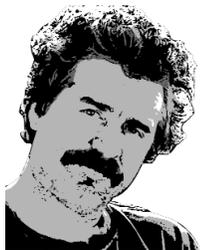


Biblio File

Mark Jacob and his brother Matthew have signed a contract with Three Rivers Press, a division of Random House, to produce *What the Great Ate*, a collection of anecdotes about the dining habits of the greatest people in history. Mark welcomes suggestions from SMA members (he's at markejacob@sbc-global.net.), but don't bother with the story of Elvis Presley's "peanut-butter-and-nanner" sandwiches. He already knows all about that. ... On Feb. 5, the Chicago Tribune published a profile of entrepreneur and historian **Dempsey Travis**, who was Society of Midland



Mark Jacob



Dempsey Travis

Authors president from 1988 to 1990. Travis is president of Travis Realty Co. and author of 20 books. ... **Kathy Stevenson** will present "Writing for Publication" at Gorton Community Center in Lake Forest on Feb. 24 at 7 p.m. Also at Gorton, on Feb. 26 at 10 a.m., Stevenson will read from her newest work at a "Morning Spotlight." Her essays have recently appeared in *Sheridan Road* and *Forest & Bluff* magazines, and for the past year Kathy has written a weekly column for *Main Line Life* newspaper in suburban Philadelphia. Last month, Kathy began the Bennington Writing Seminars MFA program at Bennington College in Bennington, Vt. ... Penguin/Putnam will release a new edition of **Cheryl L. Reed's**



Kathy Stevenson

Turn to Page 2

E-gads! Will e-books e-rupt? Changes on way, authors say

BY THOMAS FRISBIE

Technology is rapidly changing how books are promoted and may change the way they are printed, but readers are still enthusiastic about reading them, two fiction authors told Society of Midland Authors members at their regular monthly program on Feb. 10.

Shawn Shiflett, who teaches fiction writing at Columbia College, said that on the day of the program he asked his students what they thought about electronic books such as Amazon's Kindle, the second generation of which had just been announced that week.

"They turned out to be the biggest Luddites," Shiflett said. "They said, 'We like the way the pages feel. We want to smell the book binding.' ... [One] student said, 'If I could get rid of my cell phone and my e-mail, I would.' I was floored."

Even so, new technology will not only change the way we read but also the way we write, Shiflett said.

"[In class], we are reading *Madame Bovary*, and it is driving my students crazy," he said. "We just don't think like that anymore."

And even *Madame Bovary*, by omitting "Dear Reader" digressions, was an advance in economy of style over some

earlier writing, he said.

Another way technology might change books is that publishers no longer will have to set arbitrary limits on length, Stephanie Kuehnert said.

"I was over the 100,000-word mark, and [the publisher] said we will have to raise the price on your book if we go over the word count," Kuehnert said. "With any sort of e-book reader, that wouldn't be a problem."

Technology also is changing the way authors promote books, said Kuehnert,

who is going through an auction process for her third book.

"I am someone who Twitters a lot," she said. "I think it is a great promotional tool."

"I remember being a teenager and dreaming of being able to correspond with authors who I admired," she

added. "Now teenagers who enjoy my book can do that instantly through My Space or e-mail."

Kuehnert also said she did most of her publicity online. A friend set up a Web site and Kuehnert set up a "street team" whose members would enter special contests in exchange for placing the most book covers on the Web with a link.

"They got that banner up in over 200 places," Kuehnert said "It was very cost

Turn to Future of Fiction, Page 6



Shawn Shiflett



Stephanie Kuehnert

Q&A
with Laurie Lawlor

PAGE 2

New
Books

PAGES 5-6

Writers
on Writing

PAGE 4

Biblio File

Continued from Page 1

Unveiled: The Hidden Lives of Nuns in spring, 2010. ... **J. Niimi's** book *R.E.M.'s Murmur* (Continuum, 2005) was recently released in Kindle format by Amazon.com. Also, Niimi contributed an artwork for the "All Aboard Future" show at the Secret Project Robot gallery in Brooklyn, N.Y., which runs Feb. 13-20. The show features works by 15 authors from New York, Chicago and Beijing. ... **Keir Graff's** most recent book, *One Nation, Under God*, is now available in paperback. Also, in October his short story "Untitled" was the second runner-up in the Chicago Crime Writers Competition. ... **Pat Kummer**, one of the panelists for the March 10 SMA meeting, writes books for the educational market. With a B.A. and M.A. in history, she taught social studies before becoming a social studies textbook editor and then a freelance writer. Besides textbook materials, she has written 60 nonfiction books for children and young adults. Also on the March 10 panel will be **Esther Hershenthorn**, author of picture books and middle-grade fiction, who teaches writing for children at the University of Chicago's Writer's Studio and the Newberry Library and coaches writers of all ages to help them tell their stories. ... In the Feb. 11 Tribune, a columnist quoted **Carol Felsenthal** on her one-time fantasy job: "In my mind, I was working at a store like Barbara's on Wells Street in Old

Turn to Page 3

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'Children and young adults are surprising, humbling readers'

Laurie Lawlor, who has written more than 35 books of fiction and nonfiction, many of them award-winning, will be one of the panelists at the Society of Midland Authors' March 10 program on writing for children and young adults.

Partly intrigued by the fact that Literary License and Lawlor share the same initials, Literary License recently caught up with her for an interview:

Q: *Have you detected a change in children's interests during the time you have been writing books?*

Laurie Lawlor: Children and young adults are some of the most demanding, humbling readers on the planet. Their interests are diverse, insatiable, and always surprising. For the past 23 years that I have been a published author, I never cease to be amazed by their comments, suggestions and ideas. Adults tend to be the real problem. Many have a narrow, often commercialized view of what children can handle or what they'll find appealing. In difficult economic times publishing has tightened considerably. It's a tough market especially for new writers.

Q: *How did you research your historical books?*

Laurie Lawlor: Research is probably one of my favorite parts of my job. If I could, I would never write the book. Historical research does not differ considerably from nonfiction research. I begin with secondary sources and then move to primary source material: diaries, letters, newspapers, first-hand accounts, oral history – anything I can get my hands on. Travel to museums, cemeteries, and the actual landscape I'm investigating helps enormously. The Internet is helpful for locating art and photographs and answering small questions. However, it is a little like looking through a periscope. Far too little is revealed.

Q: *Does writing for different age levels*

March 10 2009, program

Cliff Dwellers
200 S. Michigan Avenue
22nd floor

6 p.m. - Social Hour
7 p.m. - Program

Free - members, teachers, students
\$5.00 - general public

create special challenges?

Laurie Lawlor: I enjoy the stretch necessary to reach different age groups. This fall I sold to Holiday House my first alphabet picture book, a delightful collection of American proverbial phrases that is being illustrated by Ethan Long. I'm also working on an older YA novel and a middle grade biography. I like being challenged and never find my work repetitive or boring.

Q: *Of the more than 35 books you have written, do you have a favorite?*

Laurie Lawlor: Coming from a theatrical family, I have always been a great admirer of William Shakespeare. *The Two Loves of Will Shakespeare*, a YA novel published by Holiday House, remains one of my favorites. Sandburg Award winner *Shadow Catcher: The Life and Work of Edward S. Curtis*, now available in paperback through Bison Imprint, University of Nebraska Press, is one that I found particularly inspiring to work on because I discovered in Curtis the artist-as-hero, a photographer who refused to give up. Stamina is something all writers need, especially if we see our work as a lifelong endeavor.

Q: *What's your next book about?*

Laurie Lawlor: I have become very interested in the environmental movement and how we engage children and young adults in experiencing, appreciating, and protecting our natural world. I am currently working on a nonfiction book about pioneer naturalists.

Q&A with Laurie Lawlor



Invest some sweet equity if you want good publicity

Perhaps some of you haven't noticed the red heart cut-outs in all the windows or the "What to Get Your Sweetie for Under \$10" articles on msn.com – but it's February, the glorious month when we take time to profess our love to that special man, woman or chocolate bar.

Since the idea this month is to focus on relationships, I'd like to promote myself as an expert "matchmaker." You want a date with the media? You got it. You want the reporter eating out of the palm of your hand? No problem. Public relations can be boiled down to finding the right news reporter to report on your story. Here are just a few things to remember when wooing the media.

Say the Right Things to the Right Person at the Right Time

Yes, that is a lot of things to get right, but don't fret. It's quite easy. Rule #1: Don't say "Your blue eyes make me melt" to a green-eyed person when that person is about to sneeze. That would be wrong, wrong and wrong. What you should do is find the right time to contact a media outlet by looking at editorial calendars and reading their most recent articles. Find the right reporter by searching by beat or topic specialty. Then say the right thing by being relevant and pertinent to their beat.

Don't Exaggerate the Truth to Try and Score Points

Don't claim to be an expert on the recession when all you are familiar with are receding hairlines. Talking yourself up does no good in the dating world nor does it do anything in the business world, besides give you a bad rep. Using a fabricated story to make yourself look better will backfire every time. Remember, reporters do their research. Be truthful,

“Forget the ‘three days’ rule. When you again have information that would interest the same reporter, don't just sit on it, wishing and hoping that the reporter calls you.”

yet tell your news in a captivating way. It is similar to the art of joke-telling. It is all in the delivery.

You need to deliver your message yet avoid going overboard.

PR Tips

from

Tom Ciesielka



Keep a Good Thing Going

When a date goes well, what do you do? Call and ask for another. If a story about you or your company runs well, keep the reporter who wrote it in

your "Hot Contacts" list. Forget the "wait three days" rule. When you again have information that would interest the same reporter, don't just sit on it, wishing and hoping that the reporter calls you. Think of it this way: Every relationship needs reassurance. Reassure reporters that you are a credible source by sending them information and ideas to help with their stories.

Once you've established that relationship, you need to keep it going and keep it strong.

These tips will put you on the fast-track to finding the perfect media match, but if you prefer, you can always resort to those red heart cut-outs and "What to Get Your Sweetie for Under \$10" articles mentioned previously.

E-mail Tom Ciesielka at tc@tcpr.net or call (312) 422-1333.

Biblio File

Continued from Page 2

Town helping customers figure out which novel to read next, explaining why one Jane Austen novel, in my opinion, was better than another, or why Edith Wharton's best novel is not her most famous." ... "As a father of two young girls, I'm always on the lookout for new children's books," wrote a contributor Feb. 13 on Blogcritics.org. "And that brought me to the wonderful book titled *The One and Only Marigold* by **Florence Parry Heide**. At age 89, Heide has written more books for kids than I can count." ... **Robert Hellenga's** novel *The Fall of a Sparrow* got a citation Feb. 11 in the online Economic Times. ... Detroit author **Sylvia M. Hubbard**, who has been writing a blog called "How to Love a Black Woman" since 2005 and who says she reads 50 relationship books a year, was quoted Feb. 2 in ajc.com [the Atlanta Journal-Constitution's site]. ... History professor **Ann Durkin Keating** has been a busy news source lately. She was quoted in the Feb. 13 Aurora (Ill.) Beacon-News about Abraham Lincoln, in the Jan. 19 (Chicago) Daily Herald and in the Jan. 20 Naperville (Ill.) Sun. about Barack Obama. ... Children's writer and Peoria native **Kate Klise**, co-author of the "Regarding ..." series, will be at Peoria's Lakeview Branch Library on Feb. 24. ... **Kristen Laine** was interviewed Jan. 21 on Vermont Public Radio about marching bands. ... **Richard Longworth's** book, *Caught in the Middle: America's Heartland in the Age of Globalism*, has gone into its third printing. Longworth has given more than 120 presentations on the book around the Midwest to universities (Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa State, Marquette, DePaul, the U. of C., Northern Iowa, Northwestern, Ball State, etc.), community colleges, economic development corporations, national and international conferences in Detroit and Chicago, and civic groups, including the Chicago Lawyer chapter of the American Constitution Society at DePaul. ... **Dan McAdams** was one of the "thoughtful academics from a variety of disciplines"

Turn to Page 4

Biblio File

Continued from Page 3

interviewed Feb. 8 by Miller-McCune.com about President Obama's call for sacrifice. "I think his chances are very good," said McAdams, a research psychologist at Northwestern University. "Americans have typically responded well to appeals for sacrifice, especially during a time of national crisis." McAdams' primary area of research is on "generativity," the concern for, and commitment to, promoting the well-being of future generations. ...

Donna McCreary's *Lincoln's Table: A President's Culinary Journey from Cabin to Cosmopolitan* was quoted in the Feb. 10 Indianapolis Star. ... On Feb. 9, swans.com reviewed **Scott Turow's** *Ultimate Punishment, A Lawyer's Reflections On Dealing With The Death Penalty*. The review quoted SMA President **James Merriner's** *The Man Who Emptied Death Row: Governor George Ryan and the Politics of Crime*. ... *My Little Red Book*, an anthology published this month of more than 90

women's stories of the first time they got their period, includes a contribution from **Jacquelyn Mitchard**. ... **Frances Shani Parker**, author of *Becoming Dead Right: A Hospice Volunteer in Urban Nursing Homes* was scheduled to speak Feb. 13 at the Detroit Unity Temple in Detroit. ...

Last month, readitnews.com said of **Benjamin Percy**, "Few writers have captured the emotional core of the Iraq war with the conviction of this 28-year-old author." ... Among the experts DePaul University listed last month who could discuss the scandal involving former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich was **Craig Sautter**, visiting faculty, School for New Learning. DePaul said, "Sautter has expertise in the history of political corruption in Illinois." ... Tentatively titled *Get Capone*, **Jonathan Eig's**

book-to-be uses recently released memos written by the IRS investigators who finally brought Capone down. ... **Josh Karp**, who's teaching journalism at Northwestern and DePaul, last month completed the first draft of his new book, a semi-humorous first person look at the world of golf and spirituality coming in spring 2010 from Chronicle Books.

On Updike: 'You forget what a tremendous story that is'

BY THOMAS FRISBIE

Novelist John Updike died on Jan. 27. Wearing its reporting hat, Literary License talked that day to several Midland Authors about the news. Here's what they said:

Joe Meno, an award-winning novelist, writer of short fiction and playwright who teaches fiction writing at Columbia College Chicago [see New Books], by coincidence the very day Updike died was teaching one of his short stories:

"Today was the first day of class in the new semester and we read 'A&P.' A lot of folks get that story foisted on them in high school. You forget what a tremendous story that is, humorous and vibrant. It is one of my favorite pieces.

"It has just an infectious type of humor, but it is really tragic at the end. It kind of balances the humor with a sense of tragedy, too, which is a large part of his work.

"All of the Rabbit series are hilarious, but inevitably end in the worst possible way for the characters. When he came to prominence, he and Philip Roth were some of the first writers to write about the suburban experience. Now that America has become more and more one giant suburb, it seems to fill so many films and television shows, but at the time people were used to novels being about characters who were extraordinary, but not as familiar as our neighbors in suburbia. It definitely is part of the tradition he will leave behind."

"He has this great sense of humor, he never takes himself so seriously that he can't discuss issues of sexuality really frankly. That is part of his legacy as well. So much of his work deals with male sexuality. He was a pioneer in some ways.

"[When we read A&P] it sounded like a 19-year-old undergraduate – as lively and colloquial as anything they would

write now. He seems incredibly timeless. It seems as significant and wild as when it first came out."

Sara Paretsky, the award-winning creator of the V.I. Warshawski detective novels: "His novels never really spoke to me, but I very much admired him as a critic and an essayist and I thought more than almost any other person in the world of letters he understood the interplay between fiction and culture in the way that he wrote about it.

"It feels like a real loss, even though I never knew him personally."

Harry Mark Petrakis, author of 21 books, including, most recently, *The Shepherd of Shadows*:

"To write a single book is like climbing a steep mountain. A writer needs courage, discipline and devotion to one's craft. John Updike mustered these qualities 50 times, a feat few other writers will ever manage to accomplish."

Scott Turow, writer, lawyer and the author of seven best-selling novels:

"I was a passionate Updike fan, especially of the four Rabbit novels, which I thought offered an unequalled portrait of the way the mind meets the present and rivaled Tolstoy in their breadth and their unsparing lack of sentimentality about a man who had grace within his grasp and repeatedly fumbled it away.

"When the last of the Rabbit books appeared I wrote Updike a euphoric letter, which he was kind enough to answer. I met him once after that. He was kindly but remarkably aloof. A mutual friend talked about setting up a golf date for the three of us, but I never got to Massachusetts with my clubs. I made the mistake of thinking there was time.

"He was our greatest living man of letters and should have won the Nobel Prize long ago. As a novelist, he was like the girl with a curl – but his greatest work stands beside the very best books of the 20th century."

Writers
on
Writing:
John
Updike



New Books

MORE WORDS TO THE WISE

ARBUTUS PRESS,
2009



Michael J.
Sheehan

Since the year 2001, **Michael J. Sheehan** has had a program on the talk radio station WTCM-AM 580 in Traverse City, Mich. Along with his co-host, he fields questions each Tuesday morning about the English language. The topics include word and phrase origins, points of grammar and punctuation, pet peeves, pronunciation, funny gaffes in advertising and broadcasting, writing tips, and anything else remotely connected to our living, list-some language.

The questions contained in this *More Words to the Wise*

were called in during the show or later e-mailed to him (at wordmall@aol.com) during the past four years. They are real questions asked by real people, some of them confused by our mother tongue, some of them bemused by its jabs and dekes.

As in the companion volumes written for Arbutus Press, the questions and answers have been edited for clarity and brevity, but the essence of the original interchanges has been preserved.

LIFE TOGETHER

FRISBIE COMMUNICATIONS,
2009

Life Together is the title of a new chapbook just published by **Margery Frisbie**. Of the 39 poems included, 24 are new and 15 have been previously published in various newspapers and journals. This is her second book of verse. She is the author of



several other books, including *An Alley in Chicago*, a widely quoted biography of the late Monsignor John. J. Egan.

THE GREAT PERHAPS

NORTON,
MAY, 2009



Joe Meno

In **Joe Meno's** latest novel, the sky is falling for the Caspers, a family of cowards: for Jonathan, a paleontologist, searching in vain for a prehistoric giant squid; for his wife, Madeline, an animal behaviorist with a failing experiment; for their daughter, Amelia, a disappointed teenage revolutionary; for her younger sister, Thisbe, on a frustrated search for God; and for grandfather Henry, who wants to disappear, limiting himself to 11 words a day, then 10, then nine.

When Jonathan and Madeline suddenly decide to separate, this nuclear family is split, each member forced to confront his or her own cowardice.

In its Feb. 2 issue, Publishers Weekly said, "Meno continues to employ his keep sense of human nature, this time exploring the tumultuous landscapes of a contemporary Chicago family. ... Meno's handle on the written word is fresh and inviting, conjuring up a story that delves deeply into the human heart."

SWEET LOU AND THE CUBS

LYONS PRESS,
MARCH 3, 2009

George Castle's 10th baseball book since 1998 is out – *Sweet Lou and the Cubs*. (Don't confuse it with another new book called *Sweet Lou*.) The book is a chronicle of manager Lou Piniella's first two seasons at the Cubs' helm, featuring plenty of insightful and funny anecdotes about Piniella, profiles of key players and a chronicle of how the team improved its

Turn to Page 6

SMA Support

The Society of Midland Authors is continuing its effort to build up its Endowment Fund to enable the Society to increase the size of the book awards we give each May.

Thanks to the following members who have donated this year to the Fund:

Robert Remer (chairman of the Endowment Fund), **Bernard J. Brommel**, **Phyllis M. Choyke**, **Mary Claire Hersh**, **Elsa Marston**, **Jon S. Anderson**, **Jean B. Elstain**, **Kathleen A. Stevenson**, **William E. Barnhart**, **Elinor P. Swiger**, **Harriette G. Robinet**, **Timothy J. Gilfoyle**, **Shirley Haas**, **Charles J. Masters**, **Michael R. Argetsinger**, **Robert J. McClory**, **Elizabeth A. Fama**, **Carol Felsenthal**, **Jacquelyn Mitchard** and **Dominick A. Pacyga**.

New Members

Werner Krieglstein, a Fulbright Scholar and University of Chicago fellow, is professor of philosophy and religious studies at the College of DuPage.

He has lectured internationally and appeared in a European film on the life of Nietzsche.



Werner
Krieglstein

He is the founder of a neo-Nietzchen philosophical school called Transcendental Perspectivism, and he is author of *The Dice Playing God* (1991, University Press of America), *Compassion: A New Philosophy of the Other* (2002, Editions

Rodopi B.V.) and *Compassionate Thinking: An Introduction to Philosophy* (2006, Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co.). He just finished writing a spiritual sci-fi novel called *Einstein's Mistake* and has an agent in England who has offered a contract, but he has not signed up yet.

His Wikipedia page is http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Werner_Krieglstein

2009 Creative Expo

The Society of Midland Authors will have a table at the 2009 Creative Chicago Expo at the Chicago Cultural Center from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. April 4.

The fair, sponsored by the city, is in its sixth year.

Artists of all types are invited to visit more than 100 vendors, exhibits, and workshops for services, resources, and support designed for the arts and creative industries.

New Board Member

The Board of the Society of Midland authors has appointed a new director to fill a vacancy on the board. **Richard Bales**, author of *The Great Chicago Fire and the Myth of Mrs. O'Leary's Cow*, is assistant regional counsel of the Wheaton, Ill., office of the Chicago Title Insurance Co. – the company that maintains the only set of land records that survived the 1871 blaze.

His term will expire in 2011.

6

New Books

Continued from Page 5

under-staffed baseball operation in time to help Piniella.

Sweet Lou and the Cubs competes in a crowded market.

Two other new Cubs books are out, and some 25 other titles, including Castle's old books, already are on book-



George Castle

store shelves.

Castle, whose syndicated weekly Diamond Gems radio show is entering its 16th season this year, previously authored *I Remember Harry Caray*, *Sammy Sosa: Clearing The Vines*, *The I-55 Series: Cubs vs. Cardinals*, *The Million-To-One-Team: Why the Chicago Cubs Haven't Won the Pennant Since 1945*, *Throwbacks: Old-School Players in Today's Game*, *Where Have All Our Cubs Gone?*, *Baseball and The Media* and *Entangled In Ivy: Inside the Cubs' Quest for October*.

Future of Fiction

Continued from Page 1

effective.”

An author's blog also is effective, she said, and she also is planning a video trailer to promote her new book.

Shiflett pointed out that, as technology makes it easier for authors to self-publish, they are hampered by a general percep-

tion that self-published books aren't worth reading.

“It is totally not fair,” he said. “If you are a filmmaker [who personally obtains financing for a film], you are looked at as savvy.”

But the old perceptions of self-publishing will evolve, he predicted.

“I think it is going to become more acceptable,” he said.

LITERARY LICENSE, FEBRUARY, 2009

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