

PenChant

To increase awareness and appreciation of the Literary Arts

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JUNE 2005

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Spend an Hour or Two with Ken Sibley

Old sayings have a way of being true. "He never met a stranger," for instance, was never truer than in the case of Ken Sibley. Ken was recently honored with PWLF's President's Award. One only has to thumb through his latest book, *A Certain Dignity*, to understand why. In a mere 150 pages, Ken has packed a lifetime of experiences, presented to the reader like gems on a jeweler's velvet cloth.

Ken is a master of the interview. At age 80+ Ken relies on hearing aids, but readers will soon discover that he is one of the world's great listeners. His subjects range from the high and mighty – FDR, Lewis & Clark – to artists he admires – Ella Fitzgerald, Lena Horne – to people he (literally) meets on the street – the blind organist on the town square. We quickly realize that in Ken's world there is no hierarchy, only the importance of having that "certain dignity."

The book is a mix of short essays and poetry. Ken uses both forms with a simplicity that belies the complex nature of what they have to say. And then, all at once, an image leaps off the page and knocks you



out, such as when he's describing the survivors of Yokohama, "the pitiful inhabitants lifting a piece of tin from the rubble to protect themselves from the rain."

Ken has seen his bits of rain as well and he doesn't shy away from painful topics. While the book is overwhelmingly optimistic, it considers the suicide of a friend, the murder of Matthew Shepard, racism, war, and poverty. But good always triumphs here. As a young navy man Ken was in Japan shortly after WWII ended. He lost his wallet and grieved for the irreplaceable family photos. Two months later the wallet appeared in the mail, returned to him by a Japanese soldier.

Ken confesses in a poem about his late wife that she always chose his ties because he is colorblind. Just another reminder that we don't need perfect senses to make perfect sense of the world. We simply need to spend an hour or two with Ken Sibley.

Corrine Frisch serves on the board of PWLF. She is Books & Poetry Editor of the Illinois Times, where you can submit your poetry via email to: cfrisch@illinoistimes.com

PWLF ANNOUNCES ANNUAL MEETING

In many organizations the membership gets together once a year. In years past, Poets & Writers Literary Forum held summer gatherings. These were typically a picnic with poetry readings scattered about them or formalized into an open mic of sorts after the feasting. One of my first memorable experiences with PWLF was one such event.

I clearly recall playing Frisbee golf at the park, eating hot dogs and listening to some poetry. It was a

pleasant afternoon and served to further cement my desire to be a part of this organization.

In subsequent years we held summer picnic/potlucks at our house. The food was always delicious (who can forget the wonderful pork satay that Nancy and her husband brought) and when someone burst into song or poetry in the great room it was thoroughly enjoyable.

We haven't gotten together like

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*"For it seems to me that the poetical language of an age should be the current language heightened, to any degree heightened and unlike itself, but not (I mean normally: passing freaks and graces are another thing) an obsolete one."
—Gerard Manley Hopkins*

ANNUAL MEETING

that for a year or so. We hold our open mics twice or three times a month, have a special event here or there and some of us gather at Trout Lily for coffee and discourse on Saturday mornings. But as an organization, we haven't pulled everyone together to discuss how we're doing and where we're going.

This year, the Board has chosen to poll the members and get a read on how many people are interested in attending an "Annual Meeting." Several people responded (look for the numbers in next month's PenChant) and the decision was favorable for a meeting. The consensus was to hold a 'business meeting' first and follow it with socializing and perhaps some poetry and song. During the May 2005 Board meeting we selected a date (July 23rd) and the following items were put up for the agenda.

- ~ President's Award
- ~ Fund Raising
- ~ Project Budgets
- ~ Salaries for Board Members
- ~ Goals for PWLF in the next year

The tentative schedule for the afternoon of the 23rd is to begin with the

meeting, which should take anywhere from ½ to 1 hour, at 4:00 p.m. We will hold off beginning the meeting until we have several members in attendance and once the meeting is concluded, we'll sit back, relax and enjoy good food and company. PWLF will supply the meat for the grill and we ask that all members bring a dish filled with food to share. This is also a bring-your-own-favorite-beverage affair, so please plan accordingly. We hope to poll members to get an idea of the types of food people are bringing and letting everyone know at the July 20th IMO's open mic. The Annual meeting will be held at 433 W. Vine Street, Springfield, thanks to the generosity of member Mark Russillo.

I hope that all of you will plan to attend. It is important for any organization that wants to survive and thrive to get together and discuss the future, make plans, and then figure out how to make those plans a reality. PWLF is no different. We need your input as members to continue with our mission:

"To increase awareness and appreciation of Literary Arts."

Sponsorship

Your Corporate Sponsorship Here.

PWLF is seeking corporate sponsors to help us in our mission to increase awareness and support of the literary arts. Do you know of any corporation, local business, or philanthropist who would be interested in being a Corporate Sponsor of PWLF? If so, please contact Treasurer Tim Sheehan to discuss how this can be arranged. Look for more information coming soon to a PenChant near you!

*"The inevitable result of [repressing instinct with either threat or rhetoric] is that the repressed instinct bursts out in some abnormal direction."
—T. E. Hulme*

NONWORDS FROM VICKI

How do you tell if something is a word or not? How would you identify a nonword? The simple test of recognition won't do; there are hundreds of thousands of words in our language and no one really knows them all. A quick look through the dictionary will probably turn up words that aren't yet a part of your vocabulary.

If a word is invented for a particular use or occasion, it is known as a "nonce word," and therefore qualifies as a real word. "Nonce" means "the one or particular occasion or purpose," and "for the nonce" means "for the present time or occasion." Some words now commonly used started life as nonce

words. Humorists Gelett Burgess and Lewis Carroll both invented words that have 'become part of our vocabulary.' Burgess gave us "bromide," meaning a commonplace idea or a trite remark, and "blurb," a brief description or advertisement full of high praise. From Carroll, we have "chortle"—the word is a combination of chuckle and snort—describing a certain way of expressing glee.

The nonwords I want to write about are those words that begin with the prefix "non-." "Non-" can mean "not real" as in nonart or nonbook. A nonbook is "a printed work that uses various attention-getting devices in binding, inserts,


and other mechanical features, and is put together in book form merely as a salable product."

Non- also, more commonly, means "not, not a, opposite of, failure of, or lack of." Thus we have words like: "nonaggression, nonalcoholic, nonbiodegradable, noncombatant, nondairy, nondominant, nonfiction, nonmember, nonperson, nonsense, nonstick, nonunion. . . and many others. You can, in fact, stick 'non' on the front of many other words to create nonce words of your own.

Among words using that prefix, there are a bare handful of words beginning with "non" that have a totally different meaning. These

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June 2005

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Open Mic@IMO's 7pm	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 Open Mic@IMO's 7pm	16	17	18
19	20 PWLF Board Meeting 7 pm	21	22	23	24 Happy Birthday David! 	25
26	27	28	29 Open Mic@IMO's 7pm	30		

July 2005

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

					1	2
3	4	5	6 Open Mic @ IMO's 7p.m.	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18 PWLF Board Meeting @ IMO's 7pm	19	20 Open Mic @ IMO's 7p.m.	21	22	23 PWLF Annual Meeting 4 pm @433 W. Vine Street
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

VINTAGE VISIONS COVER CONTEST- ENTRY FORM

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____ E-mail (optional): _____
 Bio: _____

Send your design for the front and back cover of a 6" by 9" book, with the words "Vintage Visions - Poets and Writers Literary Forum Anthology, 2005" on the front, to:

Liz Huck
 ATTN: Vintage Visions Cover Contest
 2 Verna Drive
 Springfield, IL 62702

Artwork must be in hard copy, sent by mail; the artist's name must not appear on the artwork. Enclose check or money order for \$5 entrance fee, made out to PWLF. Entries must be postmarked by June 30, 2005.

Membership Renewal Time

Hello dear Member,

As you know, Poets & Writers Literary Forum of Springfield, Illinois (PWLF) has now been alive and 'kicking' for over ten years. We are taking this opportunity to thank you for your continued support through your Membership and asking you to renew for another year.

Over the course of the past three years, the Board of PWLF has worked to coordinate the membership into two renewal periods—May and October. This facilitates tracking of memberships—for both the Board and the member. Your membership includes:

- ~ *Full year's subscription to Prism, the Forum's literary quarterly*
- ~ *12 issues of PenChant, our monthly newsletter*
- ~ *First Consideration in selection of material for publication in Forum compilations*
- ~ *Democratic voice in how the Forum is administered*
- ~ *Support and encouragement from people with a passion for the written (and spoken) word*

Many of the PWLF memberships are due for renewal as of May 31, 2005. Letters and email remind-

ers will go out shortly to let you know if your membership is one of these. When you receive your notice, please make your check payable to PWLF, mark the renewal form with the type of membership you would like and send it back to us.

Membership rates are as follows:

- ~ Single - \$27.93
- ~ Family - \$33.93
- ~ Student - \$19.93

We value your participation as a member and supporter of the Literary Arts. Thank you for your commitment to our organization.



Poets & Writers Literary Forum

P. O. Box 5666
Springfield, IL 62705

Email: submissions@pwlf.com

If you are interested in contributing to the PenChant, please contact any PWLF Board member.

It is through the contributions and energy of all that we are successful.

PWLF

To increase awareness and appreciation of Literary Arts

Something worth Writing About!

Poets & Writers Literary Forum of Springfield Calendar of Events

June 1st—7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Open Mic at IMO's

June 15th—7:00 pm to 9:00 p.m. Open Mic at IMO's

June 20th —7:00 p.m. PWLF Board Meeting @ IMO's

June 29th—7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Open Mic at IMO's

June 24th—Poetry Parnassus - A. Steinstra's home

July 6th—7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Open Mic at IMO's

July 20th—7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Open Mic at IMO's

JULY 23RD—PWLF ANNUAL MEETING

Every Thursday night at 7:00 p.m.—Open Mic at Sunsup Koffee Kafe
hosted by Jill Manning



NONWORDS FROM VICKI

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include “nonary,” “nonagenarian,” and “nonagon.” They refer to the number nine. Nonary means having nine as a base, such as in a system of counting. Compare that to a binary system. Binary is a lot more common and a lot easier to figure out uses for. But the word does exist, suggesting that someone envisioned a possible use for a nonary system. A nonagenarian is someone who is ninety years old or someone between 90 and 100. A nonagon is a polygon having nine sides.

There is another small group of words that begin with n-o-n that are neither negating something (as in nonvoter) nor referring to the number nine. These words include nonce. Others are none, nonet, and nones. You know what “none” means: no one, not any. A nonet either a musical composition written for nine instruments or voices, or it is a group of nine nuclear or subatomic particles. “Nones” is not the plural for “none,” rather it refers to the ninth canonical hour, nine hours after sunrise. The words in this group tend to be, with the exception of “none,” to have specialized uses.

Not to neglect my subject of *non-* words, here are a couple I like: nonplus and nonjuror. “Nonplus” is a transitive verb that means to puzzle completely, to

make unable to say or do anything. Synonyms are perplex, confound, confuse, mystify, and embarrass. It is also a noun that means a state of being nonplused (or nonplussed—the double S is the British spelling). Synonyms are quandary, confusion, and embarrassment. Nonjury is an adjective for something held without a jury, such as a nonjury trial, or something that is imposed without a jury trial. A *nonjuror* is neither the judge nor the defendant nor anyone else involved in such a hearing. A nonjuror is a person who refuses to take a required oath. Just about anyone could be a nonjuror: a witness who wouldn't take the oath, a doctor who wouldn't take the Hippocratic oath, a president who wouldn't be sworn into office.

Some of the nonwords have related words that begin with the prefix “in-,” which, like non, means “not,” “lack of” or “opposite of.” There can be differences, sometimes subtle, between the non-words and the “in-” words. Consider “non-essential” and “inessential.” Look for a fuller exploration of “in-” words in the future.

*If anyone has an example of a nonbook, I'd like to see it.