

Biblio File

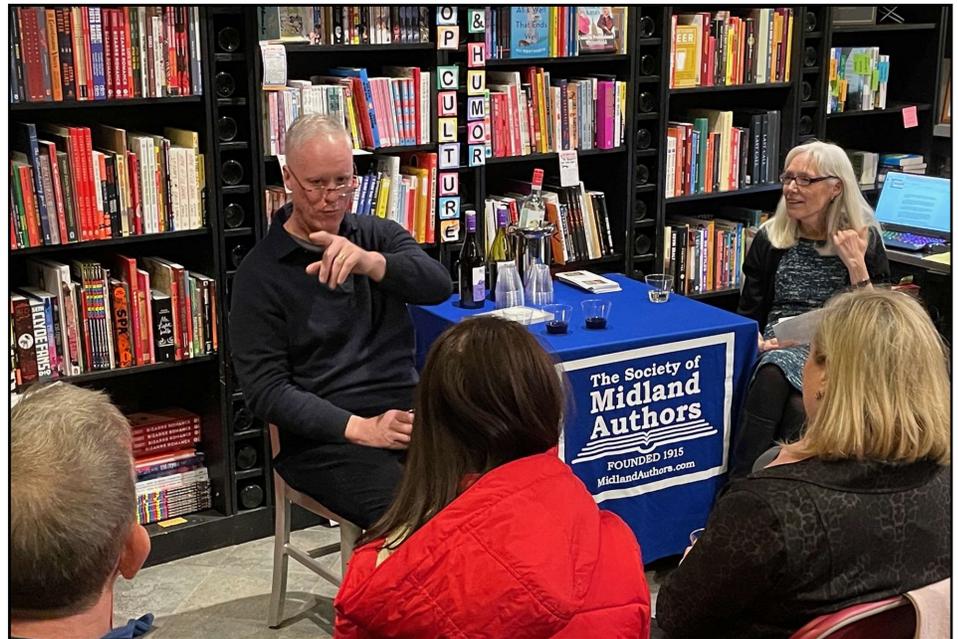
Thanks to **Kate Hannigan** (see Literary Latest, Page 2), who has resigned as Midland Authors program co-chair with **Claire Hartfield**, for her excellent contributions. ... SMA Board Member **Jim Walker** writes to say, “We’ve gotten some good news on the awards front for our book *Red Barber: The Life and Legacy of a Broadcasting Legend* by Judith R. Hiltner and James R. Walker. We were second (out of 10 finalists) for Spitball’s Casey Award for the best baseball book of the year. We also were one of three finalists for the Seymour Medal given by SABR for the best book in history or biography. We were the only book selected as a finalist for both awards. We were No. 4 on Sports Collectors Digest’s list of 40 top books in baseball for the year.



Christopher Lynch

We were on Book List’s top 10 in sports and recreation for the year. ... SMA Board Member **Christopher Lynch** and former SMA Board Member **Patrick McBriarty** report they are delighted that their Windy City Historians podcast is making waves. They say their segment with historian John Swenson regarding his theory about a second portage used in 17th century Chicago has the “Friends of the Chicago Portage” group thinking that Swenson is up a creek without a paddle. This has led to a special lecture whose sole aim is to refute Swenson’s theory. The event takes place at 1 p.m. on March 25, at Lyons Public Library, 4209 S. Joliet Ave. To hear the original program, check out www.windycityhistorians.com. ... **Connie Goddard** reports from New Jersey that she made a quick trip to Chicago early in March to give a talk to the John Dewey Society; her topic was

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Joseph G. Peterson (top left), interviewed by **Carol Fisher Saller** (top right), talks about his latest book, *Memorandum from the Iowa Cloud Appreciation Society*, at the Midland Authors program on Feb. 14 at the Book Cellar in Chicago. (Photo by Greg Borzo)

Author: Don’t pass judgment on your unlikable characters

BY THOMAS FRISBIE

Sometimes, authors find themselves writing about characters that they might not like or might not be their kind of person, but it is not up to the author to cast judgment, Midland Authors member **Joseph G. Peterson** said at the Feb. 14 meeting of the Midland Authors at the Book Cellar in Chicago.

Peterson, whose most recent book is *Memorandum from the Iowa Cloud Appreciation Society* (University of Iowa Press, Nov. 4, 2022), is also the author of eight other books. At the program, he was interviewed by Midland Authors member **Carol Fisher Saller**.

Peterson told Literary License the running theme in his books is that, “I write about losers, guys who have fallen out of family, their social networks and their jobs. They can’t get the jobs they want.”

Instead, they become unwilling to cooperate and no longer engage. They turn to guns, suicide and alcohol.

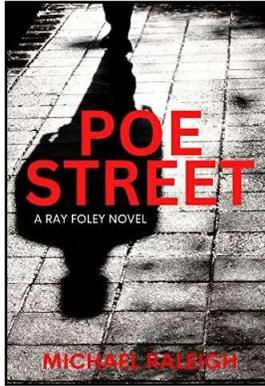
“There is a lot of dysfunctionality in my work,” Peterson said. “[But] it is not just dysfunctionality; these are also stories about how you can not succeed in the traditional sense but still find value in living and in life.

“That is what my books are about. In all of my books, my characters are really trying to find value in living, no matter how outcast they might be.”

Midland Authors member **Rick Kogan** wrote: “For years now, Joe Peterson has been one of our – Chicago’s and the planet’s – most inventive and intriguing writers. In his latest, he soars even higher, providing a captivating tale filled with narrative power, artful observations and unforgettable characters.”



Literary Latest



CHICAGO IN THE 1940S

Here's what **Michael Raleigh** tells Literary Latest about his new book, *Poe Street* (Level Best Books, March 1, 2023).

"I have set mysteries in the 1980s, the 1970s and most recently in the 1960s (*Murder in the Summer of Love*), and



Michael Raleigh

decided it was time to explore Chicago in the 1940s. *Poe Street* is set in 1946, in a smoldering, crowded Chicago that smells of coal fire, lumberyards, and small factories. Half the housing stock

dates from the time of the Great Fire, and gangsters are still prospering who worked with Capone.

"The story begins with the murder of Cary Morrison, a Gatsbyesque millionaire who knew a little something on everyone. Morrison's death is believed to have been caused by a burglary gone wrong. In the immediate aftermath of the murder, three of the burglars are themselves murdered.

"Ray Foley, recently returned from service in World War II, gets involved because one of the dead burglars was his boyhood friend, Eddie Walsh. Foley's investigation brings him into contact with a slick private investigator whom he once met on Omaha Beach, an aging and

unpredictable gangster, and a sly old Chicago street cop, and he soon finds himself stalked by the elusive killer. He also has time to pursue a tough young nurse with her own war stories.

"There is, by the way, a Poe Street in Chicago, a tiny avenue less than two blocks long."

From the publisher: "Ray [Foley] ... learns early that much of the attention to the case involves a missing statue, a hollow Greek statuette said to contain Morrison's records of all his illegal financial transactions with mobsters and public officials. Ray's investigation attracts the wrong kind of attention, for interested people begin to assume he has the statue or knows of its whereabouts.

"Ray's search brings him in contact with a wide range of characters, including a slick private investigator named Max Silver, a tough young nurse named Hannah Marcel, a crusty street cop named Carmody, and the eccentric Sal Greene, a major figure in the local mob."



EARLY WOMAN INVENTOR

Kate Hannigan writes to say: "I have a new book coming out March 14. It's a picture book biography for young readers about an early woman inventor and titled *Josephine and Her Dishwashing Machine: Josephine Cochran's Bright Invention Makes a Splash*. A couple things I found especially interesting about her story were that she and her dishwash-

ing machine gained attention at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition here in Chicago and that she held onto her company and ran it herself.

Not a common thing for a woman of her day! So she's a great example of female entrepreneurship as well as invention. It's publishing with Calkins Creek/Astra, which is the same house that published my 2022 nonfiction picture book about Nellie Bly and Elizabeth Bisland, *Nellie vs. Elizabeth: Two Daredevil Journalists' Breakneck Race Around the World*, which Smithsonian Magazine called one of their "Ten Best Children's Books of 2022." I'm excited to bring these women's stories to young readers, especially in time for Women's History Month!



Kate Hannigan

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Midland Authors invites you to attend our

March Event

Join us for a lively evening as David Witter explores how liquor has influenced nearly two centuries of Chicago's existence

WHAT: *Distilled in Chicago: A History*

WHO: David Witter in conversation with Gerry Plecki

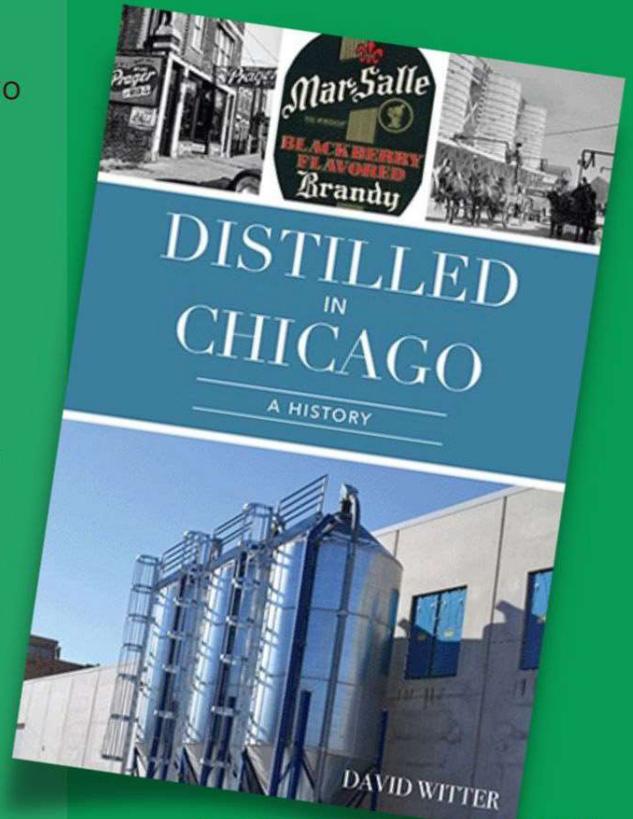
WHEN: Tuesday, March 14, 2023

Cocktails 6-7 p.m., program 7-8 p.m.

WHERE: Cliff Dwellers, 22nd floor penthouse
200 S Michigan Ave.

ABOUT THE BOOK: Follow the trickle of alcohol through Chicago's history, starting with the town's first three permanent businesses to Chicago's first gangsters.

COST: Free and open to the public;
\$5 donation suggested



Learn more at
MidlandAuthors.org



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intersections among work by Dewey, Frank Lloyd Wright and two somewhat neglected thinkers of the same era – manual training enthusiast Charles Ham and Oscar Lovell Triggs, founder of the city’s Industrial Art League. The society, meeting at Hull House, took up the topic of “Art as a Site Social Reconstruction”; Goddard contends that there was significant interaction among ideas the four articulated on how art could improve both schools and workplaces. The talk came out of her forthcoming book, *Learning and Labor Intertwined*, which is under contract with the University of Illinois Press for publication in mid-2024. ...

Patrick T. Reardon’s new book *Puddin’: The Autobiography of a Baby, A Memoir in Prose Poems* has been garnering strong reviews. The San Francisco-based Minderbinder Review of Books which specializes in one-sentence reviews published this: “It’s not a hyperbolic stretch by any means to say that Patrick

Reardon’s *Puddin’ – The Autobiography of a Baby*, is not only the most improbable and intriguing personal account by a writer published in 2022, but quite possibly the most ingeniously imagined memoir by any writer in any given year – with kudos to Third World Press for another smart addition to their catalogue.” Third World Press is headed by founder **Haki Madhubuti**, a Society of Midland Authors member, and, in the Jan. 31 Tribune, Madhubuti and Reardon were featured in a large half-page photograph with a story by **Rick Kogan**, another Society member, about the book, titled, “Through a baby’s eyes: A former Tribune writer’s new book *Puddin’* is told by an infant, but was inspired by a brother’s suicide.” Kogan also devoted his Jan. 22 WGN-radio show to an interview with Reardon about the book. Kogan said during the show *Puddin’* “is as beautiful, moving and stunning a book as I can remember reading, and it’s unique.” *Puddin’* describes the first year

in the life of a baby from the baby’s perspective and in the baby’s language. ... In mid-February, **Jim Schwab** co-instructed a week-long online course, “Recovery from Disaster: Local Community Roles,” for the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s training arm, the Emergency Management Institute. EMI provides a



Jim Schwab

wide array of training online, in regional locations, and at its Emmitsburg, Maryland, campus for local and state officials and others involved in disasters and emergency management nationwide, using certified instructors based on subject matter expertise. In a curious bit of bad timing, Jim became certified by

EMI in February 2020, just before a long period of canceled courses because of the pandemic, followed by being engaged twice last year in classes that were canceled due to late-stage circumstances. Jim fully expects to be a frequent instructor, however, and already teaches a similar graduate urban planning course as an adjunct for the University of Iowa.

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