

Biblio File

Dominic Pacyga writes to say: “The University of Chicago Press has signed a contract with the Muzeum Historii Polski Warszawie for a Polish-language edition of my book *American Warsaw: The Rise, Fall, and Rebirth of Polish Chicago*.” ...

Eileen Meyer tells Biblio File: “I was just visiting Illinois to provide author programs at a few elementary schools – heartened by the sunny skies and warming temps. Upon my return, family members shared SNOW was on the way again! Hopefully spring will be around the corner after this unwelcome and late snowfall! I’m back in North Florida and wanted to share two tidbits of news with you: 1) I’m now represented by Liza Fleissig at the Liza Royce Agency. And 2) We have the following information on a rhyming children’s picture book deal to announce: Sunita Apte has acquired, in a pre-empt, world rights to [my latest book] *Build a Sandcastle*. ... **Dan Dinello** wrote – on the website Informed Comment – “KKK Without the Robes: DeSantius has gutted Florida Education, Cancelled Black History and Criminalized LGBTQ+ People.” ... **Michele Weldon** is set to deliver a TEDxWilmette talk on April 22: “Truth Is A Dare: The Power of Claiming Your Story.” Her seventh book, *The Time We Have: Essays on Pandemic Living*, is out July 2024 from Northwestern University Press. She also won first place in opinion writing from Illinois Women’s Press Association for an oped she wrote in USA Today on the Amber Heard/Johnny Depp trial. ... **Robert K, Elder** has a new book out this spring, which resurrects Italian Disney comics inspired by Ernest Hemingway – and translates them for English-reading audiences. The title: *Walt Disney’s Mickey and Donald: “For Whom the Doorbell Tolls” and Other Tales Inspired by Hemingway*. For more, see Literary Latest in the upcoming May issue of Literary License.

A shot of Chicago history

BY THOMAS FRISBIE

Chicago was founded partly on the success of taverns that catered to trappers who would come from Wisconsin and Minnesota and who needed a place to stay – and drink, author **David Witter** said at the Midland Authors’ March 14 monthly program at the Cliff Dwellers Club in Chicago.

Bars have continued to have a big presence into the city up until modern times, partly because of the city’s weather, said Witter, who also is a journalist specializing in Chicago history and music.

“Growing up in Lincoln Park, which was a working class neighborhood when I grew up, there were like six bars on every two blocks, and that was pretty common throughout Chicago,” said Witter, as he discussed his latest book, *Distilled in Chicago: A History* (The History Press, Oct. 31, 2022).

Numerous bars continue to dot Chicago for two reasons, Witter said. From November to March, it’s a time to stay inside to hide out from Chicago’s wintry weather, and bars provide a place to gather and socialize. Second, for many of the early ethnic groups that came to Chicago, alcohol was a big part of their culture, he said.

“That pretty

much set the tone for what Chicago became,” Witter said.

Witter said he chose to write about the history of hard liquor in Chicago because “so many other people have written books about [beer].”

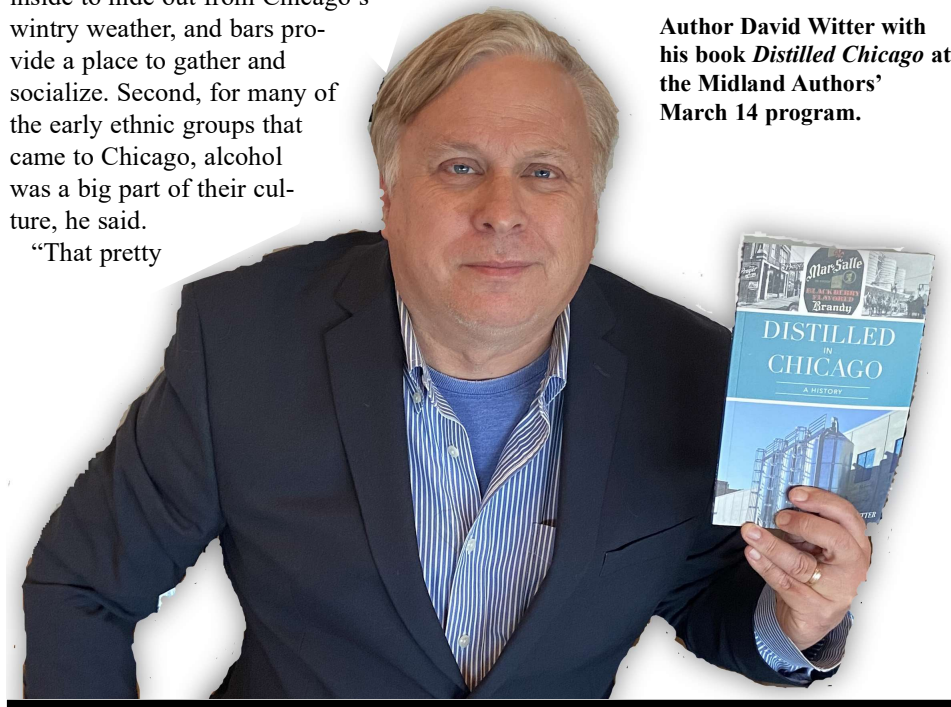
Although a lot of people distilled their own liquor, Chicago didn’t have a lot of distilleries. Hard liquor was mostly distilled in Peoria under the control of the Whiskey Trust, which preferred the downstate Illinois’ city’s access to corn, the Illinois river and availability of land where few people lived.

“Distilling liquor was dangerous,” Witter said. “There were a lot of accidents.”

If competing distilleries tried to set up shop in Chicago, the Whiskey Trust would try to price them out, buy them out or even allegedly dynamite them, Witter said.

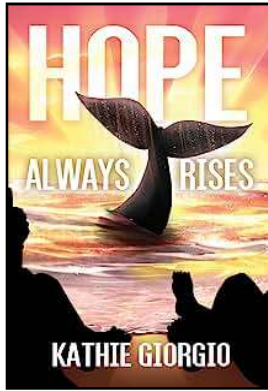
Partly as a result, there was no legal distillery in Chicago from the Civil War until 2008, he said.

Author David Witter with his book *Distilled Chicago* at the Midland Authors’ March 14 program.





Literary Latest



FOURTEENTH BOOK

“As a creative, and someone who teaches creatives, I’ve known many people who have chosen to end their own lives,” **Kathie Giorgio**, author most recently of *Hope Always Rises* (Black Rose Writing, Feb, 28, 2023), tells Literary Latest. “The incidence of suicide



Kathie Giorgio

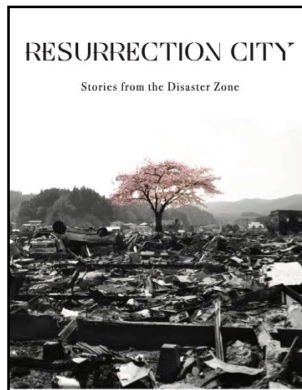
among creatives is higher than that of the average person on the street. “For me, the decision to write this book came when I overheard a conversation between two women who were talking about a ‘friend’ who’d recently chosen to end her life. They talked about how selfish she was, how awful, a monster, what a terrible thing to leave her husband and family behind. I was in a coffee shop, and before I left, I turned to them and said, ‘Did it ever occur to you to think about what kind of pain your friend must have been in to make this decision? To make it seem viable and the only way out?’ And then I left.

The novel *Hope Always Rises* is Giorgio’s 14th book and seventh novel. The launch will be at the Southeast Wisconsin Festival of Books special event on April 27, held at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Waukesha cam-

pus. It is free to the public and will begin at 6 p.m.

Georgia will be joined on stage by the Wisconsin chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

After Giorgio reads an excerpt, she’ll be interviewed on stage by Philip Chard, a well-known Wisconsin therapist and columnist. His column, “Out of My Mind,” has run since the 1980s, first in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, and now in the Shepherd Express.



‘THERE WERE STORIES HERE’

Catherine Browder writes to say, “I have a new book of fiction, *Resurrection City: Stories from the Disaster Zone* (Inland Northwest Center for Writers, December 2022), winner of the Spokane Prize for short fiction from Willow Springs Books (Eastern Washington University).

“All the stories deal in some manner with the Great East Japan Disaster of 2011 – earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear meltdown at a Fukushima power plant.

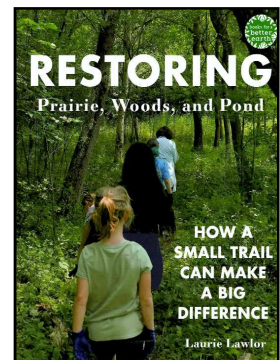
“After a Japanese friend shared his post-disaster experiences, my imagination was fired up, knowing there were stories here. In 2016 I returned to Japan (where I once lived) and traveled down the affected coast.

“The region – called Tohoku – was/is still in recovery.

“My friend arranged for me to speak to survivors of the catastrophe as well as those affected in less dramatic ways.

“Back home, I became a compulsive researcher into the event. It has been an astounding journey. The stories in the collection explore the impact of such an event on both Western and Japanese characters, although those characters are entirely my invention.

“I am, after all, a fiction writer.”



ACTIVISM AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

Restoring Prairie, Woods, and Pond: How a Small Trail Can Make a Big Difference (Holiday House) by **Laurie Lawlor** is about activism at the community level – and tells how a small village in southeastern Wisconsin has transformed an eight-acre, municipally owned dumping ground and wasteland into a nature trail with three distinct ecosystems: a prairie, woodland, and ephemeral pond wetland. The trail runs from Eagle Elementary to the public library. Illustrated with color photos, the book explains how this trail has become a valuable outdoor classroom – even during COVID-19 – a STEM teaching center, a respite for people young and old, and a place for community engagement.



Laurie Lawlor

An April panel on children's literature

Four award-winning authors discuss children's literature, new books, and writing for young readers, from picture books to middle-grade to young adult.

WHAT: What's new in children's literature

WHO: Zetta Elliott, James Klise, Natasha Tarpley and Keir Graff

WHEN: Tuesday, April 11, 2023; cocktails 6-7 p.m. and program 7-8 p.m.

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

COST: Free & open to all; \$5 donation suggested

Bookish Chicago will be on-site selling books. Authors are available to sign.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Zetta Elliott is a Black feminist poet, playwright, and author of forty books for young readers, including the award-winning picture books *Bird* and *A Place Inside of Me* and the bestselling middle-grade fantasy series *Dragons in a Bag*. Her essays have appeared in *Blavity*, *The Huffington Post*, and *Publishers Weekly*. Her own imprint, *Rosetta Press*, generates

culturally relevant stories that center youth who have been marginalized, misrepresented, and/or rendered invisible in traditional children's literature. She lives in Chicago.

James Klise's new YA novel, *I'll Take Everything You Have* (Algonquin), is a queer coming-of-age crime story set in 1934 Chicago. In a starred review, *Kirkus* promises "passionate, cinematic scenes" and "a thrillingly queer adventure." *Publishers Weekly* calls the book "an arresting narrative ... and a mesmerizing snapshot of 1930s Chicago."

Klise's previous novels for teens include the Edgar Award-winning *The Art of Secrets* and the ALA Stonewall Honor-winning *Love Drugged*. He lives with his husband in Chicago, where for the past two decades, he has overseen a very busy high school library.

As an acclaimed and bestselling children's book author, who has been writing for over 20 years, **Natasha Tarpley** is the author of the classic picture book, *I Love My Hair!*, an ode to Black childhood and natural beauty, as well as *Keyana Loves Her Family*, which is book one of a new

picture book series featuring *Keyana McGee*, a little girl with BIG ideas. Other titles include the award-winning picture book, *The Me I Choose To Be*; the social justice-themed middle grade mystery, *The Harlem Charade*; and a forthcoming supernatural middle-grade series, *Finders & Seekers*.

Tarpley is also the writer and co-creator of the award-winning children's narrative podcast, "Opal Watson: Private Eye" and is developing new children's podcast and TV projects with major media outlets.

The authors will speak in conversation with Keir Graff, the author of funny and fantastical middle-grade adventure novels including *The Tiny Mansion*, *The Phantom Tower* (a Chicago Tribune Best Children's Book), *The Matchstick Castle* (an official Illinois Reads selection) and the forthcoming *Minerva Keen's Detective Club* with James Patterson. He also writes books for grown-ups, some of them under fake names!

A longtime resident of Chicago, he lives near the shore of Lake Michigan with his wife Marya, sons Felix and Cosmo, and cats Toothless and Totoro.

A night of 'Tea & Cookies and Murder'

(This is a program co-sponsored by the Midland Authors.)

WHAT: A night of tea and cookies and murder.

WHO: Mystery writer **Ann Cleeves** with **Lori Rader-Day** and **Sara Paretsky**.

WHEN: Saturday, April 22, 6:30 p.m.

WHERE: Volumes Bookcafe; 1373 N Milwaukee Ave; Chicago, IL 60622.

COST: Free; books available for purchase.

Tickets are free, and books will be available on-site at the time of the event. If there is a specific Cleeves, Rader-Day, or Paretsky book you'd like to reserve, you can do so by ordering on the Volumes website.

Cleeves is the multi-million-copy best-selling author behind three hit television series – *Shetland*, starring Douglas Henshall; *Vera*, starring Academy Award Nominee Brenda Blethyn; and *The Long Call*, starring Ben Aldridge, all of which

are watched and loved in the United States. All three are available on BritBox.

The first *Shetland* novel, *Raven Black*, won the Crime Writers' Association Gold Dagger for best crime novel, and Cleeves was awarded the CWA Diamond Dagger in 2017. She was awarded the OBE in 2022 for services to reading and libraries. Cleeves lives in the United Kingdom.

Lori Rader-Day is the Edgar Award-nominated and Agatha, Anthony, and Mary Higgins Clark award-winning author of *Death at Greenway*, *The Lucky One*, *Under a Dark Sky*, *The Day I Died*, *Little Pretty Things*, and *The Black Hour*. She lives in Chicago, where she is co-chair of the mystery readers' festival Midwest Mystery Conference (fka Murder and Mayhem in Chicago) and served as 2019-2020 national president of Sisters in Crime. She teaches creative writing for Northwestern University's School of Professional Studies.

Sara Paretsky revolutionized the mys-

tery world in 1982 when she introduced V.I. Warshawski in *Indemnity Only*. By creating a detective with the grit and smarts to take on the mean streets, Paretsky challenged a genre in which women historically were vamps or victims. V.I. struck a chord with readers and critics; *Indemnity Only* was followed by 20 more V.I. novels. In 1986 she created Sisters in Crime, a worldwide organization to advocate for women crime writers, which earned her Ms. Magazine's 1987 Woman of the Year award.

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Editor: Thomas Frisbie
www.midlandauthors.org

Society of Midland Authors

Dinner Registration Form

The Society of Midland Authors annual awards banquet will be held May 9 at the Cliff Dwellers Club, 22nd floor, 200 S. Michigan, Chicago.

The reception with a cash bar will start at 6 p.m. Dinner will begin at 7 p.m.

Paul Lisnek will be the emcee.

Name: _____

Number of medallions of pork tenderloin dinners at \$75 each. _____

No. of vegetarian (Grilled Vegetables, Portabella Mushroom Mediterranean couscou) dinners at \$75. _____

Number of grilled filet of salmon dinners at \$75 each. _____

Donation. _____

Awards Dinner Sponsorship (includes two dinner tickets and a mention in the awards dinner program). \$250. _____

Total _____

Please clip above form and mail to: Dinner Reservation, Society of Midland Authors, P.O. Box 10419, Chicago IL 60610
You may also download a similar form at our website, www.midlandauthors.org or pay via PayPal.

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Literary Latest

Continued from Page 6



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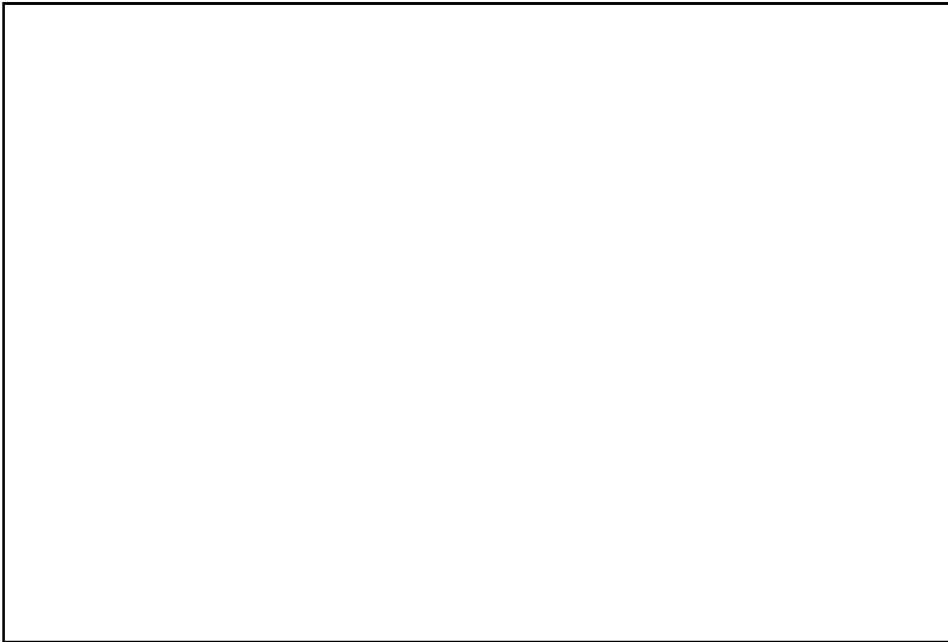
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New Members

Note: SMA members can get a free copy of our history, *A Century of Winged Words*, by sending \$1 for postage via PayPal or to our post office box.

photo page



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:

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