



June 2018 | Volume 13 | Number 4

## Caroline Fraser Wins 2018 Plutarch Award

Caroline Fraser won the 2018 Plutarch Award for *Prairie Fires: The American Dreams of Laura Ingalls Wilder*. Members of Biographers International Organization selected the winning book, which was announced on May 19, at the Ninth Annual BIO Conference, at the Leon Levy Center for Biography at the Graduate Center, City University of New York.



### Join BIO in the Netherlands!

On September 20 and 21, 2018, BIO joins the Biography Institute and the Biography Society in hosting the conference "Different Lives: Global Perspectives on Biography in Public Cultures and

Fraser's book had previously won the Pulitzer Prize for Biography and the National Book Critics Circle Award for Biography.

Caroline Fraser speaks after accepting the 2018 Plutarch Award.

After accepting the award from Plutarch Award Committee chair Anne C. Heller, Fraser said she was humbled to be around people “who know more about biography, collectively and individually, than I ever will.” She thanked James McGrath Morris for introducing her to BIO, which made her “aware of what an extraordinary resource it is.” Fraser recounted attending earlier BIO conferences and feeling a sense of camaraderie with other biographers. “We’re all grappling with the same issues and trying to find a way to represent . . . a person,” she said, referring to something she called the biographer’s “higher goal.”

The Plutarch Award Committee originally chose 10 semi-finalists before selecting four finalists for the 2018 prize. The other finalists were:

- Jonathan Eig, *Ali: A Life*
- John A. Farrell, *Richard Nixon: The Life*
- Victor Sebestyen, *Lenin: The Man, the Dictator, and the Master of Terror*

You can see the complete list of this year’s semi-finalists and past winners [here](#).

## Highlights of the 2018 BIO Conference: Holmes Keynote Address and Husband-and-Wife Team in Conversation

More than 225 established and aspiring biographers from three continents immersed themselves in their craft at the Ninth Annual Biographers International

Societies.” The conference will take place in Groningen, Netherlands, home of the Biography Institute, which is directed by BIO member Hans Renders. The event will allow biographers to look beyond their own borders, explore how biography is practiced in other parts of the world, and discuss the cultural perspectives that guide biographers in their approach to the infinite complexity of their subjects.

With a mix of panel, roundtable, and public discussions, featuring speakers from many nations, this conference is designed to present the state of the art of biography from a wealth of different perspectives. The 2018 BIO Award-winner Richard Holmes will deliver the keynote address, and BIO members participating include Carl Rollyson, John A. Farrell, and Nigel Hamilton. The latter will host a master class on Wednesday, September 19, for young biographers working on their first books.

Also on Wednesday, attendees

Organization Conference, held May 18 and 19, at the Leon Levy Center for Biography at the Graduate Center, City University of New York. Along with the announcement of the Plutarch Award for 2018, conference highlights included a keynote address by Richard Holmes, winner of the 2018 BIO Award, and a discussion between Edmund Morris and Sylvia Jukes Morris, who shared their experiences writing about both living and dead subjects.



Edmund Morris



Sylvia Jukes Morris

### Comparing Living and Dead Subjects

After opening remarks by new BIO president Cathy Curtis, the conference began Saturday morning with the breakfast plenary session featuring Edmund and Sylvia Jukes Morris. The husband-and-wife team titled their talk “Dead Is Easier,” referring to which kind of subject presents fewer challenges for a biographer. Edmund’s dead subject was Theodore Roosevelt, whose life he chronicled in a three-volume biography. Sylvia’s dead subject was Edith Kermit Roosevelt, TR’s second wife. Turning to the living, Edmund wrote an authorized if unconventional biography of Ronald Reagan, spending time with the president during his second term. Sylvia, meanwhile, had a close relationship with her living subject Clare Booth Luce—so close that at one point Sylvia joined Luce in her sprawling bed to watch television.

The title of the talk, Edmund recalled, came from years ago when a *New York Times* reporter asked him which challenge he preferred: writing about a living subject or a dead one. Before he could respond, Sylvia called out from another room, “Dead is easier.”

In the plenary session, the two authors spent some time talking about how

can choose to explore two cultural sites in and around Groningen: Museum of Graphic Arts and Camp Westerbork. The latter features an exhibition depicting the Netherlands during World War II, focusing on the persecution of Jews.

The cost of the conference is 60 euros, with additional fees for the optional cultural tours and the conference dinner on September 21. Get more information and register [here](#). If you require assistance in booking hotel or travel arrangements, [email the conference board](#). You can see the entire conference program [here](#).

### From the Editor

Another BIO conference is in the books, and this year’s event in New York drew a record number of attendees, as well as some of the most prominent names in biography. We’ll begin our reporting in this issue with a recap of the various awards given, along with highlights of the plenary session and the keynote speech by 2018 BIO Award-winner Richard Holmes. In her first

writing about the death of their subjects—in Sylvia’s case, Luce died while the author was still writing about her—affected them. While saying that he probably would not have liked Roosevelt when alive, given Theodore’s “bloodlust” and “bellicosity,” Edmund said that when it came time to write about the president’s death he felt a sense of bereavement. For her part, Sylvia cried as she wrote about Edith Kermit Roosevelt’s death. And the death of Luce, which happened after she and Sylvia had known each other for seven years, stirred different thoughts and feelings for the biographer. Sylvia explained: “I felt a thud in the chest, which was probably a combination of shock, grief, and apprehension; what should I do now about all the unanswered biographical questions?”

Edmund also had a long relationship with his living subject, Reagan, agreeing to write a life story about him in 1985. During the president’s years in the White House, his dementia was not apparent, Edmund said. Reading the 1993 letter in which Reagan publicly revealed his struggles, Edmund said he was filled with “overpowering sadness.” But that, he said, “quickly evaporated.” His writing of the Reagan book was still to come, and Edmund felt a need to accept what he called the “biographer’s challenge,” which he framed in the words of W. B. Yeats: “Cast a cold eye on life, on death.” Otherwise, Edmund thought, his book on Reagan would become sentimental “and consequently, untrustworthy.”

Spending time with his living subject, Edmund said, led him to appreciate Reagan’s sense of humor and the intelligence behind it. It also led Edmund to become a teacher of sorts to the president. When the two visited Reagan’s birthplace of Tampico, Illinois, after Reagan’s dementia took hold, the biographer had to point out the significance of buildings they saw. Edmund said, “I was instructing him in his own life.” Like other biographers, he came to know more about his subject’s life than his subject did.

Edmund had a different kind of intimacy with his dead subject and his family. While doing research at Roosevelt’s home in Oyster Bay, New York, he found an envelope that contained a lock of hair from Roosevelt’s first wife, Alice. While fingering the hair, he felt a “creepy connection” to her. Edmund was particularly attracted to the love story of Alice and Theodore, and he felt a

“The President’s Letter,” Cathy Curtis shares the remarks she gave on Saturday morning at the conference. Next month, we’ll have write-ups of some of the panel sessions and more photos.

As anyone who has been involved in planning and executing a conference of this caliber knows, a tremendous amount of work goes into creating the big event. We’d like to recognize just some of the people who played an integral role in making this another successful conference: BIO’s board of directors; Conference Program Committee co-chairs Heath Lee and John A. Farrell; Conference Site Committee chair Deirdre David; BIO Award Committee chair Cathy Curtis; Rowley Prize Committee chair James McGrath Morris; Coaching Committee chair Will Swift; Plutarch Nomination Committee chair Anne Heller; and the members of these various committees. Thanks also to Greg Daugherty, who once again took on the task of editing the program booklet, and to membership coordinator and overall problem-solver Lori Izykowski. And, I’d like to thank John Grady for providing write-ups on several sessions.

Along with our conference coverage in this issue and our usual features, we’re introducing a new

certain sense of anticipation when he reached the spot in the president's diaries that led to his wedding night. Roosevelt left out details of the evening; Edmund assumed he did so knowing that some "beady-eyed biographer" would one day read the diary.

For Sylvia, one of the thrills of researching Edith Roosevelt's life came when she read four letters TR had written to her. Before that, Sylvia said, she was "frustrated by a lack of information about Edith's emotional life," as she didn't keep a diary. Sylvia learned that Edith had burned the correspondence between herself and her husband—except for the four letters that one of Edith's daughters had convinced her to save. The letters gave Sylvia a sense of their private relationship.

Offering some general observations on biographers and their craft, Edmund stated that biographers should feel "the responsibility to resurrect the vital reality of the past." And when it comes to dealing with the death of a biographer's living subject, he suggested that a biographer embrace this dictum: "First, kill the widow." That will eliminate her impulse to withhold disparaging information, Edmund explained. Another issue when dealing with an elderly subject is that their contemporaries are aging as well, which can present challenges when trying to question them for useful information.

Although both Sylvia and Edmund Morris had positive experiences writing about the living and the dead, Edmund concluded the session this way: "Alive or dead, biography is never easy."

### **Holmes Shares "Biographical Parables"**

For Saturday's keynote address, Richard Holmes offered what he called parables for biographers, based on notes he had taken during his career that reflected his research and writing experiences (and filled more than 200 notebooks). The first parable

item, suggested and written by BIO member Karin Roffman. She asks biographers about the "unanswered question" and shares their response.

Looking ahead to August, we'll have our annual biography-on-film (and video) issue, with a look at current and proposed biopics and documentaries. Several members will be contributing their expertise on the subject.

Yours,

Michael Burgan

## **Feeling Stuck?**

Whatever state your biography's in—vague idea, proposal, well underway—BIO's experienced biographers can help. For a limited time, we are offering a **one-hour phone or email mentoring session for \$60**. (The cost of any additional sessions can be worked out with your mentor.) [Email BIO President Cathy Curtis](#) with a brief statement about the nature of your project and your goals for the one-hour session, and you



Holmes called “Touchstones.” He quoted W. Somerset Maugham, who said, “There are three rules for writing biography; unfortunately, no one has discovered what they are.” Noting flexibility of biography as a genre when it comes to form or subjects, Holmes said, “there are no rules in that sense.” On the matter of subjects, he recalled the words of Samuel Johnson, who asserted “I could write the life of a broomstick.” Holmes also noted that everyone doesn’t necessarily have a warm spot in their heart for biographers; James Joyce once referred to them as “biografiends.”

Holmes called his second parable “Passports,” and he told the story of indicating his occupation on a passport as “writer” and a French inn owner interpreting it as “waiter.” As Holmes made adjustments and further misunderstandings ensued, he was finally accused of being a “table waiter with delusions of grandeur.” His larger point amidst the humor was that biographers needs humility, and they *are* waiters of a sort. They attend to their subjects and offer them “loyalty, patience, good humor, but not discretion. And usually, you have to clear up some kind of mess as you go along. And above all, you are not more important than your subject.” Holmes said one essential trait for biographers is “the rather strange ability to fall in love with your subject, then out of love again, as is necessary.”

Holmes went on to talk about how chance comes into play while doing



Richard Holmes laced his address with humorous anecdotes while exploring different elements of the biographer's craft.

Photo by Jane O'Connor

will be matched with a mentor who can help you get unstuck.

## Sold to Publishers

Hampton Sides  
*The Resolution*  
(Captain James Cook)  
sold to Doubleday  
by Sloan Harris at ICM Partners

Mark Felton  
*Men of Confidence*  
(A group of American POWs  
in Nazi Germany)  
sold to Center Street  
by Andrew Lownie at  
Andrew Lownie Literary Agency

Holly Brubach  
*Tanaquil: Le Clercq, Balanchine, and a  
Life at the Forefront of the 20th Century*  
sold to Simon & Schuster  
by David Kuhn and Nate Muscato at  
Aevitas Creative Management

Bruce Conforth and  
Gayle Dean Wardlow  
*Up Jumped the Devil:*  
*The Real Life of Robert Johnson*  
sold to A Cappella

David Heidlers and Jeanne Heidlers  
Untitled biography of Sam Houston  
sold to Basic Books  
by Geri Thoma at Writers House

Benjamin Moser  
*Sontag*  
sold to Ecco

research, as finding useful sources can sometimes come down to luck or someone's whim. When looking at a subject's private life, the facts can be especially hard to find. Holmes believes there is no such thing as a definitive biography and, he explained, biographers do not work in a vacuum—an idea reflected in a tale he told about researching the life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Holmes found a cave in which the poet had carved his initials into the sandstone walls. Holmes realized that given the soft nature of the rock, the original initials could not have lasted over the centuries. Biographers before Holmes had found the cave and re-carved the initials. This re-carving by “unknown memorialists,” Holmes said, “was a symbol of the essentially cumulative practice of biography itself.”

In a parable he called “Range,” Holmes described the range of students who attended the MA program in biography and creative nonfiction that he established at the University of East Anglia. In age they spanned 21 to 71, and they came from various socioeconomic backgrounds and different countries. The students were exposed to people and circumstances they might not have otherwise experienced. Biography in general, Holmes said, “provides another time, another place, another identity.” Writing a biography lets an author step out of their own life, “and that stepping out of your own life allows you eventually to look back at your life.”

Holmes also discussed the importance of the first sentence in setting the tone and theme of a biography, citing several examples. One was from his biography of Percy Bysshe Shelley: “His bedroom window looked west, towards the setting sun.” The simple line foreshadowed, among other things, Shelley's drowning death caused by a storm that came from the west as sunset approached. Holmes also read the first line from Robert Caro's biography of Lyndon Johnson, which described an anecdote the president liked to tell about the announcement of his birth. The line showed both Johnson's penchant for telling tall tales and his sense that he was destined for greatness.

After finishing his parables, Holmes offered some closing thoughts on the skills and traits a good biographer needs. He framed it with the metaphor of a telescope and the person who peers through it. A telescope brings distant objects close, sometimes revealing the lesser stars. Using a telescope “requires patient

by Bill Clegg at The Clegg Agency

Margaret Powell  
*Sophisticated Lady*  
(Ann Lowe)

sold to Simon & Schuster  
by Jennifer Laughran at Andrea Brown  
Literary Agency

Ilyon Woo  
*Master Slave Husband Wife: An  
American Love Story*  
(William and Ellen Craft)  
sold to 37 Ink  
by Julie Barer at The Book Group

Geoffrey Wheatcroft  
*Churchill's Bust: The Life and  
Legacy of Winston Churchill*  
sold to W. W. Norton  
by Susanna Lea at Susanna Lea  
Associates on behalf of Toby Mundy

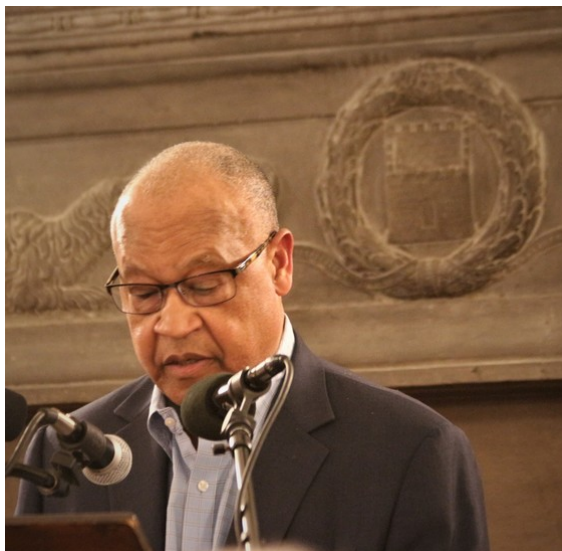
Channing Joseph  
*House of Swann*  
(William Dorsey Swann )  
sold to Crown  
by Alia Hanna Habib at  
The Gernert Company

Vicky Ward  
*Kushner, Inc.*  
(Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump)  
sold to St. Martin's Press  
by Andy McNicol at  
William Morris Endeavor

Carol Kino  
*The Fair-Haired Girls: The Twin  
Photographers Who Helped Define the  
Fashion Magazines of 1940s New York*  
(Frances McLaughlin-Gill

observation, it needs timely adjustment, it keeps you up all night, and above all it requires a steady hand.” Holmes concluded with another metaphor, calling biography “a handshake across time, across cultures, across beliefs. . . .” And, he added, a handshake is also a symbol of honor and keeping one’s word.

## Winners of Several Fellowships and Awards Recognized During BIO Conference



Ray Shepard helped kick off Friday's events with a reading from his *Now or Never!: Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Infantry's War to End Slavery*.

The winners of the first Robert and Ina Caro Fellowship and the first Chip Bishop Fellowship were among the attendees who earned special recognition at the opening reception of the Ninth Annual BIO Conference on Friday, May 18, and during the luncheon on Saturday, May 19.

Friday's events began with 15 biographers giving brief readings from their most recent works. The readers included Plutarch Award-winner Caroline Fraser and Plutarch Award-

and Kathryn Abbe)  
sold to Scribner  
by Peter Steinberg at  
Foundry Literary + Media

Amelia Pang  
*Made in China*  
(Sun Yi)  
sold to Algonquin  
by Laney Katz Becker  
at Massie & McQuilkin

Anthony McCarten  
*The Pope*  
(Pope Benedict and Pope Francis)  
sold to Flatiron Books  
by Jennifer Joel at ICM

Salamishah Tillet  
*All the Rage: "Mississippi Goddamn"  
and the World Nina Simone Made*  
sold to Ecco  
by Tanya McKinnon at the McKinnon  
McIntyre

Kate Winkler Dawson  
*American Sherlock*  
(Edward Oscar Heinrich)  
sold to Putnam  
by Jessica Papin at  
Dystel, Goderich & Bourret

Jeff Benedict  
Untitled biography of LeBron James  
sold to Simon & Schuster  
by Richard Pine at Inkwell Management

Leslie Rule  
*A Tangled Web*  
(Shanna Golyar)  
sold to Citadel



nominee William Taubman; incoming BIO president Cathy Curtis; and Joe Hagan, author of a recent biography of *Rolling Stone* founder Jann Wenner. You can see the complete lineup of the authors and their books [here](#).

BIO president Will Swift kicked off the awards portion of the evening by reflecting on his two-year term. He noted that the 2018 conference was the most successful in BIO's history, and he encouraged others to consider serving on BIO's board or becoming an officer. He said, "It gives you an extraordinary ability to stretch yourself." Swift said that even with the challenges he sometimes faced during his term, "I loved every minute of it." He closed his remarks by noting the recent research that shows the health benefits of coming together with others in a community with a shared sense of purpose. Being active in BIO, he said, can give members that kind of purposeful community.

Robert and Ina Caro were in attendance to recognize the winners of the inaugural fellowship named in their honor (and funded by BIO board member Kitty Kelley). Caro recounted his decision years ago, when he began his multivolume work on the life of Lyndon Johnson, to spend several years in the Texas Hill Country where Johnson grew up. That experience shaped his view of the importance of place in understanding a subject's life. The Caro Fellowship gives biographers money to explore locations important to their research. The winners were Natalie Dykstra, Professor of English at Hope College, and Marina Harss, dance writer and translator. Each received \$2,500.



Marina Harss (far left) is about to receive her fellowship award from Robert and Ina

by Sheree Bykofsky at  
Sheree Bykofsky Associates

## Please Keep Your Info Current

Making a move or just changed your email? We ask BIO members to keep their contact information up to date, so we and other members know where to find you. Update your information in the [Member Area](#) of the BIO website.

## Membership Up for Renewal?

Please respond promptly to your membership renewal notice. As a nonprofit organization, BIO depends on members' dues to fund our annual conference, the publication of this newsletter, and the other work we do to support biographers around the world. When renewing,

Caro, as Will Swift looks on. To the right is Natalie Dykstra, the other fellowship winner.

Photo by Jane O'Connor

Also on Friday, Natascha Scott-Stokes, a BIO member from Chile, won the first Chip Bishop Fellowship. The award honors former BIO member Chip Bishop. The winner gets free admission to the BIO Conference and receives \$500 for expenses relating to attending the event. Scott-Stokes is actively marketing her latest book, which is a memoir. She also has a proposal for her second biography, *Noisy*

*Outcast: The Life of Flora Tristan (or Gauguin's Bothersome Grandmother)*.

Friday evening's events also included the presentation of the Biblio Award to Michael T. Ryan, Vice President and Director of the Patricia D. Klingenstein Library at the New-York Historical Society. Given since 2012, the Biblio Award recognizes a librarian or archivist who has made an exceptional contribution to the craft of biography.



Will Swift presents Natascha Scott-Stokes with the first Chip Bishop Fellowship.

Photo by Jane O'Connor

### Saturday's Awards

Along with presenting the Plutarch Award to Caroline Fraser, BIO also recognized the contributions of Deirdre David to the

please make sure the contact information we have for you is up to date.

## Are You a Student?

Or do you know one who is interested in biography? BIO now has a special student membership rate. Visit [the BIO website](#) to find out more.



### The President's Letter

*This is the brief talk I gave at the opening of the BIO Conference last month. Some members understandably didn't show up at*



BIO vice president Deirdre David, shown here at the Friday evening reception, won the Ray Shepard Award for her many contributions to the organization.

Photo by Jane O'Connor

seeking a publisher. The award went to Andrew Scrimgeour for his proposal for *The Man Who Tried to Save Jesus: Robert W. Funk and the Jesus Seminar*. Funk, a New Testament scholar, won fame during the 1980s for creating the Jesus Seminar, an attempt to pinpoint the details of the life and utterances of the historical Jesus. Scrimgeour said it was an honor “to have the affirmation of an august group like this” and the prize raises the bar for what he hopes to accomplish. He added, “I hope it doesn’t bring paralysis of the pen.” The Hazel Rowley Prize provides a \$2,000 cash award; a careful reading from at least one established agent; a year’s membership in BIO; and publicity through the BIO website. Curtis noted that an agent at the conference had expressed interest in Scrimgeour’s book.

You can find out more about BIO’s various prizes and fellowships [here](#).

organization by giving her the Ray Shepard Award, a lifetime membership given to a member for outstanding volunteer work. In presenting the award, Will Swift noted Deirdre’s many activities, including her efforts to set up BIO’s first international conference, held in 2017 in Oxford, England, and her work in 2018 as chair of the Conference Site Committee. The award is named for outgoing board member Ray Shepard, its first winner. Given on an irregular basis, it recognizes outstanding effort by a member of the BIO board.

Cathy Curtis presented the last award given, on Saturday, the Hazel Rowley Prize, which is given to a first-time biographer

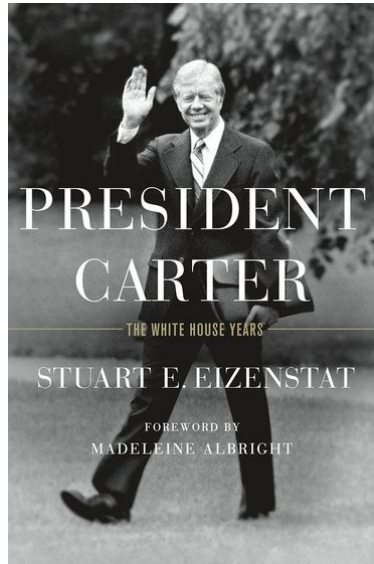
*8 a.m., so I thought I’d reprise my words here.*

I am honored and delighted to be speaking to you as the next president of BIO. Seven years ago, I was a former journalist working on my first biography. No matter that I had been published for decades. As a fledgling biographer, I was stepping into a new world I knew nothing about. BIO came to my rescue, with useful panels at the conferences and—even more valuable—a network of colleagues who could answer my questions and even help me find a new agent.

As president, I will be serving the organization at a period of rapid and often unsettling change—for BIO, for publishing, and for the world at large. I believe that we need to focus on several key areas.

One is the dilemma of how to enhance our “international” focus. As BIO member Bill Souder memorably said, without this aspect we would be BO. Outgoing board member Hans Renders is a professor of history and biography theory at the University of Groningen. BIO supports the international conference Hans has organized in the Netherlands this

# Eizenstat Offers Revisionist Take on Carter Presidency



Stuart Eizenstat's career has included a stint as the U.S. ambassador to the European Union.

Bird went on to praise Eizenstat for having written a book that not only avoided the trap of an insider's self-serving tendencies, but managed to be both critical of Carter and self-critical when it came to accounts of Eizenstat's own missteps. "So this is an extremely important book that will help us to understand a critical turning point in American political history," Bird said. "It will certainly stand the test of time—which is all any biographer can hope for."

The chief aim of *The White House Years* is the revision of what Eizenstat deems a hasty and harsh judgment of Carter's presidency. Carter was the first "New

By **Thad Ziolkowski**

Stuart Eizenstat based his *President Carter: The White House Years* on 5,000 pages of scrupulous notes that he famously took down on yellow legal pads at every meeting he attended as chief policy advisor, a position Eizenstat kept for the whole of Carter's term. In the same spirit of exhaustiveness, Eizenstat also conducted over 350 interviews with both admirers and detractors of Carter and consulted reams of newly declassified documents. Kai Bird, Executive Director of the Leon Levy Center for Biography, has been working on a Carter biography himself. In his introduction to Eizenstat's talk at the CUNY Graduate Center on April 27, 2018, Bird remarked with rueful humor, "I am some years away from finishing mine—so Stu has beaten me to the finish line. But then he had a head start—commencing his research 25 years ago."

fall. And this year, we are bestowing our BIO Award on a British citizen, Richard Holmes. But at present, the BIO board has no members from outside the United States. We must find new ways of being responsive to the needs of our international members and to the international cause of biography.

At the same time, we need to foster stronger ties with the many BIO members in this country who live outside the Eastern corridor. One way I plan to do this is to institute regional meetings to discuss a compelling biography-related topic, in cities with a strong BIO membership, and in which one member is willing to open his or her home for this event.

A third area is our relationship with publishers. While some BIO members are award-winning biographers published by leading houses, the rest of us struggle to find publishers interested in our subjects. A quick glance at the lists of biographies acquired and newly released in this newsletter makes it obvious that our books are increasingly being published by independent and university presses. We must investigate what



Democrat”—fiscally conservative, mildly populist and anti-establishment, socially progressive on race and poverty, and a liberal internationalist and free trader. “But far from being weak, indecisive, and passionless,” Eizenstat said, “Carter attacked the toughest challenges with a ferocity when he felt it was best for the country and the world, regardless of the politics, believing he would ultimately be rewarded by re-election. He forgot that a president is not only the commander-in-chief but also the nation’s politician-in-chief.” In the end, Carter was too liberal for conservatives, and too conservative for liberals.

Eizenstat then offered a number of compelling facts: “You might be surprised to learn that Carter accomplished more than any one-term modern president and that Congress passed 70 percent of his proposals, only slightly less than that legislative master Lyndon Johnson.” Eizenstat then quipped, “Carter also behaved like a president who respected the office.” As many in the audience chuckled, Eizenstat added, “As Walter Mondale put it ‘We told the truth, we obeyed the law, and we kept the peace.’”

Eizenstat went on to enumerate Carter’s many achievements. On the domestic side, he was a consumer champion, appointing consumer advocates, some from Ralph Nader’s Raiders, to run regulatory agencies, instead of industry stalwarts. His mandate to them was to transform our over-regulated transportation system, promoting cheaper fares and new airlines that opened air travel to the middle class. By protecting millions of acres in Alaska from development, he doubled the size of our national park system and became the greatest environmental president since Theodore Roosevelt. Carter also appointed more women and minorities to judgeships and senior administration positions than all previous presidents combined, supported affirmative action in universities and minority set-asides for government contracts, presided over the creation of a record number of jobs in a four-year term, and saved New York City and Chrysler from certain bankruptcy.

Abroad, Carter’s greatest accomplishment was the Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt. Placing human rights at the center of his foreign policy, Carter set a standard by which future presidents are judged. Likewise, by embracing the Soviet dissident and Jewish emigrant movements, and personally intervening during his trial to save Natan Sharansky’s life against charges he was a U.S. spy, his human rights policy struck a blow at the soft underbelly of the Soviet Union. At the

we can do to foster closer ties with these entities. At the same time, we need to make our case to leading publishers for the validity and importance of biography as a genre.

As BIO completes its first decade, a clear sign of progress is that under the leadership of Will Swift our financial health has markedly improved, with an increased emphasis on donations. No longer are we virtually out of pocket after paying the expenses of our annual conference. Funders have come forward to make new initiatives possible, notably the Robert and Ina Caro Award. During the next decade, we need to work toward being able to support the salary of a fulltime executive director, the mark of a mature nonprofit organization.

Another positive sign is that BIO’s membership has become increasingly diverse. A glance at the offerings of this conference will make this evident. While we justly celebrate the esteemed white men and women of biography, we must continue to encourage biographers of color to take center stage and to confront us when necessary with our lingering myopia.



same time, he began a post-Vietnam modernization of the military.

“I am not nominating Jimmy Carter for a place on Mount Rushmore,” Eizenstat said, “but his accomplishments put him in the foothills with a handful of others who left their enduring marks on American society—and that is the principal argument of my book.”

*Thad Ziolkowski is the Associate Director of the Leon Levy Center for Biography. He is the recipient, among other honors, of a Guggenheim Fellowship.*

## You, The Expert Researcher: Part Two

**By Charles J. Shields**

*Longtime BIO member Charles J. Shields has written biographies of Harper Lee and Kurt Vonnegut and is currently finishing a book on another literary figure, novelist John Williams. Charles has shared with TBC some thoughts on how to conduct research, based on his experience. We are going to run the piece in three parts.*

### Get Your Folders Out

Your research is going to turn up all kinds of interesting facts and sometimes not neatly teased apart in a single source. What I mean is, you may come across an oral history, say, of logging camps in the Northwest, which would provide lots of background for your book set in Portland, Oregon, during the 1880s. But all the details are jumbled together: steaming stacks of flapjacks for the men’s breakfasts, the size of the iron grappling chains used to haul cut timber out of the forest, and so on. How do you extract what you want?

Once again, break it down.

Here are some desktop folders for a young adult biography, for example, set in London in 1665–66, the years of the Great Plague and the Great Fire:

- Animals

We remain at heart a literary organization, dedicated to promoting the art and craft of biographies that are read between covers. This does not mean that we do not include panels about other media at our conferences, or that we can’t learn from techniques used by filmmakers, just as we do from the strategies of fiction writers. There may be synergies we can explore in future panels between biographies in book form and documentaries.

My point is simply that—given our limited resources (we still are run almost entirely by volunteers, with no fulltime staff), our small size compared to other organizations, and the vexing issues in publishing today—we need to retain our primary focus on the written word. In fact, I’m wondering if we might someday invite authors of memoirs to our conferences, to see if they have something useful to tell us.

Some of you will quarrel with some of these ideas. But I think we can all agree that we want BIO to continue to be an organization that provides new insights, fresh approaches, practical knowledge, and a growing circle of colleagues with whom to discuss and debate

- Clothing
- Crime and punishment
- Food and drink
- Hygiene
- Maps of London
- Medicine
- Sounds and smells
- Thieves

The number of folders will increase, of course, as you find more and more information and your details become more specific. You might have one that's labeled "Horse saddles," for instance, and into it goes everything from brands of saddle soap to popular Western patterns of hand-tooled leather. That's okay! Think of yourself as a craftsman who's filling little drawers with exactly the items you'll need as you work. You're getting your workbench set up.

### Mine Some Rich Resources

There was a time when research meant wandering up and down the aisles of enormous libraries trying to find obscure journals, or 200-year-old books that might or might not be available for checkout. "Isn't it there?" the librarian would say, helplessly. "Should be."

Well, now whatever it is, it is always *there*: it's online. Massive databases are available through libraries, even ones in small towns, provided they subscribe to InfoTrac or ProQuest, for instance. Other databases are available to anyone for free, such as Google Books and HathiTrust.

ProQuest, a full-text database with dozens of newspapers that goes back decades, is like a time machine. You can find out the weather in Manhattan on June 1, 1953; what Broadway plays were running; or what the summer fashions were by looking at the ads. A friend of mine writing a biography of Lou Gehrig found the name of Gehrig's favorite dog this way. Gehrig, the New York Yankee's "Iron Horse," had entered his German Shepherd in a dog show and there, in the results, listed by owner, was the dog's name. Minor? Readers want details.

If you can afford it, you can also subscribe to databases too, and use them at

the endlessly intriguing world of biography.

Cathy

Cathy Curtis  
BIO President

## The Unanswered Question: Hermione Lee



By Karin Roffman

*This column inaugurates a new series in which I ask biographers the question: What do you wish you had discovered about your subject and how would knowing that have changed his or her story? Hermione Lee recently responded in a phone conversation; the following piece*

home. One of my favorites is Questia, which features over 83,000 full-text books; 10 million journal, magazine, and newspaper articles; and encyclopedia entries. Meanwhile, Google Books is busily putting millions of out-of-print books online for free. What words would have been current on the eve of the Civil War? Leaf through a mid-nineteenth-century dictionary using Google Books at your leisure.

### **Enable Your Cyber Assistant**

Depending on what kind of computer you use (you can still write your drafts in longhand, if that's what you prefer), your software has a search capability for locating files and folders. It can also find *words*.

For this reason, I sometimes scan long articles or letters I've found and add them as files to electronic folders. Let's say you run across a hefty nonfiction article about the Sahara, but there are too many details, which, if taken out of context, don't mean much. The word *wadi*, for example—Arabic for a valley, ravine, or channel that is dry except in the rainy season—is a word a character might use, but you want to keep the word with its description, so you use it correctly.

If you scan articles or descriptions into your computer, the search component can find key words in nanoseconds. This is the equivalent of having a genie rooting through thousands of paragraphs instantly to find that reference you *thought* you remembered seeing—but where was it again?

Another advantage is that you make your research project almost paperless. Forget about manila folders and file cabinets: just put all of your materials on your computer. Now and then, though, take time to refresh your organization. Resist the temptation to dump everything into a catch-all folder labeled “My Book” with hundreds of items listed randomly inside.

*Charles J. Shields is a literary biographer of mid-century American authors. His third book, The Man Who Wrote the Perfect Novel: John Williams, Stoner, and the Writing Life, will be out in October from the University of Texas Press.*

---

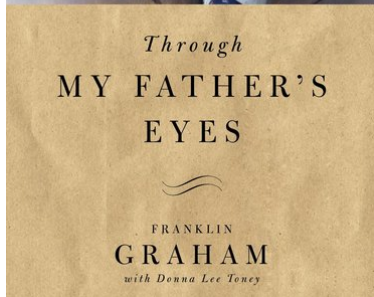
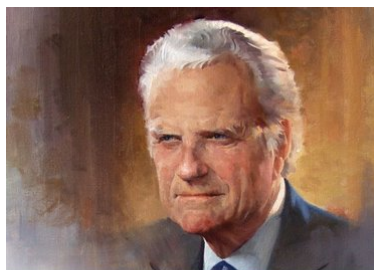
## **Shorts**

*offers a condensed version of our discussion.*

The epigraph to *Penelope Fitzgerald: A Life* (2013)—“If a story begins with finding, it must end with searching”—offers the most significant clue to Hermione Lee's thoughts on her subject. The sentence comes from Fitzgerald's masterpiece, *The Blue Flower*. As Lee explains, Fitzgerald attributes the statement to the poet Novalis but actually invents it herself.

Indeed, it also describes an essential tension in biography between a desire for, and the limits of, revelation. Or, as in Lee's words, the biography's relationship with its subject's “gaps, silences, and secrets.”

In Fitzgerald, Lee found a subject who told “all kinds of whoppers.” She was an artist determined to keep her “private emotional life” secret. Even at the peak of her fame, she wittily deflected questions. While it is true that many of her papers were lost when “the leaky Thames barge on which she and her family



*Through My Father's Eyes* was published in May 2018.

### Ghostwriter Sues Over New Billy Graham Biography

John Perry, the author of more than 30 books, recently filed suit against HarperCollins Christian Publishing after the publication of *Through My Father's Eyes* under the Thomas Nelson imprint. The book was written by Graham's son, Franklin, and Donna Lee Toney. According to the *Tennessean*, Perry proposed the biography to Thomas Nelson and the elder Graham more than a decade ago and was supposed to get a fee and royalties for the book. Perry worked with Franklin Graham on the book but was then taken off the project.

Perry asserts that he is still owed royalties for his work on the book, a fact that Thomas Nelson disputes. Previously, Perry co-authored

books with other public figures, as well as wrote biographies of Robert E. Lee and Alvin York, among others.

### First Online Source for Nigerian Biography Goes Live

The [Biographical Legacy and Research Foundation](#) (BLERF) recently launched the first online database of biography of important Nigerians, both living in the country and abroad, with subjects from the nineteenth century to today. According to BLERF, the editorial board includes historians, journalists, and other researchers and writers. The project is the brainchild of Nyaknno Osso, who previously edited *Who's Who in Nigeria* for the magazine *Newswatch*. The site will be continually updated.

### Wilkes University Offers Writer Conference

Pennsylvania's Wilkes University will hold its annual writers conference on August 3 and 4, 2018, with Andre Dubus III giving the keynote address. Before and after the conference, the Norman Mailer Center is cosponsoring week-long workshops

lived in the 1960s" sank, her most powerful weapon for keeping secrets was still her simple refusal to talk "to anyone" about her private life.

Lee "wished to know" whom Fitzgerald loved, probably unrequitedly, as a young woman working at the BBC; why she later did not leave her alcoholic husband; and whether she had affairs. "I have a feeling that she did," Lee says, "but she kept her secrets."

For Lee, whose exceptional research skills are evident in every one of her books, *not discovering* unexpectedly opened up a wider, richer space for understanding Fitzgerald as an artist. One of the highlights of Lee's biography is its illumination of the ways Fitzgerald's fierce sense of privacy became a philosophy of art. Her genius lay in condensing the messiness of life into moving understatement; the central tenet of her work is that mysteries ought to remain so.

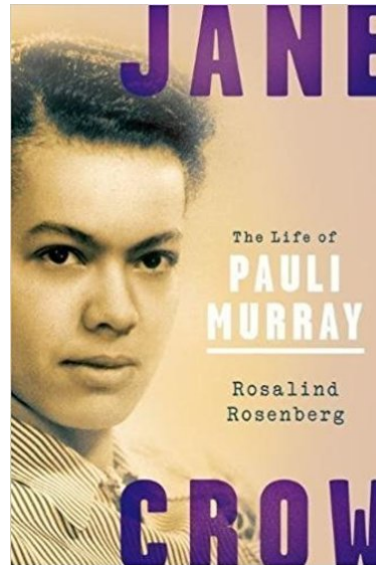
Had Lee learned certain facts, the story might have begun and ended, paradoxically, in the

on topics that include writing nonfiction, marketing, and publishing. BIO member J. Michael Lennon, a biographer of Norman Mailer and editor of Mailer's published letters, is teaching the first nonfiction session. For more information on the conference and workshops, go [here](#).

## **Prizes**

### **PROSE Awards**

*Jane Crow: The Life of Pauli Murray* by Rosalind Rosenberg won the PROSE Award for both Biography/Autobiography and Excellence in Humanities. For the former category, two books won Honorable Mention: *Witnesses of the Unseen: Seven Years in Guantanamo* by Lakhdar Boumediene and Mustafa Ait Idir and *Collecting the World: Hans Sloane and the Origins of the British Museum* by James Delbourgo. The PROSE Awards are given by the professional and scholarly publishing arm of the Association of American Publishers (AAP). Publishers submit books for consideration in more than 50 categories. For more information on the PROSE Awards, go [here](#). (Thanks to BIO member Peter Coveney for passing along this information.)



Rosalind Rosenberg's previous books include *Divided Lives: American Women in the Twentieth Century*.

## **Obituaries**

### **John Halperin**

John Halperin, a professor and literary biographer, died March 1, in La Jolla, California. He was 76.

disappointment of “finding” instead of the triumph of “searching.”

*2014 Plutarch Award-winner Hermione Lee is currently at work on a biography of Tom Stoppard.*

*Karin Roffman is a Senior Lecturer in Humanities at Yale University and the author, most recently, of The Songs We Know Best: John Ashbery's Early Life (FSG, 2017), which was named one of the New York Times 100 Notable Books of 2017.*

## **BIO's Board of Directors**

Cathy Curtis, President  
Deirdre David, Vice President  
Marc Leepson, Treasurer  
Dean King, Secretary  
Kai Bird  
John A. Farrell  
Brian Jay Jones  
Carla Kaplan  
Kitty Kelley  
Sarah Kilborne  
Lucy Knight  
Linda Leavell  
Heath Lee  
Anne Boyd Rioux



The son of a college professor and an editor, Halperin studied English before beginning his teaching career at SUNY-Stony Brook. He eventually went to Vanderbilt University, where he taught for more than 25 years. His 1984 work, *The Life of Jane Austen*, was the first full-length biography of Austen in almost 50 years. His other books include biographies of George Gissing and C. P. Snow, and *Eminent Georgians*, a study of the lives of King George V, Elizabeth Bowen, H. Saint John Philby, and Nancy Astor.



## **The Writer's Life**

### **Study Explores Gender Differences in Publishing**

In what might not be surprising news to some, authors identified by name as male have more books in print than female authors, and their books command higher prices than those by women, suggesting a gender pay gap. That is

just one of the findings [in a study done by sociologist Dana B. Weinberg and mathematician Adam Kapelner](#). The study also found that women writers do better with the Big Five houses and other major publishers, but they are underrepresented at academic presses and institutional publishers. Turning to indie publishing, the researchers found that the number of authors whose names identify them as women still lag behind the number of men. (For both studies, Weinberg and Kapelner did not include authors whose names did not easily suggest their gender.) The authors stated, “[T]he overall gender distribution of authors [within genres] appears largely similar when publishers act as gatekeepers or when authors themselves decide how to classify their own books. We also find that female-dominated genres are valued less by publishers and indie authors than male-dominated ones. . . .”

*Find a subject you care about and which you in your heart feel others should care about. It is this genuine caring, not your games with language, which will be the most compelling and seductive element in your style.*

—Kurt Vonnegut

### **A New Organization for Indie Authors**

If you’ve self-published or are considering going the indie route, the [Indie Author Support Network](#) may be for you. Founded by indie romance novelist Marie Force,

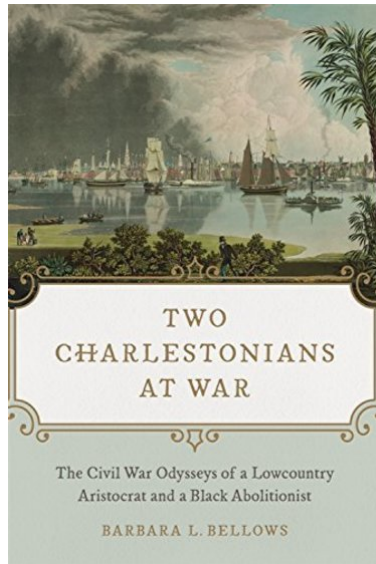
## **Advisory Council**

Hampton Sides  
Justin Spring  
Billy Tooma  
Marlene Trestman  
Sonja Williams  
Debby Applegate, Chair  
James Atlas  
Taylor Branch  
Douglas Brinkley  
Robert Caro  
Ron Chernow  
Tim Duggan  
Amanda Foreman  
Irwin Gellman  
Annette Gordon-Reed  
Michael Holroyd  
Eric Lax  
David Levering Lewis  
Andrew Lownie  
Megan Marshall  
John Matteson  
Alice Mayhew  
Jon Meacham  
Marion Meade  
Andrew Morton  
Joanny Moulin  
Arnold Rampersad

the organization's website went live in April 2018 and almost 1,000 people joined the network within a month. One of Force's goals is to use the collective power of the network's members to reach better deals with Amazon and other retailers. Membership is \$20, but authors can take part in discussions on the organization's [Facebook page](#) for free. As of press time, it had almost 7,000 members.

*My greatest fear is of suddenly feeling that to devote so much of my life to writing is meaningless.*

—Elena Ferrante



*Two Charlestonians at War* is Barbara Bellows's third book.

## News and Notes

In the March issue of *TBC*, we missed the publication of *Two Charlestonians at War: The Civil War Odysseys of a Lowcountry Aristocrat and a Black Abolitionist* by **Barbara L. Bellows**. We also missed the May publication of *Stories from Trailblazing Women Lawyers: Lives in the Law* by Jill Norgren. Out in paperback this month is **Karin Roffman's** *The Songs We Know Best: John Ashbery's Early Life*. Topping this month's "Sold to Publishers" feature is *The Resolution* by **Hampton Sides**, about the last voyage of Captain James Cook. **Andrew Lownie** is also on the list, with his sale of Mark Felton's *Men of Confidence*, about a group of American POWs trying to escape a Nazi prison camp and the man who led them. **Ray Boomhower** recently received a

research grant from the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation for a biography of World War II correspondent Richard Tregaskis, author of the best-selling book *Guadalcanal Diary*. Ray was also interviewed by the *Indianapolis Business Journal* [on Indiana politics](#). **Joseph Esposito** appeared at the Gaithersburg,

Stacy Schiff  
Martin J. Sherwin  
T.J. Stiles  
Jean Strouse  
Will Swift  
William Taubman  
Terry Teachout  
Ike Williams

## The Biographer's Craft

### Editor

Michael Burgan

### Consulting Editor

James McGrath Morris

### Copy Editor

Margaret Moore Booker

### Correspondents

*United Kingdom*  
Andrew Lownie

*Netherlands*  
Hans Renders

*India*  
Ashok R. Chandran

*Australia/New Zealand*

Maryland, Book Festival last month to discuss his *Dinner in Camelot: The Night America's Greatest Scientists, Writers, and Scholars Partied at the Kennedy White House*. Also there was **Paula Tarnapol Whitacre**, author of *A Civil Life in an Uncivil Time: Julia Wilbur's Struggle for Purpose*. **Jon Meacham** has been busy talking about his latest book, *The Soul of America: The Battle for Our Better Angels*. He appeared on [NPR's Fresh Air](#) and [The Daily Show](#). His personal appearances included a stop at the St. Louis County Library and, on June 20, he'll be at the National Press Club's Headliners Book & Breakfast Event. Jon also wrote an [op-ed for the New York Times](#) comparing President Trump to the 1930s radio figure Father Charles Coughlin, and [one for USA Today](#) on how to survive the Trump era. At Brooklyn's Mark O'Donnell Theater, **Patricia Bell-Scott** led a post-performance discussion of the Hook & Eye Theater Company's "She-She-She," a play inspired by her book, *The Firebrand and the First Lady: Portrait of a Friendship: Pauli Murray, Eleanor Roosevelt, and the Struggle for Social Justice*. **William Souder** gave a talk at the annual Steinbeck Festival in Monterey, California; the author is the subject of Bill's latest biography, which is due in 2019. **Ray Shepard** spoke about his *Now or Never!: Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Infantry's War to End Slavery* in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. The event was a benefit for the restoration of a local church. **Beverly Gray** spoke after a screening of *The Graduate* at the Theatre at Ace Hotel in Los Angeles. Among those joining her on stage was the movie's screenwriter, Buck Henry. Beverly's most recent book is *Seduced by Mrs. Robinson: How The Graduate Became the Touchstone of a Generation*. **Marc Leepson** spoke at the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia on Francis Scott Key, the National Anthem, and the history of the American flag. [Robert Caro was featured](#) on the *New Yorker Radio Hour*. **Billy Tooma's** essay, "Biography & Documentary: Academia's Evolution," was published in the latest edition of the *Community College Humanities Review*. He discussed some key points from it during a panel session at the recent BIO Conference in New York City; look for a write-up of that session in the next issue of *TBC*.

**Marlene Trestman** did a Q&A with the D.C. Bar about

Todd Nicholls

United States  
Pat McNees  
(Washington, D.C.)

Dona Munker  
Jane Lincoln Taylor  
(New York)

Felicity O. Yost  
(Hawaii)

To contact any of our correspondents,  
click [here](#).

her *Fair Labor Lawyer: The Remarkable Life of New Deal Attorney and Supreme Court Advocate Bessie Margolin*, which was posted [on the organization's website](#). **Terese Svoboda** spoke at the last “Brown Bag Biography” luncheon of the semester at the University of Hawaii’s Center for Biographical Research. Her topic was “Anything That Burns You: Radical Poet Lola Ridge in 1908 Honolulu.” **Bob Batchelor’s** *Stan Lee: The Man Behind Marvel* is a finalist for the Ohioana

Library Association’s 2018 award for nonfiction book of the year. The association also has a category for books about Ohio or an Ohioan, and two other members are in the running for that honor: **Ron Chernow** for *Grant*, and **Jonathan Blunk** for *James Wright: A Life in Poetry*. Winners will be announced in July. **Diana Parsell** spoke to rangers at Glacier Bay National Park about her subject, Eliza Scidmore, and then [blogged about the experience](#). **Harriet Reisen’s** award-winning documentary biography of Louisa May Alcott had an encore presentation on PBS’s *American Masters*, right after the conclusion of Masterpiece Theater’s *Little Women*. Harriet also [wrote an op-ed for USA Today](#) about Louisa May Alcott’s #MeToo Moment. The website Borders Literature Online [interviewed Vanda Krefft](#) about her biography, *The Man Who Made the Movies: The Meteoric Rise and Tragic Fall of William Fox*. The *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* named the book one of its top picks for summer reading. **Laurie Gwen Shapiro** spoke at the Closter, New Jersey, Public Library about *The Stowaway: A Young Man’s Extraordinary Adventure to Antarctica*; her book was recently a selection for the



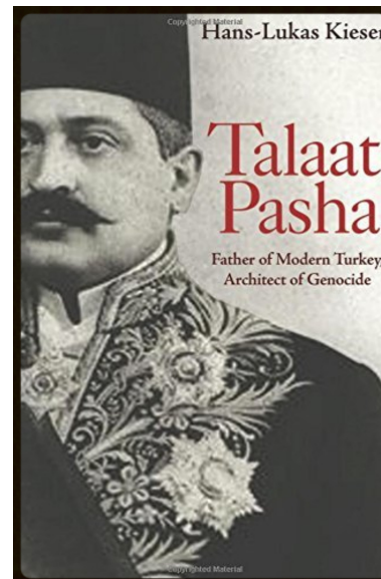
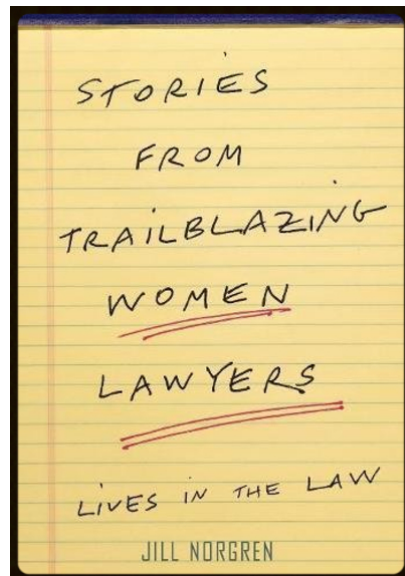
Linda Leavell and Marlene Trestman enjoy the closing reception at the 2018 BIO Conference. Look for more pictures in the next issue of *TBC*.

Photo by Barbara Lehman Smith

library's book club. Laurie also signed copies of the book at BookExpo. **Michael Owen** published the article "[From Archivist to Biographer](#)" in the May/June 2018 issue of *Archival Outlook*, the magazine of the Society of American Archivists. Later this month, **Jonathan Eig** will be a featured speaker at the American Library Association conference in New Orleans. In July, **Caroline Fraser** will present her *Prairie Fires: The American Dreams of Laura Ingalls Wilder* at Edith Wharton's summer home, The Mount, in Lenox, Massachusetts. In anticipation of the event, the *Berkshire Eagle* asked Fraser to list 10 books by women that everyone should read at some point in their life. [Here's her list](#). Congratulations to Caroline for winning this year's Plutarch Award.

[Send us your news!](#)

## In Stores





*Stories from Trailblazing Women  
Lawyers: Lives in the Law*  
by Jill Norgren  
(New York University Press)

*Fare Thee Well: The Final Chapter of the  
Grateful Dead's Long, Strange Trip*  
by Joel Selvin and Pamela Turley  
(Da Capo Press)

*The Art of Winnie-the-Pooh: How E. H.  
Shepard Illustrated an Icon*  
by James Campbell  
(Harper Design)

*Born Trump: Inside America's First  
Family*  
by Emily Jane Fox  
(Harper)

*George & Barbara Bush: A Great  
American Love Story*  
by Ellie LeBlond Sosa and Kelly Anne  
Chase  
(Down East Books)

*What Truth Sounds Like: Robert F.  
Kennedy, James Baldwin, and Our  
Unfinished Conversation About Race in  
America*  
by Michael Eric Dyson  
(St. Martin's Press)

*The King of Content: Sumner Redstone's  
Battle for Viacom, CBS, and Everlasting  
Control of His Media Empire*  
by Keach Hagey

*Talaat Pasha: Father of Modern Turkey,  
Architect of Genocide*  
by Hans-Lukas Kieser  
(Princeton University Press)

*Trotsky's Favourite Spy: The Life of  
George Alexander Hill*  
by Peter Day  
(Biteback Publishing)

*The Remarkable Kinship of Marjorie  
Kinnan Rawlings and Ellen Glasgow*  
by Ashley Andrews Lear  
(University Press of Florida)

*The Spy Who Changed History: The  
Untold Story of How the Soviet Union  
Won the Race for America's Top Secrets*  
by Svetlana Lokhova  
(William Collins)

*Those Wild Wyndhams: Three Sisters at  
the Heart of Power*  
by Claudia Renton  
(Knopf)

*No Better Friend, No Worse Enemy: The  
Life of General James Mattis*  
by Jim Proser  
(Broadside Books)

*Modernists and Mavericks: Bacon, Freud,  
Hockney and the London Painters*  
by Martin Gayford  
(Thames & Hudson)

*God, War, and Providence: The Epic*

(HarperBusiness)

*Lincoln's Last Trial: The Murder Case That Propelled Him to the Presidency*  
by Dan Abram and David Fisher  
(Hanover Square Press)

*American Eden: David Hosack, Botany, and Medicine in the Garden of the Early Republic*  
by Victoria Johnson  
(Liveright)

*Autumn in Venice: Ernest Hemingway and His Last Muse*  
by Andrea Di Robilant  
(Knopf)

*Top Hoodlum: Frank Costello, Prime Minister of the Mafia*  
by Anthony M. DeStefano  
(Citadel)

*Pamela Colman Smith: The Untold Story*  
by Stuart Kaplan  
(U.S. Games Systems)

*Conan Doyle for the Defense: The True Story of a Sensational British Murder, a Quest for Justice, and the World's Most Famous Detective Writer*  
by Margalit Fox  
(Random House)

*The Comeback: Greg LeMond, the True King of American Cycling, and a Legendary Tour de France*

*Struggle of Roger Williams and the Narragansett Indians Against the Puritans of New England*  
by James A. Warren  
(Scribner)

*In Search of Mary Shelley: The Girl Who Wrote Frankenstein*  
by Fiona Sampson  
(Pegasus Books)

*Bruce Lee: A Life*  
by Matthew Polly  
(Simon & Schuster)

*Crusader for Democracy: The Political Life of William Allen White*  
by Charles Delgadillo  
(University Press of Kansas)

*Women of Invention: Life-Changing Ideas by Remarkable Women*  
by Charlotte Montague  
(Chartwell Books)

*Crommelin: The Decline and Fall of Bomb-Run John*  
by John W. Coe  
(Naval Institute Press)

*They Called Him Buckskin Frank: The Life and Adventures of Nashville Franklyn Leslie*  
by Jack DeMattos and Chuck Parsons  
(University of North Texas Press)

*Thomas Bayrle: Playtime*

by Daniel de Vise  
(Atlantic Monthly Press)

*The Lost Indictment of Robert E. Lee:  
The Forgotten Case Against an American  
Icon*

by John Reeves  
(Rowman & Littlefield)

*Brendan O'Regan: Irish Visionary,  
Innovator, Peacemaker*

by Brian O'Connell and Cian O'Carroll  
(Irish Academic Press)

*Keith Rowe: The Room Extended*

by Brian Olewnick  
(powerHouse Books)

*Boats Against the Current: The  
Honeymoon Summer of Scott and Zelda:  
Westport, Connecticut 1920*

by Richard Webb Jr.  
(Prospecta Press)

*Amy Biehl's Last Home: A Bright Life, a  
Tragic Death, and a Journey of  
Reconciliation in South Africa*

by Steven D. Gish  
(Ohio University Press)

*Flash: The Making of Weegee the  
Famous*

by Christopher Bonanos  
(Henry Holt)

*The Good Mothers: The Story of the  
Three Women Who Took on the World's*

by Massimiliano Gioni  
(Phaidon Press)

*Princess: The Early Life of Queen  
Elizabeth II*

by Jane Dismore  
(Lyons Press)

*Sophie Taeuber-Arp and the Avant-Garde:  
A Biography*

by Roswitha Mair, translated by Damion  
Searls  
(University of Chicago Press)

*Nachmanides: An Unusual Thinker*

by Israel Drazin  
(Gefen Publishing House)

*Mrs. Pankhurst's Purple Feather:  
Fashion, Fury and Feminism – Women's  
Fight for Change*

by Tessa Boase  
(Aurum Press)

*The Price of Fame: The Biography of  
Dennis Price*

by Elaine Parker and Gareth Owen  
(Fonthill Media)

*Stalin's Meteorologist: One Man's Untold  
Story of Love, Life and Death*

by Olivier Rolin, translated by Ros  
Schwartz  
(Harvill Secker)

*The Lost Pilots: The Spectacular Rise and  
Scandalous Fall of Aviation's Golden*

*Most Powerful Mafia*  
by Alex Perry  
(William Morrow)

*In Montparnasse: The Emergence of  
Surrealism in Paris, from Duchamp to  
Dali*  
by Sue Roe  
(Fig Tree)

*James I: The Phoenix King*  
by Thomas Cogswell  
(Penguin UK)

*Gershom Scholem: Master of the  
Kabbalah*  
by David Biale  
(Yale University Press)

*Cicely Saunders: A Life and Legacy*  
by David Clark  
(Oxford University Press)

*The Unfinished Revolution: Sun Yat-Sen  
and the Struggle for Modern China*  
by Tjio Kayloe  
(Marshall Cavendish International)

*The King's Pearl: Henry VIII and His  
Daughter Mary*  
by Melita Thomas  
(Amberley)

*The Bonanza King: John Mackay and the  
Battle over the Greatest Riches in the  
American West*  
by Gregory Crouch

*Couple*  
by Corey Mead  
(Macmillan)

*Fearless Engagement of Four Arrows:  
The True Story of an Indigenous-Based  
Social Transformer*  
by R. Michael Fisher  
(Peter Lang)

*Augusto Boal*  
by Frances Babbage  
(Routledge)

*Winsor McCay: His Life and Art*  
by John Canemaker  
(CRC Press)

*Pina Bausch*  
by Royd Climenhaga  
(Routledge)

*Arthur C. Clarke*  
by Gary Westfahl  
(University of Illinois Press)

*California's Deadly Women: Murder and  
Mayhem in the Golden State 1850-1950*  
by Michael Thomas Barry  
(Schiffer)

*Rebecca Harding Davis: A Life Among  
Writers*  
by Sharon M. Harris  
(West Virginia University Press)

*The Life and Times of Daniel Murray:*

(Scribner)

*In Command: Theodore Roosevelt and the American Military*

by Matthew Oyos

(Potomac Books)

*Swindler Sachem: The American Indian Who Sold His Birthright, Dropped Out of Harvard, and Conned the King of England*

by Jenny Hale Pulsipher

(Yale University Press)

*Crusader: General Donn Starry and the Army of His Times*

by Mike Guardia

(Casemate)

*Jamal Mian: The Life of Maulana Jamaluddin Abdul Wahab of Farangi Mahall, 1919–2012*

by Francis Robinson

(Oxford University Press)

*Edward II the Man: A Doomed Inheritance*

by Stephen Spinks

(Amberley)

*Young Hitler: The Making of the Führer*

by Paul Ham

(Pegasus Books)

*William Bickerton: Forgotten Latter Day Prophet*

by Daniel P. Stone

*Esteemed Archbishop of Dublin, 1823–1852*

by Thomas J. Morrissey

(Messenger Publications)

*The Life and Career of Archbishop Richard Whately: Ireland, Religion and Reform*

by Ciara Boylan

(Four Courts Press)

*The Man Who Built the Swordfish: The Life of Sir Richard Fairey*

by Adrian Smith

(I.B. Tauris)

*George Hanger: The Life and Times of an Eccentric Nobleman*

by Ian Saberton

(Grosvenor House Publishing)

*Burned Alive: Bruno, Galileo and the Inquisition*

by Alberto A. Martinez

(Reaktion Books)

*The Spiritual Mandela: Faith and Religion in the Life of Nelson Mandela*

by Dennis Cruywagen

(Imagine)

*Vygotsky: An Intellectual Biography*

by Anton Yasnitsky

(Routledge)

*Oh Capitano!: Celso Cesare Moreno – Adventurer, Cheater, and Scoundrel on*



(Signature Books)

*Redrawing the Middle East: Sir Mark Sykes, Imperialism and the Sykes-Picot Agreement*

by Michael D. Berdine  
(I.B. Tauris)

*The Coffee Visionary: The Life and Legacy of Alfred Peet*

by Jasper Houtman  
(Roundtree Press)

*Lessons from the Lobster: Eve Marder's Work in Neuroscience*

by Charlotte Nassim  
(The MIT Press)

*Spitfire Deserter?: The American Pilot Who Went Missing*

by Bill Simpson  
(Amberley)

*Cleopatra's Daughter and Other Royal Women of the Augustan Era*

by Duane W. Roller  
(Oxford University Press)

*New State, Modern Statesman: Hashim Thaçi – A Biography*

by Suzy Jagger and Roger Boyes  
(Biteback Publishing)

*Unbeaten: Rocky Marciano's Fight for Perfection in a Crooked World*

by Mike Stanton  
(Henry Holt)

*Four Continents*

by Rudolph J. Vecoli and Francesco Durante (Author), translated by Elizabeth O. Venditto  
(Fordham University Press)

*Beyond Method: Stella Adler and the Male Actor*

by Scott Balcerzak  
(Wayne State University Press)

*Jean-Baptiste-Pierre LeBrun: In Pursuit of Art (1748–1813)*

by Bette W. Oliver  
(Hamilton Books)

*Double Agent Victoire: Mathilde Carré and the Interallié Network*

by David Tremain  
(The History Press)

*James Watson*

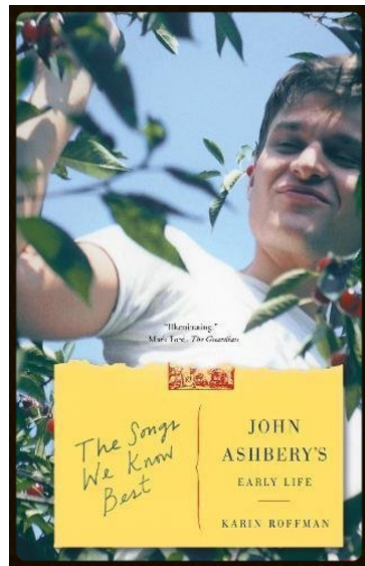
by Brenda Maddox  
(Harper)

*King of the North Wind: The Life of Henry II in Five Acts*

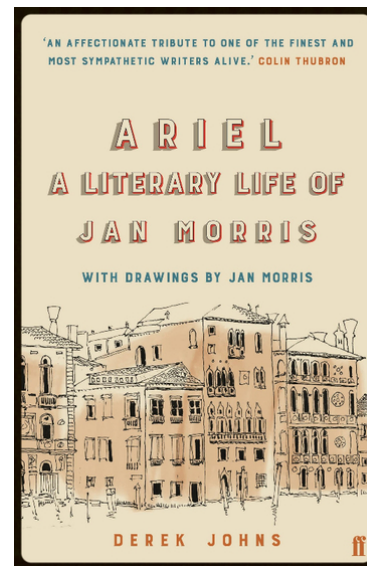
by Claudia Gold  
(William Collins)

*Seven at Santa Cruz: The Life of Fighter  
Ace Stanley "Swede" Vejtasa*  
by Ted Edwards  
(Naval Institute Press)

## Paperback



*The Songs We Know Best: John  
Ashbery's Early Life*  
by Karin Roffman  
(Farrar, Straus and Giroux)



*Ariel: A Literary Life of Jan Morris*  
by Derek Johns  
(Faber & Faber)  
  
*Joseph Henry: The Rise of an American*

*The Basket Islandman: The Life and Legacy of Tomas O Criomhthain*  
by Gerald Hayes  
(Collins Press)

*Outsiders: Five Women Writers Who Changed the World*  
by Lyndall Gordon  
(Virago Press)

*The Last Republicans: Inside the Extraordinary Relationship Between George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush*  
by Mark K. Updegrove  
(Harper)

*The Revenger: The Life and Times of Wild Bill Hickok*  
by Aaron Woodard  
(TwoDot)

*"Uncle Curro": J. R. R. Tolkien's Spanish Connection*  
by José Manuel Ferrández Bru  
(Luna Press)

*David Bowie: A Life*  
by Dylan Jones  
(Windmill Books)

*Duterte Harry: Fire and Fury in the Philippines*  
by Jonathan Miller  
(Scribe Publications)

*William Stimpson and the Golden Age of American Natural History*

*Scientist*  
by Albert E. Moyer  
(Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press)

*Colonel Tom Parker: The Curious Life of Elvis Presley's Eccentric Manager*  
by James L. Dickerson  
(Sartoris Literary Group)

*Ryan Gosling: The Unauthorised Biography*  
by Nick Johnstone  
(John Blake)

*The Convict's Daughter: The Scandal that Shocked a Colony*  
by Kiera Lindsey  
(Allen & Unwin)

*Crew: The Story of the Men Who Flew RAAF Lancaster J for Jig*  
by Mike Colman  
(Allen & Unwin)

*Flora White: In the Vanguard of Gender Equity*  
by Linda C. Morice  
(Lexington Books)

*Black Donnelly's: The Outrageous Tale of Canada's Deadliest Feud*  
by Nate Hendley  
(Lorimer)

*A Spitfire Pilot's Story: Pat Hughes: Battle of Britain Top Gun*  
by Dennis Newton  
(Amberley)

by Ronald Scott Vasile  
(Northern Illinois University Press)

*Doctor Socrates: Footballer,  
Philosopher, Legend*  
by Andrew Downie  
(Simon & Schuster UK)

*Shadow Warriors: Daring Missions of  
World War II by Women of the OSS and  
SOE*  
by Gordon Thomas  
(Amberley)

*Three Not-So-Ordinary Joes: A  
Plantation Newspaperman, a Printer's  
Devil, an English Wit, and the Founding  
of Southern Literature*  
by Julie Hedgepeth Williams  
(NewSouth Books)

*Major General Robert E. Rodes of the  
Army of Northern Virginia: A Biography*  
by Darrell Collins  
(Savas Beatie)

*William the Conqueror*  
by David Bates  
(Yale University Press)

*Woman at the Devil's Door: The Untold  
True Story of the Hampstead Murderess*  
by Sarah Beth Hopton  
(Indiana University Press)

*A Newburyport Marine in World War I:  
The Life and Legacy of Eben Bradbury*

*Thomas Jefferson and the Tripoli Pirates:  
The Forgotten War That Changed American  
History*  
by Brian Kilmeade and Don Yaeger  
(Sentinel)

*Housman Country: Into the Heart of England*  
by Peter Parker  
(Farrar, Straus and Giroux)

*Young Mandela: The Revolutionary Years*  
by David James Smith  
(Back Bay Books)

*S. D. Burman: The Prince-Musician*  
by Anirudha Bhattacharjee  
(Tranquebar)

*Who is Superman?*  
by Jacek Perzynski  
(Winged Hussar Publishing)

*Merdeka: Tom Atkinson*  
by Chris Moorhouse  
(Luath Press)

*Yigal Allon: A Neglected Political Legacy,  
1949–1980*  
by Udi Manor  
(Sussex Academic Press)

*Without Quarter: A Biography of Tom  
Johnston*  
by Russell Galbraith  
(Birlinn)

by Bethany Groff Dorau  
(The History Press)

*Alabama Founders: Fourteen Political  
and Military Leaders Who Shaped the  
State*

by Herbert James Lewis  
(University of Alabama Press)

*Lincoln and the Abolitionists: John  
Quincy Adams, Slavery, and the Civil  
War*

by Fred Kaplan  
(Harper Perennial)

*Colin Jordan and Britain's Neo-Nazi  
Movement: Hitler's Echo*

by Paul Jackson  
(Bloomsbury Academic)

*The Boy Who Loved Too Much: A True  
Story of Pathological Friendliness*

by Jennifer Latson  
(Simon & Schuster)

*Rising Star: The Making of Barack  
Obama*

by David Garrow  
(William Morrow)

*Charles E. Hires and the Drink that  
Wowed a Nation: The Life and Times of a  
Philadelphia Entrepreneur*

by Bill Double  
(Temple University Press)

*The Loyal Son: The War in Ben*

*Call Me Phaedra: The Life and Times of  
Movement Lawyer Fay Stender*

by Lise Pearlman  
(Regent Press)

*Justice Perverted: The Molestation Mistrial  
of Richard Charles Haefner*

by Derek J. Sherwood  
(Exposit Books)

*Coach: The Life and Soccer Times of Clive  
Barker*

by Michael Marnewick  
(Jacana Media)

*Mary Sumner: Mission, Education and  
Motherhood: Thinking a Life with Bourdieu*

by Sue Anderson-Faithful  
(Lutterworth Press)

*Richard Aldington: 1930-1962*

by Vivien Whelpton  
(Lutterworth Press)

*Kempe: The Life, Art and Legacy of Charles  
Eamer Kempe*

by Adrian Barlow  
(Lutterworth Press)

*Lewis Hine: Photographer and American  
Progressive*

by Timothy J. Duerden  
(McFarland)



*Franklin's House*  
by Daniel Mark Epstein  
(Ballantine Books)

*Churchill and Ireland*  
by Paul Bew  
(Oxford University Press)

*The Working Class Republican: Ronald Reagan and the Return of Blue-Collar Conservatism*  
by Henry Olsen  
(Broadside Books)

## **Amanuensis**

**Amanuensis:** A person whose employment is to write what another dictates, or to copy what another has written. Source: *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary* (1913).

I have been very fortunate as a writer: since 2010, I have had three books picked up by three different publishers. I have gotten coverage in major publications and been invited to do events in many bookstores along the east coast. I made enough money on my first book contract to buy a pretty nice couch.

Before I ever published anything, I'd assumed that if I ever finished a book, there would be so much demand from family and friends alone that we'd have to go into a second printing before the release date. But I am here to tell you: most people in your family will never buy your book. Most of your friends won't either.

I have a handful of friends and family members—people I consider close to me, people I see regularly—who have never come to any of my dozens of book events.

I don't know if they own any of my books because I haven't asked, but I have a pretty good guess. After my first book came out, I would peruse friends' bookshelves, trying to determine their organizational system (if it's not alphabetical, then where is my book? Maybe they have some special hidden shelf for books they truly cherish?). On a few occasions, I called them out for not having it. This accomplished nothing, besides making both of us feel bad.

The point of this piece is not to shame those people or to complain about not getting enough support. It's just to say: whatever you think it's like after you publish a book, it's actually harder than that. [[more](#)]

**Tom McAllister, "Who Will Buy Your Book?"**

Bio

BIOGRAPHERS INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

EDITORTBC@BIOGRAPHERSINTERNATIONAL.ORG • P.O. BOX 33020, SANTA FE, NM 87594



This email was sent to . To ensure that you continue receiving our emails, please add us to your address book or safe list.

[manage](#) your preferences | [opt out](#) using TrueRemove®



