outfit." On the Web, she runs zulkey.com.

**Arthur J. Bilek** was chief of the Cook County Sheriff's Police, a member of the Chicago Crime Commission and a professor at Loyola University. He lives in Evanston and is co-author of *The St. Valentine's Day Massacre*.

**Steve Huntley** is editorial page editor of the *Chicago Sun-Times* and a former senior editor at *U.S. News and World Report*. He is co-author with Truman Gibson of *Knocking Down Barriers*.

**Janis F. Kearney** is chancellor's lecturer at Chicago City Colleges. She was former President Bill Clinton's personal diarist from 1995-2001. She is author of *Cotton Field of Dreams: A Memoir*.

**J. Niimi** writes about music for a number of publications, including the *Chicago Reader*, *Seattle Weekly* and *City Pages*. He has worked as a studio engineer and producer, and has toured and recorded six albums with his band, Ashtray Boy. He is author of *R.E.M.'s Murmur*.

### **How to Nominate New Members**

Membership in the Society of Midland Authors is only by invitation from the board of directors.

Bylaws require that authors reside in or be strongly identified with the 12 Midwestern states. Also, their books must be published by recognized

publishers.

Existing members may nominate another author by sending the following information to Society of Midland Authors at P.O. Box 10419, Chicago, IL 60610: name, address, title of book(s), publisher.

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