



The Writers' Mark

The Official Newsletter of the Carrollton Creative Writers' Club

"All the news that's fit to print...and some that ain't"

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Carrollton, GA--Here at Lothlorien, all responds to spring's caress. Her warm breath urges redbuds and maples into bloom; leaves sprout from the hard arms of trees and shrubs; blueberry blooms blush pale lavender; dogwood bracts spread in wide-eyed amazement; the creek babbles joyfully over white quartz rock. The creek's been visible from the house throughout winter but now hides behind a soft green fog. And with the flowers, spring spreads her gossamer yellow cloak, fertile matrix for all whose feet must remain bound to the earth; bees feast; humans sneeze and complain. From a branch outside my window, a male cowbird, in sweet notes, pipes his clan: "To me! To me! To me!" Magic rides the wind as the first hummingbird, a jewel piercing air, arrives.

'Magic' also describes the exhibition of talent at last Tuesday's meeting. Present were ZanMarie, Susan, Denise, John, Richard, Joe, Mary Wilburn, Bev, Amber, Joann, Diana and Dave.

Announcements

Mary Wilburn and **Joann Dunn** have switched months in which they will facilitate. **Joann** will facilitate the **May** meetings, and **Mary** will facilitate in **August**.

Joann Dunn called for the group's ideas, suggestions and experiences with various publishing routes (i.e., POD, e-publishing, small press, etc.) so that she may compile them into her presentation at our first meeting in May. Email her at planter630@aol.com.

Dave Green reported the results of the poll he sent out regarding a change of meeting times to accommodate some of our members who can't make it Tuesday mornings. He says he got eight responses, and the consensus was to keep the current meeting time and place.

Beverly Bruemmer put forth the suggestion that the group consider breakout sessions, maybe one Saturday a month or so, to bring works-in-progress for critique, like a workshop. Groups with similar interests (for example, children's writing, adult fiction, picture books, etc.) could meet at various locations to work intensively on those days. We think it's an idea worth considering in light of how large our group has grown (and is growing!), as it would give more time to those with special interests than they get at the general meetings, and it would allow some of our members who cannot attend the Tuesday meetings to participate.

Dave Green will hold technology classes for the group this summer at his lab at the school where he teaches. Discussion followed of having, perhaps, two sessions, to help our members learn how to use word processors, .PDF writers, and the like. One session is definitely planned for **July**, when Dave is scheduled to facilitate. More on this as plans solidify.

Cheer and Tears

Cheers! ☺ To **Michele Casteel** and her family, on the birth of her new baby boy! Got an email from her last week:

“Wanted to let you know that baby Remington Alexander Casteel arrived on Feb. 23,2007 at 11:27 AM weighing in at 7lbs. .04oz. Everyone is doing fine. Hope to see you guys soon. Anyone who wants to see pictures can check out www.thatsmybaby.net code# 014 K1176.”

Cheers!☺ To **Mary Cunningham**, on her latest interview, with Alyssa Fuller, on the Young Adult (And Kids) Books Central! You can access the interview at: http://www.yabooksc.com/fuseAction=authors.interview&interview_id=133.

Mary also presented two programs at the **Blue Ridge Writers' Conference**, some of which she plans to discuss with the group when she facilitates this month's meetings.

Presentation

Second session of the month; there was no presentation.

***Shirt With The Dirt* Special Report**

Blue Ridge Writers' Conference

If you ever decide to go on a trip that should take only three and a half hours, travel alone. Do not go with a group of rowdies. Despite *expert* navigation, our trip to Blairsville required five and half hours, principally because **Dave Green** got lost in Jasper (a town the size of a postage stamp), and wouldn't listen to said navigator, thus requiring that we circle the burgh three times before finding our way. The stop at the liquor store before we left Carrollton probably added to the journey's length. And, of

course, we had to have lunch in Jasper (having become so familiar with it). I have never laughed so much in all my life.

Unfortunately, the conference itself turned out not to be as compelling the roundtrip drive. The two most positive things about it were the location and the large delegation present from our own writers' group. The reception at the Cabin Grille was nice, if noisy, and a group of us gathered for dinner afterward. Small-press publisher, Diane Hamilton, joined us; conversation was lively and fun.

The greatest problem with the conference: little new information. Last year's program was much more interesting. And, with the exception of Terry Kay and our Mary Cunningham, the speakers were not very exciting. We all agreed that next year, before deciding whether we'd return, much closer scrutiny of invited speakers would be required.

The salvation, of course, was the networking. And the camaraderie of our very large representation. Those two things alone made the going worthwhile.

Readings

Each month, as we meet, some of our members come in and sit down and not much is heard from them, until they submit something they've written. Then one is struck, as in a soft explosion of awe, by the amount of talent sitting around our meeting table. This meeting was no exception. To wit:

ZanMarie Steadham--*A Cat On Your Lap*, her absolutely delightful, and fun, feline couplet poem for young children.

Diana Black--*The Red Robe*, an intriguing, well-wrought excerpt from her Middle Age children's novel. Santa Claus will never seem the same.

John Stephens--*Scottish Lament*, his humorous poem about "four fathers."

The Mountains of Megiddo--an excerpt from his novel-in-progress, exhibiting his sure, strong voice and his original—and breathtaking--imagery.

David Green--*The Day Girls Took Over The World* (subtitled, *Always Carry A Frog, And Never Give It Up*)—

A hysterically funny chapter from his new YA novel. We told Dave he should write humor; this reading bears us out.

Denise Williams--*Our Big White Porcelain Bowl* and *Some Are Missing Feet*, two wonderful children's picture books, complete with her superb art work. To say she awed us all with the beauty of her stories and her art is to make a gross understatement.

Joe Byrd--*Tigers*, a poem I missed hearing (my deepest apologies, Joe) due an urgency of nature.

Bang!, his witty and profound poem about creation, which, at the request of many present, is reprinted below in its entirety:

Bang!

Ffffffffffffffffffttt.

Sizzle.

Pop?

“What time is it?” Time asked.

“I don’t know,” answered Chaos,

“Isn’t that your?”

“I just got here,” Time said,
and pulled out his watch.

He squinted at it and he shook it.

“It’s busted!” Time said.

Chaos winked and gave a nudge,

“Yeah, that’s my job.”

Time and Chaos sat

at the edge of it all

and laughed as they sang,

“Dust and rust, rust and dust.

our best work is the death of work

and all that is built we grind to silt!

Dust and rust, rust and dust.

Our best work is dust and rust!”

They wiggled their toes in mysterious waters,

dashing galaxies and kicking stars,

splashing light across the night

in such delight.

Worlds were smashed

in silent thunder.

“Dust and rust!”

“Who cares, as long as it passes.”

Then, God played a joke on Time and Chaos.

He made Dust breathe and think

and grab ideas from the darkest ink

and turn the rust to the Devil’s drink

to make machines that

whoosh, bang, and clink

“Dust thou wert’, little one,” said Chaos.

“And dust thou art,’ it is said, said Time”

“and dust thou wilt be again!” laughed the both of them
as the danced through fields of stars.

They snapped their fingers and the machines did rust.

They thumbed their noses and gears clogged with dust.

But Dust began to dig and toil

because they made his temper boil
And then he found the hidden oil.

. . .and. . .
whoosh, bang, and clink.
whoosh, bang, and clink.

Dust worked through the day and the night
to keep things a-runnin.
Time and Chaos worked through the night and the day
to break things down and wear them away.

Whoosh, bang, and. . .
“God, I’m tired,” said Dust,
“I need some help.”

. . .clink

“Hmmm,” hmmmmed God, “That I’ll fix.”
He took a little dust (the basic mix)
and added the light of stars to make it bewitchin’
and a little bit of Hell to make it be bitchin’
(just to keep things rollin’)
“Now, Dust,” God said, “your help is here.”
“This is She.”

“She will do her best to manage Time.
and Chaos will have to sneak in when She’s not lookin’.
Care and tenderness are her domain.
Pride is the best you can get from mechanical things.
She will bring love to your world of machines.”

“Dust and rust!” Time and Chaos yet sang.
And they still raided Dust’s little shop.
But they couldn’t destroy as fast
(as) the machines that
Whoosh, bang, and clink.

Time stumbled and hit his head, “Ow!”
Chaos slipped and ran into Time.
“What’s that?” they yelled.
There was a tremor in creation.
A roar ripped through the universe
as a new little bit of Dust started to breathe and cry.
Dust and She now had a child
To carry on their work after they were gone.
They laughed at Time.
They poked Chaos with a stick.
They said, “You two have had your way but we are here to stay.
We have our work. We have our play.

We have our love and we'll just keep coming at you,
because that's what dust does best.
whoosh, bang, and clink
whoosh, bang, and clink.

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Assignment

This was the second session of the month; there was no assignment.

Conclusion

Our next meeting is **April 10, 2007**, in **Room 4** at the **Cultural Arts Center**,
10AM-12N. There being no further business, we adjourned faster than a cat moving
through a room full of rocking chairs, to more important matters, namely, a wonderful
lunch at **Miller's**, on the square.

Your humble editor,
Tom Cook

[Pub. Note: We've burned the midnight oil checking for mistakes, but, should you
note one, email us at boinerz@copper.net. After threatening the editor with a loaded
shotgun, to keep him out of local cow pastures, we've been forced to use a pencil on him
several times this week (don't ask).]