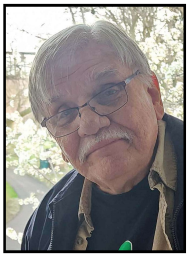
Literary License

The Society of Midland Authors
Founded 1915

July/August
2026

Biblio File

In May, **Keir Graff** won the biography/history book award honorable mention from the American Society of Journalists and Authors for *Chicago's Fine Arts Building: Music, Magic, and Murder.* In June, Keir wrote, "I'm working hard on a secret book with an imminent deadline." ... In July, the Newberry Library and The Pattis Family Foundation announced **Dominic A. Pacyga** won a 2026 Pattis Family Foundation Chicago Book Award, which honors "books that transform public understanding of Chicago, its history and its people." The $25,000 prize was awarded for Dominic's *Clout City: The Rise and Fall of the Chicago Political Machine* (University of Chicago Press, 2025), which traces the origins of Chicago's distinctive political system to its eventual collapse. The presentation of the award will take place at a free public event at the Newberry Library on Sept. 19, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. ... The softcover edition of **Edmund Lawler's** *The Graft: How a Pioneering Operation Sparked the Modern Age of Organ Transplants* was recently released by Anthem Press. In April, Lawler was the keynote speaker at an organ donation conference at the Little Company of Mary Medical Center in Evergreen Park, Illinois, where the historic kidney transplant led by Dr. Richard Lawler took place in 1950. ... **Cyndee Schaffer**, author of *Mollie's War*, was interviewed in December 2025 for a PBS special,



Dominic A. Pacyga

Cyndee Schaffer

Turn to Page 2

As new SMA year begins, it's a good time to get more involved

By Walter J. Podrazik

Thank you for your membership in The Society of Midland Authors.

I'm beginning my second year as SMA president, and it's been wonderful to hear from so many individual authors in person, at events, by email and even via the U.S. mail. It's a reminder that our reach is not just in Illinois but also across the dozen Midland states we claim as our own.

Midland Authors has been around for more than a century, and each year we renew our commitment to writers and writing, celebrating and supporting each other as authors.

Midland Authors President Walter Podrazik

As you can see in each issue of Literary License, this includes sharing your author news. Editor **Thomas Frisbie** is always looking for items that keep us connected across our region, so please send your items to tomfrisbie@aol.com.

We have regular public programs in person in the greater Chicago area. There are also some originating online (usually via Zoom), so dial in from anywhere. You can even suggest possible program topics and speakers (including yourself). Check our website for updates at: www.midlandauthors.org.

Our showpiece each year, of course, is our annual book awards. These have many opportunities for anyone interested in embracing and honoring the latest books and their authors. Past Midland Authors President **Gerry Plecki** (gplecki@travel-brokers.com) manages that operation, which starts in late summer and carries through to the awards

Turn to Page 2

Sign up for Printers Row — Page 10

Literary Latest New Books — Page 6-9

Literary Lore Illinois history program — Page 5

Get involved

Continued from Page 1

banquet next May.

Multiple judges are required for each genre category, and you can participate from anywhere (the books come to you). Reading, evaluating, recommending.

If that intrigues you, Gerry can provide further details. This is the at the heart of our annual showcase event.

For authors interested in an opportunity to sell their books in person: Each year at Chicago's annual Printers Row Lit Fest (September this year), we rent table space to authors in blocks of time that allow them to stay briefly or for longer stretches. There are further details in this issue of Literary License (See Page 10).

Finally, there will be opportunities to join the SMA Board of Directors this fall. If that is an area that might interest you please drop a line to podrazik@ameritech.net. (Most board meetings are virtual, accessible to anyone from our 12 states.)

No matter your degree of involvement, as part of the Society of Midland Authors be assured you are with supportive and kindred writing spirits.

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Follow the Society on Twitter@midlandauthors

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

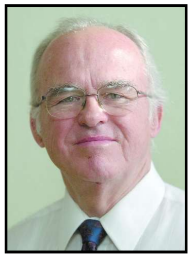
Biblio File

Continued from Page 1

"Women of WWII: More Untold Stories." She talked about her mother, Mollie Weinstein Schaffer, and her service in World War II stationed in Europe as a WAC (Women's Army Corps). It is being broadcast on WTTW Channel 11 locally and also on PBS Passport. ...

Nancy Nau Sullivan

Nancy Nau Sullivan's cozy mystery, *Hot Tango in Argentina* (Torchflame Books), was a finalist at Foreword Reviews for Best Indie Mystery, 2025. This caper to Buenos Aires in a chase after a couple of wily, aged Nazi kidnappers is the fifth installment in the Blanche Murninghan mysteries. The book is also a five-star Readers Favorite. ... **Maggie Kast** is submitting her new novel, tentatively titled *The Moving Finger Writes,* to publishers. She tells Biblio File, "This novel is about loyalty and betrayal in 1950s Washington, D.C., the time of the Red Scare, a time not too different from today. The story looks at loyalty to family, community, country, vocation and art, and it asks: How much betrayal can loyalty demand?" Also, Maggie will have an essay, "Storefronts, Streets and Stages," in one volume of *Dancing on the Third Coast*, a two-volume history of dance in Chicago, forthcoming from the University of Illinois Press in early 2027. ... Four Midland Authors members will present programs in coming weeks at the North Shore Senior Center, 161 Northfield Rd., Northfield, Illinois. **John Wasik** will present "Why Pollinators are Good for Earth and Wellness" at 1 p.m. on Sept. 15 and "Data Centers: What They Are and What Do We Need to Know" at 1 p.m. on Nov. 9. **Marlene Targ Brill** will present "Dolores Huerta Demands Justice in an Unjust World" at 1 p.m. on Sept. 29. **Charles Billington** will present "The Cubs and the White Sox: Where Do We Go From Here?" at 10 a.m. on Oct. 29. **Richard Lindberg** will present "Tales of Forgotten Chicago" at 1 p.m. on Nov. 2. Richard's program is based on his 2020 book of the same name. Costs for the North Shore Senior Center programs are $15 for members, $20 for nonmembers. Marlene also will talk about "Judith Resnik, Challenger Astronaut" (See Literary Latest, Page 6) at 7 p.m. on Aug. 10 at Max & Benny's Restaurant, 460 Waukegan Rd., Northbrook, Illinois. ... **David L. Harrison** tells Biblio File, "A Brooklyn-based production company, Legit Productions, which bills itself as America's leading independent film & TV show production company, is producing a series of documentaries called 'The Story of Art in America,' featuring people and places along Route 66 as the old road celebrates its 100th anniversary. The first episode was in Joliet, Illinois, the second, in Springfield, Missouri. I'm one of five creatives featured in that one: two musicians, two painters and one poet." ... Former Midland Authors President **Jim Bowman** is up to Chapter 18 on his Father Devlin novel at blithespirit.blog. ... **Aleksandar Hemon**, winner of the Midland Authors' 2003 and 2009 Adult Fiction Awards, has a new book coming out on Oct. 13, *Godspotting* (Copper Canyon Press). ... WGVU, the PBS affiliate in Grand Rapids, Michigan, put together a website for **Milton Nieuwsma's** 2016 "Inventing America," and it was being redistributed to PBS stations in June in connection with America250, https://share.google/NSZCAPBjgb0ivm5sy ... In June, **Kathie Giorgio** started a blog tour with WOW – Women on Writing – for her new book *The Birth of A Widow* (See Literary Latest, May/June, 2026). She planned to participate in either a guest blog or an interview on 13 sites. ... **Jonathan Eig's** 2015 book *The Birth of the Pill* will be a play opening in September at the TimeLine Theatre Co. in Chicago. ... **Adam Schuitema's** next novel, *Half a Million Minutes*, will be released March



Jim Bowman

Adam Schuitema

Turn to Page 3

Midland Authors program will help author research

Midland Authors is co-sponsoring a program to help authors with research on Chicago City Council history.

The Office of the City Clerk recently completed a grant-funded project to digitize a collection of analog tape recordings of City Council meetings made between 1970-2012. These tapes encompass the last years of the Richard J. Daley era, the brief time in office of Jane Byrne, the Harold Washington era and the notorious "Council Wars" and the Richard M. Daley era in its entirety. It's a unique record, inaccessible until now, of an important slice of Chicago and American history.

Related projects include a new archival resources page for the Office of the City Clerk and a new municipal records subject guide for the Chicago Collections Consortium site.

The speakers will be former Cook County Clerk and Acting Chicago Mayor **David Orr** and former Midland Authors President and former Chicago Ald. **Dick Simpson**.

Paul Durica, director of exhibitions and curatorial affairs from the Chicago History Museum, will be the moderator. Durica also was the emcee of the Midland Authors 2014 book awards dinner.

The room will open at 5 p.m., and the program will run from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. on Sept. 17 in the Chicago Authors Room on the seventh floor of the Harold Washington Library Center.

The discussion will center around the times in office of various alderpersons with one representative audio clip from each era played and with a Q&A at the end of the program.

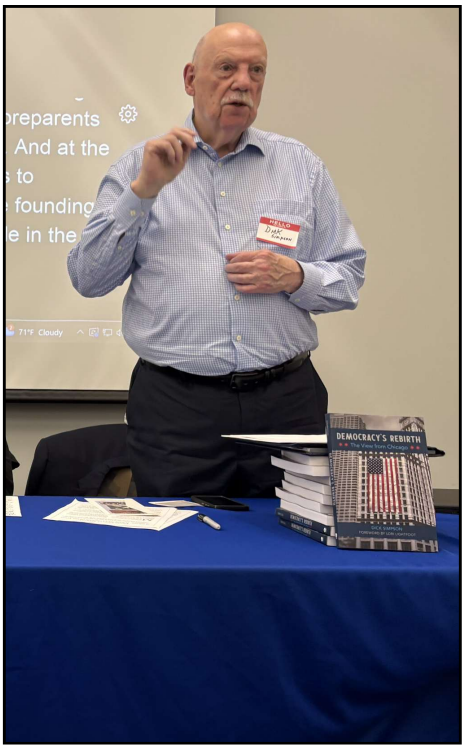
At the Midland Authors April 15 program, Simpson said, "The city clerk's office has managed to unearth all of the City Council recordings from 1970 to 2012. They're now available digitally. So if you want to hear the debate between Harold Washington and Eddie Vrdolyak and some of those colorful Council War meetings, you can. You're not dependent upon newspaper accounts. You can actually hear the meeting and all the debates that took place, and some of them are historic and important."

5:00 p.m., Sept. 17, program
Chicago Authors Room
Harold Washington Library Ctr.
400 S. State. St., Chicago

Matt Messbarger of the city clerk's office will select relevant clips from the City Council audio archives for discussion and Johanna Russ of the Chicago Public Library will select relevant photographs to display in a slideshow during the program.

Literary Landscape

The program is also sponsored by the Chicago Public Library and the Chicago Collections Consortium, whose former executive director, **Jeanne Long**, presented the Midland Authors May, 2021, program.



At the Midland Authors April program, former President Dick Simpson discusses the upcoming Sept. 17 program.

Biblio File

Continued from Page 2

30, 2027, from Regal House Publishing. ... **Joel Greenberg** (See Literary Latest, Page 8) presented a book talk on June 24 at the Prospect Heights [Illinois] Public Library. ... **Amelia Cotter's** "Spooky Story Bootique" is now streaming on PARAFlixx and debuted at No. 1 worldwide. ... **Barry Pearce** will speak at the Oct. 16-17 Desert Nights, Rising Stars Writers Conference at Arizona State University on "Pushing the Envelope: Risk and Vulnerability." ... **Richard Lindberg** is partnering with Los Angeles filmmaker Val Gobos to write a book –

Arthur Rachel (from left), Val Gobos, Richard Lindberg and Joseph "Jerry" Scalise meet at the Athena Restaurant in Chicago's Greektown neighborhood.

and develop a film treatment – about Marlborough Diamond thieves Art Rachel and Jerry Scalise. Richard and Val are seeking an agent, publisher and studio. ... **Edward Gordon** co-wrote with George W. Bohmstedt "America's schools are producing a generation of techno-peasants" for the July 13 Chicago Sun-Times. ... In May, **Margaret McMullan** wrote, "Thrilled to be a part of *With Recipes and Justice For All*, by Laura Kumin and Jill Lawrence. This book, which focuses on taxation without representation in D.C. and beyond, is filled with incredible recipes, facts and history by writers such as Heather Cox Richardson, Tom Nichols, Joyce Vance, Joe Walsh, Jodi Picoult and me! Comes out in the fall of 2027. Start your ovens!" ... **Cynthia Clampitt** has a new book coming out in the spring. ... **Scott Turow** and five publishers have sued Meta and its founder Mark Zuckerberg, accusing them of copyright infringement. Also, Hulu is developing a series version of Scott's novel

Turn to Page 4

Biblio File

Continued from Page 3

Suspect. ... Longtime Midland Authors member **Merv Block** turned 101 years old in July. ... **Paul McComas'** band, Eclecti-Pop!, has released its first-ever single, "When the Swift." The band was scheduled to perform July 11 at Montrose Saloon in Chicago. ... **Sharon Woodhouse** hosted Lidia Varesco Racoma for a July 9 virtual program on author branding, part of Sharon's free monthly Zoom series for authors on business-building topics. ... The University of Illinois Press selected *Democracy's Rebirth* for its free e-book for July to align with AMERICA250. The conditions for receiving a free e-book include interested parties signing up for the press' email list, and, in exchange, being sent a link to either a PDF or ePUB download of the book. Here is the link to sign up: https://mailchi.mp/illinois/fb4b39rm9x The promotion will run for the month of July. ... **Louise Erdrich**, who was twice honored at the Midland Authors book awards, has a new book out, *Python's Kiss*. ... **Brenda Cárdenas** was scheduled to be one of several writers-in-residence performing poetry at the July 24-25 Eaux Claires Music and Poetry Festival in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Brenda will do a group poetry reading with poets Nicholas Gulig, Gabrielle Calvocoressi and Donika Kelly on Saturday afternoon and short one-on-one readings to individual listeners over a period of time with a different audience member rotating in and out every few minutes. She also will participate in a collective live memoir made from personal memories in the tradition of Joe Brainard's cult-classic "I Remember." ... During her six-month sabbatical, which started in July, **Trevy McDonald** is "deep in research" on a multigenerational memoir, to which she has already devoted years of research. ... In June, **Lori Andrews** appeared on a panel at the annual Law and Society meeting in San Francisco. ... 2019 Bernard J. Brommel Award for Biography & Memoir honoree **Art Cullen's** latest book is *Dear Marty, We Crapped in Our Nest: Notes from the*

Brenda Cárdenas

Turn to Page 9

Fraud alerts for authors

Two Midland Authors have warnings for other authors about scams that could cost them money.

David L Harrison: I received a long email under the name of the director of one of the most prestigious literary festivals in England, telling me she had recently discovered a particular title of mine and going to some length to explain why she loved the book and hoped that I (and the artist, by name) could consider presenting via Zoom about our collaboration during this fall's event. When I said I would, I received a long follow-up letter the next day, giving more particulars about how the Zoom presentations work and reconfirming her enthusiasm about having me. She promised to send more details soon.

David L. Harrison

At this point I had shared the correspondence with my publisher (Charlesbridge), and the alert marketing director, Donna Spurlock, sniffed a scam. She said she was getting a lot of these invitations lately and noted that the sender had used a Gmail address rather than a dedicated address from the festival. With my agreement, she contacted the festival and learned that my invitation was fraudulent and that the festival and many other similar events are being bothered by numerous scam invitations this year.

I haven't received a third letter yet but expect to, and this one will probably be asking for money to reserve a spot on the program.

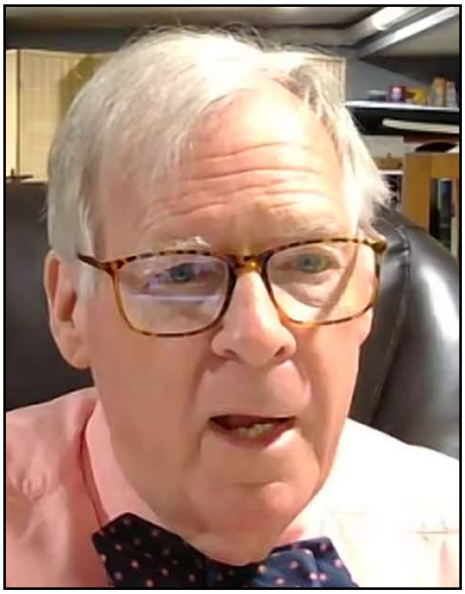
I didn't catch this. My editor didn't catch it. The third pair of eyes did.

Carol Fisher Saller: For the last year or so, every published writer I know has been receiving AI-generated scam emails. I get one or two a day. There are different tactics, but this one is very popular – the book club. The sender appears to have read your book, but actually all the information in the email is easily scavenged from online. They don't ask for money up front, but if you're naive enough to reply, they will ask for hundreds or even thousands of dollars to be featured and promoted to club members. Yes, many new writers fall for these things. And of course, they're devastated when they learn their money is gone and – almost as sad – the praise was fake. Particularly insidious is that such emails now have perfect grammar and spelling – not like the obviously fake spam of olden days.

Carol Fisher Saller

Literary Largesse

Dues cover mailings and other organizational expenses, but Midland Authors always needs more money for programs such as the annual May book awards banquet. Thanks to **Richard Babcock**, **Stan "Tex" Banash**, **Richard Bessette**, **Charles Billington**, **Donna Boonstra**, **Anne and Edward Burke**, **Jim Daniels**, **Carol Felsenthal**, **Frank Gonzalez-Crussi**, **Edward E. Gordon**, **Victoria Granacki**, **Libby Fischer Hellmann**, **Eldon Ham**, **Esther Hershenhorn**, **Susan Croce Kelly**, **Garnett Kilberg Cohen**, **Sandra Colbert**, **Michael Ebner**, **Barbara Gregorich**, **Michael Craft Johnson**, **James Klise**, **Rick Kogan, John Kropf**, **Richard Lindberg**, **Peggy Reiff Miller**, **James Plath, Carolyn Splear Pratt**, **Stuart Shea**, **Dick Simpson**, **Sharon Solwitz, Kerry Trask**, **Claude Walker**, **John Wasik** and **Steven Wiegenstein**, who recently contributed.



Robert Sampson

Eileen McMahon

Rosemary Feurer

Taking a closer look at Illinois history

As editor of the *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, **Robert Sampson** set out to publish a collection of essays about Illinois history and America250.

"We told the authors," Sampson said of the contributors, " ... What do you think is important? What do you think we need to tell people, especially something that people really don't know or they don't have a depth of knowledge [about]?"

On June 16, in a virtual program, Midland Authors presented two of those authors, who talked about their essays. Sampson, who won the Midland Authors' 2004 Biography Award (now the Biography and Memoir Award), moderated the program.

The event was co-sponsored by the University of Illinois Chicago Chapter of the State University Annuitants Association and the Illinois 250 Commission.

The first panelist to speak was **Eileen McMahon**, who talked about "250 Years of Fighting for Women's Rights in Illinois." McMahon is a history professor at Lewis University.

"Early 20th century Illinois history is fascinating history," McMahon said. "It tells a story of American history in general, so many themes, and I think Illinois was blessed with some very amazing women."

For example, Susan B. Anthony's niece came to Illinois to promote the women's suffrage movement before the Civil War, McMahon said.

One of the most notable women was Mary Livermore, a journalist and abolitionist who was originally from Boston, but who came Chicago and was part of the Republican Party. She helped to organize a national women's suffrage convention in 1869, McMahon said.

McMahon also discussed Myra Bradwell, a publisher who also was considered America's first woman lawyer at a time when married women couldn't independently own property, sign contracts or control their own wages.

"She was just very dedicated to changing women's status in society," McMahon said.

"Jane Addams wanted to see how democracy could function better in an era of widening gaps between the rich and the poor and the struggles of urban America. Ida B. Wells, of course, adds that whole issue of race that was still a conundrum. And then Betty Friedan wanted to complete that struggle with the Equal Rights Amendment," McMahon said.

Other important Illinois historical figures McMahon discussed were Mother Jones, Florence Kelley, Margaret Haley, Frances Perkins and Phyllis Schafley.

The second panelist to speak was **Rosemary Feurer**, a Northern Illinois University history professor who Sampson said is working on a new biography of Mother Jones and also on a book on the Illinois mine wars. Feurer talked about "Coal Miners Fight for Democracy."

"I've been thinking as a scholar and as a labor activist about Mother Jones' quote that she's famous for, that it was the miners who made Illinois the strongest labor state in the nation," Feurer said. "I started to explore this subject from both the public history interests that people didn't understand, and [I met] scholars who didn't even know that there was coal in Illinois. ... If you look at the long history of Illinois and the struggle for democracy in the coal fields, actually more people died in Illinois than any other state."

Miners were in the vanguard in cascades of conflicts that started beginning in the Civil War, Feurer said.

"[In] other areas of the country, especially West Virginia and Colorado, coal was linked to undemocratic coal town systems of poverty, of surveillance, of policing and worker deaths that were extreme. Illinois was the leading site of resistance to that tendency," she said.

Watch the full program at:
https://tinyurl.com/3yfkxpa3

Copies of the journal can be purchased from the University of Illinois Press at:
https://scholarlypublishingcollective.org/uip/jishs/issue/119/1

Literary Latest

REACHING FOR THE STARS

Marlene Targ Brill tells Literary Latest, "Being second in anything isn't something to ignore. That's the main theme of my latest book, *Judith Resnik: Unsung Astronaut* (Ohio University Press, June 16, 2026).

"Resnik was the second U.S. female astronaut to fly into space and fourth in the world. But because she lost her life during the *Challenger* disaster, almost all attention focused on the civilian teacher on board – not Resnik, the most experienced astronaut on the flight, nor the first African American astronaut or the first Asian American.

Marlene Targ Brill

"I wanted to tell Resnik's story for middle-graders and up. As one of the first six women accepted into NASA's space shuttle astronaut training program, Resnik brought her sharp mind, inventive engineering skills and determination to a field that had long been closed to women.

"I tell her journey from gifted student of math, science and music with serious family issues to earning multiple degrees and ultimately earning her place in the space shuttle program. She proved that astronauts aren't just pilots: they're problem solvers, inventors and explorers. Her story reminds us that even if you're not first, you can still make history, and that reaching for the stars starts with believing in yourself."

HYBRID MEMOIR

Cynthia Gallaher's new hybrid memoir, *Match Heads: My Conversations with Ted Kaczynski, the Unabomber*, will be published in the summer of 2027 by Southern Illinois University Press. The book comprises conversations Gallaher had with Kaczynski in 1971 in Chicago before he moved to Montana. It also includes poetry, quotes, a timeline and news pieces.

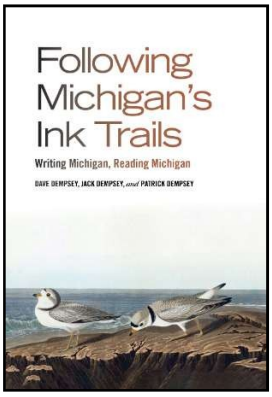
Cynthia Gallaher

Gallaher tells Literary Latest: "*Match Heads: My Conversations with Ted Kaczynski, the Unabomber* traces the author's and two fellow college freshmen's chats with future serial killer/domestic terrorist Ted Kaczynski at the University of Illinois at Chicago student lounge. These casual meetings took place from March-May 1971 up to the time he left Chicago and moved to Montana.

"In my book, I explore the various conversations I had with Kaczynski and my friends, his departure, how I nearly visited his new property in 1972 based on a hand-drawn map passed along from a friend, my reaction to the suspect drawing years later, and the realization of who he actually was upon his arrest.

"Pivotal to the acquaintanceship is my own 'cookbook chemistry' experience using match heads in fireworks experiments, which may or may not have played a role in Kaczynski's early bomb-making.

"This poetic memoir collection of dialogues is based on these actual 'missing months' in Kaczynski's timeline, with accompanying poems laced throughout."



MORE STORIES TO TELL

Jack Dempsey is co-author with Dave Dempsey and Patrick Dempsey of *Following Michigan's Ink Trails: Writing Michigan, Reading Michigan* (Michigan State University Press, Nov. 11, 2026).

Jack Dempsey writes to say, "The book grew out of a simple realization that we had other Michigan author stories to tell.

"The first two *Ink Trails* volumes introduced readers to the state's rich literary, historical and cultural landscape through the voices of writers who shared our affection for Michigan. As readers responded and new stories unfolded, it became clear that the journey was far from complete. New places and more overlooked authors deserved recognition, and fresh discoveries continued to emerge.

Jack Dempsey

"We stumbled across names we'd never heard about, and it's a real joy to think that readers might enjoy getting acquainted as we did. This third volume, *Following Michigan's Ink Trails*, invites readers to explore Michigan through the eyes now of all three Dempsey brothers.

"Michigan State University Press must have seen the merit as well, for the team

Turn to Page 7

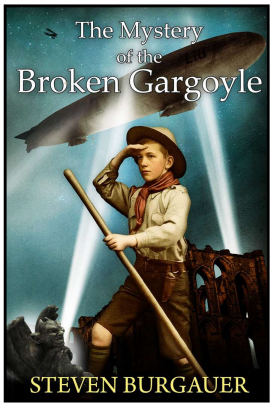
Literary Latest

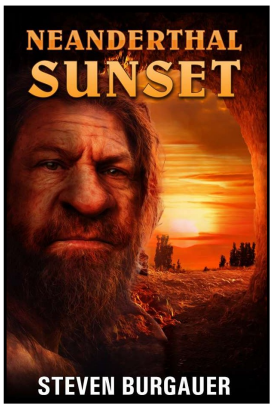
Continued from Page 6

there responded enthusiastically about another sequel and the additional material we wrote up: Michigan libraries, Michigan ladies' literary societies, Michigan's bookshops.

"So it goes way beyond author stories – as fascinating as they were to discover and write up – to provide a real roadmap to an outstanding number of literary landmarks.

"They might be a Carnegie Library that still stands. They might be a particular area of outstanding beauty. The amazing thing is that these discoveries aren't a surprise to those of us who love the Midwest and make it our home. But we hope readers will be surprised – that's another thought that inspired writing it."





TWO NEW BOOKS

Steven Burgauer has two new books: *The Mystery of the Broken Gargoyle* (Jan. 3, 2026) and *Neanderthal Sunset* (May 29, 2026).

Burgauer says, "I am inspired to write about the demonstrated bravery of our soldiers, sailors and aviators who have fought and sometimes died that we Americans may remain a free people. We have 250 years of history to be proud of.

"After years of writing science fiction, I found that my inspirations for writing prose had fundamentally changed. My new visions for writing historical fiction began when I came across the World War II diaries of a family friend who had landed on the beaches of Normandy during D-Day and was later wounded and captured by enemy forces. This led to my first historical novel titled, *The Road to War: Duty & Drill, Courage & Capture*. It is a somewhat fictionalized version of actual events. I found this work captivating and then wrote a series of World War I and World War II historical fiction novels.

Steven Burgauer

"In *The Mystery of the Broken Gargoyle*, World War I England is seen through the eyes of two dedicated Boy Scouts, who uncover and defeat a German plot to destroy the industrial might of Great Britain.

"More recently, as I came to study some of the territorial imperatives and genetic underpinnings that have led to war, I came to write a very different story structured as a work of historic fiction. *Neanderthal Sunset* is a fictionalized story of Neanderthals' first encounter with humankind, a book that brilliantly captures the final days of a brave and noble species as it nears extinction."

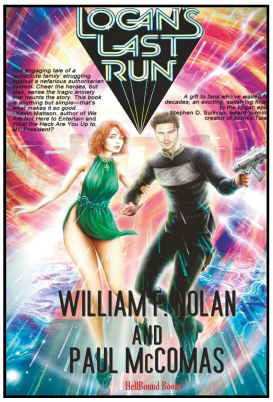
EIGHTH AND NINTH BOOKS

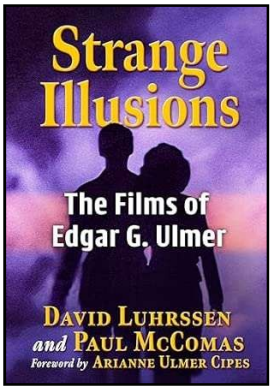
Chicago-based author/filmmaker **Paul McComas** has co-authored two new titles.

One is the long-awaited sequel – and finale – novel *Logan's Last Run*, co-authored with the late, best-selling *Logan's Run* sci-fi/horror-lit legend William F. Nolan. Prize-winning Texas-based genre publisher HellBound Books is launching the novel on June 23 in three formats: paperback, ebook and a collectible limited edition hardcover.

The new book is "multiply historic," McComas says.

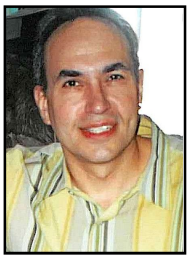
The author of *When I Am Yes* and *Looking for a Soft Place to Land*, cin





salach, wrote, "A joy to read, *Logan's Last Run* is as thrilling as it is wise as it is relevant."

McComas also co-authored *Strange Illusions: The Films of Edgar G. Ulmer* with David Luhrssen (McFarland, July 15, 2026).


Paul McComas

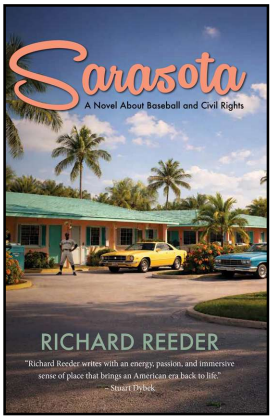
From the publisher: "Edgar G. Ulmer was a prolific filmmaker whose career from the 1920s through the 1960s spanned genres from horror to science fiction and film noir. Working both within and outside the Hollywood studio system, Ulmer developed a reputation for making stylistically distinctive films under considerable budgetary constraints, an achievement that has long made his work influential among independent filmmakers. Ulmer is most often associated with the classic horror film "The Black Cat" (1933), which paired Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi, and with the noir "Detour" (1945)."

Of *Strange Illusions,* Library Journal wrote, "Students of film will appreciate this less glamorous take on the Golden Age of Hollywood."

Turn to Page 8

Literary Latest

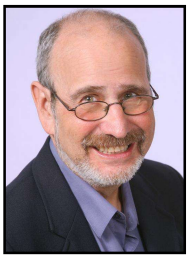
Continued from Page 7



TREASURE TROVE

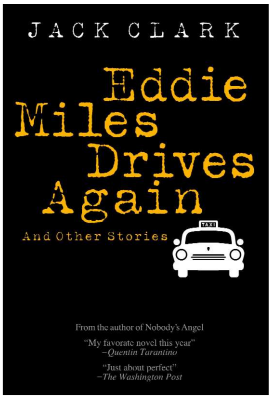
Saratoga: a Novel About Baseball and Civil Rights (Eckhartz Press, 2026) is **Richard Reeder's** new book.

Reeder tells Literary Latest, "I have been a diehard Chicago White Sox fan since my father took me to my first game at Comiskey Park in 1952. I seriously considered writing a book on the history of White Sox spring training Sox in Sarasota, Florida, from 1960 to 1997. During my research, I came upon a treasure trove of newspaper stories written by the Black journalist Wendell Smith. Smith reported on the harsh discrimination Black players faced during spring training in the South well into the early 1960s, even though Jackie Robinson had broken the Major League Baseball color barrier in 1947.



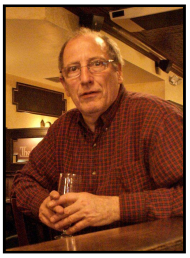
Richard Reeder

"I discovered there was a Sarasota white couple who owned a motel that did not adhere to Jim Crow and welcomed Blacks as guests. I learned about how the Chicago White Sox ownership bought the hotel where the team stayed in Sarasota and integrated it. My research also led me to understand the indignities of discrimination on army bases in the South that Black professional ballplayers were suffering after being drafted into the military, in the prime of their careers, during the so-called 'peaceful draft' of that time. My focus then shifted to writing a novel depicting that particular era in our nation's history. *Sarasota* is the result of those efforts."



EDDIE MILES STORIES

Jack Clark writes to say, "I have had two Eddie Miles novels published, *Nobody's Angel* from Hard Case Crime (That's the book Quentin Tarantino called his favorite fiction novel of the year and a 'terrific story and character study'), and *Back Door to L.A.*, which I published myself. More recently, I spent a lot of time in Paris, so I sent Eddie over there as well and ended up with *Paris in a Bottle*, which has yet to see the light of day.



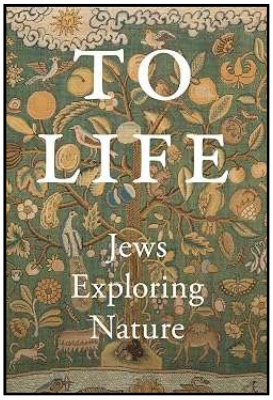
Jack Clark

"But I realized there was a gap between the end of *Back Door to L.A.* and *Paris in a Bottle*, and the gap included the time when Uber came to town and destroyed the Chicago taxi business and many lives along the way. So the title story of *Eddie Miles Drives Again & Other Stories* (May 16), covers those dark days.

"Next, I'm going to self-publish my mystery, *Murder Reporter*, in the next month or two. And I've got four finished novels after that, *Paris in a Bottle*, *The B Side of Misty*, *The Morning She Left* and *Running the Road*. By the time I publish those I should be finished with *Long Lost Friends*, which I'm about a third of the way through."

From the publisher: "From a cab driver in mourning to a ghost who offers sex tips, from teenagers in lust to a novice private-eye, to a down-and-out homeless guy, these 10 stories, set against the backdrop of Chicago, a city Jack Clark knows so well, are sometimes dark, often funny and always intriguing."

The Washington Post called *Nobody's Angel* "a gem [and] just about perfect. ... [It] doesn't contain a wasted word or a false note."



NEW BOOK RELEASED

Joel Greenberg, whose book *A Natural History of the Chicago Area* was honored at the 2003 Midland Authors book awards, writes to say, "My new book was released last month. Published by Rutgers University Press and titled *To Life: Jews Exploring Nature*, the heart of it is eight chapter-long biographies of Jewish people who studied natural history. Four had strong connections with Chicago (two Field Museum curators, a student and assistant at University of Chicago for many years, and my one bad apple, Nathan Leopold), and two more who went to graduate school in the Midwest (Madison and Ann Arbor)."

Joel Greenberg

From the publisher" "*To Life* explores

Turn to Page 9

Don't forget you can have info about your new book posted at midlandauthors.org. Members may submit books published within the last six months by emailing **Robert Loerzel** at: midlandauthors.org/members-new-book/

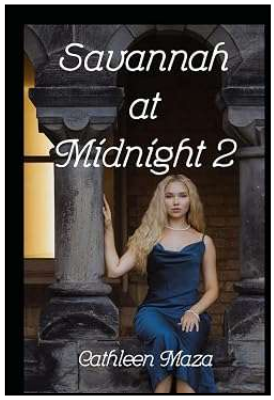
Literary Latest

Continued from Page 8

the Jewish relationship with nature by illuminating significant Jewish thinkers who increased in important ways our understanding of various aspects of natural history.

"In eight compelling chapter-long biographies, naturalist Joel Greenberg demonstrates the diversity of both Jewish identity and the natural sciences.

"Greenberg's rich biographical sketches spotlight great Jewish scientists who not only made major contributions to the study of the natural world but also led rich and colorful lives."



'SHE'S BACK'

Cathleen Maza's latest book is *Savannah at Midnight 2* (2025).

From the publisher: "Spirited, sultry, and supernatural...she's back!

"Welcome to Savannah, Georgia, where the air is humid, the history is rich and restless spirits abound. ... You may come across a lovely young woman who's named after the city. If so, mind your manners, as she's the one in charge of the shadows that come out to play during the 12 strokes of midnight. And if you prove to be inhospitable to the Hostess City, you'll quickly find yourself in a world of regret.

Cathleen Maza

"So, feel free to take that stroll along the river, enjoy a haunted trolley tour, and do plan to spend a night or two in the beautiful historic district. Just remember ... Savannah is watching!"

Media summit planned

Author **Robert K. Elder**, who is also the president and CEO of Outrider Foundation, interviewed Hank Green on stage at the Media Impact Foundation Funders' Forum earlier this year in San Francisco. Green is an Internet powerhouse and science communicator who hosts Vlogbrothers with his brother, author John Green (The Fault in Our Stars, Paper Towns), and hosts the YouTube shows Crash Course and SciShow. Elder and Green talked about content creators, journalism and the future of information on the Internet.

Outrider Foundation funds journalism about climate change and nuclear threats, and Nicole Sweeney from Hank Green's company Complexly, is an Outrider fellow. Outrider's fellowship program supports reporting at The New York Times, CNN, TIME, Vox, The Guardian US and public radio's Science Friday, among others.

Elder is currently planning the third annual Outrider Nuclear Media Summit at Warner Bros Studios in October.

ESTHER KANG

Robert K. Elder

As in years past, the summit will bring together journalists and science communicators – as well as TV and movie screenwriters, producers, and directors – to discuss nuclear security issues connected to artificial intelligence, health, the environment and outer space. This event offers sessions with leading scientists and policymakers, in partnership with Hollywood, Health and Society at USC Annenberg Norman Lear Center. This free, two-day event offers conference sessions, training and networking. Journalists and authors who might be interested in learning more can visit: https://outrider.org/events

New Members

Jean Reidy is a traditionally published children's author with 17 published picture books and two more on the way.

She grew up in Highland Park. She has lived in Colorado, where she won the Colorado Book Award three times, and now lives in Chicago.

Jean Reidy

She also is a Parents' Choice Gold Award Winner and a Charlotte Zolotow Honor winner, and she has been recognized on "Best of" lists by School Library Journal, the New York Times, NPR and Amazon.

She was nominated by **Esther Hershenhorn.**

Lisa Sukenic, the author of the novel-in-verse *Miles from Motown* (Fitzroy Books, 2021), is a poet, author and fifth-grade teacher at the University of Chicago Lab Schools. Her work has appeared in Everyday Haiku, and her short stories have appeared in the Off Campus Writers Workshop Anthologies. She was a finalist in the Many Voices Competition in 2016. She was the winner of the Prairie Writers Day Manuscript contest in 2016 and in 2019 was a finalist in Regal House/ Fitzroy's MG Kraken Contest for *Miles from Motown*, which also was a 2022 Notable Book from the Library of Michigan.

Lisa Sukenic

She was nominated by **Patricia Skalka**.

Biblio File

Cont. from Page 4

Edge of the World (Ice Cube Press, Sept. 22, 2025). ... Sunspot Lit's open call for very long fiction, CNF, poetry and graphic novels closes Aug. 31. It accepts all genres and categories. Guidelines and form here: https://sunspotlit.submittable.com/submit

Sign up for Sept. 12-13 Printers Row

The Printers Row Lit Fest, the Midwest's largest outdoor literary festival, is returning on Saturday, Sept. 12, and Sunday, Sept. 13 – and the Midland Authors will once again participate.

Both members and nonmembers will be able to showcase and sell books under a tent that we will rent at the festival, which takes place in the Printers Row area of the South Loop, primarily along Dearborn Street.

Midland Authors members can reserve half a table for a two-hour time slot. The cost is $35 for most time slots – or just $20 for the 4-6 p.m. time slots.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 12	SUNDAY, SEPT. 13
10 a.m.-noon	10 a.m.-noon
noon-2 p.m.	noon-2 p.m.
2-4 p.m.	2-4 p.m.
4-6 p.m.	4-6 p.m.

A half a table during the entire two days is $180.

Members get a 10% discount on this category.

This approach would give an author the best opportunity to sell a significant number of books.

There are eight spaces per time slot. Space is limited, so please respond ASAP.

If you'd like to participate, email Joe Gustaitis at jagustaitis@yahoo.com with your first and second preferences from these time slots. We will confirm all time slots with authors and let them know about payment details.

FROM LEFT: Michael Haupt (background, looking to the left), Joyce Burns Zeiss, Thomas E. Patterson, Daniela Ramirez, Thomas J. Thorson and Westley Heine at the Midland Authors tent at the 2025 Printers Row Litfest. (Photo by Ray Zeiss)

Table preferences within the Midland Authors half-tent will be given on a first-come, first-served basis. Again, email Joe Gustaitis at jagustaitis@yahoo.com.

Participants will be responsible for bringing their own books, selling them, collecting the money and taking away any unsold copies afterward. And they must remain at their table for the duration of their assigned time.

The Midland Authors has been at Printers Row since **Richard Lindberg** and **Carol Carlson** started the tradition in 2000, as, Lindberg said, "a means of showcasing and promoting the aims of the Society and the fine work of our author members for a nominal fee – far less than what individuals might otherwise pay were they to reserve a table on their own."

Authors should prepare for gusts of wind and not be surprised if it rains. Authors can pay for their time slot by sending $35 to our post office box at Society of Midland Authors, P.O. Box 10419, Chicago 60610. Or they can visit our website at www.midlandauthors.org and pay via PayPal.

Authors who book a slot and don't show up still are required to pay.

Midland Authors 2026-27 officers, board members

Here are the new officers and board members for the Midland Authors for 2026-27. Any member who is interested in filling a vacancy on the board should contact President Walter Podrazik.

OFFICERS 2026-2027

President: Walter Podrazik
Vice President: David Witter
Treasurer: Greg Borzo
Recording Secretary: Jim Schwab
Corresponding Secretary: Jon Lauck
Membership Secretary: Thomas Frisbie

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2026-2027 (Nine members)

(Three terms expire in 2029)	*(Three terms expire in 2027)*	*(Three terms expire in 2028)*
[vacant]	Marlene Targ Brill	Jim Walker
Gerard Plecki (immediate past president)	Christopher Lynch	[vacant]
[vacant]	Dominic Pacyga	Patricia Skalka

Appointed positions: Program Chair: vacant; Program Co-Chair: Rebecca Johns; Archivist: Walter Podrazik; Publications: Thomas Frisbie

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.

The Society of Midland Authors

NOMINATION FORM

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

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

Name:

Address:

Qualifying residence or place of birth:

Biography:

Phone number(s):

E-mail address:

Name of proposer:

Signature:

Date:

WORKS:

	Title:	Publisher:	Year:
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Declaration of Authors' Rights and Freedom of the Press

Reflecting on these contentious times, the SMA Board of Directors released this statement in March reaffirming our commitment to authors, books and freedom of the press.

Marking the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution, we as an organization of authors from 12 Midwestern states feel compelled at this time to restate the importance of the writings in the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution.

As part of "We the People" we raise our voices to support, defend and celebrate the bedrock American freedoms of expression, opinion and an unfettered press. Simultaneously, we denounce encroachment on those rights. As authors, we know words matter.

Freedom of the press should not be subject to governmental whims or fears that such exercises would upset those in power. So says the Declaration of Independence from July 4, 1776.

We abhor governmental assaults on writing, journalism and the availability of what we hold sacred: books.

Yet increasingly we have seen books banned from school libraries, public libraries, and archival sites. History has been rewritten in textbooks, websites, and public displays by those who are not historians. Civil servants have been dismissed defending literature, journalism and facts.

Books are part of the free press. A free press is promised to all Americans by our Constitution, as one of the cornerstone guarantees of the First Amendment, which states that "Congress shall make no law … abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press."

To those ends, we continue our ongoing commitment to writing and writers, back to our nation's guiding documents. We believe in our Constitution. We vociferously remind every level of government of those principles, at this pivotal marker in our 250-year history.

Declared by the Board of Directors of The Society of Midland Authors.
March 2026