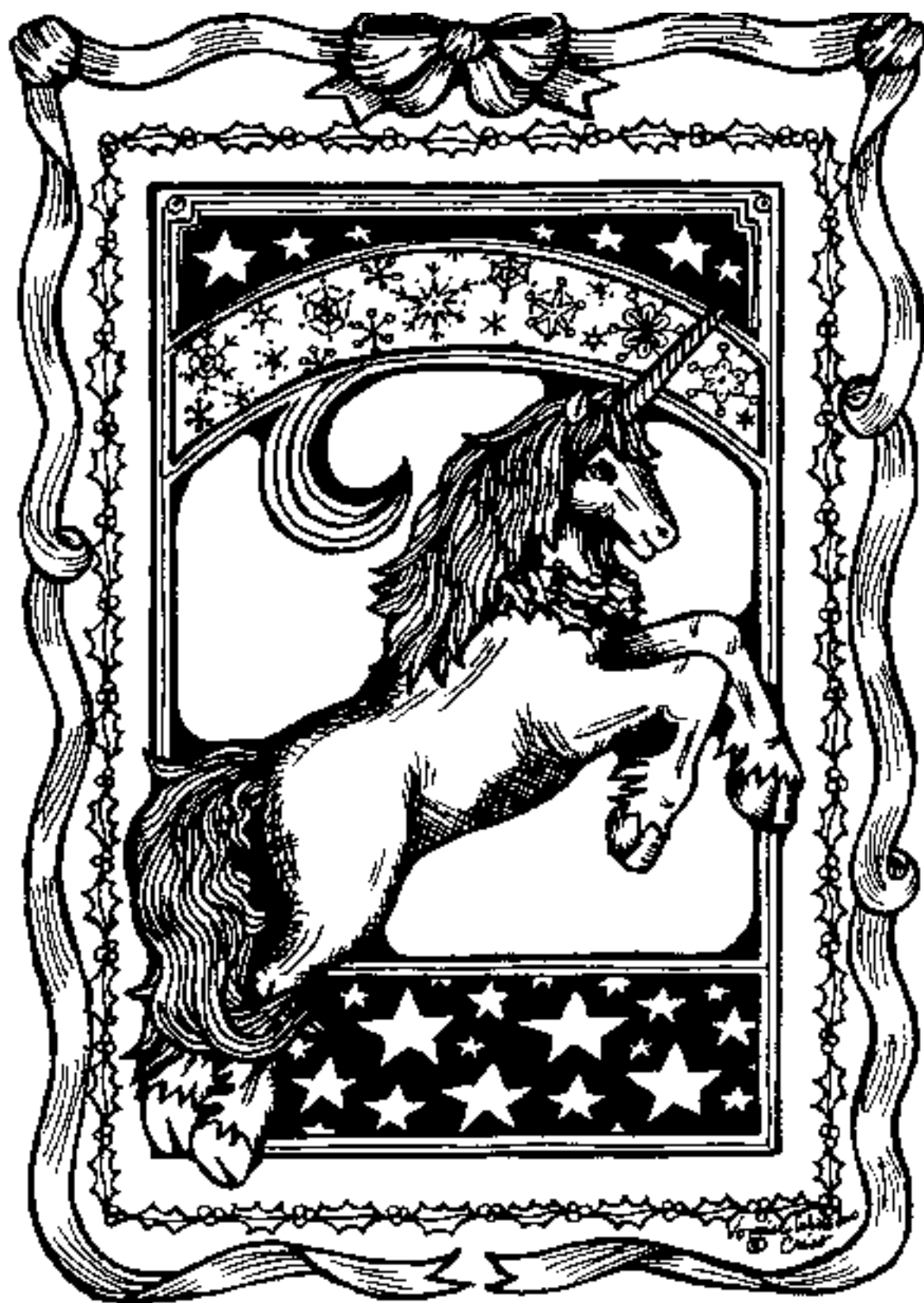


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**DECEMBER 1998/
JANUARY 1999**

Baltimore's Literary Newspaper



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NOTICE

Lite: Baltimore's Literary Newspaper is now published bimonthly. A Supplement is published on the off-months containing the literary events calendar and other items of interest to the literary community.

THANK YOU!

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Names in Lite

Katherine Beem (*Yard Sale*) is a recent graduate of Catonsville High School. She co-hosted the 1997 "Function at the Junction" poetry reading series. She won 2nd place for poetry in the 1997 Baltimore County Schools writing contest.

John Goodspeed (*Book Reviews*) of Easton, MD reviewed books weekly on Maryland Public TV's *Critic's Place* from 1974-86. He was a book and jazz critic for the Baltimore *Sunpapers* and from 1950-67 authored the five-days-a-week *Evening Sun* column "Mr. Peep's Diary." His reviews have appeared in the Easton *Star-Democrat*, *Potomac Review*, Baltimore's *City Paper*, *Air & Space Magazine*, *Maryland Magazine*, Denver's *Bloomsbury Review*, and other publications.

Judy Grey (*SpotLite: Literary News*) teaches English at Ridgely Middle School in Baltimore County. She spends her summers writing in Maine.

Matt Hohner (*Havre de Grace*) is a Baltimore native and editor of *Pasta Poetics*, a yearly collection of poetry and recipes sold to raise money for local homeless/hunger relief organizations. His work has appeared in *Atom Mind*, *Bombay Gin*, Baltimore's *City Paper*, *Maryland Poetry Review*, *The Pearl*, *Dancing Shadow Review*, *Twisted Nipples*, and on the CD *Word Up Baltimore!*

Jean Kohlenstein (*Childhood's Hour*) writes from Columbia, MD. She won Honorable Mention in *Lite's* 1997 Poetry Contest.

R.E. Moskowitz (*Memorial Day*) is a Baltimore poet. He won Honorable Mention in *Lite's* 1997 Poetry Contest.

Phillip Tomasso, III (*Unchallenged Hero...*) lives in Rochester, NY with his wife and two sons. He has been writing for many years and "would like to one day write full-time." He works for the Eastman-Kodak Company.

Lite

Baltimore's Literary Newspaper
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Literary December/January

A Bi-Monthly Potpourri of Literary Events

(Watch for more January events in *Lite's* January 1999 Supplement)

Tuesday, December 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

9:00 p.m. Open reading at Funk's Democratic Coffee Spot, 1818 Eastern Ave., Fells Point. For more info, call (410) 276-FUNK.

Thursday, December 3

7:30 p.m. Bibelot-Woodholme. Thomas Cahill discusses and signs his book *The Gifts of the Jews*.

Friday, December 4

11:00 a.m. Bibelot-Timonium. Vonnie Winslow Crist, author and illustrator of *Leprechaun Cake & Other Tales*, will tell children's stories while drawing unicorns, dragons, trolls, and leprechauns. All children will receive an activity sheet. Appropriate for children of all ages.

7:00 p.m. Atticus Books, Washington DC. Poets Barbara DeCesare, Stephen Gibson and Lori Tsang read their work.

7:30 p.m. Bibelot-Timonium. Middle school students from St. James Academy will read their creative writing.

The Health Care for the Homeless Writers Group presents "A Night Of Readings" at Minas, 733-35 S. Ann St., Fells Point. For more info, call (410) 732-4258, April Ballard at (410) 837-5533 ext.311, or Pam Stein at ext. 206.

Saturday, December 5 to Monday, December 7

Enoch Pratt Free Library's Annual Book Sale, main hall, Central Library. Hours: Saturday 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.; Sunday 1:00-5:00 p.m.; Monday 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, December 5

12:00 noon. The Enoch Pratt Free Library Poetry Group meets in the Poe Room, Central Branch. Program TBA.

1:00-3:00 p.m. Bibelot-Timonium. Writing Workshop. Rosemary Klein, editor of the *Maryland Poetry Review*, writing instructor, and published poet, will lead "Seasonal Inspiration—Creating Poems That Celebrate Holiday Traditions and Spirit." Bring pen, paper and imagination. This free workshop is sponsored by *Late Knocking* literary magazine. For more info, call (410) 308-1888 ext 7.

1:00 p.m. Borders-Columbia. Help celebrate with two local authors, Lenora Dernoga, author of *The Girl Who loved Juice*, and Phyllis Cercone, author of *Amanda's Secret Wish*, both of whose books have been recently published by Columbia's own Perry Publishers. The authors will read and sign their books, which will make a special gift for a special young person.

8:00 p.m. The Coffeehouse at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Harford County (Rt. 22, across from Campus Hills Shopping Center) will feature poetry, fiction, music and an art show by Michelle Santos. Donation \$2. For more info, call (410) 939-9522.

Sunday, December 6

2:00 p.m. Bibelot-Woodholme. Erwin Riedner discusses and signs his collection of short stories *Token Creek*, based on tales heard in the various places he has lived and on his childhood experiences in Wisconsin.

4:00-6:00 p.m. WordHouse at Minas Gallery. Peggy Morton Memorial reading. Poets TBA. \$3 donation requested.

Monday, December 7

7:30 p.m. Borders-Towson. "Meter's Running Poetry Series" presents Gary Blankenburg, Bill Jones, Jody Ellen Nusholtz and Rawley Grau, poets featured in the latest issue of the *Maryland*

Poetry Review.

Monday, December 7, 21

7:00 p.m. The Lite Circle Roundtable Critiquing Group meets at Pinocchio's Restaurant, 801 Frederick Rd., Catonsville (next to the Coffee Junction). All writers welcome. For more info, call (410) 242-5507.

Tuesday, December 8

6:30 p.m. Erwin Riedner will read from and sign his collection of stories *Token Creek* at the Central branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library in the Poe Room.

7:30 p.m. Bibelot-Canton. *After Chancellorsville: Letters from the Heart*, edited by Judith Bailey and Robert Cottom, chronicles the wartime correspondence of Private Walter G. Dunn, a youth recovering from wounds at Chancellorsville, and Emma Randolph, an unforgettable young woman. Selected readings from the book will be performed by living history actors.

Baltimore Writers' Alliance General Meeting and Holiday Party, Pickersgill Auditorium, 615 Chestnut Ave., Towson. Scott Morrow, the *Artscape* Winner for Playwriting, and fellow actors will put on a theatrical performance. For more info, call (410) 486-6178 or (410) 377-5265.

Wednesday, December 9

7:00 p.m. Borders-Columbia. Combined Mystery and sci-fi book discussion group takes up Larry Niven's *Flatlander* which fits in both genres.

Maryland Writers' Association general meeting. Place and program TBA. For more info, call Diana Hallman at (410) 544-6710 or Tim O'Neill at (410) 626-1822.

7:30 p.m. Bibelot-Canton. David Baldacci reads from and signs his latest thriller *The Simple Truth*.

Friday, December 11

7:00 p.m. Atticus Books, Washington DC. Fiction Writers Caitlin Johnson, Melanie Norton and Sarah Williams read their work.

Saturday, December 12

7:00 p.m. Harford Poetry Society reading at The Fine Grind Espresso Bar and Cafe, 101 South Main, Belair. Hugh Burgess and another reader TBA. For more info, call (410) 877-1625 or (410) 638-8740.

Friday, December 18

8:00 p.m. Bibelot-Timonium. "An Evening of Lite Verse." Dave Kriebel and Jamie Wasserman will read from their work. Open reading follows.

Students from Goucher College's Acting I class perform readings from original works by Goucher student playwrights. Mildred Dunnock Theatre at Goucher College, 1021 Dulany Valley Rd., Towson. For more info, call (410) 337-6333.

Sunday, December 20

4:00-6:00 p.m. WordHouse at the Minas Gallery. Poets from Frostburg: Barbara Hurd, Maggie Smith and Karen Zealand. \$3 donation requested.

Monday, December 28

7:00 p.m. Bibelot-Timonium. Philosophy Book Discussion. "What does scientific inquiry mean for society?" Ted Hendricks and Lisa O'Shea facilitate a discussion of *Galileo*, a play by Bertoldt Brecht.

JANUARY

Wednesday, January 6

7:30 p.m. "Function at the Junction" poetry series, The Coffee Junction, 803 Frederick Rd. Readers Hillary Hatfield, Josh Isaac and Jack DuBose. Hosted by Gary Blankenburg and Kevin Thornton. Open mike follows. Admission \$2. For more info, call (410) 719-7717.

Saturday, January 9

1:00-3:00 p.m. Bibelot-Timonium: Writing Workshop Series. Mimi Zannino will present "New Year—Time to Begin a Writing Journey." Sponsored by *Late Knocking* literary magazine.

Monday, January 19

1:00 p.m. Bibelot-Timonium: Memoir Book Discussion. Diane Scharper will discuss her book *Songs of Myself*. Discussion and writing exercises. Sponsored by the Carroll branch of the National League of American Pen Women.

To Have Your Event Listed

please send information to:
Dan Cuddy, Calendar Editor
41 Odeon Ct.
Baltimore, MD 21234
Tel. (410) 882-4138

Information received after the 15th of the preceding month may not be printed. We reserve the right to edit all material to fit space requirements.

The Big Literary "Spot" Lites

Atticus Books & Music, 1508 U St., NW, Washington, DC. Phone: (202) 667-8148.

Barnes & Noble-Annapolis, 5216 Solomon's Island Rd., Annapolis Harbour Shopping Center. Phone: (410) 573-1115.

Barnes & Noble-Ellicott City, 4300 Montgomery Rd., Long Gate Shopping Center. Phone: (410) 203-7006.

Bibelot-Canton, 2400 Boston St. Phone: (410) 276-9700.

Bibelot-Timonium Crossing, 2080 York Rd. Phone: (410) 308-1888.

Bibelot-Woodholme, 1819 Reisterstown Rd., Pikesville. Phone: (410) 653-6933.

Borders-Columbia, 9051 Snowden Square Dr. Phone: (410) 290-0062.

Borders-Towson, 415 York Rd. Phone: (410) 296-0791.

Enoch Pratt Free Library, Central branch, 400 Cathedral St., Baltimore. Phone: (410) 396-5494.

WordHouse Salon at Minas, 733-35 S. Ann St., Fells Point. Phone: (410) 732-4258.

It was cold and dark outside. I was dressed warmly. My mother had helped me put on my gloves. She had tucked the small grocery list into my coat pocket so I wouldn't lose it. She gave me a kiss on the forehead.

"Ah, Ma—"

"Don't 'Ah, Ma' me. Now you be careful. Okay?"

"I will," I said.

"If you need any help—"

"I know. Call you. I know the phone number is on the list. I know it, too."

"Okay, Alex, honey. Just take your time. You can do it."

"I know. I know, already. I'm hot."

"Okay—go on. Remember, if—"

"I know, Ma. I know."

"I'm sorry. You're right."

And I left. It was challenging having Down's Syndrome. Each new day seemed to be born with the specific purpose of testing me and my capabilities. I'm lucky. I know I am. I was fortunate enough to be born with, what I refer to, as a "mild" disability.

My parents love me. My dad works hard, he has two jobs. My mother is home all the time. She works with me. She taught me to read and to write. She taught me more than my years spent in school. I took classes in a regular classroom, with regular kids, and passed with straight C's. I did get a B in History my senior year. My dad told me he was very proud of me. Just in the way that he hugged me, so tight I could hardly breathe, I knew that he truly was.

The wind was bitter; my lips were drying out. Mom had told me not to lick them. She said that licking them would only make them worse. It was difficult to ignore the hard layer of skin that covered my lips. I used my teeth to peel away that layer of skin. My lips burned.

The little corner store was close to my house. The owner, Jamal, knew me. He always talked to me about things. Sports, usually. I never knew anything about sports. Just talking with Jamal, I found that football was very interesting. Jamal and I like the Miami Dolphins, despite living in Rochester, only miles from Buffalo.

Once a week I go to the store for my mother. I get a few things. I think that my mother sends me to help me, to teach me independence. I know that we need the things that I end up buying. Still, I know my mother. She is always teaching me. She is always trying to prepare me...for something.

We talk at night when she tucks me into bed.

We talk about the past and about history. We talk about now. Mostly I like talking about tomorrow—about the things that I still have to do. But Mom, she tells me that someday she won't be with me. I tell her that I understand. I tell her that we'd talked about *death* in school.

"You'll do wonderful things," my mother says to me. "Don't ever doubt yourself, and don't ever walk away from a challenge."

Her words, that phrase, I live by.

When I was fourteen, I learned to play chess. My father taught me. It was discouraging at first. All those pieces, their names and especially the way in which each piece moved on the board, frustrated me.

My father sometimes would close his eyes, and cup his face with his hands.

I used to think that he was mad at me when he did this—because I was *dumb*. I used to think he was disappointed in me because I wasn't "normal." Then he would open his eyes and he'd get off his chair. He'd kneel beside me. Slowly he would start over. He'd try a different way for me to associate the piece—to the name, to the way in which it specifically was allowed to move.

We play every Sunday after dinner.

I am sure that my father wanted to give up, that he didn't have the drive to teach me after so many weeks of lessons. But he didn't give up.

I didn't give up, either.

I learned.

Unchallenged Hero

by

Phillip Tomasso, III

Illustration by Vonnie Crist

It was snowing. I liked the snow. To hear my parents talk, snow was as wicked as the devil. They complained about the "idiots" driving in the blustery weather.

I don't know, it doesn't bother me, not really. I have fun in the snow. Mom and I built a snowman last night. It's still standing. We dressed it in some of my old clothes. Dad said that I couldn't put my new winter coat on the snowman, he insisted I use an old one. That was okay.

I licked at my lips. They felt like they were bleeding. They were. I must have peeled off too much skin with my teeth. I wiped at my lip using my gloved hand. If I have enough money left over, after getting everything on the list, I'll buy a small lip-balm ointment. I'll pay my mother back with money from my bank at home.

I entered the store. I loved the cowbell that sounded every time the grocery store's door opened.

Jamal was behind the counter. He was leafing through a sport's magazine. He looked up when I entered. "Hey, Alex!" He gave me a high-five. "How are things going?"

"Good," I told him. "I'm getting some groceries for my mom."

Jamal nodded. "Okay, partner. You know where everything is, but if you need anything, any help—"

"Thanks Jamal, I can do it."

The cowbell jingled. Jamal and I looked over to see who else had entered the store.

It was a couple. The man looked like someone from a clothing catalog. His hair was shaved close to his head along the sides, and it was spiked on top. She, *she* was beautiful. She had blond hair and big green eyes. She had on bright red lipstick and tight jeans. She brushed her hair out of her face. It had been blown wild from the wind.

The guy looked at me. "Problem, buddy?"

I tensed up. My shoulders rose to meet my ear lobes. My eyes opened wide. I didn't mean to stare at her. I know better than that. Girls were something that I have had a hard time with. They are so pretty. They look so soft.

They smell so good. I can't touch them. It's not right. My mother always smells so nice, and I can hug her. I can even give her a kiss, but she is the only girl...

"I said, *do you got a problem, bud?*" The man, despite being very good looking, was very mean.

"Hey, cut the kid some slack, will ya?" Jamal defended.

The magazine-model looked at Jamal for a minute, then shrugged, "Whatever. Give me a pack of cigarettes"

The girl was looking at me. She was neither smiling, nor frowning. Instead she was simply gawking.

I was a freak to her. I was like an exotic animal at the zoo. Something to stare at, to find amusement and fascination in.

I'm not supposed to be aware of this, of people rudely ogling my physical features. I'm supposed to be happy, and not know any better. That's the stereotype that floats around about people with Down's Syndrome.

But it's not true. At least with me, it's not. I try to ignore people staring at me—but it's hard. It hurts. There was a time when I was younger when, I guess, I *didn't* know any better. Once I started school, high school, that all changed. When kids laugh and point at you—how can you not be aware of it? When they make fun of you, of the way you walk, of the way you talk, how can it not hurt?

It pierces the heart.

I would cry on the school bus.

I would try to get it all out before I got home. At the bus stop my mother would be there, *every day*. Winter storms or in the pouring rain, she was at the top of the street waiting for my bus. I would see her from my seat on the bus (I knew which side to sit on, so I would be able to see her when the bus pulled up to my stop). She would be smiling, expectantly waiting to embrace me when I got off the bus. Then she would kiss me and ask to hear how my day went. How the whole day went.

I would tell her.

I would tell her everything except the stories about the kids that made fun of me. I would

tell her everything except the parts where I cried, where I hid in a bathroom stall and cried. I would tell her I had a wonderful day. I would tell her something new that I had learned. And she would kiss me again as we walked home together.

She was so happy that I was in school, that I was in *real* classes. I did not have the heart to tell her that I wanted to be in the *special* classes, that I needed to be around other students like myself.

That would disappoint them. My mom and dad were so proud of me, I was even proud of myself.

Never walk away from a challenge!

The phrase rang in my ears every time I mentally debated going back into a special class.

A special class was nothing more than students like myself, special, who were taught in more comfortable surroundings. There was nothing wrong with being in a special class, my father had said. But he also said that being in the classes I'm in now will benefit me further in the future.

It made sense, I guess.

I shuffled out of the girl's view, down an aisle.

I needed to take my gloves off so I could remove the grocery list from my coat pocket.

I dropped a glove onto the floor, I stooped to pick it up when the cowbell jingled. I wanted to see if those people had left. I wanted to see if I could catch one last glimpse of the pretty girl.

The handsome couple was still there.

Only they stood with their backs to me now. Jamal was looking at the new customer. A strange expression contorted his face.

"All right," the newest customer said. I could not see him. "Just put the money in here."

I knew what it was. I knew what was going on.

Jamal was afraid.

That was the expression on his face, fear. The store was being robbed. The customer that I could not see was robbing the place.

I could not stand still. I suddenly became anxious. "Oh, my God," I said out loud.

"Hey *you*, shut up!"

I saw him now. He was a big man, strong looking. He wore no jacket. He had on just a T-shirt. A large tattoo was etched on his forearm. It was of a black snake encircling a jagged dagger. The man was holding a gun.

"I have to go home," I said. I couldn't be here. I knew nothing about being robbed. It was too different. I felt an anxiety attack brewing within me. I started for the door.

"Listen, man, shut up and hold still!" The man yelled at me. Then he turned back to Jamal. "Open the safe!"

"We have no—"

"Behind the chip rack. Open it!"

Jamal was shaking. He looked so thin and small compared to the thief.

"Hey, buddy—"

The man whirled on the magazine-model. "SHUT-UP!"

The girl tugged on her boyfriend's arm. "Please," she begged him. "Be quiet."

"SHUT-UP!" The thief yelled at the girl, and pushed her. She stumbled backward. Her boyfriend did not move.

"That's not nice," I told him.

Almost amused, the thief turned to stare at me. "What? What did you say, you *retard?*" "I'm not retarded," I corrected him. "I have Down's Syndrome."

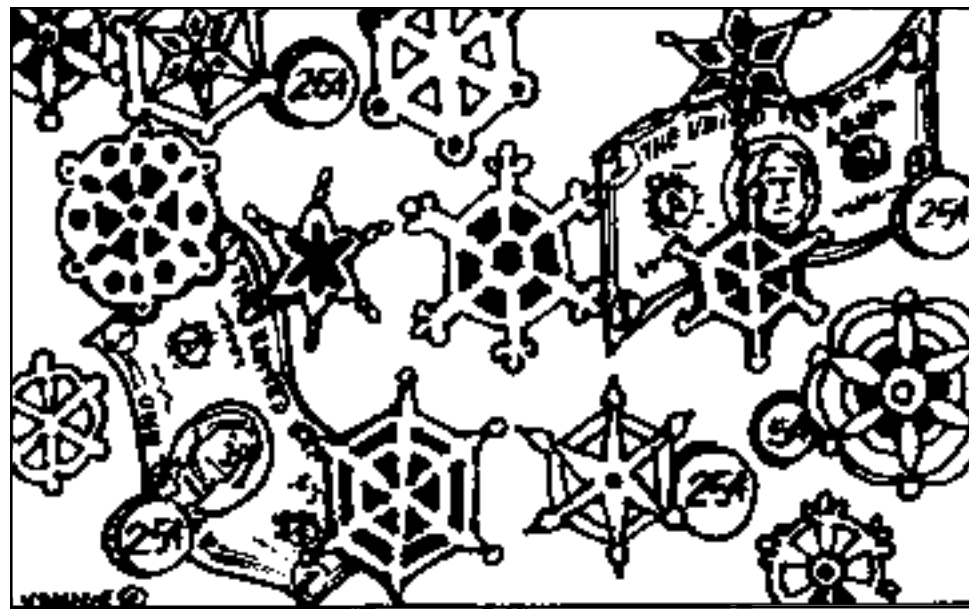
"There's a difference?" The man laughed, then he whirled back toward Jamal. "Hurry up!"

"I am, I—just, I am."

"Yes," I was still answering his question. "There is a difference."

"Are you still talking?" The thief raised the butt of his revolver over his head. He was going to hit me.

Continued on page 5



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***Poetry track hosted by the Lite Circle*

Are you a Pagan?

Do you practice Magick?

If so, I would love to hear from you. I am an anthropology graduate student studying contemporary Paganism and I am attempting to circulate a survey in the Pagan community in order to collect data. All replies totally confidential. Information will be used for academic purposes only...no ulterior motives. If you are interested, please send a SASE to: **Survey**, P.O. Box 5607, Baltimore, MD 21210. Web: www.bcpl.net/~pkinlock/survey.htm.

Memorial Day

After hearing on the radio a recording of a gas bombardment by American forces somewhere in France, 1917.

Again unseen hands
Load the waiting mortars, steel
Rasping steel gently;
"Load!" "Fire!" ... "Load!" "Fire!" ... droned
Cadence spanning distant years;
Cold thin whistles trace
Again the ghostly shells
Spinning across time's blank skies.
The recording ends.

In dreams as gray as death,
The constant shells haunt my mind:
Rising to apogee,
Traced now by silence,
The dumb shells drop and bursting
Softly, whisper gas.
Spastic scarecrows—each
A holocaust: eyes, throats, lungs
Scalded; silently
Screaming; bodies turned
Blistered curses—drown slowly
In exquisite fires.
Unrecorded.

R.E. Moskowitz

Yard Sale

My mother is an eastern trader.
she spreads treasures all around her
on bed sheets. she is ready to
haggle viciously. she is all persuasion.
with swift fingers she tempts
little girls with old plastic bangles
and metal brooches. there
is a genie in the avocado crock pot,
ancient books of magic spells.
my mother can toss a scarf in the
air and watch a million doves burst forth.

Katherine Beem

Childhood's Hour

Once upon a windy day,
I felt my childhood blow away.
I tried my best to hold it down,
But there it skipped along the ground.
And each time I stooped to overtake it
Another gust of wind would make it
Skip a little further on,
And before I knew it, it was gone.
Lost in a blur of grownup haze
Upon a field where no one plays
Then out of the mist a little boy
Came laughing in with new found joy.
He said to me, "My name is Ben.
I'll help you find your fun again."
And he stooped to pick a yellow flower,
And there we were in childhood's hour.
I placed the buttercup beneath his chin.
"You like butter," I said, and made him grin.
We followed a brook into the woods,
Took off our socks and there we stood
Wiggling our stubby distorted toes
Under the water where childhood flows.
We skipped some stones, the flattest ones,
And followed a butterfly into the sun.
And when the sunshine went away,
We went out again in the dark to play.
We caught some fireflies in a hole-punched jar;
Sat and waited for a shooting star.
And then it was time to take a rest.
And this is the part I like the best.
We read a story where tigers turned to butter
And pancakes were made by the little boy's mother.
Then Benjamin handed me a little sack.
"Here!" he said, "You'll want this back."
And there it was all shiny and polished,
Better then ever and not demolished.
Benjamin captured what had blown away.
Pinned it down and made it stay.

Jean Kohlenstein

Havre De Grace

Late winter on Chesapeake's west shore. Wooded hills rise
brown on the other side of Susquehanna's wide mouth. Calm bay,
slight breeze, a few cirrus clouds in endless blue. White smoke
rises from behind the east shore's ridge. Amtrak roars south
over black iron bridge, low to the water, fast. Warm sun
for March, but the air is still cold. A lone sail breaks the far
horizon. Concord Point lighthouse gleams blinding white.

Tourists pause to read historic plaques and pose for photos.
Here Cockburn's forces "landed, sacked, and burned the town
on the morning of May 3, 1813." Where John O'Neill "served
the guns single handed during the attack," kids climb on
a cannon aimed across muddy shallows at British ghosts.

Nearby, a goose cuts through rotten pilings to deeper
water, flaps its wings and enters the sky in silence.

Matt Hohner

Story, continued from page 3

She went to stop him. Her boyfriend went to stop her from getting involved. The thief punched her in the shoulder with the butt of the gun. It did not knock her down, though obvious pain was shooting through her arm. She clutched at it.

"You are very mean!" I told the man. The girl's boyfriend said nothing.

Jamal had the bag of money. The safe and register were empty. "Here," he said. "It's all there. Please, just leave."

"Don't tell me what to do!" He pointed the gun at Jamal.

He was going to kill Jamal. I knew how this worked, I had seen scenes like this on television. Only in real-life, Jamal would be dead. Jamal was my friend.

"NO!"

It was me that had shouted. I charged the thief.

Never walk away from a challenge!

This was a challenge. Then a boom sounded. Jamal did not fall. I did. I twisted, looking up, the ceiling got further and further, and my head slammed on the snow-soaked tiles.

It was weird, the heat—the pain. I could feel my eyes tearing. I did not want to cry—not in front of everybody. I was so embarrassed, I had wet my pants.

"Call the police!" Magazine-model shouted.

"Call an ambulance," the girl shouted.

Jamal ignored them both as he grabbed his own jacket and placed it under my head.

"Are you okay, Alex?"

"Will you call my Mommy? I have her phone number on a list in my coat pocket," I said.

"What did he say?" Magazine-model said.

"I don't know," Jamal said. He leaned closer to my face.

I had no trouble understanding what I had said. I thought that I had spoken clearly.

"What, little buddy? What do you want?"

"My Mommy? Will you call my Mommy?"

"Your mother?"

I nodded. It hurt to nod. "Her number is on a piece of paper in my pocket."

"What is he saying?"

"Shut-up, Brian!" The girl said, then to Jamal she repeated what I said. Jamal fished through my pocket.

"Are you going to call the police, or what?"

"I tripped the silent alarm," Jamal said over his shoulder. "I'm going to call your mother, you hang on, okay, Alex, you hang in there."

"My glove," I said. It was getting harder to talk. My mouth was dry, like my lips had been, but it was a different feeling.

The girl knelt beside me, "What?"

"My glove, I dropped it."

"He dropped his glove—"

"Who cares about some stupid glove?"

"Shut-up and go find it, Brian!" Then she grabbed my hand and held it in hers. She began to stroke my fingers. "Does it hurt?"

I started to cry. I tried to hold it in, the sobs, but now I couldn't.

"Yes," I moaned, "It hurts. It hurts. I want my Mom, please, get my Mom."

"Okay, she's coming. Alex is your name?" I tried to control my sobs, my tears. I nodded, "Yes."

"I have a brother named Alex."

"Alex," I said, "that's a good name. He's lucky."

The girl nodded, "Yes. He is."

Now she was crying. "My name is Alishia. It's very nice to meet you, Alex."

I could not talk. Why was she crying?

"Here's your glove, buddy," Brian said. He went to hand it to me. I could not lift my arm. I tried, but it wouldn't move. I could move the other one, but didn't want to. Alishia was holding that one.

It was hard to breathe and I could hear bells. They were ringing wildly.

"That's the police," Brian said.

Jamal was back. He got on the other side of me, he had my other hand. I could not feel him holding it. "Your mom is coming right now,

Alex, okay?"

I nodded. I was crying again. I tried to hold my mouth closed, tried to trap the cry within my throat.

I was in pain. My eyes were watering so much that I could not see clearly.

"You saved my life, Alex. You're a hero. Do you know that?" Jamal said. "Do you know you're a hero and I'm going to call every newspaper in the state—you're going to be on the front page of every paper!"

"Yeah?" I said, I didn't believe him. "You really think so?"

"I know so, little guy."

"I'm going to start junior college this February, you know?"

"Really?" Alishia said. She was still crying. "What are you going to major in?"

"Liberal arts, I guess."

"That's what I'm majoring in."

I looked at her through blurry eyes, "You go to the junior college?"

"Yes."

"Maybe I'll see you there?"

"I'll make sure you see me there!"

"You will? Really?"

"Of course. You saved my life, too. And Brian's."

Brian snorted. Jamal shot him a look filled with hatred. "It's okay, Jamal," I told him. "Where's my Mom?"

I was on an ambulance gurney. The paramedics cut my new coat off me. My dad was going to be so mad. I hope he doesn't think that I did it.

"Alex!" my mother screamed. She was running beside me as I was wheeled toward the ambulance. The snow had stopped, but the air was cold and crisp. My lungs burned.

"Mommy," I said. "Where is Dad?"

"He's coming, dear—"

"Tell him. I didn't do that to my coat." I pointed to where the jacket lay in two on the floor, near a sticky puddle of thick, dark blood.

"Alex." She didn't hear me. She was crying too loudly.

"I'm okay, Mommy."

"I know you are. You're so brave." She turned to the paramedics. "Can I ride with him?"

"Of course," the young man said.

They slid me into the van.

Suddenly, I was scared.

My mother was holding my hand. But she had the wrong one. I couldn't feel her hand, her soft skin. I needed to feel her hand. But I couldn't talk.

"Shhh, honey. Just relax."

I didn't want to relax, I wanted to tell her to hold my other hand.

I couldn't say a word. My mouth was too dry.

My mother leaned forward and kissed my forehead. I could feel her warm breath. I could smell her motherly scent, so beautiful—sweeter than a flower.

One of her tears rolled from her cheek, onto my own.

I was trying to smile. I could not tell if I actually was, though. My face felt numb.

Take my other hand. Mom. I thought. Please, take my other hand.

My heart felt funny.

Jamal was in the store. He was pinning the front page of the local newspaper onto a corkboard behind his register. He stared at Alex's picture. It was the picture from his senior year, taken from the yearbook. Jamal smiled as he quickly reread the article.

"...grocery store was robbed. One customer bravely charged the gun-wielding thief in order to save the life of the cashier/owner and the lives of two other customers. In his act of heroism, Alex Teneno, 27, was shot in the chest. He was rushed to Mother of Mercy Hospital and was pronounced dead a few hours later. Alex was to be a freshman at Rochester Community College in February."

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The Lite Circle, Inc. is a non-profit literary organization based in Baltimore. We rely on individual contributions to continue our literary activities, including Lite Circle Books (a small-press publishing house), our various poetry reading series, and the publication you are reading right now. If you care about the literary arts in Central Maryland, join us. All you have to do is fill out the form below and send it to The Lite Circle, Inc., P.O. Box 26162, Baltimore, MD 21210.

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Lite Reading: BOOK REVIEWS

Fodderwing: Stories, Essays, Poems and Articles, Summer/Fall 1998. Edward Allan Faine, Editor. (IM Press, \$3.00.)

A delightful eclectic mix of stories, essays, poems and articles, *Fodderwing* has achieved its goal of "diversity and balance" thanks to the careful choices and editing of editor Ed Faine.

Articles span subjects such as a humorous essay about toilet paper ("Sittin' Pretty" by Kenneth Lourie) to Kenneth Pobo's informative article about Bette Davis and her films ("Fasten Your Seatbelts"). To further attract readership, well-written, thought-provoking stories such as Sandy Fleming's "Impulse Control," a story of adolescence and truth, and writer/illustrator Vonnie Winslow Crist's "Toad In the Garden," a piece reminiscent of fairy tales and folklore, appear within *Fodderwing's* pages.

Other fine area writers well worth the read include Artscape '96 award-winner Mary Elizabeth Larson ("Betty, Undressed") and Washington, D.C. writer/lawyer Michael Parrish ("Our Coal Is Black").

Poems by Maryland writers Wendy Kowalski and Mel Tansill add life to the issue's Poetry Centerfold as well as Virginia poet Lyn Lifshin's three poem feature, "The Daughter I Don't Have."

A pleasing blend of prose, poetry and style, *Fodderwing* is a smooth read of truly quality material available at a bargain price.

W.H.STEVENS

Lindbergh, by A. Scott Berg. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. Illustrated. Index. 628 pages. \$30.00. ISBN 0-399-14449-8.

A. Scott Berg's detailed and balanced biography is, of course, about Charles Augustus Lindbergh (1902-1974)—"the Lone Eagle," "Lucky Lindy." He was born in Detroit; became instantly popular in 1927 after he made the first solo, non-stop flight from Long Island to Paris in a single-engine monoplane; married Anne Morrow, daughter of a wealthy diplomat; flew with her all over the world; came to detest U.S. newspapers and radio for invading their privacy and sensationalizing the kidnapping and murder of their infant son in 1932 and the trial and execution of his killer; lived in Europe during the late 1930s; accepted a Nazi aviation medal, made anti-Semitic and racist remarks and lost much of his popularity; led the "America-First" campaign to keep the U.S. out of World War II; participated (as a civilian technician) in 50 combat missions against the Japanese and recovered some of his reputation; died in Hawaii.

With Anne Morrow Lindbergh's permission, A. Scott Berg had access to the family papers and records, including diaries, as well as the mountain of other material that has been written by and about the famous couple, and *Lindbergh* consequently abounds with biographical detail:

- e.g., the famous aviator's paternal grandfather, a Swedish politician, emigrated to the U.S. to escape a personal and financial scandal and changed his surname from Mansson to Lindbergh;

- e.g., the Lone Eagle's father, Charles August Lindbergh (known as "C.A."), was a five-term populist Congressman from Minne-

sota who fought the Eastern "money interests" but later went broke speculating on Florida real estate;

- e.g., Lucky Lindy himself (who hated the popular song of that name) was an only child who had few friends, was apparently a virgin when he married, was moody and often away from home;

- and e.g., his wife had an unrequited crush in the 1940s on the French aviator and author, Antoine de Saint-Exupery, and later, a love affair (apparently requited) with a U.S. physician. She nevertheless remained married, and in other respects, loyal to Lucky Lindy.

JOHNGOODSPEED

Here I Stand, by Paul Robeson with Lloyd L. Brown; new introduction by Sterling Stuckey. Boston: Beacon Press. Index. 121 pages. Paperback. \$12.00. ISBN 0-8070-6445-9.

Here I Stand, by Paul Bustill Robeson (1898-1976), is an updated edition of his brief autobiography and social manifesto which, despite Robeson's international fame as an all-American football player at Rutgers and star singer and actor on stage and screen, was ignored by most book reviewers when it was first published in 1958. Why? Because even though Robeson was born in Princeton, New Jersey, and grew up in the North, he was an African-American and suffered the discrimination and humiliation that all blacks suffered throughout Jim-Crow America. Worse, Robeson protested U.S. racism, sang "Old Man River" in his untrained but incomparable bass voice at left-wing rallies and praised people in the Soviet Union for their racial tolerance—and that, according to Sterling Stuckey's introduction in this edition of *Here I Stand*, "made him, almost by reflex action, an object of hatred." A Communist Party leader recently claimed that Robeson was a secret Party member, but Stuckey, who helped Robeson write *Here I Stand*, says the claim is baseless.

The 1944 New York stage production of Shakespeare's *Othello*—with Paul Robeson playing the title role and Jose Ferrer playing Iago—ran longer than any other U.S. production of the Bard's plays. Because Robeson refused to say whether or not he was a Communist Party member, the U.S. State Department at one time confiscated his passport—which restricted his travel abroad and reduced his income from \$100,000 to \$6,000 a year, according to Sterling Stuckey. The passport was finally restored by a Supreme Court decision. Robeson was too ill in his later years to be very active in the civil rights campaigns of the 1960s. He died in Philadelphia.

So—did he ever regain popularity after his pro-Soviet remarks? For that matter, did Lindbergh ever recover his 1927 hero status after his anti-Semitic remarks? In my opinion, both men came back somewhat but not entirely.

JOHNGOODSPEED

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LITERARY NEWS

Lite Circle Masquerade Ball at Belvedere a Success

The Lite Circle Masquerade Ball was held on Oct. 30, 1998 at the Belvedere. This event is an annual benefit designed to raise money to support the non-profit literary activities of the Lite Circle, including the small press imprints Lite Circle Books and Sunrise Press, an annual contest, numerous reading series, and publication of this newspaper.

Guests were treated to a buffet dinner provided by Truffles catering service and music hosted by WMBC's Dan Kelly with an assist from *Lite's* own Sam Beard. The hosts for the evening were Lite Circle president and newspaper publisher David Kriebel and public relations and marketing director Dina Feinberg. Highlights of the evening included the awarding of seven door prizes, a costume contest, and the cutting of a cake decorated with the *Lite* insignia. The event kicks off festivities marking the Lite Circle's tenth year in operation. Other *Lite* staffers present at the event included vice-president and newspaper managing editor Patti Kinlock and literary roundtable moderator Donna Eason. Guests came from as far away as Bethesda, MD and Norristown, PA. The evening was a rousing success.

DAVID KRIEBEL

The Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival, September 1998

We find new poetry in journals with limited press runs. Old poetry lives in anthologies. Poetry by one author may be bound in a book if the poet is especially accomplished—or dead. Poets read in book stores and coffee houses where an audience of 50 fills the house. In our world poetry occupies a space on the margin. However, for one long weekend every other year, thousands of people celebrate poetry as an essential element in their lives. Imagine a place where thousands of poets and lovers of poetry stand and cheer for poetry. This is the Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival. Participating in this festival where people love poetry is like going to a language feast. It is a celebration, a community, an interchange. After the solitary work of writing and reading, the participants are renewed and refreshed which prepares them to go back to the work of coaxing unruly words into meaning.

The first Geraldine R. Dodge Poetry Festival was held 14 years ago. Historic Waterloo Village in northern New Jersey is the setting for this four day gathering which this year ran from Thursday, Sept. 24 to Sunday, Sept. 25. On Thursday 4,000 students and their teachers were registered to participate. Friday was designated "Teacher Day" but the many activities were open to the public on all four days of the festival.

Poets came from all over the world to participate by giving readings, running workshops, engaging in conversations about poetry and the world, and communing in the big tent by poets such as Mark Doty, Adrienne Rich, Jane Hirshfield, Bei Dao, Lorna Dee Cervantes, Marge Piercy, W.S. Merwin, Sharon Olds, Robert Pinsky, Stanley Kunitz, and Amiri Baraka. However, these poets also met with smaller groups for conversations on topics

including the life of the poet, poets and the earth, poetry and history, poetry and politics, and poetry and community. Poets gave scheduled readings in smaller settings and time and space was available for festival participants to sign up for open readings. There were opportunities to participate in intimate workshops in making the poem and tuning the poem. Conversations begun in these small groups continued and broadened all weekend.

This festival provided opportunities to learn about new poets and understand familiar poets in ways not possible with books and journals. Hearing Mark Doty read his poems allows his voice to resonate from the page when I sit down with his books. Seeing the deliberate tranquility and kindness in Jane Hirshfield's eyes enables me to experience her poems and essays in a more personal way as I read them. Listening to Amiri Baraka sing his poems and beat the podium as a drum pulled me into history as no one has before. There is passion in poetry without the human voice, but the presence of the living poet speaking his or her words adds a dimension impossible to access from the one-dimensional page.

I arrived at the festival tired from a week of teaching and a four hour drive. I left late that night full of the day's blessings and returned the next day to spend 13 more hours watching, listening, conversing, reflecting, and writing. Participating in the festival inspired me and encouraged me to do the good work of writing until I can be renewed again at the next festival in the year 2000.

JUDY GREY

Novel Beginnings: Publication of a Romance Novel Reunites a Family

Robyn Amos of Gaithersburg, MD received an unexpected surprise after the release of her first novel, *Promise Me* (Pinnacle Arabesque Mass Market Paperback Fiction, October 1997/ \$4.99). Her sister, Michele Thomas, happened upon the novel while shopping in a Virginia area supermarket. Using the e-mail address on the bio page in the back of the book, Ms. Thomas was able to contact Amos for the first time in 24 years.

At the age of three, Robyn Amos was separated from her two older siblings, Michele and Michel Thomas, due to an unfortunate family tragedy. Because of her reunion with her sister, Amos was also able to reunite with her brother and three uncles, and to meet cousins and other extended family members for the first time.

Continued on page 7

Need an event covered? Call News Editor
Dan Cuddy at (410) 882-4138.

SpotLite, continued from page 6

Promise Me was the first of six titles Amos has sold for publication. Since receiving her first two-book contract from Kensington Publishing Corporation in the spring of 1996, Amos has sold two more novels and a Valentine's Day Anthology to Kensington, and her sixth work to Silhouette's Yours Truly line. She is an active member in national and local writing organizations, including the Maryland Romance Writers. Ms Amos's latest release is *Into the Night* (Pinnacle Arabesque/\$4.99). Her novels contain characters from a variety of cultural backgrounds. She hopes her stories of romance and adventure will transcend racial stereotypes.

Romance novels represent almost 50 percent of all mass market paperback sales and are used to promote literacy and rehabilitate victims of battery and domestic abuse. They also encourage monogamy, and, as Amos has discovered firsthand, family values.

Lite: Baltimore's Literary Newspaper Guidelines for Writers

1. *Lite* is a bi-monthly publication featuring art, literature, and book reviews. Formerly a quarterly magazine, we are now a free tabloid publication carrying one story and several poems per issue. We seek to give emerging writers and artists the opportunity to reach a broad, literate audience, and to keep our readers informed of literary events in Central Maryland. *Lite* is distributed in the Baltimore area and Central Maryland, with a press run of 10,000 copies. We also publish book-length manuscripts in cooperation with authors under the imprints "Lite Circle Books" and "Sunrise Press."

2. *Lite* holds one-time publication rights to all material accepted for publication. All other rights remain the property of the author. Terms of payment: 5 copies of issue in which submission appears.

3. All material submitted to *Lite* must be on plain 8-1/2" x 11" paper, double spaced, typewritten or computer printed, with no handwritten editing or other marks anywhere on the document. Notes concerning the copy may be made in legible handwriting on accompanying separate sheets. Copy must include the author's name, address and telephone number on the first or last page; for multiple simultaneous submissions, each work must be a separate document, each with the author's name, address and telephone. We will also accept documents on disk created in WordPerfect or Microsoft Word. Copy submitted in formats not listed here will not be reviewed.

4. Word limits—Poetry: generally no more than 30 lines, but up to 50 lines may be accepted for poems in stanza, section, or any divided format; Fiction: 1,000 to 4,000 words (longer pieces may be used in serialized form); Humor: 300-1,000 words. Reviews: 300 words. Due to the enormous amount of material we receive, response time averages 6-12 months.

5. *Lite* reserves the right to do all editing appropriate to maintain grammar, stylistic consistency, and standard punctuation without advance notification to the author. We suggest that deliberate deviations from standard grammar and spelling be noted on a separate sheet to avoid editing problems. *Lite* will do everything possible to advise writers in advance of publication of any proposed changes which may affect the author's meaning or stylistic integrity; writers may withdraw their manuscripts from consideration should they conclude that proposed changes are unacceptable, provided notification is made within three days of notice of proposed changes.

6. *Lite* will not accept manuscripts which contain the following: sexually explicit language or graphically depicted sexual scenes; gratuitous expletives; pointless or graphic violence; material denigrating any race, nationality, gender, or religion. Authors accept all responsibility for factual errors contained in any submitted manuscript.

7. If material is rejected, submissions will not be returned unless a SASE of suitable size with sufficient postage is provided.

LITE BYTES

ANNOUNCEMENTS

● We receive a calendar of events for children for the 27 branches of the **Enoch Pratt Free Library**. Here are a few examples at random of events in December. We urge parents to contact their local library for a schedule of events.

Fells Point Branch, 606 S. Ann Street, (410)396-9358:

"Christmas Stocking Guess" during library hours in December. Guess the amount of candy in the stocking and win it all! Ages 6 to 12. Call (410)396-0992 to register.

"Christmas Program: Stories, Film and Treats." Thursday, Dec. 17, 4:00 p.m. Ages 6 to 12.

Hamilton Branch, 5910 Harford Rd., (410) 396-6088.

"A Holiday Hat happening," Wednesday, Dec. 9, 3:30 p.m. Create a holiday hat to wear for the season. Ages 6 to 11. Call branch to register.

Light Street Branch, 1251 Light St., (410) 396-9590.

"A Visit From Santa," Saturday Dec. 12, 11:00 a.m. Bring your wish list! Ages 5 to 12. Call (410)396-1096 for details.

● **The Baltimore Review's** latest issue will be out in mid-December. The *BR* has a new distributor, Baker and Taylor.

● **The Harford Poetry Society** was featured in the *Aegis* newspaper, a twice-weekly published in Harford County. This profile written by Karen Toussaint was entitled "Poetic License—Harford Society Finds Time For Rhyme." Featured with poems and/or a photograph were Tom Chambers, John Kehring, Marie Kilduff, Betsy Wollaston, Rebecca Motil and her daughter Ravenna Motil-McGuire, Barbara Kirchner, Naomi Grabus and Donna Bolling.

● On Sunday, Nov. 15th, there was a "Farewell Reading" for the *Dancing Shadow Review*. Some of the poets featured in that

last issue and who read their work at the Holt Center for the Arts were Bernie Wenker, Dorothy Dodge Miner, Barbara Diehl, Rosemary Klein, Dave Kriebel, Alice Potee, Susan Lowe and William Viant. There was a sizeable crowd and excellent food which included roll-up sandwiches, cheeses, dip, brownies, cookies, wine. It was quite an event.

Alan Reese consistently published a topnotch magazine. It will be missed.

● **Bookstore Update:** There have been a number of new bookstores opened in Baltimore in the past few months. Bibelot-Canton, Barnes & Noble-Inner Harbor, Barnes & Noble-Towson, a second Book Rendezvous Used Books in the 600 block of S. Broadway.

Adrian's Book Cafe in Fells Point has a new owner, Herman Ayaya.

Tiber Books that used to be on 25th St. has closed, though the business is still going strong on the web and at various consignment locations in Central Maryland.

The BNN Bookstore's fate is uncertain, though it is still open for now. BNN is looking for another space in the area. (*Lite* will let its readers know where BNN goes when it moves).

Tales From the White Hart, the Science Fiction and Fantasy Bookstore, had a fire caused by a faulty electrical outlet. Apparently much of the stock was ruined. That is a great loss for Sci-fi fans as *Tales From The White Hart* was a premier source of hard-to-find titles.

● **The "Now & Then" 1999 Appalachian Fiction Competition** offers a \$500 first prize and a \$200 second prize, plus publication in the summer "Appalachian Lives" issue. Submit up to two stories of no more than 3,000 words; entries must be postmarked by March 1, 1999. Robert Morgan will be the final judge. For complete guidelines, write to "Now & Then's Appalachian Fiction Competition," CASS/ETSU, Box 70556, Johnson City TN 37614-0556; call (423)439-5348, or visit <http://cass.etsu.edu/n&t/contest.htm>.

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Manuscripts should be typed, double-spaced, with cover sheet containing title (s) of work, along with author's name, address, and telephone number. The manuscript should include the title, but not the author's name. Winners will be notified by March 31, 1999. Maximum story length 6,000 words. Maximum poem length 50 lines. Please mail entries to:

The Lite Circle Literary Contest
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For more info, please call (410) 719-7792 or (410) 889-1574.