



BIFFMITCHELL_dot_NEWS

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BIFFMITCHELL_dot_NEWS is a free quarterly newsletter with stuff from the desk of author Biff Mitchell.

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A Handful of Goliaths and Many Little Davids

Welcome to the first issue of BIFFMITCHELL_dot_NEWS. I've been talking about publishing a newsletter for years, and here it is. Nothing fancy, but I think it'll reproduce in most email programs without turning into digital symbolism. If you have any problems reading it, please let me know. (And let me know what email program you're using.)

So much for the obvious.

As most of you know, Double Dragon Publishing has just released my ebook **The War Bug** in paperback format. This, unfortunately, doesn't mean that you'll automatically see stacks of it on book store shelves everywhere. It means that I get to send out thousands of emails to bookstores and libraries across North America asking them to stock it. Most will, some won't. In time, it will begin to move onto the shelves.

In Fredericton, you'll soon be able to buy it at Westministers, Beegie's, and the UNB Bookstore (signings will be announced in future issues of this newsletter). It'll take a little longer at Chapters because I have to go through the Indigo head offices in Ontario to have it listed in their database. This could take time.

You can help shorten that time.

All you have to do is forward this newsletter to a few friends and ask them to forward it to a few friends. Hopefully, some of those friends will go to bookstores and libraries in their home towns and order or ask for **The War Bug** by Biff Mitchell.

What you and they will also be doing is supporting independent publishers. Currently, the publishing industry is dominated by a handful of giant publishers (Random House, Penguin Putnam, HarperCollins, Holtzbrinck, Time Warner and Simon & Schuster). The publishing and distribution model used by these companies is inefficient and expensive, and many of the books they publish don't earn back the author's advance on royalties. Their response is to focus almost entirely on authors with broad mass-market appeal. Each of these publishers has a small group of writers into which most of their efforts go to get their books into bookstores, airports, drug stores, and grocery stores.

Niche authors and new voices don't fit into their formula and rarely get published by them. Writers like myself with a "different" literary voice are almost always published by the smaller, independent publishers. I have two, Double Dragon Publishing in Canada and Echelon Press in the US. I also have self-published books at Fictionwise, lulu.com and eBookAd.

But the marketing and distribution budgets of independent publishers and their authors

are no match for the mass-market blitzes of the big publishers. We rely almost entirely on word-of-mouth and a few other inexpensive things such as ... oh ... newsletters like the one you're reading now.

In short, every time you ask at a book store or library for a writer published by an independent publisher, you're helping to ensure a rich variety of new literary voices in the book world. You're voting for choice.

You can vote right now by forwarding this newsletter to a few friends. You can vote later on by asking for **The War Bug** at a book store or library.

I hope you enjoy the first issue of BIFFMITCHELL_dot_NEWS. If you have ideas for future content, or announcements to make, please send them to me.

Biff
Silence says it all.

November 2005

MY WRITING FRIENDS

24/7, Susan DiPlacido's no-holds-barred novel about Las Vegas, is steaming up bookstores across the US and at Amazon (<http://tinyurl.com/a4ps6>). You can read my review at <http://tinyurl.com/e4lke>. I also have a copy of her second novel **Trattoria**, which I'll read and review as soon as my blood pressure returns to safe levels. Explore the amazing world of Susan DiPlacido: <http://www.susandiplacido.com>.

Sara Webb-Quest dreamed about a large black hairy spider with sad eyes when she was a child. She recently turned the dream into a children's book to be published by Taiwan educational publisher San Min Books. It might even turn into an entire spider series. Explore the amazing world of Sara Webb Quest: <http://www.authorsden.com/sarawebbquest>

Joe Blades just returned from Serbia where he launched two of his poetry books in translation into Serbian. **Pesme is kasama** (Casemate Poems), translated by Dubravka Duric, was published by RAD in Beograd. **Recna svita** (River Suite), translated by Vesna Lopicic, appears alongside collections by Fraser Sutherland and Nancy Burke in the three-books-in-one anthology **Slike iz kanade: Tri kanadasa pesnika** (Images of Canada: Three Canadian Poets) published by SKC Nis. Highlights of the trip included participation in a Canadian Studies conference in Nis, activities at the 50th Beograd Book Fair, receptions at the Canadian Embassy's Official Residence and at Beograd City Hall, and beers with Jelena in a boat bar on the River Sava. Explore the amazing world of Joe Blades: <http://www.brokenjaw.com> and <http://brokenjoe.blogspot.com>

World famous canoeist and nature poet **Nanook of the Nashwaak**, writing under the name **Ken Corbett**, has melded much of the content from his internationally acclaimed web site into a book **My Secret River**. Buy it at <http://www.cafepress.com/canoenb>
Explore the amazing world of Nanook: <http://www.nanookofthenashwaak.com/index.htm>

Publisher, editor, teacher, and entrepreneur now turned author and poet **Malcolm James** has just completed his psychological thriller **The House That Jack Built** and is going full steam on his next novel **One Night in the House of the Creepy Santas**.
Explore the amazing world of Malcolm James: <http://malcolm-james.com/index.html>.

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NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Beer Can Page

I'd like to thank everyone who voted for me in the Preditors and Editors Poll. I didn't finish in the top 10, but I did finish in spot 12, beating out Piers Anthony and Orson Scott Card ... so I'm happy. Very happy. :) I have the names of those who informed me they voted, but I have only a few pictures of beer cans. This year, the canoeing season was short and it looks like people are starting to pack their cans out, because I didn't find many on the couple of trips I managed to get in. But I will be posting a beer can thank you page on my site as soon as I have enough cans for the people on the list. That means next Spring. It will happen.

Fiction Writing Workshop

The fiction writing workshop I conducted through the UNB College of Extended Learning is set for a return performance January 16. Sessions are run on Mondays at 7 PM in Marshall D'Avary Hall. Here's what it's all about: "This workshop is for those who have always wanted to write fiction but can't get the words out and those who can't get more than a few chapters into a novel before giving up. Through a mixture of

discussions, readings, and field trips into the jungles of Fredericton's food courts and bustling streets to study people and their artifacts, you'll develop a story idea into a finished piece of short fiction and then publish and market it. You'll need a computer with a word processing program, access to the Internet, at least four hours of free time a week, and a notebook and pen." You can find out more about the workshop from Andrew Titus at atitus@unb.ca.

The eBay Murdered Character Revealed

Some of you may remember back to this time last year when I ran an auction at eBay for the right to be murdered in my mystery novel **Murder by Burger**. The bids had just topped 300 bucks when eBay closed it down three days early. So I ran it again. And then one more time and I finally have a winning bidder. The winning bidder is ... well ... hmm ... let's just say that long time friend Beth Ashton ordered three copies of **The War Bug**. She's going to use two of them to wrap fish, but she's going to give one copy away with the following inscription: "Conditions of acceptance of this book: You must forward this book to someone else once you are done with it. You cannot keep it for your personal library. (please buy another copy). sign your name to the inside cover and pass it on to someone you know or someone you don't know. Make sure they understand the conditions. Go to www.biffmitchell.com and write the author a note so we know where the book is." And in exchange, I'm murdering her.

Maritime Writers' Workshop

I don't have all the details yet, but I'll be doing a workshop on SciFi and ePublishing at the 2006 Maritime Writers' Workshop. I may even be putting the focus on CyberPunk fiction. More on this later.

Twisted Tails

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

ErectSoftInc.com

ErectSoft Inc is the fictitious IT company in my novel **Team Player**, which was previously published in Australia by Jacobyte Books. **Team Player** will be re-released in ebook format by Double Dragon Publishing in 2006. But that's just the tip of the iceberg for this novel. For now, the URL for ErectSoftinc.com leads to biffmitchell.com, but not for long. Something's in the stew pot. Something that many people in the IT industry can relate to. Think ... absurd. More to come.

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INVITATION

If you have any news that you think would be appropriate for this newsletter, please feel free to send it to me. If I like it, I'll use it. If I don't, I'll drop my cat off on your front step in a burlap bag. Be careful what you send. Recipes are always good. Weird news is good. Stuff relating to my childhood from someone who's never met me is good. Links to web sites that may be of interest are really really good.

SUPER DUPER HUNKY DORY CHRISTMAS SPECIAL SALES PITCH

Christmas is coming! Want to give someone the gift that never stops getting weirder. Get them a copy of **The War Bug**. It's a weird book. They'll love it.

But here's where it gets weirder. Scan the sales slip and email it to me along with the picture of the person to whom the gift is intended along with a short Christmas message to that person from you.

Now here's where it gets really weird. I'll post their picture along with your message on a Christmas page on my web site. Christmas morning, you give them the book and tell them there's a message for them on the author's web site. They'll shit their pants.

SHOOTER RECIPE

The Peachy Keen Hunky Dory Fine Wonderful and Exuberant

Half ounce of Malibu (or any other clear coconut liqueur)
Half ounce of Ouzo* (or any other clear licorice liqueur)
Half ounce of Peach Schnapps (or any other clear peach liqueur)
Half ounce of Grand Marnier (or any other clear orange liqueur)

Mix them. Drink them. Quickly. Don't try to walk for an hour.

This shooter was served for one night at a bar in Oromocto, New Brunswick. Just one night. There was only one customer. He had two. He had to be thrown out. The shooter was never served again.

Next Spring, I'll publish my recipe for dandelion wine.

*If you love Ouzo, check this out: <http://www.lesvos.com/ouzo.html>

"MY TEN FAVORITE WRITERS" CONTEST

Each issue of this newsletter, I'm going to publish a list of the ten favorite writers of someone who's sent me a list of their favorites. I'll be drawing the name of the person from a box. The person whose list is used will win an autographed paperback copy of my book of short stories **Surfing in Catal Hyuk** (<http://www.lulu.com/content/129168>).

The prize for this issue was a Porsche. Unfortunately for everybody but me, the only name in the box was mine. Oh well, here goes ...

Christopher Moore
Kinky Friedman
Richard Brautigan
Kurt Vonnegut
Sparkle Hayter
Susan DiPlacido
Douglas Adams
Dashiell Hammett
Tom Robbins
Virginia Woolf

C'mon, top that list. I dare ya.

INTERVIEWS

Watch future issues of BIFFMITCHELL_dot_NEWS for interviews with writers, readers and a few surprises. Next issue: **Joe Blades**, Poet, Publisher, and Visionary.

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

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