



The Nashville Edition

JANUARY 2007

President's Message

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Upcoming Programs	2
WNBA Book Club	2
Chapter News	2
Vanderbilt Lecture Series	3
Holiday Dinner	4
Sharon Hatfield Answers	6
ATHENA Award Nominee	8
Write Now!	9
Book'em News	10



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January takes its name from the Roman god *Janus*, who had two faces (one to look back and the other to look forward). The month, in America, typically rings in with toasts, noise-making, and confetti, an event echoed, time zone by time zone, from the lowering of the Times Square ball in New York to midnight champagne by the Pacific. For several years now, my husband and I have eschewed late night parties. Instead, we've cut off the television and have made a tradition of reading to each other, curled beside the fireplace. "This is the way life used to be," we tell ourselves.

What we really mean is that this is the way life ought to be. What we really mean is that we have chosen to spend this time together, sharing one of our common passions: the love of a good story. And, yes, sometimes one person's good story is not the other's; still, we have shared and enjoyed Herodotus, Twain, Durrell, Byatt, Sayers, Doyle, Vergil, Halberstam, and Didion, among others. I know more than I would ever have learned, of my own accord, about chaos theory and about Stanley's search for Livingston. My husband is not really convinced that listening to Harry Potter stories is more fun than watching the movies. But *Janus*, and hence January, is associated not just with beginnings and of endings, but also "*januae*" (or doors). What better door to the New Year than sharing a story you have loved! During the rest of the year, I'm a prospector, scanning book reviews and store shelves for the fascinating books of the New Year.

But for New Year's Eve, I think about what I want to share, what I want to talk about, what I want to hear again.



As my presidency of WNBA, Nashville, moves into its final months, I'd especially like to thank Emily Masters for the wonderful books and authors she has shared with us all in our monthly meetings and, most recently, at our Holiday Dinner. The fine character sketches in

Minton Sparks' poetry rival those in Spoon River Anthology. I (whose one attempt at knitting a baby afghan became a shawl for a Barbie doll) would never have found the perfect Christmas present, on my own, for my younger daughter: Ann Shayne's wonderful knitting book! Each WNBA meeting has brought new writers and new genres into my life and the lives of us all.

I would like to urge each of us to resolve in this New Year to explore new ways of sharing books with others. Give a child a book. Bring one friend to a WNBA monthly meeting. Bring another to a WNBA outreach program. Listen to authors read at Lipscomb University, Vanderbilt, Austin Peay, Bookman/Bookwoman, and Davis-Kidd, etc. Share information about your own recent publications, so that we may all read and enjoy your work. Share the titles of books you've just discovered! As one of my favorite philosophers, Groucho Marx, once said, "Outside of a dog, there's nothing better than a good book. And, inside of a dog, it's pretty dark."

Alice Sanford

Chapter News

Upcoming Winter Programs



January 4, 2007: The Thriving Young Adult Book Market. As other areas of publishing are struggling, the young adult market is thriving—and we have quite a few stars of the genre right here in Nashville, including Candie Moonshower, Helen Hemphill, and Tracy Barrett. Candie's book, *The Legend of Zoey*, was the winner of the SCBWI's (Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators) Sue Alexander Most Promising New Work Award in 2003. Helen Hemphill, the author of *Long Gone Daddy*, (which received a rave review in Publishers Weekly), has a second young adult book, *Runaround*, to be released in March, 2007. Tracy Barrett, whose titles include *On Etruscan Time* and *Cold in Summer*, was the recipient of the 2005 General Work-in-Progress Grant from the SCBWI.

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. Ask your server for selections that will allow you to finish in time to join us for the meeting. We will no longer dine in the meeting room; instead we'll network and eat in the cafe and then head to the meeting room at 6:00. We recommend parking on the 2nd floor of the Hecht's parking garage. Meetings are free and prospective members are welcome to attend.

WNBA Book Club, February, 2007

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." Krispy Kreme will provide donuts and coffee.

Please don't miss this second installment in WNBA Nashville's new book discussion group! For more information, call Victoria Elliott at 862-5870.



Martha Hickman Moves to California

Martha Hickman, an author and long-time member of WNBA, Nashville Chapter, has recently relocated to California, along with her husband Hoyt, to be closer to their children. For those who would like to write to Martha, please contact Carolyn Wilson at CarolynWilson@lipscomb.edu for Martha's new mailing address.

Chapter News

New Members

Virginia Foster

Tara Joyce

Judith Echols

Minton Sparks

The Nashville Edition
is 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

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.

January 4: The Thriving Young Adult Book
Market.. Candie Moonshower, Helen Hemp-
hill and Tracy Barrett.

Editor's Note: We did not receive any
Literary Event information this month
by our publication date. If you have
literary events to include in the next
issue of The Nashville Edition, please
contact Gloria Toler at
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Newsletter Submissions: Articles and informa-
tion 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.



Vanderbilt Lecture Series

The Chancellor's Office at Vanderbilt University is offering a lecture series presenting "intellectuals who are shaping our world today." The following lectures are scheduled for 2007.

Each lecture - for which reservations are not required - is free and open to the public. For more information, please e-mail cls@vanderbilt.edu, call (615) 343-2574, or check the web site at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/chancellor/cls>.

Vanderbilt University is located at 2201 West End Avenue, Nashville, Tennessee. Parking is available in the South Garage (24th Ave South at Children's Way)

Tuesday, January 23, 2007
JANE SMILEY
5:00 reception, 6:00 lecture
Ingram Hall, Blair School of Music

Tuesday, February 20, 2007
BOB HERBERT
5:00 reception, 6:00 lecture
Student Life Center

Thursday, March 29, 2007
SEAN CARROLL
5:00 reception, 6:00 lecture
Ingram Hall, Blair School of Music

WNBA Holiday Dinner a Huge Success

The WNBA Holiday Dinner and Book Sale, held at the Belle Meade Plantation on December 7, was a lovely introduction to a season of camaraderie and good cheer. Entering Martha's at the Plantation, members and guests were welcomed by Joanne Slaughter, ready with a smile, personalized name tags, and copies of the new WNBA Directory. A cash bar offered wine and soft drinks, and bibliophiles were entrenched in the annual WNBA Book Sale aided by the presence of strong book bags to help cart away their finds! There were lots of good books at the ready thanks to the generosity of Ingram Book, Thomas Nelson, Humanities Tennessee, WestBow Press, and more. At the end of the day, the proceeds for WNBA were a handsome 20% increase over last year's revenues, with cookbooks and children's books being the most popular selections.



Book Sale in Progress

Dinner was next door in the Carriage House with fourteen tables, each seating ten, decorated with beautiful poinsettias from Moore & Moore West and wine complements of Weiss Liquors. The entrée was tasty, service cordial, and hot fudge-glazed peppermint ice cream absolutely delicious.



The drawing for an assortment of door prizes between dinner and entertainment brought "oohs & aahs" from the audience and settled a lovely collection of memorabilia from the Schermerhorn Symphony Center, including a signed copy of Martha Ingram's new biography of Maestro Kenneth Schermerhorn in the hands of Tori Ross and a bag of WNBA "goodies" with Barbie Chadwick.

Continued on following page



WNBA Holiday Dinner, Continued



Minton Sparks



*Joanne Slaughter and
Emily Masters*

While the WNBA Holiday Dinner has always been popular with members and their guests, this year's change in format raised the bar and added a new level of community participation with the wonderful program featuring Minton Sparks. While many call Minton Sparks a poet for her brilliant understanding of language and the human spirit, "performance artist" may better describe her approach. Her fine-tuned ear for the colloquialisms of the rural South and keen eye for the detail of movement that accompanies her stories brought joy, laughter and tears from the audience. Her tales "Cluck, Cackle, Peck," "Eastern Star," and "Vickie Pickle's Momma" brim over with a true-life reality we all recognize. John Prine describes "Minton Sparks [as] a great storyteller. Humanity with humility all told humorously with humility." She was accompanied by guitarist John Jackson, just back from Broadway.

Congratulations to the WNBA Holiday Dinner committee—Joanne Slaughter, Lee Fairbend, Serenity Gerbman, Libby Simons, Lacey Cook, Barbie Chadwick, and Emily Masters—for an outstanding event. Enormous "thank yous" also go to the supporters of this event, particularly Bookman/Bookwoman for helping to underwrite the cost.

Sue Bredensteiner

Although the WNBA Holiday Event was a huge success, the planning committee was a bit too generous in determining ticket prices, resulting in a budget deficit. If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation to help offset the costs of presenting the event, please send a check, made out to "WNBA," to:

Emily Masters
1318-A 4th Ave N.
Nashville, TN 37208

Contact Emily at ranandem@bellsouth.net with questions or to make a pledge!

Sharon Hatfield's Answers to WNBA Book Club

After its November meeting, the WNBA Book Club sent several questions to Sharon Hatfield, the author of *Never Seen the Moon*. Here are her answers.

1. On page 248 you mentioned briefly that a hand axe had washed up from the river. What determined that you included this tidbit and do you personally think it was the murder weapon?

As a journalist type, hearing this tidbit from the person who found the ax was just too good to resist. I did include it because it shows just another dramatic twist and turn in the case. I place no particular value on this ax over the others. Not only was there the Tiller family ax that disappeared, but a second ax was whisked away from Edith's house by Trigg Maxwell's son-in-law shortly after the killing. And of course, rebuttal witnesses testified that Edith claimed an iron was used. But she told different stories at different times, so we will likely never know what weapon struck the fatal blow.

2. What do you personally think really happened?

I think Edith and Trigg argued over Trigg's alleged drunken threat to throw Mrs. Ann Maxwell out of the house. Now, the location in which the fight started is very important. If you believe the prosecution's theory that it started in Trigg's bedroom, then possibly Edith was the aggressor. If you believe the defense claim that she was attacked by her father in the kitchen, then Trigg was likely the aggressor. However it happened, it was not that unusual—only the result was tragic this time. As Ernie Pyle noted, the Maxwell's were a family that was "always fighting." I believe manslaughter was the final outcome.

3. What do you know about Edith's (Ann's) children? When and how did they find out about their mother? Did they learn more through you? Did you converse with them?

I know very little about Edith's daughter, as she did not respond to numerous requests for an interview. Her son, whom I interviewed by phone, is a highly educated professional

person who seems to have done well in life. The son said they didn't know anything about the Maxwell case until I contacted him. I felt he was a bit ambivalent about hearing this news, sometimes eager to know details and at other times reluctant. But I am very grateful for his assistance in bringing closure to the story.

4. Who or what were your most outstanding sources for your primary and secondary sources in research?

I simply could not have written this story in detail without having access to the trial transcripts. When I first began looking into the Maxwell case, I was disappointed to learn that the original case file from the Wise County Court House was missing and presumed lost forever. Fortunately, the transcripts of both trials had been preserved at the Virginia Supreme Court in Richmond. The day I copied those pages was one of the happiest of my life! Another key source was the hundreds of letters written about the case that made their way into the files of Virginia governors George Peery and James Price, both housed at the Library of Virginia. And finally, I was able to locate a few key people who knew Edith Maxwell in both her old life in Virginia and her new one after prison—her nephew, brother-in-law and a close family friend. Without these wonderful people who were willing to share their knowledge, it would have been very difficult indeed to write the epilogue.

5. A friend of one of the discussion group members periodically went to do church work in Pound about 30 years ago. She was warned that it was "not a law-abiding place" and told that she needed to be very careful regarding who she spoke to and where she went alone. Did you find this to be the case when you lived in Wise County?

Sharon Hatfield's Answers , Continued

I worked as a reporter in Wise County from 1977 to 1983, about the same time your member's friend was doing her church work. During some of this period, I covered the town of Pound. I found it to be a respectable little town by day and a rowdier place by night. It had a sizeable number of bars (and music venues) for such a small place, no doubt part of the legacy from the wild Prohibition days when bootlegging was rampant there. Some of the town officials weren't used to aggressive reporting of government news, but I found the people overall to be friendly, and I never felt in any personal danger.

6. Within our group, we commented that "there is nothing new under the sun." A group member pointed out that today's problems in this country, our state, and even our city, tend to be exacerbated by "separation" through political organizations and religious differences." Do you have any thoughts or comments on these issues?

Yes, it is very true that the basic themes of the human condition reiterate through the years and change very little. Celebrity trials are still very much with us today, as they were in the 1930's. Nowadays, people are more likely to follow the big trials on the cable channels like COURT TV rather than in newspapers, but the impact is largely still the same. Sometimes the celebrities are famous before the trials, as in the case of O.J. Simpson, but sometimes the media makes celebrities of obscure people, as in the Laci Peterson tragedy. There's always the question of how extreme publicity interacts with the justice system, whether for good or ill.

The separation and polarization that dominated the Maxwell case seemed to stem from cultural differences between the largely urban journalists and social activists and the mostly rural people of Wise County. Such insider/outsider conflicts are all too common in Southern and Appalachian history. The outsiders often have good ideas but come across as pushy and superior, and the insid-

ers tend toward a certain defensiveness (in this case, with good reason!).

7. Please fill us in on what became of Edith's younger sister, Mary Katherine.

Mary Katherine was a spunky little girl who seemed rather traumatized by having to appear in court as a defense witness. I don't know what effect, if any, this may have had on her later on. She lived in the Indianapolis area at least part of her adult life, married and had a son. She has passed away, but I wasn't able to find out the specifics of her death or locate her son, who might have had some interesting things to say. Edith also had another younger sister, Anna Ruth, who died tragically as a young bride during World War II. In an effort to numb the pain of an abscessed tooth, she took excessive amounts of aspirin and died of kidney failure at around age twenty-one.

8. One group member mentioned that she had seen a wonderful documentary on public television about the women's movement called *Iron Jawed Angels*. Have you seen this film? Did it or other audio visual media aid you in your research?

I have seen *Iron Jawed Angels* and found it a very compelling film. When I showed it to my women's studies class at Hocking College, some of the women students told me they were going to rent the video and show it to their daughters. I highly recommend it. In terms of other media, I had the golden opportunity to track down and study the Warner Brothers film *Mountain Justice*, which was a fictionalized version of the Maxwell case. It was an extremely rare film, directed by Michael Curtiz, and I was lucky enough to find an archivist at the Library of Congress who helped me obtain a copy for study. *Mountain Justice* provides an eye-opening look at Appalachian stereotypes perpetuated by social reformers who had good intentions but were extremely condescending in their portrayal of mountain people and rural Americans in general.

ATHENA Award Nominee Profile: Lee Fairbend

On Thursday, March 29, 2007, WNBA will honor Lee Fairbend as our nominee for the Nashville ATHENA Award at the Parthenon in Centennial Park. In December she met with over 25 women from Nashville who have been singled out by their respective organizations as worthy of this prestigious honor. The ATHENA Award is bestowed annually on women of substance in over 350 communities throughout the United States.

Now in its 17th year in Nashville, the ATHENA Award program strives to identify individuals who use their vision and persistence to excel while reaching out and opening the way for others. Each year, the nominees exemplify leadership, superior performance, commitment to community, and unselfish assistance to women and women's issues.

In February, Lee will take part in the juried selection process, giving a three minute presentation on this year's topic based on a quote from Eleanor Roosevelt: "In the long run, we shape our lives, and we shape ourselves. The process never ends until we die. And the choices we make are ultimately our own responsibility." How has taking responsibility for your choices shaped your life and community?

That won't be difficult for Lee. One of the founders of Book'em in 1990, she has developed a children's literacy organization to encourage children to love books and reading. As executive director, Lee has guided her board in fulfilling its mission in two core areas: providing volunteer readers to local preschools, Head Start centers, and elementary schools, and collecting and distributing new books to children in lower-income families who might not otherwise have books. Lee believes that "given an early start, children learn not just to read, but to love reading."

Her energy and commitment helped Book'em grow to include a strong board of directors who provide books through four programs: Library Without Walls, collecting and distributing an average of 25,000 books each year to children served by 75 social service organizations and schools; Books in Honor, using donations given in honor or memory of a special person to supply books to libraries in schools and community centers; Reading Is Fundamental (RIF), which places volunteers in public schools and Head Start centers; and Read Me Week, an annual event highlighting the importance and fun of reading, when celebrities and volunteer readers converge in area schools. Her network of friends and resources is phenomenal and Lee's willingness to share with those who seek her guidance is legendary.

Lee has also given time, talent and energy to help young women achieve their dreams through service on the board of the Girl Scout Council of Cumberland Valley and through programs that ensure girls and young women develop the skills to succeed in the work force of the 21st century. She received the Girl Scouts, USA Thanks Badge in 1997 and the Thanks Badge II Award in 2001, and describes them as among the most meaningful reminders of endeavors that "benefited me as much as the women I worked with." Lee was the founding president of the Community Resource Center from 1985-1988. She served as president of WNBA, Nashville Chapter, from 1993-1995 and continues to stay involved, including serving on the annual holiday dinner committee.

Lee and husband John have raised three independent and delightful daughters—Jennifer, Karen, and Beth—who exemplify their strengths and beliefs.

Sue Bredensteiner

