

# East Tennessee Writer

## Agee Commemorative Park Is Shaping into A Reality

Story by Jack Neely

**T**hanks largely to the efforts of Knoxville-based poet, songwriter and recording artist R.B. Morris, Agee Park appears to be a reality. The UT parking lot on the northwest corner of Laurel Ave. and James Agee (formerly 15th St.) has been provisionally donated by the university for use as a park to honor Agee, author of *A Death In the Family*—which is largely set at his Highland Ave. home, located about a block from the prospective park site—and *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, among many other works, including journalism, poetry and screenplays.

In 1995, the BBC broadcast globally a documentary about Agee to accompany a broadcast of Samuel Barber's famous musical adaptation of Agee's prose poem, "Knoxville: Summer 1915," and PBS's Masterpiece Theatre recently filmed a version of *A Death In the Family*.



Agee

An Agee Park steering committee which includes Morris, historian and author Wilma Dykeman, architect Jon Coddington, journalism professor and editor Paul Ashdown, attorney Charles Thomas, writer Jack Neely, and others is presently considering design ideas for the park, as well as fundraising

**O**ptions. The project already has support from both UT and the city administration and will likely be funded by both public and private sources. Groundbreaking may come as soon as the latter part of 2002.

We tore down Agee's house, 40 years ago. We tore down another house which was his birthplace a few years after that. Still, people from all over the world come here looking for some trace of the man and his work. We should have something to show them, here in the neighborhood he wrote about.

*(Editor's note: The Knoxville Writers' Guild hopes to play a role in helping to support and assist this project. Look for more information in forthcoming issues of this newsletter.)*

## Vicars will read from Novel, *Treat*, in July Program

**A**ngie Vicars, long a friend of Knoxville writers, gave many new novelists the spotlight when she worked with community relations first at Bookstar and then Barnes & Noble Bookstore. Now Angie has published her first novel, *Treat*, and will read excerpts from the book in a program scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. on Thursday, July 5, at the Laurel Theater, 16th and Laurel on the University of Tennessee campus.



## Uninspired? There's Still Time to Sign Up

**A**lthough KWG workshops began in June, there's still time to sign up for some spectacular classes that will meet during the month of July.

Several literary genres will be represented in the workshops--short stories, poetry, dream workshops, creative writing, grammar and language elements, symbolism, spiritual autobiography techniques, reminiscences, autobiography, and interviewing elders. See page 3 for a complete list of available classes.



# N.Y. Prof Named New Poet Laureate

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## KUNITZ 'S TERM ENDS IN AUGUST

WASHINGTON, June 20 (Adapted from a NY Times story by Elaine Scolino)

Billy Collins, 60, was named today as the nation's next poet laureate. Collins is a writer in resident at Sarah Lawrence College in Yonkers and distinguished professor of English at Lehman College at the City University of New York. He succeeds Stanley Kunitz, who was appointed in August 2000.

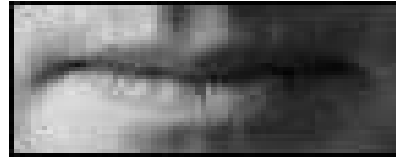
"Billy Collins's poetry is widely accessible," said James H. Billington, the librarian of Congress, in announcing the selection. "He writes in an original way about all manner of ordinary things and situations with both humor and a surprising contemplative twist." Collins' reaction to the honor does in fact have a contemplative twist: "My first reaction was kind of hyperventilation, I suppose," he said. "It came completely out of the blue, like a soft wrecking ball from outer space."

He will assume his new duties in October, when he opens the Library of Congress's annual literary series with a reading of his work. Asked about his plans for the largely honorary post, he said: "The news of the laureateship is still very new and I haven't done a spreadsheet. I hope to put my own spin on it, to add my touch to the laureateship. How that is going to be done except for activism and engagement in Washington I'm not sure yet. I'm all for a wide number of people reading poetry and I've tried to make that clear in every poem I've ever written."

Collins' books of poetry include "Picnic, Lightning" (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998); "The Art of Drowning" (1995), a Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize finalist; and "Questions About Angels" (1991). His next collection, "Sailing Alone Around the Room," is to be released this fall by Random House.

Describing Mr. Collins's poems, the novelist John Updike wrote, "Limpid, gently and consistently startling, more serious than they seem, they describe all the worlds that are and were and some others besides."

The one\_year appointment carries a \$35,000 stipend from private funds and an office in the library.



*Excerpt from "Picnic, Lightning":*

*. . . The heart, no  
valentine, decides to quit after  
lunch, the power shut off like a  
switch, or a tiny dark ship is  
unmoored into the flow of the body's  
rivers, the brain a monastery,  
defenseless on the shore. . . .*

*Photo of the author as a young man*





## *What's Up with Local Writers*

**Paul Ashdown** is co-author of *The Mosby Myth: A Confederate Hero in Life and Legend*, to be published by Scholarly Resources Books in October, 2001.

UT Press' Fall and Winter 2001 catalogue features the cover photo of a book by **Fred Brown** and **Harry Moore**, *Discovering October Roads: Fall Colors and Geology in Rural East Tennessee*, available in August.

**Kim Trevathan's** book, *Paddling the Tennessee River: A Voyage on Easy Water*, will also be released this summer by the UT Press. The book relates the adventures of Trevathan and his dog Jasper as they traversed, by canoe, the 652 miles of the Tennessee River in 1998.

**Jeanne McDonald** has won third place in the 2001 National Writers Association Novel Contest for her unpublished novel, *Water Dreams*, which also won a Washington Prize for Fiction in 1997. Jeanne jokes that her unpublished novel has won almost as much money as she would have made with a small publishing house, but naturally, getting the book into print is her goal.

**Caroline Norris'** book of poetry, *A Small Price to Pay: Poems from East Tennessee and Beyond*, is now in print. The book is presently available at [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) and at bookstores in Maryville.

**Kerry Madden** has just sold a book proposal to *American Girl* at Pleasant Publishing on creative writing for kids. The book will be published in September 2002.

*If you have published a poem, short story, or fiction or nonfiction book or essay, won a contest, or even FINISHED a manuscript, let us know. E-mail the editor of the newsletter at [jmd531k@msn.com](mailto:jmd531k@msn.com) to have your achievement announced in this column.*

## Workshops Features Classes by Writers, Songsmiths, Poets Guild Offers Third Year of Classes

**A**n exciting lineup of instructors has been recruited for the Knoxville Writers' Guild Summer Workshops, now in its third year. Unless otherwise noted, workshops will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Division Street Campus of the Pellissippi Community College. Although classes began in June, the July lineup is listed below. Email [jareaves@mindspring.com](mailto:jareaves@mindspring.com) to sign up for classes.

Refer to the KWG web site for correct times and dates:  
[www.knoxvillewritersguild.org](http://www.knoxvillewritersguild.org)

Marilyn Kallet, "Advanced Poetry Writing," 5:30-7:00 and "Dreaming Deep," 7:30-9:00. 7/10

Candance Reaves, "The Elements of Writing Poetry," 7/9 and "Critiquing and Revising Poetry," 7/10

Brian Griffin, "Creating Place in Short Stories," 7/11

Candance Reaves, "Polishing and Submitting Poetry," 7/12

John Reaves, "Getting the Words Right," 7/16

Ina Hughs, "Making Up the Past," Part I, 7/17 and Part II, 7/19

Brian Griffin, "How Conflict Works in Short Stories," 7/18

Doris Ivie, "Symbols in Your Life," 2:30-4:30, 7/23 and "Pilgrimage to Personal Truth" (see brochure for times) and "Pilgrimage and Symbols" 7/25 (see web site for correct times)

Annabel Agee, "Guided Autobiography" (see brochure for time), 7/24 and "Interviewing Elders," 3:00-5:00, 7/26

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### CALL FOR ANTHOLOGY IDEAS

Every two years, KWG publishes an anthology of writing by our members and other East Tennessee residents. Past publications have featured poetry, memoirs by senior citizens, short stories, and our most recent one--highlighting the cultural and ethnic diversity of our region, also featured essays, creative nonfiction and photos. We need ideas for the next anthology and a volunteer editor. Please send suggestions to KWG Anthology, P.O. Box 10326, Knoxville, TN 37939.

## 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: John Reaves; Vice President: Julia Auer; Secretary: Kim Trevathan; Treasurer, Lonnie Butler; President Emeritus: Jack Reese; VP Emeritus: Michael Gillespie; Newsletter Editor: Jeanne McDonald; Webmistress: Jo Ann Pantanizopoulos.

**Board Members:** Julia Auer, Marybeth Boyanton, Jeannette Brown, Alison Conde-Jaenicke, Brian Griffin, Jacqueline Kittrell, Michael Knight, Judy Loest, Flossie McNabb, Elaine Oswald, Kim Trevathan, Penny Tschantz, Allen Wier, and Don Williams.

Dues are \$20, \$15 for students. The KWG does not discriminate against any person because of race, age, gender, handicap or country of national origin.

Tel: 531-8855; e-mail should be addressed to [jmd@utk.edu](mailto:jmd@utk.edu)

Web address: [www.knoxvillewritersguild.org](http://www.knoxvillewritersguild.org)

*East Tennessee Writer*

# Membership Directory in the Works

As a service to our members, the KWG is publishing a membership directory. We hope it will assist you in networking with other writers, serving on committees, and participating in other Guild activities.

Contact us at P.O. Box 10326, Knoxville TN 37939, if the information on your newsletter mailing label is incorrect, if you'd like to add your telephone number or e-mail to your listing; or if you choose not to be included in the directory.

We need to hear from you by August 15, just before we go to press. Your KWG directory should be in your mailbox by mid-September.

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**To join the Knoxville Writers' Guild, complete the form below and mail to P.O. Box 10326, Knoxville, TN 37939, along with annual dues of \$20, \$15 if you are a student. Membership entitles you to participate in study groups, receive Guild discounts on books and merchandise, and monthly issues of the newsletter. For questions about dues or change of address, email [vgr300z@infin.net](mailto:vgr300z@infin.net)**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

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**Knoxville Writers' Guild**

**P.O. Box 10326**

**Knoxville, TN 37939**

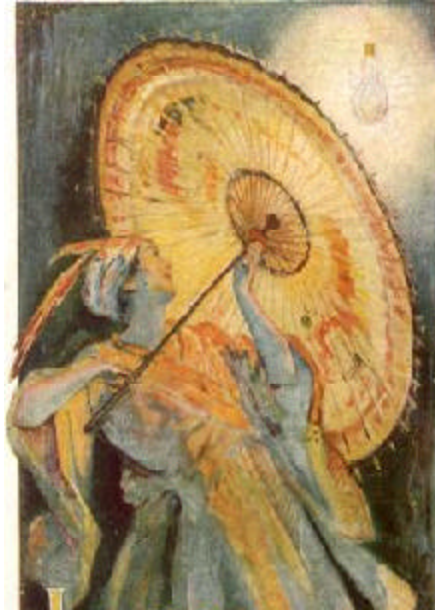
## *Writers to read from Summer issue of New Millennium*

East Tennessee writers and artists whose works appear in the 2001 Summer Issue of *New Millennium Writings* will gather to read and sign books at 2 p.m. Sunday, July 15, at Barnes & Noble Bookstore on Kingston Pike in West Knoxville.

*New Millennium Writings*, a journal of contemporary fiction, nonfiction, poetry, illustrations and more, is published twice each year in Knoxville and Sevierville and distributed nationwide. This issue contains excerpts from the best of the interviews and profiles from NMW's first five years, including John Updike, Lee Smith, Norman Mailer, Lucille Clifton, Cormac McCarthy, Sharyn McCrumb, Shelby Foote, Samuel DeLany and William Kennedy. The book also contains a tribute to Knoxville native James Agee, author of the Pulitzer-winning novel, *A Death in the Family*.

Local contributors—several of whom will be on hand to read on July 25—include: Newspaper columnist Don Williams, founding editor of NMW, Donna Doyle, who won a first-place award in the NMW poetry contest; David E. Joyner, who wrote humorous verse for the book; short story writers Linda Talbert and Pamela Schoenewaldt, photographer Richard P. Remine; poets Jeff Daniel Marion, Marilyn Kallet, Sarah Mate, Laura Still, Harvey Lane; authors Fred Brown, Jeanne McDonald and David Hunter. Maryville artist Carol Bowles also will be on hand to discuss and display her work.

Those interested in more information should phone Williams at 865-428-0389, send email to [donwilliams7@att.net](mailto:donwilliams7@att.net) or visit the NMW website at



## Young Writers Winners Announced

Julie Auer has announced winners in the KWG-sponsored annual competition for high school poets. First prize went to Kara Earl Borum, Fulton H.S., for "Cold Chunks of Charcoal Scratch."

Second: Jenna Tonn, Bearden H.S., for "After Her Old Age."

Third: Nathaniel Bass, Oak Ridge H.S., for "The Dip."

There were also several winners in the Honorable Mentions category:

1) Lydia Cuffman, Oak Ridge H.S., for "Chaos," "I Do Not Eat Beef," and "Bunny Hill."

2) Megan Cox, Oak Ridge H.S., for "The Instinctual Smell of Sweat"

3) Second-prize winner Jenna Tonn also won Honorable Mention for "Seeing Beyond My Hand."

Elaine Oswald judged the final round, and Judy Loest, Laura Still, and Tim Grindstaff chose semifinalists from the entire pile of submissions.

The only reward to be expected from the cultivation of literature is contempt if one fails and hatred if one succeeds.

*Voltaire: Letter to Mlle. Quinault*

# Inaugural Winner of the Peter Taylor Prize for the Novel to be Published

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*The Marriage of Anna Maye Potts*, inaugural winner of the Peter Taylor Prize for the Novel, will be published this year by the UT Press. Co-sponsored by the Knoxville Writers' Guild and the UT Press, the Peter Taylor Prize is named for one of the South's most celebrated writers, author of acclaimed short stories, plays, and the novels *A Summons to Memphis* and *In the Tennessee Country*.

Author DeWitt Henry is an editor, essayist and short story writer who teaches at Emerson College in Boston. Henry, founding editor of *Ploughshares*, has published five anthologies. His winning novel tells the story of a Philadelphia woman whose working-class life is changed forever with the death of her father and her sister's takeover of the family home. Her subsequent marriage to a co-worker proves traumatic, but through her various troubles, the heroine achieves a new spiritual strength.

The Peter Taylor Prize emerged initially from a concept by former KWG president Fred Brown, who wanted to bring the Guild into the national literary arena. Board member Brian Griffin, who has become the organizer for the prize, had known and worked with Peter Taylor, and board member Allen Wier was the liaison with the UT Press. The prize is designed to find as-yet unpublished works of excellent literary quality and to honor Taylor's practice of assisting other writers. Ironically, the first winner, DeWitt Henry, has also long been a benefactor of new and emerging writers.

For information about the competition, write to the Guild at P.O. Box 10326, Knoxville 37939 in care of Brian Griffin. Guild members and UT employees are excluded from the competition.

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## Williams to teach 'Writing for Publication' Course

Don Williams, newspaper columnist, short story ~~writer and founding editor of~~ *Millennium Writings*, will teach "Writing for Publication," a six-week course open to all writers and aspiring writers. The course will begin at 7 p.m. Tuesday July 10 at Christ Chapel, in Fort Sanders.

Each writer is asked to bring something you've written or an idea for a writing project to the first class. Classes will meet two hours each week for six weeks. Participants will engage in brief writing exercises in class, critique each other's works and study examples of effective word-craft. Among topics covered will be: "Great opening lines," "Drawing on family history and the subconscious for material," "Writing effective dialogue," "Striking the right tone," and "Writing opportunities." Instructional materials will be provided. Bring pen and paper and something you've written to the first meeting. Class will be limited to 15 on a first-come, first-serve basis. For more information, phone 865-428-0389, email [onwilliams@att.net](mailto:onwilliams@att.net) or enroll by showing up at the first class.

## Current Publication Opportunities

### American Poetry Review/Honickman First Book Prize:

Publication of a volume of poetry with a \$3000 award; reading and cocktail reception in Philadelphia; \$1000 grant for a book tour. See the web site for information on entering: [www.aprweb.org](http://www.aprweb.org)

### Pavement Saw Press Transcontinental Award:

\$1500 and publication for a full-length book of poetry. See [INFO@PAVEMENTSAW.ORG](mailto:INFO@PAVEMENTSAW.ORG) or [WWW.PAVEMENTSAW.ORG](http://WWW.PAVEMENTSAW.ORG).

### University of Iowa Press Short Fiction Awards:

Two publication awards given annually for two first collections of short fiction.

See [www.uiowa.edu/~uipress](http://www.uiowa.edu/~uipress)

**Literal Latte Ames Essay Award:** A prize of \$1000 and publication for an unpublished creative non-fiction essay. [www.literal-latte@aol.com](mailto:www.literal-latte@aol.com)

**Sawtooth Poetry Prize:** \$1500 honorarium plus publication. Full guidelines at [www.english.boisestate.edu/ahsahta](http://www.english.boisestate.edu/ahsahta)

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