



BIFFMITCHELL_dot_NEWS

Volume 1, Issue 2

March 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 on March 12.

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EDITORIAL

What the hell’s wrong with the IT industry when I send out multiple media releases, emails, notices on my web site, blog and RSS feed ... and I get just a handful of stories about the absurdity of the IT industry? I know there are lots of people out there with stories, either short or long, a sentence or a few pages, a saying or a scenario, an anecdote or a long diatribe on the nature of Team Playerism.

I know the stories are out there.

Visit the site at www.erectsoftinc.com and click on the contest button. If you don’t want to enter ... please ... forward the URL on to someone you know who has a good story. And remember, you can use any name and title you want. Nobody even has to know who you are.

Nobody knows who *I* am.

Biff

Silence says it all.

March 2006

MY WRITING FRIENDS

Brock Parks is one of those amazing people who seem to know how to do just about anything. He writes, he draws, he accuses his twin brother Brad of being the evil one. Brock is the artist behind the cover art for Heavy Load (a laundromance) – in conjunction with Paul O’Neil – and Team Player. He hasn’t charged me a penny for either cover. Someday, when I’m rich and can afford to buy two six packs of beer, I’m giving one of those six packs to Brock.

Explore the amazing world of Brock Parks at: www.brockparks.com.

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Check out Malcolm James’ new web site at <http://malcolm-james.com/index.html>. It’s

the kind of site to inspire drool. (Oops ... hey bro ... don' bogard that Kleenex) BTW, Mal and I were slurring words over beer and might be doing something very beat and very coffee shop. More to come on this.

Explore the amazing world of Malcolm James at: <http://malcolm-james.com/index.html>

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Susan Diplacido just never stops writing! I just finish Trattoria and don't even get a chance to write up a review and she comes out with another novel ...Mutual Holdings ... <http://www.susandiplacido.com/mutual.html>. I'm putting my money on Susan for being the most prolific writer of the 21st Century.

Explore the amazing world of Susan Diplacido at: <http://susandiplacido.blogspot.com>

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M.D. Benoit has a new novel out ... Meter Made (<http://tinyurl.com/azv6q>). It's the sequel to Metered Space (<http://tinyurl.com/dpg4y>). I have a copy and I'll be reviewing it. Look for an interview with Dom in the next BIFFMITCHELL_dot_NEWS.

FLASH! This just in on M.D. Benoit: Seems her publisher will be releasing another of her stories, Synergy, in July. It will be the first in a trilogy. In her own words: "Synergy will be the first book in a thematic trilogy based on genetic engineering. It deals with genetic warfare. Torver, a young man who can travel people's lifepaths in his mind, is also a geneticist who develops the cure for a deadly disease, which can also be turned into a gene-specific weapon, which both government and a "bad guy" covet. Demetria, a woman who can step into her own visions, is the only one who can sense Torver and help him develop his genetic cure. Together they will enter the world of illegal genetic manipulation to save a child's life. The second story, about cloning, will be "Catalyst," and the third one, about GMOs and monoculture, will be called "Entropy."

Explore the amazing world of M.D. Benoit at: <http://www.mdbenoit.com/blog>

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Rita Y. Toews and Alex Domokos have just released their first mystery book, published by NeWest Press out of Edmonton, Alberta. The book store sold out of their stock of BODY TRAFFIC during the launch party. Early readers are asking - "When do we get the sequel?" The authors indicate they are working on it already.

Explore the amazing world of Rita Y. Toews and Alex Domokos at: www.domokos.com

INTERVIEW

The interview with Joe Blades will appear in the next issue in an expanded form with a multimedia component for the enhanced version of the newsletter on my web site.

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AN EMAIL FROM HAITI

(This is an email from a woman in my fiction-writing workshop. She and friend Christa – who is also in the workshop – work in the medical industry and went to Haiti *before* the election to provide medical care to people who might have died otherwise from lack of attention. At the time they left Canada, Haiti was still considered to be one of the more volatile places on earth. These are two very courageous young ladies.)

Thought I'd give the update from Haiti.
Preval was declared president last night.
I woke with the sounds of celebrations at around 5am.
Just walked down to the tower where we can get a good view from within the compound and it is amazing to see the celebrations!

There was a discrepancy originally because they counted the blank ballots against Preval. So, that is why he had a lower percent of the votes.
This is the Haitian policy. The UN was actually accurate in the way they counted the ballots. There was upset about this.... actually BLANK would have been in the 2nd spot. (There were 85,000)
Anyway, the whole thing got worked out and Preval is president.
This is unbelievable!!!!
What an incredible experience!!

Nothing was ever actually dangerous in the streets here. The protests were actually very celebratory.

I left the compound yesterday – it is so funny – we have these windows of time when we can leave and if we don't go in that window, we don't go.

We get calls from the embassy telling us when to do things and when not. The UN French police are living in the compound with us as well and they give us the scope on what to do.

Lucien (the guy in charge of all this) knows Preval and says that he will be a great president ... there is a story there that I will type at another time – probably in my blog.

I have not even been writing too much because there is so much going on here.

It is like there is always something happening. so I haven't even journalled yet.

I think there will be a time of contemplation afterwards.

They are very proud people...it is a crazy ... crazy experience!!!

So glad I came....

I am totally safe – feel totally looked after ... I really believe that the media sensationalizes things. There are certainly dangerous areas here and NEVER in a million years would I ever come here as a tourist. But, this has been an unbelievable experience. There are areas to stay away from. But, again, it is like saying Bedford and Halifax are dangerous and all of Nova Scotia is crazy because of Preston.

This victory means peace for 5 years and a great victory for the poor.

There is going to be tons of noise and celebrating in the streets all day long. People are coming from the provinces.

It is amazing – the difference between seeing this and the electoral process in Canada. I mean, people here (75% illiterate) have to travel very far – usually walking – to cast their votes. And many did not even know where to line up because they can't read. It is a big lesson for those of us who do not take our electoral process seriously.

At 5:45 we walked down to the tower on the compound. It gave a great view of the nearby slum. We got on the roof and watched the celebrations. The children were all dancing – it was so cute. Their little legs going, banging tins together, everyone singing "Viva Preval". It was funny!

Anyway, Lucien and Gina just showed up. Things go as normal – we have teams going out to orphanages and there will be lots of excitement!

All for now ... possibly leaving tomorrow. Not sure what American Airlines is going to do yet. We have connections with airlines. It is kinda crazy that they cancelled flights because we had a team that was in the middle of the manifestations (like, and people let them through – it was described more like "Canceling flights to the US because of a state parade")

Did anyone see the national the other night? That was Gina and Magda that they did a story on – and the Healing Hands organization.

Corrine Cash

<http://corrinecash.blogspot.com>

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NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Team Player

About six years ago, I wrote a novel that started off as a short story. It was supposed to be about a man whose life suddenly becomes complicated by the fact that his divorce two years earlier had never actually gone through. He was still married. At the insistence of a friend (thank you, Sherry), I started writing the story. It was supposed to be short, but it started getting longer and longer until I had to scrap the short story idea and plot for a novel. And, because the situation was so absurd, I had to make the entire novel absurd. Fortunately, I worked in IT. Absurd was on my business card. It was tattooed on my keyboard-weary fingertips. It was stamped on my ass. I set the novel in the tallest building in the world, owned by ErectSoft INC, the biggest IT company in the world even though it had never actually turned out a single product or finished a single project. And, of course, there are the 30 naked pagan women who save the universe. The book's available in ebook format on Amazon at <http://tinyurl.com/158nf> and Fictionwise at <http://tinyurl.com/gmz4c>. Within the next month, the paperback version will be available at lulu.com. I'll send a note.

Maritime Writers' Workshop

It's definitely a go for the Maritime Writers Workshop. I'll be giving a workshop on

science fiction and cyberpunk and a pre-conference workshop on ePublishing and Marketing in a Digital World. The workshop runs from July 8 to July 16 on the University of New Brunswick campus. Writers for the 2006 workshop include Charles Foran (fiction), Sandra Birdsell (fiction), Sue Sinclair (poetry), Al Moritz (poetry), Philip Lee (non-fiction/biography), Richard Scrimger (children's literature), and Beth Powning (pre-conference workshop on Finding the Next Novel). For more details about the workshop, contact Andrew Titus at atitus@unb.ca.

arrival

I've just learned that the only good poem I've ever written – arrival – will be published in the April issue of The Backroom (<http://bobburdick.com/thebackroom>) from Bob Burdick. This was originally published on Nanook of the Nashwaak's "Reach Out and Touch a Rock" canoeing in New Brunswick web site, and then in "Clearings: Stories and a Poem." It's been read at many events, the most prestigious being Odd Sundays at Molly's Coffee House. Someday, maybe I'll write one more good poem.

Twisted Tails

TWO STORIES BY BIFF SUBMITTED AND ACCEPTED. ONE MORE TO GO. THIS ONE IS A LONG ONE. IT'S ABOUT A MAN WHO WISHES FOR THREE STONE WOMEN IN A FOUNTAIN TO COME TO LIFE AND SCREW HIS BRAINS OUT. UNFORTUNATELY FOR HIM, HIS WISH COMES TRUE.

Author, J. Richard Jacobs, contacted me about participating in a weird project. He's putting together an anthology of stories written by writers who have a reputation for being "out there in left field." The stories must have a weird twist at the end, hence the name of the book: Twisted Tails. J has already lined up a publisher (Double Dragon) and the book should be coming out sometime in 2006. Other writers in the project include:

Jeremy Davies: <http://www.casablantasy.bravehost.com>

Jamie A. Hughes: <http://elfwood.lysator.liu.se/libr/j/a/jahughes>

J. Richard Jacobs: <http://geocities.com/orbitaldata/jwrites.html>

Steve Lazarowitz: <http://www.dream-sequence.net>

K.L. Nappier:

<http://www.double-dragon-ebooks.com/Authors/eAuthor.asp?Name=K.L.%20Nappier>

Marilyn Peake: <http://www.marilynpeake.com>

Peter W. Prellwitz: <http://shardsuniverse.net>

Stormy Stevens: <http://www.stormyshewolf.com>

Terence West: <http://www.terencewest.com>

Margaret (Meg) Whitley

NotAPixelOfSanity

The stories about the absurdity of the IT industry have started to come in for the book inspired by Team Player (http://www.biffmitchell.com/Team_Player/team_player.html). There's a lot of pain out there ... and a lot of laughs for those who can look back and forgive. The contest is still open. If you have a story, anecdote, in-joke, favorite saying, IT one-liner ... anything at all ... send it to me at biff@biffmitchell.com with Team Player in the subject and it could win big (www.erecsoftinc.com/Contest.html) and will likely be published. Click on the link about halfway down the page to see the book so far.

The Baton at Fictionwise

The Baton (Echelon Press), a novella described as “Holden Caulfield on steroids” is now available at Fictionwise.com (<http://tinyurl.com/17m9d>). Read the article at: <http://tinyurl.com/qlcuf>.

Projected Letters

Projected Letters has a new web site, built from scratch, which of course means that the old links don't work. So ... to get to “The Nickel” on their site, you go to <http://tinyurl.com/qdnms>, and for “Fishing the Moody River”, you go to <http://tinyurl.com/15fjk>.

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AND CHECK OUT THE AD PROGRAM!

RECIPE FOR DANDELION WINE

I just checked the calendar and realized that it will be a few months before dandelion wine season is here, so I'll wait till then to publish it (along with the next newsletter, of course). Instead, here's a RECIPE FOR CURRYWURST.

1. Cook a bratwurst in the way in which you would normally cook it.
2. Mix 3 tablespoons of ketchup or tomato sauce with 2 tablespoons of curry powder.
3. Add a tablespoon of onion flakes to the sauce.
4. Slice the bratwurst into little drums and pour the sauce over them.

Feeds one. Goes great with beer. Any beer. Wine's OK too.

ADVERTISEMENT – New Book by Biff Mitchell

THE WAR BUG is now available in paperback. Here's what Amazon.com reader Brad Parks has to say: "Definitely an interesting read! Sitting here trying to figure out how to convey what it was like, I mostly think of a fusion of two writers - Douglas Adams for the voice/ humor (which there's lots of), and Phillip K Dick for the unreal realities and sci-fi slant."

Order your copy today from Amazon.com: <http://tinyurl.com/psnbp>.

"MY TEN FAVORITE WRITERS" CONTEST

And the winner of this issue's Ten Favorite Writers contest is Robin Helweg-Larsen. In the interest of fairness (and because the Porsche first prize in the first contest went to me), I put the entries on the floor and let my gay cat Pico choose (BTW, please be aware of the things your cats may be downloading from the Internet). Here's the winning list:

Poets:

Gerard Manley Hopkins
Matthew Arnold
TS Eliot

SF:

Kurt Vonnegut
Ursula LeGuin
John Varley

Island Music:

Eddie Minnis

Historical Atlases:

Colin McEvedy

Philosophy:

Nietzsche

Unclassifiable Canadians:

Biff Mitchell

Robin wins an autographed copy of Surfing in Catal Hyuk.

Next issue: A little twist ... THE TEN WORST WRITERS I'VE HAD THE MISFORTUNE TO READ.

COMING NEXT ISSUE

Next issue: An uncensored interview with Nanook of the Nashwaak, river poet by many names. An in-depth interview with Joe Blades, featuring a multimedia version in the enhanced issue. The recipe for dandelion wine.

Any suggestions for future issues? Send me a note at biff@biffmitchell.com.

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