

BOOKMARK



Fiction and Nonfiction News from Janet Litherland

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Potpourri

I recently visited *Bookmark's* online archives to see when we last discussed writing one's memoirs (see article on p. 2). While at the website, some other topics caught my eye, some that you, too, might like to revisit. In 2006—Time Travel; "Escape" Fiction. 2007—Ghost Writers; Literary Novels; Writer's Block. 2008—Self-Publishing; Anne Perry's Real-life Story. 2009—Authors who "Collaborate"; The Best-Sellers List.

My current project, tentatively titled *Sweet Revenge*, was inspired by an event in my own family's history (circa 1860), which affected future generations of two families. The book is pure fiction—only the *inspiration* came from real life! I've completed about two-thirds of the first draft.

In the last issue of *Bookmark*, I announced the winner of our previous photo contest. I said that she guessed correctly, and specifically, that the penguins were attacking me at Trafalgar Square in London. See anything wrong with that? Well, one—just *one*—sharp reader did. Joy Daugherty of Thomasville, GA, said those birds were *pigeons*, not penguins! Did I put penguins in there just to test you? Don't I wish! My fingers were faster than my brain. *Mea culpa!*

**All of Janet's books
are available at:**

BarnesAndNoble.com
Amazon.com
and other online stores.

Fiction Reviews

My reading this time included two "dog" books—one excellent, one a bummer (see "Janet's Ratings," p. 2). Here's the good one:

Play Dead (David Rosenfelt, 2007). This book is about a dog who is the only witness to a murder, and the lawyer who makes it possible for him to "testify" in court. Plenty of humor, love (of dogs), and mystery. It held my attention.

Faraday Road and ***Swope's Ridge*** (Ace Collins, 2008 & 2009 respectively). This is one big novel sold as two, without even a hint of it to the purchaser! I liked it very much, but when I got to the end of the first one and read the last line: *to be continued* (without resolution), I was mad—not angry, just crazy mad. What a shameful way to promote the sale of books! And this from a publisher (Zondervan) that deems to be Christian. Having said that, this "book" is a well-written intrigue that kept me reading. The meandering plot has some plausibility issues, but if you can suspend your disbelief, you'll enjoy it. I did.

The Legends: Beginnings (Robert E. Connolly, 2010). This book was first published in Ireland, then reprinted in the US. The author spins a fine tale linking the ancient Irish mythical hero, Cúchulainn, with the present day via his infant son. The child is found on an Irish hillside in the twentieth century and is taken in by a childless couple who pretend he is their own. Of course, the child grows up with special powers inherited from his mythical father. The story is interesting and I hung in there, but it gets bogged down in a plethora of distracting typos and bad punctuation. Clearly, it was never edited, which was a huge mistake by both the author and the publisher.

Crossroads (Belva Plain, 2008). I was drawn to this book (paperback edition) for just one reason: The author, who has been writing novels since 1980, is 91 years old, and I wanted to see if she could still cut it. She can. I remember reading one of her books years ago, a pleasant story. However, as you all know by now, I like plot-driven novels; Belva Plain's stories are character-driven. I prefer knowing what characters say and what they do, not what they think and feel. Even so, Plain is a good writer and this—her 22nd book, which deals with the perils of jealousy—is a good one!

The Pallbearers (Stephen J. Cannell, 2010). This author is the Emmy Award-winning creator and producer of many television series including *The Rockford Files*, *The A-Team*, and *Wiseguy*. In addition, he has written 16 excellent suspense novels. Nine of these feature Shane Scully, an LAPD detective. *The Pallbearers* unites six former street-tough orphans (of whom Scully is one) who spent their early years in a group home, befriended by the home's director. Thirty years later, "Pops" commits suicide, or so it seems. The six don't believe it, and they set out to prove it was murder. Good book!

Memoirs Revisited

FICTION AND NONFICTION NEWS FROM
JANET LITHERLAND



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In the April 2006 issue of *Bookmark* I challenged you to write your memoirs (memories). Here is what I said: “Start right now and you can have a collection of your memories ready for Christmas giving. Your friends, and especially your family, will be grateful. Don’t you wish your great-grandmother, your grandfather, or even your parents had recorded their memories for you?” It’s been four years. Have you recorded yours?

In July 2006 I helped you organize your memories via three steps: Building a framework based on significant years of your life; sorting your letters, photos, and documents; and choosing stand-alone stories. Yes, I said stories—a collection of *stories*—not a day-by-day account of your life. Some stories (My First Prom) may take a few pages; others (I Don’t Like Yard Work) may require only a few sentences. Choose specific incidents from your childhood, teenage years, young adult/early marriage years, your career, middle years, retirement, etc. Think of your life as a child’s coloring book. All of the pictures and stories are there in outline form. They only need to be “colored in” for others to enjoy and to learn from.

You are unique. You have your own values, beliefs, opinions, and quirky little habits. You have seen, and done, and been, and gone. Making a record of this will provide a treasure chest of information for your family because no one else will have lived life exactly as you lived it. No one else will have viewed it from your perspective. If you haven’t started yet, please begin now. Your memoir doesn’t have to be perfect—it just has to be *written*. It will be the best gift you ever give to your family members. The Christmas season is eight months away. Let’s get started!

Language: What’s Bugging You?

I spotted these sentences in various print media—truly, I did! Can you find the errors in them?

I haven’t heard back from he or his lawyer.

The harvest is plentiful; and everyone including children are expected to help.

It’s time for my husband and I to start packing our bags.

None of the injuries were thought to be life-threatening.

It was a personal matter between he and his wife.

He spent the evening laying on the sofa, watching television.

And just for fun (via Lexophiles, Lovers of Words):

She broke into song because she couldn’t find the key.

A boiled egg is hard to beat.

Read back issues of *Bookmark* online at: www.janetlitherland.com/newsletter.htm



Bookmark
Janet’s Book News

Janet’s Ratings: Scaled 1 - 5 ★=OK, ★★★★★=Fantastic!

Like A Dog With A Bone (Lee Charles Kelly, 2007) ★ (Don’t bother)

Hell Gate (Linda Fairstein, 2010) ★★★★★

Fatal (Michael Palmer, 2002) ★★★★★

Janet Litherland, author of 10 nonfiction books and four novels, also is editor emeritus and former owner of Write-Choice Services, Inc., a book-development company that aspiring authors can find at: www.writechoiceservices.com.