

Save the dates: The 2025 Midland Authors book awards banquet will be held on May 13 at the Cliff Dwellers Club in Chicago.

The April 8 program will be a poetry event, and among those who will present will be Kevin Coval, who has a new collection coming out.

The 2025 Printers Row Lit Fest (the 40th annual) will be Sept. 6 and Sept. 7.

Biblio File

On Feb. 13, **Diana Parsell** was a special guest at National Geographic's "Storytellers Summit in Washington," when the group gave its annual Eliza Scidmore Award for excellence in storytelling to photographer and National Geographic explorer Thomas Peschak. Diana is the author of *Eliza Scidmore: The Trailblazing Journalist Behind Washington's Cherry Trees* (Oxford, 2023), which was a finalist for the Midland Authors' 2024 Bernard J. Brommel Award for Biography & Memoir. Scidmore was a writer, editor



Diana Parsell and Thomas Peschak

and photographer for National Geographic, and its first female board member, starting in 1892. ... **Rita Dragonette** writes to say she has a manuscript out to two agents and will be pitching it in person to four more at conferences. She also says she is honored to have been invited to join the

Advisory Council of the Chicago Literary Hall of Fame. ... **Scott Turow** wrote "I've had my life's work stolen – by some of the richest people on the planet. Big Tech

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Two authors discuss their biographies of Jane Addams



Moderator Carron Little and panelists Marlene Targ Brill and Louise Knight discuss Jane Addams at the Midland Authors' March 11 program. (Photo by Thomas Frisbie)

BY THOMAS FRISBIE

Jane Addams, who was the author of 11 books and a member of the Midland Authors, was the topic of the March 11 Midland Authors' program at the University of Illinois at Chicago's Richard J. Daley Library. The library today sits on ground where Addams founded her famed settlement house.

Two authors were on the panel: **Marlene Targ Brill** and **Louise W. Knight**. The moderator was **Carron Little**, the executive director of the Chicago Womens History Center.

At the start of the program, Brill, author of a recent middle-grade/YA biography, *Jane Addams: The Most Dangerous Woman in America* (Ohio University

Press, 2024), said writing about Addams had been "a lifelong ambition. This has been kind of a full circle for me."

Brill is the author of 74 award-winning books for readers of all ages and a Midland Authors board member.

For years, Brill had wanted to write about Jane Addams. She finally got the chance with her Ohio University Press contract.

Knight is the author of two biographies about Addams. The first is *Citizen: Jane Addams and the Struggle for Democracy* (University of Chicago Press, 2005). It covers Addams' life in depth through her 40th year, including the lessons she gained during her first 10 years at Hull

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*Final
Chapters*

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*Literary Latest
New Books*

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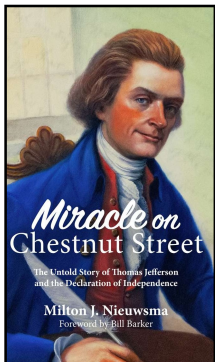
*New
Members*

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Biblio File

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companies trained AI using my books and Labour wants to give them free rein” for the Feb. 20 Daily Mail. ... A YA reprint of



Milton Nieuwsma's *Miracle on Chestnut Street* will be out in March, part of the lead-up to the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. ... **Stuart Dybek** reviewed *The Continental Divide* for the Feb. 23 New

York Times Book Review. ... **Michael Corcoran** emceed Comedy Night at Doudrins Distilling in Cottage Grove, Wisconsin, on Feb. 21. ... **Melissa Fraterrigo** will be teaching an online class for the Indiana Writer's Center on April 16 on "Using Structure to Reveal Your Story in Creative Nonfiction." Melissa's memoir-in-essays, *The Perils of Girlhood*, forthcoming in September

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P.O. Box 10419, Chicago IL 60610

Editor: Thomas Frisbie
tomfrisbie@aol.com

Copy Editors: Marlene Targ Brill,
Dorothea Frisbie

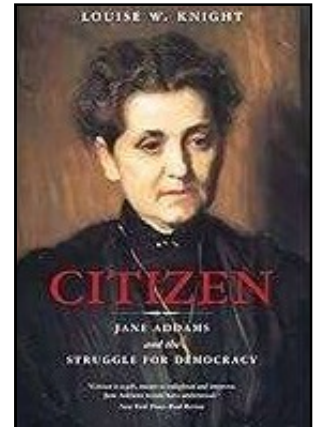
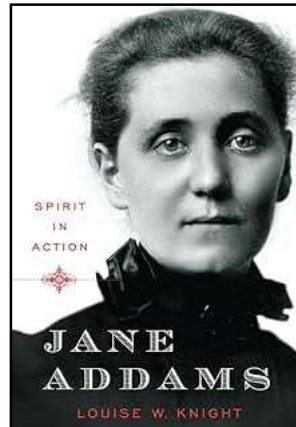
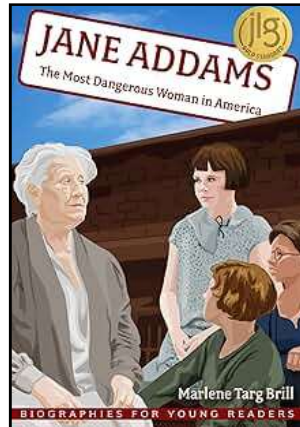
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Society of Midland Authors members can pay their membership dues, buy tickets to the annual dinner and make donations on our website with PayPal (there is a \$1 fee to help cover PayPal's fee). To make a donation, visit our home page at www.midlandauthors.org and click on the "Donate" button in the upper right corner.

Addams

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House. *Spirit in Action* (W.W. Norton, 2010), Knight's second biography, was, at the time, the first full-life biography of Addams in 40 years.

At the invitation of Little, the authors began their programs by reading selections from their books.

As they discussed their books, Knight said Addams cautioned that it was "dangerous to cling to old ideas, whether [people] did so out of clinging to tradition or fear of appearing radical."

Knight added, "That, to me, is like the most single insight that Addams shared for her entire adult life."

Addams told people to imagine the possibilities while also seeing life as it is and asked people why they were doing things a certain way when there might be a better way to do it, Knight said.

"She was always very practical," Knight said. "She was a very unusual combination."

With Addams' narrow upbringing with little knowledge of the working class, Knight said she needed to learn. "What were the assumptions [Addams] had to let go of?"

Eight years before women achieved the right to vote, there were discussions of Addams running for president, Knight said.

"She was known worldwide as an advocate for peace," Knight said.

"Biographers want to know these stories as well as to share them," Knight added.

Little, who in 2007 received the Russell B. Strange Memorial Award for her significant contribution to the study of Illinois history from the Illinois State Historical Society, asked the authors, "How would you define [Addams'] work?"

Brill said she'd define Addams' work as proactive. ... From an early age she was not only empathetic but also a can-do person. When Addams was seven years old, she went with her father to a poor neighborhood. "People said we need an education, we need a place to be, we need a place to socialize," Brill said. "As the things came up, [Hull House] provided these things. ... Jane was very creative. Nothing stopped her."



Jane Addams

For example, some swindlers told people they couldn't send money overseas without paying the mail carriers. Addams helped put a stop to that, Brill said.

"When she saw there were no bath facilities in the tenements around her, she built showers," Brill said. "There was that component of doing whatever anybody needed."

People who wanted to help other people came to Hull House, and they learned and they shared ideas, Brill said.

"They also did research," Brill said. "Research was a very new thing that she had a big part in getting started. The first research led to the founding the school of social work and improvements in work and home lives."



Midland Authors Board Member Dominic Pacyga (left) accepts the Gold Cross of Merit of the Republic of Poland on March 2.

Biblio File

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from the University of Nebraska Press, is available for preorder. ... **Walter Podrazik** and co-author Harry Castleman were scheduled on March 27 at the Paley Center in New York City to talk about their book *Watching TV*. ...

Dominic Pacyga received the Gold Cross of Merit of the Republic of Poland on March 2. President Andrzej Duda presented the medal at a ceremony in Chicago's Copernicus Center. This distinction is Poland's highest civilian award given for non-military service. Pacyga received it for his contribution to the study of Polish and Polish American history. ... **Cynthia Clampitt** recently signed a contract with the University of Illinois Press for a new book. Cynthia tells Biblio File, "This new project will be similar to my last book, *Destination Heartland*, a guide to places to visit and learn about Midwestern history, but the new book will focus more on the 20th century. As a result, I will be on the road most of this summer, visiting museums and historic sites in all 12 of the Midwestern states. So much history here. However, I will continue speaking on topics covered in previous books (this will be

my 10th year as an Illinois Humanities Road Scholar) and doing food writing for Newcity magazine." ... **Tim Chapman** has just released the fourth issue of his annual literary journal, *Litbop: Art and Literature in the Groove*. Print issues are available from indie bookstores, Amazon and Barnes & Noble. There's also a Kindle version. ... On Feb. 23, **Dan Gerber's** poem "Only This Morning" was featured on George Bilgere's Poetry Town. ... **Susan Orlean**, a 2019 Midland Authors Richard Frisbie Award for Adult Nonfiction honoree, has a new book out, *Joyride*. ... **Barbara Gregorich** posted to say, "I love the word 'ubiquitous,' which I first encountered at the age of 19 while reading *Moby Dick*." ... On March 12, **Connie Goddard** posted: "Last week, I gave a talk at the John Dewey Society meeting in Baltimore. The topic was interactions among works written during the 1930s by Dewey, W.E.B. Du Bois, Carter Woodson – and one from 2010 written by Maryland's current governor, Wes Moore. The question posed was what advice might the first three have for Gov. Moore as he works to address some of 'charm city's' less charming challenges." ... On April 23, Michael Moreci and **Keir Graff** will introduce a 25th-anniversary

screening of "Traffic" at the Lake Theater in Oak Park, Illinois. ... **Jonathan Eig** was scheduled to talk with media reporter Robert Feder on March 23 at Congregation B'nai Tikvah in Deerfield, Illinois, about Jonathan's book **King: A Life**. ... **Milton Nieuwsma** writes this about a six-part documentary series the History Channel ran on Thomas Jefferson in February: "It features Bill Barker, who portrayed Jefferson in the 'Inventing America' series we helped filmed at Hope College. Bill also wrote the foreword to my book *Miracle on Chestnut Street*, which has just been reissued as a YA book for the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence." ... **Westley Heine** writes to say, "My book release will be at Lizard's Liquid Lounge May 3 at 5 p.m. Then The Honey White's band is going to play. It's going to be a rocking release and reading!" ... Former Midland Authors President **Dick Simpson** writes to say, "I am working on two books: *Twenty-First Century Chicago*, Fourth edition to be published by Cognella in 2026 and *Dreaming Chicago's Future*, hopefully to be published by the University of Illinois Press in 2027. So even in retirement, I am still a working author."

Final Chapters

Martin Marty

Dr. Martin E. Marty, one of the nation's prominent interpreters of religion and contemporary culture, wrote more than 50 books in his lifetime. He edited others, including the encyclopedic five-volume *Fundamentalism Project* for the University of Chicago Press, which he co-edited with historian R. Scott Appleby.

A professor emeritus of religious history at the University of Chicago, he was also a Lutheran pastor ordained in 1952, a nationally known speaker and a longtime columnist and editor for *The Christian Century* magazine. Among his books was *Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America*, for which he won the National Book Award.

Dr. Marty, a longtime member of the Midland Authors until he retired from the Society, died of natural causes on Feb. 25 in Minneapolis at age 97.

Time magazine once named him America's "most influential interpreter of religion" in the United States.

In 2005, Dr. Marty presented a Midland Authors program titled "Six Years Among the Fundamentalists" about his work through the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

In 1990, Dr. Marty won the Midland Authors Adult Fiction Award for *The Search for a Usable Future*. In 1996, Dr. Marty was awarded the Midland Authors' Lifetime Achievement Award.

"I worked with Rev. Marty as a Midland Authors Adult Nonfiction book judge in the 1990s, invited him to speak later and knew him through Lutheran church circles," former Midland Authors President **James Schwab** said. (Harold Henderson



Dr. Martin Marty

was the third judge in the category). "He was one of the most knowledgeable, thoughtful, yet thoroughly pleasant people I have ever met. With dozens of books in print, some winning awards, he was also one of the most prolific authors I have ever had the honor to know."

Dr. Marty spoke at the Midland Authors' centennial celebration in 2015, taking a humorous look at Franz Bibfeldt, a fictitious theologian.

As Dr. Marty once explained in an email to Schwab, Bibfeldt was an invention of Dr. Marty in 1951, on the eve of his graduation from theological school and preparation to enter Christian ministry. It was a satire on eccentrics and eccentricities in "the system," but when the hoax was exposed, not all of the exposed took kindly to it, and they wanted Dr. Marty punished.

As a result of this episode, Dr. Marty ended up at the University of Chicago, where he spent his career. He taught in the university's Divinity School, the Department of History and was on the Committee on the History of Culture from 1963-1998.

Speaking at the centennial program, Dr.

Marty said, "No theologian had as much direct influence on my career as Franz Bibfeldt. ... He did a lot to change me along the way. His doctoral dissertation was on the problem of the year zero. Have you ever thought about the problem of the year zero? If not, I'd like to disturb you."

Observing the progression of the years B.C. to the years A.D., Marty observed, "It goes from 1 before to 1 after and no one ever said anything about this – except Franz Bibfeldt."

From time to time in the years following years following Franz Bibfeldt's exposure, fellow Midland Authors member **Richard Frisbie** – without revealing his identity – sent Dr. Marty various messages from a supposed relative of Franz's, Otto Bibfeldt. Frisbie, a former president of the Midland Authors, attended the University of Chicago.

Dr. Marty held 72 honorary doctorates. He marched alongside Martin Luther King Jr. in Selma, Alabama, and was among the rare Protestant ministers participating in Vatican II, the Catholic Church's historic summit meeting. He also liked it to be known that, as a native of Nebraska, he was an admiral in the Nebraska Navy – a typical Dr. Marty touch, as *Literary License* once reported.

Among Dr. Marty's other honors were the National Humanities Medal, the Medal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the University of Chicago Alumni Medal and the Distinguished Service Medal of the Association of Theological Schools and the Order of Lincoln Medallion.

Genevieve Davis

Genevieve Davis wrote *Secret Life, Secret Death: Going Down in Flames in Bootlegging & Prostitution in Capone's Chicago & Wisconsin* (October 7th Studio, 2013) and produced, wrote and directed a movie of the same name. The book tells of her efforts to hunt down her family's roots in organized crime.

Ms. Davis, whose given name was Linda Carol, also compiled her grand-

mother's recipes into a paperback book, *Fanni's Viennese Kitchen* (October 7th Studio, 2014). The 287-page book contains about 50 recipes, numerous stories and a trove of old photographs.

Ms. Davis died on Jan. 4 at Ascension Columbia St. Mary's Hospital in Milwaukee.

Ms. Davis, who last lived in Shorewood, Wisconsin, spent 10 years researching *Secret Life, Secret Death*.



Genevieve Davis

Midland Authors member **Rick Kogan** called the book "a haunting story."

Ms. Davis also was a professional artist. Her paintings were commissioned by ballet, opera and theater companies and designers, museums and film producers. She also lectured on art and art history.

She grew up in Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin, in the 1950s and 1960s.

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

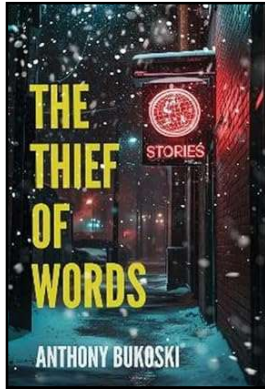
Author Member: Author Members must be an "author or co-author of a book demonstrating literary style and published by a recognized publisher, or of a published or professionally produced play."

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

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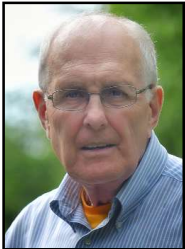


Literary Latest



GIVING A VOICE

Anthony Bukoski’s short story collection *The Thief of Words* will be published on May 6 by the University of Wisconsin Press. His collection, *The Blondes of*



Anthony Bukoski

Wisconsin (University of Wisconsin Press, 2021), was an honoree in the 2022 Society of Midland Authors’ award competition.

Bukoski writes to say, “I’ve spent my writing life trying to capture in fiction

Polish life in northwestern Wisconsin, principally in the port city where my immigrant grandparents settled. I’ve tried to give voice to the voiceless ethnics who too often have been excluded from American literature textbooks and college courses of race and ethnicity.”

Set partly in Superior, Wisconsin, partly in southern Louisiana, *The Thief of Words* concerns the assimilation of Polish displaced persons after World War II. The title story deals with Wozniak, the flour mill worker who not only steals his children’s words but also may or may not be responsible for killing the snowy owl that’s gotten into the mill. “Bread and Wine” describes the strengthening of a bread deliveryman’s faith when he meets an ailing woman in a Superior tavern.

The longest story, “King Creole,” follows a middle-aged schoolteacher’s journey to New Orleans to find Tennessee Williams.

The Polish Review has called Bukoski “one of the foremost Polish American writers.”



‘FUN, FAST FICTION’

Grove N. Mower’s new book is *Dusty Money* (Snafu Publications, Aug. 31, 2024).

Mower tells Literary Latest, “My inspiration in writing *Dusty Money* was to create a fun, fast story about Chicago for the simple reason I love this city. To do that,



Grove N. Mower

I decided I would write a story about something I know and love, which is managing family wealth – hence, *Dusty Money* – and wrap the story up in the struggle between love and money. To do that, I framed the book around a double-barreled love story with two female friends from opposite sides of the tracks – North Side and South Side – who are in love with their opposites. To add spice, I made them redheaded, hardheaded and determined. One romance is a Cinderella love story, the other is college love redux (with some mystery thrown in and a “gotcha” moment). I also threw in

Chicago references, places and people that make this town and the Midwest special. The book is fast-paced with lively banter. A page-turner if you will. Pure entertainment and relief from the nonsense of today and the digital intrusion. That was my intent.”

From the publisher: “Clare Reynolds is an ambitious South Side girl struggling to climb the ladder of a downtown bank. ... But Clare must step carefully and not let love supersede money as she is swept up in a romance with the matriarch’s son. Also caught up in this maelstrom is Margaret Carlson, a high-powered, quick-tempered technology lawyer whose life is turned upside down and inside out when her hot college flame shows up.”



TIMELY SUBJECT

Barbara Shoup’s sixth young adult novel, *About Grace*, recently released by Querencia Press, is the story of 17-year-old Grace Lowery, who is incarcerated at a state juvenile correctional facility. Inspired by a series of writing workshops Shoup did with incarcerated girls, the novel explores not only Grace’s time at the facility, but



Barbara Shoup

TONY VALANIS

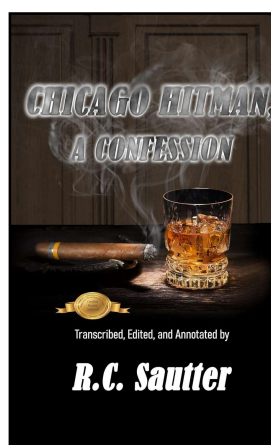
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Literary Latest

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also the events that landed her there and the history of abuse that shaped her childhood – a timely subject not often approached in young adult fiction.

“The girls’ writing was often smart, funny, perceptive – and heartbreaking,” Shoup said. “I kept thinking that if they weren’t poor, they’d be in therapy – they wouldn’t be here. Which made me wonder what would happen if a middle-class girl ended up in such a place.”



WHO WAS THE REAL TARGET?

Here’s the full title of **Craig Sautter’s** new “historical fiction”: *Chicago Hitman, A Confession: How I Helped Murder A Chicago Mayor, and (Almost) a President-Elect of the United States* (Mystic Publishers, March 4).



Craig Sautter

Sautter says, “I learned a lot of practical politics while making TV and radio ads for people running for Congress and other offices across the country for Sautter Communications, Political Strategy & Media, Washington D.C. & Chicago.

“When I started teaching philosophy at Miami Dade College during the winters, I actually came across the site where Mayor Cermak was shot during a Roosevelt rally.

“Then I started more research and met other people who knew something about

what reputedly happened.

“*Chicago Hitman, A Confession* is a hybrid of ‘historical fiction’ and factual research into newspaper files to verify events in the ‘confession.’ Then I integrated newspaper quotes of people on the scene into the book’s narrative, which is a kind of argument for an alternative theory, that Cermak was the target of a Frank Nitto (also known as Frank Nitti) vendetta.

“There also is an SMA connection at the beginning of the book. Really, I’ve been preparing for this book most of my life, and I’m just happy that I got a contract from Ink & Quill.”

From the publisher: “Who was the real target in February 1933? President-elect Franklin Delano Roosevelt, as most people at the time assumed? Or the Chicago Mayor, Anton J Cermak? Two months earlier, Cermak’s ‘hoodlum squad’ shot and nearly killed Al Capone’s successor, Frank “The Enforcer” Nitto/Nitti. Was the Miami hit a vendetta?”



SURREAL IMAGERY AND DARK HUMOR

Cloud Watching in the Inferno is a collection gathering the best pieces by

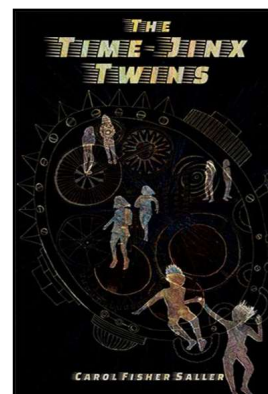


Westley Heine

Westley Heine written between 2022 and 2024. The book comes out in April.

The poems and short stories are set in the past and the future using surreal imagery and dark humor to capture the contemporary existential angst of life in the 2020s. Full of colorful hard-nosed characters.

Themes include heartbreak, AI, sex, death, America, insecurity, poverty, religion, ecological collapse, disease, alcoholism, madness, and space travel.



‘THE PARENT TRAP’ MEETS ‘BACK TO THE FUTURE’

In **Carol Fisher Saller’s** latest book, *The Time-Jinx Twins* (Duckweed Books, April 15, 2025), long-separated identical twins Ellie and Kat are practically strangers when they accidentally launch themselves into the past with their mother’s unfinished time machine.

Saller tells Literary Latest, “Unlike with all my other books, the idea for *The Time-Jinx Twins* arose from crass commercial brainstorming. Enough with the quiet, cerebral, historical stuff, I thought. What I ought to write is a series. Sci-fi or fantasy. But I like the historical stuff. That’s when time travel popped into my head.

“I love time travel. And it can be as historical as I want, alongside classic middle-grade fantasy themes (questing, returning home) and contemporary tropes (social insecurities, growing up, sibling issues). Stranding my long-separated identical twin sisters in 1970 with their mom’s half-baked time machine also lent itself to promoting physics, logical thinking, and women in science. I describe the series as ‘The Parent Trap’ meets ‘Back to the Future.’

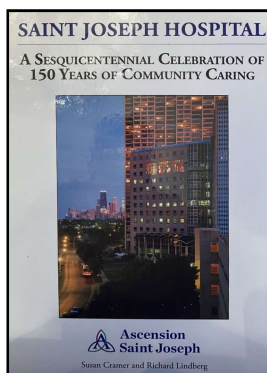


Carol Fisher Saller

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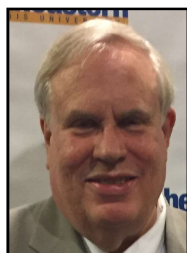
FIFTH PROJECT WITH DONNING

Besides all the other books he has written, former Midland Authors President **Richard Lindberg** has written his fifth book for Donning Company Publishers.

Lindberg writes, "I'm very pleased to introduce my most recent published volume, a history of historic Saint Joseph Hospital in Chicago commissioned by Donning on the occasion of Saint Joseph's sesquicentennial anniversary. Donning is a publisher of corporate, institutional, membership/recreational organizations and civic histories."

"[The Donning] books have no public, internet or bookstore exposure and are created for internal use by either the companies, the colleges, the country clubs or other institutional entities that contract with Donning.

"I am presently finishing up the Saddle & Cycle Club, which will be published this summer on the occasion of the club's 130th anniversary. The hospital book was intended for the hospital's 150th anniversary in 2021, but COVID delayed publication and then the original author Susan



Rich Lindberg

Kramer passed away with half the book left to write. Donning immediately contacted me and asked me to shepherd it through to publication as the co-author responsible for closing out the project, editing Susan's earlier writing, and to complete photo and graphics acquisition.

"It was a real challenge because her files were sent to me in a cardboard box unorganized. I had to re-write a lot of content and then sift through the paper files.

"My earlier published Donning editions were written for the Village of Addison, the North Dakota National Farmer's Union Insurance Company, Northeastern Illinois University and a history of Ed Burke's Committee on Finance commissioned by Ed. And now the Saddle & Cycle Club.

"These are labor-intensive projects that often require up to a year of research and writing, sometimes more, depending. Some clients do not maintain archival and historical collections to examine, so in that case you really have to hunt down the history wherever it might be found.

This involves interviewing a large number of stakeholders, decision makers and employees to flesh out the story.

"It's a paper chase beginning to end, and inevitably the hardest part of it is to locate photos and images. That often requires a deep dive of outside photo archives, the Library of

Congress, etc., and calling people on the phone asking them to send me what they can find. Sometimes there is travel involved. I went to a golf country club outside Cleveland four years ago and spent a week there, only to have the club manager place the project in limbo, where it sits now. No word yet if they will publish the volume. That's one of the pitfalls one sometimes encounters doing this kind of work."

New Members

Charles Grippo is an entertainment attorney, playwright, author, producer and the founder/artistic director of two theater companies: New Lincoln Theatre, Inc. and Grippo Stage Company. His plays, which have been produced commercially nationwide, include "Sex Marks the Spot," "A Wife's Tale," "Outrageous Mis-Fortune," "When Angels Wept," "The Tooth of the Matter" and "Santa's Children."

Allworth Press has published his books *The Stage Producer's Business and Legal Guide*, and *Business and Legal Forms for Theater*, both of which are in their second editions and are widely used in college and university theater management training programs.

Among the plays he has produced in Chicago are: "The Woods" (revival); "The Odd Couple" (female version); "A



Charles Grippo

Week-End Near Madison" (Chicago regional premiere); Beirut (Chicago regional Premiere); "Semper Fi" (Chicago regional premiere); "The Ben Hecht Show" (world premiere); "The God Of

Isaac" (revival); "Confessions of a P.I.M.P." (Co-produced with Dennis Zacek), "Chagall In School" (world premiere) and "Shaw vs. Tunney" (World Premiere).

In Chicago, he also presented Victory Harvest, a weeklong festival of readings of new plays, improv workshops, panel discussions and a seminar on self production for playwrights.

During the pandemic Grippo also partnered with actor/pianist/playwright/director Hershey Felder to present a series of new musicals live streamed from Florence, Italy.

He is Chicago Ambassador for the Author's Guild. New City Magazine recently selected him as one of the "50 Most Influential Persons in Chicago's Literary Scene."

He has resided in Park Ridge, Illinois, since 1969.