

BOOKMARK



Fiction and Nonfiction News from Janet Litherland

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Potpourri

Last month I had the privilege of taking part in the Decatur (Georgia) Book Festival as a guest of Dr. Tim Morrison at the Write Choice Services booth/tent. It was held on the “square,” which also encompassed several side streets. The weather was gorgeous, and attendance was over the top! The event, sponsored by *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, is the largest independent book festival in the country and attracts popular authors such as Diana Gabaldon (the *Outlander* series) and Ridley Pearson (long-time thriller writer), as well as mid-list authors and aspiring writers. I had a wonderful time “meeting and greeting” people. And, I am grateful to my son, Mark (who lives in Atlanta), for accompanying me—especially driving me there through all that Atlanta traffic! “Browsing the booths” is great fun. Try it next year!

A recent *Time* magazine article by Lev Grossman described literary author Jonathan Franzen’s work: “[His writing] does not call attention to itself or to the guy who wrote it. It calls attention to the thing it’s calling attention to.” That’s the kind of writing I like—writing that focuses on the story, rather than the author’s use of flowery words and phrases.

**Janet Litherland’s books
are available at:**

Amazon.com
BarnesAndNoble.com
and other online stores.

Reviews

Two very good mystery/thrillers, both with recurring characters, both in paperback: In Catherine Coulter’s *Knock Out*, husband and wife FBI agents Dillon and Sherlock strive to protect a telepathic child without knowing where she is. Elements of this story strain the imagination; however, if you can “suspend your disbelief” and simply enjoy the tale, you’ll have one heck of a ride! Tess Gerritsen’s *The Apprentice* was first released in 2002 but re-released this year in anticipation of the new TV series starring her characters, Detective Jane Rizzoli and Boston Medical Examiner Dr. Maura Isles. This particular plot involves a sadistic serial killer and a possible copycat. If you like scary stories, these novels will provide good bedtime reading!

The Last Child (John Hart, 2009). In the January 2010 issue I reviewed Hart’s *Down River*, saying that I intended to read more of his work. This novel is the story of an amazing 13-year-old boy determined to find his twin sister who disappeared a year ago. He believes everyone else—including law enforcement—has given up, but he never will. He is smart, resourceful, and endearing. And he takes the reader into dark and dangerous places. Great characterization; great book!

Peril in Patagonia (Emily Cary, 2009). The biologist heroine, Samantha (Sam) Foster, gives us an “up close and personal” look at the habits and habitats of penguins in a Welsh-settled region of South America while many Welsh tourists are in the area for a music festival. As Sam conducts environmental surveys, she encounters strange sounds, flashes of light, evidence of the mistreatment of penguins and, eventually, the body of an unidentified man. This is a book for those who enjoy history, foreign culture, biology and music, accurately researched and wrapped around a very good story!

The Dead Lie Down (Sophie Hannah, 2009). Why I stuck with this behemoth of a novel through 470 pages, I’ll never know! I guess it was the hook: Someone confessed, and *insisted*, he murdered a woman who was not dead! Yeah, that grabbed me. However, I skimmed a lot of it, which was yak-yak about nothing. The *London Times* called it an “utterly gripping thriller”—gripping, maybe; thriller, no way.

A Small Death in the Great Glen (A.D. Scott, 2010). Having recently returned from a trip to the Scottish Highlands, I was drawn to this book solely because of its setting—the Highlands, 1950s. A young boy is found dead in a canal lock, and the two little girls who saw him disappear insist he was taken by a “hoodie crow,” which is the most evil thing they can think of to call the abductor. Of course, no one believes them. Scott (who grew up in the Highlands) creates a believable, eerie atmosphere and peoples it with characters you’ll want to cheer for. For a first, or “debut” book, this one is impressive!

The Long Road Home

FICTION AND NONFICTION NEWS FROM
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I love to hear from my readers!

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This beautiful scene is from my recent trip to Scotland. The narrow road, winding through and over mountains (obstacles) made me think of *The Long Road Home*, my forthcoming novel. The road in my novel, however, is a *virtual* road between Ireland and the United States, from the 1850s to 2010; and it, too, winds through and over obstacles.

A very brief description of the story (writers call it a logline) is: “Two women—one from the present and one from the 19th century—meet as they travel through time, each trying to solve a personal problem.”

Parts of this story were inspired by my great-grandmother who, as a child, endured steerage quarters on a famine ship for the long journey to “Amerikey” with her parents. I’m grateful to all of my O’Sullivan ancestors for their strength of character, their faith in God, and their perseverance in making the best of a bad situation so that those of us who followed would have a better life.

I have visited beautiful Ireland four times; and the wild, unspoiled Dingle Peninsula on the west coast is my favorite place, a place where I once had an unforgettable experience of *déjà vu*. I’m excited about this story that, truly, comes from my heart. When will the book be available? Soon after the first of the year. And, I hope you will like it!

Language: What’s Bugging You?

“I mean” is the new “You know.” Listen to people on TV or on the street, anywhere, and you’ll hear it. For the past several years, everyday speech has been peppered with meaningless “you knows.” Lately, “I mean” has been popping up in the same manner. It’s annoying. I mean, you know, it really is!

A sign on a local business caught my eye. It said: “We appreciate you shopping with us.” The sentence contains a gerund, which is a verb converted to a noun by adding “ing.” As such, it requires a possessive form of the noun or pronoun that precedes it. Correct version: “We appreciate *your* shopping with us.” Another example: “He offered to help without me asking him.” Should be: “He offered to help without *my* asking him.”

Noteworthy

The “t” in often is silent. The word is correctly pronounced ôf en.
Orientated, irregardless, and preventative are nonstandard versions of oriented, regardless, and preventive. Avoid.

Why is it possible to enjoy the warmth of the sun but not the coldth of the snow? ☺

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!

A Stranger in the Family (Robert Barnard, 2010) ★

See Jane Run (Joy Fielding, 1991) ★★★

Little Girl Blue (Randy L. Schmidt, 2010) ★★★★★ (Fascinating bio of Karen Carpenter)

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.