

Biblio File

Tracy Seeley is “thrilled”: Her “Cartographies of Change” was named a Notable Essay in *The Best American Essays 2010*. ... **Carol Madden**

Adorjan’s short story, “Indoor Garden,” published by the St. Anthony Messenger, was awarded third place in the 2011 Catholic Press Association Competition.

... **Dan Dinello** wrote a chapter called “AutoFac” in a new book, *Philip K. Dick and Philosophy* (Open Court, Oct. 11), in which he focuses on Dick’s vision of humanity’s detrimental and degrading dependence on technology and its disastrous environmental effect. Dan also wrote an article, “The Contagious Age,” for the website

PopMatters.com. in which he argues that contagion is the dominant horror of the 21st century. ... **Ruth Spiro** will present an Off-Campus Writers’ Workshop Nov. 3: “Inspiration, Innovation and Illumination - 100 Ways to Fill Your Writing Toolbox” at the Winnetka Community House 9-12 a.m. Following her talk, she and the audience will head over to the Book Stall in Winnetka to discuss how to browse a bookstore as a writer. Also, her story “Reclaiming Myself” appears in the newly released *Chicken Soup for the Soul - Find Your Happiness*. ... The best-read recent post



Ruth Spiro

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Renewal Reminder

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‘Most important time in history of the book since Gutenberg’

BY THOMAS FRISBIE

E-books might usher in a golden era of reading, authors were told Oct. 11 at the regular Society of Midland Authors monthly program.

“We are at the transformation of the book,” said **Dominique Raccach**, a member of the panel that presented the program at the Cliff Dwellers club in Chicago. “This is a historic time. This is probably the most important time in the history of the book since Gutenberg.”

Raccach, the founder and CEO of Sourcebooks in Naperville, Ill., was joined on the panel by **Kelly Griffin**, whose job at the Chicago Public Library includes purchasing e-books for the library system, and **Libby Fischer Hellman**, author of eight novels, all of which are available digitally.

In January, 35 percent of Sourcebooks’ sales were digital, Raccach said, and they are probably averaging 13 percent or 14 percent for most publishing companies. (Publishers Weekly reported Oct. 28 that e-book sales rose 116 percent in August).

“You are going to see that transformation happen faster and faster,” she said.

Surprisingly, the rate of change differs depending on the category. Romance, mysteries and crime novels are rapidly going digital, while e-book sales for textbooks and children’s books have hardly budged, the panelists said.

“Are we headed for the demise of print-

ed books?” asked Raccach. “Are we going into 90 percent digital books? No. No, we are not. We are headed for certain categories being largely digital. Romance fiction – I can imagine romance fiction being 80 percent digital within two years.”

Griffin said e-books appear to be attracting new readers rather than strictly luring people from print.

“One thing that we have noticed is there is kind of a golden age of reading going on right now because we are not seeing any decline in the demand for print, but

huge, huge demand for e-book titles,” Griffin said. “So we are reaching new people in the library by offering this convenient way of getting books.”

If any print category is at risk, it is paperbacks, Griffin added.

“I would say that in my perspective e-books are kind of replacing popular paperback fiction and nonfiction books,” she

said. “The stuff you see when you walk into the airport.”

Raccach said 66 percent of e-book readers are female, and the core reader is 44 years old. And readers report that they read more and buy more titles now that e-books are available.

“We may be looking at a future in which we really recreate the possibilities for ... literacy,” Raccach said. “For me, it is totally about creating an incredible future. A future in which books can be with you always. And the possibilities for publish-

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Dominique Raccach

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with Greg Borzo

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Literary Loudspeaker
with Tom Ciesielka

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on the Chicago Sun-Times BackTalk blog told how **Richard Frisbie** was a pioneering bicycle commuter back in 1955. A cycling commuter was so unusual that when United Press saw him pedaling to the train station, the wire service ran a national story with a photo. Reporter Alfred Leach referred to Richard's "fine disregard for suburban customs" and even explained to the uninformed 1950s readership how you can do it (you lock your bike to a telephone pole when you get to



Ted McClelland

the station). You can read the post and see the photo at: <http://bit.ly/plyyzh>. In a Sept. 30 blog post, **Ted McClelland** listed "10 essential Chicago political books." He included *Boss* by the late SMA member **Mike Royko**, *Grafters and Goo Goos* by former SMA President **James Merriner**, *Rogues Rebels and Rubber Stamps* by **Dick Simpson** and *Big Bill of Chicago*, co-authored by former SMA member **Herman Kogan**. ... **Marcus Sakey** reports he sold his 100,000th e-book for 2011 in September. ... The launch party for **Keir Graff's** *The Other Felix* (See New Books, Page 5) will be at 4 p.m. Oct. 22 at the Book

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E-books

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ers are just hugely larger than they have ever been before. [We have] ways of connecting readers with authors that we never imagined."

Checking out e-books at a public library is "pretty straightforward," Griffin said.

"You just need a library card ... and there are some software requirements, depending on what type of device you are using," she said. "But it basically is you get online and you check out the book and download it from your home."

Hellmann said the emergence of the e-book revolution has given authors the option of publishing in an electronic format themselves or going through a traditional publisher.

Publishers, she said, offer these advantages:

– "If a traditional publisher gets behind your book, you cannot beat their marketing support. If you are their A or B book for the month, they will do enormous publicity and promotion, [more than] you can do on your own."

– "Most publishers, small, medium or large, provide editing services that are indispensable for an author. If ... it's already been traditionally published, theoretically it's already been edited. But [if] it is fresh, it is new, it needs to be edited."

– "Publishers have distribution channels authors don't. They can get into bookstores, they can get into Costco, they can get into Wal-Mart, they can get into airports, and you can't," she said.

– "If you are traditionally published, you have a much better chance of being nominated for the traditional book awards. That will not happen with e-books. Or e-books will have their own awards which are yet to be determined."

– "Traditional publishers can get you reviewed in PW, Kirkus and in Booklist. If you are publishing in e-book [format], you will probably not get reviewed in those quarters. You will probably not get reviewed by the Chicago Tribune or the Sun-Times."

Cautioning the audience that her advice might be obsolete in six weeks because the industry is changing so fast, Hellmann

said there also are advantages to publishing an e-book independently, most of which boil down to the issue of personal control over the finished work, including the cover.

"I like having control over my product from the time I write it to the time I see it published," she said.

Also, an e-book never goes out of print so in theory it can generate income indefinitely.

The "Big Six" New York publishers give authors royalties of 25 percent but that translates to 14 percent to 17 percent after the agent takes a cut, she said. An author selling directly online gets to keep a bigger share of the sale price, she said.

Much of the promotion for an e-book is done through social media, where it is best if the author does it, Hellmann said.

"People want personal relationships with the author," she said. "They don't want to hear from someone Twittering for me, they want to hear from me."

But if you do self-publish e-books, Hellmann warns you not to pencil in the profits prematurely.

"You have heard these stories of people making fortunes. Forget it," she said. "It is not happening. In some ways the trajectory of authors on e-books is nearing the trajectory of authors in traditional publishing.

"You are not going to make a fortune on e-books. You may make a couple of hundred dollars, or maybe a couple thousand dollars a month depending on who you are selling to and how, and whether it is a genre that is capturing people's imaginations.

"Romance is probably the biggest selling e-book today in fiction, followed closely by thrillers and mysteries. And fantasy and science fiction."

Amazon's recent decision to publish e-books itself followed by paperback editions without a traditional publisher will impact the market as well, the panelists said.

The Society of Midland Authors' 2010-2011 programs may be heard in their entirety at www.chicagopublicradio.org/ amplified.



Libby Fischer
Hellmann

Not just for the 'L' of it: A tour of Chicago transit

An award-winning journalist, Greg Borzo was editor of *Modern Railroads Magazine* and has been a health and/or science writer for the American Medical Association, Harcourt Brace, Field Museum and the University of Chicago. His most recent book is *Where to Bike Chicago: Best Biking in City and Suburbs*. He recently took time out from conducting public tours of the "L," local history and *The Devil in the White City* for the Chicago History Museum, Chicago Cycling Club and other organizations for a Q&A with *Literary License*.

Literary License: *When you give tours of the Chicago L, what surprises people the most?*

Greg Borzo: Many, many things! People are surprised to learn that 170 million people ride the "L" every year. That's half a million a day every business day. They are surprised to learn how old the "L" is – 119 years –

and that much of the physical structure is original. And they are surprised to learn that the "L" was built entirely by private enterprise and that it operated without a subsidy until the 1970s.

Literary License: *How do Chicago rapid transit trains compare with those in other cities?*

Greg Borzo: Other than New York City, Chicago has the most comprehensive rapid transit rail system in the United States. Many other cities would love to have a system like the "L" but it would be far too expensive to build today, not only in terms of construction but also in terms of acquiring the right-of-way.

Chicago is the only city in the world with an elevated transit system right in the heart of its downtown. It is a survivor, having fought off many plans and proposals to tear it down.

Literary License: *You've been quoted saying: "Riding the L is in many ways better than a roller coaster ride." Do you*

November 8, 2011, program

Cliff Dwellers
200 S. Michigan Avenue
22nd floor

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

Free - donations accepted

have a favorite line?

Greg Borzo: My favorite line is the Brown Line because the sights along the way are so varied and so interesting. The whole ride is above ground, so there's always lots to see. Also, it is the line that is the most community oriented.

Literary Landscape:

Greg Borzo



Neighborhoods all along the way, such as Lincoln Square and Southport, thrive due to the presence of the "L". Finally, it was built by Charles Tyson Yerkes, the ultimate Robber Baron of Transit.

Literary License:

The CTA always seems to be short of money. Does the L have a future?

Greg Borzo: The "L" has a strong future, more secure today than 10-20 years ago, since the "L" keeps half a million drivers off the road every day. That helps the city meet its air quality and traffic mitigation goals.

Literary License: *What's your next book?*

My next book is going to be about the history and meaning of Chicago's cable cars.

In 1882, Chicago became the second city in the United States (after San Francisco) to build cable car lines. In fact, the first use of the term "loop" in Chicago actually referred to the large rectangular loops of track that were used to turn around cable cars. Chicago quickly built up the largest cable car system (in terms of passengers and equipment) that the world has ever seen. Our cable cars ran until 1906.

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Cellar, 4736 N. Lincoln Ave, Chicago. ... **Jonathan Eig** played a prominent role in the PBS documentary "Prohibition" by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick, which aired in October and is available on DVD. In the third and final part, Eig appears on screen several times discussing Al Capone. ... **Gary D. Schmidt**, the SMA Children's Fiction winner in 2008 and a Children's Fiction finalist in 2009 was named a Young People's finalist Oct. 12 for the National Book Award. ... On Oct. 13, three SMA members who were finalists from the Chicago Public Library's flash fiction writing contest, inspired by Saul Bellow's famous lines, "I am an American, Chicago born," from *The Adventures of Augie March*, were scheduled to read their entries at a One Book, One Chicago event at the Stop Smiling Storefront: **Stuart Dybek** (*The Coast of Chicago*), **Achy Obejas** (*Ruins*) and **Natalie Moore** (*Almighty Black P Stone Nation: The Rise, Fall and Resurgence of an American Gang*). ...



Natalie Moore

Rebecca Skloot has reached an agreement with Crown Publishers to write a book that will focus on the human-animal bond and explore the neurology of human-animal relationships, human nature and responsibility, and the unexamined ethics of our relationship with animals. A publication date has not yet been set. Also, Rebecca was honored Oct. 20 by the Chicago Public Library Foundation with its 21st Century Award during the annual Carl Sandburg Literary Awards dinner. ... **Dominic Pacyga** on Oct. 14 was scheduled to lecture on "The Daleys of Chicago: An American Family," and the Daley family's rise to political power and its role in shaping Chicago. ... On Oct. 14, **Jean Bethke Elshain** received the National Endowment for Democracy's Democracy Service Medal. ... **Joseph Epstein**

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reviewed two books about the Medill family for the Oct. 16 New York Times Sunday Book Review. ... **Kristina Riggle** tweets to say she is re-reading *The Great Gatsby*. ... **Augie Aleksy** is the new president of the Historical Society of Forest Park (Ill.). ... **Shane Gericke** and **Luisa Buehler** will be on a mystery author panel from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Nov. 5 at the Waukegan (Ill.) Public Library. ... **Gerry Souter**, SMA vice president, has been invited to attend the 2011 Skyway Writers Festival as the nonfiction judge and workshop leader on Dec. 1 from 4 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. The event takes place at



Jean Bethke Elshstain

Elgin (Ill.) Community College and will include the following colleges: Elgin Community College, College of Lake County, McHenry County College, Moraine Valley College, Morton Community College, Oakton Community College, Prairie State College and Waubensee Community College. As nonfiction judge, he will be responsible for reading and selecting three winners total from the top five nonfiction selections from each college (chosen by English professors at each college). Souter will present the awards to these three students at the awards ceremony. In addition, he will run a writing workshop based on creative nonfiction. Gerry also tells Biblio File he had the pleasure of driving a 650 horsepower Mario Andretti Indy 500 race car at the Chicagoland Speedway in Joliet recently. The research trip achieved laps well over 100 miles an hour on the oval track. The 71-year-old author enjoyed his first experience behind the wheel zooming around the raceway an inch off the pavement, stuffed in the cockpit and peering out through a three-inch visor with a howling engine at his back. "Commuting on the Interstate is now a piece of cake," he writes.

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Promoting book with video works well if done properly

Videos can augment your book's website, or you may want to upload videos to YouTube or Vimeo about your book. Here's what you should know:

Audio matters. If your audio isn't good, people will tune out. Try to record where there's no ambient sound. Or hold the camera (or phone) right up to the person who is speaking. Wear headphones to monitor the quality.

Get an external microphone for your video recorder, or a clip-on microphone. The best way to get good audio is to use a separate recorder, such as a handheld audio recorder, which you can sync up with the video when you edit it. That requires advanced skills, but if you know how to edit video, you can learn how to integrate your audio file into the process.

Light the subject. The light source should be behind you, not behind the subject. Natural light is best. Stand in front of a window to allow the light to shine from behind you onto the subject.

Use a tripod. Not only does a tripod prevent movement, but it also helps your video look sharp, not grainy or blurry.

Finally, if each video covers only one topic and is short (10 minutes or less), your audience will pay attention and will be able to find your videos more easily.



If you want to easily download your photos from Facebook and other social networks, try PhotoLive, a free way to save your photos and photo albums without having to log in or add an app.

Just drag the bookmarklet to your browser's bookmarks bar. If you use Internet Explorer, just right click and choose "Add to Favorites".

Choose a photo album, then click the bookmarklet. It will give you the option to download the album as-is or in high

resolution. Then start the download, and it will save the album as a zip file. Unzip the file, save the photos where you want, and you're done.

You can download your own photo albums or anyone else's album, as long as they've given you access.

Because it allows you to download an entire photo album, you no longer have to download one photo at a time. Also, you don't have to worry about sharing your personal information because PhotoLive does not need it to access your account.



Do book promotion right.

Quality content matters. Original content is valuable. But also share interesting and useful links.

Promote others. Share articles, presentations or even TV appearances that relate to your book.

Know your audience. If some people aren't interested, then omit them from your email or online announcement list.

Ask for help. If you want to know about a helpful conference to attend, some facts, or just a good place to have dinner, then post a question on your social network. You might hear from people you haven't interacted with in a while, so this will get your name in front of them again.

Pay attention to your environment. If you're at a formal dinner, then that's not the time to run around the room, talking about book. Let opportunities unfold with the conversations you have.

Do what makes you feel comfortable. Work with tools that help you promote yourself in a sincere way that reflects who you are.

Thank people. If someone has given you good information or helpful advice, then thank that person publicly.

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

Literary
Loudspeaker
Tom
Ciesielka



New Books

THE OTHER FELIX

"I never planned to write a book for kids," **Keir Graff** wrote, "but I'm sure glad I did." *The Other Felix* came out Oct. 11. Every night when Felix falls asleep, monsters chase him through a wild, lonely land, and when he wakes up he's back in his bed with mud on his feet and tears in his pajamas. One night he meets a boy who knows how to fight monsters, a boy who looks just like him and is also named Felix.

Publishers Weekly wrote: [Graff's] skill at capturing the small, everyday details and dramas that loom large in children's minds, as well as his avoidance of a too-neat ending, ought to linger with readers..."

Kirkus Reviews wrote: "An allegorical tale about friendship, fear, happiness and hope. . . . This thoughtful, whimsical story promises rewards for those patient readers who stick with Felix till the end."

THE TOWMAN'S DAUGHTERS

David J. Walker's new book is available in print, from Severn House and as an e-book in Kindle and Nook formats. It is the sixth book in his Wild Onion series.

In a review, Booklist called the series "funny and clever, crackling with energy, peopled with intriguing characters."



David J. Walker

In the new book, as Dugan goes to Wancho's Towing at one a.m. to retrieve his towed car, he stumbles across a crime in progress. He rescues the beautiful young Isobel Cho from an armed thug, only to

discover that things aren't always what they seem.

When Isobel goes missing, it's up to Chicago private eye Kirsten and her lawyer husband Dugan to find out what's happened.

L-VIS LIVES!: RACEMUSIC POEMS

Kevin Coval's new book (Haymarket Books, Oct. 4) is a collection of poetry and prose exploring the collision of race, art and appropriation in hip hop culture. L-vis is an imagined persona, a representation of artists who have used and misused black music – a story of both artistic theft and radical invention.



Kevin Coval

HUGH MOORE

At the center of the **Eckhard Gerdes'** novel, *Hugh Moore* (Civil Coping Mechanisms, December, 2010), is the titular character, just as humor is at the center of the novel.

The occasion is the gathering of the tribes for the funeral (and presumed ascension) of the family matriarch, Rose Moore. The list of attendees goes on and on, and each has to survive some odd adventure or two to make it to the funeral.



Eckhard Gerdes

Beneath the humor, each character has to come to terms with life and death in his or her own way, as is befitting the occasion.

Hugh, himself, is the family scribe, a humorist and aspiring novelist, who takes it upon himself to record the family get-together.

Unfortunately, he is living below a newspaper man named Jackson Berlin, who is not known for his sense of humor and does not suffer the shenanigans of his downstairs neighbor lightly. Before too long, the two writers are at war with each other, and Jackson makes full use of his superior position.

ANOTHER BURNING KINGDOM (FLYOVER FICTION)

Another Burning Kingdom (Flyover Fiction) (Bison Books, March 1) is the latest book by **Robert Vivian**, winner of the 2002 SMA Adult Nonfiction Award for *Cold Snap as Yearning*.

Publishers Weekly wrote: "A pair of troubled brothers become engaged in a fateful showdown in an apocalyptic vision drawn from the Book of Revelations in Vivian's grim latest (after *Lamb Bright Saviors*). ... Vivian finds impressive depth in a slim and spare endeavor."

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY CHICAGO

Twenty-First Century Chicago (Cognella Academic Publishing, 2011) investigates the social, economic, political and governmental conditions of Chicago in this century. It is edited by **Dick Simpson** and Constance A. Mixon, an associate professor of political science and director of the urban studies program at Elmhurst (Ill.) College.

While traditional anthologies on urban politics sometimes include journal articles that emphasize statistics, this anthology focuses on first-hand accounts: speeches by politicians, newspaper stories, editorials by journalists, memoirs and biographies, and little-known research reports advocating change. It also incorporates the writings of scholars on the city of Chicago.

Covering all of metropolitan Chicago, this volume underscores the city's efforts in recent years to establish itself as a global metropolitan region and highlights the most pressing issues Chicago is facing to create a positive future in challenging times.



Dick Simpson

Final chapters

L. James Binder

Longtime Society of Midland Authors member **L. James Binder** died May 23 year at his home on Lake Michigan in Mears, Mich. He was 84.

Mr. Binder was author of *Lemnitzer: A Soldier for His Time*, a 1997 biography of Gen. Lyman L. Lemnitzer, a World War II hero who became Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman and Supreme Allied Commander of NATO under John F. Kennedy. Mr. Binder also edited the 1991 collection of Army Magazine pieces *Front and Center: Heroes, War Stories, and Army Life*.

Mr. Binder, editor-in-chief of Army Magazine for more than two decades until he retired in 1993, previously worked as a reporter and editor in Michigan at the Associated Press and Detroit News.



L. James Binder

Born June 21, 1926, in Jackson, Mich., to Leonard and Ethel (Lilly) Binder, Leonard James “Jim” Binder grew up in Michigan and northern Ohio.

At 17, he left high school to enlist in the United States Navy during World War II, and he served aboard the destroyer Myles C. Fox.

In 1952, he graduated from Central Michigan University, where he met Margery Elizabeth Rose, whom he married in 1950.

He began his writing career in the 1950s at several newspapers in southeast Michigan, including the Wayne Eagle and Pontiac Press. He also wrote and edited for the Associated Press and was

the state editor of the Detroit News.

In 1967, he moved his wife and sons, Timothy, Michael and Douglas to Washington DC to become the editor-in-chief of Army Magazine.

In retirement, he and his wife divided their time between Woodbridge in northern Virginia and their home in Mears.

Mr. Binder received numerous awards including the George Washington Honor Medal from the Freedoms Foundation. Mr. Binder was a member of VFW, Cosmos Club, American Society of Magazine Editors, Society of Professional Journalists, National Press Club, Detroit Press Club, American Legion, Tin Can Soldiers and the Methodist Church. Besides being an SMA member, he also was a donor to the Society.

Survivors include his wife of 60 years, Margery Rose Binder; three sons, T. James Binder of Manassas, Michael Binder of Washington and Doug Binder of Sunnyvale, Calif.; two sisters, Dorothy Binder and Jeanne Lawler, and one brother, Pat Harris; and by his grandchildren, Richmond James Binder and Helen Rose Binder.

Florence Parry Heide

Longtime Society of Midland Authors member **Florence Parry Heide**, a prolific children’s author whose work was illustrated by such well-known artists as Jules Feiffer, Edward Gorey and Lane Smith, died Oct. 24 at her Kenosha, Wis. home at age 92, her family said.

Kenosha News Editorial Page Editor Steve Lund wrote:

“Florence Parry Heide lit up the whole city with her smile. Even at age 92, she was Kenosha’s brightest star. ... No one did more to encourage the careers of other writers and artists. No one did more for Kenosha’s children. ... She was always smiling. It was an infectious smile, the kind that stayed with you all day after you saw her.”

Ms. Heide died in her sleep, one of her daughters, Judith Gilliland, told the Associated Press. The Kenosha News reported family members and friends said Ms. Heide was in good health, and her death was unexpected.

“It was just her time, I guess,” daughter

Roxanne Heide Pierce told the Kenosha News. “It came as a huge shock to me this morning. We had such a wonderful evening last night together. We watched a movie, made popcorn, laughed our heads off. It was very, very good, cozy and comfy. It made me feel good.”

Gilliland said her mother, a longtime Kenosha resident, was the author of more than 100 works (mostly children’s books), works co-authored with others (including her children), lyrics and poems. She also wrote under the pseudonyms Alex B. Allen and Jamie McDonald.

Her first book *Maximillian*, was published in 1967. Her most critically acclaimed work was the 1971 *The Shrinking of Treehorn*, part of a trilogy that was illustrated by Edward Gorey. The New York Times named it one of the best illustrated children’s books of 1971. Her most recent book, coauthored with Roxanne Heide Pierce, was *Always Listen*



Florence Parry Heide

to Your Mother in 2010. It told the story of a little boy who always does what his mother says, but is in for something different when new neighbors ask him for help fixing their place up.

Literary License reported in its November/December 2010 issue that Washington Post columnist Jay Matthews said *The Shrinking of Treehorn* was his favorite children’s book.

Among her awards were Booklist’s Editor’s Choice Award and several Notable Book citations from the American Library Association.

Carthage College professor Marilyn Ward recalled times that she brought her entire class to the author’s house.

“She was everybody’s favorite, and she was such a fun person, always enthusiastic,” Ward told the Kenosha News. “She had a real zest for everything she did.”

In addition to Heide’s daughters, survivors include sons David Heide and Parry Heide. She was preceded in death by her husband, Donald, and a son, Christen.