241 pt in short talks
It's worse than they think. It's deliberate.
1. laws of historical gravity
2. coastal art
3. poetry and language
4. what’s next. My novel coming this fall, *Sweet Thunder*, features a segment of our population that sadly has not received its full due in American literature—I speak of librarians. Sam Sandison, the reformed vigilante turned Butte Public Librarian of *Work Song*, whom one reviewer called “the most unforgettable librarian in American fiction,” returns. along with Morrie, his assistant librarian, and as does the Butte Public Library’s “finest book collection west of Chicago.”

I often generate my fiction from historical set points—such as 1960, the year of the Kennedy-Nixon election and the foreshadowing of the Sixties, in capital letters, in *The Bartender’s Tale*, and the tumultuous period after World War One, again, as in *Work Song*, in the book coming out this fall, *Sweet Thunder*.

So, my characters are affected by the laws of historical gravity. Within the wilder boundaries of my imagination—and I do make up my plots and people, they’re not just snatched from so-called real life—there are life-changing events I go to great trouble to be accurate about. The killing winter of 1919 that sent Montana’s livestock
industry to its knees, the Red Scare after World War One, the Depression, World War Two, the Sixties--these are the passages of life my characters go through. And of course, across more than thirty years of these novels, where has so much of the research for these gravity fields of history come from, but your institutions. Libraries have been my life, much of my writing career.

Back to geography as a vector of destiny, for a minute. My characters are often bred, born, and raised in Montana, and locale—that deepest place they know—governs their lives in big ways. The women often have it tough, there on homesteads and ranches and construction projects and in places like Butte, and maybe that’s why I like to write tough women. The men, almost as a given, face going to America’s wars—Varick McCaskill to World War One, his father Jick to World War Two as does the entire football team of The Eleventh Man, Jick’s son-in-law Riley Wright to Vietnam, one of three or four of my characters who’s a Vietnam vet. With the magic dust of fiction sprinkled on, this is history played out on the page of geographic destiny—in both World Wars, Montana soldiers suffered what I called in Heart Earth “mortal evaporation,” in the highest total of war dead, proportional to population, of any state in World War One, and the second highest in World War two.
This gets personal in a hurry if you're a young man from Montana as I was in the early 1960's. I did not follow the Dick Armeyite-Gingrichian-Cheneyesque maneuver of perpetual grad school--I was a Montanan, I went in the service. Maybe that's why I'm not a neo-con. I served six years in the Air Force Reserve, some of it on active duty during the Cuban missile crisis, and shipping out to Vietnam came so close it parted my hair--I wasn't sent because so little time left in my enlistment, they'd have to turn right around and send me home.

Again, that stint of military service of mine, which gave me so much to write about in the lives of my characters, luck thoroughly disguised at the time.

Let's talk about rain. As an ingredient of creativity. Rain is the ink of this area. To some extent, I think geography is destiny, and the geography which one way or another inspires Ruth and Greg and me, since we live and write in it, is the Great American Raincoast. It extends from northern California to way up in Alaska, and I needn't tell you one of its distinguishing features--precipitation--but some others are the greatest forests north of the Amazon, countless bodies of water interlacing with the Pacific, and a fairly mild climate which lets us into the outdoors perhaps more than
in other parts of the country. The raincoast, I believe, both encourages and puts a distinctive mark on creativity out here. The native coastal art I spoke of was born in longhouses in long stints of carving and painting and dance and storytelling during rainy seasons. Think of the later Northwest School of painters--Mark Tobey, Morris Graves, Guy Anderson, and Kenneth Callahan--and their use of the iridescent light of this cloud-filtered part of the world. Think of modern-day music, when kids out here hole up in garage bands in that same weather and come out as Jimi Henxris and Kurt Cobain, and Nirvana and Heart and Pearl Jam. In our field of literature, Ken Kesey’s epic Northwest novel Sometimes a Great Notion is born of the rainy Oregon coastal woods, and much of Tom Robbins’ work is atmospheric of the Skagit River country where he lives, and I daresay, the work of the three of us could not happen in, say, Kansas.
Sometimes academic critics and reviewers can be like cattle rustlers with a running iron--whatever brand the critter naturally wears, they can change it to some herd of their own. I'm sometimes branded as a western writer because I live and write about the territory west of the Dakotas. And sometimes as a historical novelist, because my stories take place more than twenty minutes ago. And sometimes as a realist novelist, because the running-iron rustlers don't get it about how much I'm making stuff up. Myself, I lay claim to two titles: professional writer, and novelist. And I think that's the way my work should be looked at.

The late Great Portland poet William Stafford had the consummate line in his poem, "Lake Chelan":

"They call it regional, this relevance:
the deepest place we have."

amazement (another Shakespeare coinage)
ALA panel, Jan. 25 '13

I'm glad this session looks at the novel as alive and kicking, instead of the premature post-mortems that the body of fiction has so often been subjected to in the past. Half a century or so ago, when a technological marvel invading every American household was going to wipe out books--the thing was called television--Flannery O'Connor was asked, "Is the novel dead?" She said she didn't know about that, she only worried about whether the one she was writing was dead or not. Myself, earlier in my career, I'd get unblinking academics asking me in awful seriousness, "Is
there a Pacific Northwest literature?” I’d always say, I guess so or you wouldn’t be sitting here talking to me, would you.

So we know the answer, about the good health of the long form of storytelling in this corner of the country, and as someone who has found a spot in your library shelves--Dickens, Doctorow, Doig, Dostoevsky--I thought I’d share with you a bit of my homework, as a Puget Sound-based writer, mostly a novelist, for thirty-five years and counting. My training was in journalism and history, traits that surely show up in my work, but the answers to really peek at, at the back of my books, are art and poetry.
I'll set aside poetry for the time being, to stay within some bounds of time here, and instead speak my piece about art finding its way into my writing process.

The native art of the Northwest coastal tribes caught my writing eye in my second book, *Winter Brothers*. Some of you may have had the unfortunate experience of trying to classify that book for shelving. It's the diary of a diary, in which I spent the 90 days of winter exploring the life and times of James Gilchrist Swan, a pioneer diarist who shuttled between the coastal tribes, such as the Makahs at the mouth of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and
the rumbustious white community--known to the Indians as the Bostons--atop Puget Sound at Port Townsend.

Swan and the Makahs were a resource for each other, cultural mother lodes of fresh motifs and fields of imagination. So whenever Makah artwork featured a Chinese dragon, or a double-headed eagle of the Austrian imperial crest, Swan and his illustrated books pretty surely had been on the scene.

It worked both ways--Swan as a sometime collector for the Smithsonian became a keen student of the native art out here, particularly that of the Haida tribe of the Queen Charlotte Islands.
And in looking over his shoulder, I began to see and feel the genius of that art myself.

(Early on)

I took to heart the immense sophistication of that work, achieved in the most willing of wood, cedar, by First Nation carvers along the great raincoast from here to Alaska. That there was painstaking use of standard design elements—the native artists actually used templates, made out of bark, of different sizes, so that, for instance, an ovoid form that is perhaps a beaver's ear high on a carved pole can be repeated as the eye of the whale, four creatures below. As the expert in the field, Bill Holm of the University of Washington, summed it up in his book *Northwest*
Coast Indian Art, there was "easy transition from form to form" within a piece of art. In other words, there was flow, connection, relation, double meaning, curvaceousness. Something was always happening in that art, any design element was on its way to add meaning to all the other elements. A sense of play, within fixed objects such as carved poles, masks, wooden chests, blankets, and so on.

For the sake of time, to boil down an art lesson that has inflected my writing for more than thirty years, let me give a small, quick, and quirky example of how such elements come into my novels. In The Bartender's Tale, and The Eleventh
Man, and probably other of my books, there's a scene in a small-town bar--the same bar, the Medicine Lodge--of two hung-over shepherders, inert as doorstops, at the far end of the bar, waiting hopefully to mooch drinks. Those guys aren't just scenery I keep repeating--they carry something culturally. Perhaps it's language, as the lingo of Canada Dan in The Bartender's Tale in 1960 turns out to provide a vital twist to the plot of the book. Perhaps it's livelihood--the pair in The Eleventh Man in 1943 are a remnant of the lariat proletariat, the dwindling itinerant ranch labor force that my own family and I were part of. Significantly, these bleary old codgers, alone in the mountains weeks on end
with their sheep and without radios, were probably the last people in America to know Pearl Harbor had happened, and the nation that is leaving them behind, in more ways than one, is at war.

One last application of this sense of design, flow, connection, learned from the raincoast art--my sets of sheepherders likely are somewhat ovoid in form, continuous in their hangovers and lack of baths, but remember, there's room for play in the fixed elements: because they're not always the same two guys, inert as doorstops, at the end of that bar.
Ala cont., poetry segment

The poetic urge caught up with me in an unexpected place—while I was working on a Ph.D. in history, at the University of Washington. What graduate school taught me, back there in the late '60s, was that I didn't have what it took to be on a university faculty—meetings give me something like jet lag. I found myself freelancing magazine articles during grad school and I also began, to my surprise, writing poetry, which I had never even thought of attempting before.

My eight or nine published poems showed me that I lacked the poet’s final skill, the one Yeats called closing a poem with the
click of a well-made box. But still wanting to stretch the craft of writing toward the areas where it mysteriously starts to be art, I began working on, as early as my first book, This House of Sky, what I later heard Norman Maclean call the poetry under the prose. It’s there in my fiction different ways, perhaps most evident in what I call a poetry of the vernacular in how my characters speak on the page. Whether it is the Depression crews “riding the tension spiders” of steelwork at Fort Peck Dam in my novel Bucking the Sun, or the handless bartender Lucas Barclay—in Dancing at the Rascal Fair—hoisting his glass to the other America-comers of the homestead era by and fearlessly
toasting in his Scotch burr, "Broth to the ill, stilts to the lame!"—
I've tried to give my characters that touch of the poet that
working people so often have.

Sometimes, though, it's just poetry, in the heads and on the
tongues of my characters, as in the forthcoming novel *Sweet
Thunder* when Morrie Morgan contemplates Sam Sandison,
vigilante turned city librarian of Butte and rabid book collector,
and what comes to mind are lines of the poet Cheyne, who exists
only in my books—-it's C-H-E-Y-N-E, like Cheyne Walk in
Chelsea in London, not the dark repository of vice-presidency—
*Greater than his age was he/Story and legend his legacy.*
Other times, poetry or at least rhyme and rhythm show up in my stories as music--I’ve written lyrics of one kind or another, I think, in all eleven of my novels thus far. It’s a lot of work, to come up original song snatches--but *Prairie Nocturne* as staged by a local theater group here last winter, and when Faith Russell stepped onstage in the solo spotlight and in real Mahalia and Aretha tradition belted out my song, “Mouthful of Stars,” it was all worth it.

Lastly, sometimes poetry sneaks into my prose because I have sneaked it in. In my very first novel, *The Sea Runners*, there’s a scene where my characters are escaping from the Russian fort at
Sitka when the bells of the cathedral go off and scare the dickens out of those "who sneak about the street at night."

Hear it? --"who sneak about the street at night." Maybe "whose woods these are we think I know," hmm? It's iambic, isn't it--an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable--as in iambic pentameter, a deliberate beat to put a little poetry under the prose, for the sake of a sentence that registers better in the reader's mind.

"To be or not to be (poetically inclined)--that is the question"--and my novels say yes.
Take a mouthful of stars,
Set your ladder 'gainst a cloud.
Go hammer up Heaven,
Oh hammer up heaven,
Fixin' up Heaven,
Slickin' up Heaven,
Silver nails of Heaven,
Driven nails of Heaven,
Heaven, strong roof of my soul!
Ivan Doig, Gregg Olsen, Ruth Ozeki in ERT/Booklist Author Forum, ALA Midwinter Meeting

For Immediate Release
Thu, 10/25/2012 - 08:20

Contact: Amy R. McGuigan (/users/amy-r-mcguigan)
Conference Services (es)

CHICAGO — "The Novel Is Alive and Well"— the 2013 subject of the always popular ERT/Booklist Author Forum—kicks Midwinter off in style from 4 p.m. - 5:15 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 25, offering the first of many opportunities to hear and see favorite authors up close over the following days. Lively moderator Brad Hooper, Booklist adult books editor, will work his usual magic as he draws best-selling authors Ivan Doig, Gregg Olsen and Ruth Ozeki out on how their books contribute to the thriving of the novel form and the influence of the Pacific Northwest on their work.

Montana-born Seattle resident Ivan Doig grew up along the Rocky Mountain Front, the dramatic landscape that has inspired much of his writing. Known for his wit and lively personality, the former ranch hand, newspaperman and magazine editor most recently published "The Bartender's Tale," which the Booklist starred review described as "essential reading for anyone who cares about western literature." This adult title has good YA crossover appeal. Doig is the author of nine previous novels and three works of nonfiction, including his classic first book, the memoir "This House of Sky." He has been a National Book Award finalist and has received the Wallace Stegner Award, a Distinguished Achievement Award from the Western Literature Association and multiple PNBA and MPBA Book Awards among other honors.

"There is something dark and beautiful about the Pacific Northwest. We seem to have an overabundance of serial killers out here," said Olsen, a Seattle native living in Washington state and a New York Times and USA Today best-selling author of adult true crime and more recently young adult novels too. Known for creating detailed narratives that offer insights into the lives of people caught in extraordinary circumstances, Olsen has published 13 books with sales of more than one million copies. The award-winning author has appeared on dozens of national and local television shows, including the History, Learning and Discovery Channels, Dateline NBC, Good Morning America, The Early Show, The Today Show, FOX News, CNN, Anderson Cooper 360, MSNBC, and A&E's Biography. He has been featured in Redbook, USA Today, People, Salon magazine, The Seattle Times, Los Angeles Times and the New York Post. His debut YA novel in the Empty Coffin series, "Envy," was Washington's official selection for the National Book Festival.

Best-selling Vancouver-based author Ruth Ozeki's forthcoming novel "A Tale for the Time Being" is her first in eight years and is already creating a buzz, described as being full of her signature humor and deeply engaged with the relationship between writer and reader, past and present, fact and fiction, quantum physics, history and myth. As author of "My Year of Meats" and "All Over Creation," Ozeki will have illuminating insights into the state of the novel form— fellow writer Michael Pollan says she is "bent on taking the novel into corners of American culture no one else has thought to look." Ozeki is an award-winning writer and filmmaker, ordained in 2010 as a Zen Buddhist priest. Her work has appeared in The New York Times, The Shambhala Sun and More, among other publications.

The authors will sign copies of their latest books at their publishers' booths during the
Doig’s appearance is sponsored by Riverhead Books, Olsen’s by Sterling Publishing Company and Ozeki’s by Viking.

Catch up with the Booklist editors, pick up a free copy of the magazine, and learn about the recent additions to the Booklist subscription package at booth 2515 in the exhibit hall at Midwinter. Booklist is the book review magazine of the American Library Association, considered an essential collection development and reader’s advisory tool by thousands of librarians for more than 100 years. Booklist Online includes a growing archive of more than 135,000 reviews available to subscribers as well as a wealth of free content offering the latest news and views on books and media.

ALA Midwinter Meeting registration and housing are open. Important conversations about the transformation and future of libraries will be taking place in Seattle, January 25-29.

For attendees who need support in making their case for attending and why they'll be more valuable to their institutions afterwards, ALA offers resources that include step-by-step guidelines for what information to present, what previous attendees have said about what they took home from ALA conferences and events, a sample budget worksheet, and more. Those resources are available on the Midwinter website.

ALA Midwinter Meeting. The conversation starts here...
However, on non-event evenings access through the Convention Center may close at 10 p.m. Parking Garage entrances on Eighth and Pike Street are open until midnight.

Standard hours for the Convention Center Freeway Park Garage (located on Hubbell Street):
Monday - Friday, 6:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.

**Holidays:** The Main Garage is open on holidays. Freeway Park Parking Garage may be closed on major holidays unless prior arrangements are made for your event.

▲ Top

**Exiting the Parking Garage**

Prior to returning to your car to exit the garage, payment can be made at one of the three automated pay stations or at the central cashier kiosk conveniently at the Conventional Center parking entrance on Level 3. An additional, automated station is located just inside the garage on Eighth Avenue entrance/exit in Aisle A, by the crosswalk.

Three Easy Steps

- **Take a parking ticket** as you enter the garage. Keep this ticket with you after you leave your vehicle.
- Prior to returning to your vehicle, **insert your ticket in one of the automated pay stations** or take to the central cashier kiosk located at the Conventional Center (Level 3) and garage entrance. You can use cash or major credit cards to pay the parking fee. Upon payment, the automated pay stations or cashier will validate your ticket and return it to you.
- **Insert your validated ticket in the machine at the exit gate** as you leave the garage. With the arrow and number side of ticket face up and pointing towards the machine. The gate will open. If additional assistance is needed please press the intercom button.

▲ Top

**Parking Options**

**Reserved**

Parking may be reserved/guaranteed for groups on a daily basis in the Convention Center garage. You will need to submit reserved parking requests and pay for reserved parking in full, 30 days in advance. These fees are non-refundable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Main Garage</th>
<th>Freeway Park</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reserved Passes</td>
<td>$24.00</td>
<td>$23.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Validation**

Meeting Planners can arrange to use a validation ticket to pay for their attendee’s parking. Arrangements for validation must be made with the Parking Manager thirty (30) days before the event. For short-term bookings, exception will be made. Parking validation does not provide in and out privileges or guarantee space availability. At the close of the event, unused validation tickets will be returned and the Meeting Planner will be billed for validations collected as part of the event settlement invoice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Main Garage</th>
<th>Freeway Park</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Validation</td>
<td>$14.00</td>
<td>$13.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For additional parking information, contact us at parking@wssc.com

▲ Top

http://www.wsctc.com/about_us/event_parking.aspx#publicGarageHours
Hi Ivan — Happy Friday! Below is an updated schedule for your upcoming appearance at ALA. It now includes driving and parking instruction. Please take a look and let me know if you have additional questions.

I hope you and Carol are doing well. Also just got my hands on the Sweet Thunder manuscript... can’t wait to dive in!

Best,
Glory

FRIDAY, JANUARY 25 — SEATTLE

Driving directions to Convention Center from I-5 South:
- Take the I-5 Southbound and exit Stewart Street #166
- Left on Boren Avenue
- Right on Seneca Street
- Right on 8th Avenue
- Please use the parking garage entrance on your right. Please remember to ask Dominique Jenkins about receiving a parking pass during the event that you can use to exit the garage later in the evening (per ALA coordinator Amy McGuigan).

3:15 PM arrival
4:00-5:15 PM
Panel & Signing

ALA MIDWINTER FORUM—“THE NOVEL IS ALIVE & WELL”
Washington State Convention Center, 800 Convention Place, Seattle
Coordinator: Dominique Jenkins, 347.607.2886
Alan Walker, 646.624.9460

- Please meet Dominique Jenkins at the exhibitor registration desk. She will escort you to the author green room #618 on the sixth floor, and give you instructions for your Penguin signing scheduled for later today.
- This is the first major event of the ALA Midwinter Forum and will be moderated by Booklist editor Brad Hooper. Other Seattle-area authors on this panel include Gregg Olsen and Ruth Ozeki. Brad will briefly introduce each author, and will proceed to ask each participant questions about “how their books contribute to the thriving novel form and the influence of the Pacific Northwest on their works.” You are encouraged to interact with your fellow panelists throughout the discussion.

5:30-6:30 PM
PENGUIN BOOTH SIGNING
Exhibit Floor, Booth #2423

- This is a joint signing with author Ruth Ozeki at the official Penguin booth.

Glory Anne Plata
Publicist | Riverhead Books
375 Hudson Street, 4th Fl
Hi Ivan - I'm told that there might be a couple of extra things to add to this later on (including parking instructions), but here is your tentative schedule for your ALA appearance scheduled to take place on January 25. I've also attached it to this email. Let me know if you have any questions at this point, and I'll keep you apprised of any updates I receive from the coordinator.

All best,
Glory

FRIDAY, JANUARY 25 – SEATTLE

3:15 PM arrival
4:00-5:15 PM
Panel & Signing

ALA MIDWINTER FORUM—"THE NOVEL IS ALIVE & WELL"
Washington State Convention Center, 800 Convention Place, Seattle
Coordinator: Dominique Jenkins, 347.607.2886
Alan Walker, 646.624.9460

- Please meet Dominique Jenkins at the exhibitor registration desk. She will escort you to the author green room #618 on the sixth floor, and give you instructions for your Penguin signing scheduled for later today.
- This is the first major event of the ALA Midwinter Forum and will be moderated by Booklist editor Brad Hooper. Other authors on this panel include Gregg Olsen and Ruth Ozeki. Brad will briefly introduce each author, and will proceed to ask each participant questions about "how their books contribute to the thriving novel form and the influence of the Pacific Northwest on their works." You are encouraged to interact with your fellow panelists throughout the discussion.

5:30-6:30 PM
PENGUIN BOOTH SIGNING
Exhibit Floor, Booth #2423

- This is a joint signing with author Ruth Ozeki at the official Penguin booth.

-----Original Message-----
From: carol doig [mailto:cddoig@comcast.net]
Sent: Monday, January 07, 2013 12:00 PM
To: Plata, Glory
Subject: ALA

Glory, hi and new year's greetings. I want to prepare for the ALA panel, so can you either find out or put me in touch with the moderator, Brad Hooper, about the format. Will each of us have an opening statement, and if so, how much time? Also, will there be Q&A from the audience? From the moderator? Will the panelists talk to each other?

Thanks
Ivan
Glory, hi and new year's greetings. I want to prepare for the ALA panel, so can you either find out or put me in touch with the moderator, Brad Hooper, about the format. Will each of us have an opening statement, and if so, how much time? Also, will there be Q&A from the audience? From the moderator? Will the panelists talk to each other?

Thanks
Ivan
ALA - Dominique
3:30 at center
387-607-2886
will have validated pkg ticket
Hi, Glory. We won't need a hotel room unless they want Ivan to do things on two days. Far as we know, he's to be on a panel and sign at the Penguin booth, and we can just go home after that. Thanks for the query, and we look forward to a schedule when ALA produces one.

Best,
Carol

On Oct 23, 2012, at 1:58 PM, Plata, Glory wrote:

Hi Ivan - The folks in our academic marketing department are wondering if you'd like to a hotel room reserved for you for the January 25 ALA panel, scheduled to take place at the Washington State Convention Center. Just say the word and you've got it.

Hope you both have been well!

All best,
Glory

-----Original Message-----
From: Plata, Glory
Sent: Wednesday, October 03, 2012 12:26 PM
To: 'carol doit'
To: RE: ALA
Subject: RE: ALA

Terrific! I'll let everyone know.

All best,
Glory

Glory Anne Plata
Publicist | Riverhead Books
375 Hudson Street, 4th Fl
New York, NY. 10014
212-366-2575 Tel.
Twitter: @glory_anne
Sure. Let's do the panel. You're right, great audience, and a fine opportunity for the marketing people.

Ivan
Hi Ivan – I’ve just returned from vacation, so just seeing this wonderful news. What terrific placement in one of the most popular “best of” lists out there. Congrats! Should be great for holiday book sales.

While I have you, our lovely academic marketing team is asking whether or not you’d be open to doing an additional signing at the Penguin booth right after your ALA panel discussion on January 25. The author panel and signing would run from 4 PM to 5:15 PM, followed by the Penguin signing with author Ruth Ozeki from 5:30 PM to 6:00 PM. As with all of these big events, a staff member will be assigned to escort you from location to location… these conferences are huge and can get a little chaotic! Let me know what you think when you have a moment.

All best,
Glory

---

From: carol doig [mailto:cddoig@comcast.net]
Sent: Monday, November 19, 2012 10:06 AM
To: Saletan, Rebecca; Plata, Glory; wendy smith
Subject: God bless Ron Charles

A bit of good news that came in over the weekend from our most media-savvy friend in the D.C. area. And the Bartender remains on the PNBA bestseller list, too. Nice run-up to the holidays.

Cheers,
Ivan

Begin forwarded message:

From: Linda Miller <miller9820@gmail.com>
Date: November 17, 2012 8:22:37 AM PST
To: carol doig <cddoig@comcast.net>
Subject: good morning

The Washington Post has a Christmas-gift section on the "100 best books of the year," 50 fiction and 50 non-fiction. *The Bartender's Tale* is #2 on the fiction list (ok, so it's alphabetical), "In this subtle and engaging narrative, a 12-year-old boy tries to figure out the adult world, including his saloonkeeper father . . . a slow-paced novel filled with the joys of a careful and loving observation."
Becky, hi. Welcome back to the office, we hope. Relieved to see the ALA speaker's lineup -- it looks like good company. You're right, it's terrific advance notice. I don't know Ruth Ozeki's work, is there a Viking galley of her novel you could slip to me?

We hope things were OK in the Berkshires.

Best,
Ivan

On Nov 5, 2012, at 8:34 AM, Saletan, Rebecca wrote:

Ivan,
Terrific advance trumpeting of your ALA Midwinter doings …

From: Walker, Alan
Sent: Monday, November 05, 2012 11:29 AM
To: Braverman, Louise; Plata, Glory
Cc: Saletan, Rebecca; Martin, Jynne L; Kloske, Geoffrey; Desanti, Carole; Jenkins, Dominique
Subject: Ivan Doig and Ruth Ozeki open ALA Midwinter

Bookstore Closings Seen as an Opening For Many Libraries

Reinventing the Town Square With Best Sellers and Coffee

By KAREN ANN CULLOTTA

At the bustling public library in Arlington Heights, Ill., requests by these patrons to place any title on hold prompt a savvy computer tracking system to order an additional copy of the coveted item. That policy was intended to eliminate the frustration of long waits to check out best sellers and other popular books. But it has had some unintended consequences, too: the library's shelves are now stocked with 36 copies of "Fifty Shades of Grey".

Of course, librarians acknowledge that when patrons' passion for the sexy series lacking in literary merit costs in a year or two, the majority of volumes in the "Fifty Shades" trilogy will probably be pucked from the shelves and sold at the Friends of the Library's used-book sales, alongside other poorly circulated, donated and out-of-date materials.

"A library has limited shelf space, so you almost have to think of it as a store, and stock it with the things that people want," said Jason Kuhl, the executive director of the Arlington Heights Memorial Library. "Renovations will turn part of the library's first floor into an area resembling a bookstore that officials are calling the Marketplace, with cozy seating, vending machines and, above all, an abundance of best sellers."

As librarians across the nation struggle with the task of redefining their roles and responsibilities in a digital age, many public libraries are seeing an opportunity to fill the void created by the loss of traditional bookstores. They are increasingly adapting their collections and services based on the demands of library patrons, whom they now call customers.

Today's libraries are reinventing themselves as vibrant town squares, showcasing the latest best sellers, lending Kindles loaded with e-books, and offering grass-roots technology training centers.\footnote{PHOTOGRAPHS BY TYLEE RUBINSTEIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES}

"Public libraries tread a fine line," Mr. Woodward said. "They want to make people happy, and get them in the habit of coming into the library for popular best sellers, even if some of it might be considered junk. But libraries also understand the need for providing good information, which often can only be found at the library."\footnote{CHERYL HURLEY, the president of the Library of America, a nonprofit publisher in New York, "dedicated to preserving America's best and most significant writing," said the trend of libraries that cater to the public's demand for best sellers is not surprising, especially given the ravages of the recession on public budgets. Still, Ms. Hurley remains confident that libraries will never relinquish their responsibility to also provide patrons with the opportunity to discover literary works of merit, be it the classics, or more recent fiction from novelists like Philip Roth, whose work is both critically acclaimed and immensely popular.}

"The political ramifications for libraries today can result in driving the collection more and more from what the people want, rather than libraries shaping the tastes of the readers," Ms. Hurley said. "But one of the joys of visiting the public library is the serendipity of discovering another book, even though you were actually looking for that best seller that you thought you wanted."\footnote{"It's all about balancing the library's mission and its marketing, and that is always a tricky dance," she added.}

While print books, both fiction and nonfiction, still make up the bulk of most library collections — e-books amount to less than 2 percent of many collections in part because some publishers limit their availability at libraries — building renovation plans rarely include expanding shelf space for print products. Instead, many libraries are cutting their collections and adapting floor plans to accommodate technology training programs, as well as mini-conference rooms that offer private, quiet spaces frequently requested by self-employed consultants meeting with clients, as well as teenagers needing space to huddle over group projects.

Though an increase in book weaving these days — a practice long known in library parlance as deselection — might be troubling to some bibliophiles, library officials say, many books enjoy a happy Continued on Page A16
Libraries like Cincinnati’s are finding that the books they must discard bring in bargain hunters.

Bookstore Closings Seen as an Opening

From Page A14

The public library redefines its role in a digital age.

spent about $50, money that officials said will be given to the library system to finance programs including its children’s story time.

“Great fiction is still being written, as well as rotten fiction,” Mr. Borden added. “To my way of thinking, you need to get them in the door of the library first, and if someone’s search for ‘Shades of Grey’ leads them to read D.H. Lawrence, well, that’s not a bad deal.”

Gretchen Caserotti, the assistant director for public services at the public library in Darien, Conn., said, “We are terrifically excited about the sea change at libraries, and rethinking our model in a new world.”

The Darien library has a three-requests policy similar to the one in Arlington Heights.

“The library should be as they say, a third place — you have home, work or school, and then you come to the library because it is the center and heart of the community,” Ms. Caserotti said. “Our staff is 100 percent committed to hospitality, customer service and welcoming people to the library as if they were visiting our home. We need to remember it is their library, not ours, and they are paying for it.”
Northwest authors in the national news

LIT LIFE

By MARY ANN GWINN
Seattle Times book editor

It's time for year-end tidying, sweeping up literary-news items for you, gentle reader. In no particular order of importance, here are some tasty bits:


• Speaking of Seattle, the Elliott Bay Book Co. was featured in a Dec. 17 New York Times story headlined "No Big Hits, but Bookshops Say They're Thriving." Peter Aaron, Elliott Bay's owner, told the Times that sales were up 15 percent over the Thanksgiving weekend and "tracking well for December."

• The Couth Buzzard, Greenwood's independent bookstore, celebrated its third anniversary this past Saturday. The Couth Buzzard has a new website: couthbuzzard.indiebound.com.

• Seattle7Writers is planning its third annual Write Here Write Now conference "for all writers, at all levels" for Jan. 26 at the Fremont Abbey Arts Center. Information: seattle7writers.org.

• Here's some really good news: Thanks to the recent passage of the levy to support Seattle Public Library operations, all branches of the library will once again be open on Sundays starting Jan. 6. Check individual branches for hours (www.spl.org).

• The Furnace, a reading series that features one story "read to completion," will feature Rae Diamond, musician, writer, artist, performing an essay about sound called "Three Songs," with vocalist Jessika Kenney. At 6 p.m. Jan. 16 at Hollow Earth Radio, 2018A E. Union St. (thefurnace-atlanta.wordpress.com).

• Seattle author ISAAC MARION has reached the coveted inner circle of writers whose books have been made into movies. A film based on his zombie love story, "Warm Bodies," is in theaters Feb. 1. A movie tie-in paperback of the book, published by Emily Bestler/Atria, has been released.

• Seattle author DOMINGO MARTINEZ has

Actress Leslie Mann, left, and her filmmaker husband, Judd Apatow, collaborated on "This is 40."

Scenes from an Apatow marriage

By STEVEN REA
The Philadelphia Inquirer

PHILADELPHIA—It's almost like Ingmar Bergman's "Scenes From a Marriage," Judd Apatow's "This Is 40." 40 years of marriage, 40 years of dealing with a fickle, unpredictable partner, 40 years of putting the funny and the serious in a single package. ...
"A CHRISTMAS STORY"

I triple-dog-dare you to watch the 24-hour marathon of the 1983 film based on Jean Shepherd's book "In God We Trust: All Others Pay Cash." Set in the 1940s, it follows young Ralphie (Peter Billingsley) as he goes on a quest for a Red Ryder air rifle and... oh, you know the rest ("You'll shoot your eye out"). Marathon begins at 8 p.m. on TBS (seattletimes.com/visitings).

Doug Knopf, Seattle Times staff
dknoop@seattletimes.com or on Twitter @dougknoop

Also on Monday

"Disney Prep & Landing," 8 p.m. (ABC): An elite unit of elves, Prep & Landing, ensures that homes around the world are properly prepared to be visited by Santa Claus each Christmas Eve.

"It's a Wonderful Life" (1946), 8 p.m. (NBC): Ruined by a miser on Christmas Eve, a suicidal family man sees life anew thanks to his guardian angel.

"How to Train Your Dragon" (2010), 8 p.m. (FX): A misfit Viking teenager sees a chance to change the course of his clan's future when he befriends an injured dragon. Animated. Based on the book by Cressida Cowell.