
East Tennessee **Writer**

Newsletter of the Knoxville Writers' Guild
Volume 11, Number 4, April 2003

Booker will read on April 3



© News Sentinel photo

In 1919, the city of Knoxville, Tennessee exploded in a firestorm of racial hatred and violence when a black man was accused of murdering a white woman.

Knoxville prided itself as a liberal, harmonious community that had sympathized with the North during the Civil War. There had never been a lynching and the black citizens were encouraged to vote. Yet, despite the outward amiability, both blacks and whites were acutely aware of the invisible divide that kept them separate . . . (From the back cover of the book)

Bob Booker has spent plenty of time sitting down in places where blacks were once refused service. He has also spent plenty of time standing up for the rights of black people.

Although he should be tired by now, he still has plenty of energy left over—to serve on important civic boards and committees in Knoxville, to write books, and to share some of those experiences with the Knoxville Writers' Guild at its April 3 meeting at 7 p.m. at the Laurel Theater in the University area, 16th and Laurel.

His career includes administrative assistant to the mayor Knoxville, a former state legislator, and executive director of the Beck Cultural Exchange Center. But what stands out in his history is his vigorous participation in the civil rights field, fighting for the rights of people of all colors. His most recent position is with the Center for Neighborhood Development Empowerment Zone program, which provides federal funds to communities for long-term economic improvement programs as well as projects for destitute, impoverished or neglected areas and neighborhoods.



Robert Booker talks to John Bell, Dean of Men at Knoxville College, through the City Jail peep slot after his arrest at the Tennessee Theater on Oct. 9, 1961. (Photo courtesy of Beck Cultural Exchange Center.)

Booker is a graduate of Austin-East High School in Knoxville and Knoxville College. He taught French for two years at Howard High School in Chattanooga but then returned to Knoxville to participate in the civil rights movement.

When Booker speaks at the Knoxville Writers' Guild meeting, he will read from his first book, *Two Hundred Years of Black Culture in Knoxville, Tennessee 1791-1991*. His most recent book is *The Heat of a Red Summer* (see column at left). The reading is free and open to the public.

Festival Wants Local Writers

Authors should consult the web site for the Dogwood Arts Festival, April 18, for information on how to sign up for selling your books in the literary tent. Go to <http://www.dogwoodarts.com>.

The Writing News



National Poetry Month

Inaugurated by the Academy in April 1996, National Poetry Month (NPM) brings together publishers, booksellers, literary organizations, libraries, schools, and poets around the country to celebrate poetry and its vital place in American culture. Thousands of businesses and non-profit organizations participate through readings, festivals, book displays, workshops, and other events.

This year, NPM will focus on "poetry in your community," and on April 1, the Academy will debut a National Poetry Map of America, with state-by-state listings of poets, poetry journals, poetry organizations, literary presses, poet laureates, conferences and writing programs, and much more. Join us today in building the most comprehensive and largest poetry resource on the Internet! In addition, the Academy will partner with Andy Carroll and the [American Poetry & Literacy Project](#) to promote and distribute free copies of his new anthology, *Across State Lines: America's 50 States as Represented in Poetry* (Dover Publications). Also check out the **National Poetry Map of America**: Discover what's going on in poetry near you and around the country.

Visit the NPM Gallery to view and buy copies of posters from previous years or get a free copy of the NPM 2003 poster.



Also check out [poetsagainstwar.org](#)

Letter to the Editor

(Editor's note: Yes, our president, Julie Auer, asked for letters in the last issue, but we never expected to get such a thorough and glowing review as we did with our first response. Honest, it's a genuine reply! However, even if you have a negative criticism of our paper or our policies, write to us: We know we're not perfect!)

Dear Editor,

In response to Ms. Auer's call for letters posted in the March issue of the *East Tennessee Writer*, I submit the following commentary of my perceptions pertaining to the Knoxville Writer's Guild. The March 6th meeting was only the second Guild event I have attended, the first being a poetry workshop directed by Ms Still and Mr Lydick, but the energy and devotion the Board and its members regularly give to the organization is blatant. It shows through in the quality of both the contents and aesthetic polish of the Guild's latest anthology, *Literary Lunch*, through the professional appearance of its website ([www.knoxvillewritersguild.org](#)), and also through the myriad of services, events, contests, honors, and so very much more the Guild provides and/or oversees, associates with, funds, etc. Most especially, however, this sense of dedication comes through in the warm, sincere welcomes extended to visitors and new members alike; the nurturing, supportive spirit I have thus far experienced has been a wonderful, if somewhat eerily utopian, surprise. At the March 6th meeting, Jack Mauro had addressed a question posed from the audience, and was speaking (tangentially) of love, when he said: "No one is entitled to it. If you happen to find it, you're just fortunate, that's all", and though I respect Mr Mauro's opinion on the matter, I feel he left the idea less than complete. Luck blooms from a bough well-tended. A great deal of effort and determination provides the best growing place for good fortune, and it is the work and commitment of the Guild's Board and members that literally (pun proudly intended) *make* East Tennessee a more fortunate place to be a writer. In the spirit of keeping this somewhat laudatory letter rather short, I should close with a sincere thank you to the Guild for not just existing or being, but *living*, within the poems, letters, stories, novels, and articles stemming from the branches of good fortune that sprout like dogwood blossoms across and throughout the Aprils and Mays of East Tennessee. I wish you Peace, Warmth, Always,—Brian Long

(And then we received this tongue-in-cheek message in response to the photo of 50 unclothed women lying in the snow to protest a war with Iraq):

Now there's a Bush policy I can support.

Jack Rentfro

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

BY JULIE AUER



Some of you may have read about the plight of a Union County family whose youngest member, a middle school student, was targeted by classmates and school officials over her refusal to participate in school-endorsed religious activities. As I understand it, students were given the "option" of leaving school to participate in Christian tent revivals during school hours. Most of the students at the Union County middle school were, of course, Christian, and more specifically, evangelical Protestant. Kids being kids, everybody wanted to

cut class: and what better reason than worshipping together?

One kid wasn't interested, though, and for a very good reason that happened to be nobody's business but hers. When India Tracy declined to participate, she was more or less interrogated about why she was not interested in going to tent revivals. India did not initially offer any reason for not wanting to participate; even as a very young girl in middle school, she was mature enough to realize that it was none of their business why she preferred to remain at school working on things like reading, history, and math.

Under pressure from her peers and adults who ought to know better than to intimidate a young girl, India finally admitted that she was not a Christian and did not want to take part in Christian activities. You can imagine what happened next. The nonconformist suddenly transformed - in the public mind - into a troublemaker. Worse, she was perceived as a heathen troublemaker, and worse still, a heathen troublemaker who had the temerity to suggest that her values were protected by the Constitution.

Her peers, predictably, banded together to make India's life miserable. She was threatened, ridiculed, beaten and eventually forced to leave school. She was accused of being a Satanist, a lesbian, and a "nigger lover." India was spirited enough to counter that while the first two accusations were unfounded - she does not worship the devil, and she likes boys - it is true that she loves black people, and all other people besides.

I have met the Tracy family. They are peaceful, intelligent, friendly, and articulate people who want two things: to be left alone to raise their children and manage their farm, and to make sure their daughters get a good education. However, they are having a difficult time financially, and home-schooling India costs money. If you are interested in helping India Tracy achieve her goal of finishing school, please consider attending a benefit for funding her education, to be held at the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church, 2931 Kingston Pike, on Sunday, April 13 3:00 p.m. For more info, contact Brian Griffing at bgriffing@care2.com.

Call for Submissions



Brian Long, poetry editor of *The Christian Guide*, a regional, quarterly magazine, is seeking positive, accessible poetry to publish in up-coming issues. Submitted poems should concern themselves with God's interaction with the nature of, and surrounding, mankind (in micro- or macrocosm), and/or any other themes associated with the gentler tenets of the devotion reciprocated between Earth and Heaven. Poems of any form or style will be given careful consideration, but please do not send trite, forced rhyme.

The *Christian Guide* was established in 1989. It serves a readership spanning the Southeast. The publication is magazine sized with full color cover, and contains features, articles, announcements, advertisements, photographs, etc. Presently, the press run is 25,000 for each edition. We have published Laura Still, Jill Alexander Essbaum, Charles Semones, CE Chaffin, Teresa White, and Leo Yankevich, among others.

Send submissions to: *The Christian Guide*
PO Box 14622

Knoxville, TN 37914

Attn.: Brian Long, Poetry Editor

All submissions should include a cover letter, brief bio, list of publishing credits (if any), and an SASE. All rights revert to the author upon publication. *The Christian Guide* pays two contributor's copies. Response time varies. We accept e-mail submissions. Send them to: Godpoems@aol.com (No attachments, please.) For more details visit the *Guide's* website: www.thechristianguide.net, or see our listing in **the upcoming edition (2004) of the Net's Market.**

GALA 2003

See you at the Knoxville Writers' Guild
second annual Gala
at the Holston Hills Country Club,
Sat. April 5, beginning at 6:30 p.m.
Honors, awards, and announcements.
Good music and good food. Join us there!
Tickets are \$15. See p. 5 for info.

A Sure Cure for Rejection: Get Mad, Then Get Published

By Judy DiGregorio



Anger erupted in me like hot lava when an editor met with me to critique my manuscript at a writing conference. His insensitive comments irritated me so much that I fled home after the session, I sat down at my computer, and literally pounded the keyboard as I began to flesh out an article rebutting each thing he said. My fragile ego couldn't handle honest feedback. I wanted to be petted and stroked like my calico cat. I wanted to be tickled under the chin. Instead, the editor had informed me, in effect, that my writing had fleas. To work through my anger and frustration, I wrote an article called "Feedback: Who Needs It?" In the article I addressed each criticism the editor had offered during my evaluation. After I cooled down, however, I realized the suggestions he offered me were invaluable. They were *specific*. They were *true*. I needed to hear them.

After several rejections, I successfully sold the article to *Inscriptions* (www.inscriptionsmagazine.com), the e-zine for professional writers. Then I sent a copy of it to the editor, thanking him for the suggestions that had enabled me to publish the article. I was still a beginning writer, but I had already learned one lesson. Accept criticism gracefully and learn from **it. I wanted to be the best writer I could be, but I could not improve without the help of good writing and submitting my work. During a particularly frustrating period, I received 27 rejection letters in a row. Finally, I received a handwritten note scribbled on the bottom of a form letter from an editor at**

Field & Stream. The note chastised me for not paying more attention to the magazine guidelines. Under the note, the editor had scrawled a word that electrified me—"Retry." This editor obviously recognized my talent, even if she didn't accept this particular piece. I kissed the letter reverently and stuffed it into my pocket. In my excitement, I pulled it out to read and reread. Unfortunately, when I scanned the letter again the next day, I made a startling discovery. The scribbled word at the bottom of the page matched the signature block on the letter. It didn't say "Retry." It said "Betsy," the editor's first name. In my desperation to be published, I had misread the editor's handwritten signature. My hopes of fame and fortune popped quicker than a balloon.

Back to the computer I crawled. I wrote an article detailing the experience entitled "Desperately Seeking Publication." After several more rejections, I finally sold this article to *Inkspot*, another online publication for writers. Unfortunately, *Inkspot* folded before publishing it, so I resold the article to *The Writing Parent* (www.thewritingparent.com). After publishing several articles in regional and local magazines, I lobbied the editor of our local paper to give me a humor column. I informed him that I was dependable, funny, and cheap. He didn't care. I left him sample columns and persisted in visiting him every three months. After nine months, he finally gave me a column—to stop my visits, I guess. Alas, he took another job after my column appeared four times. The interim editor cut back on local columnists so I was once more columnless. When a new editor finally started work, I employed the same strategy I had with the first editor. Again, I had to wait almost a year. This time the editor offered me a humor column in the newspaper's supplementary publication, *Senior Living* magazine. I accepted at once and am still writing for it. The pay is low, but the exposure is high. The magazine is distributed in hospitals, fitness centers, credit unions, and hotels. Writing for *Senior Living* has given me a great deal of visibility and added to my writing credentials.

I've learned quite a bit since that first painful writing critique. I've learned to handle rejection and accept criticism. I'm a woman of small talents and big feet. Yet I've learned that patience and persistence enable me to successfully publish in a variety of newspapers, magazines and anthologies. You can do it, too. Just be patient, be persistent, and be published! Stop procrastinating and start writing. Grab a pencil and paper or sit down at your computer. Write something. Write anything. Write a letter to your husband, your mother, or your doctor. Keep a small notebook with you and jot down any ideas that occur to you during your daily routine. Take a writing class on the Internet or at a local college. Join a local writers' group. Attend a writing conference. Accept that you will have to make sacrifices. Most of us work full time and write in our spare time. Turn off the television and turn on your brain. Cultivate this habit. Review and revise your work after the first draft. Wait several days or weeks before doing it. What sounded like Shakespeare when you initially wrote it may now sound like gibberish.

Touch someone with your writing. Nothing will give you more encouragement than hearing the words, "I loved your article." Polish and perfect your work before you submit it. Writing takes both skill and determination. All you have to do is start!

(This article appeared in the April issue of *Inscriptions* in the "Off the Cuff" section. Judy, a member of the Knoxville Writers' Guild, is a monthly humor columnist for *Senior Living* and serves as vice-president of the Tennessee Mountain Writers Board of Directors. Her light verse and humorous essays have also appeared in such publications as *Literary Lunch*, *New Millennium Writings*, *Amy/Navy Times*, *CC Motorcycle News Magazine*, *The Writing Parent*, *Church Musician*, *Alabama School Journal*, and other publications. We welcome articles about writing. Please submit to editor at jrd531k@msn.com. Submissions will not be returned. Use in the newsletter is up to the discretion of the editor.)

Appalachian Writers Contests

Contests open to all dues-paying AWA members; DEADLINE postmark June 1, 2003.

The Tom Jackson Short Story Award –\$25.00 to best entry; entry limited to approximately 2,000 words; no restriction on subject matter; entrant must be thirty (30) years old or younger; entry may not be entered in Arnow Fiction Award competition simultaneously

The Harriette Arnow Award for Short Story –\$25.00 for best short story; no restrictions on subject matter or length of entry; no restrictions on age.

The James Still Award for Poetry –\$25.00 for a selection of up to three poems; no restrictions on subject matter or length of entries; no age restrictions

The Wilma Dykeman Award for Essay –\$25.00 award for an essay on Appalachian life and literature, religion, folklore, culture, and/or values; no restrictions on entry length; no age restrictions

The Josefina Niggli Award for Playwriting –\$25.00 for a one-act play; no restrictions on subject matter; no restrictions on age of entrant

General Contest Rules

You must join or already be an AWA member currently up to date on dues to enter the contests, but you pay no additional entry fees or reading fees and may enter any or all contests for which you are eligible. Submitted entries should not have been published or performed in any form, but they may be under consideration for publication. All submissions must be typed or word-processed. Photocopies accepted. Submit two copies with removable title pages which include your name, address, and telephone no.; title of work; name of contest to which you are submitting the piece for consideration. The number of awards determined for each specific contest is contingent upon the number of entries for each specific contest. If there are fewer than five members who submit entries for any given contest, the award for that contest will be suspended for that year.

Contestants may not submit more

than 3 entries to any one contest (for example, a poet may submit no more than three separate pieces for the James Still Poetry Award. AWA membership fees are nonrefundable.

No entries will be returned. You may send registration, dues, and entries in the same envelope. See conference registration for dues info. Mail contest entries to: Appalachian Writers Association, c/o Marianne Worthington, Cumberland College, 6000 College Station Dr., Williamsburg, KY 40769

Contest Winners to Read at Gala

Winners and runners-up have been named in the annual Knoxville Writers' Guild statewide writing contests for fiction, poetry and essay. These writers will be honored along with George Scarborough, the nationally known, prize-winning poet from Oak Ridge, at the second annual KWG awards gala, beginning at 6:30 p.m. Saturday April 5 at the Holston Hills Country Club. Winners will take home prizes totaling more than \$2,500, and will read from their works. Marilyn Kallet, head of the UT creative writing program, will present Scarborough with a Career Achievement Award. KWG President Julie Auer will receive, and Brian Griffin will talk about the Peter Taylor Prize.

Others on the program include *News-Sentinel* columnist Don Williams, and poets Laura Still, Marybeth Boyanton and Judy Loest. The program also will feature food, live music by the Rocky Wynder Jazz combo, a cash bar, and appearances by celebrated writers. An hour of dancing and socializing will follow the ceremony. Tickets are \$15 each, \$10 for students. Last year's event sold out. To reserve seats, make checks payable to 'KWG' and mail them to "Tickets" at PO Box 10326, Knoxville, TN 37939, or email FuniceHate@aol.com. Type "Tickets" in the subject field. For more information, including directions to Holston Hills Country Club, see knoxvillewritersguild.org.

Contest Winners are: **Libba Moore Gray Poetry Prize:** Heather Joyner, Knoxville, first; Kelly Falzone, Nashville, second; and Connie Jordan Green, Lenoir City, third. **Robert Burns/Terry Sample Memorial Poetry Prize:** Linda Parsons Marion, Knoxville, first place. Frank

Jamison, Kingston, and Sarah Stall, Alcoa, won awards of excellence. Doris Ivie, Knoxville, won the **Celtic Heritage Award**. **Young Writers Poetry Prize:** Jessie Pounds and Amber Lorien Gilbert, both from Oak Ridge High School, took first and second, respectively. Third went to Kirby Reitz, of Powell. **2003 Essay Prize:** Michael E. Smith, of Knoxville, won first. Second place went to Wayne Christeson, Franklin, and third went to Laura Purcell, Knoxville.

Leslie Garrett Fiction Award: Charles Wyatt and Rita Welty Bourke, both from Nashville, won first and second, respectively, while Drew Edwards of Knoxville, placed third. (See more information on contests on p.6)



Casey to Judge 2003 Taylor Prize

Screeners Needed for Preliminary Judging

Acclaimed writer John Casey, author of *Spartina* and *The Half-life of Marriage*, will judge the finalist entries for the annual Peter Taylor Novel Competition for 2003. The contest is sponsored by the Knoxville Writers' Guild and the University of Tennessee Press.

In the meantime, screeners are needed for preliminary judging by April 30. Those interested should send resumes to Brian Griffin at P.O. Box 2565, Knoxville, TN 37901. There is no payment for screeners, but the rewards are a fine dinner with other screeners and the chance to meet lots of other people interested in good writing.

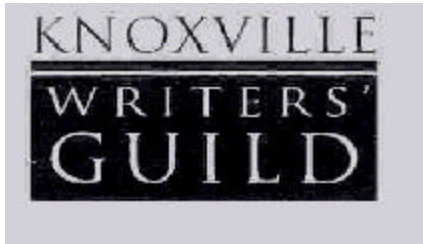
First round of screening: May 2-June 1
Second round of screening: June 4-July 7

Knoxville Writers' Guild:

Organized in December 1992 in Knoxville, TN, to facilitate a broad, inclusive and egalitarian community among area writers; to provide a forum for information, support and sharing among writers; to help members improve and market their writing skills, and to promote writing and creativity in the wider community through education, publication, and sponsorship of writing-related public events. Meetings are held the first Thursday of each month at the Laurel Theater. **Officers:** President: Julie Auer; Vice President: Don Williams; Secretary: Kim Trevathan; Treasurer: Laura Still; Hospitality: Kay Newton; Publicity: Catherine Crawley and Pamela Schoenewaldt; Membership database: Rip Lydick; Program Chairman: Ed Sullivan; President Emeritus: Jack Reese; VP Emeritus: Michael Gillespie; **Newsletter Editor:** Jeanne McDonald; **Webmistress:** Jo Ann Pantanizopoulos. **Board Members:** Marybeth Boyanton, Catherine Crawley, Robert Boyd, David Joyner, Jacqueline Kittrell, Robert Lydick, Kay Newton, Caroline Norris, Pamela Schoenewaldt, Laura Still, Marlene Taylor, Irja Treitler, Kim Trevathan, and Don Williams. Dues are \$25, \$20 for students. The KWG does not discriminate against any person because of race, age, gender, handicap or country of national origin. Send e-mail messages to editor, jrd531k@msn.com, or to president Julie Auer at hildegard@earthlink.com

web: www.knoxvillewritersguild.org

Please remember that dues are now \$25; \$20 for students.



**P.O. Box 10326
Knoxville, TN 37939**

HOW TO JOIN

To join the Writers' Guild, complete the form below and mail to P.O. Box 10326, Knoxville, TN 37939, along with annual dues of \$25, or give the form and your check to any board member of the Guild. Dues are \$20 for students. Membership allows you to participate in study groups, receive discounts on books and Guild merchandise, and monthly issues of the newsletter.

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone No. _____

Email Address _____

Web Site _____

KWG Writing Awards

The Knoxville Writers' Guild, established in 1992, is the largest community-based writing organization in Tennessee, with more than 200 members. Over the years the Guild has developed five separate local and statewide annual writing awards in keeping with the Guild's mission to promote literary arts and literacy. In 2002, these awards were consolidated with common rules, deadlines and a joint awards ceremony. The Guild also sponsors the Peter Taylor Prize for the Novel, a nationwide prize.