

THE GEORGIA POETRY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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SPRING 2005

SOCIETY RECEIVES *POETS & WRITERS* GRANTS

Collin Kelley, Vice-President of the Georgia Poetry Society, has obtained two grants recently from *Poets and Writers* magazine.

The grants were given by *P&W* to support the Society's "First Friday" reading series at the Georgia Tech Barnes & Noble.

The initial grant of \$50

was given to support the February reading by Cheryl Floyd-Miller in conjunction with her latest work of poetry, *Chops*.

The second grant was given to support the April 1 reading by Stephen Bluestone of Mercer University.

The grants were made possible in part because of a

lead gift from BellSouth.

Poets and Writers has begun these grants in conjunction with their Readings/Workshops program, which strives to build audiences for literature, "encouraging readings of literary work, and creating opportunities for readers to engage directly with writers."

Please Join Us for the 105th Quarterly Meeting

Saturday 4/23/2005 in Columbus, Georgia

Details on Page 3

SHIELDS TO READ AT 105TH QUARTERLY MEETING

GPS President Steven Shields will be the featured presenter at the 105th Quarterly meeting in April.

Shields will be reading selections from *Daimonion Sonata*, his debut collection of poems.

The book was recently published by Birch Brook Press in a limited-edition letterpress printing, and features original art by famed woodcut illustrator Rose Orcutt. It was printed on 70-pound Mohawk vellum using a Miehle Vertical Press.

"The book's production is an excellent example of the fine printer's art, and is a wonderful fit for the kind of careful verse I compose," according to Shields.

Sonata explores the intersection of human and Divine affection, using traditional poetic forms.

"Like a musical composition, the book is divided into allegro, andante, scherzo and finale movements," Shields noted. "Poems fit within movements, and the movements cohere to a unified work."

More information is at StevenOwenShields.com.

A signing will follow Shields' presentation.



Steven Owen Shields

NOTES OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

- *GPS* has a new mailing address, effective immediately. It is:

P.O. Box 147

Duluth, GA 30096

Please make note of it.

- *GPS* will participate in the first annual "Arts in the Park" festival at historic Oakland Cemetery in Atlanta. We'll be reading on Saturday, May 7 at 3:30 PM and again Wednesday May 11 at 7:30 PM. This is for *GPS MEMBERS ONLY*. Contact Collin Keller for sign-up info.
- The 2001-02 "Reach of Song" is still available. Contact Terry Hensel.

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GPS MEMBER NEWS

Ira Harrison has resigned as GPS Treasurer. **John Ottley** has agreed to complete Ira's term until the next election.

Bob Lynn's "Birmingham Jail" has been selected for publication in *Time of Singing*. Bob attended and read at the Poetry Society of Oklahoma awards luncheon on March 12, and read his verse at six Rotary club meetings in Georgia recently. A poem Bob composed while visiting his high school for his 55th class reunion is at right.

Emery Campbell's translation of the verse fable *La jeune veuve* ("The young widow") by 15th century poet-philosopher Jean de la Fontaine was selected as one of the top 25 finalists (of 300) in the third annual Willis Barnstone Translation Prize contest. Four of Emery's poems have been published in South Africa at www.nuttystories.co.za.

New Members!

Please welcome:

Gary C. Daniels

Patrick S. Duncan

Catherine Favole-Gruber

Miranda Moss

Maurice Skillern

Alice L. Teeter

Diana Smith has had a poem published in *Highlights Magazine* and has won a Letter of Merit in the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators Magazine Merit Awards for 2004. Her work is featured at right.

Poets in the Schools: **Jean Mahavier** reports having "a full day of poetry readings and discussion at Brookwood High School in Snellville on February 17. Lisa Allender, Will Kenyon, Jean Mahavier, and a new volunteer Marissa McNamara took turns at the podium in the media center. Preparation for this day of poetry prompted a *Poetry Rocks! Coffee House* that evening with students reading and reciting, and student guitarists playing. We have been asked to have a poetry day there every year."

The GPS Nominating Committee, consisting of **Dustin Brookshire** (chair), **Rosemary Mauldin** and **Herbert Denmark**, is finalizing the 2005-06 electoral slate.

Jean Osborne Shaw recently won both the poetry and light verse awards of the Atlanta Writers Club.

Collin Kelley will be a featured poet at the 2005 Austin International Poetry Festival April 14-17. Collin will appear with Tony Hoagland, Naomi Shihab Nye, Larry Jaffe, Sholeh Wolpe and many more. Details are at www.aipf.org.

GPS MEMBER POEMS

On Being Kids in World War Two

Robert L. Lynn

You'd have to have been there to understand
The raw patriotism we Oklahoma kids felt
During World War Two in the early Forties.
Our big brothers shipped out to France and Anzio,
Guadalcanal, Midway and Corregidor.
Mom required we write our pilot brother,
Letters, love and cookies locked inside the tin.
We pasted defense stamps in tiny books,
Cheered at war bond rallies in Healdton Square.
In mule-drawn cart we scavenged for scrap,
Mounding school yard tower for tanks and guns;
Hitler and Hirohito our unambiguous enemies,
Would have joined the fight if not for age;
How we children earnestly loved our land!
You'd have to have been there to understand.

The Beach Belongs to Me

Diana Smith

The sea hurls shells upon the sand,
And snaps at uninvited guests.
Waves bare dragon teeth
At seagulls pasted in the sky.
Furious gray,
Sea and sky roar,
"Go away!"
But I rest my body on the wind
And choose to stay.

105TH QUARTERLY MEETING AGENDA

Saturday, April 23, 2005

Columbus Public Library

3000 Macon Road Columbus, Georgia 31906

09:30 - 10:00 AM	Registration, coffee, pastries, and sign up for member readings
10:00 - 10:05	Welcome by President Steven Shields
10:05 - 10:45	Member readings
10:45 - 11:00	BREAK
11:00 - 11:30	FEATURED POET STEVEN SHIELDS
11:30 - 11:45	Book signing and reception
11:45 - 01:00 PM	Lunch (on your own)
01:00 - 01:15	Contest results (Youth contests, Langston Hughes, <i>Reach of Song</i>)
01:15 - 01:30	DEBORAH TAINSH READING
01:30 - 02:00	<i>SHOUT THE FROM THE MOUNTAINTOPS READING</i>
02:00 - 02:15	BREAK
02:15 - 03:00	Annual business meeting.
03:00 - 03:15	Closing thoughts from President and adjournment.
03:30 - 04:30	BOARD MEETING

DIRECTIONS:

1. Take I-85 SOUTH from Atlanta toward Columbus (**48 miles**; consult Mapquest for directions from other locations).
2. Merge onto I-185 SOUTH (Exit 21) toward Columbus (**45 miles**)
3. Take the MACON ROAD WEST exit (exit 6) and turn onto MACON ROAD WEST (also GA 22 WEST; **.7 miles**)
4. Look for the Columbus Library at 3000 MACON ROAD WEST
This is about a 2:30 trip (137 miles) from northern suburbs of Atlanta.

PARKING:

A library parking area is available.

DEBORAH TAINSH, GCTE TO SPEAK AT 105TH GPS MEETING

Columbus-area poet and writer Deborah Tainsh will speak to the Society at the 105th meeting on April 23, and talk about her latest book.

Her book, "Heart of a Hawk, Eye of an Eagle" was inspired by the death of her stepson, Sergeant Patrick Tainsh, who was killed in Iraq in 2004. It is her first full-length book.

Tainsh is author of two poetry chapbooks, *Not Even Back Trouble Can Keep Mama From Dancin'* and *Lessons*

from a Field Study.

In addition to her writing, Tainsh founded the Rivertown Poets & Storytellers group in Columbus. She also is managing editor for their 2005 anthology *A Community Speaks*. Through the Sargeant Patrick Tainsh Memorial Books for Children Fund she promotes early childhood literacy.

In addition to Tainsh's afternoon presentation, writings from *Shout Them from the Mountaintops* will be featured.

Shout is a publication of the Georgia

Council of Teachers of English (GCTE). It was published to celebrate the "Year of the Poem" (April 2003-2004) as well as the "Year of the Mountain."

Shout is a 148-page anthology, edited by Jean Copland, Hilde Holmes, Jane Dillard Knight, and John S. Knight, Jr. It features poems from GPS members.

Copies of both books will be available for sale after the reading.

DAIMONION SONATA —

A REVIEW BY ROBERT L. LYNN

Steven Owen Shields' debut book of poems is striking on three counts: Its breadth of traditional forms, its creative employment of myth, and its rare bond between printing and content.

The title, *Daimonion Sonata*, derives from the Greek word *daimon*, or "indwelling spirit." In this case, the spirit is that of poetry itself, or the Muse.

And, like a sonata, the book subdivides into four musical movements:

Allegro: Daimonic and Divine

Andante: Love, Daimonic

Scherzo

Finale: Love, Divine

Shields' book is a veritable cornucopia of traditional verse forms, all of which are identified in the table of contents.

In all, sixteen forms were used, including the Keatsian ode, quatorzain, tetrameter

blank verse, Shakespearean sonnet, trochaic tetrameter, terza rima sonnet, prose poem, blank verse, Old English stanzas, pantoum, abecedarian, Petrarchan sonnet, ottava rima, rhyming couplets, villanelle, and nonce (original) forms.

Shields' personal interest in traditional verse may have been influenced by his background as a university professor of communication, which included teaching courses in research methods and statistics.

About half of the thirty poems emerge from myths.

The opening poem, "Prayer to a Forgotten Goddess," implores Xuxa, an unknown ancient goddess, to "Return with glory, sweeping through the land/and snatch your faded image from the past."

Other myths are invoked in "Moon in Late October,"

which sings: "Sickle moon saws on a dead branch/at the edge of a pagan age./ Swaying time with Nature's concert/Druids dance in naked rage."

The third wife of Caesar Claudius is the subject of "The Raving Beauty, Lady Messalina."

Circe, the enchantress who detained Odysseus for a year and turned his men into swine, appears in the abecedarian "In and Out of Circe's Favor."

Other poems deal with life experiences, including "On Owen Island," a delightful Abraham/Sarah/Isaac conception story.

"The Dragon's Mouth, the Lady's Slipper" contains a nice botanic tribute: "Most of all, I love your azure calm,/ the heat-lightning summer sunset gaiety/of your consciousness."

In the prose poem "The

Weeping Moon", the Moon invites the poet to accompany her to convince the Sun of her love for him:

"And so with a gentle embrace the Moon carried me off through the open window, and we became one with the stars of the early morning summer sky."

Those who value letterpress production will exult in this book.

Birch Brook Press handset the type in Goudy Lite and printed the work on a Miehle Vertical Press onto 70 lb. Mohawk Vellum.

Original work by woodcut artist Rose Orcutt of dancing Druids makes for an amazing cover, with red tinting applied by hand.

The president of the Georgia Poetry Society has slammed a home run in his first poetic work.

"FIRST FRIDAYS" FEATURES STEPHEN BLUESTONE

Prominent Mercer University poet Stephen Bluestone appears on Friday, April 1 at the Georgia Tech Barnes & Noble store, site of GPS' "First Friday" readings. Collin Kelley is the host.

Bluestone's appearance is possible in part because of a grant from Bellsouth through *Poets and Writers* magazine (see page 1).

Bluestone, a professor of English and film at Mercer, was awarded the 2004 Tho-

mas Merton Prize for Poetry of the Sacred.

His poem, "The Rug Maker," was selected from 810 entries submitted from 22 different countries, and can be read online at: www.mertonfoundation.org.

Bluestone's *Laughing Monkeys of Gravity*, published by Mercer University Press in 1995, was nominated for the National Book Award in Poetry.

He also has won the *The*

Greensboro Review Poetry Prize, two Hopwood prizes, and the Robert Penn Warren competition, in addition to a National Endowment for the Humanities Award and a Pushcart Prize Special Mention.

Sign up for the open mic that precedes Bluestone's reading will begin at 7 p.m. Readings begin at 7:30 p.m.

Georgia Tech's B&N is at 5th and Spring Streets, Atlanta.



Stephen Bluestone

THE PREZ SEZ...

Several GPS members have recently entered the *blogosphere*.

No need to be concerned for their safety (I think). These members simply are making their thoughts on poetry, and life generally, available online via their *weblogs*, or "blogs" for short.

Blogs are a sort of cross between personal journal (or "log," hence the name), tirade, and personal observation and reflection. Please be aware that some are pretty frank; most are also very free with their language.

One of the joys of blogging is that, unlike the one-way posting of verse to an Internet site, blogging allows interaction between writers and audiences.

GPS writers with blogs include *Ayodele Heath*, at mayodeleheath.blogspot.com/, *Collin Kelley* at www.collinkelley.com/, and my own at www.stevenowenshields.blogspot.com/. If I missed yours, please let me know.

Some blogs are intriguing, many are inane. Some appear abandoned. You might remember the last election when bloggers were quick to dispute the CBS version of President Bush's Guard service record. But those blogs exist side-by-side with the ravings of high school students about their teachers, garage bands on tour, and discussions of macramé. Like the Internet itself, anything goes.

Fine. What would blogs offer poets? Good question, and here's today's snappy answer: Ordinarily, there's precious little to be learned about the life of a counter worker at a Dunkin Donuts in Manhattan, but what a terrific over-the-shoulder look if you were setting a poem or story there.

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Some blogs exist side-by-side with the ravings of high school students about their teachers, garage bands on tour, and discussions of macramé. Like the Internet itself, anything goes.

In other words, these little vignettes offer the possibility of adding authentic detail to your own work.

This could take various forms. Perhaps you find a bit of jargon, or a process known mainly to workers in a certain field, or see dilemmas faced by folks in certain lines of work or locales or lifestyles.

Sometimes you find blogs in fields where words are cherished for different reasons, such as public relations, which reminds you that words make a difference in other occupations too (see www.fightthebull.com/blog/ for a good example).

Be prepared to separate trash from treasure, fact from fiction. But what a wealth of personal insight and description, what a trove of ideas for interesting poems.

Come see. Even better, consider starting your own and sharing it with us.



GPS President Steven Shields

Mark Your Calendar

- 4/15 Byron Herbert Reece deadline
- 6/15 Vickers contest deadline
- 7/01 2005-06 dues are due on this date
- 7/23 106th Quarterly Meeting (check website for date changes and location)

THE GEORGIA POETRY
SOCIETY

SERVING GEORGIA'S POETS SINCE
1979

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Georgia Poetry Society Newsletter

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.GEORGIAPOETRYSOCIETY.COM

JOIN THE GEORGIA POETRY SOCIETY!

GPS membership extends from July 1 to June 30 each year. Beginning July 1, 2005, annual dues are \$30 (\$35 for families, \$10 for students with ID). Life memberships are \$300, and include a copy of the annual anthology *The Reach of Song*. Detach this form, mail check or money order to The Georgia Poetry Society, PO Box 28337, Atlanta GA 30358.

Please check: This is a **New Membership** **Renewal**

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____

PHONE _____ (home) _____ (work)

EMAIL _____

WEBSITE _____

OCCUPATION _____

WE NEED YOUR HELP! PLEASE CHECK ACTIVITIES FOR YOUR VOLUNTEER SUPPORT:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Program Planning Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Editorial Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Poetry in the Schools Project |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Membership Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity | <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative / Management |