

The 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of  
the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature

*The Cultural Heritage of the Midwest:  
A Symposium*

May 13–15, 2010  
Michigan State University Union, East Lansing, MI

**Thursday, May 13, 2010**

Registration 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

**Session A**

**12:00 noon – 1:30 p.m.**

Criticism

Parlor A

Moderator: Dana Prodoehl (Marquette University)

Nicholas Sturm (University of Akron) "I Look about Wildly': Ecological Borders and Responsibilities in  
James Wright's *The Branch Will Not Break*"

James Boehnlein (University of Dayton) "Meridel Le Sueur's 'Spring Story': An Ethics Inquiry"

JoAnne Isbey (University of Detroit Mercy) "Nick Reding's *Methland*: Harrowing Hell in the  
Heartland"

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Criticism

Parlor B

Moderator: Ronald R. Primeau (Central Michigan University)

Glenn Sheldon (University of Toledo) "Fake Mammy to God's Mistakes: Robert Hayden's Aunt Jemima"

Maureen Eke (Central Michigan University) "Langston Hughes, *The Weary Blues*, and the Midwest"

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Poetry

Parlor C

Moderator: Lylanne Musselman (University of Indianapolis)

Bobbi Lee Byrd (Osseo, MI) "A Collection of New Poems"

Christian Knoeller (Purdue University) "Indian Summer"

Nancy Genevieve Perkins (University of Illinois Springfield) Poems from *Prairie Wind*

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Panel

Green Room

A Life in Color: The Painter, Alison McMaugh

Moderator: Alixandra Summitt (Okemos, MI)

Marcia Polenberg (University of Michigan, Flint) "Alison McMaugh: A Woman Artist's Search for Color,  
Harmonies and Identity"

Vince Carducci (College for Creative Studies)

Alixandra Summitt (Okemos, MI)

**Session B**

**2:00 – 3:30 p.m.**

Creative Nonfiction

Parlor A

Moderator: Dawn Comer (Defiance College)

Janet Ruth Heller (Western Michigan University) "Harvesting the Summer of 1972"

Patrick McGinnity (Central Michigan University) "Redness and Irritation: On Living Gingerly in a World  
that Hates (and Loves) Its Redheads"

Jane L. Carman (Illinois State University) "ThUNderSTruck"

Mallory Gee (Defiance College) "For Charley"

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Criticism

Parlor B

Law and Literature

Moderator: James Seaton (Michigan State University)

Philip A. Greasley (University of Kentucky) "Variations on a Theme of Love and Death: John Donaldson  
Voelker's *The People Versus Kirk* and *Anatomy of a Murder*"

Charles Palmer (Cooley Law School) "A Courthouse in Marquette, the Teddy Roosevelt Trial, and *Anatomy of a Murder*"  
Lisa Barksdale-Shaw (Michigan State University) "I just r-r-reckon I h-had it coming??: Staging Evidence in Richard Wright's *Native Son*"

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Fiction Parlor C  
Moderator: James Marlow (University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth)  
Julie Babcock (University of Michigan) "Numbers"  
Jim Gorman (Otterbein College) New Fiction  
David Diamond (Black Hills State University) "A Night to Kill"

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Films Green Room  
Retrospective on Gene Dent  
Moderator: David D. Anderson (Michigan State University Emeritus)  
*Louis Bromfield's Mansfield*

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**Session C 4:00 – 5:30 p.m.**

Criticism Parlor A  
Drama  
Moderator: Clinton S. Burhans III (Central Michigan University)  
Michael Schwartz (Widener University and Neumann University) "Rejecting the Unicorn: Inge's The Dark at the Top of the Stairs and Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* as Portraits of Shyness, Selfishness, and Vanity"  
Janet Ruth Heller (Western Michigan University) "A Comparison of Alan Gross's *High Holidays* and Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*"

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Criticism Parlor B  
Law and Literature  
Moderator: Charles Palmer (Cooley Law School)  
Mae Kuykendall (Michigan State University College of Law) "Huck Finn and 'Poor Joshua!': Conceptions of Due Process and American Liberty"  
James Seaton (Michigan State University) "Judge Richard Posner on Law and Literature"

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Creative Nonfiction Parlor C  
Moderator: Patrick McGinnity (Central Michigan University)  
Martha Christensen Demerly (Bloomfield Hills, Michigan) "The Lemon Drop Conspiracy or a Brief Lesson in Applied Physics"  
Tracy Seeley (University of San Francisco) From "The Good Land" from *My Ruby Slippers*  
Dawn Comer (Defiance College) "Dam Parties, Fish Dreams, and SwampFire: Facebook Fragments from a Full Life"

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Poetry Green Room  
In the Valley of the Shadow of the North: A Poetry Panel  
Moderator: Matthew L. M. Fletcher (Michigan State University)  
Gordon Henry (Michigan State University) "The Failure of Certain Charms and Dead Letters"  
Paul Stebleton (Traverse City, MI) "'Pure Michigan': The Blanding of the Poetic Voice"  
Matthew L. M. Fletcher (Michigan State University) "Stone Boats"

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**Dinner Break 5:30 p.m.**

**Editorial Committee Meeting**

Marcia Noe  
Robert Beasecker  
Nancy McKinney  
Jeffrey Swenson

David D. Anderson  
Philip Greasley  
James Seaton  
Joseph Wydeven

**Green Room**

Marilyn Atlas  
Roger Bresnahan  
William Barillas

Ronald Primeau  
Mary Obuchowski  
Robert Dunne

**Session D** **7:30 – 9:00 p.m.**

Films Green Room  
Retrospective on Gene Dent  
Moderator: David D. Anderson  
*A Storyteller's Town (Sherwood Anderson)*  
*Sherwood Anderson's Blueridge Country*

**Friday, May 14, 2010**

Registration 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

**Session E** **8:00 – 9:30 a.m.**

Criticism Parlor A  
President's Panel: The Poetry of Gwendolyn Brooks: Critical and Creative Responses  
Moderator: Margaret Rozga (University of Wisconsin, Waukesha)  
Marc Seals (University of Wisconsin, Baraboo/Sauk County) "Romancing the Myth of Southern Chivalry: Gwendolyn Brooks' Emmett Till Poetry"  
Margaret Rozga (University of Wisconsin, Waukesha) "Gwendolyn Brooks' Sonnets and the Grammar of Segregation"  
James Gapinski (Milwaukee, WI) "Requisite Community: Nuclear Families in Gwendolyn Brooks' Poetry"

Criticism Parlor B  
Bromfield and Anderson  
Moderator: Dominic Ording (Millersville University of Pennsylvania)  
Norman Chaney (Otterbein College) "Louis Bromfield's Philosophy of Life at Malabar"  
Jayne E. Waterman (Ashland University) "From the Midwest, to New York, Paris, and Back: 'Placing' the Middlebrow in Louis Bromfield's Texts"  
Andy Oler (Indiana University) "'Accentuated by the Wavering Uncertain Light': Sherwood Anderson's Construction of Rural Modernity"

Creative Writing Parlor C  
Plain(s)spoken: Nebraska Voices in Poetry and Prose  
Moderator: John C. Schulze (University of Nebraska, Lincoln)  
James Engelhardt (University of Nebraska, Lincoln) Excerpts from "City of Wind, City of Salt"  
Marianne Kunkel (University of Nebraska, Lincoln) "Impressions of a Transplant"  
Zach Strait (University of Nebraska, Lincoln) "Human Nature"  
John C. Schulze (University of Nebraska, Lincoln) "From the Big Easy to the Big Empty"

Creative Prose Ballroom  
Moderator: Ed Demerly (Bloomfield, MI)  
Lawrence Moe (Metropolitan State University) "'Tis Far Off and Rather Like a Dream"  
Ryan Beatty (Michigan State University) "Fifty Percent"  
Kelly Dwyer (University of Wisconsin Baraboo/Sauk County) From *Ghost Mother*

Poetry Green Room  
Rhymes with Orange  
Moderator: JoAnne Isbey (University of Detroit Mercy)  
Alex Jones (University of Detroit Mercy)  
Deonte Osayande (University of Detroit Mercy)  
Brandon Tark (University of Detroit Mercy)

**Session F****10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.**

Criticism  
Drama Parlor A

Moderator: John Rohrkemper (Elizabethtown College)  
Arvid Sponberg (Valparaiso University) "The Nature and Meaning of the Second City, or 50 Years of Funny Behavior"  
Ronald Primeau (Central Michigan University) "Re-imagining Chicago: from Lorraine Hansberry to Sarah Ruhl"  
Marilyn Atlas (Ohio University) "Staging the Midwest: Tracy Letts' *August: Osage County* and Geography"

Criticism Parlor B

Louise Erdrich  
Moderator: Jeffrey Swenson (Hiram College)  
Mary Catherine Harper (Defiance College) "Figuring the Midwestern Grotesque in Louise Erdrich's Novels: A Matter of Romanticism"  
Jennifer Holly Wells (Drew University) "Transportation, Migration, and Louise Erdrich's 'Four Souls'"  
David D. Anderson (Michigan State University Emeritus) "Sherwood Anderson's Ohio"

Poetry Parlor C

Moderator: J. J. McKenna (University of Nebraska, Omaha)  
Chloé Yelena Miller (Fairleigh Dickinson University) From "Unrest"  
Lynanne Musselman (University of Indianapolis) "New and Selected Poems"  
Margaret Rozga (University of Wisconsin, Waukesha) Selections from *200 Nights and One Day* and New Poems

Criticism Green Room

MidAmerica Panel: Art, Architecture, and Midwest Literature  
Moderator: Joseph J. Wydeven (Bellevue University Emeritus) MidAmerica Award Winner  
Guy Szuberla (University of Toledo Emeritus) "I.K. Pond: A Chicago and Michigan Architect in the Midwest"  
Sara Kosiba (Troy University) "Grant Wood's Conflicted Regionalist Aesthetic"  
Joseph J. Wydeven (Bellevue University Emeritus) "The Literary Architecture of Wright Morris"

**Lunch break****11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

Awards Luncheon Ballroom  
MidAmerica Award: Joseph J. Wydeven  
Mark Twain Award: Jane Hamilton

**Session G****1:30 – 3:00 p.m.**

Criticism Parlor A

Mark Twain Award Panel: The Fiction of Jane Hamilton  
Moderator: Kenneth Grant (University of Wisconsin, Baraboo/Sauk County)  
Jen Litton (University of Tennessee, Chattanooga) "The Others: Representations of Otherness in Jane Hamilton's *The Book of Ruth*"  
Kenneth Grant (University of Wisconsin, Baraboo/Sauk County) "The Confessional and the Cell: Atonement in Jane Hamilton's *A Map of the World*"  
Lauren O. Brown (University of Tennessee, Chattanooga) "'Comparable to Nothing but Themselves': Misfits in the Coming-of-Age Narratives of Jane Hamilton and Carson McCullers"  
Marcia Noe (University of Tennessee, Chattanooga) "Jane Hamilton's *Midsummer Night's* Masterpiece"

Fiction Parlor B

Moderator: Mary Catherine Harper (Defiance College)  
William J. Palmer (Purdue University) "*The Wabash Trilogy: A Reading*"

Geromina Ferrara Courtney (Defiance College) "It's Like the Moon with Corn"  
Leslie Wilson (Defiance College) "Mouse Observation Diaries"

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Poetry Parlor C  
Moderator: Martha Vertreace-Doodly (Kennedy-King College)  
J.J. McKenna (University of Nebraska, Omaha) "Wind and Water – Landscapes of Love"  
Desiree M. Oden (University of Detroit Mercy) "Pieces from a Hummingbird's Journal"  
David Diamond (Black Hills State University) New Poems

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Criticism Green Room  
Moderator: Scott Emmert (University of Wisconsin, Fox Valley)  
Bill Knight (Western Illinois University) "Canon Fodder: Carl Sandburg's 1918 Advice to the Press"  
Jeffrey C. Swenson (Hiram College) "Turning the Boat toward Minnesota: Liminal Spaces, the  
Midwestern Home and War Fiction"  
Dominic Ording (Millerville University of Pennsylvania) "Michael Cunningham's Introspective and  
Teacherly Narrators"  
Leigh Gardner (Central Michigan University) "Intimacy and Violence: Philip Roth's *Indignation*"

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**Session H 3:30 – 5:00 p.m.**

Criticism Parlor A  
Native American Matters  
Moderator: Bill Knight (Western Illinois University)  
Christian Knoeller (Purdue University) "Ancient Traces: Indian Figures in the Poetry of William  
Stafford"  
Nancy Bunge (Michigan State University) "Ojibwe Influence on the Fiction of Harriet Wheeler,  
Missionary Daughter"

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Creative Nonfiction Parlor B  
Iowa Writers  
Moderator: Andre Perry (University of Iowa)  
Nick Kowalczyk (Ithaca College) "Preservation"  
Timothy Denevi (University of Iowa) "Freak Kingdom (excerpts from...)"  
Andre Perry (University of Iowa) "We've Been Had"

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Poetry Parlor C  
Moderator: Nancy Genevieve Perkins (University of Illinois Springfield)  
Martha Vertreace-Doodly (Kennedy-King College) "Elizabeth Caldwell Duncan and Other Poems"  
Glenn Sheldon (University of Toledo) "South Chicago Hospital During the Great Fire of 1871: Poems"  
Dana Bisignani (Purdue University) "FEMAville: Poems from the Flood"

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Retrospective on Gene Dent Green Room  
Moderator: David D. Anderson (Michigan State University Emeritus)  
*Up in Michigan* (Hemingway)  
*The Reluctant Hero: Brand Whitlock*

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Criticism Ballroom  
Gene Stratton-Porter  
Moderator: Susan Schiller (Central Michigan University)  
Robert Mellin (Purdue North Central) "Gene Stratton-Porter's *Music of the Wild*: Exploring the  
Boundaries of Expressive Realism"  
Mary DeJong Obuchowski (Central Michigan University Emerita) "Gene Stratton-Porter's *Music of the  
Wild* and Beyond: Nature and Belief"

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**Session I 5:00 p.m.**

**Mentoring Café** Parlor A

SSML members in various stages of their careers will host a roundtable discussion of professional development for graduate students, and the current academic job market.

**Officers' Meeting**

**6:00 p.m.**

Ballroom

David Anderson, Executive Secretary  
Roger Bresnahan, Secretary-Treasurer  
Philip Greasley, Recording Secretary  
and DML Editor  
Robert Beasecker, Bibliographer  
Marc Van Wormer, Conference Planner  
Marilyn Atlas, Prize Coordinator  
Marcia Noe, Chair, Editorial Committee  
Mary DeJong Obuchowski, Program Chair  
Scholarship Chair  
William Barillas, Book Award Coordinator

Margaret Rozga, President  
Lawrence Moe, Vice-President, President Elect  
Kenneth Grant, Past President  
Jayne Waterman, Executive Council, 2007-2010  
Christian Knoeller, Executive Council, 2007-2010  
Martha Vertreace-Doody, Executive Council, 2008-2011  
Joseph Wydeven, Executive Council, 2008-2011  
Sara Kosiba, Executive Council, 2009-2012  
Michael Kula, Executive Council, 2009-2012

**Saturday, May 15, 2010**

**8:00 – 9:00 a.m.**

**Gold Room A**

Annual Business Meeting

**Session J**

**9:00 – 10:30 a.m.**

Fiction

Parlor A

Moderator: Jim Gorman (Otterbein College)  
James Marlow (University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth) "Visions of Baseball"  
Michelle Menting (University of Nebraska, Lincoln) "When We Fell"  
Diane Payne (University of Arkansas, Monticello) From *Burning Tulips*

Criticism

Parlor B

Moderator: Amy Nolan (Wartburg College)  
Loren Logsdon (Eureka College) "Magic as Metaphor in Ray Bradbury's *Dandelion Wine*"  
Scott D. Emmert (University of Wisconsin, Fox Valley) "It's Heaven: Sports Literature and Iowa's Pastoral Image"  
Lawrence Moe (Metropolitan State University) "Hazel Barrington Selby"

Poetry

Parlor C

Moderator: Ryan Beatty (Michigan State University)  
Mary Minock (Madonna University) From *Poems That Tell the Story*, from a *Memoir of Southwest Detroit*  
Dong Li (Ohio State University) "'Lost' Daughters of China"  
Mary Catherine Harper (Defiance College) "As the Heavens Spin Open"

Creative Nonfiction

Green Room

Moderator: Jane L. Carman (Illinois State University)  
Robert Long Foreman (University of Missouri) "Columbia, Missouri"  
Sandra Humble Johnson (Zayed University) "Tents and Inspector Gadget," From *The Weight of Words: Dieting and Dying Living and Dining in the Midwest and Middle East*  
Jo Wiley (Western Michigan University) From "Becoming Me: Prologue"

Criticism

Gold Room B

Moderator: Guy Szuberla (University of Toledo Emeritus)  
Richmond B. Adams (Andrew College) "'The World's Evils in Miniature': Edward Eggleston's *The Circuit Rider* and its 'Invitation' to Post Bellum America"

John Rohrkemper (Elizabethtown College) "Mark Twain, Pudd'nhead Wilson, and the Fear of Financial Failure"

**Session K**

**10:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon**

Criticism

Parlor A

Feminist Matters

Moderator: Sara Kosiba (Troy University)

Philip J. Egan (Western Michigan University) "Growing Up Female a Century Ago: Booth Tarkington's *Alice Adams* Reconsidered"

Dong Li (Ohio State University) "'Last Communist Virgin' and 'Forage': Sexual Identity in New Contexts"

Criticism

Parlor B

Transformation in the Novels of Willa Cather

Moderator: Susan A. Schiller (Central Michigan University)

Theresa Levy (Temple University) "'The Goddess of Liberty': Cather and Women's Writing of WWI"

Sean Lake (Fordham University) "Willa Cather's Autopsy: Ancient Ruins and the Creative Mind"

Susan A. Schiller (Central Michigan University) "Sea Crossings to Sustain the Art of Cather"

Poetry

Parlor C

Moderator: Jim Gorman (Otterbein College)

Kevin McKelvey (University of Indianapolis) and Curtis Crisler (Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne) "Indiana Nocturnes: Our Rural and Urban Patchwork"

Margo LaGattuta (University of Michigan, Flint) "Bridge of Birds"

Creative Nonfiction

Gold Room B

Moderator: Philip Greasley (University of Kentucky)

Amy Nolan (Wartburg College) "Murder and Redemption"

Glenn Sheldon (University of Toledo) "A *Posthumous* Chit-Chat with Detroit Poet: Robert Hayden"

Marc Van Wormer (Lansing, MI) "Thaïs in Toledo"

Tyler Dunham (Defiance College) "The Prologue of My Life Story"

Panel

Green Room

Creating *The Calumet Region: An American Place*

Moderator: Arvid Sponberg (Valparaiso University)

Gary Ciadella, Photographer (Kalamazoo, MI)

Gregg Hertzlieb Director/Curator, Brauer Museum of Art (Valparaiso University)

**Editorial Board Meeting**

**12:00 noon**

*Dictionary of Midwestern Literature*

Green Room

David Anderson

Robert Beasecker

Marcia Noe

Phil Greasley, editor

Robert Dunne

Mary Obuchowski

Marilyn Atlas

Sara Kosiba

Guy Szuberla

William Barillas

Nancy McKinney

Joseph Wydeven

The Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature encourages you to revise your conference paper as a publishable essay and submit one hard copy by September 1, 2010 to Marcia Noe, 535

Elinor Street, Chattanooga, TN 37405. Go to [www.ssml.org/publications](http://www.ssml.org/publications) and click on the *MidAmerica* link for details.

We encourage members to nominate a fellow member of SSML for the 2011 MidAmerica Award for distinguished contributions to the study of Midwestern Literature. Give your nomination to Marcia Noe here at the conference, leave it at the Registration Table, or e-mail it to Marcia at [marcia-noe@utc.edu](mailto:marcia-noe@utc.edu) by July 1, 2010. We also encourage members to nominate a living creative writer for the 2011 Mark Twain Award for distinguished contributions to Midwestern Literature. The Mark Twain honoree need not be a member of SSML.