

**GOOS BOOK CLUB
850 NORTH BOULEVARD
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70802**

IN MEMORIAM

Page Acree: 1919--2005

Frank Craig, Jr.: 1918--2005

Durwood "Woody" Facundus: 1934--2003

Charles Prosser: 1919--2005

Carter Wilkinson: 1947-2006

July 28, 2006

RE: GOOS BOOK CLUB MEETING OF June 29, 2006.

NEXT MEETING: August 17, 2006 at 6:30 p.m. at Kivas' Private Room.

Lads:

The regiment "fell in" at Kiva's Restaurant on Thursday, June 29, 2006 at approximately 7 p.m. As usual, we were ensconced in our private room.

Present for duty were:

Brian Luikart

Scott Thurston

Buzzy Anding

Alan Carey

Bubber Currier

Keith Richardson

Louis Leggio

Gus Dalton

Wally Dunlap

Herb Dyer

Jim Clary, Jr.

Herman Moyse, who brought as a guest his son, Louis Moyse

Clay Waggenpack, who brought a guest, James Ruiez

After calling the meeting to order, your President then reported on the current status of the Goos' website construction. The short version: the website construction is almost completed and going well. The longer version: the website is nearly constructed and, although we had some challenges to surmount, those initial hurdles seem to be behind us now.

In this vein, your President reports that we have a professional assisting us in the construction of this site, which Clary had commenced on his own, only to discover that there was more to constructing a website than one might first surmise. Accordingly, your humble President was — in short order — “a lost ball in high weeds.” Fortunately, Dr. Scott Thurston came to the rescue. Scott has a professional (Troye Stonich) who has been working with us to finalize the site, which is now “up and running.” It can be reviewed at goosbookclub.org, so give it a “once over.”

Our website Roster Page lists the names of all Goos' members, their physical and email addresses, phone numbers, etc. This would make it **very** easy for all of us to contact each other, should the need arise.

Because there has been some concern about having all of this information available on the web, we have employed a mechanism through which the Roster Page can be “password protected.” Only Goos members can access the Roster and all will use the same login information. That “log-in” information is as follows: USER ID: Snowgoose; PASSWORD: dragoon.

After the website report, the membership was polled as to any new books recently read which the group might like. Herewith follows the report on those suggestions:

- 1) “*Heartburn*” by Nora Ephron. Suggested by Alan Carey. This is the author who wrote “*When Harry Met Sally*” and “*Sleepless in Seattle*.” It is the autobiographical story of the dissolution of her marriage, although some of it was shortened by various injunctions sought by her estranged husband, etc. Alan said it was a good read.

- 2) “*Under the Volcano*” by Malcom Lowry. Suggested by Clay Waggenpack. This 1947 novel takes place in a 24-hour period and everything occurs in real time. Clay said it is a paean to Mexico and all its shortcomings. Moreover, it contains the best description of *delirium tremens* Clay says he has ever read.
- 3) “*Me Talk Pretty One Day*” by David Sedaris. Suggested by Keith Richardson. Keith said this is a “laugh out loud, funny book.” I do not know if he was attempting to describe the book or if he was auditioning dust jacket blurbs.
- 4) “*Wise Blood*” by Flannery O’Connor. Suggested by Buzzy Anding. Unfortunately, your President made no notes about this book. But, we all know Buzzy’s literary opinions are to be trusted.
- 5) “*When All The World Was Young*” by Dr. Ferrol Sams. Suggested by Louis Leggio. Sams is a southern primary care physician and has written numerous delightful books. Louis was a particular fan of this one, as were several other members of the group.

After the books suggestions discussion, we turned to the matter at hand.

The meeting was turned over to dragooned Goo Keith Richardson, who gave us a biographical sketch on the author of “*Winesberg, Ohio*” — Sherwood Anderson. He was born in 1887; his father was a Civil War veteran. Growing up, Anderson’s nickname was “Jobbie,” apparently because he was always eager and willing to do **any** sort of job. After completing his military service during the Spanish American War, he went to college and — shortly thereafter — earned his fortune the old-fashioned way: *He married it.*¹

¹ This glib reference was stolen from Keith Richardson, who used it during his presentation.

Throughout his 30s, he made an industrious and successful living selling paint. Everything was proceeding swimmingly until — weighed down by the relentless pursuit of the American Dream — Anderson suffered a nervous breakdown which — in truth — only lasted for 3 or 4 days. However, in subsequent years, the emotional collapse grew into myth and the colossal nature of the psychological degeneration was much magnified by Anderson in ensuing years. In any event, this breakdown apparently caused him to change his world view. He walked away from the business world and began to write.

“*Winesberg, Ohio*” was written in 1919 and the critics loved it. As sometimes happens, though, Anderson spent the last of his literary career sort of “chasing” his initial success. Nothing he did afterwards seems to have completely measured up to his initial effort.

Anderson died of peritonitis in Panama shortly before the commencement of World War II. The cause of death was listed as being due to Anderson’s “swallowing a toothpick.” Apparently, this was a diagnosis *often* delivered to individuals who were big drinkers, which Anderson was.

Keith then turned the meeting over to the group, after reporting that the short story “*Hands*” in the book is the one that gets most of the critical acclaim. In the ensuing discussion, the group had other various favorites, which were mentioned.

All seemed to agree that these short sketches — which passed for short stories — seemed to demonstrate the very most Anderson could wring out of any scene. Anderson was not of the bent to write long novels. He would write a short sketch on a particular subject and — when he was done — he was done.

Several members of the regiment thought it was very interesting that Anderson referred to the characters in his book and the inhabitants of Winesberg as “grotesques.”

Everyone seemed to agree that Anderson had a sort of “story teller style” to his writing, which made it easy to follow. . .even if some of the subjects were not of the greatest interest.

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Wally Dunlap pointed out that he came from a Midwestern background, growing up in a small town in Kansas. His small-town experience was **exactly** similar to the experiences rendered by Sherwood Anderson in *Winesberg*. Most notably, Wally said he never learned to ask conversational questions in his small-town experience. People did not ask each other questions in small town discourse. They simply exchanged statements. So, Wally had to learn the art of conversation — particularly the art of asking questions — **after** he had departed his small town and he suspected that the characters in *Winesberg* were exactly the same.

Perhaps Louis Leggio summed it up best, when he observed: “*Winesberg seemed like a perfectly nice little town that I would **not** want to visit.*”

Finally, the group thought it very interesting that — at one time or another — Sherwood Anderson was either a close friend or patron of Ernest Hemingway, Thomas Wolfe, William Faulkner, and other writers. However, it seems as though — for one reason or another — Anderson **always** came to a “parting of the ways” with his literary friends. None of the friendships endured and some of the estrangements were bitter.

The group may recall that Keith had suggested this book as an American counterpoint to James Joyce’s “*Dubliners*” and — for that purpose — the book served well. In addition, the group seemed to have a positive consensus on the work as a whole.

Once the discussion began to wind down, Keith started to cast about for another Goo to dragoon and — before the discussion could grow remotely threatening — Scott Thurston volunteered. His offer was accepted and he suggested that we read “*A Bend In The River*” by V.S. Naipaul, a Pulitzer Prize winning author.

Accordingly, we shall reconvene at Kiva’s on Thursday, August 17, 2006 at 6:30 p.m. at which time we shall be regaled by Brother Thurston on matters pertaining to Mr. Naipaul, “*A Bend In The River*,” and other short subjects.

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I am pleased to report that our two guests, James Ruiez and Louis Moyse, agreed to join us again in the future and we look forward to seeing them.

Until our paths cross again, I remain — as ever

Your obedient servant,

James R. Clary, Jr.

JRCjr/slc/jlw