

## Biblio File

Welcome to two new members of the Midland Authors Board: **Sharon Woodhouse** and **Mary Wisniewski**. Sharon is a book publisher and author. Mary is author of the Midland Authors



**Angela Jackson-Brown**

award-winning book *Algren: A Life. ...* Among the authors shortlisted in August for the 2022 Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana Authors Awards were **Angela Jackson-Brown** for *When Stars Rain*

*Down*; **Kaveh Akbar** for *Pilgrim Bell*; **Ray Boomhower** for *Richard Tregaskis: Reporting Under Fire from Guadalcanal to Vietnam*, and **Helen Frost** for *All He Knew*. **Craig Fehrman** won for *Author in Chief: The Untold Story of Our Presidents and the Books They Wrote*, which was a 2021 Midland Authors award honoree. ...



**Kaveh Akbar**

**Barbara Gregorich** will speak on "The Power of F Words" at the Plainfield Public Library on Nov. 5, 1:30 p.m. 2:30 p.m. The presentation delves into Old English



**Craig Fehrman**

words such as fair, foe, friend, father and free. ... On Sept. 23, the Chicago Tribune published an article headlined "**Dick Simpson**, a fixture in Chicago's political and academic spheres for more than 50 years, is retired and

looking forward to life outside a UIC classroom." ... On Nov. 9, **David L. Harrison** will be at The Writers Place at 7 p.m. in The Nonprofit Village, 31 W. 31st St. Kansas City. ... **Keir Graf** reports

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## Setting the record straight on Woodstock, 50 years later

BY THOMAS FRISBIE

As people started writing books about the 1969 Woodstock music festival, **Gerard Plecki** noticed historical flaws in many of the accounts.

So Plecki, who presented the Midland Authors Aug. 9 program at the Cliff Dwellers Club in Chicago with the help of Midland Authors Archivist and Board Member **Walter Podrazik**, set out to set the record straight.

"Unless we were going to settle for half-truths, falsehoods and complete fabrications, it was time to document the history of the event as critically as possible," said Plecki, whose book about Woodstock, *Singing in the Rain: The Definitive Story of Woodstock at 50* (Mill City Press, 2019), runs to 900-plus pages.

Flanked by posters advertising Woodstock and playing musical clips from the event, Plecki talked about what really happened at the Woodstock Music and Art Fair on a farm property in upstate New York in 1969.

"I was fortunate enough to get hold of Mel Lawrence, who was the director of operations for Woodstock," said Plecki, who is president of the Midland Authors. "He was happy to pass on his insights. The more I listened to Mel [who has since passed away] the more I realized there was a story out

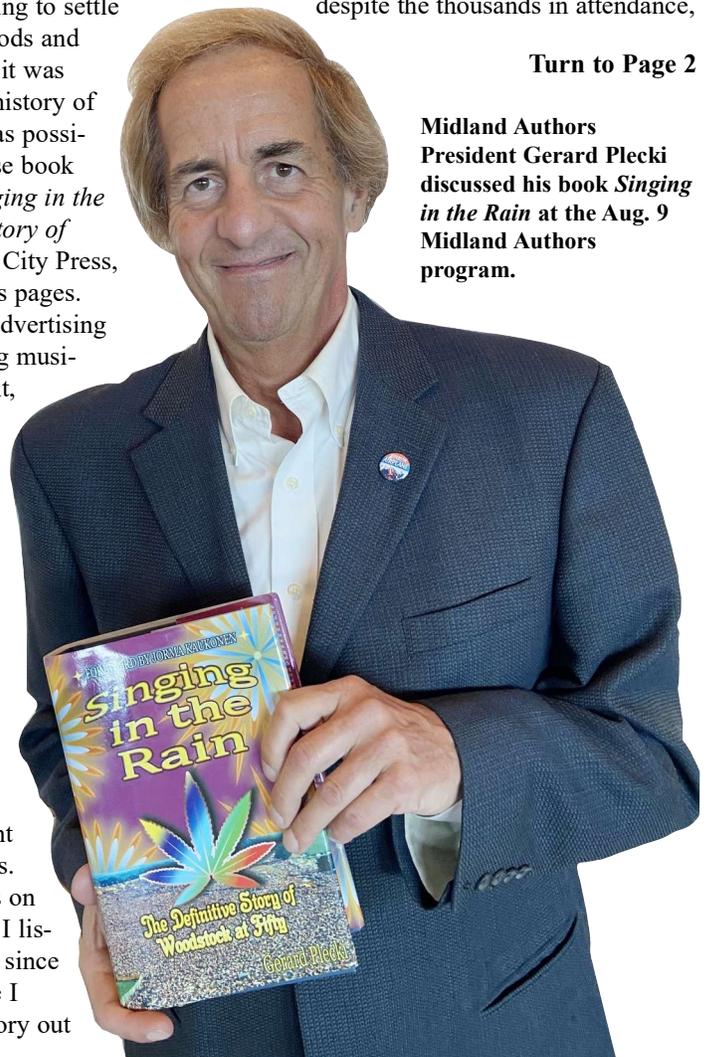
there that just had to be told."

At the in-person program, which was delayed for two years because of COVID-19, Plecki said, "There was no time to hesitate" for Woodstock's planners once the wheels started turning for the event, which turned out to be "beyond anyone's expectations."

The rain never let up on the first day of the festival, yet while featuring acoustical instruments, it had an intimate feeling despite the thousands in attendance,

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Midland Authors President Gerard Plecki discussed his book *Singing in the Rain* at the Aug. 9 Midland Authors program.



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he is drafting two books simultaneously. ... **Edward McClelland** quoted **Dominic Pacyga** in a Sept. 30 Chicago magazine article headlined "Something Good in Every Neighborhood: Part 1." ...

**Geraldine K. Piorkowski** wrote "Why Do We Fall For Certain 'Types'?" for Psychology Today. ... Sadly, Midland Authors member **Pauline Saliga** passed away on Sept. 11.



Pauline Saliga

Pauline was co-editor of *The Sky's the Limit: A Century of Chicago Skyscrapers* (Rizzoli, 1990) and author of *The Architecture of Bruce Goff 1904-1982: Design for the Continuous Present:*

(Prestel, 1995), *Building in a New Spain: Contemporary Spanish Architecture* (Artemis-Aidc, 1993) and *Fragments of Chicago's Past* (Art Institute of Chicago, 1990). She held curatorial jobs at both the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago and the Art Institute of Chicago and also was the executive director of the Society of Architectural Historians since 1995. Services were held, but a memorial service will be held at a later date.

## Literary License

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Society of Midland Authors members can pay their membership dues, buy tickets to the annual dinner and make donations on our website with PayPal). To make a donation, visit our home page at [www.midlandauthors.org](http://www.midlandauthors.org) and click on the "Donate" button in the upper right corner.

# Woodstock

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**Midland Authors Treasurer Greg Borzo (right) gets in the spirit of Woodstock with 1969-era flower child garb as he introduces the Aug. 9 program featuring Midland Authors President Gerard Plecki (left) and Board Member and Archivist Walter Podrazik. Note the widely admired Midland Authors table skirt.**

Plecki said.

"The crowd was ready for it," he said. And because of a well-designed and innovative sound system, everyone could hear the songs even if they weren't in a good position to see the stage, he said.

"If you could hear it, you understood the intimacy of the song and you had the feeling of kind of a coffeehouse performance that you wouldn't get no matter how many times you watched it [later on video]."

Despite the weather, the performers rose the occasion, Plecki said.

"When you add the specialness of this once-in-a-lifetime gathering, every performance was something special," he said.

“ “ It was time to document the history of the event as critically as possible. ” ”

At that point in the presentation, Podrazik asked Plecki, "What was the reaction of our friends in the print press [to Woodstock]?"

For example, a New York Times headline read, "Nightmare in the Catskills,"

Podrazik said.

Weeks after Woodstock, Plecki said, the editors of the Chicago Tribune said, "Somehow, we can't believe that ruthless revolutions and personal affirmations of rejection of the old institutions and values by an inchoate mass ... were positive actions."

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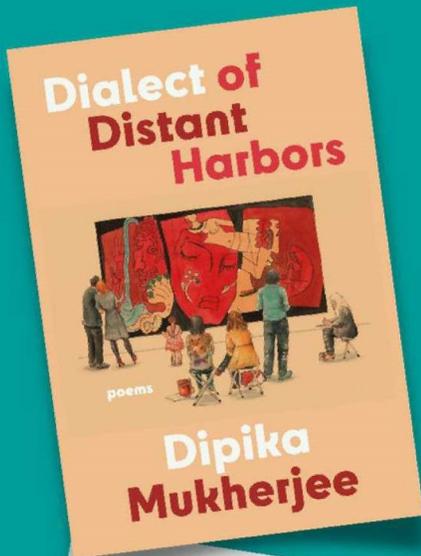
## Literary Largess

Dues cover mailings and other organizational expenses, but the Society always needs additional money for programs such as the awards at the annual May book awards banquet. Thanks to **Richard**

**Bales, Stan Banash, Dennis Byrne, Catherine Browder, John Cella, Jonathan Eig, Michael Fedo, Linda Gartz, Thomas J. Gradel, D. Leigh Henson, Michael Haupt, Rick Kogan, Marcia Z. Nelson, Harriette Gillem Robinet,** who made recent contributions.

Midland Authors Presents

# Poetry & Dance



Join us for a night with the award-winning poet as she discusses her themes of home, grieving, and kinship. As the world recovers from a global pandemic and the failure of modern government, these poems are incantations to our connections to the human family.

**What:** Dipika Mukherjee discusses her new book of poetry, *Dialect of Distant Harbors*, in conversation with poet Marty McConnell accompanied by the Ishti Collective, a Chicago-area fusion dance troupe

**When:** Tuesday, October 11, 2022  
Cocktails: 6-7 pm  
Presentation: 7-8 pm

**Where:** Cliff Dwellers Club, 200 S. Michigan Ave., 22nd floor penthouse

Free & open to the public  
Suggested donation \$5

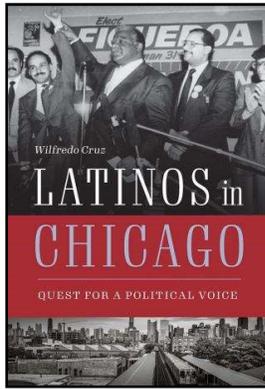
“Mukherjee's latest poetry collection is a penetrating, intercontinental, and reflective sheaf of poems on aging, illness, faith, and family written in a keen diasporic music.”

— *Maya Marshall, author of All the Blood Involved in Love*

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## Literary Latest



### AN IMPORTANT TOPIC

In his new book, *Latinos in Chicago: A Quest for a Political Voice* (Southern Illinois University Press, November, 2022). **Wilfredo Cruz** shows how Latinos went from being ignored by the Irish-controlled political machine to becoming a respected constituency.

“I wrote this book because I believe Latino politics is an important topic no

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one else has written about,” Cruz tells Literary License. “Latinos are now the second largest group in Chicago after White people. Latinos continue to make important progress and contributions to the political landscape at the city and state level. They will continue to be important political players in the future. I believe this book will appeal to a scholarly and general audience.”

Former Midland Authors President **Dick Simpson** said, “*Latinos in Chicago* is a major contribution to Chicago political history. It is an important account of minority empowerment as the struggle for political voice and recognition is occurring throughout America. After more than a century of political battles, Latinos are coming into power in Chicago and America.

“This is a tale to be told beyond Chicago as an inspiration for the new America being born.”

From the publisher: “Beginning with the Latino community’s first attempt to acquire a political voice in Chicago poli-

tics in 1911 and continuing through Latino officeholders of the early 21st century, Cruz surveys not only the struggles of this community – specifically the two largest Latino groups in the city, Mexicans and Puerto Ricans – but also the ways in which Chicago’s Latinos



**Wilfredo Cruz**

overcame those challenges to gain their political voice. “For most of the 20th century, Chicago politicians ignored the growing Latino community. This disregard changed with the 1983 election of Mayor Harold Washington, an African American who defied the political machine and actively recruited Latinos to his administration and helped them win city and statewide political offices. His actions opened the doors of government for Latinos in Chicago. Subsequent mayors, seeing the political success of Washington’s move, continued his policies.”

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