

Sept. 12 program with Jonathan Eig

When: 6 p.m., Sept. 12, 2023

Where: Harold Washington Library
Center, 400 S. State St., Chicago

See Page 6 for details about
Jonathan Eig's new book, *King: A
Life*.

Biblio File

Check Page 12 for information on the Midland Authors election for new officers and board members for 2023-24. Thanks to Midland Authors board members and officers who stepped down over the past year for their excellent contributions, including Midland Authors program co-chair **Claire Hartfield**, who also served



Claire Hartfield

as vice president, Corresponding Secretary **Lynn Sloan** and Board Member **Patrick McBriarty**. ... 2020 Midland Authors awardee **Nandi Comer** has been appointed to serve as the Michigan poet laureate. Michigan has not had a poet laureate for 60 years. Midland Authors member **Anne-Marie Oomen**, a member of the selection committee, wrote, "Nandi Comer's poems enter my consciousness as linguistic power, offering gut-punch narratives and bold image-making. Her poems are full of mind-defiance grappling an opponent to the mat. She zings readers with language that calls us to the ring to



Nandi Comer

Turn to Page 2

Honoring authors, books that can change the world

BY THOMAS FRISBIE

Good writing is not easy, but it's important, Master of Ceremonies **Paul Lisnek** said at the May 9 Midland Authors book awards dinner at the Cliff Dwellers Club in Chicago.



Midland Authors Vice President **Walter Podrazik** and Emcee **Paul Lisnek**.

analyst and television and radio talk show host. "Tonight, we celebrate free speech, we celebrate our authors [and] we celebrate books that hopefully can change the world.

"This year, the judges read, they analyzed, they debated," Lisnek added. "... Decisions on the winners obviously take a lot of concentration and negotiation. The judges were up for that."

Before the book awards portion of the program started, Midland Authors Vice President **Walter Podrazik** presented Literary License Editor **Thomas Frisbie**, who also is membership secretary, with the organization's first Board of Director's Award for Distinguished Service. The award is given to someone who has demonstrated stalwart support of the Society in a variety of roles.

"Thomas Frisbie embodies the soul, the spirit, the heart of the Midland Authors," Podrazik said.

The first category of book awards was for the Richard Frisbie Award for Adult

"I know all of you have taken that journey and appreciated the difficulties that come along with it," said Lisnek, an author, lawyer, political

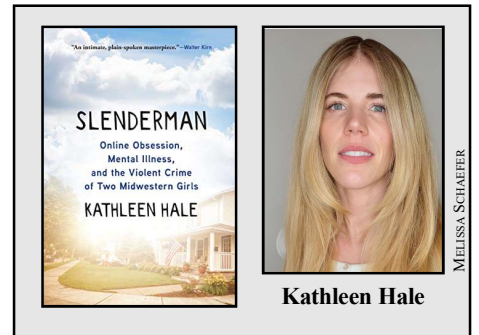


The Midland Authors History Award winners (from left) **Hugh Eakin**, **Deborah Cohen** and **Jon K. Lauck**. History was one of seven categories in which awards were given. (Photo by **Dominic Pacyga**)

Nonfiction. The late **Richard Frisbie** was a former president of the Midland Authors.

The winner was **Kathleen Hale** for *Slenderman: Online Obsessions, Mental Illness and the Violent Crime of Two Midwestern Girls* (Grove Atlantic Press). Hale was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and she now lives in Los Angeles.

Judge **Greg Borzo** said, "The book performs a kind of magic. ... It offers revelations that became very, very memorable."



Kathleen Hale

Turn to Page 2

Printers Row Litfest
Sign up now

PAGE 8

Literary Latest
New Books

PAGES 6-8

Literary Lore
Program reports

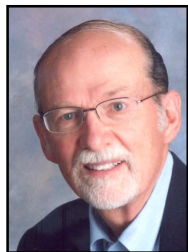
PAGES 9, 11

Biblio File

Continued from Page 1

chant the praises of wrestlers who wear masks that sparkle with linguistic fierceness – read: Tapped Out. Their pain becomes ours. She has a voice clear and sharp, invigorating and challenging.

There is no other American exuberance quite like hers.” ...



John Hallwas

John Hallwas, who has contributed occasional pieces to Literary License about noted Illinois authors, has been elected president of the Illinois Historical Society. ...

Glennette Tilley

Turner writes to say, “I am thrilled that I was one of the four Wheaton residents chosen to have their images painted in the Warhol style” for Wheaton’s Warhol Pop Art Challenge. Local artist Geoff Bevington recreated images of the four prominent local figures.” The unveiling was scheduled for May 22. ... **Carol Dunbar** has a new book, *A Winter’s Rime*, due out in September. ... **Anne-Marie Ooman** received the Association

Turn to Page 3

Literary License

©2023, Society of Midland Authors
P.O. Box 10419, Chicago IL 60610

Editor: Thomas Frisbie
tomfrisbie@aol.com

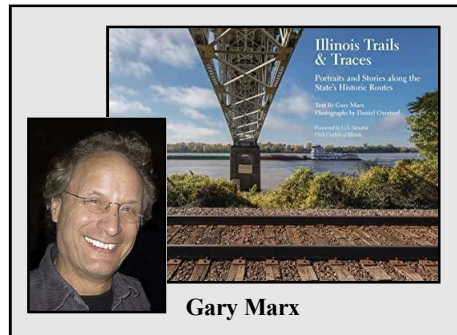
Copy Editors: Marlene Targ Brill,
Dorothea Frisbie

www.midlandauthors.org

Follow the Society on
[Twitter@midlandauthors](https://twitter.com/midlandauthors)

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.

Awards Continued from Page 1

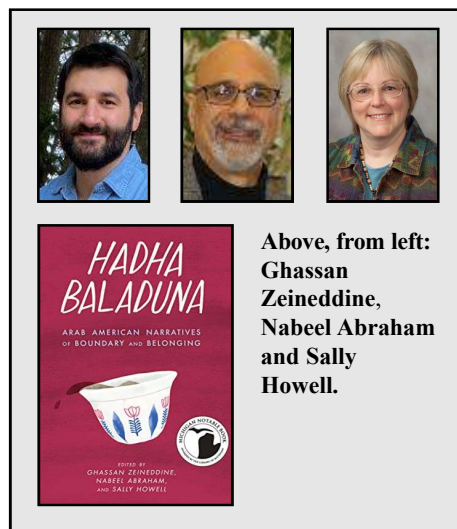


Gary Marx

One honoree was **Gary Marx** for *Illinois Trails & Traces: Portraits and Stories along the State’s Historic Routes* (Southern Illinois University Press). Marx grew up in Schiller Park, Illinois, and lived recently in Carbondale, Illinois; he died in December.

The other honorees were editors **Ghassan Zeineddine, Nabeel Abraham** and **Sally Howell**, all from Michigan, for *Hadha Baladuna: Arab American Narratives of Boundary and Belonging* (Wayne State University Press).

Borzo said, “[*Illinois Trails & Traces*] “is really a colorful run through the history of Illinois’ highways and byways and – through the journeys and highlights – remarkable people and places.”



Above, from left:
Ghassan Zeineddine, Nabeel Abraham and Sally Howell.

Borzo said *Hadha Baladuna* is well edited and “provides a peek into the voices of Arabs living in Detroit. ... Each person’s story offers a glimpse into a different culture. ... Each poignant narrative captures the broad diversity of the Arab American experience.”

The other judges for Adult Nonfiction were **Kim Todd** and **Marlene Targ Brill**.

The winner of the Adult Fiction Award was **Rita Woods** of Homer Glen, Illinois, for *The Last Dreamwalker* (Forge Books).

In a note sent before the program, Judge **Kate McIntyre** wrote, “Woods’ lucid and



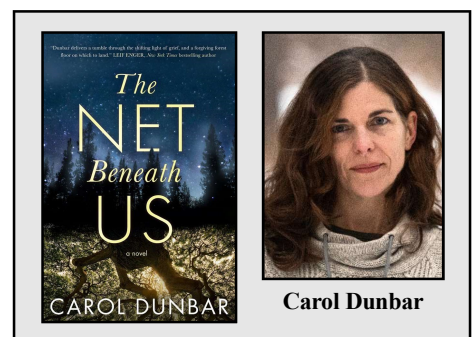
Rita Woods

immersive prose takes readers on an unforgettable journey, across waters and the bounds of consciousness.”

The honorees were **Wendy Wimmer** of Green Bay, Wisconsin, for *Entry Level* (Autumn House Press); **Carol Dunbar** of Superior, Wisconsin, for *The Net Beneath Us* (Forge Books); and **Antonia Angress** of Minneapolis for *Sirens & Muses* (Ballantine Books).



Wendy Wimmer



Carol Dunbar

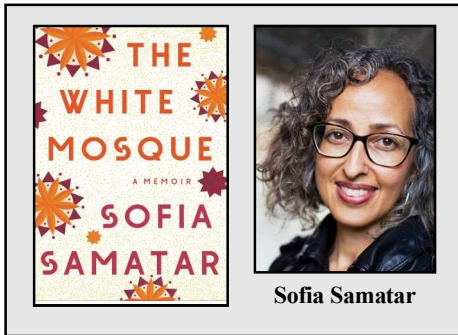


Antonia Angress

Turn to Page 3

Awards Continued from Page 2

The other Adult Fiction judges were **Andrew J. Graff** and **Christina Clancy**.

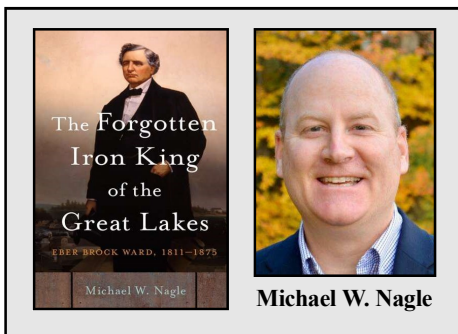


The winner of the Bernard J. Brommel Award for Biography & Memoir was **Sofia Samatar** for *The White Mosque: A Memoir* (Catapult). Samatar was born in Indiana and now teaches in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Judge **Steve Paul** called *The White Mosque* “a captivating book.”

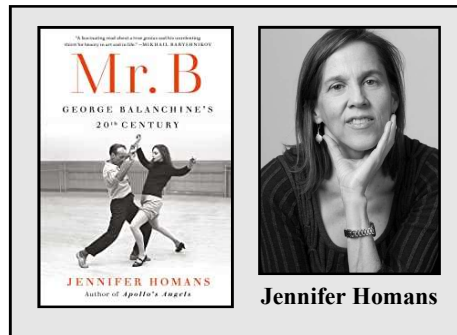
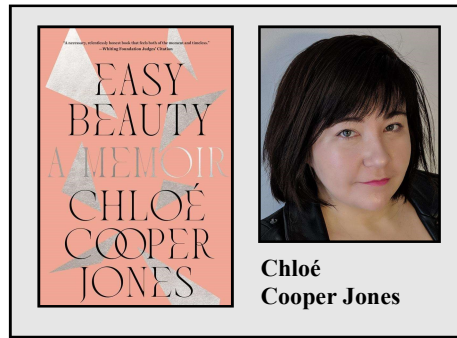
In a video played for the audience, Samatar said, “I want to thank all of you who dwell in language with me.”

The honorees were **Michael W. Nagle** of Ludington, Michigan, for *The Forgotten Iron King of the Great Lakes: Eber Brock Ward, 1811–1875* (Wayne State University Press); **Chloé Cooper Jones** for *Easy Beauty: A Memoir* (Avid Reader Press), and **Jennifer Homans** for *Mr. B: George Balanchine’s 20th Century* (Random House). Jones is from Tonganoxie, Kansas, and now lives in Brooklyn. Homans grew up in Chicago and is now based in New York.



Of *The Forgotten Iron King of the Great Lakes*, Paul’s fellow judge **Robert Remer** said, “It is a thoroughly researched work about one of the wealthiest and most important natural resource barons of the rough-and-tumble 19th century Midwest.”

Of *Easy Beauty*, Remer said, “Cooper Jones suffers from a congenital defect [that causes] almost constant pain from walking and standing. Cooper Jones takes us on a journey showing her determination to have a full life as a university scholar and journalist and mother. ... The writing is simply exquisite.”

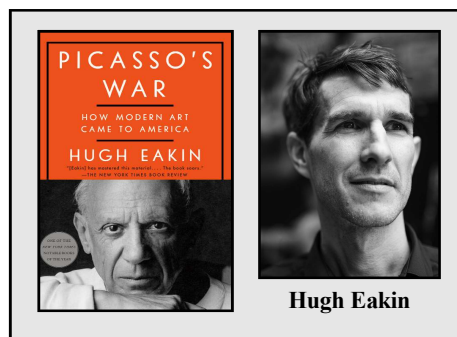


Two days before the Midland Authors awards dinner, it was announced *Easy Beauty* was a Pulitzer Prize finalist, Remer said.

Of *Mr. B*, Paul said, “I could tell from the very beginning that Jennifer Homans’ book was going to be something special. ... [It is] a highly readable biography of a cultural icon.”

The other judge for Biography & Memoir was **Sarah Vogel**.

The winner of the History Award was **Hugh**



Eakin of St. Paul, Minnesota, for *Picasso’s War: How Modern Art Came to America* (Crown).

Reading comments by fellow judge **John Holden**, judge **Dominic Pacyga** said *Picasso’s War* is an “excellent new work.”

The honorees were **Jon K. Lauck** of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, for *The Good Country: A History of the American Midwest, 1800–1900* (University of Oklahoma Press) and **Deborah Cohen** of Chicago for *Last Call at the Hotel Imperial: The Reporters Who Took on a World at War* (Random House).

Turn to Page 4

Biblio File

Continued from Page 2

of Writers and Writing Program’s Sue William Silverman Nonfiction Prize and a Michigan Notable Book Award for her 2022 memoir *As Long As I Know You: The Mom Book*. ... **Patrick McBriarty** and **Christopher Lynch** interviewed fellow SMA member **Claire Hartfield** about her award-winning book *A Few Red Drops: The Chicago Race Riot of 1919* for their Windy City Historians podcast about the Red Summer of 1919. ... **Christina Clancy** is working on a third novel tentatively titled *The Snowbirds*. ... **Craig Sautter** appeared on Midland Authors member **Paul Lisnek’s** WGN Political Report on April 16, speaking about Craig’s book *Inside the Wigwam: Chicago Presidential Conventions 1860–1996* (the co-author is Midland Authors member **Edward M. Burke**) and Chicago’s 2024 Democratic National Convention. Also, one of Craig’s short stories, “Ella,” is scheduled for the forthcoming *Catamaran*, a glossy lit magazine out of California. Another, “Fever,” appeared in a New York surrealistic website/magazine *Neon Garden* #11. ... **Burt Levy** writes, “I was selected to be inducted into the British Sports Car Hall of Fame at this summer’s big vintage meet at Road America, July 13-16. ... **Bill Ott**, former editor and publisher of *Booklist* and winner of the 2004 James Friend Memorial Award, which for many years was presented during the annual Midland Authors book awards, died on April 8. ... **S.L. Wisenberg** was scheduled to read from *The Wandering Womb: Essays in Search of Home* on May 17 at DePaul University and on May 21 at the Chicago Loop Synagogue. ... A dramatic reading of *The Road to Barnhill: Orwell on Jura* by former Midland Authors Board Member **June Sawyers** was presented at Mrs. Murphy and Sons Irish Bistro on June 11 in Chicago. ... **Eldon Ham** wrote “How William Wrigley Jr. brought soap, gum and Chicago baseball broadcasting together” for the April 24 Chicago Sun-Times. ... Midland Authors Recording Secretary **Jim Schwab** was quoted in the May 25 Chicago Tribune in an article

Turn to Page 4

Biblio File

Continued from Page 3

about the danger of summer Chicago heat. ... After more than 30 years, **Augie Aleksy**, who co-presented a Midland Authors program in February, 2010, is closing his Forest Park, Illinois, bookstore, Centuries & Sleuths. ... In March, **Deborah Cohen** was among the winners of awards announced by the J. Anthony Lukas Prize Project. ... **Angela Jackson-Brown** read from some of her work in early March at the Spalding University student center atrium. ... On May 14, **Emilio DeGrazia** was scheduled to read poetry at the Red Wing Arts Depot Gallery in Red Wing, Minnesota. ...

Linda Nemeč Foster's new book, *Bone Country* (Cornerstone Press, 2023), has received "wonderful reviews" from across the country from North of Oxford (an online journal in Philadelphia) to *Zyzyva* (a literary journal in San Francisco). Also – this just in – Linda has won first prize in the 2023 Allen Ginsberg Poetry Contest sponsored by The Poetry Center in New Jersey and the Paterson Literary Review. Linda's poem was selected by the judges from 1,134 poems submitted this year. And, for the second year in a row, Linda's flash fiction was honored by the Fish Anthology in Ireland. Her piece was among the top 10 winners of their annual flash fiction competition and will be published later this year. She was also invited to read her flash fiction at the West Cork Literary Festival in July. And, last but not least, she is one of seven American poets and writers invited to participate in creative writing workshops in Poland this summer. Linda will spend several weeks traveling throughout the country interacting with her Polish colleagues (poets, writers, translators, artists and musicians) as a creative response to Russia's brutal war in Ukraine. She writes to say she "is grateful and honored to be doing this important work." ... **David L. Harrison**



Linda Nemeč Foster

... **David L. Harrison**

Turn to Page 12

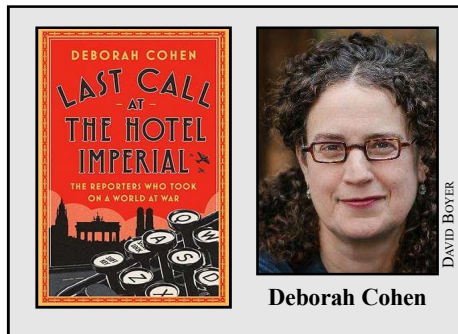
Awards Continued from Page 3



Jon K. Lauck

Pacyga said Lauck "has done more for Midwest history than almost anyone else in the country."

Pacyga said *Last Call at the Hotel Imperial* "is a well written and researched account. ... She keeps the readers interested. ... It is both riveting and fascinating. It reads like a novel."



Deborah Cohen

Cohen discussed *Last Call at the Hotel Imperial* at the Midland Authors' Nov 15 meeting.

The other judge for History was **Joseph Gustaitis**.

The winner of the Children's Fiction Award was **Janet Halfmann** of South Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for *How Can We Be Kind? Wisdom from the Animal Kingdom* (Frances Lincoln Children's Books).



Janet Halfmann

Midland Authors President Gerard Plecki, read a note from Judge **Kelly J. Baptist**, who summarized the opinions of the judges. Of *How Can We Be Kind?*, they said, "It is a reminder that at our core, we are wired to be kind, and thus, this is a necessary story for us all."

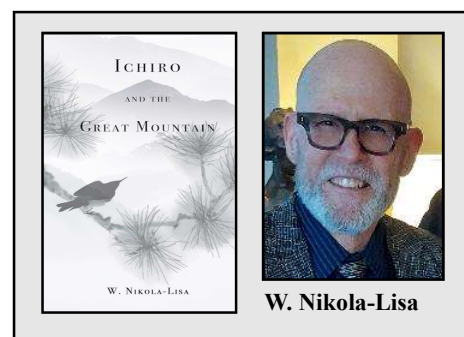
In a video of her acceptance, played for the

audience, Halfmann said, "I wrote this book to try to make the world a more positive place."



Monica Brown

The honorees were **Monica Brown**, who earned a Ph.D. from Ohio State University and now lives in Flagstaff, Arizona, for *El Cuarto Turquesa/The Turquoise Room* (Lee & Low Books); **W. Nikola-Lisa** of Chicago for *Ichiro*



W. Nikola-Lisa

and *The Great Mountain* (Gyroscope Books), and **Kelly Barnhill** of Minneapolis for *The Ogress and the Orphans* (Algonquin Young Readers).



Kelly Barnhill

Of *El Cuarto Turquesa/The Turquoise Room*, the judges said, "This is a beautiful celebration of art, creativity and the importance of family legacy."

Of *Ichiro and the Great Mountain*, the judges said, "Set in ancient Japan, this folk tale follows young Ichiro through the stages of life. Ichiro lives with his parents on the great mountain but searches for 'greener pastures' and new adventures in far off places until he finds true contentment and self-realization."

Turn to Page 5

Awards Continued from Page 4

In accepting the award, Nikola-Lisa said he had the idea for the book for years. Finally, he thought, “Now I have a vision for it. And then, poof, it becomes a book.”

The judges called *The Ogress and the Orphans*, “a timely and spellbinding fantasy about the power of generosity and love, kindness, empathy, the importance of books and libraries and what it means to be a good neighbor.”

The other judges for Children’s Fiction were **Laura Hirshfield** and **Sandra Renner**.



The winner of the Children’s Reading Round Table Award for Children’s Nonfiction was **Jingmai O’Connor** of Chicago for *When Dinosaurs Conquered the Skies: The Incredible Story of Bird Evolution* (Words & Pictures).

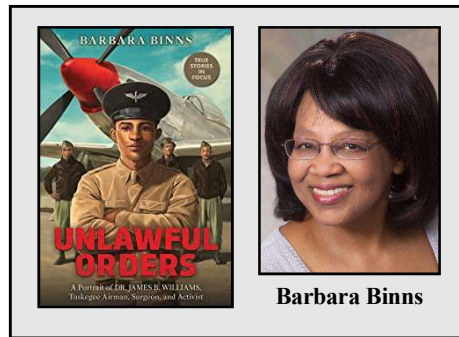
Of *When Dinosaurs Conquered the Skies*, Judge **Suzanne Slade** said, “I couldn’t put it down.”

The honorees were **Jill Esbaum**, of Dixon, Iowa, for *Jack Knight’s Brave Flight: How One Gutsy Pilot Saved the U.S. Air Mail Service* (Calkins Creek); **Barbara Binns** of Arlington Heights, Illinois, for *Unlawful Orders: A Portrait of Dr. James B. Williams, Tuskegee Airman, Surgeon, and Activist* (Scholastic Focus), and **Sally M. Walker** of DeKalb, Illinois, for *Underground Fire: Hope, Sacrifice and Courage in the Cherry Mine Disaster* (Candlewick).

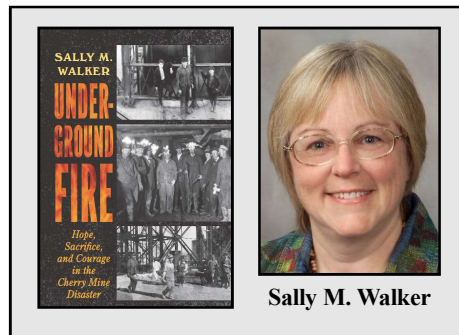


Slade said *Jack Knight’s Brave Flight* tells the story of how Knight’s flight proved airmail “was reliable and safe.”

Of *Unlawful Orders*, Slade said, “This was a



lovely read, so many details, so well-researched.” *Underground Fire*, Slade said, “is



a wonderful book.”
The other judges for Children’s Nonfiction were **Laurie Lawlor** and **Marianne Malone**.



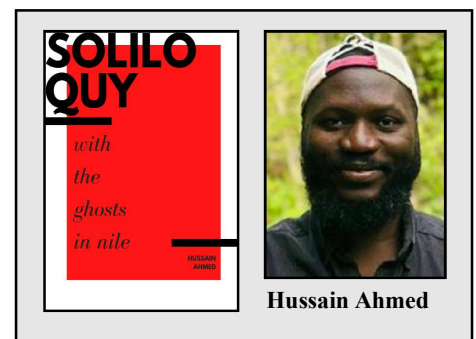
The winner of the Poetry Award was **Sun Yung Shin** of Minneapolis for *The Wet Hex* (Coffee House Press).

Judge **Simone Muench** said *The Wet Hex* “is powerfully structured in the tradition of tragedy.”

The honorees were **Katie Marya** of Lincoln,



Nebraska, for *Sugar Work* (Alice James Books); **Courtney Faye Taylor** of Kansas City, Missouri, for *Concentrate* (Graywolf Press), and **Hussain Ahmed**, a Ph.D. student at the University of Cincinnati, for *Soliloquy*



with the Ghosts in Nile (Black Ocean).

The other judges for Poetry were **Jackie K. White** and **Tara Betts**.

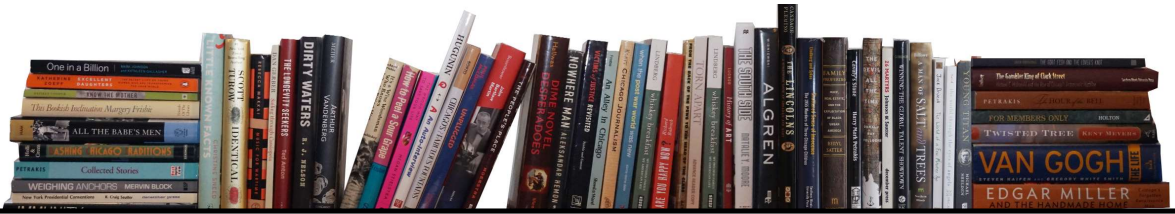
The Society of Midland Authors, founded in 1915 by a group of authors including **Hamlin Garland**, **Harriet Monroe**, **Clarence Darrow**, **James Whitcomb Riley** and **Vachel Lindsay**, has given out annual awards since 1957 and additional awards not on an annual basis in earlier years.

Lisnek said the Midland Authors “seeks to highlight talented authors, like many of you, their wonderful books, regardless of the topics, and the good news is this group is not about banning books. I’m not getting political.”

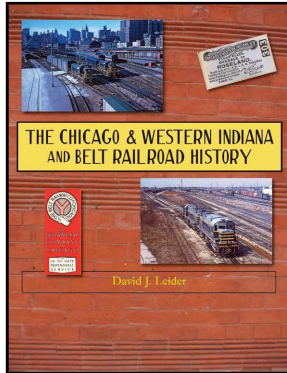
The juried competition is open to authors who live in, were born in, or have strong ties to Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota or Wisconsin.

Notable winners have included **Saul Bellow**, **Kurt Vonnegut**, **Studs Terkel**, **Gwendolyn Brooks**, **Mike Royko**, **Jane Smiley**, **Dempsey Travis**, **Leon Forrest**, **William Maxwell**, **Louise Erdrich**, **Scott Turow**, **Alex Kotlowitz**, **Aleksandar Hemon**, **Harry Mark Petrakis**, **Stuart Dybek**, **William Shirer** and **Roger Ebert**.

This year’s winners received a \$500 award and a recognition plaque.



Literary Latest



SECOND BOOK IN SERIES

David Leider tells Literary Latest, “I am happy to announce that the second book in my series on the Terminal and Belt Railroads of Chicago has been released. *The Chicago & Western Indiana and Belt Railroad History* joins the *Baltimore & Ohio Chicago Terminal History* in documenting the terminal railroads of Chicago. The book traces the history of the Chicago & Western Indiana Railroad from before its inception, including its battles to get to the center of the city and build its depot. The story continues through its sale to the Missouri Pacific in 1981 and the formation of Amtrak.

“The book includes short histories of its five proprietary lines, the Chicago & Eastern Illinois, the Chicago & Grand Trunk, the Wabash, the Erie, the Monon and its lessee, the Santa Fe.

“In addition, it follows the development of the Belt Railway of Chicago. It includes the history of the Chicago Union Transfer Railway, its rebuilding of Clearing Yard and sale to the Belt. In 1952, the Belt purchased its property from the C&WI and emerged as an independent company. It went through some hard times after deregulation but today is an energetic, vibrant company.

“I had access to a wide variety of materials from various sources, including original documents, manuscripts and more.”



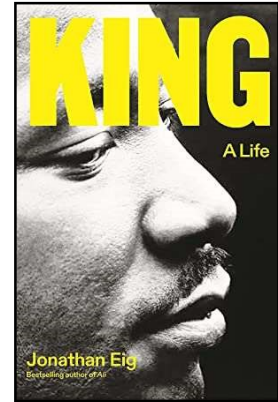
OUT IN EARLY AUGUST

Susan Croce Kelly write to say, “The University of Arkansas Press has just let me know that my book, *Newspaperwoman of the Ozarks, the Life & Times of Lucile Morris Upton*, will be out in early August.

It is a long-overdue study of one of the region’s best-known reporters and local historians. A longtime reporter and columnist at Springfield newspapers during a time when the remote Ozarks was reshaped from back country into a national vacation hub and the role of women in the United States shifted drastically. In this significant contribution to the historical research of Ozarkers’ daily lives, I traced Upton’s life, from teaching school to covering the news – from crime to politics – to governing her city and raising awareness for historic preservation. The book paints a vivid picture of Ozarks culture over nearly a century of change. Behind Upton’s efforts was her own story: one of diligence, of adventure found in everyday moments and of her role in the women’s movement before it carried that title. *Newspaperwoman of the Ozarks* shares that story.”



Susan Croce Kelly



SIX YEARS OF WORK

Jonathan Eig wrote recently, “Finally, after six years of work, my MLK biography launches today. I know, it feels like I’ve been talking about this for 60 years, and I thank you for your patience and your support.

“Hey, I love writing books. And this is the best and most important book I’ve ever written. The main reason my King book is getting so much love and buzz is King. He matters. We need him. We need his voice, and we need his story. If my book helps us connect with him again, helps us learn from him again, I will feel an extraordinary sense of satisfaction.”

In an interview about *King: A Life* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, May 16, 2023), Eig said he had realized it had been 30 to 40 years since the last big biographies of King had been written and that since then a lot of new archival material had become available.

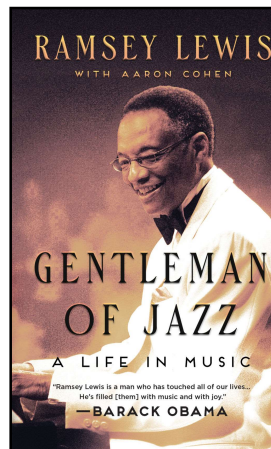
In the course of his research, Eig found that an often repeated statement by author Alex Haley that King accused Malcolm X of “fiery, demagogic oratory” was wrong. The transcripts of the interview on which that was based showed no such remark.

The New York Times’ Dwight Garner called the book, “Supple, penetrating, heartstring-pulling and compulsively readable.”

Turn to Page 7

Literary Latest

Continued from Page 6



NEW AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Aaron Cohen is co-author of *Gentleman of Jazz* (Blackstone Publishing, May 9, 2023), an autobiography of Ramsey Lewis.

From the publisher: “This immersive new autobiography provides insight into the early life and illustrious career of the late great Ramsey Lewis, one of the most popular jazz pianists of all time.

“Beginning with his childhood growing up in Chicago’s Cabrini Green neighborhood, Lewis recounts his memories of the music in his parents’ church and his early piano lessons. As he learned classical technique, Lewis also absorbed jazz records



Aaron Cohen

and heard gospel music weekly, finally becoming a performer himself in his teenage years. With his co-author and collaborator, Aaron Cohen, Lewis describes his early steps in jazz from joining The Clefs in the ’50s, to eventually establishing The Ramsey Lewis Trio.”

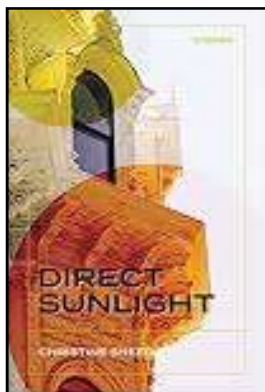
SEVENTH BOOK

Christine Sneed’s seventh book, *Direct Sunlight*, will be published in June by Northwestern University Press.

Sneed writes to say, “It’s actually a story collection, and is my seventh book

(which includes an anthology I edited; the other six books are just me as the author).

“I wrote the stories in *Direct Sunlight* over the last eight or so years, writing



them while often working on a novel. After assembling the collection, I noticed there are three or four stories with animal



Christine Sneed

characters in important roles – a capuchin monkey, squirrels, a miniature horse. Not sure why this is the case, but I’ve always loved animals in stories.”

Booklist wrote, “[T]his hugely impressive collection shows Sneed’s range, humor and mastery of her craft.”

A PATHOLOGIST’S INSIGHT

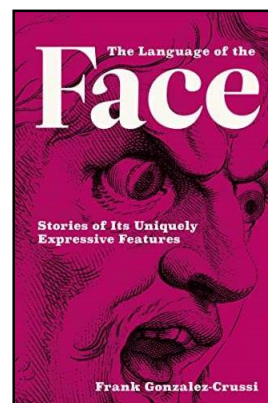
If you want to know why **Frank Gonzalez-Crussi** wrote *The Language of the Face* (The MIT Press, March 7, 2023), here is what the author tells Literary Latest:

“As a pathologist, much of what I have written refers to the body. I was driven to write *The Language of the Face* upon reflecting on the curious fact that the face is perhaps no more than 5 percent of the body surface, yet exerts a massively disproportionate effect on our lives.”

From the publisher, “*In The Language of the Face*, a marvelously comprehensive exploration of the pseudoscience of

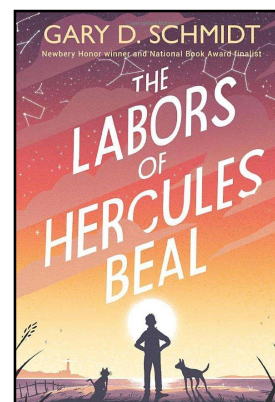


Frank Gonzalez-Crussi



physiognomy, Frank Gonzalez-Crussi considers over a millennium’s worth of primary sources to paint a splendid portrait of the face’s cultural symbology.”

The Boston Globe wrote, “Gonzalez-Crussi employs a full expression of sources and draws from a range of disciplines ... all of it expressed with verve, wit and a contagious enthusiasm and curiosity.”



‘SIGNATURE NARRATIVE STYLE’

Gary D. Schmidt, the winner of the 2008 Midland Authors Children’s Fiction Award and a 2009 Children’s Fiction finalist, has a new book out titled *The Labors of Hercules Beal* (Clarion Books, May 23, 2023).

Schmidt tells Literary Latest, “*The Labors of Hercules Beal* is a contemporary novel in which a middle school kiddo is given the yearlong assignment of re-liv-



Gary D. Schmidt

Turn to Page 8

Sign up for Sept 9-10 Printers Row

The Printers Row Lit Fest, the Midwest's largest outdoor literary festival, is returning on Saturday, Sept. 9, and Sunday, Sept. 10 – 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 \$30 for most time slots – or just

SATURDAY, SEPT. 9	SUNDAY, SEPT. 10
10 a.m.-noon	10 a.m.-noon
noon-2 p.m.	noon-2 p.m.
2-4 p.m.	2-4 p.m.
4-6 p.m.	4-6 p.m.

\$20 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.

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% dis-



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 at the 2022 Printers Row Litfest. (Photo by Greg Borzo)

count 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 at jagustaitis@yahoo.com.

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.

The Midland Authors has been at Printers Row since **Richard Lindberg**

and **Carol Carlson** started the tradition in 2000, as, Lindberg said, “a means of showcasing and promoting the aims of the Society and the fine work of our author members for a nominal fee – far less than what individuals might otherwise pay were they to reserve a table on their own.”

Authors should prepare for gusts of wind and not be surprised if it rains. Authors can pay for their time slot by sending \$30 to our post office box at Society of Midland Authors, P.O. Box 10419, Chicago 60610. Or they can visit our website at www.midlandauthors.org and pay via PayPal.

Literary Latest

Continued from Page 7

ing the 12 labors of Hercules as his teacher's way of helping him to deal with the grief of losing his family – the same situation that inspires the gods to assign the mythical Hercules the tasks.

“While much of the novel handles these labors playfully, the book is also exploring the ways in which these stories have subtly interacted with our sense of how these stories have helped to define who we are as human beings.”

Publishers Weekly wrote: “Schmidt employs his signature narrative style, balancing scenes of humor and affecting gravity.”

NEW MYSTERY SERIES

Minerva Keen's Detective Club (JIMMY Patterson, May 1, 2023) is **Keir Graff's** latest book (See Literary License,



Keir Graff

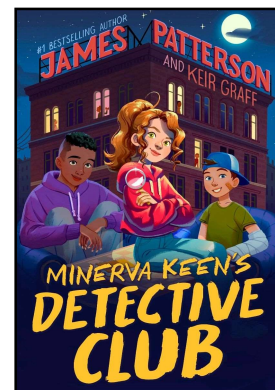
October, 2022). He wrote it in collaboration with James Patterson.

“It's set right here in Chicago,” Graff said at the Midland Authors' April 11 program.

From the publisher:

“To clear her name and help the police crack the case, Minerva starts her own detective club. So what if it has only two other members, one being Minerva's accident-prone daredevil brother and the other

being the biggest and quietest kid in school, who happens to be afraid of his own shadow? Minerva knows that with her brainpower, the club's sleuthing skills, and case files full of suspects, they can unmask the poisoner. ... This page-turning new mystery series is packed with thrills, chills, laughs and unforgettable characters and will leave kids eager to join the best club around.”





FROM LEFT:
James Klise,
Zetta Elliott,
Natasha
Tarpley and
moderator Keir
Graff.

Authors discuss writing for children

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

The Midland Authors’ April 11 program at the Cliff Dwellers Club in Chicago, which included **Zetta Elliott, James Klise and Natasha Tarpley**, was moderated by **Keir Graff**.

To open the program, the authors talked about the wide array of categories for books written for children.

“People are confused about these things, and understandably,” Graff said.

There are board books, picture books, early readers, chapter books, middle-grade books, young adult books and adult books for teens.

But Tarpley said, “For me I don’t look at my books in that kind of way.” Klise added, “These are publisher-generated labels, and everyone reads at their own level.”

Elliott said, “Kids tend to read up.”

“An eight-year-old doesn’t want to read about an eight-year-old,” she said. “They want to read about a 10-year-old.”

“YA books can mean everything from books for seventh- to eighth-graders through high school,” Klise said. “A tricky one is that ‘tween’ category.”

Asked by Graff how she pitches ideas for picture books, Tarpley described one of her characters and said, “I was really excited about that little girl’s life. ... I really wanted to delve into that. So I pitched that as a series.”

Tarpley said she sold her first book without an agent, but has also worked with an agent. Over time, it has become much more difficult to sell a book without an agent, she said.

Elliott said she’s written 42 books, but had to self-publish two thirds of them.

Now, “Publishers won’t accept un-agented submissions,” she said. And if you are writing a series, you have to stay with the same publisher, she added.

Klise said, “Anyone who tries to write for the market – we have to write what gets us excited.”

Graff said, “Clearly this is a challenge for many writers and many of their books.”



TOP RIGHT PHOTO: David Hunter and Walter Podrazik. **CENTER RIGHT:** Carol Fisher Saller, Natasha Tarpley and James Klise. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** James Walker and Gerard Plecki.

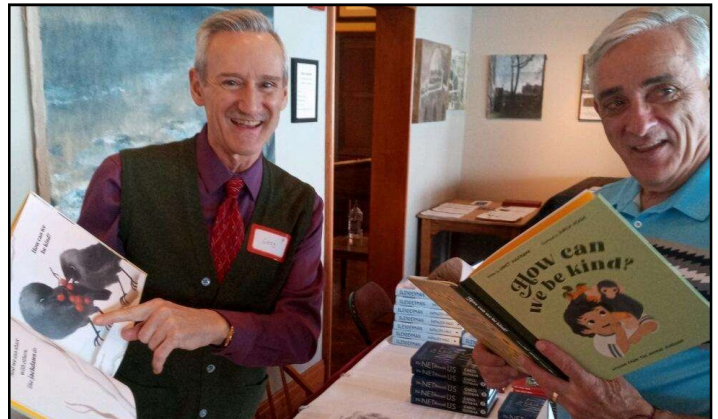
67th annual book awards



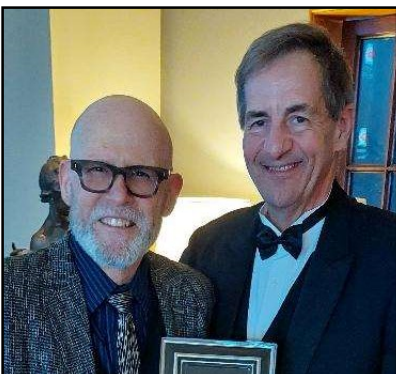
Some of the awardees at the Midland Authors May 9 book awards gather in the dining room of the Cliff Dwellers Club of Chicago. From left: Barbara Binns, Rita Woods, Kathleen Hale, Michael W. Nagle, Deborah Cohen, Hugh Eakin, Jon K. Lauck, W. Nikola-Lisa and Master of Ceremonies Paul Lisnek. The Midland Authors has been giving out annual book awards since 1957. (Photo by Walter Podrazik)



Michael W. Nagle, Craig Sautter and Buffy Nagle enjoy the pleasant weather on the scenic Cliff Dwellers patio before the start of the May 9 program. (Photo by Walter Podrazik)



Midland Authors Treasurer Greg Borzo and Jim Wales look over the award-winning books at the May 9 book awards before the start of the program. (Photo by Walter Podrazik)



FAR LEFT: W. Nikola-Lisa and Gerard Plecki. (Photo by Walter Podrazik)



CENTER: Rita Woods and Paul Lisnek. (Photo by Walter Podrazik)



LEFT: Thomas Frisbie (Photo by Margaret Frisbie)

An authors' evening with wit, candor

BY CAROL FISHER SALLER
AND GERARD PLECKI

Members of both the Midland Authors and Sisters in Crime helped pack the house at Volumes Bookcafe on April 22 to hear Diamond Dagger-winning mystery writers Ann Cleeves and Sara Paretsky.

Agatha Award-winning **Lori Rader-Day** posed questions to the two world-renowned writers, who delighted the audience with their wit and candor.

Titled "A Night of Tea & Cookies & Murder" on April 22 at Volumes Bookcafe in Chicago, the 45-minute panel discussion was moderated by Midland Authors member Rader-Day, who delineated differences between series-writing versus stand-alone books, and provided fascinating details about the various sources of inspiration from which each of the writers drew.

The authors very poignantly addressed

the issue of how their writing processes were affected by personal tragedies, such as the loss of a spouse.

The writers answered questions from an audience of 50 mystery-lovers about their first novels, and they shared the typical responses they received from various publishers that reviewed and rejected those manuscripts.

The Chicago audience was fortunate to hear three best-selling authors speak so candidly of their craft.

On that Saturday evening, with signed copies of those authors' books in hand, attendees left the seminar with the knowledge they had shared a uniquely personal experience with three

authors whose works will no doubt keep them awake later that evening and for years to come.

Cleeves is the multimillion-copy best-selling author behind three hit television series – "Shetland," starring Douglas Henshall; "Vera," starring Academy



Sara Paretsky



Ann Cleeves



Lori Rader-Day

Award Nominee Brenda Blethyn, and "The Long Call," starring Ben Aldridge.

New Members

Colleen Taylor Sen is the author or editor of eight books, mainly on culinary history.

Her titles include *Curry: A Global History and Feasts and Fasts: A History of Food in India*, both published by Reaktion Books, and the latter named one of the best food books of the year in 1996 by Vogue and The Smithsonian magazine.

She is also the co-editor of the *Chicago Food Encyclopedia* (University of Illinois Press, Aug. 16, 2017); *Street Food around the World: An Encyclopedia of Food and Culture* (ABC Clío, Sept. 9, 2013), and



Colleen Taylor Sen

The Bloomsbury Handbook of Indian Cuisine (Bloomsbury Academic, Feb. 23, 2023),

Her first non-food-related book is *Ashoka and the Maurya Dynasty: The History and Legacy of Ancient India's Greatest Empire* (Reaktion Books, Nov. 23, 2022) and she has written or co-edited additional books on South Indian

food history, street food and Chicago food.

Born in Toronto, Sen has been a resident of Chicago since 1968. She holds a B.A. and M.A. from the University of Toronto and a Ph.D. from Columbia University, all in Slavic languages and literatures.

After a brief spell in academia at Roosevelt University, she joined the Institute of Gas Technology, a research institute affiliated with IIT, where she held various editorial, policy and management positions from 1975 to 2017.

Meanwhile, as a freelancer she contributed articles on chess, travel, dogs and food to the Chicago Tribune, Chicago Sun-Times, Food Arts, Travel and Leisure and other publications.

In 1996, Sen began presenting papers at the Oxford Symposia on Food and Cookery, which resulted in her first book contract for *Food Culture in India* (Greenwood, July 30, 2004).

Her books have been translated into Arabic, Chinese, Japanese and Korean.

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 **Marlene Targ Brill, Thomas Frisbie, Connie**

Goddard, Joe Gustaitis, Ann Durkin Keating, Syed Haider, Jim Schwab, Dick Simpson, Lynn Voedisch and Jim Walker, who made recent contributions.

Slate of 2023-24 officers and board

Midland Authors has a slate of candidates for officer and board positions for the 2023-24 year.

If any member wishes to submit alternate candidates for any of these positions, that member should contact an officer or a member of the existing board. In that case, a mail election by all members will be held for open seats.

Otherwise, Midland Authors members attending the Oct. 10 program will vote on whether to ratify the slate.

Here are the officers and board members on the slate.

Officers

President: Gerard Plecki
Vice-President: Walter Podrazik
Corresponding Secretary: Mary Wisniewski
Membership Secretary: Thomas Frisbie
Recording Secretary: Jim Schwab
Treasurer: Greg Borzo

Board Members (Three three-year year terms that expire in 2026)

Joseph Gustaitis David Witter
Dick Simpson

(An unexpired term that expires in 2025)

Sharon Woodhouse

Anyone interested in the appointed position of program chair should contact President Gerry Plecki.

Biblio File

Continued from Page 4

writes to say, "I now have a firm pub date of Sept. 27 for my new collaboration with Tim Rasinski and Laura Robb, titled *Promote Reading Gains with Differentiated Instruction, Out with Teacher Created Materials*. Also, I learned I've been selected to have my own star in the Walk of Fame in downtown Marshfield,

Missouri. The Walk of Fame honors six famous Missourians each year with a sidewalk star in the historic downtown district. I've also been nominated for the fifth time for the post of Missouri Poet Laureate." ... **Geraldine K. Piorkowski** wrote "The Illusion of Control" for the April 15 *Psychology Today*. ... On March 14, **Harriette Gillem Robinet** received the Fuller Award for Lifetime Achievement from the Chicago Literary

Hall of Fame. ... **Walter Podrazik** has updated *Watching TV: Eight Decades of American Television*. ... **Edward Hirsch**, who presented the Midland Authors' April, 2013 program, wrote "I Am Going Blind, and I Now Find It Strangely Exhilarating" for the March 23 *New York Times*. ... **Amina Gautier** will be the 2023-24 Association of Marquette University Women chair in humanistic studies at Marquette University.

Address Service Requested
Chicago IL 60610
P.O. Box 10419
Society of Midland Authors
Literary License