

South Loop Writers Showcase Wed., May 20, 2009 at Jazz Showcase

Writer and Speaker Bios

REGINA HARRIS BAIOCCHI is an award winning writer and composer. Her first book, "Indigo Sound," consists of thirteen perfectly-pitched chapters that function individually as short stories and collectively as a novel. The book was described by Studs Terkel as having "the feeling tone of a soft, yet strong lullaby. It has music and poetry that sings and exhilarates." Regina's first book of poetry, "Urban Haiku & Other Selected Poems," applies the ancient Japanese poetry form, haiku, to topics that include skyscrapers, boom boxes, taxis, the stock exchange, oil spills, street markets, rooftop gardens, storefront churches, and urban myths. Her book "Blues Haiku" was inspired by the Blues music genre and is full of life, heartache, and song.

GREG BORZO, whose first home was a few steps from Chicago's "L" train, enjoys riding it almost every day and gives history tours of several "L" lines. Formerly the editor of Modern Railroads magazine, he also worked as a science writer at Chicago's Field Museum and is now a freelance writer. Greg's book, "The Chicago L," chronicles the development of our much-loved and sometimes hated train in all its grit and glory. Greg is currently a board member of South Loop Neighbors.

NINA CORWIN is the author of "Conversations With Friendly Demons and Tainted Saints" and co-editor of "Inhabiting the Body: A Collection of Poetry and Art By Women." Curator for WomanMade Gallery's literary events, she has performed her poetry throughout the country, regularly collaborating with a variety of musicians, dancers and other poets. Some of these include the CUBE chamber ensemble, dancer/choreographer Regina Lavery and the Serendipity Percussion Ensemble. Her poetry appears or is forthcoming in such publications as ACM, BlazeVOX, Hotel Amerika, Mudfish, Poetry East, Slipstream, Southern Poetry and Wm&Mary Reviews, as well as the anthologies Visiting Frost (University of Iowa Press, 2005) and Poetic Voices Without Borders (Gival Press). She has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and has received awards from the Illinois Arts Council and the Illinois State Poetry Society.

BETH FINKE is an NPR commentator and writer and whose memoir, "Long Time, No See," was one of the Chicago Tribune's Favorite Nonfiction Books of 2003. The Trib wrote that the book "offers an insider's report on adaptation. How does a newly blinded woman know what she's doing...?" Her latest book is "Hanni and Beth: Safe and Sound," a day in the life of her seeing eye dog. One reviewer writes, "Be it her strength, her honesty, or her enduring sense of humor - most likely a combination of all - Beth Finke manages to tell her story in a way that shocks, informs, and inspires. She says things that others typically won't, and it is both refreshing and thought provoking."

RON GORDON and JOHN PAULETT: Ron Gordon, one of the original pioneers of Printer's Row, is an accomplished photographer who specializes in historic preservation and architecture. He captured the progression and evolution of Printer's Row while living and working in the community. His books include "Printer's Row, Chicago," and "Forgotten Chicago." Ron has said, "Often I have been the last person to document something as it was about to disappear. This visual record of changes in the urban landscape is also social documentary, since architecture cannot exist without people, or people without architecture." John Paulett, Ron's collaborator on the two Chicago books, is an author and local local historian. He is also an actor, musician and playwright.

MAUD LAVIN teaches at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her most recent book is "The Oldest We've Ever Been," a collection of seven true stories of midlife transition, including one written by Maud. The essays probe divorce, remarriage, friendship, parenthood, illness and death as they celebrate the richness of midlife experience. Previous books include "The Business of Holidays" and "Clean New World: Culture, Politics, and Graphic Design." Of the latter, the New York Times Book Review writes, "Maud Lavin. . . discusses the divergent voices of graphic artists whose images have shaped society," and the Chicago Tribune says, "...a discussion that has powerful implications for our interpretation of the past and art practices in the future."

THOM NICHOLSON served as a Special Forces officer in Vietnam, South America and Africa. In 1996, with more than thirty years commissioned service, he retired at the rank of colonel. As a civilian, Thom was a professional engineer. After civilian retirement, Thom started writing novels, many about the Civil War and the American West. "15 Months in Sog" recounts his experiences as a company commander in Vietnam. His latest Western, "Stagecoach Graveyard," has just been released.

SHARON WOODHOUSE is the founder and publisher of **Lake Claremont Press**, a local, independent publisher specializing in books about Chicago. In addition to running her company, Sharon also enjoys sharing her knowledge of publishing and discussing issues in publishing in various forums; she has presented on this topic to dozens of organizations, including the Illinois Women's Press Association, the Midwest Writers Association, and the Self-Employment in the Arts conference. Her articles have appeared in publications such as Crain's Chicago Business, Publisher's Weekly, and American Bookseller. She has counseled over 300 new college graduates, aspiring authors, and career changers on book writing, book proposal writing, book publishing, and/or careers in publishing. Lake Claremont Press (www.lakeclaremont.com) has published almost 400,000 books of 45 different titles in its first 15 years. They currently have 23 books in print and 20 books under contract for release in the next two years.