

For more information on the Sept. 13 program with Ray Gibson, see Pages 11 and 13. For more information on the Oct. 11 program with poet Dipika Mukherjee, see Page 14.

SIGN UP NOW FOR PRINTERS ROW. Details, Page 16.

Biblio File

Thanks to **Patrick McBriarty** for his valued volunteer service on the Midland Authors Board of Directors. Patrick stepped down in July. Also thanks to Midland Authors Treasurer **Greg Borzo**, who stepped down as program chair after the August program. He will be replaced by **Claire Hartfield**. ... **Helen Lambin** won second place in the National Catholic Press Association Book Awards for "An Empty Space in Your Heart: Reflections on the Death of a Sibling or Best Friend." ... **Frank Joseph's** novel *To Do Justice*, winner of the Chicago Writers Association's First Chapter Award, will be published in April 2023 by TouchPoint Press. *Justice* is the final novel in his "Chicago Trilogy." Other titles in the trilogy are *To Love Mercy* (trilogy novel No. 1) and *To Do Justice* (trilogy novel No. 2). *To Love Mercy* won the Eric Hoffer Award plus seven others; it was first published in 2006 by Mid Atlantic Highlands. ... Former SMA president **Craig Sautter** spent his winter months cataloging his Little (Literary) Magazine and Small Press collection (1,566 volumes, 1950s-2020), alphabetically, by decade, in preparation for sale. He also wrote a short history marking the Midland Authors 107th year for The Chicago Literary Hall of Fame's blog. ... **Robert Fieseler** was scheduled to do a special author event in Palatine,

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A room that's been filled with 'great minds and great people'

BY THOMAS FRISBIE

At the Midland Authors 2022 book awards, which were presented in person for the first time since 2019, emcee **Carol Marin** opened the awards portion of the program by pointing out the long history of the Cliff Dwellers Club's association with writers. The awards ceremony was held on May 10 at the Cliff Dwellers Club in Chicago.

"This room has been filled with great minds, great writers and great people who have interpreted Chicago," said Marin, a well-known Chicago journalist. "We need writers and thinkers and reporters today, maybe more than ever."

"Sometime or another, every reporter I know, this one included, thinks 'maybe I could write a book,' " she said. "And then they slam directly into the wall [and find] just how hard that is."

Marin was followed by novelist **Jean Thompson**, the keynote speaker for the evening.

Thompson is a novelist and short story writer, whose most recent novel is *The Poet's House* (Algonquin, July 12, 2022). She has published nine previous novels.

"Literature is both central to our culture and marginalized," Thompson said. "If

you write, as I have my entire my adult life – fiction for me, not poetry – you can find yourself meditating ... on the disjunctions and contradictions of the writing life. How literature is both central to our culture and marginalized. How much effort it can take to write even a bad book."



ABOVE LEFT: Emcee Carol Marin addresses the Midland Authors 2022 book awards banquet.

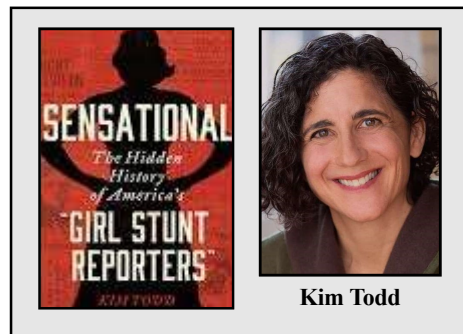
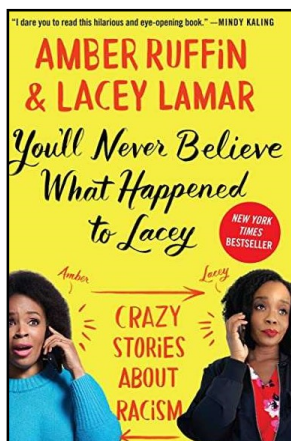
ABOVE RIGHT: Keynote speaker Jean Thompson talks about the challenges of writing.

For the Richard Frisbie Adult Nonfiction Award, the co-winners were **Amber Ruffin** and **Lacey Lamar** from Omaha, Nebraska, for *You'll Never Believe What Happened to Lacey: Crazy Stories about Racism* (Grand Central Publishing).

Reading comments from the judges, who were unable to attend, Marin said the book is "an important take on the subject [of racism] handled in a more lighthearted manner."

In a video played at the dinner, Ruffin said, "We just thought we were writing down stories that made us laugh, but it

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Illinois, at the Cutting Arts Center on June 14 to honor Chicagoland's forgotten Upstairs Lounge victim Guy Andersen. ... On May 3, 2022, it was announced **Artika R. Tyner** received a 2022 McKnight Artist Fellowship in Writing (for children's literature). ... **Robert K. Elder** is the new president and CEO of Outrider Foundation. ... **Wally Podrazik** talked about memorable TV teachers on WGN Radio during National Teacher Appreciation Week in May. ... An Aug. 2 Chicago Tribune story by **Rick Kogan** quoted the "esteemed local author and historian **Richard Lindberg**." ... Midland Authors President **Gerard Plecki**, Literary License Editor **Thomas Frisbie** and **Syed Haider** were included in Newcity magazine's "Lit 50 2022: Advocates, Educators and Changemakers." Among the names in Newcity's Hall of Fame: **Chris Abani**, **Eve L. Ewing**, **Audrey Niffenegger**, **Reginald Gibbons**, **Natalie Moore**, **Megan Stielstra**, **Rick Kogan**, **Kathleen Rooney**, **Haki Madhubuti**, **Donna Seaman**, **Simone Muench** and **Rebecca**

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Awards

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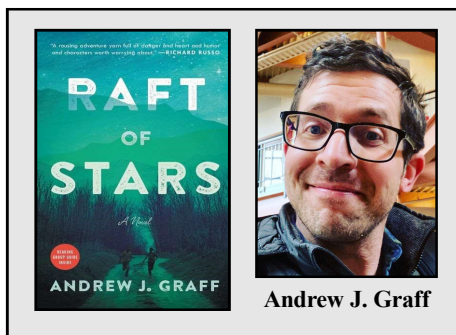
turned out to be a lot more than that."

The honoree was **Kim Todd** of Minneapolis for *Sensational: The Hidden History of America's "Girl Stunt Reporters"* (Harper).

Quoting the judges, Marin said the book, "is a fascinating look at the female reporters in the late 19th century. ... *Sensational* is just that."

The judges were **Marie Mockett**, **Jack Shuler** and **Kim Hiltwein**.

For the Adult Fiction Award, the winner



was **Andrew J. Graff**, of Cedarville, Iowa, for *Raft of Stars* (Ecco).

The honorees were **Kate McIntyre**, originally from Kansas, for *Mad Prairie: Stories and a Novella* (University of Georgia Press); **Anthony Bukoski** of Superior, Wisconsin, for *The Blondes of Wisconsin* (University of Wisconsin Press) and **Jakob Guanzon**, who was raised in Minnesota, for *Abundance* (Graywolf Press).

Thompson, who also was an Adult Fiction judge, returned to the podium to discuss the Adult Fiction winner and honorees.

Of *Raft of Stars*, Thompson said, "Andrew Graff writes about the intersection of human psychology and the natural world."

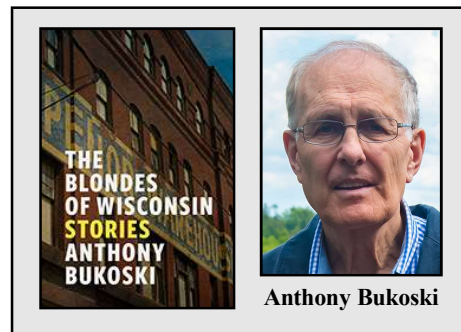
He does so, she said, with authority and insight.

Of *Mad Prairie*, Thompson said, "Kate McIntyre uncovers the Gothic beneath the



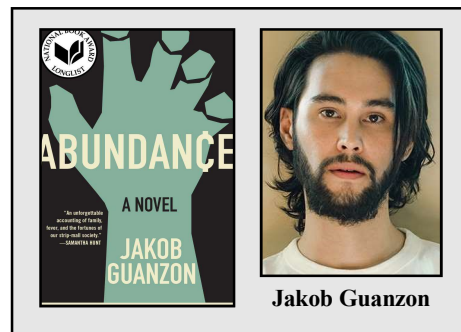
surfaces, poetic Midwestern silences. ... [It is] a rich and complex portrait of McIntyre's native Kansas, the people who live there and those who yearn to flee."

The "elegant book" *Blondes of Wisconsin*, Thompson said, "illuminates the immigrant experience in America in fully new ways ... in prose that surges with



understatement because he makes silence eloquent, distance intimate, narrow large. Underlying it all is Lake Superior and its immense, implacable rhythms."

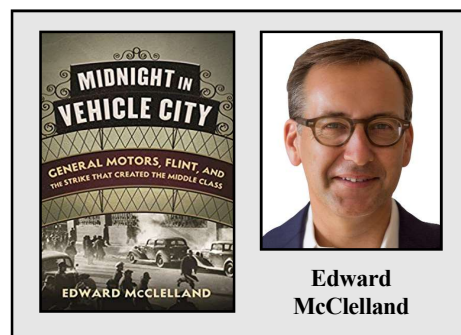
In the "harrowing and poignant novel" *Abundance*, Thompson said, "[L]ike a contemporary Dickens or Hugo, Guanzon forces us to consider how illusory our notions of personal independence may be."



The other judges were **Dan Chaon** and **Kent Meyers**.

For the History Award, which was added in 2022, the winner was **Edward McClelland** for *Midnight in Vehicle City: General Motors, Flint, and the Strike That Created the Middle Class* (Beacon Press). McClelland is from both Lansing,

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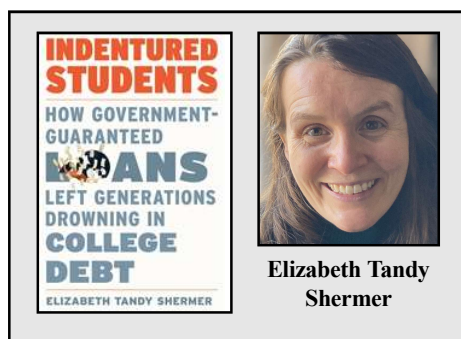
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Michigan, and Chicago.

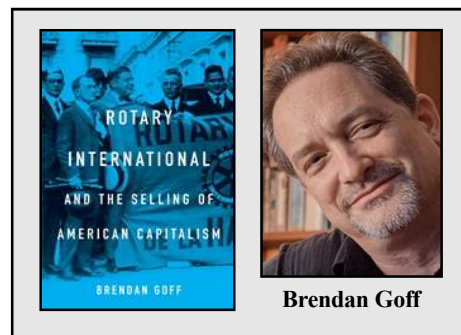
The honorees were **Elizabeth Tandy Shermer** of Chicago for *Indentured Students: How Government-Guaranteed Loans Left Generations Drowning in College Debt* (Belknap Press) and **Brendan Goff** of Chicago for *Rotary International and the Selling of American Capitalism* (Harvard University Press).

Judge **Joseph Gustaitis** said *Midnight in Vehicle City* “checks all the boxes for a superior work of history. It brings to light an important story in a dramatic style. ... The author made impressive use of archival material. The result is an important story, vividly told.”

At the podium, McClelland said, “I hope we are seeing a revival of the [organized labor] movement in the wake of the pandemic. I am going to be very interested to see the results of the organizing votes at Starbucks.”



Gustaitis said *Indentured Students* “takes one of the major problems of our time, student college debt, and explains how it got that way. ... [It is] a valuable, even essential contribution to the national debate.”



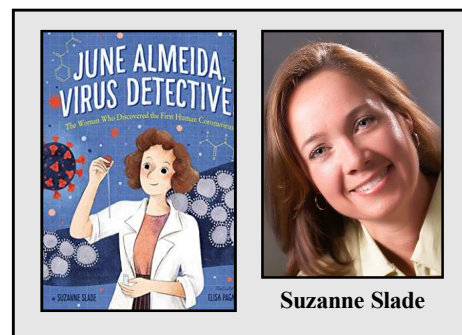
Gustaitis said *Rotary International* “clearly articulates the soft power of the Rotarian mind-set and infrastructure.

“Of writing the book, Goff said, “It was a lot of fun at times, and a lot of times of

just pulling my hair out.”

The other judges were **John Holden** and **Dominic Pacyga**.

In the Children’s Reading Round Table Children’s Nonfiction Award category, the winner was **Suzanne Slade** of Libertyville, Illinois, for *June Almeida, Virus Detective!: The Woman Who Discovered the First Human Coronavirus* (Sleeping Bear Press).



The honorees were **Kao Kalia Yang**, of St. Paul, Minnesota, for *Yang Warriors* (University of Minnesota Press) and **Laurie Lawlor** of Evanston, Illinois, for *Fearless World Traveler: Adventures of Marianne North, Botanical Artist* (Holiday House).

Judge **Judith Schein Cohen** said *June Almeida* “presents a realistic picture ... the writing is clear and crisp and the illustrations enrich the text in a realistic but child-friendly way.”

Slade said, “What I love about what I do is I highlight women in STEM. ... I am thrilled to shine a light on this woman for our young women and young girls.”

Lawlor told Literary License: “I became interested in Marianne North, 19th century British botanical artist, because of her courage. At a time when proper Victorian women weren’t encouraged to travel alone – much less pursue artistic careers in remote often dangerous corners of the world – she bravely followed her dream of tracking down and painting rare tropi-



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Makkai. ... Jonathan Eig, author of *Ali: A Life*, recently toured the former Muhammad Ali training camp. ... **Steve Paul**, a board member of the Biographers International Organization, invites fellow Midland Authors members who work on biography to view recordings of “the inspiring and educational speakers and panel discussions [that took] place at this year’s online conference, May 13-15. Keynoters included George Packer, Craig Smith and Megan Marshall, and panel topics included all aspects of writing and publishing biography from a lively and diverse array of angles.” ... **Joyce Burns Zeiss** was on a panel at the Winnetka Public Library on April 27 discussing the topic “Why You Need a Writing Workshop.” The event was sponsored by the Off Campus Writers Workshop. ... **Emilio DeGrazia** was a judge in the 2022 Maria W. Faust Sonnet Contest in Winona, Minnesota. ... On Aug. 9, KRCU Public Radio’s “Martin’s Must-Reads” included **Gary Schmidt’s** Midland Authors award-winning *The Wednesday Wars*. ... **Christoph Irmischer** wrote “This America of Ours” Review: Savior of the National Parks” for the July 22 Wall Street Journal. ... **Connie Goddard** did an interview for Prairie Public Radio (in Fargo, North Dakota) on July 6; the topic was a distinctive manual and industrial training school (founded in 1899 and closed in 1971), which she also did a talk about on July 8 in the school’s hometown. Next month, an article she wrote about the school – “A ‘Howling Success’: Ellendales’ Normal and Industrial School, 1899-1929” – will appear in the Journal of North Dakota History. The school is one of three that are the topic of her book on three distinctive Progressive Era manual training schools, which is moving toward publication. Another article, a review of Molly Rozum’s compelling new *Grasslands Grown: Creating Place on the U.S. Northern Plains and Canadian Prairies* (University of Nebraska Press), appears in the July issue of The Journal of the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era. ... **David Treuer** wrote

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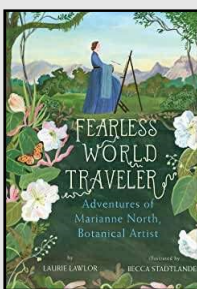
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“Adrift Between My Parents’ Two Americas” for the July 18 New York Times. ... **Charlene Baumbich** wrote “Look at primary ballot carefully” for the Aug. 5 Winona Post. ... **David Harrison’s** *The Dirt Book* is one of 10 books chosen for the 2023 list of finalists for the Bill Martin, Jr. Picture Book Award for the state of Kansas. David writes to say, “In March, David Harrison Elementary School celebrated my 85th birthday in high school, best party ever, and *Pardner Poems & Word Ladders for Developing Fundamental Literacy Skills* was released by Scholastic. In April, I signed a contract for a new book of poetry – *Wild Brunch: How Animals Eat What They Eat* – with Charlesbridge, did a virtual school visit in Pennsylvania, and virtual poetry readings in Massachusetts, Missouri, Connecticut and Colorado.” David is booked on a poetry panel in Anaheim in November during the annual national conference of NCTE (National Council for Teachers of English). In October he will be the guest speaker at The Writers Place in Kansas City, Missouri. David also writes to say, “In July I had a book signing at Sun Dog Books in Seaside, Florida. I just signed the contract for a new collaborative book for the classroom for Benchmark Education with a February due date. “The Little Boy’s Secret,” one of the stories in my Christopher Award-winning book, *The Book of Giant Stores*, just came out in an anthology of children’s stories published by HarperCollins in London. I just signed an agreement with Pearson Publishing in Cape Town, South Africa, to reprint the same story in Afrikaans, which is spoken in Namibia, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe. I’ve had a collaborative article about the art of teaching reading accepted by California Reading journal and have agreed to make videos for California International Literacy Association for their fall conference and for NCTE’s fall conference. ... Author and former NBC5 political reporter **Peter Nolan** was on WBBM Newsradio’s May 1 “At Issue” program discussing the importance of the late Chicago Mayor

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Awards

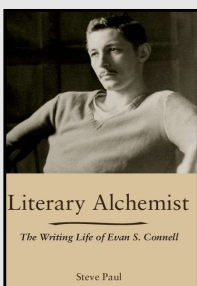
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Laurie Lawlor

cal plants. She was a spunky late-bloomer who did not get started on her globe-trotting career until she was 40. Her remarkable output of vivid creations remains a lasting encouragement to me as a writer. Her life and work are a rallying cry for all of us to ‘follow our bliss.’”

The other judges in the category were **Mary Losure** and **Marianne Malone**.



Steve Paul

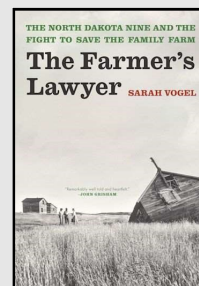
For the **Bernard J. Brommel Biography and Memoir Award**, the winner was **Steve Paul** of Kansas City for *Literary Alchemist: The Writing Life of Evan S. Connell* (University of Missouri Press).

Judge **Bob Remer** said *Literary Alchemist* “is a very penetrating, literary biography. ... This well-researched book explores the twists and turns of a well-known Kansas-Missouri midcentury writer’s life.”

Paul was not present, but in a video played for the audience, he said, “When I set out to write a biography of Connell, I had very little to go on. But thanks to literary archives, a handful of family and friends and acquaintances, and the enormous range of books and other writings he left behind, a reasonable portrait began to come together.”

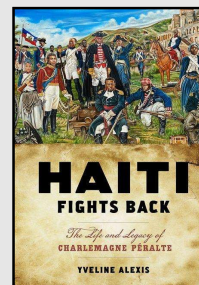
The honorees were **Sarah Vogel** of Bismarck, North Dakota, for *The Farmer’s Lawyer: The North Dakota Nine and the Fight to Save the Family Farm* (Bloomsbury);

Melissa J. Homestead of Omaha for *The Only Wonderful Things: The Creative Partnership of Willa Cather & Edith Lewis* (Oxford University Press), and **Yveline Alexis** of Oberlin, Ohio, for *Haiti Fights Back: The Life and Legacy of Charlemagne Peralte* (Rutgers University Press).



Sarah Vogel

Vogel was unable to attend the banquet, but in a written statement she said: “I’m incredibly honored to be recognized by the Society of Midland Authors, with its long history of heralding the best and brightest of Midwest authors, many of whom are my literary heroes. I’m saddened to miss this event tonight but I have an excuse, closely related to the subject of my book. I’ll be in Washington, D.C., as part of the U.S. Department of



Yveline Alexis

Agriculture’s Equity Commission, where I serve as a member of the Agriculture Subcommittee. ... I hope you read my book and will be inspired to actively support our family farmers and our rural agricultural communities, who continue to face economic pressures today. The Midlands of the United States rest upon the family farm system of agriculture!”

Haiti Fights Back, Remer said, “is a broad historical survey.”

The Only Wonderful Things, Remer said, is “another literary biography about a talented writer who is overlooked and underappreciated as a literary and personal partner of a more famous author.”

Homestead said, “One of the honorees

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for poetry tells me one of the other honorees for poetry, **Diane Seuss**, just won a Pulitzer in poetry, so I am going to con-

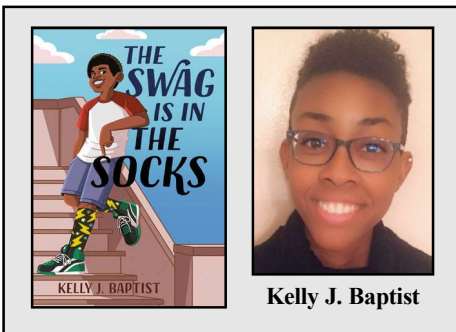


sider this my Pulitzer Prize in biography.”

The other history judges were **John Hallwas** and **Gary Schmidt**.

The winner of the Children’s Fiction Award was **Kelly J. Baptist** of Berrien Springs, Michigan, for *The Swag Is in the Socks* (Crown Books for Young Readers).

Reading from the judges’ report, Marin said *The Swag Is in the Socks* “is filled with humor, charm and inspiration.”



Baptist told the assembled writers, “I encourage you to continue what your passion is because it is inspiring others.”

The honorees were **Andrea Zimmerman**, originally from Ohio and now residing in Los Angeles, for *If I Were a Tree* (Lee & Low Books), **Molly Beth Griffin** of Minn-



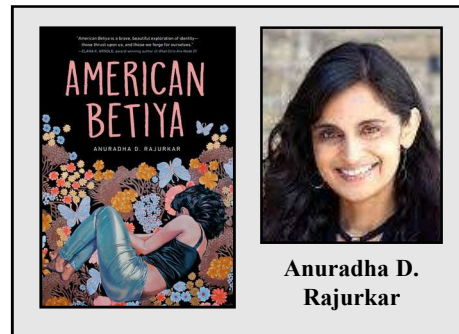
neapolis for *Ten Beautiful Things* (Charlesbridge) and **Anuradha D. Rajurkar**, of Evanston, Illinois, for *American Betiya*



(Knopf Books for Young Readers).

Rajurkar said her book started as a short story before it became a book.

Marin said *If I Were a Tree* is a book “young children and their parents will want to read over and over.”



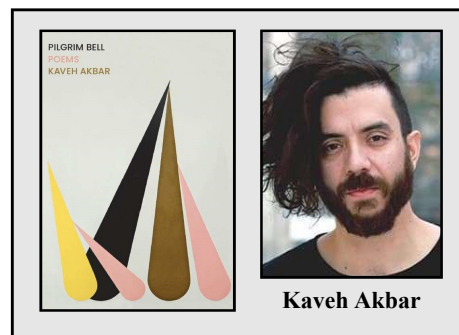
Ten Beautiful Things, she said, is “beautifully illustrated with a positive message. This picture book will delight younger readers.”

American Betiya, Marin said, “explores stereotypes ... and artistic expression. It is a cross-cultural young adult story.”

The judges were **Laura Hirshfield**, **Julie Novak** and **Sandy Renner**.

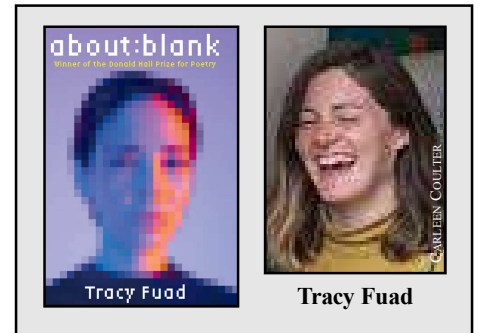
Kaveh Akbar of West Lafayette, Indiana, was the winner of the Poetry Award for *Pilgrim Bell: Poems* (Graywolf Press).

The honorees were **Tracy Fuad**, who was born and raised in Minnesota for *about: blank* (University of Pittsburgh Press); **Simone Muench** and **Jackie K.**



White, both of Chicago, for *Hex & Howl* (Black Lawrence Press), and **Diane Seuss** of Kalamazoo, Michigan, for *frank: sonnets* (Graywolf Press).

Reading judge **Emilio DeGrazia’s** comments, Marin said, “This book stands out for breadth and depth. ... Akbar shows



not the middle way but the unity of our complexities and apparent contradictions.”

about: blank, DeGrazia wrote, “sees parts of the world unseen and unknown to us. [Fuad] saw deeply about how she sees

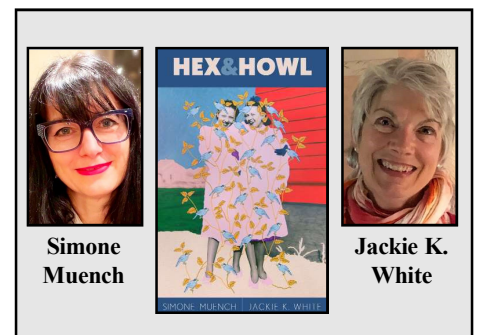


herself and how we see the way windows, words standing between us.”

The subject of the 127 14-line sonnets in *frank:sonnets*, DeGrazia wrote, are “those we call losers. We drive past them, give them a window glance. ... She tells their tales.”

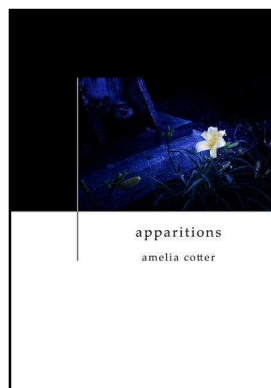
Of reading *Hex and Howl*, DeGrazia wrote, “It is heartening to read these two women making such good sense.”

The other poetry judges were **Chris Abani** and **Nandi Comer**.



Literary Latest

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hope found in connection, reconciliation, redemption, and resiliency. Poet and storyteller Amelia Cotter invites readers to walk the liminal spaces between alienation and belonging, darkness and light, and the earthly and otherworldly in this lovingly curated collection of micro- and prose poetry, including haiku and haibun.”

Cotter tells Literary License, “My fifth book and first poetry collection, *apparitions*, was released this month by Highland Park Poetry Press. This is a long-awaited collection, and I’m so proud and so relieved that it’s finally here. The book has been an Amazon Best Seller in Poetry by Women, with more excitement to come.”

Charlotte Digregorio, author of *Ripples of Air: Poems of Healing*, wrote, “In this riveting and masterful collection of poetry and prose, Amelia Cotter offers sorely-needed healing for those facing crisis and despondency due to physical/mental illness. ... [I]t merits reading again and again to fully appreciate its artful expression, honesty, sensitivity, and wisdom.”

GUTENBERG’S ASSISTANT?

“I felt like Gutenberg’s assistant,” **Lynn Sloan** says of her experience in the production of her latest book, *Fortune Cookies* (Lark Sparrow Press), which appeared in January.

Two and a half years ago, Craig Jobson, founder of Lark Sparrow Press, book-maker, designer and graphic artist, asked if he could produce a fine press edition of a selection of Sloan’s flash fiction stories.



Together they chose seven that hinge on moments when a little girl or a grown woman finds herself facing a reckoning with only a fortune cookie fortune to illuminate the way.



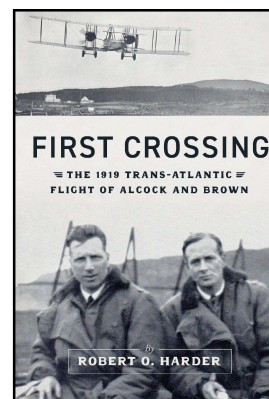
Lynn Sloan

Fortune Cookies is a limited edition art book with 72 pages, digitally embossed bamboo covers, open-spine binding, letterpress printing on handmade paper, embossed artwork by Lynn McClain, hand-tinted illustrations by Jobson and tipped in fortune cookie fortunes.

On a few occasions Craig invited Lynn to pull page prints from his massive Vandercook IV press. “To smell the ink and make sure none of it got on my fingers, to hear the roll of the drum, and the click of the press’ return, to lift each sheet of paper and place it carefully in the drying rack was thrilling. Writing a book is one thing – that’s what I do. Creating a beautiful book is something else. That’s what Craig Jobson does.”

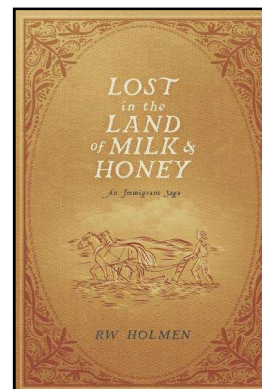
LARGELY FORGOTTEN STORY

Robert O. Harder writes to say, “It gives me great pleasure to share with you the launch of my new book *First Crossing: The 1919 Trans-Atlantic Flight of Alcock and Brown* (Sunbury Press), published in April. This largely forgotten story unfolds on two levels – an adventure tale that beggars belief it actually succeeded, blended with a lay history of early technological breakthroughs that brought about the modern aviation age.”



From the publisher: “The first to fly across the Atlantic nonstop wasn’t Charles Lindbergh, but two long-forgotten British airmen. Captain John Alcock and Lieutenant Arthur Whitten Brown flew their flimsy wood and fabric modified Vickers Vimy bomber from St. Johns, Newfoundland to Cliveden, Ireland – eight years before Lindbergh’s epic New York-to-Paris flight.

“In *First Crossing*, follow two Royal Air Force officers through terrifying Great War aerial combat before they are shot down and they become prisoners of war. While incarcerated, both independently schemed of a way to win Lord Northcliffe’s £10,000 prize for the first nonstop trans-Atlantic crossing.”



HISTORICAL FICTION NOVEL

From the publisher: “Historical fiction novel *Lost in the Land of Milk and Honey* by **R.W. Holmen** (Smashwords, April 14, 2022) plays out over the course of nearly

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Literary Latest

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five decades of Minnesota and American history beginning in 1891.

“Swedish immigrant Jonas Jönsson comes to America dreaming of a farm with a herd of spotted cattle, sturdy horses and a big red barn that will dwarf the meager dwellings left behind in Sweden. With fits and starts, triumphs and tragedies, Jönsson’s pursuit of his dreams becomes a twisted journey across the sweep of American history: a legendary forest fire; labor strife in mining and shipping; the Great War; the nativist, labor-bashing, intolerant Red Scare; mid-America’s flirtation with the Ku Klux Klan; progressive prairie populism; and

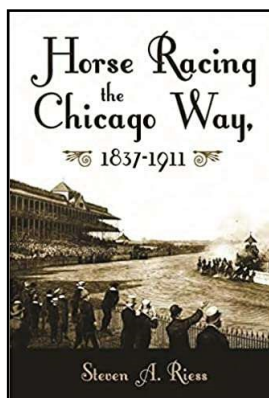


R.W. Holmen

the Great Depression. Tribalism – religious, economic, cultural, political, and ethnic – posts roadblocks and causes detours in his journey to the American dream.

“Turn-of-the-century Minnesota provides the setting, actual events form the backdrop and real persons weave in and out of Jönsson’s fictional story.

“The novel is set in four Minnesota locales, and each provides important context. Swede Hollow is a mishmash of immigrant hovels on the east side of St. Paul, a landing spot for new immigrants and a departure point when they are ready to begin their new life in America.”



RACING HISTORY BROUGHT TO LIFE

Steven Riess’ new book is *Horse Racing the Chicago Way: Gambling,*

Politics, and Organized Crime, 1837-1911 (Syracuse University Press, June 2022),

From the publisher: “Chicago may seem a surprising choice for studying thoroughbred racing, especially since it was originally a famous harness racing town and did not get heavily into thoroughbred racing until the 1880s.

“However, Chicago in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was second only to New York as a center of both thoroughbred racing and off-track gambling.

“*Horse Racing the Chicago Way* shines a light on this fascinating, complicated history, exploring the role of political influence and class in the rise and fall of thoroughbred racing; the business of racing; the cultural and social significance of racing; and the impact widespread opposition to gambling in Illinois had on the sport.

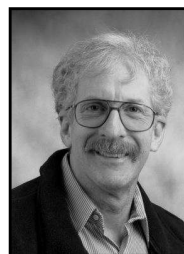
“Riess also draws attention to the nexus that existed between horse racing, politics, and syndicate crime, as well as the emergence of neighborhood bookmaking, and the role of the national racing wire in Chicago. Taking readers from the grandstands of Chicago’s finest tracks to the underworld of crime syndicates and downtown poolrooms, Riess brings to life this understudied era of sports history.”

NEW BOOK OF POETRY

Dan Gerber’s new book of poetry is *The End of Michelangelo* (Copper Canyon Press, Oct. 11, 2022).

From the publisher: “Reading the poetry of Dan Gerber, we are summoned to this larger truth: Though we live in fraught times, on the tipping point of human self-destruction, we and our planet are still very much alive.

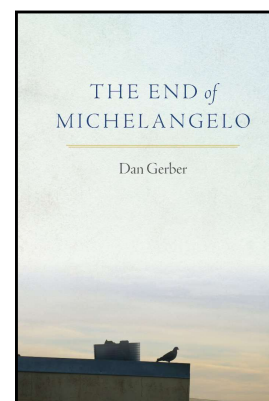
“In one of his last sonnets, nearly 500 years ago, Michelangelo Buonarroti confronted the paradox of our earthly existence: “Why



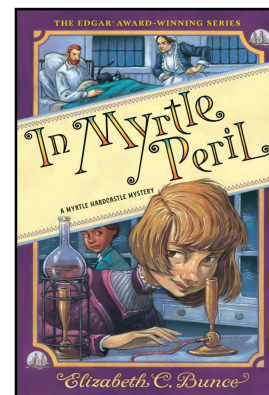
Steven Riess



Dan Gerber



beauty mixed with terror, feeds so strangely my desire.” Reading *The End of Michelangelo*, we are similarly reminded that the very fact of being alive – experiencing our fleeting, fragile existence – is our only source of joy, our only avenue of consolation. These are poems that wake us up, revivify our desire to go on living despite our times, to counter our times; if poetry has a purpose, it may be exactly this. As T.H. White suggests, we can’t save our world if we don’t first savor it.”



FOURTH INSTALLMENT

In the latest volume of **Elizabeth Bunce’s** Edgar Award-winning series, *Myrtle Hardcastle* – a 12-year-old Victorian-era amateur detective – investigates the case of a heiress lost at sea.

In Myrtle Peril (Algonquin Young Readers, Oct. 4, 2022), tells the story of a girl who tries to stake her claim to a family fortune. Myrtle’s father, a solicitor, is asked to help verify the girl’s identity. His work on the case is sidelined when he’s hospitalized – only to witness a murder. But with no body at the scene, Myrtle and her governess, Miss Judson, fear the so-called murder was a feverish delusion. Then a key piece of evidence emerges.

LITERARY LICENSE, MAY-AUGUST 2022

An informal chat about long career

BY GERARD PLECKI

On Wednesday, April 20, at the Cliff Dwellers Club in Chicago, two renowned writers, **Rick Kogan** and **Peter Nolan**, discussed Nolan's new book, *Campaign! The Election that Rocked Chicago*, published by Amika Press (Feb. 9. 2022).

With the ambience of an informal, living room chat with an old friend, Nolan delighted the audience of 120 attendees with stories of his career, beginning with his arrival in Chicago from Buffalo, New York, in 1968. Hired as a summer replacement writer on NBC, throughout the course of his career in Chicago he came to know Richard J. Daley, Jane Byrne, Richard M. Daley, and Harold Washington. Kogan commented on how Mr. Nolan's writing style communicated "his affection for the people he covered."

In a fascinating series of anecdotes, Nolan revealed how that affection helped him write, stating he would collect tidbits of information that became the "puzzle pieces" leading to *Campaign!*

His whimsical insights and his casual sense of humor were on full display: he recalled, for example, how the Daley Machine "passed out money and jobs on election days to get the vote out"; how often he witnessed Mayor Byrne's mercurial nature leading her to make an important decision as she started walking toward her office, only to contradict herself and reverse her decision by the time she reached the office door; how Richard M. "was not a good politician, but he was a pretty good manager"; how "liberal Republican" Bernie Epton "wasn't a bad guy, he was a good guy who got himself into a bad situation," and how frequently he was impressed by Harold Washington's "eloquence and command of language"



ABOVE: Rick Kogan and Peter Nolan discuss Nolan's new book, *Campaign!*



LEFT: A large crowd turned out to hear the program at the Cliff Dwellers Club.

even though he believed Washington was "hamstrung by Council Wars."

When Nolan commented that Epton "was no Harold Washington," Kogan quipped, "very few people are."

Such was the tenor and theme of the conversation through which these two writers brought Chicago mayoral campaigns into a new and clear focus, to the delight of all present.

The evening ended with Kogan reading

from a chapter of *Campaign!* The excerpts illustrated Nolan's knack for recognizing and analyzing election turning points, describing them with a panache frequently lacking in Chicago political discourse.

Kogan said that those excerpts served as "another inducement to read the book," but really, for all those lucky enough to attend this interview, in the humble opinion of Literary License, no further inducement is required.

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 **Theresa Amato, Charlene Baumbich, Ann Bausum, Pete Beatty,**

Richard Bessette, Charles Billington, Ray Boomhower, Marlene Targ Brill, Michelle Cox, Michael Craft, Michael C. Dorf, Michael Ebner, Thomas Frisbie, Robert J. Follett, Dan Gerber, Frank Gonzalez-Crussi, Edward Gordon, Eldon Ham, Joanne Koch, Aric Lasher, Katherine McCaughan, Trevy McDonald, Eileen M. Meyer,

Milton Nieuwsma, David Radavich, Peggy Reiff Miller, Gerard Plecki, Carolyn Splear Pratt, Jamila Ra, Dick Simpson, Lynn Sloan, Jill Long Thompson, Kerry Trask, Scott Turow, Claude Walker, Michele Weldon, Steve Wiegenstein and Joyce Zeiss, who made recent contributions.

Discussing rebirth of democracy

BY GERARD PLECKI

On April 21, author and past Midland Authors President **Dick Simpson** met with Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot to discuss key issues in Simpson's new book, *Democracy's Rebirth: The View from Chicago*, published by the University of Illinois Press (April 26, 2022).

Approximately 150 people attended the forum, which was held in the Cindy Pritzker Auditorium of the Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State St., Chicago.

Simpson, who was a member of Mayor Lightfoot's transition team, welcomed the mayor and thanked her for "graciously writing the foreword for *Democracy's Rebirth*. Lightfoot responded, thanking everyone in attendance and stating that being onstage to discuss key issues that evening was a "humbling and great experience."

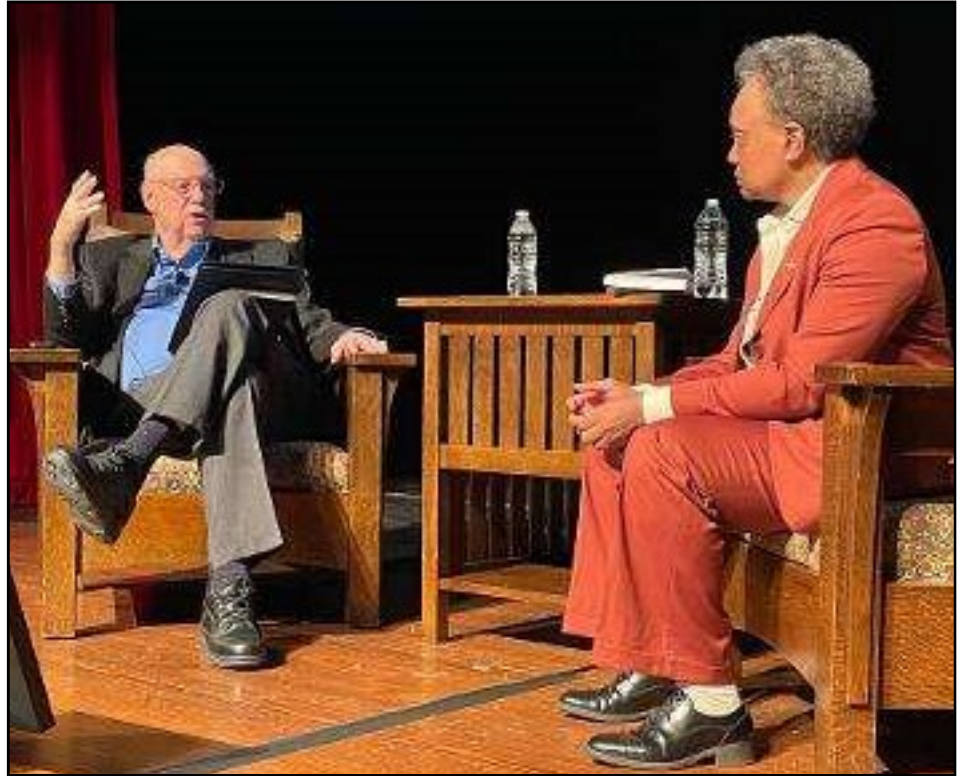
Simpson began the discussion with an overview of the tenets of his book, which were, to say the least, eye-opening. He outlined eight major causes for the general decline in democracy, which included "racial and income inequality," "systemic racism," big and dark money in politics," "low level of citizen and voter participation" and "political corruption."

Democracy, in Simpson's well-informed opinion, has been replaced by autocracy in the United States, in Ukraine and throughout the world.

He then presented documentation of the disturbing fact that the percentage of Americans who constitute our middle-class census communities – a class that Thomas Jefferson viewed as vital to the existence of democracy – has steadily declined, and now represents only 16% of our population.

The mayor pointed out that the "silver lining" was a "reckoning to racial inequality."

When asked what can be done to deconstruct the causal relationship between big money and political corruption, the mayor stated, "You need strength of character to resist that quid pro quo." Both speakers agreed that one way to "get our democracy back" was through "public financing" of political campaigns.



Dick Simpson, immediate past president of the Midland Authors (left), and Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot. (Photo by Greg Borzo)

What followed was a fascinating, intellectual exchange on topics such as how "the Machine is not dead – its residue is very real."

The mayor pointed out that corruption can exist "even if everyone is honest" and often results, inevitably, from a "loss of faith in politics."

The concept that "crises give us the fuel to save democracy" led to a spirited discussion of how a political, economic or sociological crises can lead to attitude and behavioral changes, with a movement to a revitalization of democracy as the end goal.

The mayor then responded to questions previously submitted to the podium, read by Midland Authors Program Chair **Greg Borzo**.

When Borzo asked, "Why aren't more people voting," the mayor answered that we must "get people to care, give people a reason to care, and make it easier for them to vote."

When asked about the hot topic of reforming property tax, the mayor suggested that we must "stop corporate lawyers from profiting there." Both

Simpson and Mayor Lightfoot spoke eloquently about the need for volunteering, proffering that everyone can do something to re-imagine and actualize a more democratic community.

When Borzo asked "what message, Mayor Lightfoot, do you have for the members of the Society of Midland

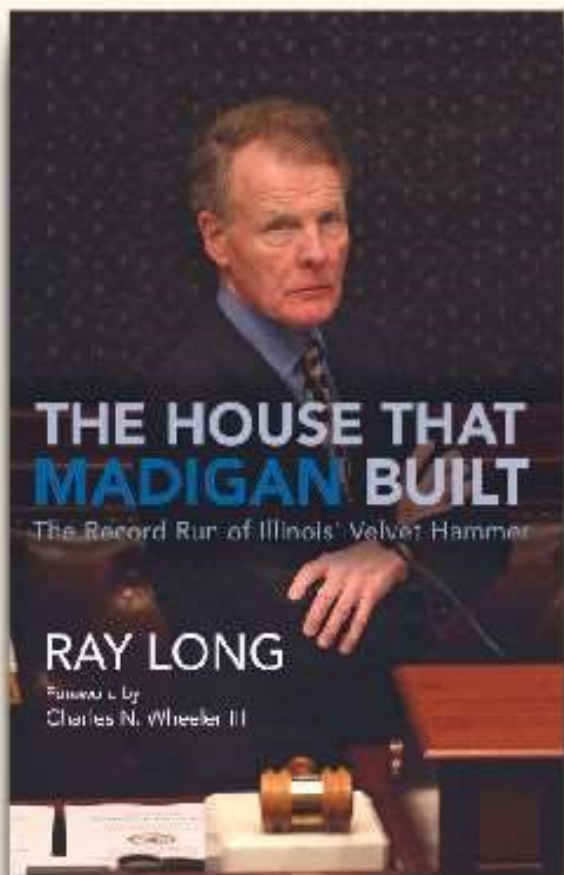
“It is important for people to find a voice ... if you are talented enough, then write – it's a gift.”

Authors," the mayor told Literary License, "It is important for people to find a voice," that "if you are talented enough, then write – it's a gift," because if we are to change the course of the decline of democracy, "we need to get back to expressing ourselves in a thoughtful way," in much the same way that Simpson and Mayor Lightfoot expressed themselves on April 21.



Midland Authors presents

September Event



What: Ray Long discusses his new book, *The House That Madigan Built*

When: 6-7 p.m. Tuesday, September 13

Where: Cindy Pritzker Auditorium, Harold Washington Library, 400 S. State St., Chicago

What: Free, open to the public; no need to register

Questions? Visit MidlandAuthors.org or contact Claire Hartfield: chartfield57@gmail.com



"Fans of raw politics will find this a must read."

—Jill Wine-Banks, author of *The Watergate Girl*



New Members

Pauline Saliga is 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*



Pauline Saliga

(Artemis-Aidc, 1993) and *Fragments of Chicago's Past* (Art Institute of Chicago, 1990).

Saliga has held curatorial jobs at both the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago and the Art

Institute of Chicago and also has been the executive director of the Society of Architectural Historians since 1995, but will step down from the post this fall.

She was nominated by **Dominic Pacyga**.

Richard Miller, a scholar of religion, politics and ethics at the University of Chicago, is author of *Interpretations of Conflict: Ethics, Pacifism, and the Just-War Tradition* (University of Chicago Press, 1991); *Casuistry and Modern*



Richard Miller

Ethics (University of Chicago, 1996); *Children, Ethics and Modern Medicine* (Indiana University Press, 2003), and other books.

Miller's essays have appeared in the *Journal of Religion*, the

Journal of Religious Ethics, *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, *Ethics and International Affairs*, *Harvard Theological Review* and *Theological Studies*.

He was nominated by **Jim Walker**.

Dipika Mukherjee, who teaches at StoryStudio and the Graham School at the University of Chicago, is author of *Shambala Junction* (Aurora Metro Books) and *Ode to Broken Things* (Repeater, 2016), which was originally published as *Thunder Demons* in 2013.

Mukherjee has won the Virginia Prize

for Fiction and two of her books. *Thunder Demons* was longlisted for the Man Asian Literary Prize.



Dipika Mukherjee

She was nominated by **Greg Borzo** and will present the Midland Authors October program (See Page 14). **Stanley M. Totten** is author of *The Brilliance of Charles Whittlesey: Geologist, Surveyor, Military Engineer, Civil War Strategist* (Kent State University Press, Sept. 13, 2022), *One Hundred Points of Light: A History of Science at Hanover College* (Hanover College Press, 2007) and other books.

He graduated from Wooster College, got a Ph.D. in geology at the University of Illinois, taught at Hanover (Indiana) College for 40 years and is the curator of the Hanover College Museum of Natural History.

He successfully nominated to the state legislature the mastodon as Indiana's state fossil, effective July. He is involved in proposing to Congress the Tyrannosaurus rex as the national reptile fossil and the mastodon as the national mammal fossil.

He was nominated by **Thomas Frisbie**.

Edmund Lawler is the author of six books, including *The Graft: How a Pioneering Operation Sparked the Modern Age of Transplants* (First Hill Books, 2022); *Lessons in Wine Service from Charlie Trotter* (Ten Speed Press, 2008) and *Lessons in Excellence from Charlie Trotter* (Ten Speed Press, 1999).

Lawler lived in Chicago's Beverly neighborhood for many years. He now lives in southwestern Michigan, but spends a lot of time in Chicago.

A former journalist and journalism instructor at DePaul University, Ed wrote a column on marketing called "Copy Chasers" for 23 years for B2B magazine.



Stanley Totten



Edmund Lawler

He was nominated by **Greg Borzo**.

Tim Malone is author of *Galena Grade School Invitational Basketball Tournament 1948 to 1967: A History/Memoir* (River Lights Publishing, 2019).

He was born in Galena, Illinois, where he played basketball at St. Michaels Grade School in Galena and Galena High School. He taught American history at Elgin Community College for 25 years.

He was nominated by **Eckhard Gerdes**.

David Leider is the author of *Pickle and Vinegar Makers of the Midwest* (Sooauthor Publishing, 2015); *The Baltimore & Ohio Chicago Terminal History* (Sooauthor Publishing, 2020); *The Wisconsin Central in Illinois* (Sooauthor Publishing, 2012), and *Waupaca and its Railroads* (Waupaca Historical Society, 1998).

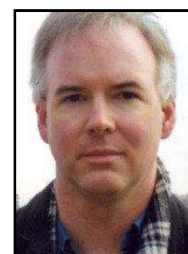
He is finishing a book on the Chicago & Western Indiana and Belt Railroad history. He has written numerous articles for railroad historical societies and for model railroad magazines. He loves to research the history of Chicago and Wisconsin railroads and the effect they had on the area.

He grew up in Des Plaines, where he developed his love for railroads. He is president of the Soo Line Historical & Technical Society, other railroad historical societies and the Lexington Group in Transportation History.

He was nominated by **Gerard Plecki**.

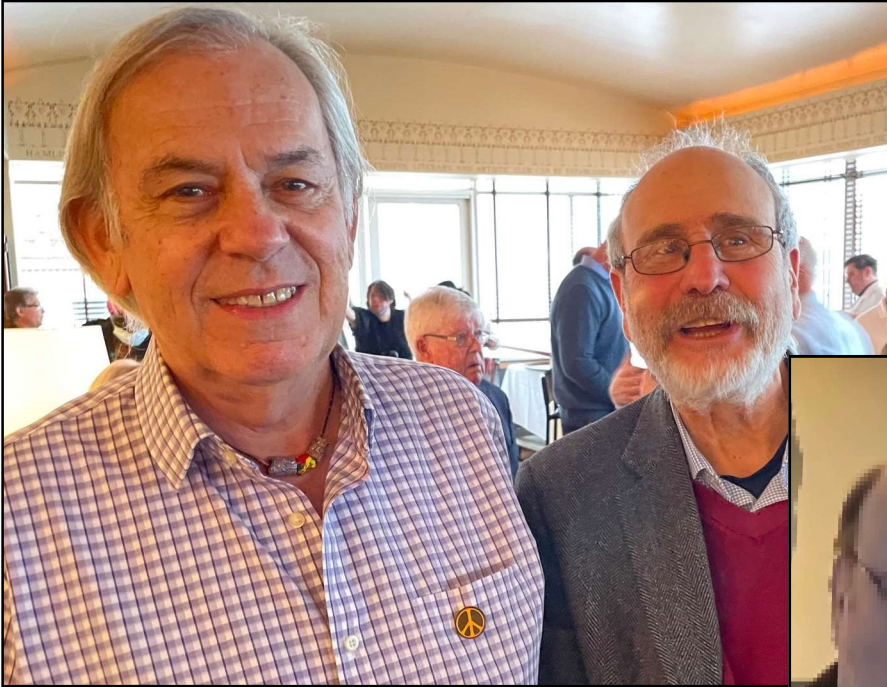
Scott Spires has lived a nomadic life. He was born in India and has lived in the United States, Argentina, United Kingdom, Czech Republic and Russia. He studied linguistics and Slavic languages at the universities of Chicago, St. Andrews and Oxford, and in addition to being a writer, works as a translator of German and Russian into English. He is an award-winning author who has published short stories, book reviews, academic articles on linguistics, and articles on cultural, environmental, and artistic topics. His novel *Abandon All Hope* was published by Auctus Publishers in 2021.

He was nominated by **Jim Merriner**.



Scott Spires

Looking back at career covering politics



ABOVE: Craig Sautter, former Midland Authors president, and Richard Reeder, moderator of the Cliff Dwellers Club book club.

RIGHT: Tony Romanowski, a retired Chicago Police Dept. detective, and Christopher Lynch, author of *Chicago's Midway Airport*.

BELOW: John Holden shows speaker Peter Nolan his reporter's notebook from when he covered Mayor Harold Washington's death in 1987, while he was a reporter at the City News Bureau.



On April 20, Chicago Tribune columnist and WGN-AM “After Hours” radio host **Rick Kogan** chatted with retired political columnist **Peter Nolan**, author of *Campaign! The Election that Rocked Chicago*.

Nolan covered former Mayor Harold Washington extensively over Nolan’s long career.

Members of the Midland Authors and others turned out to hear Nolan and Kogan at the



Cliff Dwellers Club.

For the Sept. 13 program: Who is Mike Madigan and how did he rise from the Chicago Machine to hold unsurpassed power as Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives? Madigan masterfully worked the halls of power, commanding tight allegiance of his admirers and outsmarting his opponents, time and time again. But this spring, the powerful Chicago politician ended up deposed by his own Democratic caucus following a sexual harassment scandal among top aides and a bribes-for-favors investigation.

Ray Long is an investigative reporter with the Chicago Tribune who has covered newly indicted Democratic ex-Speaker Michael Madigan for more than four decades. Long will share stories and political analysis from his new book *The House That Madigan Built*.

For more details, See Page 11.

Dipika Mukherjee to present Oct. program

BY CLAIRE HARTFIELD

Dipika Mukherjee will present the Midland Authors October program at the Cliff Dwellers Club. She has a new book of poems dropping on Oct. 4, so perfect timing. Her work will resonate with all of us struggling through the pandemic.

A little bit about the author (from the Poetry Foundation website):

“Dipika Mukherjee is the author of the poetry collections *Dialect of Distant Harbors* (CavanKerry Press, forthcoming

October 2022), *The Third Glass of Wine* (2015) and *The Palimpsest of Exile* (2009). Her poetry appears in publications around the world, including RHINO, PostColonial Text, World Literature Today, Asia Literary Review, Del Sol Review and Chicago Quarterly Review. In 2016, she won the Liakoura Prize for Poetry.

“Mukherjee’s debut novel, *Ode to Broken Things*, was longlisted for the Man Asian Literary Prize, and her second novel, *Shambala Junction*, won the UK

Virginia Prize for Fiction. Her short story collection is *Rules of Desire*. Her essays appear in Newsweek, Los Angeles Review of Books, Hemispheres, Orion, Scroll, The Edge and more. Her work is also included in *The Best Small Fictions 2019*. She teaches at the Graham School at University of Chicago as well as at StoryStudio Chicago.

“Most recently, she received an Esteemed Artist grant from the City of Chicago to promote her new book.”

Biblio File

Continued from Page 4

Harold Washington’s centennial birthday and what his legacy means today. ...

Iliana Regan’s *Fieldwork: A Forager’s Memoir* (Agate Midway) is scheduled to be published on Jan. 24, 2023. ... On June 16, **Michael Haupt** made a presentation

on John C. “Johnny” Robinson at his induction into the Illinois Aviation Hall of Fame.

Robinson (1903-1934) was a pioneering African American aviator who broke new ground for others, including the Tuskegee Institute’s famed aviation program. In 1935, he became the first American in combat against the fascists when

he volunteered to command Ethiopia’s small air force against an Italian onslaught. On June 24, Michael held a seminar “Chicago: Shaping the Airline Industry” at the International Airliners 2022 Conference in Rosemont. ... **Gail Lukasik’s** Gothic, historical mystery, *The Darkness Surrounds Us*, will be released by CamCat Publishing in fall 2023. She will give a presentation on how to integrate research into your writing at the September meeting of Sisters in Crime, Chicago. ... **R.J. Nelson’s** *Dirty Waters* will be out in paperback in January. Also, R.J. is looking for a publisher for another book titled *Stony Island*, about death and dying on the waterfront. ... **Edward “Ted” McClelland** wrote “RINO Hunters: Darren Bailey’s Trump-style conservatism has taken over the Illinois

Republican Party, which may doom it in November” for Chicago magazine in August. ... On Aug. 10, **Kathleen Rooney** reviewed *Farewell Transmission: Notes from Hidden Spaces* (Dzanc Books, Aug. 9, 2022) by 2019 Midland Authors award winner **Will McGrath**. Also, Rooney’s poetry collection

Where Are the Snows, winner of the X.J. Kennedy Prize, is forthcoming from Texas Review Press this fall. ... **Kate McElligott** is looking for an agent for her third novel, tentatively titled *Mia*

Unarmed. ... **Mara W. Cohen Ioannides’** upcoming book is

Jews of Springfield in the Ozarks (Arcadia Publishing, Feb. 18, 2023). It follows *Jews of Missouri: An Ornament to Israel* (Ozark Studies Institute, 2021). ... **Kao Kalia Yang** will be part of the 2022 New York State

Writers Institute. ... As part of her spring/summer *Chicago Beer: A History of Brewing, Public Drinking and the Corner Bar* “book” tour, **June Sawyers**

appeared at the following: Sunday, April 24, at Printers Row Wine Shop with live music by Gus Noble and Heather Kollmer. Sunday, May 1. “After Hours with **Rick Kogan**,” WGN-AM Radio. Sunday, May 15, at Centuries and Sleuths Bookstore, Forest Park, with live music by Kathy and John

Atwood. Monday, June 20, at Jimmy’s Woodlawn Tap, with live music by Chris Farrell. Sunday, July 17, at Montrose Saloon, with live music by John Ballantyne and Crazy Heart. Articles about the book also appeared in the Sun-

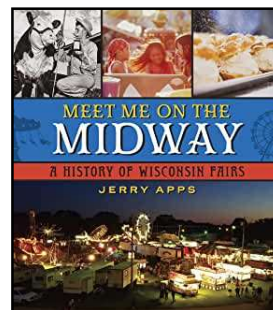
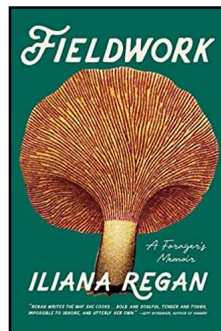
Times, Oak Leaves, and on **Dave Hoekstra’s** blog. In addition she wrote a poem, “The Voice” and “Talkin’ About Early Bob Dylan,” a review of the book, *The Dylan Tapes*, in the Third Coast Review, where she is a staff writer. ... **John Galligan’s** new book is *Bad Day Breaking* (Atria Books, Sept. 13, 2022). ... **Anne-Marie**

Oomen and the Beach Bards and Co. – “to a full house, a nearly full moon and with a good deal of laughter” – told of the first settlers of Port Oneida, Michigan, and of a lost community in “Stories of Sleeping Bear: Two Lost Tales of the Past” on Aug. 12 at Thoreson Farm in the Port Oneida Rural Historic District. ...

Jerry Apps’ latest book is *Meet Me on the Midway: A History of Wisconsin Fairs* (Wisconsin Historical Society Press, July 26, 2022). ... **Jeff Huebner** was quoted in an Aug. 5 Chicago Sun-Times article headlined “Little Village mural mystery solved; now Aurelio Diaz work is in line for a restoration.” ... **John**

Hallwas wrote “The abortion issue and our noted case back in 1899” for the May 28 McDonough County Voice. ... WAND

Turn to Page 16



Note from the SMA Board of Directors: *Members of the Society of Midland Authors are encouraged to nominate authors from our 12-state region who have published with a recognized publisher. The nominations will be considered by the SMA board at its next meeting. The 12 states are Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin. The nomination form is below. Send it to Society of Midland Authors, P.O. Box 10419, Chicago, IL 60610. You can also email it as a PDF to Membership Secretary Thomas Frisbie at tomfrisbie@aol.com.*

**For the use of
members only.**



NOMINATION FORM

☐ **Author Member:** Author Members must be an "author or co-author of a book demonstrating literary style and published by a recognized publisher, or of a published or professionally produced play."

☐ **Associate Member:** Associate members (without voting rights) may be "persons having some connection with literature, such as librarians, teachers, publishers, and editors."

Name:

Phone number(s):

Address:

E-mail address:

Qualifying residence
or place of birth:

Name of
proposer:

Signature:

Date:

Biography:

WORKS:

Title:

Publisher:

Year:

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Sign up for Sept. 10-11 Printers Row

The Printers Row Lit Fest, the Midwest's largest outdoor literary festival, is returning on Saturday, Sept. 10, and Sunday, Sept. 11 – and the Midland Authors will once again participate. Both members and nonmembers will be able to showcase and sell books under a tent that we will rent at the festival, which takes place in the Printers Row area of the South Loop, primarily along Dearborn Street.

Midland Authors members can reserve half a table for a two-hour time slot. The cost is \$25 for most time slots — or just \$15 for the 4-6 p.m. time slots.

Space is limited, so please respond

asap. If you'd like to participate, email Joe Gustaitis at jagustaitis@yahoo.com with your first and second preferences from these time slots. We will confirm all time slots with authors and let them know about payment details.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 10

10 a.m.-noon
noon-2 p.m.
2-4 p.m.
4-6 p.m.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 11

10 a.m.-noon
noon-2 p.m.
2-4 p.m.
4-6 p.m.

In addition, Midland Authors members and nonmembers will be able to rent one table for \$330 or one-half of a table for

\$180 – over both days – with a 10% discount for members.

This approach would give an author the best opportunity to sell a significant number of books.

Table preferences within the Midland Authors tent will be given on a first-come, first-served basis. Again, email Joe Gustaitis asap at jagustaitis@yahoo.com asap.

Participants will be responsible for bringing their own books, selling them, collecting the money and taking away any unsold copies afterward. And they must remain at their table for the duration of their assigned time.

Biblio File

Continued from Page 14

quoted **Graham Peck** on Aug. 11 in a story about a new Abraham Lincoln exhibit. ... **Iris Waichler** was quoted in a

July 13 Washington Post story about the nonstop scam economy. ... **Michael C. Dorf** and **George Van Dusen** wrote "U.S. Rep. John Porter's example of public service will be sorely missed" for the June 9 Chicago Tribune. ... **Michele**

Weldon wrote "Johnny Depp and Amber Heard trial is horrifying to domestic violence survivors like me" for the May 16 USA Today. ... In August, the (Michigan) Bridge Book Club discussed **Miles Harvey's** *The King of Confidence*.

Literary License
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