

**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

October 27, 2006

RE: GOOS BOOK CLUB MEETING OF October 12, 2006.

Dragooned Goo — Bubber Currier

Selected Read — “*The Great Gatsby*”

NEXT MEETING: November 30, 2006 at 6:30 p.m. at Kivas.

Newly Dragooned Goo — Lou Leggio

Selected Read — “*Palace Walk,*” by Naguib Mahfouz

Lads:

Let me first apprise everyone that our brother, Wally Dunlap, has been ill for a few months and is working hard to recover. I know he would appreciate hearing from the guys, so drop him an e-mail or a call to wish him well. Were in your corner, Wally!

Next, I can report that the regiment “fell in” at Kivas’ Restaurant on Thursday, October 12, 2006 so as to “go do that voodoo that we do so well.”

Present for duty were:

Brian Luikart

Alan Carey

Bubber Currier

Louis Leggio

Herb Dyer

Jim Clary, Jr.

Herman Moyse

Scott Thurston

Jesse Gellrich

Keith Richardson

Gus Dalton

Lewis Moyse

Charles Kahoe

Clay Waggenpack

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Prior to turning to our topic, we engaged in our customary poll about good books enjoyed by the troops. In this vein, the following was reported:

Alan Cary — for some reason, brother Cary thought this the propitious moment to mention that he had recently read a short story by Henry James that was so bad that he could not even recollect the title. He did remember Ambrose Bierce's quote about the story, however: "*It's a shame that somebody hasn't thought to translate this into English.*"

Lou Leggio — "*The Places In Between,*" by Rory Stewart. Shortly after 9/11, Rory Stewart walked across Afghanistan, West to East. He stayed in private homes along the way and the story is very enlightening. Lou recommends it highly.

Herb Dyer — "*The Looming Tower,*" by Lawrence Wright. This book provides a history of Al-Queda from the beginning through the present. Herb reports that the history is not the "political truth" told by the leaders of our country, but a more penetrating truth which bears reviewing.

Herb Dyer — "*The Republican War on Science,*" by Chris Mooney. Regardless of your party affiliation, Herb says that this review of the Republican Party's "take" on science is quite illuminating. Ahhh... those nutty Republicans...

Keith Richardson — "*The Big Con,*" by David Maure. Keith reports this book to be the story of the American confidence man and grifter. He said that it was very good.

James Clary, Jr. — "*The Miracle Life of Edgar Mint,*" by Brady Udall. This work of fiction got good reviews and so I snagged it on sale at Barnes & Nobles. How can you resist a novel that begins with the following line: "*I guess if there was one important thing about my life that I would want you to know, it is that — when I was eight years old — the mailman ran over my head.*"

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Clay Waggenpack — “*Walker Percy Remembered*,” by David Horace Howell. It is a collection of informal interviews, so they are not all top grade, but it’s an easy read.

Scott Thurston — “*The Long Walk*,” by — according to Scott — “some Polish guy.” Apparently, the author escaped from a prison camp in Siberia and walked through that wasteland, through the Himalayas and on to India. It is not a recent work, but Scott recommends it very highly.

With these “Goos Reviews” accomplished, the meeting was turned over to our Dragooned brother, Bubber Currier, for his review of the novel selected for our most recent enjoyment, “*The Great Gatsby*,” by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Bubber absolutely loved the book and perceived it as Fitzgerald’s “masterpiece.” When the novel came out, it received good critical reviews but didn’t really sell with the public. It took a reissue of the novel by Scribners in 1942 for the sales to take off — long after Fitzgerald’s death at 44 in the 30’s.

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald — a descendant of Francis Scott Key through his paternal line — was a Princeton man, class of 1919 — although he left Princeton early to join the army. Bubber regarded it as fortunate that he never actually saw combat as a second lieutenant because he would have no doubt been responsible for the demise of many men. In short, he was not a good soldier. While serving at Camp Sheridan in the army, though, he met Zelda in Montgomery, Alabama. They fell in love and their tracks paralleled each other forever after.

Fitzgerald went to New York in the 1920’s to try his hand in the advertising game in order to achieve the material success demanded by Zelda. During those ensuing years he wrote “*This Side of Paradise*” and “*Tender is The Night*.” While these efforts brought him some material success, money troubles continued to plague him throughout the remainder of his existence, even after he went to Hollywood to try his hand there.

Fitzgerald is responsible for giving the name “The Jazz Age” to the 1920’s, an era within which he is intimately identified.

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His life — on balance — was not a happy one. He was constantly plagued by financial reverses and the need to borrow money. He was burdened by Zelda's unremitting mental illness, as well. In addition to that, he was a big drinker and often lamented the fact that the last 3rd of "*Tender is The Night*" was written in a drunken stupor. He often said that he wished that he had an opportunity to rewrite the novel and finish it in a sober fashion. Of course, he never did.

Max Perkins, about whom we read some years ago, was Fitzgerald's editor. Apparently, "*The Great Gatsby*" was written by Fitzgerald during a period of time when he had his drinking under control. This is responsible — in Bubber's view — for the masterful quality of the work.

The membership seemed to agree that the book was beautifully written, particularly the character sketches many loved Fitzgerald's distinctive phrasing, as well. Brother Dalton reported that he had read the book 40 years ago and — until rereading it recently — he always thought "*Tender is The Night*" was Fitzgerald's best work. Now, he believes that *Gatsby* gives "*Tender is The Night*" a true run for its money.

Jesse Gellrich was touched by the *Gatsby* character. Was *Gatsby* simply acting or was he truly naive? Jesse agreed with Bubber's assertion that the *Gatsby* story is a true tragedy. *Gatsby*'s demise is inevitable, just as with characters in all true, classic tragedies.

No dissenters were present among the Goos about the quality of Fitzgerald's novel. It was enjoyed by everyone.

Thereafter, Bubber Currier dragooned one of our new members, Lou Leggio, who selected "*Palace Walk*," by Naguib Mahfouz as our next read. The story — based upon Mahfouz's life and volume on of a trilogy — is a story of an Egyptian merchant and his life in a Cairo neighborhood in the early 20th Century. It won the Nobel Prize for literature and, consequently, should polish our collective laurels.

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Our next meeting is scheduled at Kiva's in our usual private room for Thursday, November 30, 2006 at 6:30 p.m. I look forward to seeing all of you there for Brother Leggio's discussion of "*Palace Walk*," by Naguib Mahfouz.

Until we meet again, I remain — as ever

Your obedient servant,

James R. Clary, Jr.

JRCjr/jlw