



by Anita Anderson

Literary Minnesota

On the Web

Minnesota Center for the Book
<http://www.mnbooks.org/cfb/pubs.htm>

University of St. Thomas Law Library
<http://www.stthomas.edu/lawschool>

Hennepin County Law Library
<http://www.co.hennepin.mn.us/lawlibrary/lawlib.htm>

United States Courts Branch Library
<http://www.ca8.uscourts.gov/library/minnlib.html>

Minnesota State Law Library
<http://www.state.mn.us/courts/library>

James J. Hill Reference Library
http://www.jjhill.org/lib_services_main.html

University of Minnesota Law Library
<http://www.law.umn.edu/library/home.html>

Elmer L. Andersen Library
<http://andersen.lib.umn.edu>

Playwrights' Center of Minneapolis
<http://www.pwcenter.org>

Minnesota Book Awards
<http://www.mnbooks.org/cfb/mmnbkawds.htm>

Open Book
<http://www.208.155.173.235/faq.html>

Loft Literary Center
<http://www.loft.org/about.htm>

Minnesota Center for Book Arts
<http://www.mnbookarts.org/main.html>

Milkweed Editions
http://www.milkweed.org/2_0.html

Quick! What is the common thread in this list? F. Scott Fitzgerald, Garrison Keillor, Lorna Landvik, Jon Hassler, Meridel Le Sueur, Alex Pate, John Sandford, Kate Green, Patricia Hampl, Judith Guest, Sinclair Lewis, Ole Rolvaag, Maud Hart Lovelace, Laura Ingalls Wilder, Graywolf Press, Milkweed Editions, CoffeeHouse Press, Holy Cow! Press, Amazon Bookstore, *Utne Reader*, *Ruminator Review*, the Loft Literary Center.

Answer: Minnesota! All of these authors, institutions, and publications hail from the North Star State.

For four years running, Morgan Quitno Press named Minnesota the most livable state in the country. Minnesota's advantage: its well-educated, healthy, and involved population. Part of what makes Minnesota so livable is the thriving community of writers, publishers, literary institutions, libraries, bookstores, and (of course) readers. Success of our literary arts parallels Minnesota's other cultural successes: two world-class orchestras, thriving theaters, and a multitude of museums and art galleries.

An article in the *Star Tribune* (Mary Lyons, 10/22/00) touted the state as becoming the "Williams-Sonoma of the literary arts and publishing world." Minnesota's printing and publishing industry employs more than 56,000 people. All law librarians know of the successful Minnesota legal publisher, the West Group. You may not know that Minnesota is a national leader in the small press world. Our numerous small presses have realized success by staying independent and offering works of new writers. The Minnesota Center for the Book's Web site lists 129 Minnesota publishers. Each year, the products of many of these small presses are honored at the Minnesota Book Awards.

Minnesota has a strong tradition of supporting a wide variety of libraries and library services. Minnesota is one of a few states where all citizens are entitled to library service through publicly funded

libraries. The library tours during the AALL Annual Meeting will feature a variety of both publicly and privately funded libraries. Our newest law library, the University of St. Thomas Law Library, will be included in the walking tours, as well as two firm libraries (Merchant & Gould Law Library and Faegre & Benson LLP Law Library), and two court libraries (Hennepin County Law Library, and United States Courts Branch Library. Minnesota's oldest continuing publicly funded library, Minnesota State Law Library and a Beaux Arts Neoclassical style business reference library founded by empire builder James J. Hill (James J. Hill Reference Library) will be on the schedule for the St. Paul bus tour. Another bus tour will include the University of Minnesota Law Library as well as our newest state-of-the-art architectural wonder built underground into the limestone bluffs of the Mississippi River, the Elmer L. Andersen Library.

In addition to supporting individual libraries, Minnesota encourages numerous library consortia and networks that bring added services to their members. Since the 1970s, Twin City area public libraries have cooperated by allowing any library cardholder to borrow from and return books to any other metro library. In 1986, that program was expanded statewide to include all regional public libraries in Minnesota. Minitex, a statewide library information network, has recently funded public access to a large database of electronic books. This new resource is available to all Minnesotans through local libraries' connections to the Web.

Below are descriptions of a few of Minnesota's noteworthy literary sites and programs.

F. Scott Fitzgerald House. Although the St. Paul-born novelist lived in several locations in the city, the home bearing his name on Summit Avenue is where he wrote *This Side of Paradise* (1920). A view of this red stone row house is part of the Summit Walking Tour excursion.

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Playwrights' Center of Minneapolis, founded in 1971, has brought national attention to Minnesota by nurturing the careers of Pulitzer Prize winners August Wilson and Paula Vogel. The Center is a regional and national resource for script development that caters to writers at all stages of their careers. It provides a range of services, including public readings, private workshops, classes, conferences, roundtables, residencies, and fellowships. Located in a church recently renovated into a 120-seat theater, the Center partners with Twin City theaters to prepare new plays for productions.

A sampling of Twin City **independent bookstores.** Are you an SF, fantasy, or mystery fan? Visit Uncle Hugo's and Uncle Edgar's bookstores at Lake and Chicago in south Minneapolis. Amazon Bookstore, near Loring Park on the edge of downtown Minneapolis, is the longest-running feminist bookstore in the United States. Ruminator Bookstore has two locations, one near the Minneapolis downtown area in the Open Book building. While you are there, pick up the latest issue of the *Ruminator Review*. Red Balloon Bookshop in St. Paul specializes in quality children's titles.

The Loft Literary Center. Twin City book lovers have great support from this center, which offers programs and services for readers and writers. Founded in 1974 in a loft above a Minneapolis bookstore, the Loft is now the nation's largest and most comprehensive literary center. It offers educational programs for writers, programs for readers,

mentoring programs for writers, grants and awards for writers, *A View from the Loft* (a monthly magazine), Write on Radio! (a weekly radio program featuring interviews with writers), and the Loft writers' studios.

Minnesota Center for Book Arts.

was established in 1983 to advance the book as a vital contemporary art form. To preserve the traditional crafts of bookmaking, the Center encourages the public to learn about bookmaking and book production. MCBA serves artists, students, teachers, designers, writers, families, youth, and book lovers through a variety of participatory programs. The Center presents exhibits and provides access to its library and archives freely to the general public. MCBA is the most comprehensive independent book arts facility in the nation.

Milkweed Editions is a quality literary press that publishes "with the intent of making a humane impact on society." It is the second largest nonprofit press in the nation, with more than 115 titles in publication. Milkweed authors and poets have been the recipients of numerous awards and prizes.

Minnesota Book Awards honor Minnesota writers, illustrators, and editors. Since 1988, more than 500 Minnesota-written books have been Minnesota Book Award nominees. The Minnesota Center for the Book has a list on the Web of all nominated books, comprising what one fan calls "the best reading list in Minnesota."

Open Book. Three local literary organizations worked together to form a nonprofit, the Minnesota Book and Literary Arts Building, Inc. It was organized by the Loft Literary Center, the Minnesota Center for Book Arts, and Milkweed Editions to seek grants with the objective of owning a building that would communally house their enterprises. Informally called the *Open Book*, its goal is to provide a creative and learning environment for writers and consumers of books. To help fund the effort, the trio leases space to commercial tenants, currently Ruminator Books and the Coffee Gallery. All building tenants share facilities provided by Open Book: expanded working space, studios, a 200-seat performance space, classrooms, and gathering spaces. The renovated nineteenth-century, light-filled building features a spiral staircase with side panels designed to look like pages of a book. This unique endeavor characterizes the Twin Cities' creative philanthropy and dedication to the community.

Take part in "Literary Minnesota" by joining a library tour during the AALL meeting, attending a theater production by one of our many local playwrights, strolling through the Open Book building, or visiting one of our many bookstores to find an award-winning Minnesota book.

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