



BIFFMITCHELL_dot_NEWS

Volume 1, Issue 3

April 2006

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BIFFMITCHELL_dot_NEWS is a free quarterly (except when it's not quarterly) newsletter with stuff from the desk of author Biff Mitchell.

The enhanced edition of this newsletter will be available at www.biffmitchell.com in the near future.

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EDITORIAL

So I walk into my home office the other day and my gay cat Pico is surfing porno sites on my computer again and I'm wondering how he figured out my desktop password so I say, “Pico, cats shouldn't be looking at stuff like that.” To which he replies, “Get your ass out to the kitchen and get me a kitty treat, bitch.” This is why I believe the best pets are the ones made out of paper mache.

On the bright side, I was talking to Andrew Titus, organizer and top dog of the Maritime Writers' Workshop and Literary Festival (<http://www.maritimewriters.blogspot.com>), and it looks like this year's event is going to be the likes of which the city has never before seen. Check out the link above for the star-studded line-up of writers. I feel truly humbled and in the presence of giants. I'll be reading with novelist Charles Foran (<http://www.charlesforan.com>) at the Lighthouse on July 11 (open to the public) and presenting a lecture with poet Sue Sinclair (<http://www.brickbooks.ca/BL-Sinclair.htm>) on July 14 (this one's just for Workshop participants). On July 8, I'll be giving an pre-conference eWorkshop on ePublishing and eMarketing (free to Workshoppers, admission fee for public).

In honor of the occasion, beginning in May, I'll be taking to deserted street corners and reading from my books. I won't be accepting money, but I will be passing out stuff on my books and brochures for the Workshop and Literary Festival. Please don't throw rocks at me ... I'll be armed.

More to come on my blog (<http://biffmitchelldotblog.blogspot.com>).

Biff
Silence says it all.

April 2006

MY WRITING FRIENDS

Susan DiPlacido's short story I, Candy won in the Spirit award at the 2005 Moondance Film Festival. Read the story here: <http://www.writethis.com/030.html>. Susan is re-

defining the term Chick Lit with novels like 24/7, Trattoria (review from me to appear soon) and Mutual Holdings. She also has a brand new web site. BTW, you might want to check out her links page at: <http://www.susandiplacido.com/links.html>.

Explore the amazing world of Sudan DiPlacido at: <http://www.susandiplacido.com>.

John Heinsteint, poet of questionable foot and author of The Cheap Red Wine Manifesto, is writing some poems for kids from a viewpoint that might surprise most kids. He was also second place finisher in the Poetry Slam at the Memorial Hall Art Center on the UNB campus. The picture on my blog shows his triumphant graciousness (his is the second picture down).



This is John showing his gracious attitude toward a respectable second place finish.

Explore the amazing world of John Heinsteint at: <http://biffmitchell.blogspot.com/2006/03/poetry-slam.html>

Barbara J. Gill's new book Soul Gifts: Prose, Poetry and Art will be pre-released on Saturday, June 10 between 6:30 and 9:30 PM at Pilates by Garda on Queen Street, Fredericton, New Brunswick. The 360 page book features accompanying booklet and CD for self-help insights and exercises.

Explore the amazing world of Barbara J. Gill (when the site is up) at: www.shandarrah.com.

MD Benoit is getting some great reviews for her latest novel Meter Made. Here's one: <http://novelspot.net/node/1688>. For some reason, the reviewer thinks she's a man. BTW, I have the novel and I'll be interviewing it soon.

Explore the amazing world of MD Benoit at: <http://mdbenoit.com>.

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOE BLADES (PART 1)

Joe Blades is one of the most accomplished members of Fredericton's arts community – publisher, photographer, internationally acclaimed poet, visionary and much more. You can read a brief summary from the Writer's Union of Canada (TWUC) at <http://tinyurl.com/or5qu> or the expanded version at <http://tinyurl.com/qdcfe>.



You can also read about him in the Serbian paper Danas:
<http://www.danas.co.yu/20060311/knjiga1.html> ... and compare him to Hunter Thompson at: <http://www.biffmitchell.com/JoeBladesAndHunter.pdf>.

Biff: Your interests span a wide spectrum of arts including writing, filmmaking, editing, broadcasting, and photography. Do you feel more comfortable, or more expressive, in any of these?

Joe: I don't know if it's comfort I'm looking for. These arts certainly are different in their expressiveness. Don't think I could ever do just one. I like the slipperiness of words. How they slide over one another until they catch on each other and start forming something new. Hosting the radio show, like editing and publishing, comes out of the writing interests. Photography is a totally different thing for me—all about non-word, non-verbal impressions of the seen or almost seen.

Biff: I read that you have exhibited book sculptures. What is a book sculpture?

Joe: In recent years my making of artist books and hand-bound fine craft book works have broadened in scope to include books that I've needed a 3-metre long space to display. For me that size of book makes it a sculptural book or a sculpture artwork.

(Check out one of Joe's book sculptures here: <http://tinyurl.com/g8fy8>.)

Biff: You have your own radio show - Ashes, Paper & Beans (CHSR 97.9 FM, www.unb.ca/chsr) - devoted to poetry and writing. Can you talk about some of your more memorable shows?

Joe: I've particularly liked episodes with roundtable discussions: Once, Jo-Anne Elder, translator and writer, and Herménégilde Chiasson, poet, artist extraordinaire and the current Lieutenant Governor of the Province of New Brunswick, were on the show for a great three-way conversation about Acadian literature and translation. Other times I've produced beautiful episodes from my library for International Women's Day or Highland Radio or Sex FM special broadcast days.

Biff: What do you see happening in the next five years in publishing?

Joe: Less bookselling space in hybrid entertainment retailers and more closings of independent booksellers. More consolidation of mid-sized and large publishers and retailers. A widening gap between the industrial-size activities of the large national and multinational publishers and book resellers and the activities of micro-presses and self-publishers. Outside Canada, in the UK and USA in particular there has seemed to be a great increase in the development of ePublishing and Print-on-Demand publishing activity.

Biff: Some people say that the Internet makes everybody a publisher. What are your thoughts on this? Will bookstores be a rarity 20 or 30 years from now? Will they even sell fiction?

Joe: Frankly, bookstores are not that common these days. There's more libraries than bookstores, even when you add the second-hand booksellers into the mix.

Biff: I've heard Maritimes Arts Projects Productions described as an entity created by you for your personal art and writing. Is this a step in the direction of everyone being their own publisher?

Joe: Both Maritimes Arts Projects Productions and older Broken Jaw Press and entities created by me for the managing of my creative efforts. MAPP became more necessary for my personal writing, freelance and art making activity after Broken Jaw Press became a grant supported independent literary publishing house with its own needs and requirements.

By the very nature of transactions and taxation, once a writer has received monetary value in exchange for their writing, whether for an article, story, poem, book, even a reading or kill-fee, the government considers them to have started a business. I've always maintained that publishing is an extension of writing. Writers should be prepared to become publishers. These days, it's easier than ever.

(The following section of the interview was taped live at The Second Cup Coffee Shop on King Street.)

Biff: So how do you find time to write?

Joe: Sometimes I don't. Sometimes I've gone weeks and weeks without writing. Other times, I'll get up and I'll start something, you know the idea's coming into my head and I'll write down a phrase or two and I'll have something I can take and run with later. But getting time to write when I'm under a heavy pressure period for being a publisher interferes.

Biff: So the publishing interferes with your writing?

Joe: Very much so. And the administration part is the worst. It never ends ... it takes all the time you have and then demands more.

Biff: I just have to ask this. Do you ever get jealous of the writers you publish given the fact that they have time to write and the fact that you're publishing them cuts into your writing time?

Joe: Well ... I get frustrated when they don't really want to be sympathetic to the balance ... what it take and what it means. I think there has to be a much greater understanding, especially with small presses. It's this crazy labor of love ... just like the writing. It's not

a monetary venture. It's not really a business as far as I'm concerned. Sure, we're supposed to have business-like attributes and all that but ... it doesn't have the scale to work as a business model, not what I'm doing.

Biff: It's a labor of love.

Joe: (laughs) Yes.

Biff: You've done a lot of traveling through the USA, Canada and Serbia. What are the moments you love the most when you're on the road?

Joe: (loud laugh) That's one of those fuzzy questions.

Biff: Yep.

Joe: (considers for a while) I don't know. Sometimes it's the people, getting a chance to really talk with people ... not just be talking at them or doing that transactional stuff. Just really having a good conversation with someone and you connect at some level. It's hard to do when you're traveling, especially when you're spending a lot of time writing and publishing and promoting yourself. You're just putting yourself out there and putting yourself out. You talk, you stop, you collapse and you go on to the next place. So sometimes you don't even have that chance unless you have a lot of time ... you don't even have a chance to connect with people. It's not as anonymous as these rock bands that do the big thing on the stage and go from town to town but it's pretty close to it at times. Yeah, I really do like to have that conversation, or getting out to have that walk, or be someplace I've really wanted to be and never imagined being there. It's OK if you can be social and have a pint or whatever. (laughs)

Biff: Do you ever feel in your own writing that you're putting too much of yourself out there?

Joe: Well ... in some sense. There's always a risk, but at the same time it depends how you do it. I think there're two things that go with that. One is whether people see everything you write as being autobiographical or not ... and that's usually a fallacy, but an assumption that people like to make. And the second one really this notion that just because you write something doesn't mean that you have to publish it. So you can write all sorts of things that could be considered way out there, or out there from the norm for what people know you for ... but it doesn't mean you do anything with it. You do have that choice.

To be continued ...

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YOU ASKED ABOUT PRINCESS OF ART – THE REAL PEOPLE IN THE BLOG

Several people contacted me about my April 1 (or was it 2?) blog about the opening of Ingrid Mueller's Art Concepts gallery on March 31. In fact, one person with nothing better to do than read my blog (I mean, get a life.) wrote: "I can't wait to read the newsletter and find out more about the people who weren't there :)"

Here's the blog URL:

<http://biffmitchelldotblog.blogspot.com/2006/04/princess-of-art.html>

Well, dear e-mailer with lots of free time, I can understand your excitement. I'm pretty hepped up on this too, daddio (or was that mommio?). I can hardly wait to tell you who's who and who's not who. So, beginning with the picture at the top – that's not really Karen and she's not really a weaver. She's Margaret Atwood and she writes books. The woman beside her is Virginia Woolf.

In the next photo, the famous publisher is the one with the sunglasses and big smile. Her name is Virginia Woolf and that's the back of Kurt Vonnegut's head.

In the next picture, the famous publisher is actually the famous photographer Ansel Adams and the man looking up is Karsh surrounded by three Virginia Woolfs.

This is actually a room full of Virginia Woolf's – one of them with a black belt. The next demonstrates wine belting. Good form.

And the next is not really Ingrid and she's not talking to Gordon.

And there you go ... you asked.

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NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Team Player Now in Paperback

Team Player is now available in paperback at my new “store” on lulu. Heavy Load (a laundromance) and Surfing in Catal Hyuk are also there.

<http://www.lulu.com/biffmitchell>

Seven Stories to Appear at Fictionwise

I just sent off the contract to Fictionwise for the publication of seven of the short stories that appear Surfing in Catal Hyuk to be published as individual ebook downloads ... complete with covers by the author. They’ll likely sell for less than an dollar each and the proceeds will be donated to the author. Among the stories are The Nickel, Surfing in Catal Hyuk, Fishing the Moody River and Still Life with Muse and Sax. They should appear on my author web site at Fictionwise in the near future:

<http://www.fictionwise.com/eBooks/BiffMitchelleBooks.htm>

Maritime Writers’ Workshop Has a Blog

The Maritime Writers’ Workshop and Literary Festival has a brand spankin’ new blog at: <http://www.maritimewriters.blogspot.com>. I’ll be doing a workshop on science fiction and cyberpunk with some really weird activities to get the creative juices going in a speculative way. I’ll also be giving a pre-conference workshop on ePublishing. More details to come!

Twisted Tails Soon to be Published by Double Dragon

The stories are in and the manuscript is in the publisher’s hands (Deron Douglas at Double Dragon Publishing). Contracts have been sent. I saw the galley and it looks like an impressive collection of writers all with their own peculiar sense being “out there in left field.” The stories have a weird twist at the end, hence the name of the book. I’ll be posting a page on my site about Twisted Tails in the near future. BTW, I have four stories in the anthology: The Big Red Gift and three brand new stories. Learn more about the book and the authors at: http://www.biffmitchell.com/Twisted_Tails/twisted_tails.html.

NotAPixelOfSanity Call for Stories

The stories are trickling, but I know they're out there. If you've been working in the IT industry, or around the IT industry, or if you even know somebody from the IT industry, then you have a story to tell. I know you do. Send it to me. It could be a story, anecdote, in-joke, favorite saying, IT one-liner ... anything. Send it to biff@biffmitchell.com with Team Player in the subject and it could win big (www.erectsoftinc.com/Contest.html) and will likely be published. Click on the link about halfway down the page to see the book so far.

St. Paddy's Day Weekend – A Poetry Weekend for a Prose Writer

I survived two poetry readings, the first on St. Paddy's Day at UNB's Memorial Hall ... the Poetry Slam. Read about it here:

<http://biffmitchelldotblog.blogspot.com/2006/03/poetry-slam.html>. And the following Sunday, I read the poem, galileo, from my first novel (Heavy Load) at the Sixth International Multicultural-Multilingual Poetry Reading in conjunction with the United Nation's Dialogue Among Civilizations Through Poetry. In Fredericton, it was organized brilliantly by poet Nela Rio. My poem might even appear in a future edition of ellipse magazine (<http://ellipsemag.org>).



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AND CHECK OUT THE AD PROGRAM!

RECIPE FOR DANDELION WINE

Don't wait! Just as soon as you see those first flowers coming up, pick them! Turn them into something you can drink with their own special ability to make you wake up in new ditches. Dandelion wine ... drink it only when you're ready to face new worlds,

Click <http://www.biffmitchell.com/dandelion.pdf> for the PDF download.

Some facts about dandelions:

Dandelions are NOT weeds! They are wild vegetables.
According to the USDA, dandelions are more nutritious than broccoli and spinach.
All parts of the dandelion are useable: the leaves for greens, the blossoms for wines and jelly, and the roots for coffee.

DION SISTERS' DOGGIE TREATS

If you really really really love your dog, then you'll dine your canine on Dion Sisters Doggie Treats, one of them (the sisters, not the treats) being none other than the awesome Pyroxide Pirate on CIHI when radio was radio.

Click here to earn a smooch from pooch:
<http://www.biffmitchell.com/DoggieTreats.jpg>.

LITERARY MAGAZINE – Projected Letters

Projected Letters is a literary magazine devoted to the best fiction, poetry, and non-fiction on the web. Established greats like Queiroz rub shoulders with some of the most exciting new short fiction writers and poets on the web. It's an eclectic mix: comedy, tragedy, free verse, formalism, journalism, autobiography, criticism, and reviews. This isn't a money-

making machine: it's an art-fulfilling one. We have over one hundred unique works of fiction, non-fiction, reviews, and collections of prose in our library — it's enough reading for a year!

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"THE TEN WORST WRITERS I'VE HAD THE MISFORTUNE TO READ"
CONTEST

Nobody entered. Thus ... there are no worst writers. Only best. As one of the worst of the obviously best ... thank you.

No more contests. Nobody likes contests. Come to think of it ... I don't like contests either. They're the worst.

LITERARY MAGAZINE – The Rose & Thorn - A Literary eZine

The Rose & Thorn seeks to bring the voices of emerging and established writers to a discerning Internet audience. Our readership spans the globe, from Europe to Australia, from India to our own backyard in the United States. In each issue, short fiction, poetry and other literary articles reflect the diversity and brilliance of authors who have something to say, and find unprecedented, imaginative ways in which to say it. In addition, we are open to new ideas and concepts from visitors and participants to this site.

Visit The Rose & Thorn at <http://www.theroseandthornezine.com>.

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