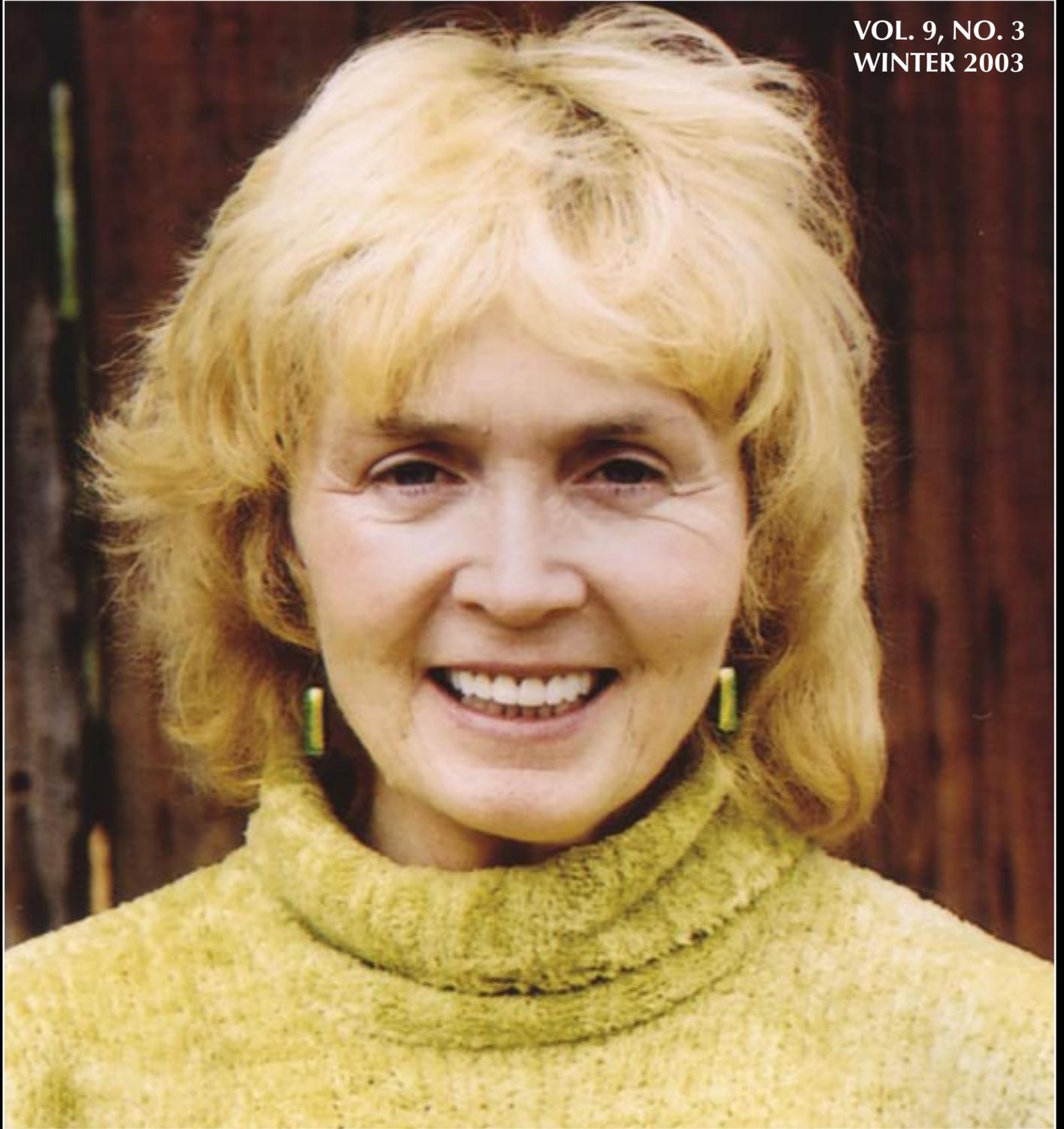


The Journal of the Alabama Writers' Forum

FIRST DRAFT

VOL. 9, NO. 3
WINTER 2003



SUSAN WOODLEY RAINES

Writing Today's Grand Master Lee Smith

FY 03

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From the Executive Director The Alabama Writers' Forum



Jeanie Thompson

The Year 2003 Promises Much

The year 2003 brings an anniversary, and a promise. In 1992, the Alabama Writers' Forum was conceived by a handful of literary arts types with the guidance of Al Head and the Alabama State Council on the Arts. The Council believed in the Forum—and generously invested in it in 1993—and ten years later we are one of the strongest literary arts support organizations in the country.

On May 1-3 we will celebrate ten years of supporting writers and writing in Alabama at the Alabama Writers Symposium in Monroeville. Register early—we are hoping for the biggest gathering to date.

The Forum is proud to partner with Alabama Southern Community College and the many generous sponsors, including Eva and George Landegger, who make this event possible. The Landegggers continue to fund the Harper Lee Award for Alabama's Distinguished Writer and its sister award, the Eugene Current-Garcia Award for Distinguished Literary Scholarship. (See page 7 for details or visit www.ascc.edu.)

And here's where the promise comes in. As the quadrennium begins, we have a lot of new players in Montgomery. With more than 30 newly elected representatives and senators in the Alabama State House, a new set of constitutional officers, and a new administration, we have a lot of work to do.

I encourage you to write to your legislative delegation and tell them how important the arts, and arts education, are to the continuing development and vitality of our state. Meantime the Forum and other arts organizations will help the freshman class of the legislature get up to speed with the rich diversity of Alabama arts and artists.

We have Pulitzer Prize-winning writers, National Book Award winners, NEA Fellowship recipients, and those who work quietly with less acclaim but with no less talent or fervor. As a member of the Forum, it is your privilege to tell this story to those who represent you in Montgomery. Write to them at home, where they take time to stop and read the mail in between session days. When you have local literary events, personally invite them to attend. They want to know their communities.

Let me ask that you make the Forum a priority in your life in one other way. As you select birthday, anniversary, or graduation gifts, please consider a gift association in the Forum. To survive another year of tight budgets, the Forum must double the size of its membership. If each associate would recruit *just one new member*, we would grow from 500 paid associates to 1000. Please help us meet this goal.

I can't believe how much has happened in ten years, and it is just starting! Writing Our Stories has produced a dozen anthologies of student writings as well as a curriculum guide; Alabama's literary season offers a rich smorgasbord of conferences all over the state; and there are more fine novels, poems, and plays being written now than one could read in a lifetime. The arts, and in particular the literary arts, are alive, well, and thriving in Alabama. Please own this – you've helped make it so. And please help us keep the Forum and all the arts healthy in 2003.

Come celebrate with us in Monroeville – it's everyone's party!

Jeanie Thompson
Jeanie Thompson
Executive Director

The Alabama Writers' Forum is generously funded by the Alabama State Council on the Arts, with additional funding from the Children's Trust Fund of Alabama and corporate, institutional, and individual associates.

The Alabama Center for the Book Says

Thank You!

On September 27-29, 2002, the Alabama Center for the Book greeted the state with a weekend full of "word" events. The state affiliate of the Library of Congress National Center for the Book hosted a sold-out gala dinner with Fannie Flagg, a day of tall tales and folk narratives featuring a dozen Alabama tellers, and an exhibit and gallery talk with painter Charlotte Riley-Webb. All events highlighted books, writers, and readers.

The ACFTB thanks its event partners, including the Alabama Writers' Forum, the Alabama Public Library Service, Troy State University Montgomery, Old Alabama Town, the Alabama State Council on the Arts, the Rosa Parks Library and Museum, and Capitol Book & News. They made the weekend an unqualified success.

The Friday night Fannie Flagg Gala Dinner at Troy State University Montgomery included the presentation of a commemorative plaque by Frances Smiley, Alabama Department of Tourism. The gift featured Flagg's statement: "I am proud to be an Alabama writer." An introduction by Don Noble kept guests laughing as it set the stage for Flagg's touching talk and reading.

More than 200 people spent time at Old Alabama Town on Saturday to hear tellers spin tales, make music, and involve audience members in elaborate stories from around the state and around the world. "Telling Alabama's Stories" included tellers Delores Hydock, Anne Bailey, Joseph Trimble, Bernadette Smith, Anne Dalton, Eve Kneeland, Deborah Adero Ferguson, Mack Vann, Mark Stewart, Marty Hoerr, and Wanda Johnson. Radio personalities Leslie Bailey and Carolyn Hutcheson emceed the day.

On Sunday, the Rosa Parks Museum hosted painter Charlotte Riley-Webb in a gallery talk with her work. Her lively, colorful paintings capture moments in both family stories and cultural narratives. Riley-Webb recently illustrated *Rent Party Jazz* (Lee & Low, 2001), a new children's book by Alabama native William Miller.

Dedicated to supporting books and reading in a variety of venues and ways, the ACFTB will recognize the winners of the state Letters About Literature competition, co-sponsored with the Alabama PTA and held in conjunction with the National Center for the Book and Weekly Reader. It will also plan a statewide book festival to be held in fall 2003. Mark your calendar for the last weekend of September 2003, and please be in touch if you are interested in being a part of the festival or finding out more about it.

"Without the help and support of the Alabama Writers' Forum and our other partners, the Alabama Center for the Book could not have been so successfully launched," notes ACFTB director Allen Cronenberg. "We look forward to this year's book festival as a way for all of us to do more to highlight books and reading. Its success will also be due to the work of many."

The ACFTB website is www.alabamabookcenter.org. Please check it for information about events, past and planned, and contact information.

Fannie Flagg talks with AWF President Peter Huggins and his wife, Chris.



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OLD FRIENDS AND NEW FACES

Alabama Literary Season Opens Soon and Goes Strong

It was an off-hand remark from the dean of Arts and Sciences at Jacksonville State University, something like “What would you think about a writers’ conference?” From that question almost a decade ago came **ON THE BRINK**, a Southern writers conference that celebrates its ninth year this February.

On the Brink is designed as a provocative and entertaining gathering of Southern writers and readers. It offers a forum to emerging writers as they explore the Southern experience through our past, present, and future. Although “emerging” purports “new on the scene,” the conference has featured established writers as well.

Among those writers who were “new”: Brad Watson is a National Book Award nominee 2002; Han Nolan is

ON THE BRINK *Jacksonville*

a National Book Award winner; Rick Bragg has won a Pulitzer Prize; and Melinda Haynes and Gwyn Hyman Rubio have had their books featured by Oprah Winfrey. More established writers such as Robert Inman, Ann George, and Clifton Taulbert have participated.

On the Brink brings together such writers, each working in a range of genres. Authors read from their books and discuss their reasons for working in their chosen genres, and they respond to questions from an audience of avid readers. This year’s conference theme

is “And I’m Happy for Them to Do It.” As is the tradition, no explanation of the theme will be forthcoming until the day of the conference.

Already committed to On the Brink 2003 are **Aileen Henderson** (*Tenderfoot Teacher*), **Brian Hicks** (*Raising the Hunley*), **Lynn Pruett** (*Ruby River*), **Norman McMillan** (*Distant Son*), **Michael Morris** (*A Place Called Wiregrass*), and **Hans Watford** (*Mortal Strain*).

This year’s conference will be **February 15, 2003**, at the Houston Cole Library, Jacksonville State University (near the intersection of Hwy 21 and Hwy 204). For further information, call Gena Christopher at 256.782.5856 or visit the conference website at www.jsu.edu/depart/english/notxbrnk.htm.

—*Steve Whitton, Jacksonville State University*

SOUTHERN VOICES

Hoover



Roger Rosenblatt

In its eleventh year, **SOUTHERN VOICES** is a three-day conference exploring the characteristics of Southern culture as reflected in our contemporary arts. Sponsored by the Hoover Public Library and open to the public, the conference brings together a chorus of artistic voices—writers, editors, musicians, performers, and public figures—to create a full and open dialogue on the relevance of our regional past to Southern art and culture today. The Southern Voices Conference offers an enriching and stimulating forum for everyone interested in the past and future direction of the Southern experience.

In its first decade, Southern Voices hosted such renowned figures as Pat Conroy, Rosalynn Carter, Lee Smith, Shelby Foote, Anne Rivers Siddons, Winston Groom, Bailey White, and Tony Horwitz. Now in its second decade, Southern Voices hopes to extend Southern hospitality to writers from other regions of the country as well.

Southern Voices 2003 features a variety of voices. The conference opens on **Friday, February 21** with **An Evening with Roger Rosenblatt** in The Library Theatre. Mr. Rosenblatt is a noted journalist, essayist for *Time* magazine, commentator for *MacNeil-Lehrer*, and the author of *Where*

We Stand: 30 Reasons for Loving Our Country, which has been called “a love letter that should be in every American home” by Tom Brokaw, and *Rules for Aging*, labeled as “funny, brilliant, wise and indispensable advice.” A book signing and reception follows Mr. Rosenblatt’s presentation.



Mary Ward Brown

Saturday’s Author Conference is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. It highlights authors **William Bernhardt** (*Criminal Intent*), **Mary Ward Brown** (*It Wasn’t All Dancing and Other Stories*), **Haven Kimmel** (*A Girl Named Zippy*), **Catherine Landis** (*Some Days There’s Pie*), **Silas House** (*A Parchment of Leaves*), **Robert McCammon** (*Speaks the Nightbird*), **Ron Rash** (*One Foot in Eden*), and

Jeanne Ray (*Step-Ball Change*). The day also includes a barbecue lunch, book sales, and book signings.

Musical group **Zöe Speaks** performs on Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon. The Appalachian duo creates their own style of music, from old-time gospel to guitar-thumping contemporary acoustic tunes. Their concert leaves you feeling you’ve spent an enjoyable evening with good friends. “When they finished their set, it was like an Appalachian breeze blew through here.” Southern Voices artist **Armor Keller** will be honored at a reception in the Friends’ Gallery on the lower level of the Hoover Public Library on Thursday, February 20. The exhibit of her noted acrylics and collage will run February 12 – April 1.

Tickets go on sale at 10 a.m. on Saturday, January 4. For conference information, call 205.444.7820 or visit www.southernvoices.info. For tickets, call 205.444.7888.

—Pam Bainter, Hoover Public Library

ALABAMA BOUND

Birmingham

On **April 26, 2003**, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Birmingham Public Library will be **ALABAMA BOUND!**, marking the fifth anniversary of the unique annual event that celebrates Alabama’s own books, authors, and publishers. More than 50 Alabama writers and publishers will gather in the atrium of the downtown Birmingham Public Library to promote their latest publications and talk in person about reading, writing, and publishing. Each year this casual, fun-filled day gives the reading public an opportunity to meet and talk with published authors in person and to mingle with other readers and book lovers in Alabama’s largest public library.

The 2003 edition of Alabama Bound! will offer readers opportunities to discover new Alabama authors and to rediscover treasured favorites. The event welcomes a number of familiar authors to the stage. **Robert McCammon**, **Shelley Stewart**, **Wayne Greenhaw**, **Jo Kittinger**, and **Jennifer Greer** are just a few.

Throughout the day the invited authors will speak about

their work or read selections aloud and sign copies of their books. Books will be available for purchase or for checking out. Question-and-answer periods and autograph sessions will provide additional opportunities for the audience and authors to interact. With authors of fiction, nonfiction, and juvenile books in the lineup, Alabama Bound! will offer something for everyone.

As an added attraction, the 2003 program will feature a panel discussion of *The Remembered Gate: Memoirs from Alabama Writers*, a collection of essays published by the University of Alabama Press and edited by **Jay Lamar** and **Jeanie Thompson**.

Books, T-shirts, coffee mugs, and other souvenirs will be on sale throughout the day. Light refreshments will be served “under the trees” in the Atrium Café. Representatives from Alabama book and magazine publishers will be on hand to display their products and answer questions about the types of materials they publish.

On the same weekend, in neighboring Linn Park, Operation New Birmingham will hold its annual *Magic City Art Connection*. This popular juried show hosts artists from around the country. Together the Magic City Art Connection and Alabama Bound! will make April 26 in downtown Birmingham a day of literary and artistic delight.

Alabama Bound! is free and open to the public. More information, author schedules, and regular updates are available at www.alabamabound.org.

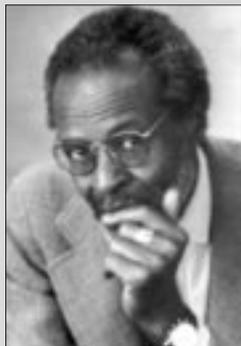
—Linda Wilson, Birmingham Public Library



Alabama Bound! Authors speak to audience members.

WRITING TODAY

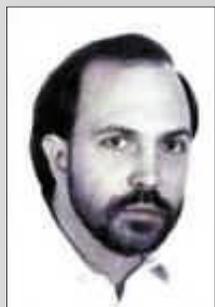
Birmingham



James Haskins



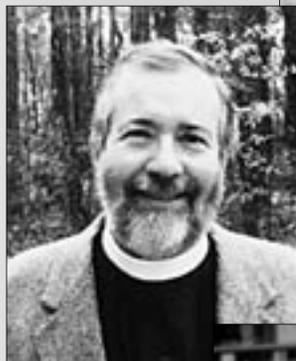
Janet McAdams



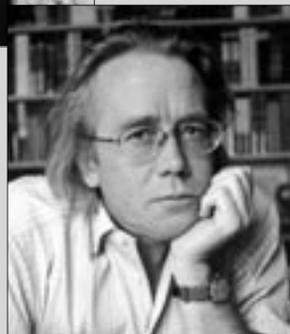
Marlin Barton



Hal Crowther



Louie Skipper



Gary Fisketjon

WRITING TODAY, one of the nation's oldest writers' conferences, is held each spring on the Birmingham-Southern College campus. The 2003 conference to be held **March 7-8**, will be the twenty-third annual gathering. Writing Today brings together acclaimed American writers—one of whom is designated Grand Master—and other well-known writers, agents, and publishing company executives with conference attendees from around the Southeast.

Writing Today consists of two days of concentrated sessions on every facet of writing: screenwriting, short stories, novels, plays, nonfiction, memoir, magazine writing, and poetry. Each workshop is led by a writer or writers distinguished in that genre. The schedule is designed so that conferees may attend a total of eight different sessions, four each day, and each session provides time for questions so that the attendees' individual concerns can be addressed. Lunch is included on both days.

The Grand Master for 2003 is **Lee Smith**, author of numerous novels and short story collections, whose latest novel is the critically acclaimed *The Last Girls*. She will speak at the Grand Master Luncheon on Saturday and be available for Q&A and book signing. Other faculty for 2003 include **Hal Crowther** on magazine writing and essays; **Pat Cunningham DeVoto** on the novel; **Marlin Barton** on short stories; **Jim Rogers** on memoir and travel writing; **James Haskins** on writing for children and adolescents; **Janet McAdams** on poetry; **Morgan Murphy** on magazine writing; **Louie Skipper** on poetry; **Gary Fisketjon**, editor at Knopf; **Emma Sweeney**, New York literary agent at Harold Ober Associates; and **Ellen Archer**, executive vice-president for Acquisitions at Hyperion Publishers. Others will be announced.

The conference offers opportunities for the attendees to talk informally with the faculty over morning coffee and between sessions. There are designated times each day when the various writers will be available for book signing and chat. Writing Today strives to make the conference as practical and as enjoyable as possible. We want the attendees to go home highly motivated and inspired to write, fully equipped with all the new advice they can absorb in two days.

Past Grand Masters include Pat Conroy, Ernest J. Gaines, Horton Foote, Ray Bradbury, James Dickey, Peter Taylor, Richard Wilbur, John Barth, Eudora Welty, and Edward Albee. The Grand Master for 2004 will be George Plimpton.

The cost of the conference is \$120 on or before February 20; \$130 after. One day is \$65. Some individual luncheon tickets for \$35 each day will be available. Some scholarship money is available for high school students through the Fred Bonnie Scholarships; interested students should consult their English teachers, as this aid is granted through the high schools. Individual manuscript critiques are offered in both poetry and fiction for a fee of \$40 per manuscript, which is in addition to the cost of the conference. For details, contact Annie Green, Office of Special Events, at 205.226.4921. Hotel information in Birmingham will be sent with registration confirmation.

The Hackney Literary Awards, open to writers nationwide, are presented at a special session during the Writing Today conference. Sponsored since 1969 by the Cecil Hackney family of Birmingham, the competition awards \$5,000 in annual prizes for poetry and short fiction, plus a \$5,000 prize sponsored by Morris Hackney for an unpublished novel. For more information, call the Office of Special Events, Birmingham-Southern College, 205.226.4921, or go to www.bsc.edu and click on the Writing Today link.

— William Cobb, Chair, Writing Today

UNA WRITERS' FESTIVAL

Florence

The UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA WRITERS' FESTIVAL began in 1984 as the University of North Alabama Writers' Conference. From its inception, the focus of the festival has been to provide students and area residents with interests in writing and contemporary literature an opportunity to share those interests with one another and with professional writers from a variety of genres. The festival is designed to stimulate and encourage those people who teach writing, who write professionally, or who write as a hobby.

Throughout the years, the festival has attracted a wide variety of gifted writers. Past participants have included Al Young, Russell Banks, Vicki Covington, Ellen Gilchrist, Marilynne Robinson, Kaye Gibbons, Larry Brown, Dori Sanders, Rodney Jones, David Bottoms, Barry Hannah, Miller Williams, Brendan Galvin, Allen Wier, Jon Silkin, James Whitehead, Tim McLaurin, Peter Jenkins, Edward Hirsch, J. California Cooper, Lex Wiliford, Charles McNair, Robert Olen Butler, Carolyn Kizer, James Seay, Lewis Nordon, and Michael Lee West.

The festival covers two days: a Thursday evening session and a Friday morning session. We usually have four authors, two at each session. Generally, our authors talk about the art of writing and read selectively from their works. There is also a short question and answer period at each session. The authors attend both the evening and morning sessions and a public reception on Tuesday evening. All of the participants are available for autographs and conversations.

This year's festival will be held **March 13 and 14**. On Thursday night, **Robert Michael Pyle**, renowned nature/environmental writer, will read. Pyle, in addition to his many nonfiction books, is the editor of the *Audubon Guide to Butterflies*. On Friday morning two poets, **Christopher Howell** and **Alison Funk**, will read from 10 to noon. Howell is a recent recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts grant and the author of six collections of poems. He is also the editor of Lynx House Press. Funk is the author of three books of poems, one of which won the Samuel French Morse Prize in 1995. All events are free and open to the public. For more information contact the UNA Department of English at UNA, 256.765.4238.

—Lynne Butler, University of North Alabama

TICKETS GO ON SALE
10:00 a.m. on
Sat., Jan. 4, 2003.
(205) 444-7888

Southern Voices 2003

February 20-23, 2003

An Evening with Roger Rosenblatt
Fri., Feb. 21, 7 p.m.

Featuring the noted journalist, essayist for Time magazine, commentator for MacNeil-Lehrer and author of *Where We Stand: 30 Reasons for Loving Our Country*, which Tom Brokaw called "a love letter that should be in every American home" and *Rules for Aging*, labeled as "funny, brilliant, wise, indispensable advice."

Author Conference and Book Signings
Sat., Feb. 22, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

William Bernhardt, Mary Ward Brown, Catherine Landis, Silas House, Robert McCammon, Ron Rash and Jeanne Ray

Zoe Speaks - In Concert
Sat., Feb. 22, 8 p.m. and Sun., Feb. 23, 2:30 p.m.

This concert will leave you feeling like you've spent an evening with good friends.

Artist Reception
Thur., Feb. 20, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Featuring the art of Armor Keller - Acrylic and Collage (Art on Exhibit Feb. 12-Apr. 1)

All events on the Theatre Level of the Hoover Public Library



HOOVER PUBLIC LIBRARY

QUESTIONS?
(205) 444-7820 or www.southernvoices.info

MONTEVALLO LITERARY FESTIVAL

Montevallo

The town of Montevallo has been a readers' and writers' haven for some time. Students and professors at the University of Montevallo, the state's public liberal arts university, have long been engaged in the study of a multitude of literatures, and writers on campus and in the community have found an eager audience for their work. From the regularly scheduled readings on campus at cozy Palmer Commons to well-attended events at Eclipse Coffeehouse & Bookstore on Main Street to poetry slams at Barnstormer Pizza to an annual literary yard party that's become a much loved tradition, Montevallo enjoys a full slate of literary happenings.

In 2003, a new tradition begins in Montevallo with the first ever **MONTEVALLO LITERARY FESTIVAL**, scheduled for **March 14-15**. Set to coincide with novelist **Sena Jeter Naslund's** stay at UM as Vacca Professor in Residence, the event will feature intensive workshops with nationally known faculty, readings and signings from prominent Alabama authors, keynote addresses from Naslund and from one of the state's favorite sons, poet **Andrew Hudgins**, plus a Saturday night concert featuring **Phil & Walon**, an acoustic guitar duo sure to please music fans of any age.

We're especially interested in reaching undergraduates around the state and around the region who might not otherwise have the chance to work closely with well-known writers at this point in their lives. But the festival is open to anyone who's interested. Sena Jeter Naslund will lead workshops in fiction. Naslund teaches at the University of Louisville and is the director of Spalding University's brief-residency writing program. Naslund's novel *Ahab's Wife* was published by Morrow in 1999, swiftly becoming a national bestseller and a Book of the Month Club Main Selection. Also on fiction faculty is Tuscaloosa native **Brad Vice**, who teaches creative writing



Sena Jeter Naslund

at Mississippi State University and whose stories have been anthologized in *Best New American Voices* and in *New Stories from the South*.

Poetry workshops will be led by Poets' Prize winner and Pulitzer nominee **Andrew Hudgins**, who is professor of creative writing at Ohio State University and whose most recent collection from Houghton Mifflin is *Babylon in a Jar*. Emory University's **Natasha Trethewey** will complete the poetry workshop faculty. Her most recent book, *Bellocq's Ophelia*, was published to acclaim by Graywolf Press.

In addition to the fiction and poetry workshops, a host of Alabama writers will offer readings and signings over the weekend, including novelist and short story writer **Bill Cobb**, poet **Bob Collins**, memoirist **Norman McMillan**, poets **Jim Murphy** and **Jeanie Thompson**, plus fiction writers **Wendy Rawlings** and **Carolynne Scott**.

Another addition to the literary landscape at Montevallo will be the festival's re-launching of *The Montevallo Review*, a literary magazine rooted in the school's Alabama College days, and boasting past contributors that include e.e. cummings, Charles Olson, and Muriel Rukeyser.



Andrew Hudgins

The Montevallo Literary Festival begins on the afternoon of Friday, March 14, and will conclude the evening of March 15. Accommodations are available in Montevallo at the Ramsay Conference Center (205.665.6280) and at the McKibbin Bed and Breakfast. Nearby lodging may also be found in Calera. Montevallo is about thirty miles south of downtown Birmingham, and is easily accessible from I-65.

Space in workshops is limited, so early registration is a must. For information on deadlines, costs, and other administrative concerns, including applications for admission, please contact Montevallo Literary Festival Director Elaine Hughes by e-mail at hughes@montevallo.edu (205.665.6501) or Assistant Director Jim Murphy by e-mail at murphyj@montevallo.edu (205.665.6416). Please direct all written correspondence to the following address: Conference Administrators, Montevallo Literary Festival, Dept. of English & Foreign Languages, Sta. 6420, U. of Montevallo, Montevallo, AL 35115-6420.

—Jim Murphy, University of Montevallo

ALABAMA WRITERS SYMPOSIUM

Monroeville

The first thing to say about Alabama Southern College's sixth annual **ALABAMA WRITERS SYMPOSIUM**, set for May 1-3 in Monroeville, is "Register early!" Besides an annual sell-out crowd, this year the Alabama Writers Symposium will salute the 10th anniversary of the Alabama Writers' Forum by celebrating the "Power of the Written Word." New hotel properties in Monroeville offer ample space for visitors, but it is still wise to book now.

Monroeville, Monroe County, "the Literary Capital of Alabama," has a rich literary heritage. It is home to such writers as Harper Lee, Truman Capote, Mark Childress, Cynthia Tucker, Riley Kelly, Hank Williams, William Barrett Travis, Rheta Grimsley Johnson, and Mike Stewart. In fact, Rick Bragg has called the little town the "cradle of Southern literature." It is this strength of home and sense of belonging to a literary family that makes the Alabama Writers Symposium unique and why hundreds return year after year. While attending the Alabama Writers Symposium, participants also have the opportunity to enjoy a variety of activities designed to honor and celebrate the contributions of the state's finest literary, musical, dramatic, and visual artists.

Symposium 2003 highlights include an evening with **Rheta Grimsley Johnson**, the presentation of the Harper Lee Distinguished Alabama Writer of the Year Award, selected by the Alabama Writers' Forum, and the Eugene Current-Garcia Distinguished Alabama Scholar of the Year Award, selected by the Association of College English Teachers of Alabama. Each award recipient receives \$5,000 and a Frank Fleming Clock Tower Bronze, generously sponsored by **George Landegger**.

Jeanie Thompson, executive director of the Alabama Writers' Forum, notes, "The Forum appreciates the opportunity to partner with Alabama Southern for this year's Alabama Writers Symposium. Our associates will have the opportunity to be part of a first-class writers' conference as well as meet and visit with each other. Since the Harper Lee Award is given at Monroeville, it seemed fitting to celebrate our 10th anniversary in the Literary Capital of Alabama."

In addition to the writing events, participants may attend a live performance of the play "To Kill A Mockingbird," enjoy light jazz, have books signed, hear authors read their works, participate in scholarly discussions, and socialize with others who appreciate good books and fellowship. At this year's Saturday luncheon, the **Honorable John Lewis** (*Walking With the Wind*) will share the power of his written words as he describes his life as a child in rural Alabama, a youth and young adult fighting against racial injustice, a civil rights activist, and a champion of education and tolerance.

Other writers and scholars who will participate in 2003 include **Brad Watson, Michelle Richmond, Elaine Hughes, R. Scott Brunner, Natasha Trethewey, Frank X Walker, Aileen Henderson, William Miller, Charles Gaines, Sena Jeter Naslund, Julia Oliver, Derryn Moten, Daniel Wallace, Brian Kurlander, Dale Foster, Cassandra King, Lisa Minor, Bettye Forbus, James White, Michael Martone, and Don Noble**, as well as the Harper Lee Distinguished Alabama Writer of the Year and the Eugene Current-Garcia Distinguished Alabama Scholar of the Year award recipients.

The comprehensive registration fee is \$150. For more information, please contact Lee Taylor at 251.575.3156 ext. 223 or by e-mail at ltaylor@ascc.edu.

Register early!

—Lee Taylor, Alabama Southern College



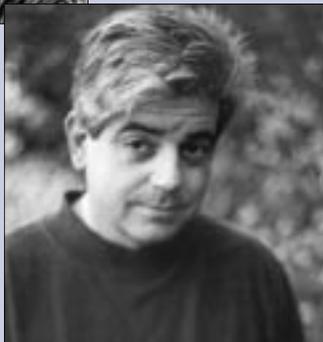
Elaine Hughes



John Lewis



Charles Gaines



Michael Martone

Collective Works

by Edward M. George

This article on collective works is the fourth in a series that is being published in First Draft on the business of writing



Edward M. George

What Is a Collective Work?

A “collective work,” as that term is generally used in the literary field, is a type of compilation consisting of several pre-existing separate and independent works, each of which is a copyrightable document in its own right. The works may be novels, plays, short stories, essays, treatises, or any other recognized form of writing; or a collective work may contain more than one type of writing. In most cases, a collective work will be composed of works by a number of different authors but will be based on a theme of some type, such as “The Best American Essays of 2003,” “An Anthology of 18th Century Alabama Literature,” or “The World’s Scariest Ghost Stories.”

From a business point of view, it is important to know that in putting together a collective work, the editor (or publisher) cannot legally include the work of another without the author’s (or copyright holder’s) consent unless the work is in the public domain. For example, if the editor wanted to include a work by Charles Dickens, he or she would not need to obtain permission from any outside party. On the other hand, for the inclusion of any presently copyrighted work, proper permission would have to be secured in order not to violate the applicable copyright laws.

What Type of Permission Is Required for a Work’s Inclusion in a Collective Work?

In order to use a copyrighted work in a collection, the editor would secure from the copyright holder permission in the form of a “license” to use the work. The cost and other terms of the license are entirely negotiable, but they would generally include, but certainly not be limited to, such information as the name of the person or company to whom the permission is given, the length of the period of permission, the name and/or type of compilation for which the permission is granted, the theme of the collective work, the extent (if any) to which the work could be edited by the editor, the projected date of publication, the amount and type(s) of fees or royalties that are to be paid and a payment schedule, whether or not the license included any updates or sequels to the collective work, and the conditions under which the permission could be withdrawn.

In view of a U. S. Supreme Court decision issued in 2001 in the case of *New York Times Co. v. Tasini*, any editor who is ne-

gotiating a license for a collective work would be well advised to include in the license agreement language that would permit the future use of the copyrighted material in forms other than printed “books.” In the *Tasini* case, the Supreme Court held that when a publisher reproduced a collective work on the internet, the publisher was not merely revising the initial work, it was creating a “new” work that would require a second license from the respective authors. In a related case styled *Greenberg v. National Geographic*, the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals found that where a publisher produced a 30-CD version of “The Complete National Geographic” that did no more than faithfully reproduce in electronic form all of the back issues of the magazine, the result was nevertheless a “new” use and would require additional consent of the many copyright holders of the materials that were reproduced.

Avoiding the Entanglement

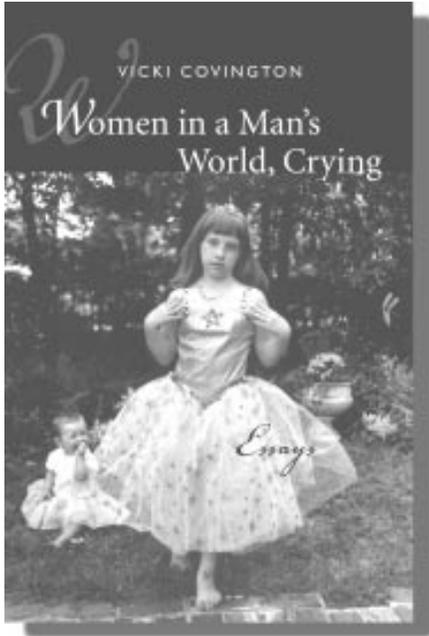
Obviously, the simplest way to avoid the kinds of problems that the New York Times Co. and National Geographic ran into would be to include language in the license agreement that extends the license to cover use in whatever other form(s) the editor or publisher might ever reproduce the works. The downside of such a broad license is that it could create a new problem in the form of having to negotiate fees or royalties from any usage other than the printed book format. For that reason, it would be advisable for the publisher to give considerable thought to what other formats might ultimately be used and include proposed compensation for each of those other uses in the initial offer to the author.

What About Copyrighting the Collective Work?

In order to be a copyrightable creative work, a compilation has to be more than just a number of photocopied stories or articles stacked on top of one another and bound. A collective work can only be considered a new “creative work” for copyright purposes if it evidences that the editors engaged in such creative processes as arranging the materials in a certain manner; adding new material such as an introduction, preface, or biographical material on the authors; laying out the various works so as to make the printed format consistent or compatible throughout the book; or otherwise designing the overall product in such a manner as to present it as a new work. If a collective work is copyrighted, it is copyrighted in its entirety as a collection, and its copyright does not in any manner affect the underlying copyrights of the individual works, unless the contributing authors have agreed as part of their licenses that the publication of the collective work will somehow limit their usage of the separate works

Ed George is a member of the AWF board and an attorney who practices in Montgomery. He is also a songwriter and poet, and he recently produced a coffee house oriented CD for NewSouth Books, which includes a poetry reading by Ed with musical accompaniment by guitarist Danny Angel.

The best part about a good cry is being able to tell your friends about it later.



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VICKI COVINGTON

This thoughtful, engaging collection showcases the best nonfiction prose produced by one of the nation's most observant and incisive writers.

This collection of warm, heartfelt essays from award-winning novelist Vicki Covington chronicles the multitude of “in between” moments in the writer's life. These are her stolen moments in between the writing of four novels—*Gathering Home*, *Bird of Paradise*, *Night Ride Home*, and *The Last Hotel for Women*; in between coauthoring the edgy memoir *Cleaving: The Story of a Marriage* with her husband Dennis Covington; in between raising two daughters; in between her husband's struggle with cancer and the author's own heart attack; in between a life full of trials and triumphs, disappointments and celebrations—moments that, as Covington demonstrates here, are always rich and revealing.

In the title essay, the author questions why all seven middle-class women who live on her street confess at a neighborhood cookout that in the past 48 hours each of them has cried. In “A Southern Thanksgiving,” Covington reflects on the “family dance” that is Thanksgiving in the South: “In the North they put their crazy family members in institutions, but in the South we put them in the living room for everyone to enjoy.” In “My Mother's Brain,” the author recounts the onset of Alzheimer's in her mother and how, with the spread of the disease, an untapped vein of love is revealed.

Some of these essays were written as weekly newspaper columns for the *Birmingham News*. Others were written for specific literary occasions, such as the First Annual Eudora Welty Symposium. They are divided into six thematic sections: “Girls and Women,” “Neighborhood,” “Death,” “The South,” “Spiritual Matters,” and “Writing.”

Throughout, as Covington casts her candid, attentive eye on a situation, confusion yields to comprehension, fear flourishes into faith, and anger flows into understanding. In memorializing the small moments of her life, she finds that they are far from peripheral; indeed, they are central to a life full of value and meaning.

Vicki Covington is a regular contributor to the *Oxford American*, where she writes a column called “Meditations for Bad Girls.” Author of four novels and one memoir, she resides in Birmingham, Alabama.

“Vicki Covington's essays have a mix of Baptist and feminist to them that is amusing, maybe even slightly frightening. That's the edge that carries this collection and what I love, what I find so compelling about it. In that way, Vicki is every Southern woman.”

— Nanci Kincaid, author of *Crossing Blood*

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Profile



Lee Smith

by Michelle Eubanks

Write what you know. It's a mantra for most writers—most writers who get published anyway. And for these writers slumped behind a computer screen or huddled over a notepad with pen in hand, writing what they know is both cathartic and liberating. This process reveals a shared experience that, in translation, becomes full of compelling characters, all-too-true plot lines, and realistic settings.

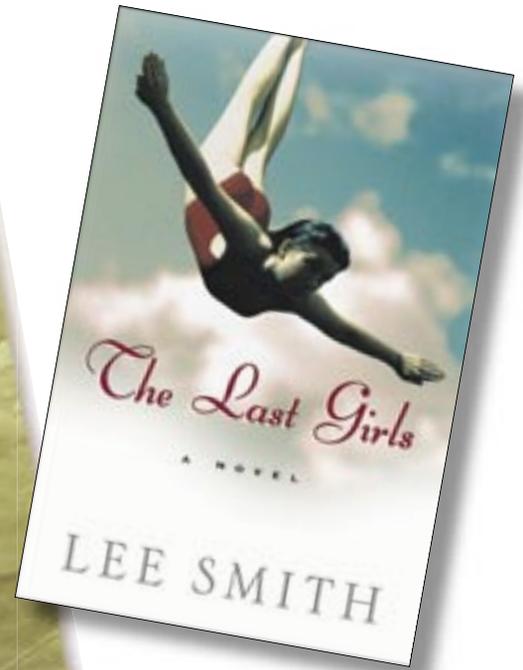
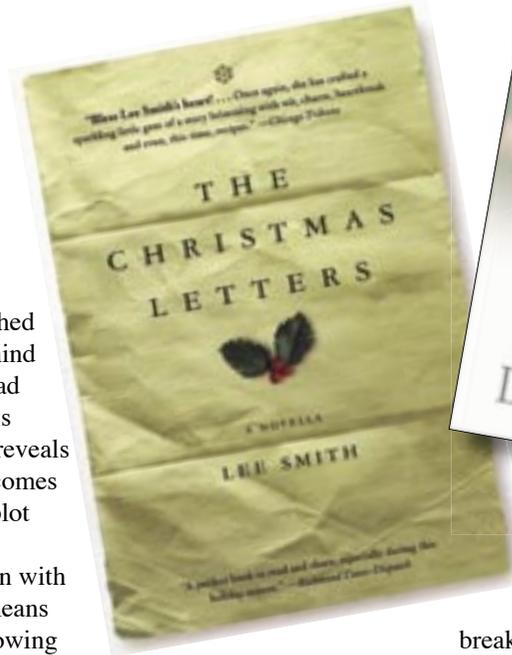
For Lee Smith, a native North Carolinian with ties to Alabama, writing what she knows means drawing on those experiences she's had growing up Southern. Whether it's summers spent with her aunt in Birmingham or months spent rafting down the Mississippi with college friends, Smith believes her writing is inextricably tied to her past.

It wasn't until she wrote *Fancy Strut* that the author says she "got away from herself as a writer."

"*Fancy Strut* is important for me as a writer," she said during a recent telephone interview. "I wrote out of the experiences I had while working at [*The Tuscaloosa News*]. The characters were all made up. I had a wonderful time because I was able to make that leap, and I loved that."

And making that leap is pivotal for a writer, according to Smith, especially for a fiction writer constantly challenged with providing a new and equally powerful story each time a book is published. "Fiction requires a lot of time," she said, "especially with the first draft. You need to be able to concentrate for hours in a row."

Smith's latest novel, *The Last Girls*, is no exception. Having the story tucked away in her memory, Smith says she was simply waiting for the right time to write it, waiting for the opportunity to present itself in a way that would feel natural, unhurried, and not too like her own experience sailing down that mythic river. And four years later, it was this latest novel that emerged and, Smith says, she is proud to call it her own.



"I think I wrote this book instead of having a nervous breakdown," she said. "I came to a point in my life in late middle age, and I became interested in the passage of time and what happens to our friends and family. So as I wrote the story, I really wanted to invest the time in it."

Currently on a book tour that has taken Smith from one Southern city to the next, and even into parts of Iowa and Washington, the author says she's overwhelmed by the response to *The Last Girls* as well as how her own life has changed in the process.

"It's been a whirlwind, emotionally and literally," she said, "I've been really busy and, in the middle of it all, I became a grandmother."

"I've had to take breaks for when my granddaughter was first born and then for a longer visit. And I think that's fitting because [*The Last Girls*] is a book about women's lives. It's an emotional thing becoming a grandmother and seeing the transformation of my son into a father."

Thematically, *The Last Girls* is complex and rounded, weaving in threads of Smith's own experience with the one shared by her four main characters: Harriet, Catherine, Courtney, and Anna.

As the last of her generation to be known as *girls*, a decidedly un-politically correct term by today's standards, Smith says that she wrote a good bit of herself into each character.

Lacking that seemingly essential male counterbalance, the women are foils to one another, revealing both their good sides as well as bad.

"I wrote a lot of me into each character," Smith said. "There's a lot of self-assessment. But it all happened after my 30-year college reunion. I took the trip again, and I had my husband go with me. I just loved the element that brought in."

Inspired by the journey the second time around, the author said she knew the time was right to get the story out of herself and onto the page. She just needed the right inspiration, and seeing male authors publish these kinds of books was all it took.

"There are so many books about men's mid-life crises; there are even lots of books about guys who write stuff like that. So I knew that a woman could do it, too.

"But I identify with each character as I write about her. I think I would identify with Courtney the least. It's funny because the cultural context is about going down the river on a journey. I took it from there.

"I felt I was the captain on the boat that the novel was becoming. And as I wrote about each character, she would become a mutineer."

Like the strong female characters that dominate the story, each with her own personal tragedy to overcome, the river's role is also integral to the book's success.

"The river is a universal symbol," said Smith. "Of course, it was used by Mark Twain and so many other American writers that it has become part of the vernacular. I had the notion that I wanted to use the river as a metaphor for life. You have to use what you know."

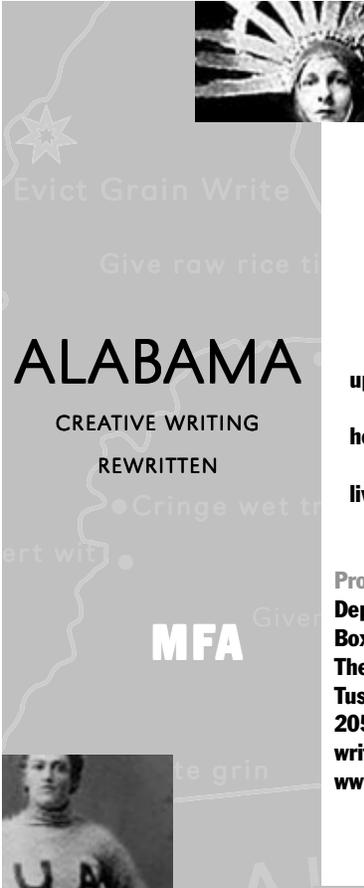
Admitting that her schedule has kept her from writing as much as she would on anything new, Smith says the next book will come out probably a little later, rather than sooner. "I've got a novel that I really want to write," she said, "but I've had to put it aside until after Christmas. I've done some short journalism pieces, but between the book tour and the new baby, I'm keeping busy."

On the heels of the release of *The Last Girls* (Algonquin, 2002, \$26.95) in early October was a novella titled *The Christmas Letters*, also released by Algonquin. Filled with little vignettes of everyday life made sweeter by Smith's touching stories and sincere characters, it is poignant and endearing.

Like all of Smith's novels and stories, *The Last Girls* and *The Christmas Letters* are further testament to Smith's genius as a storyteller. Raised as she was on equal parts oral tradition and "lady lessons" from her aunt in Birmingham, she has carved out her role as the reigning diva of Southern literature.

Journey with her and her riverboat queens down a river that has taken on a life of its own.

Michelle Rupe Eubanks is a free-lance writer living in Florence, Alabama.



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Birmingham Writers Found New Community Writing Program

A group of Birmingham-area writers has founded a new community-based program offering classes in creative writing to the public. Magic City Community Writers (MCCW) presented its first slate of classes in the fall, with further sessions scheduled for this winter and spring.

According to the program's administrator, Tina Harris, "Birmingham is a rich literary community. But there are many writers here, both accomplished and aspiring, who don't have the opportunity to receive guidance and support for their work. We wanted to create a program that would fulfill that need."

In addition to Harris, other founding members of MCCW are fellow writers Maria Morrison and Tony Crunk and graphic artist Peggy Gordon. All four have extensive experience in community outreach work, as well as in literary and arts education.

In its first year, MCCW is offering three different classes in each of the three seasonal sessions. Classes include the writing of poetry, fiction, memoir, and children's books, at beginning through advanced levels. So far all the classes have been for adult students, but future plans include adding classes for younger writers, as well as classes in other genres.

Each class meets weekly for eight weeks, and includes both guided instruction and workshop discussion of students' work. "We wanted to offer a substantial educational experience," said Morrison. "The classes are designed to give students intensive, individualized attention over a sustained period."

The quality of the class experience is also assured by the criteria used to select the program's instructors. Instructors must be published writers and/or graduates of academic writing programs with previous teaching experience. "We want

to offer aspiring writers truly professional-quality instruction from writers already accomplished in their respective genres," Crunk said.

The idea for the program grew out of the founders' prior community outreach work. Crunk, assistant professor of English at UAB, had previously served as an administrator and instructor in a similar community program in Missoula, Montana. Harris, a graduate of UAB's M.A. program in English, has taught creative writing through the Alabama Aid to Inmate Mothers program and through Birmingham's Space One Eleven Center for the Arts. Morrison, a graduate of the Goddard College M.F.A. program in Creative Writing, had previously developed and taught in a creative writing program as a foster care outreach worker in Boston. Gordon, who directs the program's promotional efforts, is an active member of the Birmingham Arts Association.

The integration of creative writing and community outreach is an essential component of the MCCW program. According to Morrison, "Both are aimed at creating a more humane culture."

This goal guided the program's founders in their search for a host organization that could provide classroom facilities, a search that began and ended with the Downtown Branch of the Birmingham YMCA. "We are elated to be meeting at the YMCA," Harris said. "We have benefited tremendously from the Y's visibility, reputation, and diversity. They have been a wonderfully generous, accommodating host."

According to Angela Blakley, the Birmingham Downtown YMCA Membership and Marketing Director, "We are always looking to develop or offer new programs to enrich the lives of our communities. The MCCW's mission clearly enriches

and helps to build a healthy spirit and mind by promoting and providing educational opportunities for personal expression through the writing and literary arts."

Further information about the program may be obtained from Tina Harris at 205.933.8786 or at magiccitywriters@yahoo.com.



CHARLOTTE CASTRO

(left to right) MCCW poetry-writing students Lin Carlene and Kim Thomas, with instructor Maria Morrison



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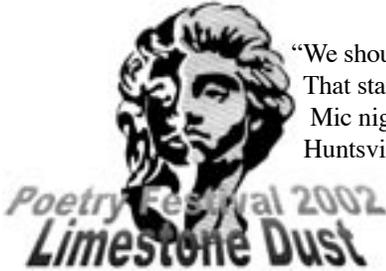
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THE LIMESTONE DUST POETRY FESTIVAL

by Allen Berry



“We should do a poetry festival.” That statement one fateful Open Mic night at Barnes & Noble in Huntsville began the adventure that brought poets from all over the state to the Limestone Dust Poetry Festival, April 13, 2002.

It had been a banner night at Barnes & Noble, especially for poets, with forty people in attendance. I was a newly published poet writing with a diverse group of talented malcontents called “The Out Loud Poets.” I was just waking up to how much poetry was being written here in the Tennessee Valley. In short, I was excited about the literary community here and excited about the possibilities. I turned to my friend and co-conspirator in this endeavor, Stephenie Walker, and suggested the idea. She didn’t laugh at me; in fact she thought it was a pretty good idea. That was the beginning.

Undeterred by the fact that neither of us had ever done a festival before, we met for a power lunch and created our battle plan. How do we pull all the different groups together without neglecting anyone? We made a list of all the movers and shakers in poetry that we knew of and worked from there. From the SLAM community, we drafted Ruth Braswell who became our treasurer. From *The American Muse* magazine, we drafted Mary Alderman who had put on the Flying Monkey Art Festival the previous April; we were sure that she had the know-how. From the Huntsville Literary Association, we found Jack Dempsey, a long-time poet and artist, who edited and assembled our anthology. Local attorney George Smith graciously donated his time and effort to draw up our articles of incorporation. Together, with a great deal of help and charity from many kind souls, we gave birth to the Limestone Dust Poetry Festival.

Once we had assembled a board of directors, we set out to put together a plan of action. As I have already mentioned, none of us had done a poetry festival before, and the reality of our ignorance began to sink in. I contacted my dear friend Anastasia McFadyen, a fellow poet and long-time affiliate of the Austin International Poetry Festival, and asked her what to do. A few days later, Stazja sent me a large document detailing what would be needed to pull this off.

We have a festival!—where do we put it? A few ideas were passed along: first there was the multi-venue idea. This being a new endeavor, however, we were fearful that splitting the festival up over a few days and locations might serve to “divide and

conquer.” Initially, we looked into Big Springs Park. Problem was, as heady as we were, there was no guarantee the weather would smile upon us. It was looking grim and, at the very least, expensive, until one of our board members said, “Hey, why not get the Art League involved?” Luckily, Jack Dempsey was an established participant in the league and made the arrangements for us to use their space in the Market Square Mall.

It was our goal to represent all forms of poetry. Our festival would be a place where academic, Beat, and SLAM poets alike would feel at home. In order to do this, we set out to book guests who would attract all sides of the poetry community. From Nashville, we booked Pamela and Joe Spear who are known as “The Beatlicks” and who can be credited with bringing SLAM poetry south of the Mason-Dixon line. Next we contacted Alabama State Poet of the Year Dr. Virginia Gilbert and poet and fiction writer Mary Carol Moran, author of *Clear Soul*, to conduct a workshop. Last, but far from least, I contacted a colleague of mine from south Alabama, Claiborne Walsh, who has done readings and workshops all over the globe.

Finally, we put out a call for submissions to our poetry contest. The judges chose work by twenty poets, and Jack Dempsey stepped in again to help, editing and assembling a chapbook containing poems by the winning poets as well as featured work from our guest poets.

Now that we had guests and a plan of action, there was one small issue to take care of: financing. Barnes & Noble assisted us with our first and second fund-raisers, donating a portion of sales for one day to the festival. Local independent bookstores Shaver’s Books and Booklegger donated cash to the organization. And finally, three wonderful local poets, Bonnie Roberts, Dr. Virginia Gilbert, and Dr. Susan Luther, donated time and books at a benefit reading held at the Renaissance Theatre.

We started around 1 p.m. on Saturday, April 13 with an introduction by our emcee, Mrs. Beth Norwood, from the local NPR affiliate, WLRH, which led into a series of readings by our panel of judges, contest winners, and featured poets. In between the readings and workshops, festival attendees tried their hand at creating spontaneous poetry at easels set up with magnetic poetry kits scattered around the venue floor or adding lines to the group poems along tables in the back.

Our Open Mic was rounded out with local poets eager to share their work and one surprise guest: poet Soul Evans, who was passing through town on his global tour. A welcome surprise, Soul had learned of the festival from The Beatlicks.

More than one hundred guests, celebrating poetry and the

arts, passed through the festival that day—not a bad run for a first-time festival put on by a group with no prior experience. We hope that future festivals will be bigger and better and, in time, perhaps grow to a size comparable with other festivals such as Austin.

The board of directors met again on September 29, 2002, to begin planning for the next poetry festival to be held April 12,

2003. The guest list is still being finalized, but contest entries will be accepted starting February 12, 2003. For more information on the festival as well as photographs and “magnetic poetry,” visit our website at www.limestonedustpoetry.org.

Poet Allen Berry is the president of the the Limestone Dust Poetry Festival



COURTESY ALABAMA HUMANITIES FOUNDATION

Nelle Harper Lee

A Tribute to *Nelle Harper Lee*

by Wayne Greenhaw

The 2002 Alabama Humanities Award was given to Harper Lee. In his introductory remarks, Lee's friend Wayne Greenhaw not only welcomed Alabama's beloved author but also skillfully evoked the context of her achievement. We thank Greenhaw and the Alabama Humanities Foundation for permission to publish his remarks.

I am very proud to be here today to honor my friend Nelle Harper Lee.

We have known each other so long neither of us remember the first meeting—probably when we had coffee at the old Whitley Hotel in Montgomery with our mutual friend Vic Levine, proprietor of Capitol Book & News.

Through the years Nelle and I have met on a number of occasions. Each of these was reason to celebrate. Once we spent hours in the Russian Tea Room in New York, sipping and talking, talking and sipping, until it was two o'clock in the morning and we were the only people left—other than the waiter—who said he'd stay as long as we wanted to talk.

We never talk about our work. We talk about our state. We gossip about friends. We discuss the world.

Nelle Lee has never done a whole lot of talking about her work. She is a very private person. Or perhaps she takes Miss Maudie Atkinson at her word when she said of Atticus: “People in their right minds never take pride in their talents.”

For a minute I will talk about her wonderful work.

Her book started: “When he was nearly thirteen, my brother Jem got his arm badly broken at the elbow.”

A simple, unassuming, straightforward sentence.

From this sentence came the history of a state and its people—a time of tragic circumstances—mirrored through the eyes of innocence. Because of this piece of work, the world was allowed to peer into their lives—just as Scout and Jem and Dill tried to peek into the house next door.

Having grown up in Monroeville in south Alabama, she knew well “the tired old town” about which she wrote.

Nelle long ago learned the simple trick from her wise and courageous character, Atticus Finch: to climb into another person's skin and walk around in it. Because she learned that trick and put it to work in her writing, we all have been able to live with Scout and Atticus, Jem and Dill, Calpurnia and Boo Radley, and even the Haverfords—whose name in Maycomb County was synonymous with jackass.

Because her work was so perfect—because it did indeed peer inside the lives of everyday Alabama people—the entire world of the humanities has been made richer.

More than thirty million copies of *To Kill a Mockingbird* have been sold in more than forty languages. Librarians from across the U.S. have chosen *To Kill a Mockingbird* as the best novel of the 20th century. Today *To Kill a Mockingbird* continues to resonate with the glory of life.

Once when we were talking about such things, my old friend Federal Judge Frank M. Johnson Jr. said of Harper Lee, “That lady writes better about the law and the heart than anybody I ever read.”

On behalf of the Alabama Humanities Foundation—it is a great personal honor for me to present to my friend Nelle Harper Lee this year's Humanitarian Award.

Wayne Greenhaw lives and writes in Montgomery. His most recent book is Montgomery: The River City.

“Writing Our Stories” CELEBRATES NEW PUBLICATIONS

THREE NEW ANTHOLOGIES MAKE IT AN EVEN DOZEN. In October 2002, the Alabama Writers’ Forum and the Alabama Department of Youth Services (DYS) Services collaborated in publishing three new anthologies from the “Writing Our Stories” program. From the schools on the Chalkville, Mt. Meigs and Vacca campuses of DYS, boys and girls ages 13-18 published stories, poems and personal narratives written with teaching writers in their classroom. At publication parties on each campus, the published authors read from their books and signed copies for assembled students, staff and guests. The three new books bring to an even dozen the anthologies published since “Writing our Stories” began in 1997.

Mt. Meigs teaching writer and program assistant director **Marlin Barton** says it is gratifying to have watched the program grow from the beginning. “These students have taught me that the ability to create original images and similes and metaphors that speak to a reader and enable the reader to recognize some truth about his or her own life is a gift that one might find anywhere—even behind a guarded gate” Marlin Barton’s introduction, *Open the Door V*.

Danny Gamble, who teaches at Vacca’s McNeel school, wrote in his introduction to this year’s anthology, *Dreams Behind Bars*: “At McNeel I have attempted to shed the light of knowledge on my students. Like Henry Frankenstein, I wish to revivify my students, to lead them out of the torchlight of public foreboding and into the sunlight of learning and creativity.”

Priscilla Hancock Cooper, who has worked with the girls at Chalkville since fall 1998, comments on the importance of Writing Our Stories, “*In A Mirror of You*, the poetry and fiction are contemplative and humorous, depressing and delightful. Through their courage and creativity, these student writers invite us to take a look into the mirror of their own lives.”



Celebrating the publication of A Mirror of You, guest speaker Odessa Woolfolk is shown here with authors Amanda Phillips, Jawanna Jackson, and Nicloe Ellison.

AWF AND DYS PUBLISH CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR WRITING OUR STORIES



On November 12, Barton, Cooper and Gamble presented the 179-page “Writing Our Stories” Curriculum Guide for the first time to DYS faculty and staff at a training day at the Alabama TechnaCenter in Montgomery. Guests from the Mobile Children’s Policy Council, the Mississippi Arts Commission, the Lee County Youth Facility, the Indiana Department of Correctional Education, and the Veterans Administration also participated in the training session where they were introduced to the 31 “Writing Our Stories” lessons in poetry writing, fiction writing and personal narrative. The teaching writers involved trainees in four typical lessons.

“We have always wanted to expand the program to other DYS campuses and similar facilities,” said Tracy Smitherman, co-author of the guide and DYS Curriculum Coordinator. “Now that people have the book in their hands, they can see the reality of the program and how to implement it. They are excited about it.”

The Alabama Child Abuse Neglect Prevention Board, or “Children’s Trust Fund,” provided funds for the Curriculum Guide.

For more information about “Writing Our Stories” and its publications, contact the Forum office at 334.242.4076, x. 233 or awf1@arts.state.al.us. For more extensive coverage of the anthology events, or to learn more about the Curriculum Guide visit www.writersforum.org.

BookBriefs

Writer and educator **Anne Chancey Dalton** bases her new book on characters and events from Alabama's early French history. *Massacre Island* (Black Swans Books, 2002) tells the story of 12-year-old Nicolas La Salle and his family as they sail to La Louisiane, or French Louisiana. Arriving in Pensacola in 1701, Nicolas and his family move to Massacre Island, present-day Dauphin Island, to help build and manage the supply base that will support La Mobile. Dalton is a gifted historian and storyteller. Through her books and her performances, she makes good on her commitment to re-create a rich and fascinating period of Alabama history. *Massacre Island* is appropriate for ages 8 and up. Dalton is available both as a writer and a storyteller for school and library programs.

Stillness Walks on Water (Mt. Charron Books, 2002), poems by **Nancy Compton Williams**, includes 85 lyric poems about love, loss, and "human truth hard-learned." Set in Ireland, Italy, and Alabama, many of the poems have appeared in literary journals and magazines. Williams is a former co-director of the Sunbelt Writing Project at Auburn University and has taught in the Poet-in-Schools program in Huntsville and Decatur. She is currently president of the Huntsville Literary Association.

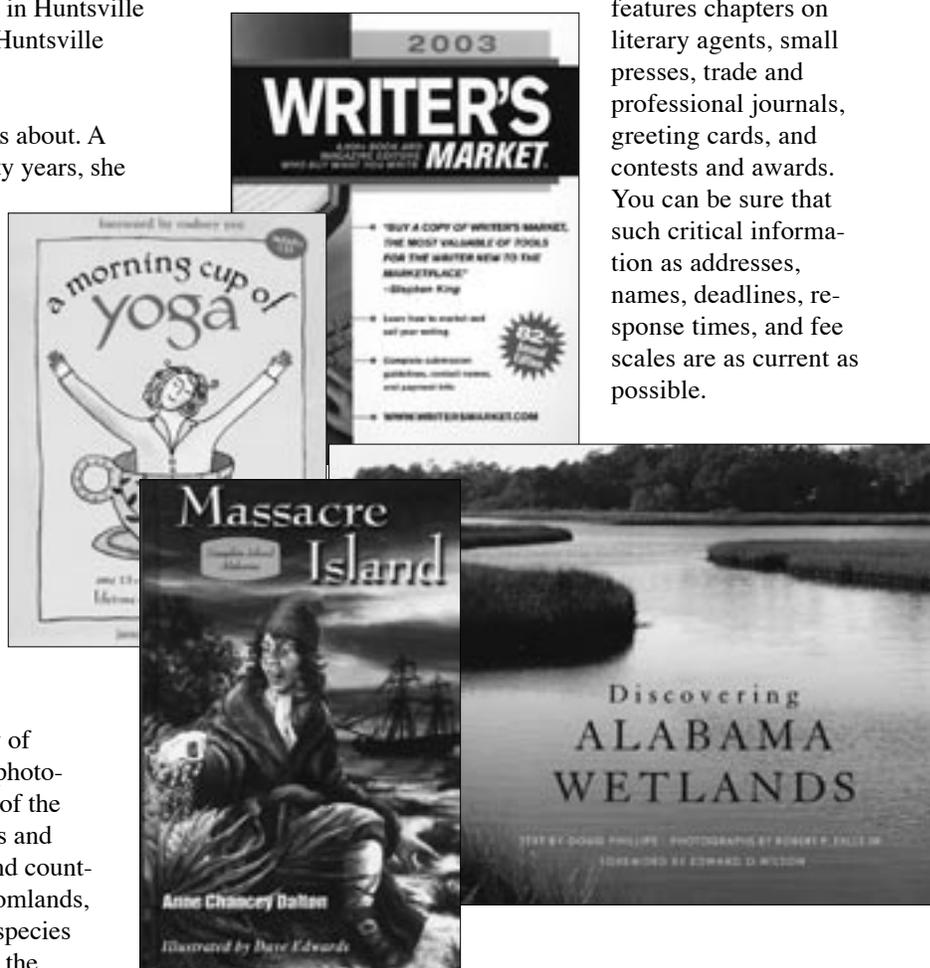
Jane Goad Trechsel knows what she writes about. A teacher and student of yoga for more than thirty years, she pours experience and knowledge into *A Morning Cup of Yoga* (Crane Hill Publishers, 2002). "People who love yoga want to share it," notes Trechsel. These true words inform the simple, not intimidating sequence of stretches and poses that help you "say hello to your body." An instructional CD accompanies the very nicely illustrated, spiral-bound book. Final chapters suggest paths for further study as well as a brief introduction to the Sutras of Patanjali (precepts of yoga) and meditation. If you have been interested in yoga and would like to take a dip, or a sip, *A Morning Cup of Yoga* is a gentle, encouraging, do-able place to start.

Discovering Alabama Wetlands (University of Alabama Press, 2002) by **Doug Phillips** with photographs by **Robert P. Falls Sr.** is a celebration of the state's diverse wetland habitats and their plants and animals. Alabama's abundant supply of rain and countless streams, rivers, lakes, swamps, bogs, bottomlands, and bays harbor a variety of plant and animal species virtually unequalled on the continent. Phillips, the

coordinator for Environmental Information and Education with the Alabama Museum of Natural History and producer of the award-winning APT series *Discovering Alabama*, and Falls, a professional photographer whose work includes *Exploring Gulf Islands National Seashore* (Globe Pequot, 2001), not only offer a beautiful record but also warn that the fragile environments are dwindling. As E. O. Wilson, Mellon Professor of Sciences Emeritus at Harvard University and Pulitzer Prize-winning author, notes in the introduction, "I am thankful that most of the places I knew as a boy and subsequently as a student at the University of Alabama still exist. But...they are also very much at risk." The book makes a strong case for their protection and preservation.

As many professional and aspiring writers know, annual editions of *Writer's Market* (Writer's Digest Books) are invaluable resources for submission guidelines, contact names, and marketing tips. The 2003 edition includes advice on getting published, marketing, and the business of writing. Listing more than 8,000 book and magazine editors, it also

features chapters on literary agents, small presses, trade and professional journals, greeting cards, and contests and awards. You can be sure that such critical information as addresses, names, deadlines, response times, and fee scales are as current as possible.



Reviews

A Century of Controversy Constitutional Reform in Alabama

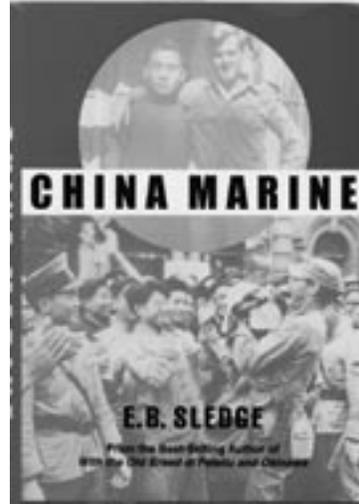
Edited by Bailey Thomson

University of Alabama Press, 2002
\$24.95, Paperback

Alabama's antiquated state constitution, written in 1901 and conceived primarily as a way to disfranchise poor blacks and whites, is the subject of this collection of essays by twelve state history and political science scholars. Fourteen years after the voters ratified the constitution in an election tainted with fraud, Governor Emmett O'Neal called for changes because the document constituted "insuperable barriers to most of the important reforms necessary to meet modern conditions and to secure economy and efficiency in the administration of every department of state government." This indictment is as pertinent today as it was in 1915. Despite constant awareness of the constitution's burdens and amendments nearing 700, only occasionally has there been any interest in making fundamental changes. All efforts have failed to garner support.

As Alabama approached the 21st century and the 100th anniversary of the document, a grass roots campaign started that advocated writing a new and modern constitution. This collection of essays was written for the general public and conceived as an educational tool to help citizens understand the history and the problems of the 1901 constitution and its consequences. The slim book has also been used as a text in courses on Alabama constitutional history in state colleges and universities. University of Alabama journalism professor Bailey Thomson edited the work and writes the introduction and closing essay. The contributors are Samuel L. Webb (UAB), Harvey H. Jackson, III (Jacksonville State), Wayne Flynt (Auburn), William H. Stewart (University of Alabama), Joe A. Sumners (Auburn), Bradley Moody (AUM), James W. Williams, Jr. (Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama), Anne Permaloff (AUM), G. Alan Tarr (Rutgers University), Robert Martin Schaefer (University of Mobile), and Howard P. Walthall, Sr. (Cumberland School of Law, Samford University). They all write with clarity but leave no doubt about their commitment to changing the fundamental document of the state of Alabama. The essays present a concise and clear argument, and they should be read by everyone who votes in Alabama, as well as those who care about the future of the state.

Historian Leah Rawls Atkins lives in Birmingham.



China Marine

by E. B. Sledge

University of Alabama Press, 2002
\$29.95, Hardcover

This memoir tells the unique experience of Professor E. B. "Gene" Sledge, "Sledgehammer," as a young marine stationed in China at the end of the Second World War. After combat in the Pacific, detailed in his previous memoir, *With*

the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa, he eagerly anticipates his return to Mobile and his family. He describes himself as "young and naïve." He is blessed to be alive because he survived a brutal conflict he describes as "overwhelming, horrifying, degrading and fascinating."

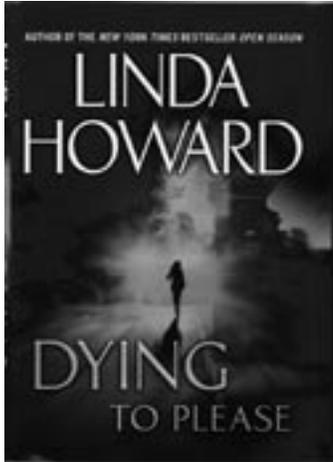
Despite his weary state, he accepts his patriotic duty to extend his time in the Orient. Alternately appalled and intrigued by his situation, he had presence of mind to keep notes throughout his time in the military. He enters China with ambiguous responsibilities. The powers include the nationalists, the Chinese Communists, the Russian Communists, the warlords, the outlaws, and the remaining Japanese troops.

The description of his experiences reveals a rich culture of warm people beset by chaos. His friendship with one family marks his Chinese sojourn. His kind and playful attitude toward the vicissitudes of his colleagues and the citizens of China is heartwarming. He amusingly notes that "gung ho" ("work together" in Chinese) was both a favored marine expression and the Communist army slogan. Communication was challenging. Christmas in Peiping is memorable.

His views on the war and his return are compelling. His attribution of his values to his parents is moving. The decision made by his father, a physician, to give up hunting, a sport that they previously shared, is touching.

Sledge passed away last year. He was a biology professor at the University of Montevallo. He leaves a rich inheritance to his family and friends. He was a great Alabamian. His superb memoir is the remarkable testament of a man who did what he was supposed to do.

Dr. David Hodo lives and writes in Selma.



Dying to Please

by Linda Howard

Ballantine Books, 2002
\$25.95, Hardback

Sarah Stevens is young, smart, beautiful, and the best butler/bodyguard in Mountain Brook, Alabama. She is employed by Lowell Roberts, a retired federal judge who has received numerous death

threats from his time on the bench and whose children insist upon Sarah's employment. Sarah, expert at running large households, is a trained bodyguard and expert marksman. She is happy with her life and is fond of her elderly employer.

After foiling a burglary attempt, she finds herself featured on the local news and dating the attractive Detective Cahill of the Mountain Brook Police Department. The "fifteen minutes of fame" disrupts her routine and, unbeknownst to her, she becomes the object of a successful businessman's obsession as a result of the television coverage. When Judge Roberts is brutally murdered, Sarah is assured that she is not a suspect . . . until her new employers are also murdered. Attempting to bring normalcy back to her life, Sarah accepts a new butler/bodyguard position. She warns her new employer, a successful businessman, about the fate of her previous employers. But the question is not his safety but her own. Will *she* be able to make it out of this job alive?

Dying to Please is a suspenseful page-turner that will please the many fans of Alabama native Howard, the author of such best selling novels as *Open Season* and *Mr. Perfect*. Howard's story is perfect for those who enjoy romantic suspense and who are interested in an Alabama setting.

Pam Bainter is at the Hoover Public Library where she helps organize Southern Voices.

Finding Palestine

by Liza Elliott

Hope Publishing Company, 2002
\$17.95, Paperback

Despite years of almost daily news coverage about the Middle East in the media, many Americans still do not know the difference between Palestine and Pakistan. Birmingham resident Liza Elliott, author of *Finding Palestine, One American's Trek from the Midwest to the Middle East*, says,

"When I tell a new acquaintance that I worked with Palestinians, they either answer 'you mean you lived in Pakistan,' or 'aren't they those terrorists?'"

For Americans, the Middle East remains a blur of media images—women with weathered faces, framed with scarves, protesting angrily in Arabic as they point to Israeli tanks—while the Israeli soldier calmly insists to the interviewer, in seamless Midwestern English, that the tank protects the security of the Israelis who are, after all, "like us"—meaning "like you, the Americans."

It took a catastrophic event on American soil for us to care about questioning who those distressed women were, what town the American Israeli soldier came from, and whose eyes glared in resistance between folds of a *kafiya*. "Who are they?" "Why do they hate us?" we now ask.

With *Finding Palestine*, Elliott's recently published memoir detailing more than 20 years of direct and indirect support of Palestinian human rights, the American reading public now has an accessible place to start learning about Palestine. *Finding Palestine* is an adventure story where the political and personal are told with honesty and detail.

The saga begins in Washington, D.C., in 1978 when Liza Elliott, then an ER nurse studying for her master's degree in nursing, meets a fellow graduate student—handsome, olive-skinned Soliman Munir, a Palestinian from Galilee, a village destroyed by Zionists in 1948. "My family had been living there for 800 years," he related to her over a cup of coffee. Nothing in her typical Indiana upbringing prepared her for this day when she first learned about settler colonialism in the "Third World."

At first highly skeptical of Munir's story, she begins to read, question, and later form friendships with Palestinians, other Arabs, and Africans—some of whom are Christian and some Muslim. The story of Palestine was common knowledge to them and directly influenced their personal lives. Learning of the long history of betrayal of the Arab world by Europe and the West, from the McMahon Correspondence to Sykes-Picot to the 1948 Partition of Palestine, Elliott is outraged by the omission of Arab/Palestinian existence in the history of Israel as understood by most Americans. She and Munir marry.

Elliott chronicles her experiences of the next years, juxtaposing her compartmentalized life in Chicago inside the Palestinian ethnic community with the professional, academic world where she teaches nursing. She draws us into her personal attachment to and struggle with her Palestinian husband, in-laws, friends, and teachers. Through her eyes, we see their daily struggles with racism and prejudice. When Elliott is hired to work in the Middle East, she exposes the abject poverty of Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut. We grieve alongside her for the dead and wounded from Israel's first bombing raids of those same refugee camps in the 1982 war. We drift in the post-Lebanon war era of the PLO's internal political struggle for direction and record the fresh attitude of Palestinian youth who launch the first Intifada—protesting for

the right to go to school and have jobs, freedom, and self-determination. Finally, we understand what the Palestinians are fighting for.

Ultimately, Elliott and Munir part, and she moves to Cairo to work with the Palestine Red Crescent Society at their new Beirut headquarters in Heliopolis. There a new man enters her life, and she is torn between returning to the States with him and staying in Cairo. He emphasizes that the real challenge is for her to return to the States to educate Americans and challenges her to write a book explaining Middle Eastern history, Zionism, and the Palestinian resistance and struggle for peace. "Tell them your story," he suggests, "because it is real. You were there."

Elliott's story is a must-read for Americans in our quest to become informed partners of world politics. We can no longer continue to put history and the international community last in our priorities. If September 11 challenged us to be informed about the world, the April 2002 Israeli military operation in the West Bank compels us to get to know the Palestinians in particular. *Finding Palestine* is a good place to start.

Nabella Shunnarah is a Birmingham based free-lance writer.

Open House

Poems by Beth Ann Fennelly

Zoo Press, 2002—Winner of the 2001 Kenyon

Review Prize in Poetry

\$14.95, Paperback

One of the most famous American poems of childhood closes this way: "You beat time on my head / With a palm caked hard by dirt, / Then waltzed me off to bed / Still clinging to your shirt." The potent mixture of fun and fear, and of love and hazard, that makes Theodore Roethke's "My Papa's Waltz" so resonant is all too rarely found when poets turn to address their early years. Too often the validations and vendettas of adulthood creep in to warp depictions of childhood episodes, leading to sentimentality on the one hand and brutalization on the other. One of Roethke's greatest gifts seems to have been the ability to evoke the successively fast-flying wonders and terrors of childhood in the same poetic concentration of language. As a reflective adult, fully aware of poetry's artifice and of the absolute loss of the past, he's somehow able to yet re-inhabit the childhood moment and fill it with a child-like openness and immediacy. The results are purposeful and playful at the same time.

Many years and several states removed, the serious play of Roethke's *Lost Son* has found a more than worthy feminine counterpart in the nuanced daughter depicted in Beth Ann Fennelly's first full-length collection, *Open House*. In "Asked for a Happy Memory of Her Father, She Recalls Wrigley

Field," Fennelly works in a space similar to Roethke's, with similarly stunning results. The poem begins like this:

His drinking was different in sunshine,
as if it couldn't be bad. Sudden, manic,
he swung into a laugh, bought me
two ice creams, said *One for each hand*.

Over the course of the next three vivid quatrains, readers are treated to alternately charming and unsettling images of an overly protective mother outfitting her daughter for the day with warnings against the sun, Wrigley's bleacher bums, and more of father's rough-edged TLC. But in a gesture that refuses adult posturing about what it meant to be a child in these circumstances, Fennelly stays true to the essence of lived childhood experience in the final stanza:

be careful. But why should I be full of care
with his thick arm circling my shoulders,
with a high smiling sun, like a home run,
in the upper right-hand corner of the sky?

This kind of wonder is abundant in many of the poems in *Open House* that touch on families, relations, lineage, and legacy. The titles of some of these poems alone give a good indication as to the breadth of inventive themes and forms that Fennelly explores along such lines: "Mother Sends My Poem to Her Sister With Post-Its," "Poem Not to Be Read at Your Wedding," "The Cup Which My Father Hath Given Me," "Letter from Gauguin's Daughter," and "Why I Can't Cook for Your Self-Centered Architect Cousin."

Whether engaging questions of the Fennelly family, delving into the strained and distant relations of painter Paul Gauguin in a letter poem from his child Aline, or bringing to life unheard voices in the household of John Milton ("Mary Speaks to the Early Visitor at the Laying Out"), one thing holds true across all the joyous and sorrowful contexts in which they are rendered—in this house, daughters rule.

Working hand in hand with this examination of the family in *Open House* is an examination of the self as an artist. The extended sequence that forms the third section of the book, "From *L'Hotel Terminus Notebooks*," is a poem with a great task and a great risk before it. Ostensibly, the poem is about "the four categories from which art is drawn: ambition, love, religion, and death," and is divided into four sections to match, plus a prologue and epilogue. Such a ponderous project seems ripe for disaster at this moment in literary history, but Fennelly again demonstrates just enough playfulness and insight to strike a crafty balance between a genuine exploration of these ideas and a lighthearted undercutting of the poem's own purposes. Taking cues from John Berryman's play between Henry and Mr. Bones in the *Dream Songs*, Fennelly interjects the opinions of a boorish and skeptical "Mr. Daylater" into her poem. This figure works as a comic check

against the pretensions of the project, yet his jokes seem to point to genuine costs of trying to create art in this social climate, especially for women. The following exchange, from the poem's prologue, "Holding an Open House," is typical of Daylater's disturbances in the piece. The context involves tongue-in-cheek notes toward what the project will include

- A poem that rehabilitates the exclamation mark!
 - A poem with an analogue for the personal, a la Glück's *Meadowlands*.
- Mr. D: Remember how in speech class long ago you were told if you were nervous to imagine the audience in their underwear?
- So?
- Mr. D: Well, that was only fair. They're imagining you in yours.
- Stop it.
- Mr. D: If your students read your poems, it's for gossip.
- No and I'm not listening.
- Mr. D: The critics massacred *Meadowlands*. Too personal.
- No. I'm plugging my ears & singing Frère Jacques.
- Mr D: What color are your panties?
- I'm writing To begin:

Such a passage only begins to suggest the array of voices and forms in the poem, but it is a prime indication of the cutting self-awareness that's the counterpoint to childhood wonder found elsewhere in *Open House*—an essential collection from a truly gifted daughter.

Jim Murphy teaches creative writing at the University of Montevallo.



Lake Moon

by John M. Williams

Mercer University Press,
2002
\$24.95, Hardcover

Rock 'n' roll may never die, but it sure leaves the streets scattered with casualties. John M. Williams' novel *Lake Moon* chronicles the rise of the Atlanta-based Trybald Trio, a rock 'n' roll band destined to stardom and

doomed to discount bins. In its sonic wake, the band leaves bruised egos, crippled talent, and dead musicians.

Set in the late 1960s, early '70s, *Lake Moon* explores relationships between band members, between lovers, between parents and siblings. The Trybald Trio is not the communal pop band of *A Hard Day's Night*. Its members fuss and feud and often play "like three frogs on lily pads." And no wonder. Forced together by a wanna-be agent, the band members share only a desire to play music.

Glenroy Trimble, the band's euphoric and depressive guitar virtuoso, performs "like the center of gravity, everything falling into him." The unflappable drummer, Doug Early, lays "out an intricate rhythm like a hundred-pronged hat-rack." Even the narcissistic, combative malcontent, Donny Dartt, can sing and play a "real fast and flashy" bass. When the band is on it plays a "voracious, accelerating, exhausting, ecstatic rush." Fortunately, the Trybald Trio cooks onstage and in the recording studio.

The story weaves in and out of first and third person and essentially follows Glenroy and Doug. Glenroy, raised on the wrong side of the tracks in the Trybald, Georgia, neighborhood known as Milltown, struggles to escape his rural and impoverished childhood the only way he knows how—with his guitar. His eccentric millworker mother and drunken musician father instill in Glenroy and his younger brother Louis the joy of music. When the Beatles hit, Glenroy and Louis begin writing songs, forming bands, and holding rehearsals in the Trimble living room. Readers are surprised then when his mother objects to Glenroy's moving out to live in the Mansion, a biker hangout where he can further develop his music unencumbered by family life and high school, Mother and son never reconcile.

Doug grows up in the newly integrated Atlanta. He and his senile mother live with his aunt and cousins in a quiet and orderly neighborhood. Doug learns early the pains of racism when he is forced to fight his rival for the percussion first chair of their high school orchestra. After the draw—neither boy really wishes to fight—Doug retires to the room he shares with his cousins and bangs away on a drum set fashioned largely out of discarded junk. High school behind him, Doug hits the road in his Volkswagen Beetle, never to see his mother or aunt alive again.

The musicians' lovers prove as important to the band's story as the musicians themselves. The ephemeral Rainy floats in and out of the novel and Glenroy's life like a shadowy ghost. "The girl with nowhere to go," Rainy becomes Glenroy's "Other Thing," his passion, his muse.

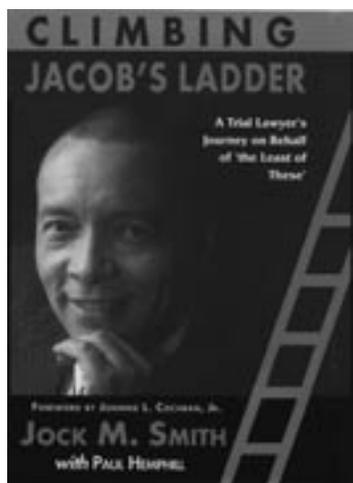
If Williams hasn't played in rock 'n' roll bands, then he has certainly spent a great deal of time around them. His novel captures the struggle to reach success in the music business—the teenage garage bands, the house bands, the show bands, self-recording a single, regional success, the verge of stardom. He further takes his readers through the songwriting process and into the recording studio. Williams' crisp dialogue offers a voyeur's view into the lives of struggling rockers.

Lake Moon ultimately explores loss—loss of love, loss of

spirit, loss of life. Drugs, drink, and groupies take their hold. Glenroy awakens each morning with a roach and a jug of his personal concoction, a mixture of Big Orange and vodka. He notes that “the taste of strange [is] strong—and it [is] easy.” Eventually for the Trybald Trio, moments “are just gone, swallowed into a haze, and even the sense of how maddening that was was only another moment, swallowed.”

With *Lake Moon*, Williams has created a novel not only for the rock aficionado but for every person with a creative talent and a dream to succeed.

Danny Gamble is a teaching writer with the Writing Our Stories program.



Climbing Jacob's Ladder

From Queens to Tuskegee: A Trial Lawyer's Journey on Behalf of 'the Least of These'

by Jock Smith

NewSouth Books, 2002
\$26.95, Hardcover

When Charles Hamilton Houston became Howard University

School of Law's first black dean in 1929, he transformed a mostly marginal part-time legal program into the “West Point of civil rights.” Such protégées as Thurgood Marshall trained and chafed under Houston's tutelage and worked for the New York headquarters of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund where Marshall helped dismantle Jim Crow statutes through litigation rather than fiat. Between 1930 and 1960, civil rights attorneys envisaged Houston's dream of black lawyers as social architects helping to create a more perfect union. Their efforts culminated in the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court landmark, *Brown v. Board of Education*.

When in 1976 Jock M. Smith became only the twenty-seventh black licensed to practice law in Alabama, he did so in memory and dedication to his murdered father. In 1957, Jacob Abraham Smith was killed in his New York law office by a deranged New York City policeman whose wife Smith represented. Jock Smith was just a mere nine years old.

Smith represents a neo-civil rights lawyer, and one whose target is often an egregious corporation rather than a racist city or state government. Smith seeks redress where it perhaps matters most, the company checkbook. This point is the subject of his *Climbing Jacob's Ladder: A Trial Lawyer's Journey on Behalf of 'the Least of These.'* His journey

has taken him from a \$10 an hour court-appointed Tuskegee attorney to becoming a law partner of Johnnie Cochran. The law offices of Cochran, Cherry, Givens, and Smith can be found in such major markets as New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Atlanta, and its mega million dollar verdicts make Smith's law firm one of the most lucrative practices in the United States. Despite Cochran's notoriety as the attorney of the stars—he represented O.J. Simpson and Michael Jackson—many of the clients represented by Cochran *et al.* are ordinary aggrieved citizens, people whom Smith refers to as “the least of these.” An example would include Artie Mae Jeter, an indigent black woman whose Tuskegee home was inundated by termites despite the lifetime coverage she had paid for with Orkin Exterminating Company. Mrs. Jeter complained to Orkin that had she not been a black she could expect relief and, in a private memo discovered by Smith, an Orkin manager agreed. The jury found for Mrs. Jeter to the tune of \$80 million dollars.

Perhaps the most interesting, maybe startling aspect of *Climbing Jacob's Ladder: A Trial Lawyer's Journey on Behalf of 'the Least of These'* is how Smith's Christian faith informs his work as a lawyer. The legal profession is viewed by many as a secular profession, and the courts, notwithstanding recent legal challenges over the efficacy of the Ten Commandments, are argued to be religiously neutral. Yet Smith seems to view himself as a Christian soldier whose duty is to protect the innocent and the afflicted. Surely Marshall had similar urgings; he just did not couch his judicial philosophy in such terms.

Alabama State University faculty member Derryn E. Moten is a member of the Alabama Writers' Forum board.

Remembering Thunder

by Andrew Glaze

NewSouth Books, 2002
\$18, Cloth

Alabama's Andrew Glaze is one of the most important and widely acclaimed poets writing in America today. Now in his eighties, Glaze has delivered some of his best work yet in *Remembering Thunder*. Poet Maxine Kumin has called the volume “Glaze's boldest work to date. . . a real triumph,” and summarized his poetic voice as “original and unsettling.” Poet Richard Wilbur characterizes Glaze's language as “always wonderfully sprightly, but without any shallow trickiness.”

Glowing endorsements by poets of such stature do not come readily. They provide good evidence that Glaze stands in the forefront of contemporary American poets, as does his 1999 SEBA award for best poetry book of the year, *Someone Will Go On Owing*.

But the proof about *Remembering Thunder* is in the

poems. Glaze's mind ranges widely, wisely, and often impishly about the most profound issues of human experience: the nightmare of history, the meaning of suffering, the tragic versus the comic vision of life, mutability and death, and the redemptive power of love. Glaze's willingness to engage such matters in verse is uncommon these days. His insightful treatment of them in this book, together with a lifetime of achievement in writing (eleven plays, two novels, and nine volumes of verse), ought to make him a strong contender for the Pulitzer Prize.

In this book, Glaze is a gadfly of the in-between. In the larger, historical context, various poems address the murky shadowland of our cultural milieu. Civilization exists today much as Matthew Arnold described it in the nineteenth century: "between two worlds, one dead, the other without the power to be born," and Glaze skillfully limns our ambiguous heritage. Other poems take as their subject the in-betweenness of the individual, the split between the acquired and the more authentic, instinctual senses of the self.

One might say that Glaze often meditates upon, and attempts to mediate, two insights of depth psychology. In a famous phrase, Freud wrote that "civilization is built upon neurosis." Equally famous is Jung's observation that "neurosis is suffering that has not yet understood its meaning." Glaze's project, his major theme perhaps, is an attempt to recall that suffering, name it, and thereby gain some understanding and purchase upon its unspoken power.

The first poem in *Remembering Thunder*, "Prometheus Who?" is an excellent illustration of these concerns. The speaker states:

We ask and ask, why laid on us the world's madnesses--?

....

What can we do to make it right? Christ woe!

Neither Gods nor men, I'm told,--we're Heroes.

.... Who've nothing to give!

And nobody tells us why! Just that we *ought*!

....

Yes! Yes! We were mad! Giving fire to those creatures

....

Who only leap about stupidly, flaming,
apprehending nothing,
and haven't the least gift for what we gave.

The poem argues that the post-modern duty is to remember, that is, "to join again," cause and effect. We have no choice in the matter, nor will we receive any thanks for our efforts. We are called to recollect that we, as conflicted, split-up individuals, are responsible ourselves for the great cultural chasms of our time. We cannot lay the burdens of "haves and have nots," of wars, racism, classism, sexism, and cultural institutions that no longer serve us at the feet of previous

generations. Thus, with similar wit and wisdom, Glaze often takes the immortal words of Pogo as his theme: "We have met the enemy, and he is us."

Yet we are also our own heroes in the glorious dance of death we call our lives, and therefore the poems in *Remembering Thunder* delightfully engage the whole harmonium of human emotion with wit, humor, and joy in abundance.

Andrew Glaze is a major poet, and *Remembering Thunder* is an important book that lovers of contemporary American verse will want to read again and again.

Robert Ely is an associate professor of English at Alabama State University and an attorney in private practice in Montgomery. He is the author of two books, Mose T's Slapout Family Album and Encanchata.

Speaks the Nightbird

by Robert R. McCammon

River City Press, 2002

Hardcover, \$29.95

After a ten-year hiatus from publishing, Robert R. McCammon has returned to the literary marketplace with a novel blending elements of both the mystery and historical genres.

As in his earlier twelve horror novels (*Boy's Life, Usher's Passing, Mine, Gone South*), many of which made the *New York Times*' bestseller list, McCammon examines good and evil, honesty and deceit, and what it means to live a conscientious life in often unconscionable times.

Speaks the Nightbird, set in 1699 in the colonies of the Carolinas, opens with the disappearance of Thymon Kingsbury and the appearance of his replacement, Magistrate Isaac Woodward, and his young assistant, Matthew Corbett. They've been summoned to the fledging village to oversee the trial of Rachel Howarth.

Rachel, a young widow, has been accused of witchcraft and is being held in the local prison. Locals blame the winter weather, settlers moving on, murders, and other woes on the lovely lady. Unbeknownst to Woodward, there are people who will benefit from her death if she's executed as the law demands.

While everyone in town would like to see the trial taken care of immediately, Matthew believes the charges against Rachel make no sense. After all, would a prison hold a real witch and would a witch stand by as rats bite her? Charmed by her dignity and grace, Matthew believes Rachel is innocent.

Orphaned as a young man, Matthew is wiser in the ways of the world than he's been given credit for. Following his instincts leads him to expose lies, cover-ups, and deceitful politicians and townspeople.

McCammon has always been first and foremost a fine

storyteller. With this novel, his research provides extensive historical trivia reminding readers of the harshness of the lifestyle, unsettled landscape, and medical care in the colonial South.

Though set in 1699, astute readers will find contemporary parallels in American politics. *Speaks the Nightbird* is an intriguing novel about destiny and one man's willingness to follow his heart.

Pam Kingsbury lives and writes reviews in Florence.

W.E.B. DuBois

A Scholar's Courageous Life

by Horace Randall Williams

NewSouth Books, 2002

When I started to read *W.E.B. DuBois: A Scholar's Courageous Life*, I was surprised to learn that William Edward Burghardt DuBois was born in the North on February 23, 1868, and he was not a wealthy person. He worked and saved up money, but he did not have enough money to afford college so the townspeople of Great Barrington arranged that he would get a scholarship for \$25 a year to Fisk University. This was the first time he was around other Blacks besides his family. He went to teach Black children in the southern countryside, and he saw the hard lifestyle there. After a little while he finished Fisk and went to Harvard.

While he was at Harvard he received three degrees: a bachelor's, masters', and a doctorate. He also spent two years in Germany, and he learned about racism in a different way. DuBois got a teaching job for Wilberforce University in Ohio. He was paid \$800 a year, and he taught Greek and Latin for two years. After that he went to Atlanta and published a lot of articles, many about Jim Crow laws. There was a conflict between DuBois and Booker T. Washington because they had different ideas about helping African-Americans.

DuBois and others were called to a meeting known as the Niagara Movement. The group did not last that long, just three years. Then he joined the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and became the leading spokesperson for the NAACP in America. He wrote about it in the magazine called the *Crisis*. This was a very important magazine. During World War I he talked about how Blacks were lynched with their uniforms still on. The great depression was really hard on blacks, and he said that blacks were last hired and first fired.

He left the NAACP when he was 66 years old. He was a good father, but he was gone so much his children saw little of him when they were growing up. His legacy includes over 100 essays and 21 books as well as letters, poems, and other

writings. He also made remarks about the government and that made him unpopular to government officials during the Cold War. W.E.B. DuBois moved to Ghana and was welcomed by the president Kwame Nkrume. He died on August 27, 1963, at the age of 97 years old. To me, he was one of the greatest African-Americans ever.

Cole Moten is a 7th grader at Floyd Middle Magnet School in Montgomery. He has become quite a reader with the Accelerated Reader Program, and also enjoys football, video games, and playing the saxophone. First Draft is pleased to include reviews by young readers and writers. If you are interested in reviewing books for First Draft, please contact the editor.

Vanishing Florida

A Personal Guide to Sights Rarely Seen

by David T. Warner

River City Publishing, 2001

\$19.95, Paperback

All good writing reveals its author. David Warner's *Vanishing Florida* acknowledges this in its subtitle, *A Personal Guide to Sights Rarely Seen*. With the word "personal," Warner frankly offers us his own perceptions and experiences. Even when self-expression takes precedence over travel-writing, however, *Vanishing Florida* is a book well worth reading.

One hint for readers: if you're interested in personal insights, start reading *Vanishing Florida* at the beginning. If, however, you're eager for the "sights rarely seen," skip ahead and return to Section 1 after you've gotten to know Warner. Just as modern billboards and high-rise condos have hidden much of the old Florida from view, Warner's memoirs can obscure his sincere affection for the state. Before plunging into Section 1, "Yesterday," flip to the back of the book and read the last chapter of Section 5. Here in "Lochloosa," you'll see both the natural beauty of the state of Florida and the sincere emotion that characterizes Warner's writing at its best.

The book closes at Warner's Florida home near Lochloosa Lake not far from Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' Cross Creek. Here Warner has no need for research, long quoted passages, or name-dropping. Instead, we see "towering oaks with pale gray beards of Spanish moss fluttering gently in the afternoon breeze" and hear "a chorus of crickets, frogs, and hoot owls." Local residents are described simply:

plump, fair-skinned women in loose-fitting gingham dresses and sun bonnets, and pinch-faced men with pale blue eyes and thin bloodless lips, in checkered work shirts and worn jeans. The spitting image of their

forebears in a faded daguerreotype retrieved from some long-forgotten chiffonier drawer.

In Lochloosa Warner finally reveals the writer and person he is, and his motive for writing *Vanishing Florida*: love.

Geographically, the book circles Florida several times before Warner arrives home in Lochloosa. He starts in Jacksonville and travels quickly via old Route A1A down to Miami in a blur of place-names, long quotes, and ellipses. A side-trip to Bimini, where Warner encounters Leicester Hemingway, Ernest's less famous but equally hard-drinking brother, eventually brings us to Key West, where Part 1 of the book begins. The longest section of the book, Part 1 includes no rare sights but lots of annoying name dropping—although it is interesting to know that the late mystery writer John D. MacDonald had an MBA from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

The persistent reader will eventually be rewarded by the kind of writing Warner does extremely well: using his own experience to illuminate an obscure place. In "Adventures in the Skin Trade," he gives us a funny and self-deprecating explanation of his brief career owning a triple-X movie house in Sarasota, "with the steady stream of elderly men ghosting in and out." The story of how he moved from first-run films to porn conveys the personality of Sarasota, a place where "the local sports arena is named after the founder of a chain of funeral homes."

Part 2, "The Oyster Coast" travels up the west coast of Florida to capture more scenes out of the past. Many of these live on today, however, which may explain the vividness of Warner's writing in this and following sections. Great photos by Warner's friend photographer Keith Bollum anchor the prose in this and following sections with images like the evocative flicker of sunlight through the lattice on the front of the Island Hotel in Cedar Key.

One insightful passage explains a shore personality found in communities dependent on marine life, from Kennebunkport to Key West:

Livelihood depends on the season's moods, and people become a part of their environment—fierce, moody, and violent, or by turns warm and passive—to an extent unknown to their landlocked brethren. Depending on the weather, one spends one's days at sea, at dock mending nets and traps, at country cafes drinking bottomless cups of coffee, smoking endless cigarettes (the surgeon general's message has not penetrated the consciousness here), and shooting the breeze, or in the jooks ["juke joints"], drinking up one's pay and fighting. Like the life of a wild creature, it would be a monotonous existence to one versed in the ways of the intellect and the city. But to one who seeks communion with the elements, it's a life like no other.

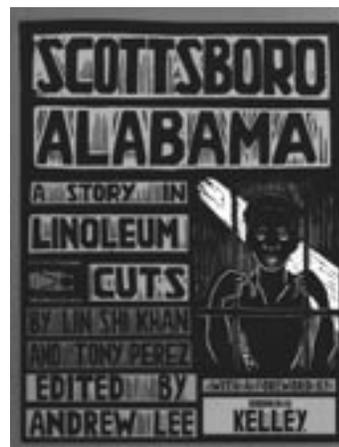
At the same time, this honesty explains the ambivalence

bordering on condescension: Warner, like his readers, lives the life of the intellect and recognizes his own distance from the elemental lives he admires.

In the Everglades, Warner brilliantly captures both the natural and human surroundings, seamlessly integrating history with today's Everglades. Amidst "brooding beauty and a variety of wildlife unparalleled," he finds a bar full of "crackers wearing trucker's caps, with strings of keys connected to the belt loops of their jeans." Through dialogue between "a weathered-looking cracker" and "a Seminole with a dusty black felt cap," Warner manages subtly to illustrate how the original Native American residents of Florida managed to survive since the Seminole Wars of the 1800s: "The Seminole's ironic verbal sparring is the sort of subtle offensive that enabled his tribe to survive the bloody conflicts in the Glades." Later, a fishing trip connects today's Everglades with 1920s sugar industry and World War II training in Clewiston. Along with the town of Flamingo, these images make one eager to follow Warner's directions to Everglades National Park.

Vanishing Florida is indeed a personal guide. Readers who continue through the Epilogue will agree with Warner's closing self-portrait. "Florida's traveling bard and troubadour, revealer of its myriad mysteries and charms, its beauty marks and blemishes," he's written about the state, "not because I'm special but because I'm here."

Auburn University at Montgomery professor of English Karen Pirnie is also on the executive board of the Alabama Center for the Book.



Scottsboro, Alabama

A Story in Linoleum Cuts

by Lin Shi Kahn and

Toni Perez

Edited by Andrew Lee

Forward by Robin D.G.

Kelley

New York University

Press, 2002

\$26.95, Hardback

On March 25, 1931, nine young black men were pulled off a train near Paint Rock, Alabama, for allegedly raping two white women who were riding the same train. To protect themselves against charges of vagrancy and prostitution, Ruby Bates and Victoria Price told the police that the nine young men had raped them. During this time in American history, such charges were a death warrant. The nine were taken to Scottsboro for a quick trial, without proper representation, and were convicted on unsubstantial

evidence. All but one was sentenced to death.

The outcry that arose reverberated far beyond what most in Scottsboro could imagine. What could have been another example of Southern racism and injustice motivated by the worst kinds of fears, ending in death, became an international fight for justice. The fates of Charlie Weems, Ozie Powell, Clarence Norris, Olen Montgomery, Willie Roberson, Haywood Patterson, Andy and Roy Wright, and Eugene Williams changed the course of civil rights. This impressive collection of linoleum cuts graphically chronicles the events of the trial, as well as some history of the African-American presence in this country prior to the 1930s.

The story the linoleum cuts depict of the Scottsboro case strikes to the very essence of social protest through art. What is most surprising is how long this particular show of protest has been hidden. The artists, of which no more is known than their names, Lin Shi Kahn and Toni Perez, created a series of 118 linoleum cuts reflecting the historical events of the Scottsboro case, but imbued in each cut are strokes of intense emotion and political affiliations. The images fit clearly within 1930s era Communist propaganda, suggesting worker pride, uniformity in justice, and trying to overthrow a capitalist society bent on suppressing minority groups. The two artists sent a copy to Joe Norris of the Communist Party-USA and editor of the left-wing publication *New Masses*. The work was found in North's papers at the Tamiment Library at NYU.

The political and social implications of this collection are not directed solely at the Scottsboro case itself. It attacks the injustices of racism, the lack of job opportunities, and the capitalist construction of power in the U.S. The collection also acknowledges the real and growing threat of Nazism. The images are haunting. Some feed on stereotypical understandings of race and power—and these change given the context in which they appear in the book. But the book is not intended to be an objective commentary—it is meant to bring about awareness and change.

The intention of some of the images is remarkable. One in particular combines the presence of capitalism, white supremacy, and American images of law to support the quest for money and power, in the end justifying Nazism and lynching. The KKK's cross is set as equal to the American flag, and above them is a dollar sign, suggesting the powerful presence of capitalism in society. The cuts are not necessarily easy to look at. And some will make readers uncomfortable, but it is the positive kind of uncomfortable.

The book is broken into three sections and is an exact replication of the copy found in the NYU library by librarian Andrew Lee. Along with a foreword by historian Robin D. G. Kelley (*Hammer and Hoe, Alabama Communist During the Great Depression*, University of North Carolina Press, 1990), there is an introduction by Andrew Lee.

This collection is for anyone interested in the history of Alabama, the long history of civil rights, and the labor movement. Anyone interested in art as a means of social voice

should read this. In fact, I would encourage all readers to spend some time with this collection and its representations of a trial and a period of our history that forever changed understandings of race, labor, and voices of the people

Kyes Stevens is a poet who teaches in the Alabama Prison Arts Initiative project.

The Camellia City

by Phillip Routh

XLibris, 2000

\$21.99, Paperback

Morgan Baines hasn't had a literary success in fifteen years. He has, however, parlayed his earlier publications into a literary life. Morgan teaches creative writing at a four-year university, and he supplements his income by giving workshops in the summer. Occasionally, he's asked to do a booksigning for his novel, *Burning Bridges*.

Dealing with university politics and students has left him little time or energy for his own work. Adding insult to injury, his ex-wife Beth has published an existential feminist thriller filled with Southern California ennui.

He has decided this year will be different. His goal is to attend the Moorehead University Conference and meet the great American novelist Stuart Kramer. Believing all that stands between himself and great literary success is a blurb from Kramer, he gets on the plane to attend the conference with a plan full of magical thinking. Alas, nothing goes as planned and the novel's great comedy begins.

Reminiscent of Richard Russo's *The Straight Man* and James Hynes' *Publish or Perish*, Routh's *The Camellia City* is a wickedly funny send-up of writer's conferences and the writing life.

Pam Kingsbury

Searching for Ambergris

by Kathleen Thompson

Pudding House Publications

\$8.95, Paperback

Kathleen Thompson's chapbook of poetry, *Searching for Ambergris*, contains twenty poems on subjects she knows intimately. They tell of places she has been and people she has known. She writes about food and family, the country, and the beach.

Continued page 28

IN THE TRENCHES

Advice toward an MFA

by Van Newell

What's it like being in an MFA writing program? Well, there are more than a hundred answers to that question because there are literally more than a hundred programs across the country that offer an MA in writing, usually a one-year program, or a two- or four-year MFA. In fact, *U.S. News & World Report* has even ranked the schools. I can give you an idea of what it's like for me: simultaneously the hardest, most frustratingly difficult, and yet enjoyable endeavor for me as a writer.

Before I started in the MFA program at Columbia University in New York, I wrote when I had the chance, when I had an idea, when I was in the mood. You get the picture. But a writing program is just that: you write and write and write. Any writing program worth its salt will push you to write more in the program than you ever have before. Why? Because the faculty want to squeeze every drop they can out of you just to show you how much you can do if you are pushed that far. Which is far beyond where we push ourselves as writers. When you start thinking about attending a writing program, be prepared to really earn your degree.

If you're just now starting in a program, or about to, I suggest giving yourself a goal—a realistic one. Don't try and trick yourself into thinking (as I have done) that you can write dozens of pages night after night if you never write more than two paragraphs a night (which is plenty, if you keep doing it). What has worked best for me is trying to write between fifteen and thirty minutes a day, which may sound like a little or a lot. I've found that if I just warm up for a few minutes I get into the writing groove and stop when I want to. But let's face it. There are people who can run faster or jump higher than us, and there are going to be people who not only write more but maybe also write "better." Don't worry about how good or how much so-and-so's writing is. Focus on your own work and you'll be happier and more productive.

And consider your faculty. They are often varied. Some are good writers, some just talk a good game, some are helpful and care about their students, and some, well, do not. In small programs, sometimes fewer than half a dozen writers teach everything. What I've found helpful, and what makes me feel I'm getting my money's worth, is to hang around teachers who

have an open-door policy, who enjoy talking with students out of class, and who really take teaching seriously.

Workshop classes, where you turn in work to be critiqued as well as critiquing others' work, are the meat-and-potatoes of MFA programs. These classes hone your skills not only as a writer but also as an editor. Here is where you put yourself on the line and where you develop a thick skin. No one says, or at least they shouldn't, "this is awful" when you turn in quality work that you have worked hard on. And that will show. But because writing is intensely personal, the slightest constructive criticism can be taken personally. Remember, though, that it is not the writer on trial, rather the words on a page. And critiquing in workshops is very crucial because you are able to find out what an objective judge thinks of your writing. There are no friends or family to give you cotton-candy compliments, and everyone in the class will try to fix your story the best way they know how. But while there are usually more criticisms, though almost always constructive ones, the occasional genuine compliment from a fellow writer goes that much further in encouragement.

Reading is also a major part of a writing program. While some programs have relatively light reading loads, others have the same amount of reading as many graduate programs. I read,

on average, about six novel-sized works a month. Reading loads for my classes range from six works per class to almost twenty. What I have to do in many cases is say to myself, "I'm going to read this three-hundred page book in four days." In and of itself, that is not the most Herculean of academic feats, but doing it week in and week out is hard work, no matter how fast you read.

Though there are many facets to the dozens of available writing programs, all of them have one thing in common: the commitment to make you write more and better than you thought possible. From the trenches, I can tell you that is both the goal and the challenge.



IN SCHOOL ALREADY? Here are some tips (and they're not just for MFA programs either):

- ▶ Talk to your instructors while they are in office hours. This is when they take off their "game face" and you can ask for advice on your writing.
- ▶ Get to know the program's administration. Knowing who does what can really take the stress out of financial aid, class selection, and other administrative issues.
- ▶ Don't be afraid to ask a classmate to look at writing that you've been hesitant to share in class. It can be scary when you start writing in another direction or style, but sometimes that is exactly the way you need to go to grow as a writer.

Birmingham native Van Newell is enrolled in the MFA program at Columbia University.

Thompson has an interest in the differences between men and women. In “Woman’s Wait” she describes “mothers, sweethearts, and wives” waving to the “boys on deck.” In “Men Going Fishing” she writes of a “kitchen without women” in which men and boys are lost.

She also writes about the beach. She writes about seagulls and sandpipers, sheets of sails, “strung out” pelicans, the sunrise at Gulf Shores, and seafood at Zeke’s. She writes about kitchens, food (pork tenderloin, acorn squash, anise biscotti), and people “cluttering her kitchen.” She also writes of gardens with “begonias gone leggy.”

Thompson’s poetry is nice and precise. Her poems possess a sense of familiarity, like a back porch conversation, which is the title of one of her poems. The collection forms a narrative that shows small glimpses of the South.

David Hodo



The Fourth Watch of the Night

Swan Scythe, 2001
\$14.99, Paperback



Deaths That Travel With the Weather

Orchises, 1992
\$10, Hardback

Louie Skipper knows the questioning spirit as well as anyone. Awed by creation and death (they are not simply concepts to him), he has clearly thought about them long and hard. He has also submitted to them. They are *events* in his life, dramatized and endlessly considered. In the former of these two books, the birth of a son gives rise to a profound meditation. The latter shows a man in middle-age fighting to reconcile his idea of a benevolent creator with the death of his wife by cancer. This is no small thing. God calls upon Skipper to redefine the self – both his and God’s (the two are inextricably intertwined) – as John Berryman was called upon in his poem, “Eleven Addresses to the Lord,” Roethke in his “In a Dark Time,” and Gerard Manley Hopkins in his “terrible sonnets.”

Nothing changes us with greater authority than prolonged suffering. “Drop by drop” it falls, Aescylus sings, “and in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful

grace of God.” How could we have been prey to such folly? “The last illusion is that there are no illusions,” Wallace Stevens said. And so one comes, as the German poet Rilke wrote, “to love the questions” – not the least of which is “Why.”

The paradox is this: If God ceases to exist, or becomes a Nothingness, why do we still long for and even speak to God? In the concluding line to *Deaths That Travel With the Weather*, Skipper makes this thunderous command: “I want to hear the deep nothing calling my name.” One wonders if he understands what he is getting himself into. Be careful what you ask for, the adage goes.

Read in the light of *The Fourth Watch of the Night*, that one line flings open a door through which this Nothingness appears; the narrator of this second volume is left broken, nearly destroyed. But he goes on. Why? Because God has come in the shape of death, not as a panel of light slanting through the heavens. This death is not his, it is his wife’s, a wife “awakening me,” as he says, “in her whispered scream/when she could no longer speak and I fell asleep/beside her bed at St. Vincent’s/damning me to hell for not hearing her out.” Now Skipper has the unfathomable duty of being there for her, as Severn was there for consumptive Keats, Mary for crucified Christ. He would prefer to run away. But Skipper is *forced* to live.

He is forced to live because, in this case, love is stronger than cowardice. Why is this so? Because of the nature of the task – the necessity the speaker feels in following the horrible story to its conclusion. Along the way, the orthodox understanding of God is annihilated. “I longed to see God,” Skipper says in the second section of the book. “Eventually I came to know him/by becoming as he is: anonymous and lonely.” We listen in on his hushed voice as he tells the story of grief and longing, of the poet inconsolable and alone in the desert without the Father.

“And you, God,” the Spanish poet Vallejo indicts, in his poem called “God,” “what do you weep for/In love with such an immense and whirling breast”—a god, Vallejo insists, whose “heart must all the time give you [him] great pain.” Skipper has been given this same god, the one that is like us, and he has received him bravely, in the figure of his dying spouse, with trembling hands. Locked within the center of this drama, he grasps immediately that he has to be there for the chemotherapy treatments, the deathbed watches, and the reassurances of exhaustion. He is like that wretched St. Judas of James Wright’s poem who stumbles upon a beaten man, whom he “held for nothing in my [his] arms.”

The love of the world in these poems (which Skipper personalizes beautifully), his love of the suffering human being—even of that exacting God who asks so much more than we are capable of giving—survive this severest of tests. Is deepened. And all is told through the song that, in page after page, seems to be insisting that the song itself, in the midst of trial, of hope crushed, revived, crushed again, is the only relief from the pain of being a man.

It is a consoling song, self-deprecating, even amusing at

times (the penultimate section of *The Fourth Watch of the Night* contains gnomic pieces spoken as if by a court jester coming completely apart). He has lain with God, in pain beside him, his wife, Stephanie, who has “pushed her feet and ankles against my own/and moved a final way from pain.”

While the voice in Skipper’s first book blows like a crisp wind through high cedars, the voice in *The Fourth Watch of the Night* is nearly still.

The “torn and empty wonder” that is the speaker in *Deaths That Travel with the Weather* is humbled in this ensuing volume, becomes whole. In the end, the solitary voice of the poet—a tempered psalmist—acknowledges with his “Epithalamium” that the most sacramental relationship is one formed through ordeal. There are so few answers. Mostly questions: “What have I done? What is my guilt? And what is my sin?” And the outrageous promise that “in the dawn that will come/ there will be no end to the saying of final things.”

Poet Dennis Sampson teaches creative writing at Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina .

They Say the Wind Is Red

The Alabama Choctaw—Lost in Their Own Land

by Jacqueline Anderson Matte

NewSouth Books, 2002 (1999)

\$19.95, Paperback

Some twenty-two years ago, Jacqueline Matte set about writing *The History of Washington County: The First County in Alabama*. She knew vaguely of the existence of a local Choctaw tribe, and in the interest of completeness wished to include their story in her county history. The *History* was published in 1982, but Matte’s work on the history of the MOWA, that is capital M-O-W-A, short for Mobile and Washington Counties Choctaw, has endured and resulted in this book, first published in 1999 and now revised, updated, and reissued in 2002.

Jackie Matte is as determined to get this story before the public as the MOWA Choctaw themselves. This is a book written for a purpose.

There are seven Indian Tribes recognized by the state of Alabama. The only one of these recognized by the federal government is the Poarch Band of Creeks. There is an intricate process in achieving federal recognition as a tribe and a number of benefits to be derived in the forms of tribal autonomy and federal aid through the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Matte’s book has as its primary purpose to tell the historical story of the MOWA and thus convince the government to recognize, finally, after several attempts, their tribal status. She seems to succeed pretty well.

The story of how white government and white settlers treated Indians in Alabama is not pretty. Indians were encroached upon, cheated, and duped. In 1803 Thomas Jefferson encouraged trading posts to allow Indians to run up large debts on credit, writing “because we observe that when these debts get beyond what the individual can pay they become willing to lop off by a cession of lands.” This is pretty much the same ethical system that offers a handful of credit cards to college freshman upon arrival on campus.

Much land was turned over to cover debts. Some was “purchased.” In 1801 the Choctaw were asked to “sign a treaty ceding over two million acres of land. In return, the Choctaw were granted ‘two thousand dollars in goods and merchandise and three sets of blacksmith’s tools.’” Apparently the same real estate agent who handled the Manhattan Island deal was used in Alabama.

In the early nineteenth century, assimilation of Indians was the national policy. This gave way, with the election of Andrew Jackson, to the removal of all Indians east of the Mississippi River. This is where the story of the MOWA Choctaw really begins, because they chose not to go to Oklahoma.

The Choctaws, hidden in the swamps and thickets of southwest Alabama, remained where they were. They lay low, out of sight, and out of the white government’s mind as much as possible, and that is the basis of much of the present trouble. They were accidentally omitted from some census reports, maliciously excluded from others. As the Civil War approached, was fought, and lost, and Reconstruction and Jim Crow took over, Alabama became a state in which the “modern concept of the American Indian did not officially exist . . . laws written in the South were for either whites or blacks.” American Indians living in the South became a group of people who did not officially exist. This now makes it difficult to produce convincing written records, especially when a huge percentage of the MOWA were illiterate or did not have English names anyway.

Matte has done the research in courthouses, churches, libraries, and legal statutes to produce their history. She tells us that the MOWA in fact continue to live in ten sub-districts, in some twenty-one villages. She has written the genealogies of many of the Choctaw families and has some fascinating mini-biographies. Matte describes Choctaw herbal and folk remedies, customs, beliefs, and legends, and their traditional polygamy.

Matte hopes readers will be moved to help the MOWA at last achieve tribal recognition. They have an uphill fight, for in 1991, perhaps to avoid sharing of the federal pie, the Poarch Creek Indians hired researchers to help refute the MOWA claims. The MOWA were most recently denied tribal status in 1998, but as Matte suggests, the story will not end there.

Don Noble is host of BookMark on Alabama Public Television and Alabama Bound on Alabama Public Radio. This review was broadcast on APR in fall 2002.

A Blue Moon Pilgrimage

The launch of every book must be, at least for its author, an exciting event, but doubtfully are all book launches mythic in their execution. Though I wouldn't know, having participated in only one—the one for *Stories from the Blue Moon Café* at Lemuria Bookstore in Jackson, Mississippi, in August of 2002. There was something special, if not celestial, occurring with ours. How else could twenty-two authors, some celebrated (like Rick Bragg and Jill Conner Browne) and some not (like myself), converge in one bookstore for a two-day festival of readings and book signings and it not descend into a brawl of egos, or into a staid atmosphere suffocated by the business of book sales? The launch of the *Blue Moon* anthology somehow remained aloft to the end in the spirit of friends communing. It's simply a tale, as I see it, about pilgrims and their pilgrimage. In fact, it might just be *The Canterbury Tales* retold.

Consider for a moment the plot of Chaucer's classic: thirty pilgrims entertain one another with tales as they journey to and from the shrine of Thomas á Becket in Canterbury, and the one who tells the best tale, says their host Harry Bailly, receives a free dinner upon their return to his tavern. Now consider the contributors in the *Blue Moon* anthology: there are thirty of us devoted to the written word and its spiritual expression (among us even a "Franklin" in Tom Franklin and a "Knight" in Michael Knight). Of course, not all thirty were able to make the journey to Lemuria, but since two of the authors are deceased, that would have been impossible anyway. And though it might be a stretch to call the trip to Lemuria a pilgrimage, especially for those living nearby in Mississippi (Jill Conner Browne, Beth Ann Fennelly, Tom Franklin, and Bev Marshall), most of us did have quite a journey to make, from Alabama (Marlin Barton, C. Terry Cline, Jim Gilbert, Melinda Haynes, Frank Turner Hollon, Suzanne Hudson, Tom Kelly, Jennifer Paddock, Judith Richards, and myself), California (Steve Yarbrough), Florida (Brad Watson), Kentucky (Silas House), Iowa (Patricia Foster and Barbara Robinette Moss), Louisiana (Rick Bragg), Oklahoma (Douglas Kelley), and Tennessee (William Gay).

If we writers can indeed be considered, for my intents and purposes, pilgrims sharing our tales, perhaps our kind host at Lemuria, its owner Johnny Evans, can fairly be compared to the innkeeper character of Harry Bailly. Our readings were held after all above Lemuria in a modern-day tavern, the MusiQuarium, and the publisher, MacAdam/Cage, did provide us with free drinks (including Blue Moon

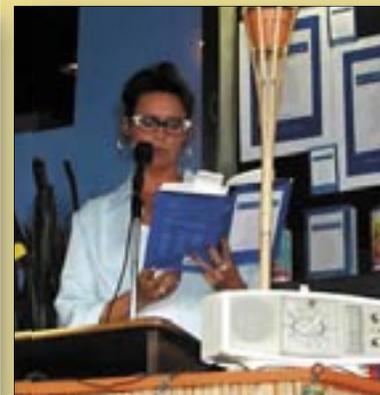


ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF LEMURIA BOOKS, JACKSON, MS.

Contributors to *Stories from the Blue Moon Café*



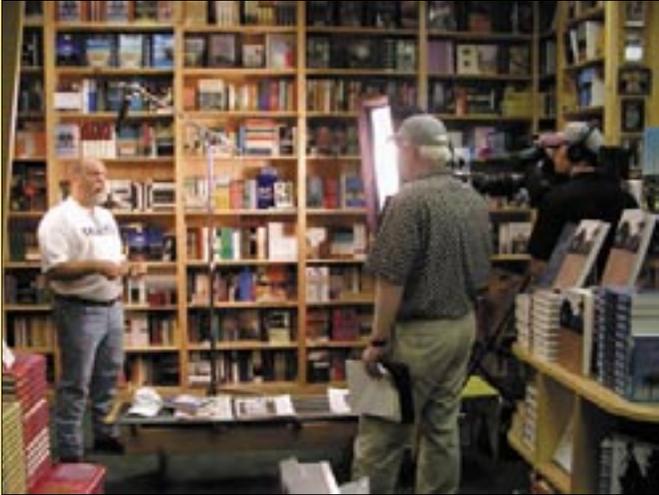
Beth Ann Fennelly



Jill Conner Browne



Sony Brewer and Rick Bragg



beer specially ordered for the occasion) and free meals at Broad Street Bakery next door (luckily, unlike Chaucer's characters, we didn't have to compete for meals).

So how does Sonny Brewer, the man who both conceived and edited our anthology, figure into *The Canterbury Tales*? Why, I think he's the most important pilgrim of all. He's the humble one who lurks behind the scenes throughout the journey and records each tale told, then turns the telling of tales not only into a book but into an event, who therefore stands as both character and creator: Geoffrey Chaucer himself.

Sonny is our greatest common denominator. As the owner of Over the Transom Bookstore in Fairhope, Alabama, and as the organizer of Southern Writers Reading, an annual writers conference in Fairhope, which has featured more than half of the contributors in the *Blue Moon* anthology, he had become, before becoming our editor, our friend. And this commonality of friendship was evident on the weekend of our book launch.

Perhaps the five hundred people (at least that's the number of books Lemuria sold over the weekend) who packed the MusiQuarium for each of three readings and who lined up for our assembly-line book signing wondered how twenty-two writers of fiction, non-fiction, and a poem could possibly be such a close-knit group. The fact is, if we aren't neighbors (as seven of us are in Fairhope) or former college classmates (as four are who attended the University of South Alabama or as four did at the University of Arkansas), then chances are we're family. There are three married couples among us: C. Terry Cline and Judith Richards, Tom Franklin and Beth Ann Fennelly, and Jennifer Paddock and me. And then there are bonds that aren't easily defined: Doug Kelley was once a student in one of my mother-in-law's writing classes; William Gay, Frank Turner Hollon, and I once shared the same literary agent; Steve Yarbrough once judged a short-story contest that I entered (and lost); and Suzanne Hudson and William Gay once entered, nearly thirty years ago, the same short-story contest, judged by Toni Morrison and Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. (which William lost but Suzanne won). The South is a small world.

And then this family of writers brought additional family,



Far left: Sonny, interviewing with ETV's "Mississippi Roads"

Left: Bart Barton

which included William Gay's son Chris (whose hard electric blues entertained us after the first round of readings Friday night), Tom Franklin's and Beth Ann Fennelly's baby daughter Claire, my father Lamar (who was the first to spot the arrival of Rick Bragg's limousine), and my mother-in-law Anita.

The high point of the weekend would not have been what it was, not for me anyway, if my mother-in-law hadn't been at Lemuria to hear Jennifer read from her story "And When I Should Feel Something." It's an autobiographical story heavily weighted by the death of Jennifer's father. Reading at Lemuria would be my wife's first time to read to more than ten people and only her third time ever to read. And never before was her mother in the audience. Jennifer was terrified that she would break into a fit of crying or would pass out from fright. And she was not alone. I was terrified for her, and so was her mother, and so were my father and stepmother, and so were Sonny Brewer, Jim Gilbert, Suzanne Hudson, and many others who know her.

When the time came Saturday afternoon for Jennifer to step up onto the ice chest behind the bar and climb into the high perch of the reader's nest (which looks more like some lost soul's pulpit, with Catholic prayer candles on a shelf along the back wall and a red Hindu elephant sitting on the lectern that's bookended by tiki lamps), she did so with evident unease. But she read, with her mouth pressed to the microphone, with determined grace. Steadily, starkly, and without a stammer. Other readers may have transformed the room into a juke joint or a battlefield or a turkey hunt or, as I did, a bus depot, but it was Jennifer who turned it into a shrine.

On Sunday morning all but a few of us traveled upstate to Oxford for the second stage of our debut by signing hundreds more of the *Blue Moon Cafe* at Square Books. And since then, some of us have traveled to Nashville, Fort Smith, and Birmingham to read and sign more books. There seems to be no end to the launch of our book. In fact, MacAdam/Cage has granted Sonny Brewer the opportunity to do all this again next year with *Stories from the Blue Moon Cafe II*. You might recall that *The Canterbury Tales* is an unfinished work.

Sidney Thompson lives in Fairhope, Alabama. His fiction has been published in The Southern Review, The Carolina Quarterly, Louisiana Literature, New Delta Review, and Stories from the Blue Moon Cafe.

University of Alabama • Spring 2003

BANKHEAD VISITING WRITERS SERIES 2003

The Bankhead Visiting Writers Series is made possible by an endowment from the Bankhead Foundation, the University of Alabama's Program in Creative Writing, the Department of English, and the College of Arts and Sciences. For more information, please contact the University of Alabama's Creative Writing Program at 205.348.0766 or visit our website at www.bama.ua.edu/~writing.

Donald Revell & Joel Brouwer
7:30 p.m., January 16, 2003
Morgan Auditorium

DONALD REVELL is the author of seven collections of poetry, including *There Are Three*, *Beautiful Shirt*, and *Erasures*. His most recent collection is *Arcady*. He is the recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship, and a Gertrude Stein Award in Innovative American Poetry. He is a professor of English and Creative Writing at the University of Utah. Mr. Revell is a Coal Royalty Chairholder in Creative Writing at the University of Alabama for the Spring 2003 Semester.

JOEL BROUWER's first book of poems, *Exactly What Happened*, won the Verna Emery Poetry Prize and the Larry Levis Reading Prize. His second collection, *Centuries*, will be published by Four Way Books in March 2003. He is a graduate of Sarah Lawrence College and Syracuse University, and has held fellowships from the Wisconsin Institute for Creative Writing, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Mrs. Giles Whiting Foundation. He currently teaches Creative Writing at the University of Alabama.

Robert Creeley
7:30 p.m., February 20, 2003
205 Smith Hall

ROBERT CREELEY has published more than 60 books of poetry, including *Echoes*, *Life & Death*, *Memory Gardens*, *Windows* and *Selected Poems*. In addition to poetry he has also published short stories, novels, essays and edited *Black Mountain Review*, one of America's most innovative literary journals. He has received numerous awards during his career, including the Levinson Prize, two Guggenheim fellowships, the Shelley Memorial Award and the Robert Frost Medal, both from the Poetry Society of America. He served as New York State Poet from 1989 to 1991. He is currently the Samuel P. Capen Professor of Poetry and the Humanities at the University of Buffalo, New York. He will also give a lecture in 301 Morgan Hall at 12 p.m. on February 21.

Sigrid Nunez
7:30 p.m., March 20, 2003
205 Smith Hall

SIGRID NUNEZ is the author of four novels, *A Feather on the Breath of God*, *Naked Sleeper*, *Mitz: The Marmoset of Bloomsbury*, and *For Rouenna*, which was a *New York Times* notable book in 2001. Her short fictions have appeared in *The Threepenny Review*, *Iowa Review*, *Salmagundi*, *Fiction*, and the *New England Review*. Her writing garnered her two Pushcart prizes, a Whiting Writer's Award, and the 2000-2001 Rome Prize in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. She is the recipient of a Lannan Foundation Residency, and was Writer in Residence at Ucross Foundation. She has taught at Smith College, Amherst College, the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, the Rope Walk Writer's Retreat, and the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown. She will also give a lecture in 301 Morgan Hall at 12 p.m. on March 21.

Aimee Bender
7:30 p.m., March 27, 2003
205 Smith Hall

AIMEE BENDER is the author of two books, *The Girl in the Flammable Skirt*, a *New York Times* Notable Book for 1998, and *An Invisible Sign of My Own* (2000). Her writing has appeared in *Fence*, *Harper's*, *GQ*, *LA Weekly*, *Granta*, *Faultline*, *Story*, *North American Review*, *Antioch Review*, and *The Paris Review*. She currently teaches creative writing at the University of Southern California. She lives in Los Angeles.

Robert Hass
7:30 p.m., April 24, 2003
Morgan Auditorium

ROBERT HASS, America's Poet Laureate between 1995-1997, has published several books of poetry, including *Field Guide*, *Praise*, *Human Wishes*, *Sun Under Wood*, and a book of essays on poetry entitled *Twentieth Century Pleasures*. He has been awarded the MacArthur Fellowship, the National

Book Critics Circle Award twice (1984 & 1997), and won the Yale Series of Younger Poets in 1973. Hass founded River of Words, an organization that promotes environmental and arts education in affiliation with The Library of Congress Center for the Book. He is currently a professor of English at the University of California at Berkeley. He will also give a lecture in 301 Morgan Hall at 12 p.m. on April 25.

**Andy Duncan, Jill Christman, Jennifer Davis,
Kevin Waltman, Eliot Wilson, and Paul Guest**
7:30 p.m., May 1, 2003
205 Smith Hall

ANDY DUNCAN's first book, *Beluthahatchie and Other Stories*, won a World Fantasy Award. His story "The Pottawatomie Giant" won another World Fantasy Award, and his novella "The Chief Designer" won a Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Award. His stories have appeared in *Asimov's*, *Realms of Fantasy*, *SciFiction*, *Starlight 1 and 3*, *Conjunctions:39*, *Cemetery Dance*, *Polyphony*, and *Mojo: Conjure Stories*. He co-edited the forthcoming anthology *Crossroads: Southern Stories of the Fantastic* and contributed a chapter on alternate history to *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*. He received an MFA in fiction writing at the University of Alabama. He is assistant director of student media at the University of Alabama.

JILL CHRISTMAN's first book, *Darkroom: A Family Affair*, won the Associated Writing Programs Award for Creative Nonfiction in 2000. She received her MFA from the University of Alabama in 1999. After graduating she became Coordinator of the Creative Writing Program at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis for two years before becoming an assistant professor of English at Ball State University, Indiana.

JENNIFER DAVIS's *Her Kind of Want* won the University of Iowa Press's John Simmons Short Fiction Award in 2001, the same year she received her MFA from the University of Alabama. Her stories have appeared in the *Apalachee Review*, *Greensboro Review*, and *Crab Orchard Review*. She is a recipient of the Prague Summer Seminars Fellowship in Fiction. She currently teaches Creative Writing at the University of Eastern Washington.

KEVIN WALTMAN's first book, the young adult novel *Nowhere Fast*, was published as part of the Push series by Scholastic in 2002. He is a graduate of DePaw University, Indiana. He is currently completing his MFA in fiction at the University of Alabama.

ELIOT WILSON's first book of poetry, *The Saint of Letting Small Fish Go*, won the Cleveland State University Poetry Prize in 2002. He received his PhD in English from the University of Alabama in 2002.

PAUL GUEST's poetry manuscript, *Resurrection of the Body and the Ruin of the World*, won the New Issues Poetry Prize in 2002 and is to be published this year. His poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *The Iowa Review*, *Third Coast*, *Quarterly West*, *Poet Lore*, *Fine Madness*, and other journals. He received his MFA in poetry from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. He currently teaches at the University of Alabama.

Tim Croft is assistant to the director of the Program in Creative Writing, University of Alabama.

Robert Hass



Robert Creeley



Andy Duncan



Aimee Bender



Jennifer Davis



Sigrid Nunez



Paul Guest



Jill Christman

Literary News

CONTESTS AND CONFERENCES

New River Poets, a chapter of the Florida State Poets Association, Inc., announces Quarterly Poetry Awards. Open to all poets (except NRP members), the contest winter-spring deadlines are February 15 and May 15. For up to three poems (42 lines of text per poem maximum) and additional poems at \$1 each, please send two copies with deadline date on upper right corner of each copy and name and full address on second copy. Please include SASE for notification. Mail entries and fees to June Owens, Awards Coordinator, 5545 Meadowbrook St., Zephyrhills, FL 33541-2715.



Robert Inman



Jill McCorkle

Southern Living and the Biltmore Host Authors in Asheville... The Inn on Biltmore Estate will host the second annual **Writers' Winter Weekend** February 7 through 9, 2003, in Asheville, North Carolina. Southern Living is pleased to be co-hosting the event. Featured authors are **Jill McCorkle**, **Cassandra King**, and **Robert Inman**. Jill McCorkle's most recent release is a short story collection, *Creatures of Habit* (Algonquin Books). Cassandra King is the author of the recently released novel *The Sunday Wife* (Hyperion). Robert Inman is a novelist, screenwriter, and playwright. His most recent novel, *Captain Saturday* (Little, Brown and Company), was selected as a Book Sense 76 recommendation by America's Independent



Cassandra King

Booksellers. The Writers' Winter Weekend includes breakfast buffets and a wine-tasting reception; tours of the Biltmore House, gardens, and winery; and author presentations and a reception. For reviews of the

authors' most recent works, www.southernliving.com. For more information call toll free 1-877-843-4687.

Huntingdon College and the surrounding area—the Garden District of the city of Montgomery—can boast of reeling in a number of big fish these days, and they are all connected to the novel *Big Fish* by Alabama writer **Daniel Wallace**. What started out as an “exercise” in prose ended up as a highly acclaimed first novel by a writer whose only aim is to “write quality literature.” Currently residing in Asheville, North Carolina, Wallace has admitted that he never guessed that the book's publication would be only the beginning. *Big Fish* so appealed to Hollywood screenwriter John August that he optioned the film rights and wrote a screenplay. Ultimately, the project is bringing to Montgomery, Alabama and Huntingdon College legendary film director Tim Burton, producers Bruce Cohen and Dan Jinks, and actors Ewan McGregor and Albert Finney, to name a few. Some of these “big fish” are already on campus at the former Cloverdale Junior High School site. Fans (and anglers) can meet Daniel Wallace on February 19, 2003, at Huntingdon's Patrons of the Library annual dinner and participate in a workshop in which Wallace will explore the origins and nature of his novel, as well as the adaptation of his work for the screen. For further information, call the Huntingdon College Office of Continuing Education at (334) 833-4522 or email pstein@huntingdon.edu.

UAB Writers' Series Spring Schedule announced: Jan. 15: **Jesse Lee Kercheval**; Feb. 19: **Beth Ann Fennelly**; Apr. 9: **Brad Watson**. All readings at the Spencer Honors House 1190 10th Ave. S., start at 7 p.m. and are free and open to the public. Parking on Lot 16E. Books on sale at readings. For details, call 205.934.4250.

The Midwinter meeting of **Alabama State Poetry Society** will be held at the Sahara Restaurant in Montgomery on Saturday,

The Alabama Literary Season

- February 15 On the Brink, *Jacksonville*
- February 20-23 Southern Voices, *Hoover*
- March 7-8 Writing Today, *Birmingham*
- March 7-9 T.S. Stribling Celebration, *Florence*
- March 13-14 University of North Alabama Writer Festival, *Florence*
- March 14-15 University of Montevallo Literary Festival, *Montevallo*
- April 26 Alabama Bound, *Birmingham*
- May 1-3 Alabama Writers' Symposium, *Monroeville*

February 22, beginning at 11:30 a.m. Lunch will be off the menu, and attendees are encouraged to bring a poem for the Round Robin reading(s).

2002-2003 **Red Mountain Reading Series** co-sponsored by the Alabama School of Fine Arts & Jefferson County Community College: January 31, 7 p.m., ASFA Lecture Hall: **Tom Franklin**, author of the acclaimed novella/short story collection, *Poachers*, was born in Dickinson. He received his MFA in fiction from the University of Arkansas in 1998 and spent the last year as the Grisham writer-in-residence at the University of Mississippi where he completed his forthcoming novel, *Hell in the Breach*.

February 13, 11 a.m. Jefferson State Scrushy campus (Room 110 A & B in the main conference hall for all readings): **Dana Johnson**, a native of Los Angeles, is now an assistant professor of creative writing and literature at Indiana University. Her collection of stories, *Break Any Woman Down*, won the Flannery O'Connor Award.

March 13, 11 a.m. Jeff State Scrushy Campus: **Jeanie Thompson**, a founding editor of the *Black Warrior Review* and executive director of the Alabama Writers' Forum, is author of four collections of poetry and



Natasha Trethewey

numerous chapbooks, including *Litany for a Vanishing Landscape*, a collaboration with photographer Wayne Sides, and *White for Harvest: New and Selected Poems*.

April 17, 11 a.m. Jeff State Scrushy

Campus: **Natasha Tretheway** is assistant professor of creative writing at Emory University and author of *Bellocq's Ophelia*. Her first collection of poems, *Domestic Work*, was selected by former U.S. poet laureate Rita Dove as the first recipient of the Cave Canem poetry prize.

Get to know the ladies of Covington while enjoying the familiarity and beauty of Montgomery's **Huntingdon College** campus. Plan to meet North Carolina's resident writer **Joan Medicott** on April 11 when she will be on campus to discuss her Covington series of novels and how she came to develop her "third and well loved career" in writing. The novels are set in the fictional town of Covington, North Carolina, and present mature women who aggressively pursue new experiences and inspirations. The books plumb relationships that defy the clichés and expectations regarding women "of a certain age." With degrees in history and Counseling, Medicott has worked as director of the Division of Beautification for the Virgin Islands government and directed a program for the elderly in Boca Raton, FL. She brings the same determination, ingenuity, and entrepreneurial spirit to her writing. For further information, contact the Huntingdon College Office of Continuing Education at (334) 883-4522 or email pstein@huntingdon.edu.

The **Salem College Center for Women Writers** is pleased to announce three national literary competitions: the **Reynolds Price Short Fiction Award** for a short story up to 7500 words, the **Rita Dove Poetry Award** for a poem of any style up to 200 lines, and the **Penelope Niven Creative Nonfiction Award** for a single piece of creative nonfiction, including personal essay and memoir, up to 7500 words. The judges are: Shannon Ravenel in fiction, Joy Harjo in poetry, and Carol Brightman in creative nonfiction. The winner in each genre will receive \$1000 plus round trip travel and lodging for a reading of his/her work at Salem College. Competitions are open to anyone living in the United States and writing in English except Salem College employees and students. All submissions must be unpublished. The postmark deadline is February 1, 2003. The author's name and address must not appear anywhere on the manuscript. Entrants are asked to send three clean typed copies of their manuscript, a SASE for notification of winners, a cover sheet with their name, address, telephone, e-mail, genre, and the title of the work (s), and a check for the \$15 reading fee, per submission, made out to the Center for Women Writers National Literary Awards. Please send submission (s) to Center for Women Writers, PO Box 10548, Salem College, Winston-Salem, NC 27108.

PRIZES AND PUBLICATIONS

The University of Alabama Press is happy to announce its most recent award winning books include Mark Newman's *Getting Right with God: Southern Baptists and Desegregation, 1945-1995*, 2002 Lillian Smith Book Award for Non-fiction; Rachel Bonney and J. Anthony Paredes' *Anthropologist and Indians in the New South*, a CHOICE 2002 Outstanding Academic Title; Loss Glazier's *Digital Poetics*, Resource Center for Cyberculture Studies Book of the Month (December 2002); and Mary Ward Brown's *It Wasn't All Dancing*, Fellowship of Southern Writers Award for Fiction.

The winner of the first annual **Dropping the Hammer Poetry Contest**, held by the Writers' Group at the NewSouth Bookstore, is Kathy Rooney. Rooney attended George Washington University in Washington, D.C., from which she received a degree in English and creative writing. Her poetry has appeared in *Wooden Teeth*, *the Oxford Student*, *the Oxford Reader*, and the *Allegheny Review*. She is an intern at Ploughshares and a poetry reader for the Beacon Street Review. Contest prize is publication, date to be announced.

Claire T. Feild, author of *Mississippi Delta Women in Prism*, has just recently had excerpts from her unpublished memoir titled *A Delta Vigil* accepted for publication in *Full Circle: A Journal of Poetry and Prose*, a Boston, MA, quarterly.

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA TO HOST 2003 T.S. STRIBLING CELEBRATION

by *William E. Smith, Jr.*



T.S. Stribling

The University of North Alabama National Alumni Association is hosting the 2003 T.S. Stribling Celebration as part of its 2003 Fine Arts Festival. The festival will be held March 7-9 on the campus of the University of North Alabama. The event honors the late T.S. Stribling on the centennial anniversary of his graduation from the former Florence Normal School (now UNA).

The theme of this year's celebration is inspired by Stribling's epitaph: "Through this dust these hills once spoke." Sessions will consider the role of family, education, adult experience, and serendipity in shaping the writer's voice. The festival recognizes not only Stribling but also Alabama writers generally, including graduates of the University of North Alabama.

Stribling was the first Alabamian to receive the Pulitzer Prize in letters (1933), awarded for his novel *The Store*. Part of a trilogy, which includes *The Forge* and *Unfinished Cathedral*, it is set in Florence and Lauderdale County.

Since its conception in 1998, the T. S. Stribling Committee has established a special collection of T. S. Stribling writings and memorabilia at UNA's Collier Library and the Florence-Lauderdale Public Library, created a unit of study about T. S. Stribling for high school students in the Florence City Schools System, and provided copies of Stribling's trilogy to local libraries. The committee also hosted a public viewing of "She Had Hair Like His Sister's," an adaptation of a Stribling short story which won a "student Emmy" for the Theatre Department at the University of North Alabama.

The 2003 Fine Arts Festival honoring T. S. Stribling consists of over twenty programs, events, and exhibits, including panel discussions about Southern Literature, the creative process, and markets for writing. Other events include a bus trip to Clifton, Tennessee, to tour Stribling's home/museum and the settings for several of his novels. The 2003 Stribling Celebration is designed to raise scholarship money for the English Department of the University of North Alabama. For more information on the 2003 Fine Arts Festival, contact the Office of Alumni Relations at (256) 765-4201 or view the website at www.una.edu/alumni/FAF03.htm.

William E. Smith, Jr. lives in Florence, where he practices law. He is chair of the T.S. Stribling Committee and an adjunct professor at UNA.

CLASSIFIEDS

MENASHA RIDGE PRESS, a publisher of outdoor guidebooks, seeks an author to research and pen books in the series "60 Hikes within 60 Miles." Books already in print include titles on Nashville, Portland, Tampa, Raleigh, Washington DC, and the Twin Cities. Authors are sought for guides to Salt Lake City, Santa Fe/Albuquerque, Dallas/Fort Worth, Louisville, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Boston, Detroit/Ann Arbor, Austin/San Antonio, Milwaukee, Denver/Boulder, Sacramento, San Francisco. Visit our web site at www.manasharidge.com and follow the 60 Hikes link for more information on the series.

Prospective authors should be experienced day hikers and be able to write clear, accurate, and interesting prose. The prospective author must be able to provide detailed map tracings of each hike. A background in outdoor writing is ideal, but promising new authors or avid hikers in search of a book project are welcome to apply. If interested, please send a resume, cover letter, and a writing sample to Russell Helms, MRP, 2000 First Avenue North, Suite 1400, Birmingham, Alabama 35203

AS A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION, First Draft inevitably misses important dates and announcements, frustrating readers and editors alike. For the most up-to-date calendars, news, and information, check the Alabama Writers' Forum website, www.writersforum.org. The magazine will continue to publish some calendar items, but we encourage you to bookmark the website and post your own news and announcements.

CELEBRATE SOUTHERN REGIONAL WRITING at SouthernScribe. For the best in regional news; contest and conference information; author profiles and reviews visit Southern Scribe: www.southernscribe.com.

EXTRA BOOKS EVERYWHERE? Reading Outreach is a project originated in Tuscaloosa by Margaret and Joe Searcy to set up libraries in small, rural communities where no library or bookmobile exists. Reading Outreach will take books, videos, games, and computer equipment. To find out more, call 205.437.0714.

FD Classifieds: for rate information contact the Forum at 334.242.4076, ext. 233.

The Back Page



Marlin Barton



Patricia Foster



Kathryn Tucker Wyndham



Clyde Bolton



Marvin Rogers

Read Alabama! The Tradition Continues

by Marthanne Brown

Because many times the resources of educational institutions are limited in various areas, such institutions find it expedient to form partnerships with other entities in order to accomplish worthwhile goals. Beville State Community College, a four-campus institution, has formed one of these unique partnerships with several organizations in order to bring literary programs that are free of charge to the students as well as to the public in its service area.

An integral part of Beville State's mission is "providing the citizens of the west-central Alabama area with educational opportunities that enrich their lives intellectually, culturally, and economically."

In 1988 Auburn University's Center for the Arts & Humanities conducted a program throughout the state of Alabama entitled Read Alabama! It was a program funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, and its purpose was to encourage Alabamians to read works by Alabama writers, both past and present. Authors and scholars from colleges and universities throughout the state

participated in the program, which was a remarkable success. Not only did it bring in scholars to discuss such classics as *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, but it also introduced program participants to current writers from Alabama such as Pulitzer Prize nominee William Cobb.

In 1992 the last in this series of programs was brought to Bevill State's Sumiton Campus. Because the program was so enthusiastically received in its service area, the College responded to the student and community requests to conduct additional programs. Although Auburn's Center would have liked to continue the program in its original format, Read Alabama! had been discontinued statewide because the NEH grant funding had ended, and money was no longer available from that source. However, Bevill State obtained permission from the Auburn Center for the Arts & Humanities to take the concept and develop it further for its own constituents. The Center was so enthusiastic about the proposal that the two institutions formed a partnership in this endeavor, with Auburn contacting the authors and scholars and Bevill State underwriting the expenses. The program was renamed Read Alabama! The Tradition Continues.

The program continued and the number of people attending increased. Each year, and sometimes twice a year, The Tradition Continues invited various authors from Alabama to participate in the series by reading from and discussing their works. To accommodate the program participants, Bevill State eventually moved the series to the Walker College Campus of Bevill State Community College in Jasper, Alabama. The audience there became even larger, and we realized that we needed to reach out to an additional organization for support. The Chamber of Commerce of Walker County, a long-standing organization centered in Jasper, became a third partner in the program. In fact, the organization had been discussing how to add "quality of

life" programming to its growing list of offerings to the public. It not only participated by underwriting some of the expenses incurred in producing the programs, but it also helped with publicity and with hosting responsibilities.

One final partner was added in the spring of 1998. Because the audience enjoyed having the authors' works for personal reading and for signings, Bevill State had always provided the authors' books at the programs. This became a big job, and the college invited the Highland Booksmith, now the Alabama Booksmith, to become a fourth member of the partnership. The bookstore's owner, Jake Reiss, readily

READ ALABAMA!

The Tradition Continues

2003 SEASON

1/21-Wayne Greenhaw

2/4-Shelley Stewart

2/18-Cassandra King

3/4-Barbara Robinette Moss

3/18-Frank Turner Hollon

All programs begin at 4 P.M. in
Bevill Hall Auditorium.
For more information call,
1-800-648-3271. ext/ 5715

agreed. This new sponsor both provides and sells the authors' books.

Since this growing partnership began its programming back in 1992, it has introduced numerous authors to its audience, including Helen Norris, Kathryn Tucker Windham, Madison Jones, Sena Naslund, Ann George, Don Keith, Clyde Bolton, Fred Bonnie, Nora Ezell, Bob Inman, Ben Erickson, Mike Stewart, Dr. Richard Bailey, Dale Short, Vicki Covington, Cassandra King, Wayne Greenhaw, Shelley Stewart, Charles McNair, Brent Davis, Marianne Moates, Bill Grant, Dr.

Wayne Flynt, and Dr. Hardy Jackson. The program has also brought scholars from universities and colleges throughout the state to lead discussions on various Alabama works. These scholars include Dr. Leah Rawls Atkins, Dr. Allen Cronenberg, Dr. Elaine Hughes, Dr. Don Noble, Dr. Norman McMillan, and Dr. Philip Beidler.

This partnership is unique in a variety of ways. It brings together a community college, a major state university, a local chamber of commerce, and private enterprise. Their working together fulfills a need for each group in some way. The result has been outstanding enrichment for the service area, often for audiences numbering over 100.

The combined sponsors are very proud of the outcomes that they have achieved in conducting Read Alabama! The Tradition Continues. The program's continued success is due in large part to the coordination among these groups, along with the audience's increased knowledge and pride in one of its state's greatest resources, its excellent writers and scholars. It is the intent of these sponsors to continue to promote the tradition that began in the state of Alabama so many years ago and continues today.

Marthanne Brown is associate dean at Bevill State. Read Alabama! The Tradition Continues has been her mission since its inception and she continues to infuse it with energy, wit, and enthusiasm.



Join

www.writersforum.org

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Watch for the updated Alabama Literary Resources Directory on line, too. You can even find current and back issues of First Draft, filled with news about Alabama's literary community, book reviews, and other research ideas for students or teachers.

If you are a writer, a reader, a teacher, or a student of writing, this is your site. We hope to see you there.

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