

## Biblio File

**Robert Marovich** was given a lifetime achievement award at the Prayze Factor gospel music award ceremony in Atlanta on Sept. 16. ... **Michael Ebner** wrote “What does Harry Truman’s 1948 bid for re-election tell us about Joe Biden’s chances?” for the Aug. 13 Kansas City Star. ... Former SMA President **James L. Merriner** was scheduled to speak about “Public Corruption: Why So Much of It? Can We Fix It?” at the Winnetka Library, Oct. 5 at 7 p.m. Jim says, “I am summing up what I have learned about corruption and reform in a 50-year career and after six books.” ... **Michele Weldon** was named to Newcity’s “Lit50 2023,” which chronicles the most important literary influences in Chicago; she is in the non-fiction category. She also recently did a TEDx Wilmette talk, “Truth Is A Dare: The Power of Claiming Your Story” and has a chapter in the anthology *Gifted-ish: Women and Nonbinary Writers on Intelligence, Identity and Education*



Michele Weldon

(McFarland), out in September. Her seventh book, *The Time We Have: Essays on Pandemic Living*, is due out in spring 2024 through Northwestern University Press. Lit50 also included **Rita Woods, Tracy Clark, Rachel Swearingen** and **James Kennedy**. ... Academic Studies Press has translated **Joan Cashin’s** 2018 book *War Stuff: The Struggle for Human and Environmental Resources in the American Civil War* into Russian, the first monograph on the American Civil War to be translated into that language. ... **Dave Hoekstra** has three pieces in *Prine on Prine: Interviews & Encounters*, which traces the songwriting legend’s life through the media, cookbooks, films, hot rod magazines and the Library of

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## King’s story needed to be told ‘more intimately,’ author says



Jonathan Eig (left) and Greg Borzo, who introduced Eig at the Sept. 12 Midland Authors program at the Harold Washington Library Center in Chicago. (Photo by Walter Podrazik)

BY THOMAS FRISBIE

An intrepid audience came to hear intrepid author **Jonathan Eig** talk about his new biography on Sept. 12 despite a bomb threat having been emailed earlier in the day at the Harold Washington Library Center in Chicago. Police had swept the building before the event started.

Eig, author of six books, four of them New York Times best-sellers, said he wrote *King: A Life* to deepen the nation’s understanding of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Also, he said, there was a “closing window of opportunity” to interview people who knew King well.

“[In 68 years] we have turned King into a monument,” Eig said. “But in the process of doing that we have lost sight of him as a human being. ... His story needed to be told more intimately. ... I wrote

this book to humanize King.”

The Midland Authors program, co-sponsored by the Chicago Public Library, was part of the library’s “Voices For Justice” series. *King: A Life* is the first major biography in decades of King.

Eig began by reading the first sentence of the prologue to his book: “On Dec. 5, 1955, a young Black man became one of America’s founding fathers.”

After reading it, Eig said, “He became a founding father that day, I say, because he – this young man – did more to fulfill the promise than the other founding fathers had made in writing the Bill of Rights, the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence. They had promised this was going to be a country where all men were created equal, but it had not borne out that way. ... But this young man who took the podium in 1955 had an idea

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Congress and which was scheduled to arrive Sept. 12. ... **Robert Loerzel** was one of the writers for a new documentary in the WTTW series "Chicago Stories." He tells us, "I worked with producer Eddie Griffin on 'The Race to Reverse the River,' airing at 8 p.m. Sept. 29. It's part of a new season that begins Sept. 22 – with other episodes that I'm excited to see myself!" ... **Linda Neme Foster's** new book, *Bone Country*, was featured on the online program, New Books Network. The interview was conducted by poet and editor Megan Wildhood. Also, one of Linda's prose poems published in *Bone Country* was selected to be included in the award-winning anthology, *Best Spiritual Literature* (2023). The piece, "The Cloud Sleeps on the Mountain," was one of only 17 works of poetry and prose accepted for publication after being nominated by editor Clare MacQueen. Other poets and writers selected include T.R. Hummer and Robert Wrigley. The anthology will be published by Orison Books in December. ... **Amber Ruffin** has been chosen to write the 21st century

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## Literary License

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# King biography

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about how this could be accomplished."

King went on to help lead the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott and became a leader in the fight for civil rights across the nation, Eig said.

"He was able to find this voice that spoke to everyone," Eig said. "... He had this ability to combine the words of the Constitution and the words of the Bible."

Eig said he was fortunate to begin his interviews before COVID-19 started so he could travel the country and talk to people. After COVID hit, he was able to make follow-up calls to people who were stuck at home because of the pandemic.

In doing his research, Eig unearthed several troves of previously unreported information about King.

First, he was able to find the unpublished autobiography of Martin Luther King Sr.

"The King family didn't know it existed until I found it," Eig said.

He also found audiotapes Coretta Scott King had made for her memoir that were in the possession of a ghostwriter who worked with Coretta Scott King on her manuscript.

"I know I am the first book writer who had access to those tapes," Eig said.

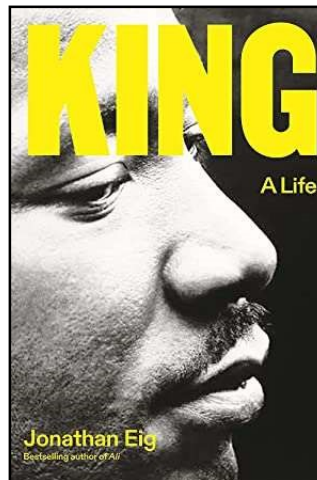
Eig said also was fortunate to find the papers of the personal archivist for former President Lyndon Johnson, Lawrence D. Reddick, at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem, including thousands of pages of every meeting with King and the SLSC [Southern Christian Leadership Conference].

"But I think maybe the more important

discovery I made was in the papers belonging to LBJ's secretary, Mildred Stegall," Eig said. "They had not been opened yet, they had not been declassified. But I was able to request declassification. And what they showed is that LBJ and J. Edgar Hoover were in constant communication, sometimes two or three times a week, discussing Martin Luther King."

The FBI already had labeled King a threat to national security after the bus boycott. The tapes showed how it was not an issue of national security, but Hoover's personal obsession.

"And King knew it, he understood it, and yet continued to stand up for what he believed in," Eig said.



Watch the full Jonathan Eig program on YouTube at  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hO3f67pgptQ>

## Join us at Wisconsin open house

The Midland Authors Board of Directors is welcoming all members to a Wisconsin Authors Open House.

The open house will be held at the Milwaukee office of board member Sharon Woodhouse for a cocktail reception and a chance to meet Wisconsin authors and introduce them to the Midland Authors and the possibility of membership.

The event is open to all authors, members and non-members of any state, but space is limited. Please RSVP.

**WHERE:** Everything Goes Media/Conspire Creative, 316 N

Milwaukee St, Suite 208

**WHEN:** Friday, Oct. 20, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

**BONUS:** The Open House is in Milwaukee's Third Ward, a downtown neighborhood filled with art galleries, creative businesses, performing arts venues, restaurants, bars and lots of charm.

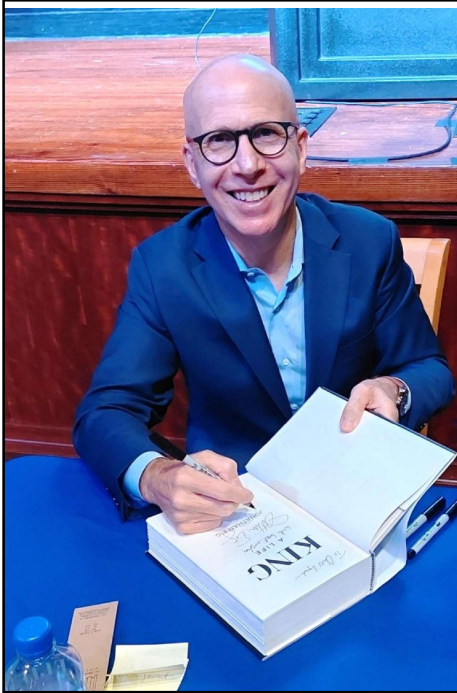
This evening is also Gallery Night in the Third Ward (till 9 p.m.), so after the Open House, stick around to visit the many open art galleries within walking distance.

**RSVP:** By Tuesday, Oct. 17, to [sharon@conspirecreative.com](mailto:sharon@conspirecreative.com).

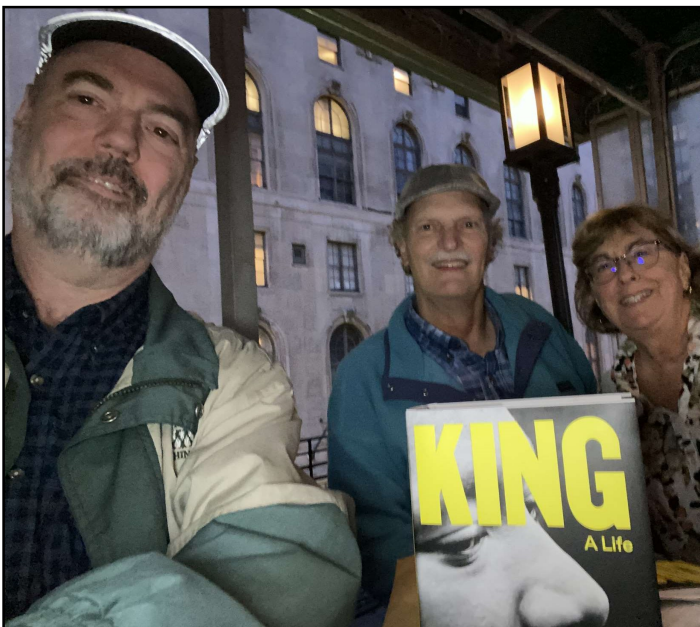


# Authors gather after Sept. program

After Jonathan Eig signed books at the Harold Washington Library Center (photo below by Walter Podrazik), those who attended the program repaired to the rooftop seating at the nearby Plymouth Grill to discuss Eig's program.



Jim Sikora, Margaret Kulujian and Mary Wisniewski. (Photo by Thomas Frisbie)



ABOVE: John Holden, Thomas Frisbie and Dorothea Frisbie. RIGHT: Jean Schwab, Jim Schwab and Craig Sautter. (Photos by John Holden, above, and Thomas Frisbie, right)





# ‘Place can drive the story and have a

Three authors will present the Oct. 17 program on writing short stories focused on a single, fictional place, such as Winesburg, Ohio.

The authors are **Janice Deal**, who wrote *Strange Attractors: The Ephrem Stories* about the fictional Ephrem, Illinois; **Ryan Elliott Smith**, who wrote *Fly Over This: Stories From the New Midwest* and **Christina Marrocco**, who wrote *Addio, Love Monster*. Here’s what Deal and Marrocco tell Literary License:

**Literary License:** *Eudora Welty said, “Fiction depends for its life on place.” Why did you center your story collection on one fictional community?*

**Janice Deal:** I love the idea of place as character; like characters, place can drive the story and have a personality all its own. A community can provide comfort, or be a prison. Ephrem in *Strange Attractors* is its own character, informing the lives of its inhabitants even as it evolves or implodes along with them.

In Ephrem, I created a fictional town on the border of Illinois and Wisconsin. It’s an exurb – not quite rural, but not exactly urban, either. There’s a community college, there’s a dying mall. Setting all these stories in Ephrem allowed me to explore the notion of an environment exerting its influence over time. And an exurban Midwestern town really spoke to me. I tend to be drawn to humble locales. And I am interested in the ways human truths flourish in these often overlooked communities.

**Christina Marrocco:** First, I’d like to concur with Welty. It’s no surprise, but she’s right. I believe good fiction does depend for its life on place. This is not just a consideration for me in my writing but also in what I chose to read for pleasure. I am completely carried away by a book or story that has beautifully developed sense of place. Place, for me, is a large, ever-present character unto itself. It’s made up of the geography, the history and the sensibilities of the human (and sometimes animal) characters who inhabit that place. My collection had to be centered as it was for several reasons, many of which I fully recognize only as I

**Oct. 17, 2023, program**

**Cliff Dwellers**  
**200 S. Michigan Avenue**  
**22nd floor**  
**6 p.m. - Social Hour**  
**7 p.m. - Program**  
**Free - donations accepted**

answer this question. Let’s take it apart.

First, stories like those I wrote for *Addio, Love Monster* could have been set in a variety of existing communities – spread out throughout Chicagoland – in communities that are mentioned as neighbors in the collection. However, I could not have developed the same resonance in without crowding them into one space. My characters, neighbors, enemies, family and so on needed to rub against one another so they must be in close proximity. So they live on Singer Street, packed in like sardines.

The second thing to look at is why it’s a fictional place. I could have selected one of the very real suburbs that surround the fictional Mulberry Park: Melrose Park, Franklin Park, Stone Park, Forest Park. I could have set them in Chicago, but the timbre of the city is different. The thing is, fictional Mulberry Park gave me larger freedoms – more room to invent, less worry about either being inaccurate to a “real” place or too accurate to a “real” place. It lent itself to a touch of magic. It kept (hopefully) readers from imagining they saw their family members co-opted into the book. It was the perfect space for fiction that is heavily informed by observation and history. In my mind, Mulberry Park is like an invisible sibling of the “Parks” that border it. Ethereal and yet absolutely real. In some ways, more real with that capital T truth.

**Literary License:** *Is writing a collection of linked stories more of a challenge than writing a set of independent stories?*

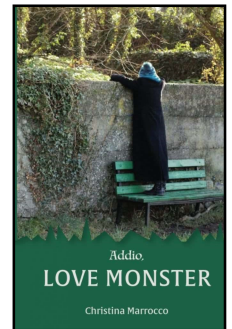
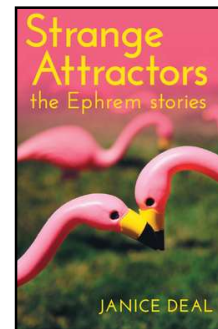
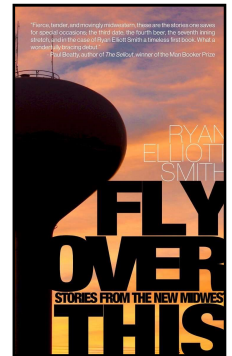
**Christina Marrocco:** It’s difficult to weigh up challenges.

Writing itself is a challenge, always. And I congratulate and commiserate with everyone driven to do it. Today, I sat back and thought about this question for quite a

while, because there were so many “yes, buts” occurring to me. Even in a collection of independent short stories, there’s the need for some type of complementary flow – if it’s good. And that takes a lot of planning as well. Of a more subtle sort.

These linked stories, if there’s to be any value to their linkage, must perform the old two plus two equals five equation. What I mean by that is that the connections and the various points of view must offer the reader additional insight – beyond what any character might enjoy, beyond what a narrator alone can offer. For this collection, I felt the linkages were tiny treasure boxes to be opened along the way as each character had his or her day.

Now, is that a challenge? Yes, yes, it is, but it’s also a boon. A writer can do so much with those boxes. And I think it speaks to a larger truth outside of writing, that we understand ourselves so differently than others may understand



ourselves, that time and perspective shift everything. That there is no good or bad person, no good or bad character. The linking allows this way of looking at the human condition to rise to the top of the page. There’s an awful lot of body work that has to happen in revision when you link stories – not in invention – in revision. Again, it’s a challenge. But again, it’s a tool – like writing in form can be for poets. It presses out a very different wine than you would get without the constraint. One thing is for sure: it works your mem-

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# personality all its own'

ory. It forces the writer to corral and deeply feel every one of the characters for authenticity perhaps more deeply. Because they are going to show up again from a different angle, and you had better allow yourself to know them down to the tips of their toes. Even to know their confusion and their unpredictability where and when those arise. Writing a large set of linked short stories lies in a crevice between writing a standard novel and writing a set of shorts. It's everything both of those are plus all the exponential surprises. You've got to enjoy complications.

**Janice Deal:** There was an organic flow to the process of writing the stories in *Strange Attractors* that really delighted me, a certain momentum that developed because one story led – not effortlessly, exactly – but smoothly to the next. This was a new experience for me. In my first story collection, *The Decline of Pigeons*, the stories were bound together by themes of loss, but that was the extent of the connective tissue. I think of the stories in *Strange Attractors* as having more of a dense interconnection, somewhat like the roots of aspen trees underground.

That interconnection really became apparent during the process of writing. When I wrote the first story in *Strange Attractors*, for example, I didn't understand that it would be part of a larger whole. But writing "This One is Okay," which details the story of a widow named Looie, and her complicated relationship with her deceased husband Grant, made me wonder a little bit about Grant when he was alive. He never got his "own" story in the collection, but he walked on, very much alive, in my next story, which is about a woman, Sandrine, who has her own battles with alcohol as Grant does. Grant and Sandrine's paths cross around the time Grant is getting his cancer diagnosis. And that story, "String Theory and Other Animals," raised questions about yet another character whose life I wanted to explore. By the time I started that third story, which is "Muskellunge," I knew this was going to be a linked collection, set in one place. I'd read and loved *Olive Kitteridge*. I'd read and loved *Winesburg, Ohio*. The linked form and

importance of place just clicked for me. And I appreciated the ways in which questions arose very naturally during the writing process, questions that I felt inspired to answer in a subsequent story.

Finally, linked stories allow the bandwidth that a novel does in terms of getting to expand on certain characters. This felt really liberating to me. Even when a character has only a brief "walk on" in a second or third story, I relish the opportunity to give readers an enlarged vision of that character, maybe even a different way of viewing them. For example, we meet a secondary character, Rex, in one story, "Muskellunge," who really is a mean human. After I wrote "Muskellunge," I found myself wondering what forces might have shaped who Rex has become as a young adult. So I wrote a story, called "Lost City," about eight-year-old Rex. What happens in "Lost City" doesn't condone Rex's adult self or the choices he makes, but it possibly gives readers some context, or compassion, because they understand some of the Why he is such a damaged individual.

**Literary License:** Which other author or authors have successfully created a fictional place with a collection of stories?

**Janice Deal:** Elizabeth Strout comes to my mind immediately. In her novel-in-stories *Olive Kitteridge*, we not only get to understand the complexities of the title character, but we also learn about the town in which she lives: the fictional Crosby,

Maine. Crosby and its inhabitants all shape the character of Olive and the way she responds to her life and those around her.

And I'm now reading Shannon Bowring's deeply moving novel *The Road to Dalton*, which I believe began as a collection of linked stories, and which maintains that vibe through chapters that shift perspectives. The book also takes place in a fictional Maine town: Dalton.

In both books, the towns are characters in and of themselves, presented in a way that is neither condescending nor sentimental. These aren't Hallmark communi-

ties – they are deeply real. As part of that reality, readers witness the ugly or challenging aspects of human nature, and they also experience the deep compassion and kindness which human beings are capable of when they connect. I love these books.

**Christina Marrocco:** Which other author or authors have successfully created a fictional place with a collection of stories? Oh, so many. Lately, I've been reading a lot of the work of Alis Hawkins, a U.K.-based historical mystery writer.



Christina Marrocco

Her new book, *A Bitter Remedy* is just out now, and I'm waiting for my copy to arrive. I'll use her medieval mystery set during the Black Plague years, *The Black and The White*. Hawkins is able to pull the reader so far into the 14th century, that you would swear you had lived it. Her specific place is fictional but the context absolutely non-

fictional. While her characters are strongly written, much of this work is done by her attention to place, and within it time. You never feel like you are reading research, but that's only because she's done so much of it and then envisioned the place so smoothly and accurately that the reader is transported. My biggest influences on how I write place are from my earlier years, and are not necessarily creating fictional spaces – in fact, sometimes the opposite – they are shedding light on very real, exacting, locales. Some name the place as it is, others write a place and simply change its name, and others create a completely fictional place. But I would argue nothing comes from a void, and all of the fictional places are informed by real ones. I suppose I was imprinted early. Simply, it's Edgar Lee Masters, JT Farrell (particularly Chicago Stories) Sherwood Anderson, Lee Smith and a contemporary fellow, who came from Chicago, Tony Ardizzone, author of *In the Garden of Papa Santuzzu*, an almost magical realist collection of short stories that works as a linked novel.

**Literary License:** What's your next book?

**Janice Deal:** I have just completed a short novel called *The Blue Door*, which is a literary fiction mashup of a contemporary story with a fairy tale of my devising. The protagonist in *The Blue Door* is in fact a character, Flo, who appears in two stories in *Strange Attractors*. The

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# ■ Fictional spaces

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novel is set a few years after the events that take place in the collection. In *The Blue Door*, Flo is living in Arizona and processing, among other things, the death of a dear friend, Sunby, who was a pastor, as well as an upcoming visit from her daughter Teddy, whose disastrous trajectory in *Strange Attractors* led to unspeakable tragedy.

As the work progresses, the line between Flo's story (including her feelings about her role as a mother and her agnosticism) and the fairy tale begins to fade. My exploration of the two storylines reflects my interest in the role faith plays in our lives, whether we rely on stories we've been told as children, or the tenets of organized religion. I'm fascinated by the ways in which fairy tales and religion can mine similar veins of loss, redemption, identity and transformation, even as they offer solace.

**Christina Marrocco:** I have a book in the hands of a Welsh publishing company right now – I will know if they are picking it up within the next month or two. It's a collection of linked short stories set in turn-of-the-last-century North Wales. Each story is told in the first person by a different character, and told by the dead. Yes, Edgar Lee Masters stamped his *Spoon River* on my soul. But these are long stories and quite different in how they work as well. Because of my great respect for the people of Wales and for that country's history, my hope is to place it with a Welsh press. Here's hoping. The book is titled *We're Still Here*. On the writing front, I'm both planning a companion book for *Addio Love Monster* that will take on the next twenty years with the stories of characters who did not get a chance to have their own story yet – and will engage in the experience of the break up of the old neighborhood. I'm also writing a dual memoir that will be about my daughter's life-long struggle with cancer – from childhood till the age of 34 – incorporating both my own writing and some writing she left behind for me. No title yet for that one, but I've begun. You asked for my next book, and the answer is three books, an answer that makes me laugh in a good way. I've got to have my hands in many writing pots at once. That's just my inclination. And I'll bet I'm not alone.



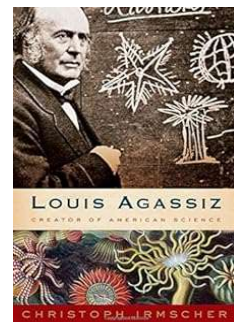
**Milton Nieuwsma (center)** signs copies of his latest book, *Dateline: World: 20 Dispatches from the Earth & One from Hell* (Brick Tower Press (Aug. 31, 2023), on Sept. 5. **Tom Stites**, who wrote the foreword and who was Milton's editor at the *Chicago Tribune* back in the 1980s when he ran the *Tempo* section, is at right. The occasion was a talk Stites gave on journalism and democracy for an organization at Hope College in Holland, Michigan, called the Hope Academy of Senior Professionals, a.k.a. HASP. Hope College is Milton's alma mater. See *Literary Latest*, Page 8.

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version of "The Wiz" on Broadway. ... **Amy Alznauer** wrote "Counting Books for Children" for the June 9 *New York Times*. ... **Michael Raleigh** retired on June 1 from teaching first-year writing and in the honors program at DePaul University. ... **Sandi Wisenberg** writes to say, "I've been lucky enough to have read from my new book this spring at the College of Charleston, University of Scranton and DePaul University. I also read from it at the Printers Row Lit Fest. The book is *The Wandering Womb: Essays in Search of Home*, winner of the University of Massachusetts Press Juniper Prize in creative nonfiction." ... **Rita Dragonette** writes in her newsletter: "I'm killing myself to get the full revision of my next novel to my editor before the end of September." ... **Joyce Burns Zeiss'** award-winning flash fiction piece, *Joni*, has been selected for publication in the *Chicago Writers Association* anthology, *The Write City Review*, Volume 4, edited by

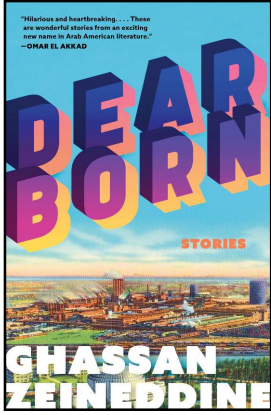
Maggie Smith. Drawn from the *Chicago Writers Association* online publication, *The Windy City Magazine*, it contains poetry, short stories, essays and book excerpts. It's available in paperback from Eckhartz Press. ... Donald Evans reviewed **Christine Sneed's** *Direct Sunlight* for the June 1 *Newcity*. ... The May/June issue of *Harevard Magazine* reviewed **Christoph Irmischer's** book *Louis Agassiz: Creator of American Science* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt; Feb. 5, 2013), calling it an "important new biography of this outside figure [that] provides a fresh evaluation of Agassiz's professional and personal life, of his disproportionate influence on the development and professionalization of science in America, and of his abuse of scientific authority in support of false claims regarding race and social inequality."







## Literary Latest



### 'FULL OF HUMOR AND WARMTH'

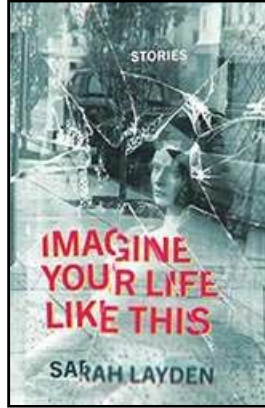
*Dearborn* (Tin House Books, Sept. 5, 2023), a collection debut by **Ghassan Zeineddine**, is a portrait of the lives of Arab American community members in Dearborn, Michigan. Spanning several decades, the book examines the diverse range and complexities of the Arab American community in Dearborn.



**Ghassan Zeineddine**

Zeineddine tells *Literary Latest*, "Dearborn, the so-called 'Capital of Arab America,' is one of the most unique cities I've ever lived in. "When I was a teenager growing up in the D.C. area in the '90s, my parents would order boxes of baklava from Shatila's, the famous bakery in Dearborn. It was then that I first heard about the city. Many years later, I got the chance to live in Dearborn when I landed a teaching position at the University of Michigan-Dearborn. Once I felt settled in the city, I began to write about it."

Kirkus Reviews, in a starred review, said of the book, "Stories full of humor and warmth about an Arab American community." Good Housekeeping called the book "a best book of fall."



### A SENSE OF REPORTAGE

"I wrote some of the stories in *Imagine Your Life Like This* (University of Wisconsin Press, April 11, 2023) as an MFA student at Purdue, directly after leaving a career as a newspaper reporter in Syracuse, New York," **Sarah Layden** tells *Literary Latest*.

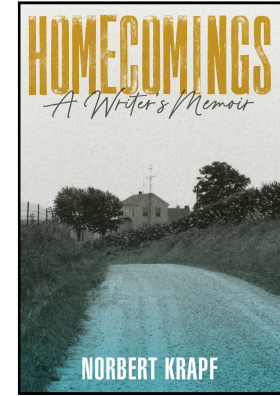
"My friend and former colleague Sean Kirst, now a columnist at *The Buffalo News*, said there's a sense of reportage in the book, especially the Central New York and Midwestern settings. The narrators of these stories are mostly women, in careers and relationships that aren't quite what they'd imagined. They're trying to see their lives with greater clarity amid alienation, estrangement, and loneliness.

"We all long for something, but what are we going to do about it? I like to think of the title as a dare, both for the characters and the reader.

"Several stories are from the last few years, and explore how we are connected and disconnected, especially through precarious work like adjuncting, gigging at bars in a cover band, and classified government jobs you can't discuss at the high school reunion."



**Sarah Layden**



### 'RECORD OF A POET, TEACHER, CRITIC'

The Indiana Historical Society Press in August released former Indiana Poet Laureate **Norbert Krapf's** *Homecomings: A Writer's Memoir*, which covers the 50-plus years of his writing and publishing life.

Krapf says this about the memoir: "The book of 336 pages is composed of 43 mostly short chapters about the writers who mentored me, the varied literary, historical, folklore, and translation projects I undertook over the years, with an emphasis on an exploration of my southern Indiana German heritage, including World War II and the Holocaust, my abuse by a priest from my native German-Catholic area, my book of poems, Catholic Boy Blues and subsequent prose memoir, *Shrinking the Monster: Healing the Wounds of our Abuse*," which won an international Silver Illumination Book Award in Recovery."

In his endorsement for the book, composer, instrumentalist and writer David Amram says, "Norbert Krapf's poetry always makes you want to celebrate your own family history, your own roots and the beauty that surrounds us all. ... His poetry celebrates his great love of the blues."

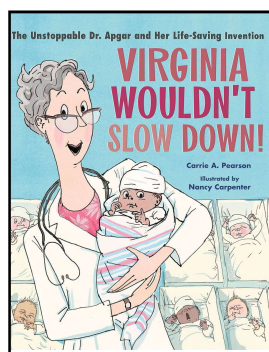
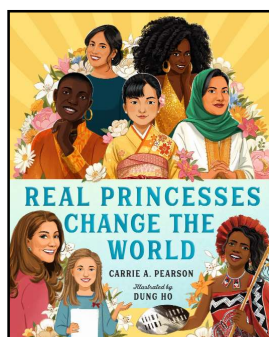
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Indiana fiction and nonfiction prose writer Susan Neville observes, “*Homecomings* is the record of a poet, teacher and critic meditating with deep love and profound insight into his concerns, the places, and the questions that have shaped his work. ... It is also ... for those interested in how a poem works and how an artist chooses and maintains a lifelong passion for craft and for the truth it reveals.”

Indiana author Scott Russell Sanders said, “Like Thoreau, who boasted ‘I have as many trades as fingers,’ Krapf has practiced a host of writerly trades as poet, memoirist, translator, folklorist and historian ... richly displayed in these pages in which he pays tribute to the people and places that have shaped his character and his art.”



### TWO NEW BOOKS

Carrie Pearson writes to say, “I’m happy to report the recent launches of two books I authored. Both are nonfiction picture books for young readers. *Real Princesses Change the World* (Macmillan/Roaring Brook Press, Dung

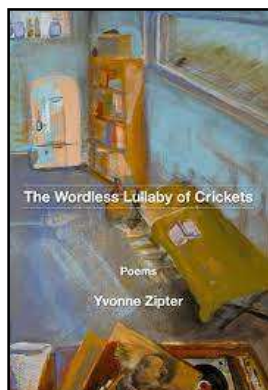
Ho illustrating) is a collective biography of 11 contemporary, diverse princesses and four heirs apparent who defy the princess caricature and positively impact both their communities and the world.

“*Virginia Wouldn't Slow Down! The Unstoppable Dr. Apgar and Her Life-*



Carrie Pearson

*Saving Invention* (W.W. Norton/Norton Young Readers, Nancy Carpenter illustrating) is a biography of Dr. Virginia Apgar, a woman who revolutionized neonatal care starting with the APGAR Score she developed to assess babies’ health immediately after birth. It is said that ‘every baby is first seen through the eyes of Dr. Apgar.’ *Virginia Wouldn't Slow Down!* is a Junior Library Guild selection and received a starred review from the School Library Journal.”



### ‘A SENSE OF CURIOSITY’

Yvonne Zipter tells Literary Latest: “*The Wordless Lullaby of Crickets* (Kelsay Books, Feb. 28, 2023), my third full-length poetry collection, is loosely thematically connected, as poetry collections often are.

“Instead, what connects these poems is a sense of curiosity about all aspects of life (including death) and finding joy, as well as a feeling of peace and beauty, in the unlikely places.”

In a poem exploring my sense of guilt



Yvonne Zipter

about having gone through treatment for cancer relatively unscathed, for instance, I say:

*I'm determined not to look back,  
though even now, like Lot's wife,  
I can feel the salt begin to lick my skin.*

Humor also plays a role in many of the poems. In a poem about wishing I could write a sonnet, for example, I write:

*If only I could hear  
the little iambs, in their soft Italian shoes,  
skipping across the page.*

*The Wordless Lullaby of Crickets*, like many volumes of poetry, was not so much born of an idea but, rather, resulted from something more akin to a calling. Not religious, per se, but with a perception of a kind of divinity.



### BEST PIECES

*Dateline: World-20 Dispatches from the Earth & One from Hell* (Brick Tower Press, Aug. 31, 2023), is Milton J. Nieuwsma’s latest book.

From the publisher: “Before he turned to writing for public television, Nieuwsma traveled the world covering stories for the Chicago Tribune and other major newspapers.

“This book is a compendium of 21 of his best pieces – 20 from the Earth and one from hell.

“He takes [readers] to the Arctic and the Antarctic; to the Amazon and the Nile; to Auschwitz, the scene of humanity’s greatest crime, and to a rural Mississippi courtroom where the acquittal of Emmett Till’s killers helped spark the civil rights movement.”





CAROL FISHER SALLER

*Printers Row Lit Fest 2023*

# One for the books

BY GREG BORZO

The Midland Authors filled a large tent during the 38th Annual Printers Row Lit Fest Sept. 9-10, offering more than 30 members the opportunity to network with other authors, connect with readers and sell their books.

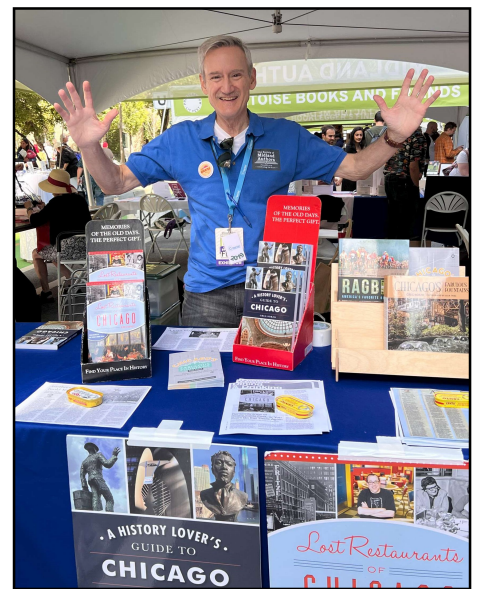
More than 100,000 visitors attended the event, strolling up and down the crowded aisles along Dearborn and Polk streets in the South Loop. Others attended more than 40 author presentations at six local venues.

“It was a banner year,” said Gerard Plecki, Midland Authors president, who spent both Saturday and Sunday selling copies of his books, including *The Definitive Story of Woodstock at Fifty* – all the while welcoming exhibitors, distributing Midland Authors materials and recruiting many new members to the organization.

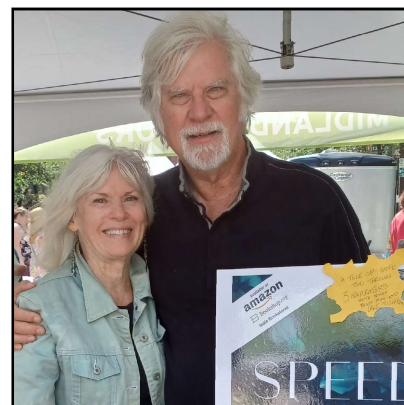
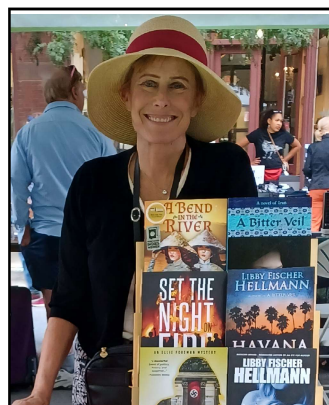
Everyone in attendance was thrilled by the exceptional weather – two days of cool temperatures and abundant sunshine. And many noticed that the fountain that serves as the festival’s centerpiece had recently been restored. The 25-year-old water-tosser had ceased to operate but was given a beautiful \$40,000 facelift just in time for the festival thanks to the efforts of local residents.

Lit Fest is sponsored by the not-for-profit Near South Planning Board.

**More photos on Pages 10-11**



Midland Authors members Judith Brenner (left) and Greg Borzo sell their books at the 2023 Printers Row Lit Fest. (Photos by Greg Borzo and Judith Brenner)



**FAR LEFT:** Libby Fischer Hellmann.  
**LEFT:** Patricia Ricketts and Peter Hurley. (Photos by Michael Haupt)

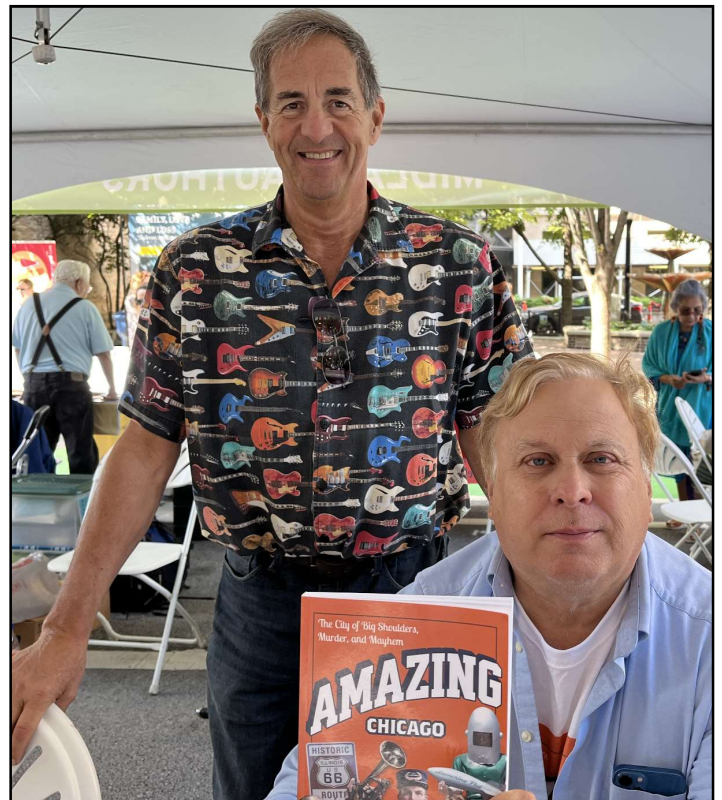




TOP: Patricia Skalka. ABOVE: Sel Erder Yackley. (Photos by Michael Haupt)



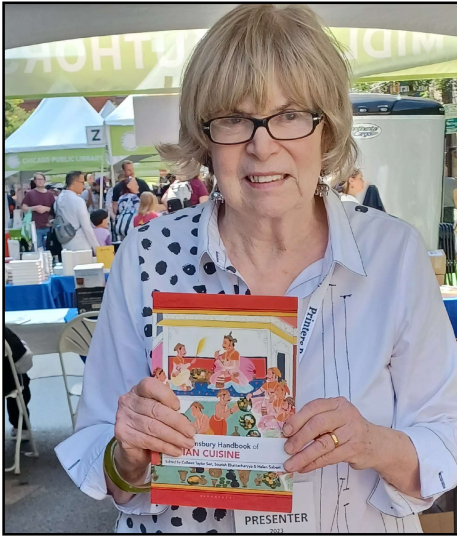
Ruth Goring, left, and Carol Fisher Saller at the 2023 Printers Row Lit Fest. (Photo by Paula Morrow)



LEFT: Patrick Reardon. (Photo by Michael Haupt) RIGHT: Midland Authors President Gerard Plecki and member David Witter in the Midland Authors tent. The tent was staffed both days by Plecki and Treasurer Greg Borzo. Plecki contributed \$50 to the Midland Authors from the sale of his books. (Photo by Carol Fisher Saller)

Turn to Page 11





Colleen Taylor Sen. (Photo by Michael Haupt)



Esther Yin-Ling Spodek. (Photo by Michael Haupt)



Edward "Ted" McClelland. (Photo by Michael Haupt)



Book enthusiasts talk to author Diane Piron-Gelman at the Midland Authors tent at the Printers Row Lit Fest. (Photo by Michael Haupt)



LEFT: Itala Langmar (left) and James Merriner. (Photo by Michael Haupt)



RIGHT: Michael Haupt chats with a book fair attendee. (Photo by Patricia Skalka)



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## New Members

**Judith R. Hiltner** received her Ph.D. in English and American literature from the University of Maryland. After teaching there as a graduate student, she began her professorial career at Christian Brothers University in Memphis, where she also chaired the Department of Literature and Languages.



**Judith Hiltner**

She then moved to Saint Xavier University in Chicago, where she chaired the Department of English and served as founding director of the university's interdisciplinary Honors Program.

She has published two books on the poetry of Philip Freneau, "the poet of the American Revolution," and a range of articles on

American fiction and poetry. Her most recent book, which she co-authored, *Red Barber: The Life and Legacy of a Broadcasting Legend* (University of Nebraska Press, April 1, 2022), is a biography of baseball broadcaster Red Barber.

She was nominated by **Jim Walker**.

**Jack Dempsey** is an avid historian, former president of the Michigan Historical Commission (2007-2018) and an award-winning author, co-author and editor of seven books, with two more scheduled in 2023, and various articles.

His writing focuses on the Civil War, the history of Michigan and cultural heritage.

Among his books are *Michigan and the Civil War: A Great and Bloody Sacrifice*, *Ink Trails: Michigan's Famous and Forgotten Authors*, *Capitol Park: Historic Heart of Detroit* and *Michigan at Antietam: The Wolverine State's Sacrifice*

*on America's Bloodiest Day*.

He has a B.A. from Michigan State University (1974) and is the co-founder of the Michigan Civil War Association. He also was a member of the Michigan World War I Centennial Commission, and holds membership in the Society of Civil War Historians and the Society for Women and the Civil War.



**Jack Dempsey**

Born in Detroit, he has been a resident of Plymouth Township, Michigan, since 1984.

After graduation from George Washington University Law School, he was admitted to the Michigan bar in 1980 and served as a Michigan assistant attorney general.

He was nominated by **Jon Lauck**.

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