

Biblio File

Christopher Lynch was the emcee for the French Heritage Society's seminar "Hidden in Plain Sight: A Sunday Salon with French Eyes on Illinois French Heritage," held Oct. 2, at the Alliance

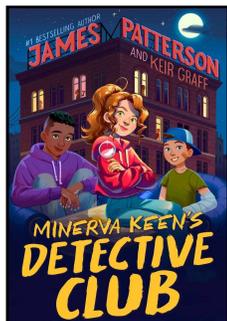


Carla Knorowski

Française de Chicago. The seminar included historians and authors, both in person and via Zoom from Paris ... **Carla Knorowski** recently was named an Officer in the French National Order of

Merit. The Republic of France gave her this honor because of her work raising funds for the restoration of the Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris. ... 2018 Midland Authors award winner **Erika Sanchez** has a new memoir, *Crying in the*

Bathroom: A Memoir (Viking, July 12, 2022). ... **Keir Graff** is writing a new middle-grade series with James Patterson. *Minerva Keen's Detective Club*. The first installment, goes on sale



May 1, 2023. Keir writes, "I'm really excited about this one. Not only is it a high-profile project, but it was a ton of fun to write. It's fast-paced, it's funny, it has characters I fell in love with and it's even set in a quirky old Chicago high-rise. ... **Robert Marovich's** article "The Origin of a Gospel Classic" about Thomas A. Dorsey's 1932 composition "Take My Hand, Precious Lord" was published in the Sept. 10-11 Wall Street Journal. ... This fall, **Anya Achtenberg** is teaching "Deepening & Organizing Our Stories," which was scheduled to begin Oct. 19, and "Writing for Social Change:

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A delightful presentation

BY GERARD PLECKI
AND CLAIRE HARTFIELD

In her first outing as program chair, on Sept. 13 at the Cindy Pritzker Auditorium of the Harold Washington Library, **Claire Hartfield** provided the audience with a delightful presentation by **Ray Long**, who discussed his book *The House that Madigan Built: The Record Run of Illinois' Velvet Hammer* (University of Illinois Press, March 2, 2022).

After Hartfield introduced Long as a "Chicago Tribune investigative reporter and two-time finalist for the Pulitzer Prize," the renowned author said he would describe how Madigan, who "served as speaker of the House for 36 years" and "was indicted on 22 counts," managed to build his house.

He related anecdotes about Madigan and spoke of how in 1988 Illinois was about to lose the White Sox to Florida, and how Chicago was saved from losing the team through political shenanigans. He said a little about Madigan's role in securing needed votes while the clock ticked down the seconds to midnight – which was the deadline for the Illinois House to prevent the move.

Midnight of June 30 was the drop-dead cutoff for the vote and things looked grim. But as the seconds ticked down to

midnight, Madigan was still looking for the vote that would push the bill over the top. As Long described it, "The clock was on Illinois time." And in the end, though

the roll call was time-stamped 12:03 a.m., Madigan's watch showed 11:59 p.m. when the bill passed. The rest is history.

Long spoke briefly about the corrupt appointment that Madigan made to the board of directors of ComEd and mentioned a "sex harassment case" before the audience of 36.

The insider tales Long shared of Illinois' most powerful speaker of the House, Mike Madigan, highlighted the power and prowess that Madigan wielded until his fall from grace this year

when he was indicted on federal racketeering charges.

Long, who covered Madigan since 1981, was an intern so green when he started, "I didn't know where the bathroom was."

Long's first year also was the first year of Madigan's legislative leadership, so Long was able to get a bird's-eye view of the arc of Madigan's career.

Long regaled the audience with fascinating stories, starting with the night the Legislature passed a bill to keep the White Sox baseball team from moving to Florida.

Long's audience was enthralled with his stories, as was evidenced by the

Turn to RAY LONG, Page 2



Ray Long presents the Sept. 13 Midland Authors program at the Harold Washington Library Center in Chicago. (Photo by Claire Hartfield)

<i>Literary Lineup</i> November program	<i>Literary Latest</i> New Books	Printers Row report
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Re-Dream a Just World.” ... **Dan Dinello** published a new story on Juan Cole’s website Informed Comment: “Revolt of the Rational: Women and other Mainstream Americans Rise Up Against the Forced-Birth Republicans and MAGA Fascists.” ... **Steve Wiegenstein’s** short story collection *Scattered Lights* received the 2022 Missouri Author Award from the Missouri Library Association at its annual conference Sept. 29 in Springfield, Mo. According to its website, “The awards are to encourage and recognize Missouri authors and promote interest in local authors’ books, whether the books are about Missouri or another subject. Awards are based on literary merit. An honored author must be a Missourian by birth or have lived in Missouri for at least five years.” ... **Edward “Ted” McClelland** writes to say, “I am looking for writers for the Opener and Vox features in Chicago magazine. Opener is a 1,000-word story on current events, usually business or politics. Vox is a 1,000-word Q&A with a newsmaker. Recently we’ve featured artists, authors, philanthropists and politicians. Writers can pitch me at emcclelland@chicagomag.com. ... **Michael Raleigh** writes to say, “I have a

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■ Ray Long

stream of follow-up questions at the end of the program. For those who want all the juicy details, you will have to read the book.

Literary License highly recommends this entertaining look at Illinois politics.

When it was time for the Q and A, Literary License thanked Long for his wonderful presentation, and asked, “What advice do you have for Midland Authors writing biographies or political commentaries such as yours?”

Long suggested working and re-working “structure.”

He stated that an important decision to be made early in the research process is “do you do the legwork yourself? Or do

A regionwide November program

BY CLAIRE HARTFIELD

November's program is regionwide! More about our illustrious panel: **Deborah Cohen** is the Richard W. Leopold Professor of History and chair of the History Department at Northwestern. Her books have been awarded the Forkosch, Sharlin and Stansky prizes, and she’s held fellowships from the Mellon Foundation, the National Humanities Center, the Cullman Center at the New York Public Library, the ACLS, the Botstiber Foundation, and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation.

Cohen also writes regularly for the Atlantic on subjects ranging from war photography to punk rock.

The New York Times called *Last Call at the Hotel Imperial: The Reporters Who Took on a World at War* “effervescent.”

The New Yorker called it an account of “a close-knit band of wildly famous American reporters who, in the run-up to World War II, took on dictators and rewrote the rules of modern journalism.”

Kim Todd is the author of four books about science and history; *Sensational, the Hidden History of America's "Girl Stunt Reporters"* (Harper 2021), a finalist for the Minnesota Book Award, the Richard Frisbie Adult Nonfiction Award, and the American Journalism Historians Association Book of the Year Award. Her



Deborah Cohen



Kim Todd



Mary Schmich

work has appeared in Orion, Sierra Magazine, Smithsonian and several Best American Science and Nature Writing anthologies, among other places. She is on the creative writing MFA faculty at the University of Minnesota, where she teaches literary nonfiction.

Author Abbott Kahler (as Karen Abbott) called *Sensational, the Hidden History of America's "Girl Stunt Reporters"* “a gripping, flawlessly researched, and overdue portrait of America's trailblazing female journalists” and said, “Kim Todd has restored these long-forgotten mavericks to their rightful place in American history.”

Mary Schmich is a nationally renowned journalist.

A columnist for 29 years with the Chicago Tribune, she was awarded the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for Commentary. Mary was also the writer behind the Brenda Starr, Reporter comic strip.

For more information, see facing page.

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you rely on what others have written?”

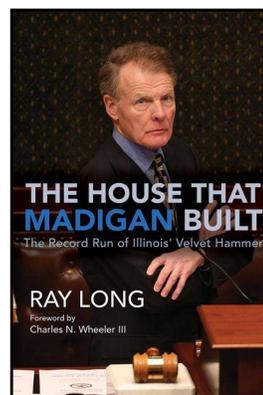
He admitted that with an “original topic – it may not be so easy to find other material.”

He stated that in his case, he relied heavily on what had been written.

The rest of the Q and A was quite interesting.

SMA Treasurer **Greg Borzo** asked Long the Big Question: Is Madigan to blame for the chaotic state of Illinois finances?

Later, Borzo asked colleagues, “Why not put it out there? Madigan is gone.”



The answer to that question is indicative of the tenor of the evening’s presentation by Long. The anecdotes he provided about Madigan were interesting, but he did not say much about the “turning point” and how that related to Madigan’s “down-fall.”

Borzo also asked Long if he thought Lisa Madigan might run again. Long

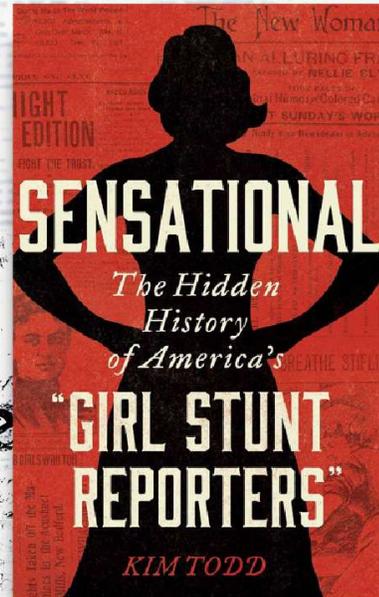
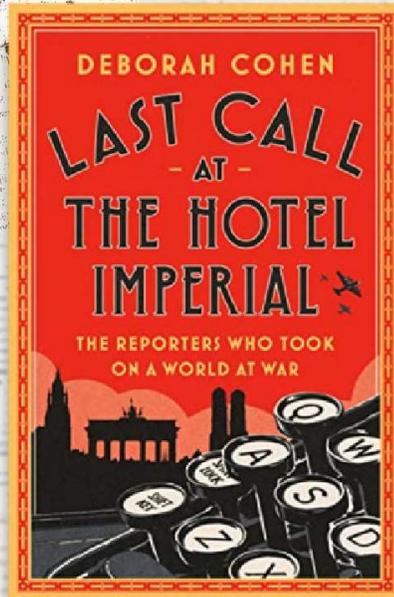
thought her running was unlikely. He stated, “She had her chance in 2010.”

The evening ended with book signings by Long.

Watch the full Midland Authors September program at <https://tinyurl.com/5xmp4xkp>

Midland Authors invites you to join us for our November Event

In this **virtual program**, Deborah Cohen (*Last Call at the Hotel Imperial*) and Kim Todd (*Sensational*) talk about their books exploring legendary reporters of World War II & the Gilded Age. In conversation with Pulitzer Prize winning columnist Mary Schmich



When: 7-8 p.m. Tuesday, November 15

Where: Online via Zoom

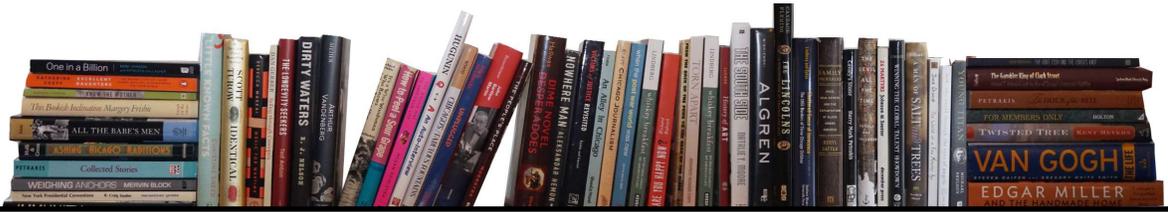
Cost: Free & open to public; more at MidlandAuthors.org

Use **code SMA15** for 15% off at BookishChicago.com/adult/midland-authors

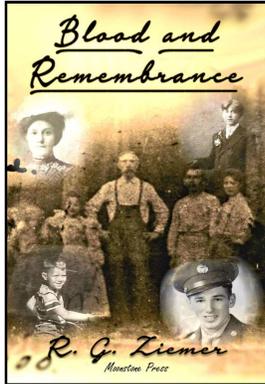
Deborah Cohen's *Last Call at the Hotel Imperial: The Reporters Who Took on a World at War* (Random House 2022) is an account of a close-knit band of famous American reporters who took on dictators and rewrote the rules of modern journalism. She is the Richard W. Leopold Professor of History and Chair of the History Department at Northwestern. deborahcohen.com

Kim Todd's *Sensational, the Hidden History of America's "Girl Stunt Reporters"* (Harper 2021) was a finalist for the Minnesota Book Award, Richard Frisbie Adult Nonfiction Award, and the American Journalism Historians Association Book of the Year Award. She is on the creative writing MFA faculty at University of Minnesota, where she teaches literary nonfiction. kimtodd.net

Pulitzer Prize winning journalist **Mary Schmich** was a longtime columnist for the *Chicago Tribune*, as well as author of the comic strip *Brenda Starr, Reporter* for nearly 30 years.



Literary Latest



NEW POETRY CHAPBOOK

R.G. Ziemer writes to say, “I am pleased to announce my new poetry chapbook, *Blood and Remembrance*, is due for publication by Moonstone Press in October, 2022. This work features poetic reminiscences of family and other people who have made an impression in my life.”

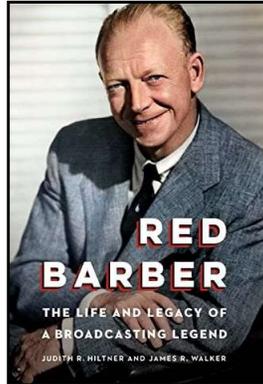
Ziemer was scheduled to be at the Fall Authors Fair in Elgin’s Gail Borden Library, on Oct. 9, and at the public launch of Naperville Writers Group’s annual Rivulets at the 95th Street Library in Naperville on Oct. 15.



R.G. Ziemer

Mardelle Fortier, author of *White Fire and Moon Fire* wrote, “In *Blood and Remembrance*, R.G. Ziemer raises a glass in celebration of life in the present and past, in war and peace. He invites us all in with his large heart and humanity, and his energetic stretches to find language powerful enough to portray strong emotions. The result is a hearty brew as it ranges from human to animal, young to old, male to female.”

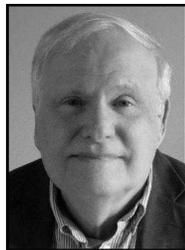
Caroline Johnson, author of *The Caregiver*, wrote, “R.G.’s words don’t winnow away; they stay with you long after the reading, like a glass of red wine shared with a German priest on a quiet World War II battlefield.”



TOP CHOICE

Red Barber: The Life and Legacy of a Broadcasting Legend (University of Nebraska Press, April 1, 2022), a new book co-authored by Judith R. Hiltner and **James R Walker**, was a Booklist Top 10 choice in sports and recreation for September 2021 to August 2022.

Walker tells Literary Latest, “*Red Barber: The Life and Legacy of a Broadcasting Legend* traces the career of the announcer who did the most to professionalize the job of sport broadcasting. Today’s sports commentators identify Vin Scully as Barber’s most famous protégé but, as we document, Barber also influenced many major sportscasters, including Curt Gowdy, Ernie Harwell, Jerry Coleman, Al Michaels, Bob Costas, Chris Berman and even Phil Rizzuto. No one before us has written a comprehensive biography of Red Barber’s life, even though



James R. Walker

scores of barely tapped boxes at the University of Florida contain fascinating archives documenting the highs and lows of his public broadcasting career, as well as his never-before examined subsequent careers as journalist and author. These archives supported our conviction that Barber’s life story – a boy of modest

means shaped by small town life and values in the Deep South becomes famous and beloved by the city of Brooklyn – would make for compelling biography with meaningful resonance for today’s readers. After Branch Rickey told Barber he had decided to bring a black player to the Dodgers, Red, who began his performing career in high school as a black-face endman in a mistral show, told his wife that he would have to quit his job with the team.

“Our sources document the soul-searching self-inquiry he conducted to wrestle with his own ingrained racism, ultimately to become a friend of Jackie and Rachel Robinson and a supporter of other black players. Barber’s own daughter’s coming out as a lesbian in the late 1950s also forced him to confront his culture’s and his own homophobia. Such a story tracing one man’s way to a broader vision speaks to tensions regarding diversity that continue to plague our culture today.

“Also relevant for ‘now’ is Barber’s commitment to the civic use of mass media. Years after he’d left Brooklyn, Barber claimed that his favorite baseball broadcasts were the ones where he solicited blood donations over the radio for wounded soldiers during the war years, a testimony to how deeply he believed in the power of mass media to foster and sustain a socially engaged citizenry.

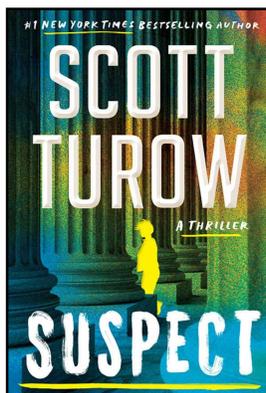
“We trace the evolution and challenges to Red’s commitment to media’s civic responsibility, perhaps providing a vision of a ‘better way’ for readers who today are witnessing the power of unregulated media engines to sabotage the necessary foundations for effective citizenship in a democracy.

“Finally, Red’s personal story poignantly dramatizes the strains that single-minded professional ambition can impose upon family life, personal health and psychic well-being.”

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Literary Latest

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'FRESH AND CREATIVE'

Scott Turow's new book is *Suspect* (Grand Central Publishing, Sept. 27, 2022), about a police chief who turns to an old friend to act as her attorney in a grand jury investigation, insisting that the accusations against her are part of a smear campaign.

The Chicago Tribune called it: "Satisfyingly fresh and creative ... Turow has created one of contemporary fiction's most complicatedly arresting characters, one not easy to adore but one impossible to ignore."

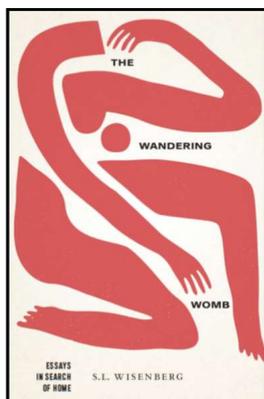
The New York Times said: "[The] courtroom scenes remain gratifyingly sharp."

The Wall Street Journal wrote: "The courtroom scenes in *Suspect* are rich with the character sketches and surprise revelations we've come to expect from a Scott Turow novel. Pinky's own narrative presents a vivid portrait of an offbeat character who, at 33, is still a work in progress. The suspense and intrigue build as the chapters progress, culminating in a breathtaking finale."

A COHESIVE WHOLE

S.L. Wisenberg's fourth book, *The Wandering Womb: Essays in Search of Home*, is coming out in late March from University of Massachusetts Press.

Wisenberg writes to say: "Someone asked me if my forthcoming book was new work or if it was 'just' accumulated essays. It's both. *The Wandering Womb: Essays in Search of Home* contains essays



from the last few decades, but I've revised all of them, with an eye for shaping them into a cohesive whole. They're not in chronological order, but I placed them in a thematic or emotional sequence, I think.

"They start with alienation and wandering and achieving a little bit of connection/satisfaction (meeting a young Austrian tourist in Istanbul, conversing with him as his first Jew met in the flesh, staying with him in Vienna when he's become tired of talking about World War II, finding a place to throw away tampons – in the Freud Museum bathroom). They end with me finding home in Chicago with my True Love.

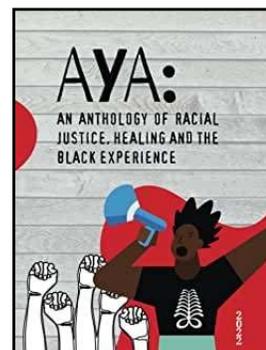
"Throughout is the notion of the ghost of (Jewish) Europe constantly at my back, contributing to my sense of not being worthy of living because of chronic asthma that requires constant vigilance and medicine (I would have died in a Nazi camp had I been born 20 years earlier in my grandmother's shtetl). In between are also seriously funny parts, including a self-deprecating narrative about sneaking through sorority rush at age 29. That, too, is about wandering and fitting in, as is the title essay that's about the way men of science, including Freud, have viewed the wandering uterus/hysteria. Overall, I say the book has blood, breath, Jews, Freud, Texas, Europe and blows against the patriarchy.

"I had been submitting versions of this collection into small-press contests for a number of years. It won the Juniper Prize in nonfiction from the University of Massachusetts Press, which is publishing it on March 31, 2023.

"Like everyone, I want the whole world to read my books, but I find that

I'm a university press author. My previous three books were published by university presses: Northwestern, Nebraska and Iowa.

"If anyone would like an advance review copy or is interested in interviewing me, please contact me at SLwisenberg@sbcglobal.net."



NEW ANTHOLOGY

Artika R. Tyner is the editor of *Aya: An Anthology of Racial Justice, Healing and the Black Experience* (Planting People Growing Justice Leadership Institute).

In this anthology, over 20 young African American students in St. Paul share their writing on their black identities and experience.

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Literary License

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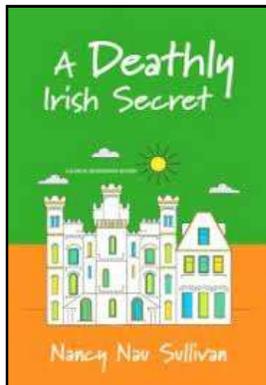
Society of Midland Authors members can pay their membership dues, buy tickets to the annual dinner and make donations on our website with PayPal.

To make a donation, visit our home page at www.midlandauthors.org and click on the "Donate" button in the upper right corner.

Literary Latest

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In three sections, Racial Justice, Healing, and The Black Experience, these young writers share their ideas for racial justice and explore their place in the world. Produced by black Minnesota voices, *Aya Anthology* was created to ignite change in the furtherance of racial justice. It serves as an open invitation to lead and serve in the community.



FOURTH INSTALLMENT

Nancy Nau Sullivan's fourth installment in the Blanche Murningham mystery series, *A Deathly Irish Secret* (Torchflame/Light Messages Publishing), is set for next June.

Kirkus Reviews wrote of an earlier book in the series: "Blanche alone puts the bang in the book, and her debut should make readers sit up and take notice. A welcome newcomer to the South Florida genre."



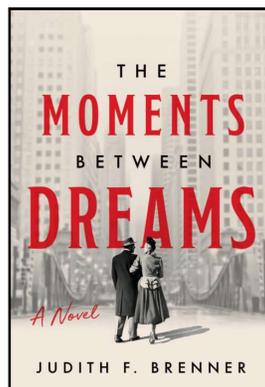
Nancy Nau Sullivan

More on *A Deathly Irish Secret*: "Blanche has a penchant for travel – and getting into trouble. This latest adventure finds her inheriting part of an Irish castle in Limerick, and it's a fine trip to the auld sod – until she'd charged with murder."

Sullivan tells Literary Latest: "The new mystery is set in Dunfaedan, a totally fabricated castle in the invented village of Ballycill, Ireland. The inspiration for this story came out of the author's stay at Glin Castle in Limerick though, thankfully,

there was no murder involved in the trip. The knight of Glin, Desmond FitzGerald, worked his way into some of the traits of the Irish characters Blanche Murningham meets in Ireland. And the lovely Georgian castle in *A Deathly Irish Secret* bears a strong resemblance to Glin. In the writing, I drew on the sayings of her Irish grandmothers and a love of Irish legend."

Sullivan sets her mysteries in places she's visited and loves – Mexico City and Vietnam, so far, but the story always winds up on Santa Maria Island, Florida, based on Anna Maria Island.



CAPTIVATING STORY

Judith F. Brenner's new book is *The Moments Between Dreams* (Greenleaf Book Group Press, May 2022).

From midlandauthors.org: "Carol misses red flags about Joe's need for control before she marries him, dashing her dreams for herself and her family. Trouble escalates after their daughter Ellie is paralyzed by the polio virus and Joe returns from WWII. Carol realizes how brutal waking life can be, and she conceals bruises and protects her children the best she can."

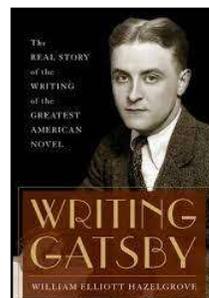
"*The Moments Between Dreams* is a captivating story of a 1940s housewife who conforms to the rulebook of society until Joe pushes her too far. His constant intimidation shrinks Carol's confidence while she tries to boost Ellie's. Church-going neighbors in Carol's tight-knit Polish community are complacent, but Sam, a handsome reporter, stirs up Carol's zest for life.

Despite impossible circumstances, Carol plans a secret escape. Along a risky path, she empowers her daughter to know no limits and teaches her son to stop the cycle of violence."

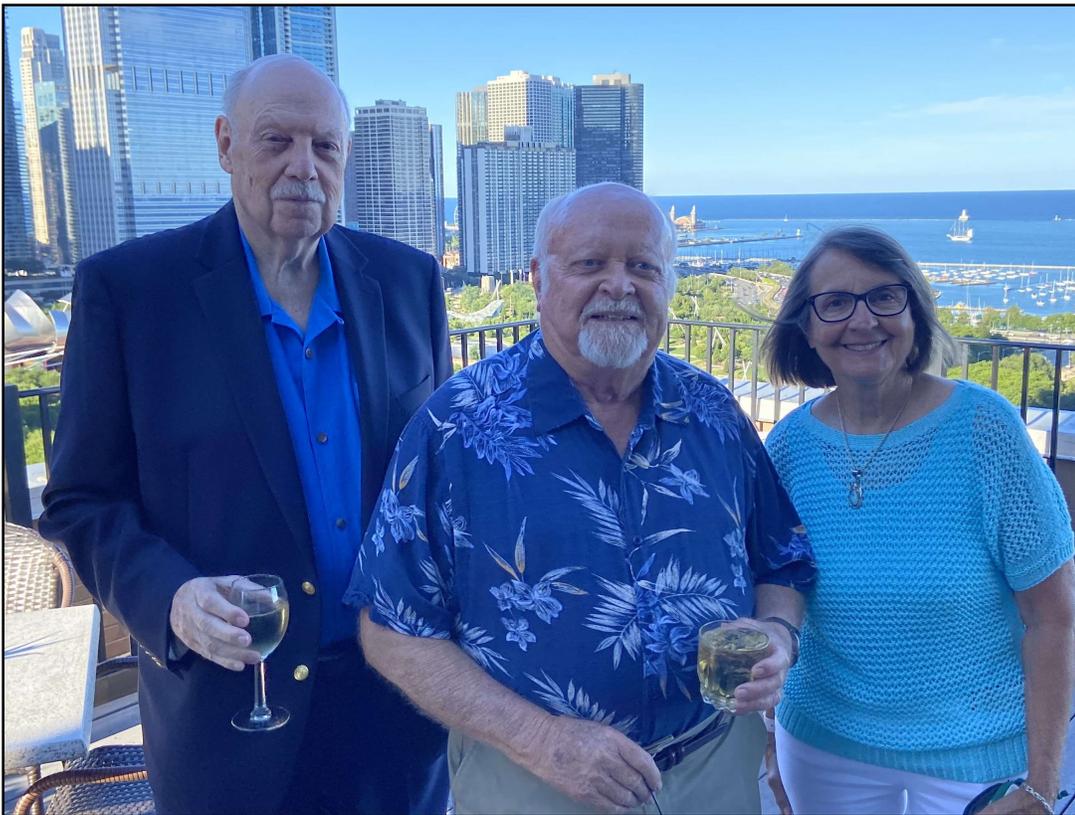
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book coming out in November (Nov. 29, I'm told) called *Poe Street* (Level Best Books Publishing). It's set in Chicago (there is actually a tiny lane on the North Side named for Poe) in 1946 and concerns the bloody aftermath of the murder of a Gatsbyesque millionaire, and involves a young soldier just back from the War. I don't have a cover yet. I'm working on a second book featuring the characters from this book, and I recently finished a family saga set in Chicago between 1930 and 1967, called *The Family Prendergast*. ... **Andrea Warren** is now more than an author, free-lance writer and past Midland Authors book awards judge. Andrea tells Biblio File, "I'd like to share with members that I am now a playwright. 'Surviving Hitler,' was commissioned by the Lewis & Shirley White Theatre in Overland Park, Kansas, and produced there last April to sold-out audiences for its five productions. The play is based on my best-seller, *Surviving Hitler: A Boy in the Nazi Death Camps* (HarperCollins, 2001), which won the ALA's Robert F. Sibert Honor Award, as well as the SMA's children's nonfiction award in 2002. Like the book, my play about Jack Mandelbaum is for ages 10 and up. Jack's story is one of immense courage in the face of overwhelming odds. A Polish Jew, he was 15 when the Nazis deported him to the first of several concentration camps. Liberated at 18, he learned he was the only survivor of his immediate family



and chose to immigrate to America. He settled in Kansas City, married, raised a family and became a successful businessman and civil rights activist. He's 95 today, still active in civil justice causes, and is the co-founder of the "... **Rick Kogan** has received the Chicago Literary Hall of Fame's Fuller Award "for his lifetime achievements." ... **William Elliott Hazelgrove's** new book is *Writing Gatsby: The Real Story of the Writing of the Greatest American Novel*. (Lyons Press, Oct. 1, 2022).



Former Midland Authors President Dick Simpson, Robert J. Nelson and Kathleen McElligott attend the August Midland Authors program at the Cliff Dwellers Club in Chicago.

Sunny day to discuss Woodstock rain

On Aug. 9, Midland Authors President **Gerard Plecki**, in conversation with Board Member and Archivist **Walter Podrazik**, discussed

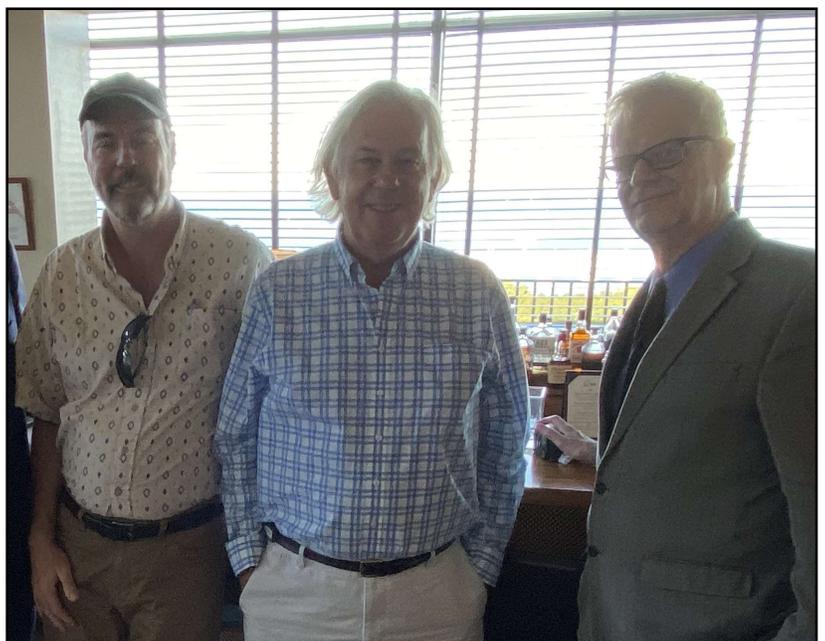
Plecki's book, *Singing in the Rain* at the Midland Authors program at the Cliff Dwellers Club in Chicago.

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 in 1969.



Christine Bertrand and Greg Borzo at the Aug. 9 program.



John Holden, former Midland Authors President Craig Sautter and Midland Authors Board Member and Archivist Walter Podrazik.

Poetry, dance and music

Poet **Marty McConnell** and author and poet **Dipika Mukherjee** appeared on a panel on Oct. 11 at the Cliff Dwellers Club in Chicago to discuss Mukherjee's book *Dialect of Distant Harbors* and writing in general.

Mukherjee also has a collection of travel essays that will be published by Penguin Random House next year.

In addition, she is working on a third novel and a hybrid memoir.

Cautioning that "we only practiced this once" Mukherjee nevertheless confidently predicted at the outset of the program "this is going to be perfect."

The program began with Mukherjee reading a poem about "going back to where I'm from."

She was accompanied by dancer Kinnari Vora of the Ishti Collective, a Chicago area fusion dance troupe, and musician Bob Garret.

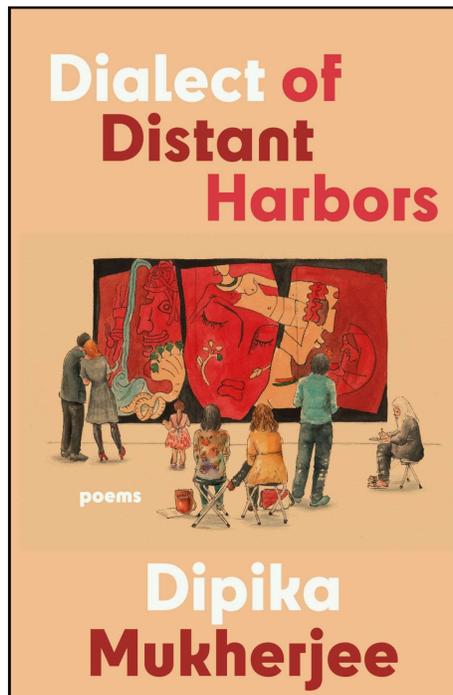
Next, McConnell opened the discussion by saying, "Throughout the book, there are so many ways the natural world and the human-made world co-exist, collide and sometimes collapse. How does that reflect the way you move through the world?"

In response, Mukherjee said she grew up in India with "ties to very natural phenomena. ... There is still a very strong culture there of honoring the spirit of the land. For instance, if a farmer is going to cut something from his land, he will ask for permission to desecrate that part of the land."

McConnell, whose second poetry collection, *when they say you can't go home again, what they mean is you were never there* (Southern Indiana University Press, 2018) won the 2017 Michael Waters Poetry Prize, next asked, "Is there any-



FAR LEFT: Marty McConnell and Dipika Mukherjee discuss their writing. LEFT: Kinnari Vora interprets a poem from *Dialect of Distant Harbors* to music played by Bob Garret.



thing that is off-limits to you in your writing? You go into such places of joy, but also of terror and violence."

Mukherjee said she grew up as the only daughter in a family in which she had three brothers.

"I think I was not very comfortable discussing sexuality ... now that I have a

voice ... I need to talk about the things that are happening in our community in our own country. And one of the things that I started to write about more is abortion."

McConnell asked if Mukherjee has received any pushback while writing about such topics. Mukherjee said she has not.

Mukherjee also said, "Writing is not something you can conjure up out of thin air."

"When I am writing a novel, I am more aware of the market," she added.

Midland Authors member **Simone Muench** wrote of *Dialect of Distant Harbors*, "Whether writing ghazals or haibuns or unpacking the brutality of recent historical events, Mukherjee's collection is a hybridic journey of translations, storytelling, reportage, lyrical unfoldings, and acts of witness. Language and lineage take center stage as the palimpsest of memory, history, and utterance is explored."

Mukherjee also is the author of two novels, *Shambala Junction* and *Ode to Broken Things*, and a short story collection, *Rules of Desire*. She has published two earlier books of poetry, *The Palimpsest of Exile* and *The Third Glass of Wine*.

The Midland Authors book competition is now underway for books published in 2022. Please check midlandauthors.org for rules, names of judges to whom books should be shipped and the deadline. An awards ceremony will be held in May.



ABOVE: Ed Lawler, Rita Dragonette, Midland Authors Treasurer Greg Borzo and Marcella Schuler.



RIGHT: Syed Afzal Haider, Afzal Ahmad, Shireen Ahmad and Craig Sautter.

(Photos by Thomas Frisbie and Claire Hartfield)

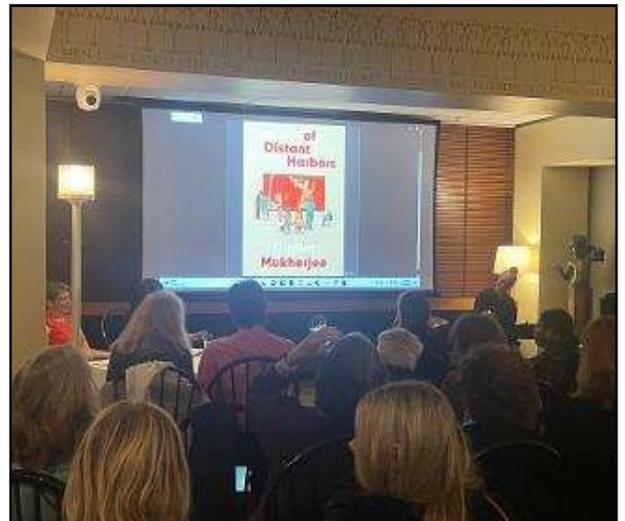
Full house shows up for discussion of new book

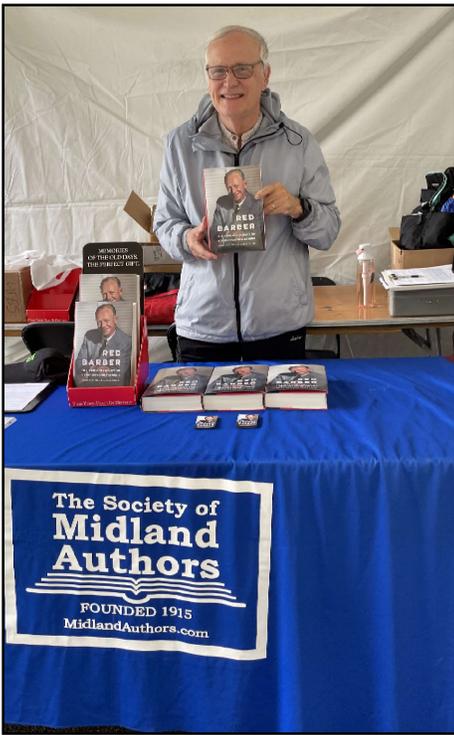


Hopie Melton (left) and Shanti Nagarkatti were among the attendees at the October Midland Authors program with panelists Marty McConnell and author Dipika Mukherjee.



LEFT: Janet Burroway, Larissa Rollep, Kristja Frascheri and Dipika Mukherjee. RIGHT: A full house of attendees.





James Walker (left photo) and Michael Termine and Vicki Quade (center photo) were among those at the Midland Authors tent at the 2022 Printers Row Lit Fest on a weekend that turned rainy on its second day (right photo).

A ray of literary sunshine at Printers Row

BY GERARD PLECKI

On the rainy afternoon of Sept. 11 – the second day of Lit Fest 2022 – **Dick Simpson** and **Michael Dorf** spoke to an eager, indoor audience at the Blake Hotel, 500 S. Dearborn, on the local, national and global challenges that democracy faces. It was an event sponsored by the Printers Row Lit Fest and presented by the Midland Authors.

On April 21, Simpson had discussed his latest book, *Democracy's Rebirth: The View from Chicago* with Mayor Lightfoot at the Cindy Pritzker Auditorium of Chicago's Harold Washington Library Center (Literary License: May-August 2022, p. 10). Dorf and co-author **George Van Dusen** wrote *Clear It With Sid!: Sidney R. Yates and Fifty Years of Presidents, Pragmatism, and Public Service*, which was the topic of the Midland Authors November 2019 program at the Cliff Dwellers Club.

Simpson spoke first, after a moment of silence in memory of the victims of 9/11. He outlined the general causes for the decline of democracy, mentioning “racial and income inequality”; “systemic racism”; “big and dark money in politics”,



ABOVE LEFT: Sylvia Frank Rodrique, executive editor of the Southern Illinois University Press; Michael Haupt; Sandra Colbert; Mandi Jourdan, publications editor, Southern Illinois University Press, and Midland Authors President Gerard Plecki. ABOVE RIGHT: Printers Row attendees. (Photos by Greg Borzo)

and “political corruption.”

Dorf congratulated Simpson on the epic nature and monumental importance of democracy’s rebirth, and talked about the constitutional amendments that would be required to bring about changes to voting. Dorf spotted a local judge in the audience and asked if anything could be done to require all Americans to vote; the judge replied “no.”

The question-and-answer repartee which followed was fascinating and could have continued for hours, but it gave way to make room for another panel hoping to



avoid the torrential rainfall, and to provide time for book signing by both our wonderful authors. On a day otherwise filled with dark clouds, local flooding, and far too many wet books and disappointed authors, the Dorf and Simpson panel was a true ray of literary sunshine.

Also at the Printers Row Lit Fest, **S.L. Wisenberg** read from *Open Heart Chicago: An Anthology of Chicago Writing*, with other contributors Dorothy Frey, Lorena Ornelas and **Joe Peterson**. The emcee was anthology editor Vincent Francone.

New Members

Sarah Layden is the author of *Trip Through Your Wires* (Engine Books, 2015) and *The Story I Tell Myself About*



Sarah Layden

Myself (Sonder, 2018). *The Story I Tell Myself About Myself* won the 2017 Sonder Press Chapbook Competition.

Her upcoming books are: *Imagine Your Life Like This* (University of

Wisconsin Press, 2023) and *The Invisible Art of Literary Editing* (co-authored with Bryan Furuness, Bloomsbury Academic, 2023).

Her short fiction has appeared in the Boston Review, Stone Canoe, Blackbird, Artful Dodge, the Evansville Review, Booth, PANK and the anthology *Sudden Flash Youth*.

Her short fiction has won the Allen and Nirelle Galson Prize for Fiction and an AWP Intro Award.

She teaches writing at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis and at the Indiana Writers Center.

She was nominated by **Kate Hannigan**.

Barbara Binns is author of *Unlawful Orders: A Portrait of Dr. James B. Williams, Tuskegee Airman, Surgeon, and Activist* (Scholastic Focus, Oct. 18, 2022); *Courage* (HarperCollins, July 31, 2018), and the Farrington High series.

In addition to writing, Binns lectures and leads workshops for experienced and aspiring authors of all ages.

Her writing won an Oregon 2010

Readers Choice award and was chosen for the 2012 YALSA Quick Picks for Reluctant Readers list.

Binns worked as clinical chemist at the University of Chicago Hospitals and as computer analyst for AT&T. She is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin.

She was nominated by **Marlene Targ Brill**.

Born in Milwaukee and raised in Champaign, Illinois, **Esther Yin-ling Spodek** taught the Survivors' Writing



Esther Yin-ling Spodek

Workshop at the Illinois Holocaust Museum and edited the book from that workshop, *In Our Voices*, published by the museum. Her most recent short story appears in the Hamilton Stone Review and her novel, *We Have Everything*

Before Us, was published by Gibson House Press (2009).

She was nominated by **Lynn Sloan**.

Patricia Ricketts is author of *Speed of Dark: A Novel* (She Writes Press, May 3, 2022), her debut novel.

Her upcoming book, *The First of June*, is scheduled for publication in 2023.

She has published



Barbara Binns

short stories in New Directions, The Slate, Meta, The Blue Hour Magazine, Realize Magazine, Storied Stuff and on NPR's "This I Believe" website.

She earned a scholarship to the University of Edinburgh in creative writing.

She was nominated by **Michelle Cox**.

Judith F. Brenner is an author of a novel, *The Moments Between Dreams*, (Greenleaf Book Group, May, 2022).

She also is a short story contributor to an anthology, *Minnesota Stories: A collection of 28 fiction stories with a Minnesota Flair*.

In addition, she owns Creative Lakes Media, LLC, an editing service and publishing company.

Brenner also owns Sharpeners-Report.com, launching the website and trade digital newsletter in 2011 after acquiring the print publication from a retired publisher.

Brenner's series of nonfiction books, The Best of Sharpeners Report, are published by Creative Lakes Media, LLC. They include *Knife*

Sharpening as a Business (2nd Ed. 2021); *Chainsaw Chain, Lawn & Garden Tool Sharpening* (2nd Ed. 2019); *Clipper Sharpening and Clipper Repair* (2016, Reprinted 2022), *Beauty Shears and Scissor Sharpening* (2nd Ed. 2020), and *Saw & Tool Sharpening* (2nd Ed. 2019).

She was nominated by **Rita Dragonette**.



Judith F. Brenner



Patricia Ricketts

Final Chapters

BY THOMAS FRISBIE

In 2013, **Jennifer Bartoli-Kalina**, a children's book author and a longtime Midland Authors member, recalled how at one Midland Authors meeting, "I sat next to **Alzina Stone Dale**, who was rocking in an antique chair before a blazing fire and telling us of a biography she had written about a so-



Jennifer Bartoli-Kalina

called obscure English author. Ignorant, I kept quiet and went home to meet G.K. Chesterton in an old poetry collection."

Ms. Bartoli-Kalina went on to become the local group leader of the Midwest Chesterton Society, whose members discuss and read books, mostly those by Chesterton, who also was a writer, philosopher and literary and art critic. The local group meets at Centuries & Sleuths

Bookstore in Forest Park.

Ms. Bartoli-Kalina, a former Midland Authors board member and a judge for the 2010 Midland Authors book awards, died of cancer on Oct. 18 at Central DuPage Hospital in Winfield, Illinois. She was 77.

She had started feeling ill about five weeks before she died, her husband, Daniel Kalina, said.

Ms. Bartoli-Kalina, a longtime Winfield resident, was the author of *Snow on*

Final Chapters

Continued from Page 11

Bear's Nose: A Story of a Japanese Moon Bear Cub (Albert Whitman & Co., Jan. 1, 1977); *The Story of the Grateful Crane* (Albert Whitman & Co., Jan 1, 1977); *Nonna* (Harvey House, Jan. 1, 1975), and *In a Meadow, Two Hares Hide* (Gakken Co Ltd., 1978).

Her family recalled she was a passionate reader and enjoyed travel, theater, music, cooking and gardening.

Ms. Bartoli-Kalina was born on May 13, 1945, in Ann Arbor, Michigan. She grew up on Chicago's North Shore, in Michigan and in Australia. She graduated from the University of Michigan and was an active member of the Children's Reading Round Table. She also was a Benedictine Oblate of St. Procopius in Lisle, Illinois.

She got her love of writing and literature from her father, who was an English professor at the University of Michigan, her daughter, Amelia Hanrahan, said.

Hanrahan also recalled when she was taking a reading comprehension test in grade school, one of the selections she

unexpectedly had to read and answer questions about was from her mother's book *Nonna*. Hanrahan said she aced that part of the test, partly because her mother often read to her and her brother, Pietro, from her books.

Ms. Bartoli-Kalina was a successful children's writer because she "embraced imagination and frivolity, and it was easy for her to imagine storytelling through a child's eyes," Hanrahan said. "Much of her writing could be characterized as very precise and pastoral and maternal – not quite feminist but a persistent theme nonetheless."

Former Midland Authors President **Richard Lindberg** recalled Ms. Bartoli-Kalina as "charming and nice."

Children's book author and Midland Authors member **Charlotte Herman** wrote, "I met Jennifer at a Children's Reading Round Table dinner in the early 1970s. She was super friendly, warm, and soft spoken. We became instant friends. After that first dinner, we attended most of the CRRT and SMA events together.

"We celebrated Jennifer's two books that came out around that time: *Snow on*

Bear's Nose, and *Nonna*, a tender story about the death of a grandmother. Jennifer also wrote poetry. She had the heart of a poet, the soul of a poet.

"One day Jennifer decided that we should write a book together. So we came up with *The Beginner's Guide to Social Climbing*. We actually wrote a few chapters and received positive feedback from a publisher. But we never got to finish the book, because whenever we got together we had tea and cookies and laughed ourselves silly over what we were writing.

"Some years ago, Jennifer moved from Chicago to Winfield. And even though we didn't see each other nearly as often, we kept in close touch by phone calls and countless emails. She often peppered our conversations with the Hebrew words: 'Shabbat Shalom,' and 'Todah,' thank you.

"And now I say, 'Thank you, Jenn, for your love and friendship. You will be forever in my thoughts.'"

Ms. Bartoli-Kalina was preceded in death by her first husband, Peter Bartoli. She is also survived by a sister, Alison Mutter, and six grandchildren.

Services have been held.

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