



Literary License

March, 2006

NEWBERRY CHIEF TO SPEAK AT ANNUAL DINNER MAY 9

David Spadafora, the new president of the Newberry Library, will be the principal speaker for the SMA's annual awards dinner on May 9 at the Chicago Athletic Association.

Previously, he was president of Lake Forest College. A historian, he is the author of *The Idea of Progress in 18th Century Britain*, which was included in the Outstanding Academic Books List by *Choice*, a publication of the Association of College and Research Libraries.

SOCIETY MATTERS

The Siragusa Foundation has renewed its \$1,000 grant to the Society for another year.

Funds from foundations and other

donors (like you?) help support the literary awards program.

Literary License is now accepting a limited amount of advertising. Inserts like the one enclosed that seem useful to a readership of authors can be mailed with the newsletter.

This could help offset the recent postage increase. For details, contact the editor.

R. Craig Sautter, immediate past president, continues to collect material for the SMA archives at the University of Illinois Chicago.

Don't discard old dinner programs, yearbooks or other significant documents and correspondence having to do with SMA history.

Instead, please ship them to him at

7658 N. Rogers Ave. #3, Chicago, IL 6062.

DISASTER EXPERTS PUT "HOLLYWOOD SILLINESS" IN PERSPECTIVE

BY RICHARD FRISBIE

With natural disasters—hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, prairie fires—so much in the news lately and likely to influence new fiction and nonfiction, SMA program chairman Jim Schwab thought it would be a good time to counteract "Hollywood silliness."

That's why he assembled a panel of disaster experts for the Jan. 10 SMA program in the Chicago Athletic Association to tell what disasters are really like.

Robert Olshansky, urban and

Six Years Among the Fundamentalists with Marty

Dr. Martin E. Marty, one of the nation's most prominent interpreters of religion and contemporary culture, co-edited the encyclopedic five-volume Fundamentalism Project for the University of Chicago Press with historian R. Scott Appleby. Professor emeritus of religious history at the University of Chicago, he is also a Lutheran pastor, nationally known speaker, longtime columnist for *The Christian Century* magazine and author of more than 50 books, including *Righteous Empire*, for which he won the National Book Award.

Other honors include the National Humanities Medal, the Medal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the University of Chicago Alumni Medal, the Distinguished Service Medal of the Association of Theological Schools and the Order of Lincoln Medallion (Illinois' top honor). He holds 72 honorary doctorates.

He marched alongside Martin Luther King Jr. in Selma, Ala., and was among the rare Protestant ministers participating in Vatican II, the Roman Catholic Church's historic summit meeting. He also likes it known that, as a native of Nebraska, he is an admiral in the Nebraska Navy—a typical Marty touch.

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

When: 6 p.m. social hour, 7 p.m. program, Tuesday, March 14

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

April 11--William T. McGrath, copyright/ fair use.
May 9--Annual awards dinner.

Board Meetings

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

LITERARY LICENSE

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regional planning professor from the University of Illinois, has visited disaster sites around the world and is co-authoring a book on California earthquakes. He confessed to being fascinated by natural disasters just like everyone else.

"People really like earthquake stories," he has found, along with narratives of such events as the 1889 Johnstown flood, the 1900 Galveston hurricane, the 1927 Mississippi flood and Hurricane Katrina. He's already collecting tsunami stories, like that of a family who fled the beach just in time when the father saw a 20-foot wave rolling in and shouted, "Run!"

By the time the wave caught up with them, they were passing their hotel swimming pool on higher ground. They escaped being swept away, but the water took their belongings, including the teenager's homework. Would the teacher believe "a tsunami ate my homework"?

Timothy Kusky, natural sciences professor from St. Louis University and author of *Geological Hazards*, was one of the scientists who foresaw the New Orleans disaster and tried to warn people about it.

As he has explained on *60 Minutes*, New Orleans never was a good place for a city. It sits on bedrock that has been subsiding for the past 250 million years. With upstream flood control reducing replenishment of the delta silt that tops the bedrock, the site is sinking an average of half an inch a year.

He predicted that by the end of the century the lowest parts of what is now New Orleans will be 18 feet below sea level.

Schwab, himself a disaster recovery expert for the American Planning Association, chose the Des Moines flood of 1993 as an example of how even a comparatively minor disaster, can disrupt people's lives.

Besides flooding homes, the high water from the Des Moines and Raccoon rivers covered the local baseball stadium and shut down the *Des Moines Register* printing plant and other businesses affecting 60,000 jobs. Particularly harmful was the damage to the local water-treatment plant serving 250,000 people, who for two weeks had to line up for bottled water to stay alive.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR NEW BOOK IS GETTING "ZERO" PUBLICITY

BY TOM CIESIELKA
TC PUBLIC RELATIONS

So many books are being published it's more and more difficult to get publicity when a title does not attract media attention on its own. Review outlets like *The New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune* get book pitches from all the publishers, their internal and external media relations professionals and sometimes even the authors themselves. Yet, too often, a book gets next to no publicity. Should an author simply lie down and cry?

Although book reviews in major newspapers and magazines are tough to come by, there are some ways to get some attention for your book:

Think story angles, not just a book review: Many media outlets want experts to help interpret breaking news (e.g. health problem with a national leader) or trends (e.g. outsourcing overseas versus using in-house staff). Many topics are related to news stories. Therefore, authors need to make themselves available for comments as experts.

Realize it's no longer a print world: Newspaper circulation is down. Even some established magazines go out of business or convert to on-line publication. On-line magazines, newsletters, blogs and many other Internet-based media sources are growing fast and are becoming more niche. This makes it easier to get to the people who would care about the central message of your book.

Boil down your central messages:

Except for book reviewers, most writers who might be interested in the topic of your book will not read the entire book. Be glad if they glance at the table of contents. Therefore, consider drafting three to five newsy items to send to reporters. For example, if you wrote a book on how businesses can be more innovative, write out five ways that most businesses can consider the principles in your book. Then reporters might just use the advice in an upcoming article and credit your book.

You'll be amazed at how publicity can multiply itself once you get picked up, even at a few significant Internet sites. The point is that after you've gotten the rejections from the major media outlets, you need to be creative in getting the media's attention with alternative pitches.

Next month's tip: How to Build a "Loving" Relationship with Media Contacts

CAROL'S IN-BOX

BY CAROL JEAN CARLSON

Growing Up in Pilsen

Lookingglass Theater Company recently presented Walkabout Theater Company's production of Stuart Dybek's *The Coast of Chicago*. The book is a collection of short stories about growing up in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood, and was the Chicago Public Library's spring 2004 "One Book, One Chicago" selection.

Laura Eason, former artistic director for Lookingglass and Jeff Citation recipient for Best New Work for her play, *In the Eye of the Beholder*, adapted the book for the stage. Theater veteran Gary Zabinski directed the world-premiere production.

Honoring Martin Luther King, Jr.

Glennette Tilley Turner, author, educator, historian and Lake Forest College alumna, gave the keynote address at the college's celebration on Jan. 16 honoring the life and work of Martin Luther King, Jr.

An educator for most of her career, Turner currently supervises student teachers at National-Lewis University. Much of Turner's historical research

has centered on the Underground Railroad. Turner's books include *The Underground Railroad in DuPage County Illinois*, *The Underground Railroad in Illinois*, *Running for Our Lives*, *Take a Walk in Their Shoes*, *Follow in Their Footsteps*, *Lewis Howard Latimer* and *Surprise for Mrs. Burns*.

(She has a new book to be published by Albert Whitman in fall, 2006. It's a result of her attendance at an SMA program on children's literature. She heard Abby Levine of Whitman announce what kinds of books she was interested in, and sent her the manuscript for *An Apple for Harriet Tubman*.)

Turner is a recipient of the Studs Terkel Humanities Service Award given by the Illinois Humanities Council and the Alice Browning Award from the International Black Writers Conference. She is also an advisor to the National Park Service where she helps plan programs for the national historic Underground Railroad trail. At the behest of Dr. King, Turner's father, the Reverend John Tilley, became the first executive director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), which was founded by King in 1957.

African-Americans in Aviation

Last year when the Smithsonian Institution closed down its press, a number of authors without a large number of copies left were awarded copyrights to their books and given an opportunity to purchase the remaining stock. Marjorie Kriz was one of those authors.

Her book, *Soaring Above Setbacks: The Autobiography of Janet Harmon Bragg, African-American Aviator*, as told to Kriz, was part of the Smithsonian History of Aviation Series. Janet Harmon Bragg was the first African-American woman to earn a commercial pilot's license.

The book tells of Bragg's efforts to launch an African-American flying program and to raise awareness of African-Americans and women in aviation. A portion of that book is being published on the Minnesota Department of Education's web site.

Of special interest to the DOE was the section on the large growth of

African-American aviation accomplishments in Chicago, particularly in the late '20s and early '30s, when the pilots in the city were so numerous that they built their own airport.

Smithsonian Books is now an imprint of HarperCollins and is scheduled to publish about 25 titles in 2006.

OTHER MEMBER NEWS

Wisdom from Da Coach

Rick Telander is co-author with Mike Ditka of a new book: *In Life, First You Kick Ass: Reflections on the 1985 Bears and Wisdom from Da Coach*. Telander and Ditka signed copies of the book Feb. 8 at the Borders at 830 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago.

Reviewing the Reviewers

The Off Campus Writers' Workshop featured Donna Seaman speaking on "Books in the Hands of Reviewers" Feb. 9 at the Winnetka (Ill.) Community Center.

Knocking Down Barriers

Steve Huntley will discuss and sign *Knocking Down Barriers: My Fight for Black America*, which he co-authored with the late Truman K. Gibson, Feb. 15 at 5:30 p.m. in the seventh floor Authors Room at the Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State St., Chicago.

Article Turns on TV

Because of her 1999 magazine article, "Charlie Chan's Poppa: The Life of Earl Derr Biggers," Barbara Gregorich was interviewed by documentary producer John Cork.

His company, Cloverland, is producing a 20-minute documentary on the life and influence of Earl Derr Biggers for inclusion later in 2006. on the DVD releases of the 20th Century Fox Charlie Chan films.

Biggers' stories were dramatized for Broadway as well as films.

On Sabbatical to Finish Book

Gary Eberle reports that, while fulfilling his duties one afternoon a

week as chairman of the English department at Aquinas College in Grand Rapids, Mich., he is otherwise on sabbatical till May to work on a new book.

"Mole-Like" Authors Back in Light

Gerry and Janet Souter say they have a bad case of writer's pallor. They spent the last four months of 2005 in a "mole-like existence" researching, writing and editing just about as fast as they could to complete finishing touches on contracts which resulted in five non-fiction books being published in 2006.

These volumes include such diverse titles as *Founding of the United States* (a slip-cased gift book), *Careers in the Department of Homeland Security* (two books), *Battle Tanks – Power in the Field* and *Modern Military Rifles*.

Also coming out in 2006 are their biographies of sculptors Alexander Calder and Camille Claudel.

"It's hard on equipment," Gerry says. "The letters 'N' and 'A' have all but disappeared off my keyboard and both the 'E' and 'S' are not far behind. I need (to see) those keys because I never learned how to type."

Christmas Mouse Who Stirred

Leone Anderson writes, "Thanks to the help and talent of son Jim Anderson at his Green Dream Studio in Spring Green, Wis., I was able to put my *Maxmilian Mouse* story with music onto a CD in time for Christmas sales at a Galena gift shop during a booksigning of my historical middle-grade novels, *Sean's War* and *Sean's Quest* on Dec. 16.

"I've done live presentations of Max Mouse (The Mouse Who Loved Music) for a number of years, but asked my son to cut the CD (as well as add to my music).

"It's the story of the mouse who chewed a hole in the bellows of an organ in a small church in Austria-- which resulted in the creation of 'Silent Night' on the guitar."

Historical Sequel

Joseph C. Morton, author of *The American Revolution*, has a new book coming out from the same publisher, Greenwood Press of Westport, Conn. *Shapers of the Great Debate at the*

Constitutional Convention of 1787 continues the story.

He and his wife are also moving from Arlington Heights to Crystal Lake, Ill.

Suburban Thriller

Shane Gericke announces: "Anderson's Bookshop in Naperville has graciously agreed to host the kickoff reading and signing of the worldwide release of *Blown Away*, my Naperville-based police thriller."

The date is Thursday, May 11, 7 p.m. Anderson's is downtown in Naperville, Ill.

She has posted a sample chapter on her web site: www.shanegericke.com

Poet Wins Essay Contest

Sue William Silverman's poetry collection, *Hieroglyphics in Neon*, has just been published by Orchises Press.

In addition, her essay, "That Summer of War and Apricots," won the Mid-American Review essay contest.

Wins \$7,000 Prize

S.L. Wisenberg has won a 2006 Illinois Arts Council fellowship for prose. For the \$7,000 award, she submitted two new pieces of creative nonfiction, as yet unpublished, "Mikvah—That Which Will Not Stay Submerged" and "The Wandering Womb."

Lifetime Achievement

Richard Christiansen has been honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Chicago Headline Club, an organization of journalists.

He worked for the *Chicago Daily*

News, noted as a writers' newspaper, until it closed in 1978. Then he moved to the *Chicago Tribune*, where he carved out a distinguished career as a critic.

Laureate Runs Poetry Workshop

Ted Kooser, current U.S. poet laureate, will conduct a poetry workshop on March 14 as part of the spring reading series of the Poetry Center of Chicago.

On March 15, he'll read from his own work. Winner of a Pulitzer Prize for poetry, he has written 11 books of poetry.

Also part of the reading series was James McManus on Feb. 15.

RECENT NEW MEMBERS

BY THOMAS FRISBIE

Dina Elenbogen is an award-winning poet and prose writer who has had work published in numerous magazines and anthologies. She received an MFA in creative writing from the Iowa Writers' Workshop and teaches creative writing at the University of Chicago Graham School. She is author of *Apples of the Earth*, which appeared in November 2005.

Barbara A. Burkhardt is author of *William Maxwell: A Literary Life* (University of Illinois Press, 2004), which details his 40-year editing career at *The New Yorker* and his life experience generally.

She is an assistant professor of English at the University of Illinois at Springfield, where she teaches graduate seminars on postmodern

fiction, Mark Twain and writers of *The New Yorker*, as well as courses on the American novel, Midwestern literature, Latino/Latina literature, and professional writing.

She holds a Ph.D. in American literature from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, William Maxwell's alma mater.

During the last 10 years of Maxwell's life, she conducted extensive interviews with him, and as a result of their association, Maxwell entrusted Burkhardt with organizing his voluminous archive of literary correspondence with such writers as Eudora Welty, J.D. Salinger, John Updike, John Cheever, Mary McCarthy and Vladimir Nabokov.

She received the Writer of the Year Award in the nonfiction category from Lincoln Library in Springfield, Ill., for an early manuscript of her Maxwell book and has been interviewed on public radio.

Karen Lee Osborne has taught literature and composition at Columbia College since 1987. She is author of the novel *Carlyle Simpson* (Academy Chicago, 1986), *Hawkings* (Third Side Press, 1991) and *Survival*.

Carlyle Simpson was winner of the Friends of American Writers Award and the Chicago Foundation for Literature Award.

Blouke Carus is chairman and CEO of Carus Corp., publisher of textbooks, philosophy and other books. **Marianne Carus** is publisher/editor of *Crickets* and other children's magazines and books.