

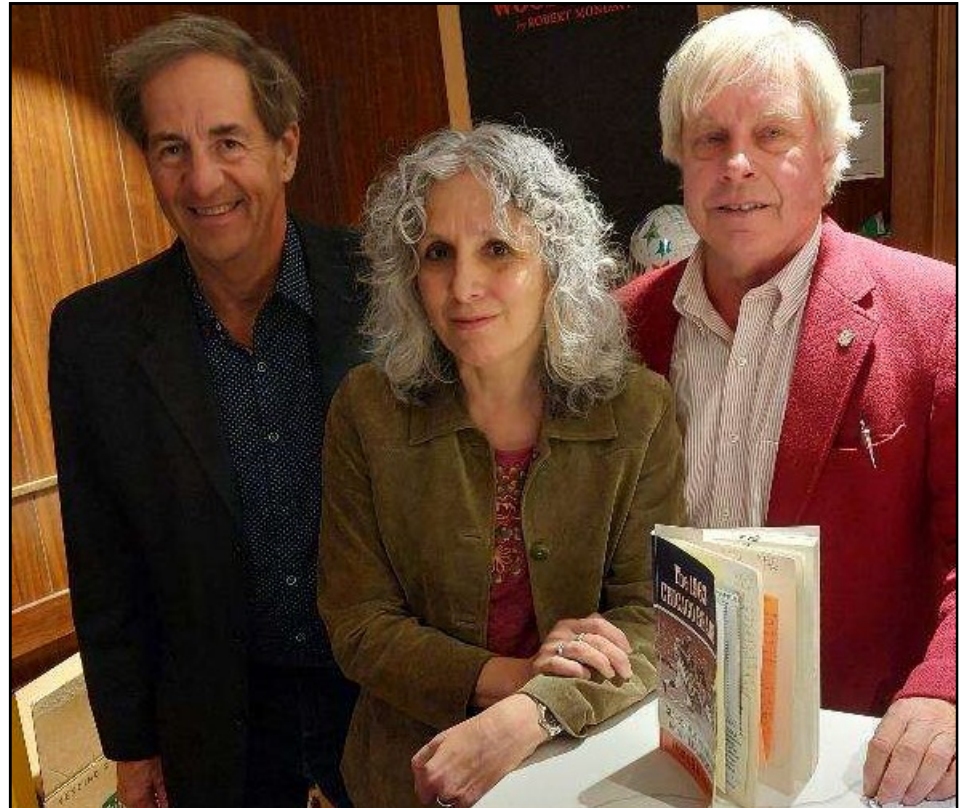
For the Midland Authors' Nov. 12 program, **Sharon Woodhouse** will lead a Zoom panel on pitching nonfiction book proposals. The panel will include authors, an agent and an acquisitions editor. **Dominic Pacyga, Arnie Bernstein** and Tina Purcell will be among those on the panel. See midlandauthors.org for more information.

Biblio File

Newspaperwoman of the Ozarks, the Life & Times of Lucile Morris Upton by **Susan Croce Kelly** has won the Missouri Library Association's 2024 Literary Award, which was presented to her at a ceremony in Kansas City on Sept. 26. The book, which was a semi-finalist in the Midland Authors Biography/Memoir category, also won second place in the history/biography category of the National Federation of Press Women's 2024 Communications Contest (nonfiction book for adult readers/biography or history), and first place in the Missouri Professional Communicators' 2024 Communications Contest. **Michelle Cox** won an honorable mention in the NFPW's novel category. ... **David L. Harrison** (See Literary Latest, Page 7) writes to say, "On Oct. 25, I will read an original poem at the inauguration of Dr. Jeff Frederick, 19th president of Drury University. ... The Oct. 14 issue of Time magazine included **Kaveh Akbar**, the Midland Authors 2022 Poetry Award winner, among its "Next Artists." ... One of **Cynthia Gallaher's** poems will be sent on NASA's flight to the south pole of the moon later this decade. ... **Craig Sautter** forwarded to Biblio File this note from **Claude Walker**, written after Hurricane

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Author presents inside look at 1963 Bears championship



FROM LEFT: Midland Authors President Gerard Plecki, Program Chair Mary Wisniewski and author Charles Billington at the Midland Authors' Oct. 8 program at the Billy Goat Tavern in Chicago. (Photo by Walter J. Podrazik)

BY THOMAS FRISBIE

At the Midland Authors' monthly program on Oct. 8, **Charles Billington** shared an inside look at the Chicago Bears' 1963 championship team.

Billington, a sports historian and author of *The 1963 Chicago Bears: George Halas and the Road to the NFL Championship* (McFarland, 2023) spoke in the party room at the Billy Goat Tavern in Chicago.

To start the program, Billington talked about the challenge of promoting one of his earlier books, *Comiskey Park's Last*

World Series: A History of the 1959 Chicago White Sox (McFarland; 2019), which came out shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic, something that affected many authors whose books came out at the time.

"With the pandemic, that was kind of the end of any kind of public speaking," Billington said. "And so that was a three-year dent in there."

Once the pandemic ebbed, the White Sox started losing, which eroded interest in the team, Billington said.

"Things got so bad with my White Sox book ... I had two libraries call and very

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Biblio File

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Helene, but before Milton, “When we had to evacuate last week, we bunked with Walker cousin Maureen for a night, then cousin Kathleen for a few days. Now we’re at our pal Roberta’s place, but need to evacuate again so we’re probably heading across the peninsula to enjoy Orsinger cousin hospitality at Mary & John Hall’s place in Lake Worth. If you have cousins, give them a hug. Helene was not kind to our sweet house: four-foot storm surge outside, three-foot inside. We lost 100% of our furniture & appliances, which are sitting by our curb. Watching the Miata towed away was awful (best car we ever had). We lost about 80% of our other stuff (clothes, books, technology, work files, family tree relics). I was able to save about 200 items from my political/baseball memorabilia collection, 100 copies of *Drone Dogs* and *Seminole Smoke*, and my prized final edition of the Chicago Daily News (“So Long, Chicago”). Cousin Maureen’s crew helped us begin the process of removing drywall (we have no air conditioning, so

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Society of Midland Authors members can pay their membership dues, buy tickets to the annual dinner and make donations on our website with PayPal. To make a donation, visit our home page at www.midlandauthors.org and click on the “Donate” button in the upper right corner.

1963 Bears

Continued from Page 1

ashamedly asked me if they didn’t mind if I canceled my appointment to speak because nobody wanted to hear anything about this team.”

For his following book, Billington said he chose to write about the 1963 Chicago Bears, which won an NFL championship.

“This was my favorite team as a kid. I’m a baby boomer, and this was the first baby boomer team to reach a championship. The ’47 [Chicago] Cardinals, most baby boomers if they were born yet, were two years old when they won an NFL title. The Cubs, of course, lost the World Series in ’45. The Bears got to the championship game in ’56 with an amazingly good team only to lose badly to the New York Giants. The Sox lost in 1959.

“I’m not counting the Black Hawks because in those days it was a very regional sport. But they did win the Stanley Cup in ’61. Then along come the Bears. The city was mesmerized by the Bears in ’63. And it was a good topic for a book because fans have short memories.

“A lot of them weren’t born ... and the 1985 [championship Bears] team overshadowed this team immensely, and it’s still that way today.”

In doing his research, Billington said he was lucky to speak with many of the players on the ’63 team.

“It’s hard to get interviews with old pro football players because of, I’ll put it gently, neurological issues. And, in some cases, very early deaths. But I was lucky



Charles Billington presents the Oct. 8 Midland Authors’ program. (Photo by Walter J. Podrazik)

enough to talk to about nine players, including Ronnie Bull, Doug Atkins before his death, Bill Wade before his passing, Jim Dooley’s son and Bob Wetoska, who it turned out lives about three blocks away from me. I had an opportunity to speak with Mike Ditka, but it was canceled the week before [for health reasons]. I was also lucky enough to talk with Frank Gifford, before his dementia set in, on two occasions. And a stroke of genius on my part, I had breakfast with Ed O’Bradovich, which is an experience. ... O’Bradovich is exactly like he is on the radio. He goes from smiling and jovial to pounding the table. ... He

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Literary Largesse

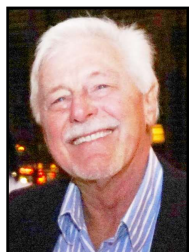
Dues cover mailings and other organizational expenses, but the Society always needs additional money for programs

such as the awards at the annual May book awards banquet. Thanks to **Catherine Browder, Martha Miller and Sharon Solwitz** who made recent contributions.

Biblio File

Continued from Page 2

it's getting stinky and toxic). The house is pretty much gutted. I plan to head over shortly to finish sandbagging. Mandatory evacuation from the island is 7 p.m., but we'll start driving east this afternoon. Our next-door neighbors (who rode out Helene on their roof), have another neighbor's powerboat perched precariously on their seawall. We're hoping it doesn't float into our house with Milton. Trying to be Zen about this. (Ngoan doesn't even need to try ... she's already Zen.) Life is impermanent, a process. As Ngoan was tossing all the plaques she's earned and I was trying to read some of the thousands of press releases I've written, we realize all of our efforts over the years were for good reasons, and we're better people because of it. But that doesn't ease the pain. Yesterday, Ngoan found a soggy bundle of letters from her Dad, and I found my Mom's notes on the family tree. When disaster victims say, "Well, we're alive, and everything else can be replaced." Uh, no, not a 2004 Miata, or Ngoan's photo with Bill Clinton in Saigon or my "Obama for State Senate" button. It's been a year of pain for us, with Ngoan's two nephews being killed in March and our sweet doggie, Milou, dying of kidney failure in July. The Great Life Cycle. I gotta find a post office to mail in my ballot. OK, 'nuff said. Love you all." ... An essay by **Dan Dinello** was featured on the website Informed Comment: "American Women vs. Maga Men: The 2024 Election is a Gender Battle Where Abortion Rights are the Flashpoint." ... **Michelle Cox, Frank Joseph and Victoria Granacki** were among the Chicago Writers Association's 2024 Book of the Year finalists. ... **Martha Miller's** article "Growing Old Gay in the Midwest" about the changes in gay life over the past 50 years while living in Springfield, Illinois, was published by the Illinois Times, a Central Illinois newspaper. It begins with Miller getting run out of her home after



Claude Walker



Michelle Cox

coming out in 1987 and ends with a current conflict about trans women using the women's locker room at the Springfield YMCA. Of course, many things good and bad in between. ... **Robert Marovich** tells Biblio File, "I was awarded an honorary doctorate in sacred music from the Wayland Baptist Theological Seminary.

The ceremony took place in Wilmington, Delaware (unfortunately, no Biden sightings!)." ... **James Klise** wrote "Maggie Smith's portrayal of Miss Brodie continues to teach us" for the Oct. 11 Chicago Tribune. ... In his newsletter, **Keir Graff** writes, "I plan to spend the rest of 2024 catching up on my book

about the Fine Arts Building, the Filmographers Podcast and a couple of ghostwriting projects. And I'm very pleased to say that a couple of weeks ago, I started writing some pages, just for me, that may well turn out to be a novel." ... **Gail Lukasik** will sign copies of her 2023 mystery, *The Darkness Surrounds Us*, on Nov. 2 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at Skokie Crossing's Barnes & Noble. ... The North American edition of **Colleen Taylor Sen's** *Bloomsbury Handbook of Indian Cuisine*, co-edited by Sen, Sourish Bhattacharyya and Helen Saberi, was published in August. The reference work covers the cuisine and foodways of India in all their diversity and complexity, including regions, personalities, street foods, communities and topics that have been often neglected. ... **Arnie Bernstein** writes to say, "I'm

quoted in the Huffington Post in an article about James Carville's appearance on MSNBC's "Inside with Jen Psaki." Carville warned about the Trump's upcoming Madison Square Garden rally and the 1939 Madison Square Garden German-American Bund rally. They cited my expertise because of my book *Swastika Nation: Fritz Kuhn and the Rise and Fall of the German-American Bund*. ... **Connie Goddard** reports that she was in Chicago to sign copies of her new *Learning for Work:*

How Industrial Education Fostered Democratic Opportunity at the University of Illinois Press booth during Printers Row. Two days later, she appeared at an event sponsored by UIC's College of Education to discuss the book. In November, she'll be back in Chicago to deliver a paper at the History of Education Society's annual meeting. Her topic: the important role Chicago played in the development of industrial education programs for public schools during the Progressive Era (1880-1920). ... **Linda Nemec Foster** and **Anne-Marie Oomen's** new book (with artist Meridith Ridl), *The Lake Huron Mermaid*, was featured on the websites of PEN America and AWP highlighting recent books by members. They will be presenting their book in Traverse City (a book launch at the Botanical Gardens on Nov. 21);



Colleen Taylor Sen

Bellaire, Michigan Library (a reading and workshop on Nov. 22); and a book signing at Horizon Bookstore in Traverse City (Nov. 23). More events are planned in 2025 at the AWP Conference (March 27-29) in Los Angeles; and at other venues in the spring (Detroit and Chicago). Linda talked about her collaboration on *The Lake Huron*

Mermaid with Shelley Irwin on WGUV (Michigan Public Radio's station in Grand Rapids) on Oct. 21. Also, she recently guest-edited a special issue of an academic journal devoted to the work of Pulitzer Prize winning poet Lisel Mueller. This issue of *Midwestern Miscellany* will be published in late 2024 by the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature. From Oct. 4-6, Linda was invited to participate in The Summit, an online series of videos about poetry produced by Cervena Barva Press (near Boston). Her talk was titled "The Prose Poem: An Exploration of the Genre That Defies Boundaries." Recently, her poems have been nominated for the Best of the Net (by editors of The Mackinaw) and the Touchstone Award (by the editors of MacQueen's Quinterly). In late October, Linda's book *Bone Country* (Cornerstone Press) was honored as a Distinguished Favorite in the NYC Big Book Award for Poetry. The awards ceremony will take place on May 3, 2025.

Awards Entry Form

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION: January 31, 2025 | Print four copies of this form and send one copy with your payment. One copy should also go with each of the books that go to the three judges in your entry's category. Please type or print clearly. Note: We need author contact information to communicate with winner: providing only editor's contact information will disqualify the book.

Name of book: _____

Publisher: _____

Publication date: (if publication date differs from copyright date, please explain in "Comments" section below.)

Author: _____

Author's address: (must be author's info) _____

Author's email address: (must be author's actual email address) _____

Category of entry (check one). Entries improperly categorized will be disqualified:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ADULT FICTION | <input type="checkbox"/> BIOGRAPHY and MEMOIR (Adult) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ADULT NONFICTION | <input type="checkbox"/> CHILDREN'S FICTION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> POETRY (Adult) | <input type="checkbox"/> CHILDREN'S NONFICTION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HISTORY | |

I nominate the above work for a Society of Midland Authors Award.

(Authors or publishers may nominate works)

Your name: _____

Signature: _____

Company and Business title: _____

Telephone and email address: _____

Address: _____

If the author is not currently a resident of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota or Wisconsin, please explain the author's connection to this region: _____

Comments: _____

CHECK MIDLANDAUTHORS.ORG FOR FULL LIST OF CONTEST JUDGES

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

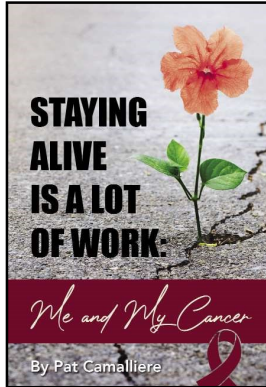
Author Member: Author Members must be an "author or co-author of a book demonstrating literary style and published by a recognized publisher, or of a published or professionally produced play."

Associate Member: Associate members (without voting rights) may be "persons having some connection with literature, such as librarians, teachers, publishers, and editors."

<p>Name:</p> <p>Address:</p> <p>Qualifying residence or place of birth:</p> <p>Biography:</p>	<p>Phone number(s):</p> <p>E-mail address:</p> <div style="background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 5px;"> <p>Name of proposer:</p> <p>Signature:</p> <p>Date:</p> </div>
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<p>Title:</p> <p>1:</p> <p>2:</p> <p>3:</p> <p>4:</p> <p>5:</p> <p>6:</p> <p>7:</p> <p>8:</p> <p>9:</p> <p>10:</p> <p>11:</p> <p>12:</p>	<p>Publisher:</p> <p>Year:</p>



Literary Latest



FIRST MEMOIR

Author of the popular Cora Tozzi Historical Mystery Series set in suburban Lemont, Illinois, **Pat Camalliere** writes to tell us that she has published her first memoir through Eckhartz Press.

“With knowledge gained from a lifetime career in medical administration and a cancer survivor myself, I wrote the memoir to help others having a similar experience,” Camalliere says.



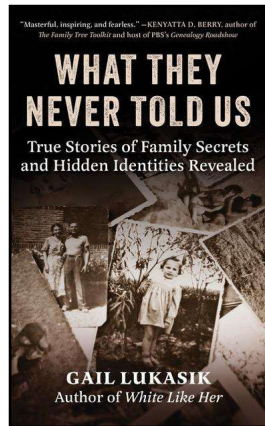
Pat Camalliere

“*Staying Alive Is a Lot of Work: Me and My Cancer* demystifies the day-to-day struggles of a cancer patient from diagnosis, chemotherapy, radiation, side effects and recovery, while walking readers through slices of my life growing up in Chicagoland. Although staying alive is a lot of work, I wanted to give others the tools and inspiration needed to understand cancer, not only to lead to survival but also to ease the journey to recovery. I wrote my story for anyone who has or has had cancer, their loved ones and all who treat and support cancer patients.”

Chicago Literary Hall of Fame Founder and Director Donald G. Evans said, “... She expertly toggles between her emotional and physical challenges. She

manages, at once, to avoid sentimentality and express great empathy about the enormity of her situation. The author’s own experience alone makes this an interesting read. That Camalliere meticulously documents the nuances of her health care support system including doctors, nurses, family, friends and so forth elevates this to a definitive manual on survival.

“Camalliere ... reminds us that in every ailing patient there lies the remnants of a rich, important life. A life worth salvaging.”



RAISING BIG QUESTIONS

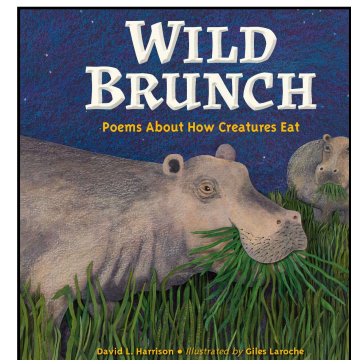
Gail Lukasik’s newest book, *What They Never Told Us: True Stories of Family Secrets and Hidden Identities Revealed*, comes out on Nov. 26 (Skyhorse Publishing). It’s the followup book to Gail’s best-selling memoir *White Like Her: My Family’s Story of Race and Racial Passing*. *What They Never Told Us* tells the stories of ordinary people who made extraordinary, life-changing discoveries about their parentage and/or race and ethnicity that fractured their identities. The book asks the big questions: Who are we? And what is family?

From the publisher: “Blending social history and personal narrative, each story delves into the devastating psychological trauma of uncovering a hidden family secret with all the twists and turns of a

mystery novel, from how the discovery was made; to why it was kept secret; to the arduous, sometimes disappointing, quest to find the biological parent or parents. To fully understand the secrecy surrounding these family secrets, the book examines pre-WWII and post-WWII attitudes toward infertility, adoption, donor conception, race and racial passing and unmarried pregnant women.

“Prefacing these harrowing narratives is Lukasik’s own confusing and sometimes painful journey to redefine her racial identity under the spotlight of public opinion. The book tells the stories that were never meant to be told.”

Lukasik writes: “*After White Like Her* came out and I appeared on “The Today Show,” I received an avalanche of emails from strangers who shared with me their family secrets. Some were about hidden racial identities, some were about discovering their parent or parents weren’t their parents. Many emails began with: ‘I had to tell someone.’ Many of these secrets came to light as a result of commercial DNA tests. To this day, strangers are writing me about their family secrets. It became clear to me that these stories needed to have a voice.”



TWO NEW BOOKS

David Harrison tells Literary Latest, “Since my last report, *Wild Brunch, Poems About How Animals Eat* was published by Charlesbridge Publishing, and

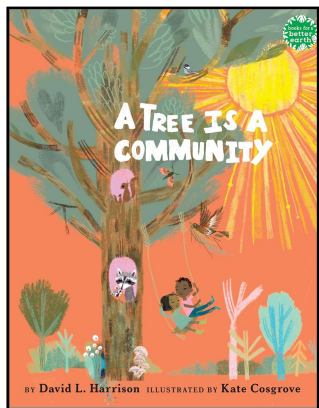
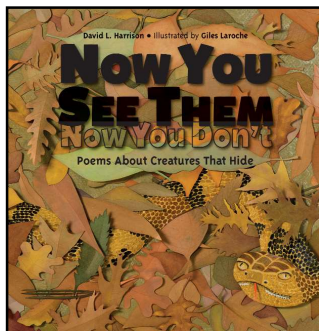
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Literary Latest

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on Oct. 8 Holiday House released *A Tree is a Community*. A YouTube of me reading the newest book will be released soon.

“In 2012, my wife and I were splashing around in our pool. and I was whining about the midges, flies so small you can hardly see them but that leave itchy bumps where they bite. My wife suggested I write a book about tiny creatures. I eventually wrote a collection of poems about creatures that use camouflage to hide or to hunt. *Now You See Them, Now You Don't* was illustrated by Giles Laroche and published by Charlesbridge in 2016. Giles and I became friends and enjoyed working together. At his sugges-



tion we did a second book, this time about the kinds of structures that animals create in which to have their young. *A Place to Start a Family* was published in 2018. And now, as of September 2024, we have a third book. *Wild Brunch* is about some of the incredible ways in which animals adapt to eat the food they require. As in the first two books, I added a 100-word prose piece about each of the creatures to support the poem and provide

scientific information.

“The idea for *A Tree is a Community* was ‘encouraged’ by my back yard. We have two hackberry trees just beyond our patio, and over the 35 years that we’ve lived here I’ve spent hundreds of hours looking out at those trees, taking pictures of them, writing poems about them.

“Trees are those ubiquitous giants among us – mysterious, strong, usually silent. A lot of authors have written books about trees. Why one more? I not only felt I needed to add my own tree story, I even knew (don’t ask me why) how I wanted to tell it. It would be in free verse in a sort of calypso style and phrased to be read aloud. I’d never done anything like that in my entire life! I wasn’t even sure I knew what a calypso-style free verse poem was! One day I just sat down and started writing. I think I had the mandrill from *Lion King* for my muse, riding on my shoulder. Or maybe it was the echoes of Harry Belafonte singing, ‘Daylight come and me want go home.’ Whatever it was, I began like this:

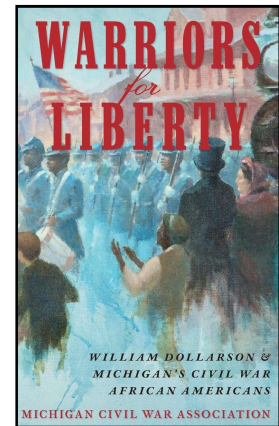
<i>In spring,</i>	<i>The rain, she</i>
<i>the rain, she</i>	<i>SHOUTS,</i>
<i>ROARS!</i>	<i>“Wake up you lazy roots!”</i>
<i>GUSHES!</i>	<i>And the roots,</i>
<i>POURS</i>	<i>they wake up</i>
<i>down through that</i>	<i>and say, “Oh yes!</i>
<i>rich,</i>	<i>Give us a nice long</i>
<i>dark</i>	<i>drink</i>
<i>dirt.</i>	<i>of your good water!”</i>

“Sometimes something ... some thing ... itches and we must attend to it the best way we can, even if it’s by a route never taken before. And one of the best things about *A Tree is a Community* was the chance to be paired for the third time with the gloriously talented Kate Cosgrove.”

‘FASCINATING AND POWERFUL’

Jack Dempsey is the editor of a new book, *Warriors for Liberty: William Dollarson & Michigan’s Civil War African Americans* (Mission Point Press, Oct. 1, 2024).

From the publisher: “Michigan’s African Americans played critical roles in winning the Civil War and setting millions of fellow Americans forever free. The 1st Michigan Colored Infantry



Regiment, more than 1,500 strong, helped overwhelm their enemies on the battlefield.

“Alongside the soldiers, civilian Black men and women contributed in previously unrecognized ways to defending and extending human liberty. One such unsung hero, William Dollarson, escaped from brutal slave conditions in Natchez, Mississippi, became a conductor on the Underground Railroad in Detroit and joined the staff of Michigan’s preeminent general in fighting the Confederacy in Maryland and Virginia.

“This first-ever complete recounting coincides with the 160th anniversary of the Michigan regiment mustering into the U.S. Army. *Warriors for Liberty* sheds unprecedented light on the heroism, patriotism and fortitude of Michiganders of African descent during this tumultuous era in American history.

“Aided by extensive research and fresh scholarship, this volume is a breakthrough study of compelling depth and majesty.

“Included is a first-person account by victims of the 1863 Detroit riot that spurred greater sacrifice by Michigan’s people of color in the cause of saving the Union and of emancipation.

Kimberly L. Simmons, 2022 Michigan Humanities Champion of the Year, Executive Director of the Detroit River Project, called the book “fascinating and powerful.”

Chandra Manning, professor of history, Georgetown University wrote: “A multifaceted gem that sparkles with both the individual story of the remarkable, formerly enslaved William Dollarson and the collective story of resistance to slavery in antebellum Michigan.”

■ 1963 Bears

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complained that day that it was the 60th anniversary of this title, this championship team, last January and he said, ‘Do you think the McCaskeys so much as issued a press release to the media or an email or a letter to any of the 12 players that are still around? Not a word.’”

Billington said he likes to include political and social backdrops in his books.

“I have a whole chapter on what the [White Sox] first World Series in 40 years did to [the Chicago neighborhood of]

Bridgeport and to Canaryville,” he said. “It was a huge event in those neighborhoods. And I think if the White Sox move

from that neighborhood, they’re not going to be the White Sox anymore, in my mind. And there’s absolutely no reason for them to move anyway.”

Other themes in the Bears book include the presence of gambling, the way pro football was becoming a major industry, the envy that [Bears owner] George Halas had for a much and in many ways more successful man, Vince Lombardi, and why the Bears didn’t repeat as champions.

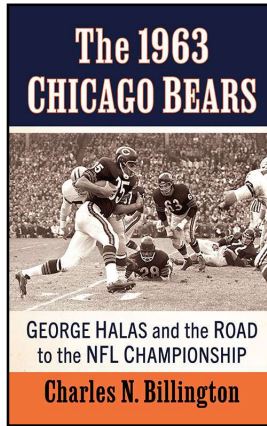
“The last chapter deals with the health issues of the players as they went on in life,”

Billington said. “There were three who had very early deaths. Bill George died in a car accident, as did John “Bo”

Farrington and Willie Galimore, six months after they won the title game, on a lonely Indiana highway. There are nine players at least who have documented neurological dementia, CTE issues that led to their deaths.

“There are two individuals with injury and surgery problems that would probably be the end for any normal human being. Rick Casares has had both knees replaced, an ankle replaced, a shoulder replaced, a wrist replaced, and two ribs replaced. And he, of course, said he’d do it all again.

“Doug Atkins has had a hip, collarbone, [and] four toes replaced. He’s had two broken legs. He has a torn groin muscle that he never fixed and a bicep, which is torn off the humerus at the elbow. He says: I never needed to get it fixed, don’t need it anymore.”



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Society of Midland Authors

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