



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--I awoke this morning to the erratic tap of raindrops against the window glass and to the soft snores of the warm, pint-sized creature curled against the small of my back. Precious likes to sleep in mornings when the sky is wet and the ground a bog. Soon, however, the tap turned to torrent and I made the mistake of turning my head to listen to the muted roar of the heavenly cascade against the roof of the house. Precious stirred, rooted her way from beneath the covers, stuck out her head and licked my cheek, then lay down again, resting her head on my arm and looking up at me with her monocular vision as if to say, "Let's not get up today."

My Precious. We loves it, we does. The Precious came to us and now it's ours.

"Sorry, my girl," I said and stroked the smooth, blonde head, "but I have things to do. Time to get started." I slipped out of bed, pulled on my robe and stumbled to the bathroom to wash sleep from my eyes and dreams from my mind.

I looked up. A mirrored version of the real Gollum stared back at me.

"Hmmm. You look a tad rough today," I said, unable to tear my gaze from those haunted eyes. The creature stared back, its sharp, tiny teeth showing as it mouthed my words in mockery.

I turned away from the mirror. Sometimes it's best if fictional creatures stay in the worlds created for them. And if writers stay in bed.

Yesterday's meeting was wonderfully productive. You'll see some of it's outcome below. Amber and Ian joined us again, to our delight. Also present were Mary, Bev, Shelly and Claire and, in multiple effigy, our man, David.

Announcements

- As announced in the last WM, there'll be only one meeting in December, and it will be hosted by Bev Bruemmer in her home. Discussion evolved to a consensus on having a pot luck lunch. So mark your calendars, make your favorite dish and bring it to Bev's on TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12. The time's changed, though: 11:00AM to 2:00PM. It'd be great if everyone could come, but whether you plan to attend or not, please RSVP Bev at mermaid4@bellsouth.net so she can count heads.
- The Friends of the Smyrna Library, in conjunction with the Atlanta chapter of Sisters in Crime, is sponsoring a mystery writers and readers conference in January, entitled "Murder Goes South." Margaret Maron will be the keynote speaker. The conference runs only one day, the 27th, but there's a dinner on the 26th, at which Ms. Maron will speak. Cost for the dinner Friday night and the conference Saturday is \$50. It will be held at the Smyrna Library and surrounds. For more information, and if you would like an application, go to www.murdergoessouth.com/registrationpf.htm or email Tom at boinerz@copper.net. There was some discussion that, if many of our group want to go, we might check into securing a van so all of us could travel together. Suggestions or offers, email Tom. He promised to check into it and get back to the group.
- At our next regular meeting, on the 28th, we will have as guest speakers a group who call themselves **The Litchix**. These three Atlanta-based writers are currently collaborating on an amateur-sleuth mystery, entitled "A Well Manicured Murder." We met them at Sisters in Crime and they expressed an interest in coming to our meeting to read their first chapter and to get some feedback from us about it. These ladies are delightful in their persons and their presentation, so I encourage everyone who possibly can to attend.
(Learn more about them at www.litchix.com.)
- Tom reported that he's been trying to get **The Dixie Divas** to come speak to us in March but is not having a great deal of progress. Two of the group responded to his invitation, but one of those turned him down because she'll be in the middle of a project. One of the group, Patricia Sprinkle, is already slated to speak to us in February. Another member of the group, Jackie Miles said she would be delighted to come, but left the arrangements up to their "leader," Karin Gillespie, who's the one who can't come. And the remaining member of the group, Julie Cannon, hasn't responded to the invitation. Tom said he spoke with Patricia last Saturday and she put forth the possibility of she and Jackie Miles coming together in February. He also said he'd continue to pursue this and get back to the group.
- Bev discussed, with input from Mary and Tom, the importance of attending writers' conferences, whether one's a veteran or a beginner. It's not necessary to have a work ready for publication in order to attend, because the reasons for attending a conference can be varied. One reason might, indeed, be to meet with an

agent or editor to promote one's book, but another, just as legitimate, reason is to improve one's craft by attending one of the seminars or panels within the conference. Yet another is to network with other writers; you never know whether a person you meet at a conference might turn out to be just the connection you need to further your career. And there's no need to empty your bank account to attend a conference. Start small and near. There are many excellent conferences within easy reach of our particular neck of the woods which afford you all the above opportunities. To mention a few: *Murder Goes South*, sponsored by the Friends of the Smyrna Library, in January; *Spring Mingle*, under the aegis of The Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, in March; and *The Blue Ridge Writer's Festival*, presented by The Blue Ridge Arts Association, also in March. Choose one that you think will be suit your needs and go. To make it more fun and less intimidating, buddy-up. Like Mary says, one always comes home from a conference suffused with the feeling one's really a writer.

- In connection with the above subject, there was discussion over the importance, as a writer, of having business cards and always carrying some with you. It's an easy way to get people to remember your name and it doesn't have to be fancy or expensive. Many word-processing programs on computers have a sub-program for making business cards, with several choices or styles. And card stock is relatively inexpensive and readily available at places such as *Staples* or *Wal-Mart*. Office supply stores, such as *Staples*, will also assist you in designing and printing your cards. Prices range from around \$30 for a plain card to \$60 for a fancier version at Staples. And that's for five hundred to a thousand cards. Choose a card that's simple in design but with some indication (like a logo) of what you do. Those who are published frequently use a copy of their book's front cover as the background for the card, a clever way to advertise the work. And remember, the cards are deductible as a business expense. Bev says another inexpensive, quality alternative is *Stewart's Pretty Papers*, a local stationer (email Bev at mermaid4@bellsouth.net for contact information).
- Mary brought up discussion of the cost of our logo mugs, which are currently available at Ditto's on Maple Street for \$15. Other groups charge far less and one doesn't have to take the mug home and bake it before it can be used. (The Sisters in Crime mug costs only six or seven dollars and is ready to use.) Bev said she would see if there's a place where we can get a lot of cups printed up all at once and offer them at a more reasonable price. Anyone with this knowledge or suggestions, please email Bev at mermaid4@bellsouth.net.
- As we grow and move forward, the time has come to look at charging membership dues to defray some of the group's expenses. To that end, the group decided on the following:
 - 1) Beginning January 1, 2007 and each January 1st thereafter, annual memberships will be due. They are \$25, payable in cash only to Bev Bruemmer, who will act as Treasurer. The treasurer will issue a receipt to each member who's paid dues (keep this for your records and for tax purposes).

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2) The Treasurer will maintain records of who has paid, how much is on hand in the fund and where and for what reason, if any, the money was spent. Also, the treasurer will report the status of this fund to the group quarterly.

3) Members will have until March of each year to pay the dues. If dues are not paid by the end of that month, one is no longer a member and will be dropped from the rolls and from distribution of The Writers' Mark.

4) Regardless of when in a given year a prospective member joins the group, the full annual amount will be due.

5) It was agreed that Invited Speakers will be granted honorary membership in the group and will receive complimentary copies of The Writers' Mark.

6) The Writers' Mark is complimentary with membership. There is no charge for it and no funds are deducted from the membership dues to pay for any part of its publication and distribution. However, unpaid membership dues will result in one's email address being dropped from the distribution list. Beginning with the first issue of the WM each January, reminders that memberships are due will appear in each issue until the last issue in March.

- As you all know, members of the group gather for lunch after each meeting. You don't have to go, but you're always invited. Following is a list, in no particular order, of the restaurants we currently use for that purpose. If anyone present wishes to go to a particular restaurant in the list, mention it at the meeting. Or, if you have other choices you know of that the group may like, mention that and we'll add it to the list. Currently, we grace:

Miller's (on the square)

The Corner Café (on the square)

Pearl's (on the square)

The Little Hawaiian (on Alabama Street/Bankhead
Highway)

Cheers and Tears

Cheers! ☺ To **Mary Cunningham**, The West Georgia Juvenile Fiction author, who will be signing copies of her books, *The Missing Locket* and *The Magic Medallion*, from her "Cynthia's Attic" fantasy/fiction series at the following times and places:

***Border's Books & Music, Arbor Place Mall, Douglasville, GA;
Saturday, December 2, from 12-2P***

***Barnes & Noble, 3625 Dallas Highway, Marietta, GA; Saturday,
December 2, 5-7PM***

I urge all of you to go to one of these signings to support Mary's work. Way to go Mary!!

Presentation

Bev Bruemmer and Mary Wilburn presented an idea for a group writers' calendar, a device to act as a day-planner, an expense sheet, a contact list and more. Bev's been discussing the idea with David, who will help her set it up. They polled the group for ideas and here's the outcome:

- The calendar would be designed for a looseleaf notebook. There would be a **cover page**, on the back of which would appear the **Writers' Book List** Tom devised.
- The second page would be designed for a **List of Potential Speakers**
- Subsequent pages would have, on the left-hand side, a **box calendar** for each month, with spaces large enough to enter to-dos, appointments, etc. More space for that would appear in a date-sequential listing on the right-hand page. Also on the right-hand page would be room to list expenses for that month, as well as mileage and income. An additional block would allow you to write in the name(s) or paste in the business card of a writing contact you'd met that month.
- In the back would be a blank page or two, for notes.
- Once Bev and Dave have completed the concept, it would be emailed to each member in the group so that you could print it out and put it in a 3-ring notebook.

The whole idea is to get you organized, like a regular business person, and keep you that way. Everything you need would be at your fingertips. And you could add things, like the members list, to the binder as you liked.

Readings

(Ed. Note: This is a new heading under which I will put the title and author of any work any member reads at the meetings.)

Shelly Murphy--*The Turkey Fiasco*, an hilarious account of Thanksgiving
gone wrong

Ian Wesley--*You Were My Hen*, a lyrical, amusing poem

Assignment

Due to the fact that we have guest speakers scheduled for the next meeting, there is no assignment. However, if you are working on something or wish to bring something to read at the next meeting, please feel free.

Conclusion

Our **next** regularly scheduled **meeting** is **Tuesday, November 28 at 10AM** in the Cultural Arts Center, Room 4. Hope to see you all there!

There being no further business, we adjourned to more important matters, namely, lunch at Miller's.

Your humble editor,
Tom Cook

[Pub. Note: Much effort has been expended to be as accurate as possible. The editor, despite the way he looks, has been over every comma and semicolon to make sure it's right, but, if you should find a mistake, please email me at boinerz@copper.net. I've already dug a large hole with a backhoe and want a reason to throw the editor in it and cover it up.]