

President's Message—Prize-Winning Books

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"How do you find good books to read?" a member (like me, not a librarian) asked one evening last fall. "I used to read the *New York Times Book Review*, but, frankly, I don't enjoy most of the books on their best-seller lists. I browse through new selections in the bookstores and in the library, but I really don't have the time to waste on a bad book."

I thought about the question. One of my own techniques for finding new books is to read book reviews in magazines I enjoy, such as *Atlantic Monthly* and *Poetry*. Another is to look for new work by or about authors I've enjoyed. As a starting point for finding new books, though, I follow the year's prize winners. This year I was delighted to see that the **Nobel Prize** in literature had gone to Turkish writer Orhan Pamuk, whose novel, *Snow*, I picked up when browsing the sale table at Davis-Kidd. While the Nobel is given for a body of work rather than a single book, any author who has received one is probably worth reading. The annual **Pulitzer Prizes** remind me each year of what is excellent in America, including our writing. I certainly want to read *Late Wife* by Claudia Emerson, this year's Pulitzer poetry winner. Each November, the **New York Times** lists the ten best books of the year (as opposed to the best sellers), a list that can help you find last year's wonderful book, which you almost missed!

More great American writing can be found in the **National Book Awards** and the **National Book Critics Circle Awards** (2006 winners will be announced on January 20, 2007). The United Kingdom's **Orange Prize** goes to any full length novel, written in English by a woman of any nationality, provided that the novel is published for the first time in the United Kingdom between 1 April of the year before the prize is awarded and 31 March of the year in which the prize is awarded; this organization also identifies fine new writers. Each August, I look at the Man Booker Long List; by September, the Man Booker Short List is published; and, finally, in October, the **Man Booker Prize** winner is announced! As a doting relative of other people's children, I find excellent presents among **Newbery** and **Caldecott** winners, as well as through the National Book Awards.

The web site addresses for most of these prizes follow, but if you really want to know what some of the best books for 2007 may be, the books that haven't even been printed yet, come to the February meeting of WNBA Nashville at Davis-Kidd!

Alice Sanford, President

www.pulitzer.org/

www.nationalbook.org/nba.html

www.bookcritics.org/

www.orangeprize.co.uk

www.themanbookerprize.com/

www.ala.org/ala/alsc/awardsscholarships/literaryawards/newberymedal/newberymedal.htm

www.ala.org/ala/alsc/awardsscholarships/literaryawards/caldecottmedal/caldecottmedal.htm



Chapter News

February Meeting Preview—New Year/New Books

Join us on Thursday, February 1, from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. as Serenity Gerbman, Director of Literature and Language Programs for Humanities Tennessee, and Amy Cox Williams, Manager of Editorial for Ingram Book, present their "picks" from the long list of new titles that will appear in bookstores this spring. Serenity has worked to produce the Southern Festival of Books: A Celebration of the Written Word for ten years; and she has directed the last six Festivals, so she knows a good book when she sees one! Amy pores through publisher catalogs in search of features for Ingram's various catalogs, so she is very familiar with the entire array of books to be offered well before they hit the shelves. The Nashville Chapter of the WNBA looks forward to hearing their suggestions for 2007!

WNBA meets at 6:00 p.m. the first Thursday of each month (September through May) in the Bronte Café at Davis-Kidd Booksellers in the Green Hills Mall. Many members come early to network, visit, and get a bite to eat. We'll network and eat in the cafe and then head to the meeting room at 6:00. Ask your server for selections that will allow you to finish in time to join us for the meeting. We recommend parking on the second floor of the Hecht's parking garage. Meetings are free and prospective members are welcome to attend.

March Meeting Preview—"Journaling" Workshop

Ramon Presson is the creator and co-writer, with Dr. Gary Chapman, of *Love Talks for Families* and *Love Talks for Couples*, each in its third printing. He has written a number of feature articles, and he is a sought-after writing coach. He believes "journaling is a great butterfly net to catch fleeting and skittish ideas that can be further developed later into creative nonfiction or fiction pieces." On March 1, he'll lead us in a creative journaling workshop and offer insight into the process for getting your writing published.



National News—Eastman Grant

Linda Moskovic,
who manages the Allie Gardens Benjamin Branch
of the San Diego Public Library System,
is the recipient of the
2006 WNBA Eastman Grant.

Chapter News

New Members:

Tari Hughes

Minda Lazarov

Remember the
ATHENA Awards
March 29,
2007 at The
Parthenon

Lee Fairbend
is the WNBA
nominee

BOARD MEETINGS:

David Lipscomb University,
Beaman Library, 5:30 p.m.
Monday after the General Meeting

GENERAL MEETINGS:

First Thursday, Bronte Café,
Davis-Kidd Booksellers
Green Hills Mall
Networking starts at 5:00 p.m.
Meeting starts at 6:00 p.m.
Meetings are open to the public.

February 1: New Year/New Books, with
Serenity Gerbman and Amy Cox Williams

March 1: Journaling Workshop with
Ramon Presson

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Newsletter Submissions: Articles and information about members or upcoming literary events are always welcome. Please contact Gloria Toler (see above). All information must be received by the 10th of the month to be included in the next month's newsletter.

Newsletter Advertising: Monthly rates for business card-size ads are \$15 for WNBA Nashville Chapter members and \$20 for non-members.

In Memoriam: Christine Brown

A long-time, valued member of WNBA, Christine Brown, died of cancer on December 16, 2006. Originally from Springfield, Tennessee, Christine was educated in the Robertson County schools and graduated from MTSU with a BS degree and an MLS from the University of Tennessee, with additional graduate work at the University of Pittsburg.

After three years of classroom teaching in Orlinda High School in Robertson County, she directed the library services program for Robertson County schools from 1948–1966, being one of four such programs across the state. In 1966 she became Director of School Library Services for the state of Tennessee, a position she held for 18 years. She was librarian at Harpeth Academy in Franklin for two years. In 1987 she agreed to serve as a volunteer in the church library at Belmont Methodist Church, where she “volunteered” for the next 19 years. Christine never lost her love of books, and she shared this love widely with all. It brought her to WNBA and she was a member for over 35 years. She had not attended regular meetings for some time due to her health.

Christine is survived by her sisters Jeanette Brown, and June (Charles) Moore, Nashville; a nephew, Alan G (Diana) Moore, Nashville; a niece, Marcia Moore (John) Olewine of Charlotte, NC; great-nephew, Spencer G. Moore, Nashville; and great-nieces, Kimberly (Grant) Bevel, Houston, TX, and Kelly Taylor, Charlotte, NC.

Services for Christine were held Monday, December 18, in the Elmwood Cemetery in Springfield, with Rev. John Collett officiating. Memorial gifts may be made to Belmont United Methodist Church, PO Box 120098, Nashville, TN 37212.

Carolyn Wilson

The
Nashville Edition
is always looking
for
authors!!

Here is your
chance to get published—just send
your articles, book
reviews,
news items and
other
book-related
matters of interest
to Gloria Toler

January Meeting Recap

Every reader finds himself. The writer's work is merely a kind of optical instrument that makes it possible for the reader to discern what, without this book, he would perhaps never have seen in himself.

-Marcel Proust

January's monthly meeting kicked the year off right with a panel of three outstanding authors of young adult (YA) literature. **Tracy Barrett, Helen Hemphill and Candie Moonshower** provided a well-rounded, entertaining perspective of the past, present and future of books for ages 9 and up.

Hemphill began with some interesting facts about the current state of YA literature. Although the children's book market has never been the biggest in the industry, the YA market is clearly filling a void in the literary world faster than ever, and according to Hemphill, is presently growing at the rate of \$1 billion each year. The number of books for young adults has grown to give youth a wide variety of subject matter to foster as well as satisfy any literary appetite. Hemphill read from her recently published YA book, *Long Gone Daddy* (Front Street Books, May 2006). Her forthcoming book, *Runaround*, will be released this spring.



Tracy Barrett shared a short history of YA literature and gave examples of early YA books such as Hinton's *The Outsiders*, L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*, Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye* and Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. According to Barrett, YA literature is categorized as

such when the protagonist is a young adult going through coming of age problems; and naturally, the content is not too mature for a young audience. It is not a story told by an adult reflecting on her past, but is the story

of youth struggling through and working out predicaments as they take place. Barrett then read excerpts from some of her books: *On Etruscan Time* (Henry Holt & Co., April, 2005), *Anna of Byzantium* (Laurel Leaf, October, 2000), and *Cold in Summer* (Henry Holt & Co., May, 2003).

Candie Moonshower offered a glimpse into future trends of this burgeoning sector of the literary market, reporting that the YA market is not only for teens. Under the YA umbrella, authors have responded to children of all reading levels with literature tailored to specific age groups and interests. For example, middle grade books are targeted towards youth ages 8–12 while YA books may be better suited for children ages 13–18. Now, however, there is a group of literature called "Tween," signifying an age group that falls in between middle grade and YA (ages 10–14). Moonshower also read from her recently published book, *The Legend of Zoey* (Delacorte, July, 2006), and generously offered to anyone who buys her book to meet him or her for coffee, chat, and get the book signed. Isn't it great to be a member of WNBA?

If you would like more information on great YA authors and books, ask your librarian or bookseller for suggestions. You may also want to check out the following web resources:

www.teenreads.com

www.guysread.com

www.ala.org/ala/yalsa/booklistsawards/booklistsbook.htm

www.scils.rutgers.edu/~kvander/YoungAdult/index.html

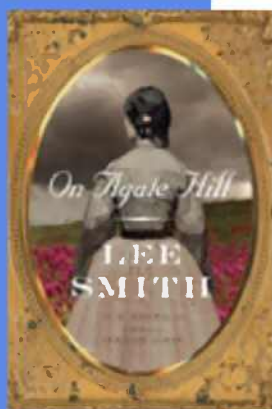
Lacey Cook

WNBA Book Club

Join us on Saturday, February 10, from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. at the Richland Park Branch Library as Darnell Arnoult leads a discussion about Lee Smith's latest novel, *On Agate Hill*. Smith's tenth novel chronicles the post-Civil War life of a precocious Southern orphan using a patchwork of journal entries, letters, poems, recipes, songs, catechisms and court records. Donna Rifkind of the *Washington Post* called the work "a book that seeks to rejuvenate the rapt early reader in us all."

Don't forget that you may pick the book up at Davis-Kidd and enjoy a 20 percent discount. Krispy Kreme will provide donuts and coffee at the meeting. Please don't miss this second installment in WNBA Nashville's new book discussion group! For more information, call Victoria Elliott at 615-862-5870.

Following are a few questions to consider as you read:



- Lee Smith has said that she wrote *On Agate Hill* while dealing with her own grief over her son's death. She has since talked about the usefulness of writing in coping with grief. In what ways does the novel reflect the grief of the author? How does the main character, Molly, deal with grief through her journaling?
- Caroline Preston, in the *Boston Globe*, writes that Smith "is an archivist at heart." How do Smith's imagined "archives" play a role in the story as a whole? Is her unique form of storytelling within this novel the best way she could have told the story?
- *On Agate Hill* is full of Southern archetypes. Does Smith manage to add new life to the quintessential Southern characters within her novel? If so, how? If not, what might have breathed new life into the prototypical characters?
- Donald Harington of the *Raleigh News & Observer* writes that "somebody should give a copy of this book to a member of the Nobel committee." Is Lee Smith of the same caliber as such Nobel Laureates as Toni Morrison, John Steinbeck, William Faulkner, and the many others? Why or why not?

WNBA member Helen Hemphill will be interviewed
by John Seigenthaler for *A Word on Words*,
to be broadcast in February
on Nashville Public Television

Check Helen's web site for more information.

<http://www.helenhemphill.com/>

Remembering Wilma Dykeman

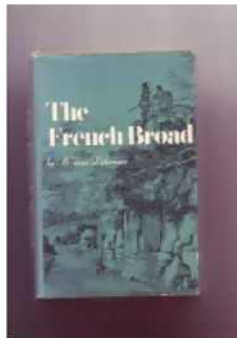
On Christmas Eve, I read the account of the death of Wilma Dykeman. The news release was headed, "Renowned Appalachian writer, literary inspiration dies at 86." It was significant that even at her death, she was recognized primarily as a regional writer, but she was so much more. In her own words, she once said that being a Southerner, a regional writer, an Appalachian, had diminished serious evaluation of her work. But she believed that in the largest sense, some of the world's best literature is the regional because discovering all that is unique in a place or a person is one of the great challenges of writing.

In the early 1990s, Ms. Dykeman wrote a book titled *Tennessee Woman: An Infinite Variety*. She wrote of women of courage and diversity, a multi-dimensional woman. Such was Wilma Dykeman and she exemplified that courage and diversity in all her roles as writer, lecturer, teacher, business-woman, civic leader, humanitarian, environmentalist, and historian. Many times I heard her quote from Santayana regarding "the rooted heart and the ranging intellect." She saw these values reflected in her work as she sought to portray the intense sense of place and a concern for the human values and issues of our time.

Wilma was always a woman ahead of her time. From her earliest books, such as *The French Broad*, we see not just a portrayal of people or settings but an account of a lyrical river and its people threatened by pollution. Who can ever forget hearing her tell her humorous account of reaction to writing a book with this title? Her biography of Edna Rankin McKinnon placed her as a crusader for family planning (*Too Many People, Too Little Love*); *Return the Innocent Earth* foreshadowed the present concerns over genetically altered foods; and her numerous writ-

ings beginning with *Neither Black Nor White* placed her squarely in the forefront of the Civil Rights Movement.

I had the privilege of being with and introducing this lovely lady many times; and I nominated her more than once for the WNBA Award. Unfortunately, the perception of her work as regional prevented serious consideration but during the process of compiling documentation for these, her son Dykeman kindly sent me a wealth of information about his mother. When I pulled out my file to prepare this piece, I found a photocopy of a note sent from Connemara Farm, Flat Rock, N.C. on January 27, 1956. It related to the reading of *The French Broad*, one of the distinguished volumes in The Rivers of America Series, and the person who penned the note said:



Your blood and brain absorbed that tributary so completely in fact and imagination that the book would not have been misnamed," Hey, feller, how does it feel to be a river?".....

Affectionate good wishes,
Carl Sandburg

In our many conversations and correspondences, Wilma and I shared some common bonds in the early loss of our mates. Her little book of essays, titled *Explorations*, has always been dear to me because she explored so beautifully the processes of grief.

With all this, Wilma Dykeman was most eloquent when she wrote of her beloved state, of the mountains, of the Tennessee, like Gaul, which she found divided into three parts. In the preface to the new printing of her bicentennial history of Tennessee, she issued a profound challenge to us as Tennesseans for our future. She stated that while the recurring history of our area had been the frontier, we now must realize

Con't on following page

Remembering Wilma Dykeman, continued from page 6

that the geographical frontiers have gone, and now the frontiers we must seek to conquer are concerned with relationships—relationships between families, sexes, races, religions, classes, nationalities, professions—all pressing for awareness and understanding.

Like her indomitable character, Lydia McQueen, Wilma Dykeman cast a long shadow. We shall miss her stylish hats, her quick wit, her entertaining stories, her humanitarian insights, her compassion—but most of all, we will miss the beauty and eloquence of her words, of her use of the language. We are diminished by her loss but in the same words she used as she described the loss of her beloved James, we are all diminished because she is no longer with us, but we continue,better than we could ever have been without her presence, even for a little while.

Carolyn T. Wilson, Beaman Library

Write Now! By Bunkie Lynn

As I perused a magazine instead of scrubbing the tub, I encountered the phrase “arts and letters.” At this stage of my life, carpool and basketball team snack procurement rule, so “arts and letters” is not in my lexicon. But the beauty of that archaic expression made me ponder the lost art of letter-writing.

Today’s instant communication renders handwritten letters rare. February means romance, and what’s more romantic than a passionate love letter, whether you’re the writer or the recipient? When did you last write—or receive—a love letter that made you blush at its eloquent poetry, its unabashed passion, penned on crisp scented paper for your eyes only?

E-mail’s a timesaver, but recognizing familiar scrawl on an envelope in your mailbox can launch your heart into orbit. Most of us cringe at the prospect of writing so much as a thank-you note. “I don’t know what to say,” we moan. We slink away to our computers, to forward yet another good luck prayer to ten friends, plus the person who sent it to you, within five minutes. Or die.

Chain e-mails or slap-dashed lines are equally uninspiring, and apparently it’s not a recent problem. Thoreau wrote to his wife in 1837: “Letter-writing too often degenerates into a communicating of facts, and not of truths; of other men’s deeds and not our thoughts. What are the convulsions of a planet, compared with the emotions of the soul?”

Right on, Hank. I’ve received my share of love letters, including mushy notes from my husband and illegible notes from my son; but I eagerly await the envelope that arrives on my birthday from Aunt Martha. A former paralegal, she still types 150 WPM on a rusty Underwood, and although her words aren’t handwritten, they are heartfelt. As I read them, I can almost taste her German chocolate cake, and her raucous laughter fills my ears. Her familiar signature, “lovingly, Aunt Martha,” with its three Xs and Os underneath, confirms it as a true love letter, indeed.

Expressions of love are the icing on life’s cake; let your best bud know how you feel. Better yet, prow! in the attic, untie the satin ribbon on a bundle of patient papers, and rediscover the arts of letters.

Go write, WRITE NOW!



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