

PenChant

To increase awareness and appreciation of the Literary Arts

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CONGER "PRESENTS COLORS" AT COUNTY HISTORY GROUP

"Mock your colanders," Job Conger advises to his poet friends, for Tuesday, November 16 at 7 p.m., Carnegie Room North, Lincoln Library, 326 S. Seventh in lyrical downtown Springfield. That's when he addresses the Sangamon County Historical Society with a presentation entitled "A Consideration of Springfield's Famous Native Son – Vachel Lindsay."

"This is a breakthrough event for me," Conger says. "It's the first time I lay my



history of the man on the line with respected peers and mostly *Supeers*, and I expect to find as many conduits to a better understanding of the man as I provide to the audience with what I have to say."

By T.S. Thaseezin

Job's book *Vachel Lindsay: Strange Gold* will factor prominently in his presentation. Along with several *Vachel* poems, recited as he separates fact from myth, Conger will display part of his collection of books by and about the Prairie Troubadour.

What's the difference between a poem which is APPROVED for sharing at the Vachel Lindsay Home State Historic Site and one which is BANNED?

(Continued on page 5)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Poetry Reading	2
Daybreak Press Takes on Prism	2
Pull out Calendar	3-4
Trivial Notes	5
Handy Guide for Readers	5
Prism	5
Conger "Presents Colors"	5
A Word from Vicki	6
Calendar	6

A WORD FROM VICKI



How many words are there in the English language? No one has an accurate count because new words are being picked up, tried out, dropped, adopted, or coined all the time. Some words hang around in literary uses but don't become part of everyday speech. When a new word fits a need and clearly expresses some

idea or concept, we don't need to have the word defined when we hear it. We begin using it and it quickly becomes part of our everyday speech and writing. Such a word is "wannabe."

"Wannabe" was first used to describe white kids who "wannabe" black, used black slang, dressed like the black kids, listened to black music. It quickly began to be applied to anyone who acted like something they were not but that they aspired to be. Thus we had rock star wannabes, beauty queen wannabes, diva

wannabes, presidential wannabes... The word expresses the whole notion of desire and aspiration and modeling your behavior as closely as possible to the identity or role you want to have, the kind of person you want to be.

There is another word in English: *manqué*. It means unfulfilled, unrealized, or frustrated. Many of the wannabes, whether rock stars or politicians, will be unfulfilled, their dreams and aspirations unrealized or

(Continued on page 6)

WHEN A POETRY READING GOES BAD

Given the nature of our passion and the nature of many of us involved in it, it may be no small wonder that it is very rare for one of our events to turn out – less than optimally. We poets tend to be people with very strong opinions, and often opinions dissimilar to those of the mainstream. But let's not jump into labels like "contentious" or such. Fact is, we have opinions strong enough that we like to write them, publish them, and voice them behind the microphone to any willing audience. The very act of doing so requires a certain amount of audacity, and it is that quality that we so often facilitate, encourage, and laud at our open-mic events.

But what happens when one of us – any of us – abuses the right to free speech by using it irresponsibly? In the case of Wednesday, October 20th, some of us use our own right to expression and vacate the premises – which is to say get up and walk out. And that's the right thing to do. There comes a point at which each of us must determine the cutoff between good old Midwestern politeness and the self-respect it takes to walk away from someone whose presentation is, for whatever reason, obnoxious to us. It is also

an individual right and responsibility to decide whether or not to comment while doing so.

Happily enough, I'm proud to report that PWLF members have a perfect record for judiciously exercising their rights as audience members. My praise and thanks to all who made the decision with which they were most comfortable – to those who had the audacity to leave, and equally to those who decided that there was something there to stick it out for.

For those not present, suffice it to say that our feature (whose name is quite irrelevant, as is his person because we can all assume that he was having a *really* bad time himself) on the night of October 20th was injudicious in his use of profanity, unwilling to take responsibility for offending audience members, and irresponsibly used his presentation time to inflict his own personal issues on the audience. Of course, this isn't so different from some of the experiences we've all had in the past – so why is this exemplary of a time to walk out? I've mulled this over and talked it over with some of the other audience members, and I believe the consensus to be that our guest failed to consider his audience.

By: David Pitchford

There is a vast difference between being complained to and being bitched at, and I believe a few of us



felt more that the latter was taking place than the former.

Contrary to our guest's assertion, we took no exception to anyone expressing himself; what we took exception to was the manner of that expression. Telling the chorus they're all going to hell because they are heathens is just a stupid way to preach. Just as telling PWLF members that they hate the performer for his liberal views because central Illinois is such a vicious nest of conservatives. This is, of course, my way of asserting that we should all remember to take into consideration our audience (and venue) every time we step to the microphone. None of us is interested in advocating rules to constrict our open-mic events, but it benefits us all to use our rights responsibly and refrain from injudicious profanity, intolerance, and thoughtless insult.

DAYBREAK PRESS TAKES ON PRISM

Daybreak Press, poetry imprint of Pitch-Black LLC, has taken over the publication of Prism Quarterly, formerly known as Prism Galliard. In a move to increase circulation while maintaining quality, the board of Poets & Writers Literary Forum

(PWLF) has signed a contract with Pitch-Black LLC to handle the solicitation of material, as well as the publication, production, and marketing of Prism.

PWLF will continue to include Prism as a benefit of membership in the organization,

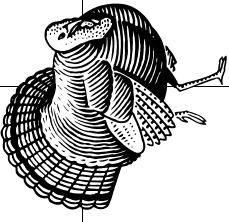
purchasing member copies at an equitable discount. Additionally, members of PWLF will continue to have first consideration for both poetry and prose material for the literary quarterly.

One of the hopes for this new

(Continued on page 5)

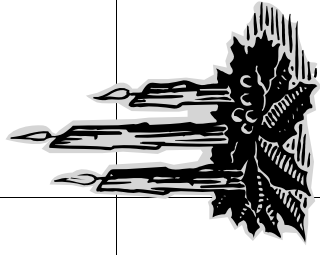
November 2004

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

	1	2	3	4	5	6
		Please let your voice be heard—VOTE!	IMO's open mic at 7p.m.	Open Mic @ Sunsup Kaffe hosted by Jill Manning 7 p.m.		
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
				Open Mic @ Sunsup Kaffe hosted by Jill Manning 7 p.m.		
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
	PWLF Board Meeting @ Pitchford's		IMO's open mic at 7p.m.	Open Mic @ Sunsup Kaffe hosted by Jill Manning 7 p.m.		
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
						
28	29	30				

December 2004

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

			1 Open Mic and Featured Reading at IMO's 7-9 p.m.	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 Open Mic at IMO's 7-9 p.m.	16	17	18
19	20 PWLF Board Meet- ing @Pitchford's 7pm	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

TRIVIAL NOTES

The PWLF Fund Raiser Trivia Night has been postponed from November until January 2005 due to numerous conflicts. Please watch your PenChant for further updates.

Where did James Joyce die?

For those of you wondering—no there will be NO trivia questions related to James Joyce or President Tyler. All questions will be carefully crafted with the

aim of providing an entertaining yet competitive evening for all who choose to attend.

The cost will be \$10.00 per person with team tables setup for 6 to 10 people per table. All board members of PWLF who are involved in the crafting of the trivia questions will be excluded from participating on a team for this event. All proceeds will benefit our activities to increase awareness for, and appreciation of, the Literary Arts.

PRISM

(Continued from page 2)

partnership is to increase the reader base for Prism through the

Submissions for Prism have increased...from as far away as Sweden

expanded marketing capabilities of Pitch-Black LLC. Over the course of the past two issues, submissions for Prism have increased three-fold and come from as far away as Sweden and Tanzania, Connecticut and Arizona, as well as here in Central Illinois.

For more information on Pitch-Black LLC and Daybreak Press visit:

www.pitchblackbooks.com

As always, your opinions and concerns are important, so please feel free to contact any member of the board with your feedback. We want to hear from you.



CONGER "PRESENTS COLORS"

(Continued from page 1)

Learn the answer to this and other points of disputation during Conger's presentation.

And yes, he will be garbed in his "amazing Technicolor sport coat" for the event. As far as any living person can tell, Job is the first member of our organization to be a featured speaker at an SCHS meeting. Conger is a life

member of SCHS and in his fifth year as a board member. He promises "a heapin' helpin' of their hospitality" to all P&WLF members who attend.

*Job Conger
Tuesday, Nov. 16th—7:00 p.m.
Carnegie Room North
Lincoln Library*

A HANDY GUIDE FOR READERS AND RECITERS—BY JOB CONGER

1. If the audience can't hear you, consider another line of work.
2. Don't cheat the author and your audience by not revealing the emotions written into the poems you share.
3. Grand elocution which does not convey the point of the poem wastes your breath and the audience's time.
4. Punctuation marks are used in poems to help readers understand. Don't insult the author and your audience by sharing a poem as though commas, colons, periods and !!!!! don't matter.
5. If you're not sweating when you recite a poem that's more than 12 lines long, you probably don't understand the poem.
6. A sad poem does not require you to dredge up painful emotions. All you are asked (by the poet) to do is share the poem in a way that reveals the poet's view of the nature of the written thoughts.
7. If you're bored with a poem, you will never convince your audience that the time they invested in hearing you share it is time well spent.
8. Although you learn something when you recite poems, don't regard presentations as "just another place to practice." You have one chance to share a poem to a given audience. Don't learn how to apologize for yourself; learn how to share the poem the right way.
9. You don't have to be "a professional" to demonstrate a level of competence in your craft that flatters your audience and honors the poet whose creations you share.
10. The spaces between words are almost as important as the words. Take as much time as the poem requires, but not a minute more.



Poets & Writers Literary Forum

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

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

Our thanks to Rhonda Colby for offering to fill the editor's position! Rhonda begins as editor with December's issue.

Editor: Siobhan Pitchford
Proof Ed: David Pitchford

PWLF

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Poets & Writers Literary Forum of Springfield

Calendar of Events

Nov. 3rd—7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Open Mic at IMO's

Nov. 4th—Illini Union Bookstore in Champaign .

Siobhan will be reading and signing books @ 4 p.m

Nov. 15th—7:00 p.m. Board Meeting @ Pitchford's

Nov. 17th—7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Open Mic at IMO's

Dec. 1st—7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Featured Reading by *Siobhan* at IMO's

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

Dec. 20th—7:00 p.m. Board Meeting @ Pitchford's

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



A WORD OR TWO FROM VICKI (CONT.)

(Continued from page 1)

frustrated. The word ought to be taken out of its literary setting and used more frequently. It expresses notions similar to "wannabe" but sounds more serious, maybe more dedicated, and more hopeless. "Singer manqué," that would be me. I'm not a "wannabe" because I know I'll never be able to sing, there is no hope for it, my husband hides in the garage when I start to sing. Manqué has a secondary meaning of defective or abortive, and that pretty much sums up my singing ability.

Someone wrote that every masseur is a doctor manqué. I suspect that everyone I know is a healer manqué -- just go out with a cough or cold and listen to all the suggestions for how to treat it. (Speaking of doctors manqué, did anyone see the last issue of Mental Floss? There was a do-it-yourself article on heart transplants.)

A poet manqué could also be

called a "poetaster." My dictionary defines that as "a writer of rather poor poetry!" That word could be dusted off and put back into circulation. I didn't look up the origin of this word, because I like the one I made up: it is a combination of "poet" and "taste", and means someone who has had just a taste of poetry!

***If you thrive on
discontent, you
just might be a
Manqué
Wannabe!***