

The Writer's Mark

Official Newsletter of the Carrollton Writers' Club

Volume One

Number One

May 24, 2006

Carrollton, GA--Welcome to our first issue! It's my hope that this will be the beginning of a useful forum for happenings with all our Carrollton writers, a way to keep everyone abreast of the goings-on. After each meeting I'll send members of the group presentations and discussions from our bimonthly meetings, as well as writing assignments, announcements, upcoming conferences, etc. All the news that's fit to read and some that ain't. I encourage you to let me know of special events in your writer's life, like books or novels completed, an exciting new short story or article that you've done and, especially, have sold. As we grow, I'd like to include an article from one of our group each month about their writing life; perhaps, even, feature an article or short story, selected by the group. I'd also welcome your ideas for improvements, additions, changes, etc., you'd like to see in the newsletter. You can email any of the above to me or present it at a meeting, for inclusion in the newsletter. Announcements of a personal nature, however, like births, deaths, marriages, divorces, birthdays, unexpected pregnancies or sleepovers, I request you forward to Beverly "Bubbles" Bruemmer, our social secretary.

May 23, 2006 Meeting Highlights

Activities Update

- Beginning with this meeting (and this newsletter) I have officially become the recording secretary for the group. Beverly will serve as the social secretary and Mary remains, as always, our beloved leader.
- Don't forget about the upcoming play this Friday and Saturday at the Whitesburg Elementary School, right in downtown Whitesburg. One of the skits to be performed was written by Claire Baker. Play starts at 7:30 PM both nights. For more info, contact Claire at pauldbaker@mindspring.com.

- Shelly Murphy, our resident Master Gardener, will have another article appear soon in the Times-Georgian newspaper. You won't want to miss these well-written, informative articles. Way to go, Shelly!
- Mary has had an article accepted for consideration by the publishers of Chicken Soup for the Soul. The article will appear in their new publication, Chicken Soup for the African-American Woman Writer's Soul. Kudos to Mary!
- Dave Green brought copies of the pictures he took at the first annual Pie Fest, held at Horton's Books on May 13th to honor prominent mystery writer, Patricia Sprinkle. The pictures are great (and so were the desserts!). Anyone who didn't get a copy can email Dave at david.green@carrollcountyschools.com. Thanks, Dave, though I think the old, bald dude could have been cropped from the photos improve their quality.
- Beverly informed us that she'd spoken with Jim Agan at the University of West Georgia about the status of a local writers' conference and he informed her that the conference is a 'go!' for October. It will be sponsored by the university in conjunction with their one-hundredth anniversary celebration. More details as they become available.
- Dave shared flyers with the group of upcoming writers' conferences, and one summer writing course, that might be of interest to our members. The websites are listed below. Check them out to see if you might like to attend:

Summer creative writing course: <http://www.creativewriting.emory.edu/>
 Southern Breeze Fall Conference (October) "Writing and Illustrating for Kids":
http://www.southern-breeze.org/conf_fallconference06.htm

The Alabama Writers' Conclave (in July)
<http://www.alabamawritersconclave.org/>

Also of interest to the group might be the Georgia Writers newsletter:
<http://www.georgiawriters.org/NewsMag.html>

Thanks, Dave, for all the great info.

Presentation

Critiquing by Mary Wilburn. Some fine points on how, what and what not to do in a critique. As we went to press, Mary had emailed the presentation to all the club members. If you didn't get yours, email her at Mnsaxon@aol.com. Nice job, Mary, despite the noise from the peanut gallery.

Assignments

There seemed to be some confusion about the assignment from the May 9th meeting. So here it is, again: Write a short story, around 2500 words (which is about ten pages but it can be more or less) to be submitted for the group's review by the June 13th meeting. That would give the writer one week (from May 9th meeting) to choose what they wanted to write about, two weeks to write the story and one week to polish it for presentation. (A caveat: stories should be as polished as you can get them before you submit them to the group.) Because of the length required, it was suggested that everyone email their stories to every other member of the group so they could print them out, critique them and give them back to the author at the next meeting.

So far, here are the submissions:

Beverly: The Moose Who Lost Christmas

Status: Read and critiqued at the May 23rd meeting. (Those who couldn't attend should email her your comments).

Shelly: The Gift Certificate

Status: Emailed to everyone; deferred for reading until June; some critiques given back to her, email the rest to her or bring them to one of the meetings.

Rose: That Night

Status: Emailed to everyone; deferred reading until June; email critiques to her or bring them to one of the meetings.

Dave: The Winemaker

Status: Emailed to everyone; deferred reading until June; email critiques to him or bring them to one of the meetings.

Tom: Billy's Funeral

Status: Emailed to everyone; deferred reading until length reduced; email critiques to him or bring them to one of the meetings.

Rose and David asked for time to revise their submissions, which revisions they will resubmit and everyone can offer critiques of the final product. This is a learning process! If you feel that you want to revise what you've done, whether of your own volition or based on the critiques you've received, please feel free. Only one reading per story, however. Once you've read it to the group, it's a fait accompli.

As for my story, it's deliberately a first draft. There are many, many things wrong with it. It's submission was a setup between Mary and me to allow you to flex your critiquing muscles. Be hard! Tell me what doesn't work and why. (Using the list from Mary's presentation will help you.) See how this works? You get two for the price of one: writing exercise and critiquing exercise at the same time!

Closing

Business to ponder for the next meeting:

Beverly suggested we work up a writers' activities calendar, print it up and distribute it to the group's members, to help keep track of who's presenting each month, assignments and, very importantly, expenses you incur as a writer (which include the lunches we have after the meetings). We will go into more depth about this at the June meetings.

Since the Arts Center is driving us from our home during the summer (because of the kids' activities they have scheduled), the first meeting of June and July will be at the Sunset Hills Country Club. Joy has been kind enough to set that up for us. If you need directions, contact me, Joy or Mary. The group discussed whether to have a second meeting during those months and the consensus was we should. So Beverly and I have offered to open our homes to the second meetings in June and in July. (In August, we can go back home to the Arts Center.) It remained undecided about which would be first, but we can decide that at our next meeting and get directions to everyone who needs them.

This newsletter is just the beginning of what may become a more formal production. I need everyone's input on the choice of the name (i.e., do you like it and does anyone know if anyone else is using it?). It may become a printed version--mailed to everyone if we can't work out how to email the artwork so everyone can open the file--and Dave has posed the possibility to me of putting it up on a website. Depends on how complicated it becomes and how much of my time it requires. Food for thought. For now, I offer this protean representative.

Your humble editor,
Tom "Gadfly" Cook

I've striven for accuracy. If I got it wrong, email me at boinerz@copper.net