



The Writer's Access

January-February 2007

News from the Lane Literary Guild

www.laneliteraryguild.org

A Look at Future Windfalls

March 20: Writers, Eastern Oregon University professors, and husband-and-wife, **Jodi Varon** and **David Axelrod**.

April 17: Oregon's poet laureate **Lawson Inada**, along with **Paulann Peterson**, helps the Guild celebrate National Poetry Month.

May 15: Local favorite **William Sullivan** does a reading and slideshow from his new novel, *Hiking Europe in Search of Einstein's Violin*.

Windfall Readings are held 7-9 p.m. in the downtown library and are sponsored by the Guild, the Library, the Friends of the Library, the Library Foundation, and the Cultural Services Division of the Lane Arts Council.

LLG Membership

Thanks to all the new and renewing members, whose dues support all the Guild's programs, and whose spirit supports so much more.

New Members

Meg Kieran Adrea Bogle

Renewing Members

Toni Van Deusen Kelly Terwilliger
Dana Furgerson Cecelia Hagen
Dawn Marlan Erik & Ann Muller
Deborah Narin-Wells Quinton Hallett
Bonnita Stahlbert

Angels

Vince & Patty Wixon

HOW TO JOIN LLG OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP
Membership in Lane Literary Guild is open to anyone. Annual membership fees are \$25 for individuals,

\$35 for families, \$15 for low-income or students, and \$50 for "angels."

To find out whether you need to renew, look at the mailing label on this newsletter. A neon sticker beside it saying "Time to Renew" is our not-so-subtle visual reminder.

Mail checks to LLG, P.O. Box 11035, Eugene, OR 97440.

January and February Windfalls

A One-Man Show for All Seasons; Mathematicians, Labor Organizers and Other Wildernesses

Jeff DeMark on baseball, fathers, and more on January 16; Lisa Steinman and John Daniel to read on February 20



Jeff DeMark

On Tuesday, January 16, the Guild's Windfall Reading Series starts the new year right with a memorable one-man show by **Jeff DeMark** in the Bascom-Tykeson room of the Eugene Public Library. The show begins at 7:00 p.m. and is free and open to the public.

Writer and solo performer Jeff DeMark hails from Blue Lake, California. He returns to Eugene to perform "Hard as a Diamond, Soft as the Dirt." In September 2004 DeMark presented another one of his shows, "Writing My Way Out of Adolescence," to kick off the 20th Anniversary Season of the Windfall series, drawing a large and enthusiastic crowd of 200.

"Hard as a Diamond, Soft as the Dirt" was commissioned by Eureka's College of the Redwoods' Visiting Writers Series in April 2002 and opened to a sold-out house at the college's 350-seat Forum Theater.

"Hard as a Diamond, Soft as the Dirt" weaves numerous stories, songs, and poems about baseball and the death of DeMark's father and how common interests in baseball and storytelling united the father and son. Alternately humorous and poignant, the show details how DeMark used a trip to Detroit's Tiger Stadium to ritualize a final goodbye to his father. Along the way, the audience meets Mr. Cub, Ernie Banks, and Willie Mays, learns about the creative use of a "Beatle" wig, and hears about an appearance by Hank Aaron on the Home Shopping Network, among many other stories.

An integral part of the performance is the accompaniment by the popular Humboldt County band, The Delta Nationals. The band (via recordings, for the Eugene show) plays a grooving set of music before DeMark's performance, then accompanies the stories with a versatile mix of music ranging from jazz to R&B to rock and roll.

In reviewing the debut show, *The North Coast Journal* of Arcata wrote:

"DeMark's material is wonderfully poetic in places, ironic throughout and is tightly unified and universal. . . . The stories are carefully and dramatically arranged while sometimes appearing to be just wild swings at the ball. This is

continued on page 2

January–February Windfalls . . . continued from page 1

an unquestionable, happy breakthrough.”

A mainstay of the Humboldt County writing community for over 15 years, DeMark claims three other original shows, “Writing My Way Out of Adolescence,” “Went to Lunch, Never Returned,” and “Making Every Mistake Twice.” Each show debuted to sold-out crowds at Dell’Arte Theatre’s “Mad River Festival” in Blue Lake, California.

Jeff DeMark started his writing and performing career in Madison, Wisconsin, over 30 years ago. He has performed and collaborated with such musical groups as The Violent Femmes, Paul Cebal and the Milwaukeeans, and others. He has toured his shows widely, performing in theaters in San Francisco, Milwaukee, Madison, Minneapolis, Santa Fe, and New York’s famed Knitting Factory. Additionally, he has performed in many schools and at Humboldt State University.



Lisa Steinman

The February 20 Windfall Reading brings Lisa Steinman and John Daniel—two of Oregon’s most intelligent and dedicated writers—to read in the Bascom-Tykeson room of the Eugene downtown library starting at 7 p.m.

Lisa Steinman was born and raised in rural Connecticut. She is the daughter of a mathematician, which she suspects is one reason why the title of her fifth book of poems, *Carslaw’s Sequences*, appealed

to her. The book is a tribute to Horatio Scott Carslaw, an early 20th century mathematician who worked unsuccessfully on “divergent series” (series of numbers that cannot be tidily summed). Steinman uses this as a metaphor for the way we try to make sense out of a world that is often senseless. Vern Rutsala says of *Sequences*: “These fluid, roving and wryly meditative poems are among the finest I’ve read—such an eye for detail! Such an ear for the anomalous language of signs and overheard conversations! In this book you encounter a sensibility that is quietly but genuinely original and which supplies the reader with a steady diet of delights.”

In the title poem, the poet takes us, through association, into one scene after another in which things happen without apparent logic. A boy falls to his death from a dairy truck, a volcano covers a city, a repair shop is unable to fix anything. Poem after poem reflects how things don’t add up.

The book is about language as well—how we use words to try to define ourselves and our world. It is obvious—by the abundance of word play and the snatches of overheard conversations that make their way into the poems—that this poet is in love with words. Steinman finds language everywhere. For her, “Poems walk by,” “the sky mumbles / constantly,” “waterfalls say hard things / brilliantly.” In the end, “the world is verbose.”

Steinman attended college and graduate school at Cornell University. She has received NEA and Rockefeller fellowships. Along with five books of poems, Steinman has published two books about poetry, *Made in America* (Yale University Press), and *Masters of Repetition* (St. Martin’s Press). She is currently writing a book on contemporary American poetry. Her poems have been published in *The Massachusetts Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Notre Dame Review*, and elsewhere. She lives in Portland, where she has taught at Reed College since 1976. With her husband, Jim Shugrue, she has coedited the poetry journal *Hubbub* since 1982.



John Daniels

Born in South Carolina and raised in the suburbs of Washington, D.C., **John Daniel** has lived in the West since 1966. After attending Reed College, he worked as a logger, railroad inspector, rock-climbing instructor, hod carrier, and poet-in-the-schools. He began to write in the 1970s while living in south-central Oregon. In 1982 he received a Wallace Stegner Fellowship in Poetry at Stanford University, where he then earned his master’s degree and taught as a Jones Lecturer

in Creative Writing and a lecturer in Freshman English for five years.

Daniel is the author of eight books of memoir, personal essays, and poetry. His newest work, *Rogue River Journal: A Winter Alone*, is an account of four-and-a-half months of solitude in the backcountry of the Klamath Mountains. It is also a memoir of his father’s life and career in the American labor movement and of Daniel’s own coming of age. He describes this latest book as a “popoir” to accompany the “momoir” (*Looking After*), published in 1996, about caring for his mother at the end of her life as she declined with Alzheimer’s. The Pacific Northwest Booksellers Association gave *Rogue River Journal* a PNBA Book Award in 2006.

Daniel has been a James Thurber Writer-in-Residence at Ohio State University, a Research and Writing Fellow at Oregon State University’s Center for the Humanities, and the Viebranz Visiting Professor of Creative Writing at St. Lawrence University in northern New York State. Two of his books have won the Oregon Book Award for Literary Nonfiction.

His essays and articles have appeared in *Audubon*, *Outside*, *Hope*, *Bloomsbury Review*, *North American Review*, *Southwest Review*, and other journals and anthologies. His poems have been published in *Poetry*, *The Southern Review*, *Sierra*, *The Pushcart Prize VIII*, *Poetry of the American West*, and elsewhere. He is poetry editor of *Wilderness*, the annual publication of the Wilderness Society. A commissioned poem (untitled) appears as a 270-foot frieze in the interior of Fern Ridge Library in Veneta, Oregon. A third collection of poems, *Spring Burning*, is in progress.

John Daniel lives with his wife, Marilyn Daniel, plus two cats and usually a pack rat, in the Coast Range foothills.

New Eyes in Poems' Lines

by Toni VanDeusen

Dennis Bleything's poems sneak up on you, much the way time does. Time is a key theme in Bleything's chapbook, *Perfect Mistakes* (Traprock Books, 2006). From "The Gradual Fall," which begins the book, right through to the final poem, "Shaniko," an elegy for a lost town and way of life, Bleything weaves images of time: *sundial hands of the plants, Young time stretches out flat, and Wind, the dry voice of time.* In "The Hourglass Maker" he gives us these remarkable images:

Book Review

Perfect Mistakes,
by Dennis Bleything.
Traprock Books,
2006. 36 pages, \$8.

*Forming time's hollow lens
he bends it so the moon-ground stone
will slide to mark his motion.*

*Even small-boned birds whose high
long cries are vacant in the wind turn
to a count kept sealed in glass.*

Bleything's descriptions of the natural world are those of a man who sees deeply. He watches and listens and allows the world to speak to him.

In some poems, the poet appears almost as a kind of hourglass himself, so still is he in his careful and loving observation of the world around him. In "Barn on a Remote Meadow," there are these amazing lines: *The old slow barn has moved. Light / bending on the silent grass leaps / between the cracks & falls / dusty to the floor.*

Other people are somewhat incidental in most of the poems, part of the natural world, or inhabitants of memories. A departure from this occurs in "Maps," in which the poet presents a beautiful sketch of the way it is possible (and indeed, likely) for a couple to misunderstand each other, even when trying their best to be clear.

*We could try this trail, he said.
She heard trial, noticing a white scar.
It's a long drive, he gestured
off the map at where they would start.
She heard, we might part, noticing
the map continuing in his eyes.*

Thanks once again to Erik Muller and Traprock Books for bringing yet another remarkable Oregon poet to light. With beautiful cover art by Craig Spilman, *Perfect Mistakes* is anything but a mistake, and is available at independent bookstores. Read it and see the world with new eyes.

Kudos to Guild Members

Dorianne Laux won the Oregon Book Award in poetry for her most recent collection of poems, *Facts About the Moon*.

Laura LeHew has two poems coming out in *Pank*: "Investigative Assessment: Criminal Personality Profiling" and "A Word Problem."

What Next, Ms. Elliott?, the new novel of contemporary women in retirement by **Jo-Brew**, has just been released and is available at Books without Borders in downtown Eugene.

Cecelia Hagen's poem, "The Exile Returns in Theory," was nominated for a Pushcart Prize by *Caffeine Destiny*.

Michael Hanner has a poem in the upcoming issue of *Tiger's Eye*.

Erik Muller, publisher of Traprock Books, donated the entire proceeds from the November Windfall's sale of **Vince Wixon's** *The Square Grove* (Traprock Books, 2006) to the Lane Literary Guild. Thanks, Erik!

Traprock Books has a new title, *Green November*, by **Eleanor Berry**. Paulann Petersen writes of the book: "Each poem carries the complexity of uncertainty and mystery, a gleaming depth gained in part from echoing allusions to companion poems."

Ingrid Wendt received an honorable mention for her manuscript *Sanctuary* from the NFSPS Stevens Poetry Manuscript competition.

January 27 Poetry Craft Workshop with Laton Carter

Laton Carter, Eugene native and winner of the 2005 Stafford-Hall Oregon Book Award for poetry, will lead a one-day poetry craft workshop on Saturday, January 27, 2007.

The workshop will balance a traditional workshop forum—where participants will read and openly discuss their own work—with a talk on poetic craft entitled "The Quiet Metaphor," in which the use and limits of the metaphor as a tool in contemporary poetry are examined and reviewed. Poems by Mary Oliver, Jorie Graham, Galway Kinnell, Wendell Berry, James McMichael, and others will be discussed for this portion of the workshop.

Participants of all levels are encouraged to join. The cost for the workshop is \$50 for LLG members, \$65 for non-members. Call 685-1087 or email tonivd@cmc.net for more information and to reserve a spot.

LLG Contacts

Events: Deborah Narin-Wells, calendar@laneliteraryguild.org

Membership: Toni Van Deusen, membership@laneliteraryguild.org

Windfall Readings: Cecelia Hagen & Deborah Narin-Wells, windfall@laneliteraryguild.org

Newsletter: Cecelia Hagen, newsletter@laneliteraryguild.org

Craft Workshops: Toni Van Deusen, tonivd@cmc.net

LLG Website: Laura LeHew, laura@deer-run.com

Newsletter Layout: Ling Chan, ling_c_chan@yahoo.com

Ongoing Workshops:
Fiction 1: Steven Higgins, 689-8306

Fiction 2: John Groves, 345-2732
Poetry 1: Deborah Narin-Wells, 683-2086

Poetry 2: Michael Hanner, 895-2236

Poetry 4: Laura LeHew, 683-8682

*Is it time
to renew?*



The Writer's Access is published bimonthly by the Lane Literary Guild, a not-for-profit group dedicated to fostering appreciation of the written and spoken word and providing workshops and support for writers in Lane County. Send member news, calendar events, or announcements to newsletter@laneliteraryguild.org. The LLC website, www.laneliteraryguild.org, is updated regularly. Log on to find links to Windfall readers and information about the Guild.

About The Writer's Access

Lane Literary Guild
P.O. Box 11035
Eugene, OR 97440



Readings & Events in January–February

Readings are free unless otherwise noted.

January

- 14 Red Sofa Poets read at Mother Kali's.
- 16 Windfall presents Jeff DeMark performing his play, "Hard as a Diamond, Soft as the Dirt." Eugene Public Library, Bascom-Tykeson Room, 7:00 p.m.
- 20 Poet Margareta Waterman. Tsunami Books, 5:00 p.m.
- 25 The Oregon Book Award tour brings poetry finalist Matt Yurdana (*Public Gestures*), nonfiction winner Andrew Bernstein (*Modern Passings: Death Rites, Politics, and Social Change in Imperial Japan*), creative nonfiction finalist Kristin Kaye (*Iron Maidens: The Celebration of the Most Awesome Female Muscle in the World*), and short-story finalist Geronimo Tagatac (*The Weight of the Sun*) to Tsunami Books, 7:00 p.m.
- 28 Annual William Stafford Birthday reading. Bring a favorite Stafford poem or anecdote, or one of yours "in the spirit of Stafford." For information, call Martha Gatchell, 836-2532. Tsunami Books, 2–4 p.m.

February

- 4 Lane Literary Guild's Red Sofa Poets (formerly known as Poetry 2) reading. Tsunami Books, 4:00 p.m.
- 10 Poet Clayton Eshelman. Tsunami Books, 5:00 p.m.
- 15 Poet Maxine Scates, sponsored by UO Creative Writing. Knight Library Browsing Room, 8:00 p.m.
- Poets Jesus Sepulveda and Paul Dresman. Tsunami Books, 7:00 p.m.
- 20 Windfall presents Eastern Oregon writers Jodi Varon and David Axelrod. Eugene Public Library, Bascom-Tykeson Room, 7:00 p.m.
- 22 Fiction Writer Cai Emmons, sponsored by UO Creative Writing. Knight Library Browsing Room, 8:00 p.m.