

# East Tennessee **Writer**

Newsletter of the Knoxville Writers' Guild  
Volume 11, Number 10, October 2003

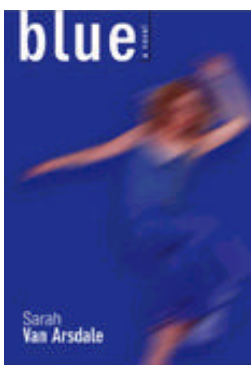
## Van Arsdale, Writer and Teacher, Wins Peter Taylor Award

Sarah Van Arsdale has won the 2002 Peter Taylor Prize for the Novel, sponsored by the Knoxville Writer's Guild and the University of Tennessee Press. *Blue* is the third novel to be published under the agreement. Van Arsdale holds a BA from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and an MFA in Creative Writing from Vermont College. Her first novel, *Toward Amnesia*, was published by Riverhead/Putnam in 1996. She will read from her work at the Knoxville Writers' Guild meeting on Thursday, Oct. 9, at 7 p.m. at the Laurel Theater, 16th and Laurel. **NOTE: this is a schedule change from Oct. 2.** Alan Chuse, All Things Considered book critic, was the judge for the competition.

Van Arsdale's articles, fiction, and poetry have appeared in *Publishers Weekly*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *Columbia Review*, *Oxford Magazine*, *San Francisco Magazine*, *Barnard Magazine*, *Lilith*, and *The Jewish Forward*, and she has a regular book review column in *Middlebury Magazine*. She currently teaches at the Jewish Community Center with the New York Writers Workshop, the Gotham Writers Workshop, and the 92nd Street Y. She is senior staff writer at *Designer Monthly Magazine* and a coordinator of the BJ Reads Program, a collaboration of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun and PS 166 in

New York City, helping children learn to read.

**REMEMBER THE DATE CHANGE FOR THE MEETING! OCT. 9**



## UT Southern Conference to Honor Writer George Garrett



The UT Southern Literature Festival will present "A Celebration of the Life and Work of George Garrett," Oct. 2-4, 2003, at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Garrett is the author of over 30 books of poetry, fiction, essays, criticism, plays and screenplays. Named Poet Laureate of Virginia. in 2002, he is also the Henry Hoynes Professor Emeritus at the University of Virginia.

Among the many colleagues, friends, and/or former students who will participate in the conference are Richard Bausch, Robert Bausch, Madison Smartt Bell, Fred Brown, Fred Chappell, Kelly Cherry, Brian M. Conley, George Core, Nicholas Delbanco, R.H.W. Dillard, Percival Everett, Brendan Galvin, Brian Griffin, Marilyn Kallet, Michael Knight, Kathryn Lang, David Madden, Jill McCorkle, Jeanne McDonald, Thomas McGonigle, Paul Ruffin, Jennifer Siler, David Slavitt, Arthur Smith, Dave Smith, Ron Smith, Henry Taylor, Jon Manchip White, Allen Wier, and Don Williams.

The conference will include celebrity readings of George Garrett's poetry, fiction, and plays, panels on publishing and finding an agent, creative writing pedagogy panels, scholarly explorations of George Garrett's writings, and screenings of his films. Garrett will speak on Sat. evening, Oct. 4th at the University Club. See page 2 for a schedule of events.

# The Writing News



## Schedule for Garrett Conference, Oct. 2-4

**Thursday, October 2, 2003**

**4 p.m.**, The Laurel Theatre (corner of 16th and Laurel Avenue), Reading of Garrett's children's play, "Sir Slob and the Princess." Director: Marta Stout of CBT Music: Nancy Brennan Strange

**7 p.m.**, University Center Ballroom: Introductions: John Zomchick, Chair of English Department; Marilyn Kallet, Director Creative Writing; Keynote Address: Henry Taylor

**8:15 p.m.**, University Center Ballroom Reception following Keynote. Music: Po Hannah Trio

**Continuous Crest Room/UC Ballroom: Book Fair**

**Friday, October 3, 2003**

**10 a.m.**, University Center Ballroom Poetry Panel Moderator: Arthur Smith. Fred Chappell, Kelly Cherry, Brendan Galvin and Henry Taylor

**2 p.m.**, University Center Ballroom Short Story Panel Moderator: Laura Hoffer. Brian Griffin, David Haynes, David Madden, Jill McCorkle and Jeanne McDonald

**8 p.m.**, University Center Ballroom. Readings of George Garrett's works by Literary Lights Moderator: Michael Knight. Richard Bausch, Kelly Cherry, Fred Chappell, R.H.W. Dillard, Percival Everett, Brendan Galvin, David Madden, Jill McCorkle and David R. Slavitt



**4 p.m.** University Center Ballroom Publishing Panel Moderator: Don Williams. Fred Brown, Kathryn Lang and Jennifer Siler

**8 p.m.**, University Center Ballroom Readings of George Garrett's works by Literary Lights. Moderator: Michael Knight. Richard Bausch, Kelly Cherry, Fred Chappell, R.H.W. Dillard, Percival Everett, Brendan Galvin, David Madden, Jill McCorkle and David R. Slavitt

**Saturday, October 4, 2003**

**10 a.m.** University Center Ballroom Scholarship Panel Moderator: Casey Clabough. George Core, Paul Ruffin and David R. Slavitt

**2 p.m.** University Center Ballroom Screening of Garrett's Frankenstein Meets the Space Monster Presented by: R.H.W. Dillard

**4 p.m.** University Center Ballroom Novel Panel Moderator: Richard Bausch. Robert Bausch, Madison Smartt Bell, Nicholas Delbanco, Thomas McGonigle, David R. Slavitt and Jon Manchip White

**7 p.m.** University Center Ballroom (**Please note the site change from the UT Faculty Club.**) Banquet with concluding remarks by George Garrett

Introduction: Allen Wier

# President's Column

By Julie Auer

My family once had a ghost, as my grandparents reminded me all the time growing up. But the only thing about the story that frightened me was the danger that one of my friends might be hanging around when they told it. This is because the Auer Ghost Story is an embarrassing ghost story. Our ghost

didn't hover over us in a black robe carrying a scythe. We weren't pelted with flying objects or attacked in our beds. Our walls didn't bleed; no demons heckled us from the attic, or tripped us as we went downstairs in the basement.

No, our ghost story begins with Grandma's creepy reminiscence of a toilet that flushes for no reason. Our tale of terror is set on a muggy night in Southwest Virginia's coal mining country, in a house of shadows occupied by Louis and Ada Auer, and their two children, Mickey (my father), and Margaret. Louis worked as an electrician in the

mines, and the family had to move from town to town as work was available. One year in the late 1940s, when Mickey was about ten, the Auers moved to the town of Derby, into a picturesque white cottage in a sunny, grassy lot filled with roses and cherry trees. It was the nicest house the coal company had ever leased them.

Well, there's no free lunch, Grandma Ada always said, and she might have learned it soon after they moved into the house in Derby. Despite the absence of shade trees, and an abundance of bright sunlight outside, there never seemed to be any light in the house. The family pets refused to come inside, and the children got cold chills in the hallway, where something seemed to walk through them, Mickey would later recall.

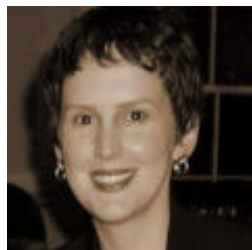
Some nights Louis worked the overnight shift in the mine. Ada was used to it and put the children to bed at the usual hour and sat up in her bed to read. If she were telling the story now, she'd make sure you understood that in those days, there were old toilets - antique even then - that flushed automatically when you got up. Something about the seat flipping up and activating a lever. Anyway, you didn't have to pull a chain, even. The thing just flushed by itself, but only if the seat had been pulled down and flipped back up again.

On this early autumn night, Ada heard the toilet flush. It wasn't your modern flush-and-fill sound, either. Those old flushes - Ada could go on about this forever - rattled your tonsils, boy. They shook the walls. Every pipe in the house hummed when one of those automatic lids flipped up. Lights came on in the neighbors' houses. You get the picture. It was loud.

She knew her children were asleep and would have noticed one of them passing to get to the bathroom. Outside, the dogs began barking wildly, and inside the children began crying in their beds, and Ada noticed a powerful chill had overtaken the whole house. She went outside and saw the dogs lunging at the bathroom window, and when she went back inside, none of the lights worked. She got her children out from underneath their beds and crowded them into bed with her for a long night of inexplicable but palpable terror. To their last days, my grandmother and my father couldn't explain the overwhelming sense of dread and despair that consumed them that night. But it must have been pretty bad, because the next day, Louis came home to packed suitcases and Ada's declaration that they were moving.

After they had moved, of course, Ada investigated and found out that the house was popularly held to be haunted. I'll make it quick: in the 1920s, a deformed company executive committed suicide while sitting on that very toilet. Apparently, sorrow over his deformity, and the added insult of relentless constipation, had driven him to the breaking point. He shot himself, fell off the toilet, and up flipped the lid.

And that, as Ada used to say, was all she wrote, Dear John. Happy Halloween.



## Maryville Series Presents Award-Winning Appalachian Writers

Silas House will be the Oct. 7 speaker for the Appalachian Lecture Series being sponsored by Maryville College to celebrate the culture and heritage of the Southern Appalachian Mountains.

House is the second award-winning writer to speak in the series. The first was Robert Morgan, whose topic was "The Voice of the Story." Morgan has published fiction and poetry and his **best-selling novel**, *Cap Creek*, was chosen by Oprah Winfrey as a book club selection in 2000.

House's topic will be "Finding His Heritage." He says he began finding his heritage while writing his latest novel, *A Parchment of Leaves* (Algonquin, 2002). The novel recently won the Award for Special Achievement from the Fellowship of Southern Writers and sold out its first printing before it was even published.

Mary Bozeman Hodges will speak on Nov. 4 on "Delights and Dangers of Using Appalachian Dialect." She will explain how she uses dialect to create a sense of place and will use some of her favorite authors to illustrate the use of rhythm, words, and metaphors.

All programs will be held at 7 p.m. in the Lawson Auditorium of Fayerweather Hall on the Maryville College Campus.

***Below, House accepts award from Bobbie Ann Mason.***



# What 's Up with Local Writers



"The Knox County public library recently opened **The Rothrock Cafe** at Lawson McGhee downtown, and the public response has been terrific, says Nelda Hill, coordinator. " We want the cafe to become a gathering place for writers, musicians, thinkers, and talkers," says Hill. " Each Thursday evening at 6:00 (usually) we will be

hosting writers, performers, and lecturers in the cafe." The first Thursday of every month: *A Conversation with the Director*, will be the week when Larry Frank, Library Services Director, will be in the cafe to talk to the public.

**October Programs:** Start at 6 p.m. unless otherwise noted.:

September 25: (at 7:00) **Miro and Nathalie Hristov** on violin and cello

October 9: **Pamela Schoenewaldt**, reading

October 14: the **chorale from The Knoxville Choral Society**

October 23: **Darius Antwan Stewart** (a promising young writer at UT)

October 30: **Tom Parkhill, East Tennessee Stage Company**

## Poetry News from Daniel Roop



SEPTEMBER 26-27 THE FIRST KNOX WORD SPOKEN WORD SHOWCASE, a co-production of Knox Word and the Actors Co-op sponsored by *Metro Pulse* Black Box Theater, 5213 Homberg Drive, 8pm start time, admission \$7.. Call 909-9300 to reserve tickets .The first Knox Word Spoken Word Showcase should be the hottest spoken word event of the year. This is a twice-yearly event I'm organizing to feature Knoxville spoken word

poets (and some regional poets as well). Each year there will be a fall showcase and a spring showcase - each will run for two nights. The lineup for this show is incredible: John Kilpatrick, Julia Nance, Daniel Roop, and Seed. Each poet will have about 20 minutes to shine. I want to give these spoken word artists who have proven themselves as crowd favorites over the years an opportunity to shine in an extended set. I love giving poets a chance to show off more of their work in an excellent venue. I'd also like to thank *Metro Pulse* for their generous support of this event. If everything goes according to plan, you should be able to read articles about this show in the *News-Sentinel* on Friday, and in *Metro Pulse* on Thursday (I think in Calendar Spotlights). Also, look for a big ad in *Metro Pulse* with art from Julia Nance.



## Writers in the Library

The Writers in the Library series inaugurates a new season of poets and fiction writers reading their work. This promises to be an exceptional season of distinguished writers visiting the university; three are editors of literary journals and all are strong voices in the literary world. All readings in the series will be given in the Hodes Library auditorium on the first floor., Monday nights at 7 p.m. The events are free and the public is invited.

**On Sept. 8, Stephen Corey and Allen Wier** presented the first readings in this year's Writers in the Library series. Stephen Corey, an **editor of the *Georgia Review*** and a fine poet read work newly published. Knoxville is the first stop on his book tour. Allen Wier, professor of creative writing at the University of Tennessee, read from a new work of fiction.

On Monday, October 6, at 7 p.m. the Hodes Library will be home to a distinguished group of poets. Reading will be **Richard Jackson**, UC Foundation Professor at the University of Tennessee Chattanooga; **Carolyn Elkins**, a University of Tennessee graduate now on the faculty of Delta State University in Cleveland, Mississippi,; and **Lawrence Hetrick**, editor of the *Chattahoochee Review*.

On November 17, three poets associated with the University of Alabama Birmingham will be reading their work. Theodore Haddin is an emeritus professor; **Randy Blythe and Robert Collins** are English faculty. Collins is editor of the *Birmingham Poetry Review*. Spring reading dates are Feb 2, March 22, and April 26. Graduate students in the University's creative writing program will present their original work on Sept. 22 and Oct. 27. The spring dates for the graduate writing students are Feb. 23 and April 5. This series is endowed by the Libraries of the University of Tennessee with assistance from the English Department and its creative writing faculty. **Patricia Waters**, the Libraries' current Writer-in-Residence, will introduce the writers.

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# Nominees for Board Discuss Qualifications

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**Nominees for the Knoxville Writers' Guild board will be voted on at the Nov. meeting.**

**Emily Dziuban** is an award-winning teacher and tutor in the UT English Dept. She holds a B.A. in English with a professional writing minor from Winthrop University in S. C. and an M.A. in English from UIK.

Statement: "I was thrilled to learn that the KWG had chosen me to edit their forthcoming anthology. Publishing in *Literary Lunch* has been such a positive experience for me that I never questioned my desire to be involved in the Guild's next anthology. The Guild's mission to encourage writers at all levels and to create an equitable environment for writers appeals to me. I see the editor's position as one designed to further those goals. Assessing the Guild's topical issues and concerns would help me in crafting an anthology worthy of the organization."

**Nicole Underwood** is a senior project manager for a national consulting firm headquartered in Knoxville, TN. She has been performing project management relative to environmental clean-ups for multi-party sites on behalf of the Potentially Responsible Parties under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), also known as Superfund, for the past nine years. She resides in Kingston, TN, with her husband, Bennie, their 2½ year old twins and her two step-children, ages 6 and 10, on their 100-acre farm, accompanied by goats, chickens, a cow, a pig, a couple dogs and a few more cats. Currently writing a book in collaboration with the local area Parents of Multiples Club, she plans to continue her career in project management part time while focusing on free-lance writing. Nicole writes creative non-fiction, essays, and short stories and is also working on a novel.

**Dennis McCarthy:** Mission Statement: "I come from a family of writers. It's in our genes. Writing has gotten me through every job I've ever had, from park ranger to policy wonk, from ecologist to arts school director. I've been a speech writer, a publications manager, and the editor of a world-class journal. Today, I'm a lawyer. I've worked for government agencies, nonprofit organizations, universities, and, finally, myself, and the only thread that has tied all these strands together has been the writing. So it's the writing that brings me into this organization. But it's my other skills-acquired as an analyzer, problem solver, communicator, and empathizer-that I have to offer the Writers' Guild. Besides, you never know when you might need an attorney in the room."

**Marti Davis** has been a staff writer for the *Knoxville News Sentinel* since 1983. Her beats have included police, politics, education, environment, health, religion and in recent years, features. Marti also writes the paper's hiking column. She has won regional and national awards and was most recently recognized by the Tennessee Library Assn. for her coverage of the recent controversy over the selection of Knox County's library director. Statement: "I am particularly interested in helping educate high school and college age students about the many opportunities in print journalism. I would also hope to be of use in publicizing local events for the guild."

**Patricia Waters** grew up in Nashville, took her B.A. at Memphis State University, her M.A. and Ph.D. at the University of Tennessee Knoxville. She has published in little magazines. She is the writer in residence at the library at the University of Tennessee and an adjunct lecturer in the UT English Department.

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## Lost State Writers Meet Oct. 2-5

The 5th annual Lost State Writers Conference will meet in Greeneville, TN at the General Morgan Inn Oct. 2-5. To register, consult the web site at [www.loststatewritersconference.com](http://www.loststatewritersconference.com).

*Appalachian Life* magazine, MainStreet organization and local businesses in Greeneville, sponsors of the conference, have announced that acclaimed author and radio commentator Sarah Vowell, best known for her commentaries on NPR's "This American Life," and award-winning novelist and poet Robert Morgan will be keynote speakers. Tamara Chapman is coordinator.

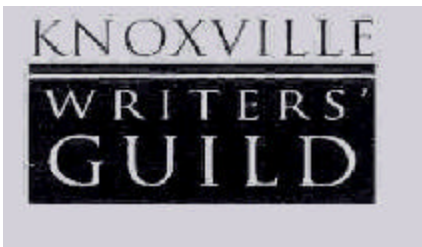
**Lee Smith signs books at last year's conference.**



## 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, Tony Day, David Joyner, Jacqueline Kittrell, Robert Lydick, Kay Newton, Pamela Schoenewaldt, Laura Still, Ed Sullivan, Marlene Taylor, Inga 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](mailto:jrd531k@msn.com), or to president Julie Auer at [hildegaard@earthlink.com](mailto:hildegaard@earthlink.com) **web:** [www.knoxvillewritersguild.org](http://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.



The Southern Festival of Books will be held in Nashville, Oct. 10-12. For more information, visit web site: [www.tn-humanities.org/sfmain.htm](http://www.tn-humanities.org/sfmain.htm)

Name _____
Address _____
Telephone No. _____
Email Address _____
Web Site _____

**Don't forget: The next Knoxville Writers' Guild Meeting has been changed from Oct. 2 to Oct. 9!**