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Chelsea District Library Hosts 18th Annual Midwest Literary Walk!

Chelsea District Library (CDL) is thrilled to announce the 18th Annual Midwest Literary Walk lineup featuring Montana Poet Laureate Chris La Tray, George Orwell Prize Fellow Carmen Bugar, and *New York Times* Bestselling Author and Cartoonist Nathan Pyle. Each year, Midwest Literary Walk showcases award-winning authors from around the country at historic venues throughout downtown Chelsea. The authors will read from their works, share insights into their writing process, and will be available for book signings. This year's Walk also offers attendees the chance to see one of Chelsea's most iconic venues and experience a concert reading at the Purple Rose Theatre, while engaging with the actors and playwrights. The Walk will take place from 10am–6pm on Saturday, April 18 and is open to the public without ticket costs or reservations.

The day kicks off at 10am with the 2026 Purple Rose Theatre Company New Works Comedy Fest! Enjoy scenes performed from several plays written by Michigan playwrights including a featured new work by Founder and Artistic Director Jeff Daniels. The plays will include: *LEGS* by Jeff Daniels, *GLAMPING* by Carey Crim, *I DONE IT* by Paul Stroili, *THREE'S COWMPANY* by Eric Pfeffinger, *REQUIM FOR A DONUT LOVER* by David MacGregor, and *THE CADDIE* by S. Duane.

Following the concert reading, Chelsea's own Serendipity Books owner Michelle Tuplin will interview Chris La Tray at Main Street Church, 320 N. Main St. at 1pm. La Tray is a Métis storyteller and enrolled member of the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians. In addition to serving as Montana's Poet Laureate from 2023–2025, he is also the recipient of the Montana Book Award, the High Plains Book Award, and *Kirkus Reviews* Best Nonfiction of the Year selection. *Becoming Little Shell* is a memoir combining the story of the Little Shell Chippewa Tribe, the history of the Métis people, and La Tray's own search to find a place with them. Robin Wall Kimmerer (*Braiding Sweetgrass*) calls it "a story as strong and beautiful as a Métis sash, a story of identity, kinship and the journey toward justice."

Dr. Carmen Bugar will be interviewed by Tuplin at 3pm at First Congregational Church of Chelsea at 121 E. Middle St. Bugar is a prize-winning poet and writer based in Chelsea, MI. She won the Bread Loaf Nonfiction Prize, received a Poetry Book Society Special Commendation, was a finalist for the Dayton Literary Peace Prize, and was named 2018 Helen DeRoy Professor in Honors at the University of Michigan. She is on the faculty of the Oxford Writing Mentors, the Poetry School in London, and the International Women Writing Guild. Her

poetry collections such as *Time Being* and *Crossing the Carpathians* and her memoir, *Burying the Typewriter*, draw inspiration from her family's oppression and rebellion in 1980s Romania.

The Walk culminates with Nathan W. Pyle's presentation at 4:30pm at the Chelsea First United Methodist Church at 128 Park St. Pyle has spent the last decade making art for the internet and his creations have taken the world by storm. He is the author of comic collections *Strange Planet*, *Stranger Planet*, *NYC Basic Tips and Etiquette*, and *99 Stories I Could Tell*, as well as children's books such as *Tuck Me!* *Strange Planet* began as a webcomic series, was published as a graphic novel, and was adapted into an Apple TV series in 2023 with Pyle as executive producer. Pyle's work pokes and prods the social traditions we take for granted and shines a light on how weird they really are, from singing happy birthday to feeling like we need to tidy up our apartment before guests arrive. When asked why he creates his cartoons, Pyle told NPR's Liz Metzger "I want to celebrate humanity! I think that so much of what we are doing here is meaningful and absurd simultaneously."

Space is limited and requires registration on the library's website for the Purple Rose Theatre Reading, but all three author talks are walk-in friendly with no registration or tickets required. Books by Lit Walk authors can be borrowed from the library in print, ebook, or audiobook formats. Additionally, Indie bookstore, Serendipity Books, will offer print copies for sale and signing during the event. Join us for all or part of the day, check out the cute Chelsea shops, indulge at one of our restaurants, and get inspired by literature and the arts.

About Us: Chelsea District Library (CDL) is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to engage, inspire, and equip through evolving services and resources. CDL currently serves 16,126 residents in the Chelsea library district—City of Chelsea, Lyndon and Sylvan Townships, and the portions of Lima and Dexter Townships within the Chelsea School District. For more information visit chelseadistrictlibrary.org.

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