

Author Series Opens with . . . a Christmas Western?

Written by Editor

Tuesday, 08 October 2013 10:11



When is a 'western novel' a Christmas tale? Or when does a USCB Lunch With Author Series author show up in a ten-gallon cowboy hat? Jeans? Cowboy boots?

The opening luncheon on Thursday, October 24, 2013 at Dataw Island's Carolina Room—that's when! When **Craig Johnson**, New York Times bestselling author of the Walt Longmire mystery series opens the season of seven premier author luncheons. His new book, *Spirit of Steamboat*, is a holiday tale that begins with Sheriff Walt Longmire reading *A Christmas Carol* in his office on December 24th when he's interrupted by the ghost of Christmas Past: a young woman with a hairline scar across her forehead and more than a few questions about Walt's predecessor, Lucian Connally. Walt doesn't recognize the mystery woman, but she seems to know him and thus begins her story that takes them back to Christmas Eve, 1988 when three people died in a terrible crash.

This spirited luncheon is followed on Wednesday, November 6th with a favorite LWA author, **Mary Kay Andrews**

at Sea Pines Country Club, Hilton Head. Andrews' new holiday novella *Christmas Bliss* reunites us with Weezie Foley, Savannah antique dealer extraordinaire, who is doubly distracted—both by her upcoming wedding to her longtime love, chef Daniel Stipanek and also by the fact that her best friend and maid-of-honor BeBe Loudermilk is due to give birth any day—and is still adamantly refusing to marry her live-in-love Harry. You'll remember all these characters in Mary Kay's three previous Savannah novels: *Savannah Blues*, *Savannah Breeze*, and *Blue Christmas*.

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On Thursday, December 12th, **Clay Rice**, foremost silhouette artist and grandson of legendary silhouette artist, Carew Rice, will bring his own unique style of Christmas cheer to the luncheon. With his guitar in hand, he will serenade us with some of his original songs. With his magic scissors, he will make a silhouette of you to be placed in his latest book, *Mama, Let's Make a Moon* or his earlier book, *The Lonely Shadow*. Both books are completely illustrated with his silhouette art and are books children treasure.

After so much resplendent holiday cheer, it's time to settle back with a mystery---the fourth and final book of the Tradd Street Mysteries presented by **Karen White** on Thursday, January 16, 2014 at the Belfair Clubhouse, Bluffton. In the *Return to Tradd Street*, psychic realtor Melanie Middleton is determined to be strong and leave her past with writer Jack Tranholm behind her, even while carrying his unborn child. When Melanie is roused one night by the sound of a ghostly infant crying, she chooses to ignore it until the remains of a newborn in an old christening gown are found hidden in the foundation of her house during renovations.

Historical fiction soared to new heights with first-time novelist **Nancy Horan's** New York Times bestselling novel *Loving Frank*, so meet her on Monday, February 17th when she brings Robert Louis Stevenson to life with her new book, *Under the Wide and Starry Sky*. Nancy evocatively re-creates the passionate and powerful love story of Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson and his intrepid American wife Fanny Van de Grift Osborne, a divorcee ten years his senior and an artist in her own right who played a key role in his career. Ranging from the artists' colonies of Europe and the mining camps of Nevada to the shores of Polynesia, Nancy invites us to explore the Stevensons' unusual relationship and the ways in which they changed the literary and artistic landscape around them.

March brings a change of pace with two authors of different genres and yet so closely related they make a major impact. New York Times bestselling author **Beverly Donofrio** writes memoirs, most notably, *Riding in Cars with Boys*, and now the story of her rape at age 55, *Astonished: A Story of Evil, Blessings, Grace, and Solace*. Beverly's story is the journey of facing such a personal evil and dealing with life after the fact.

Internationally acclaimed author **Corban Addison's** novels cover human trafficking in *A Walk Across the Sun* and condemn gender-based violence in his new book, *The Garden of Burning Sand*. In the latter, Corban addresses violence against women and girls in Southern Africa and the United States. Corban says "Beverly's own testimony will beautifully reinforce the point: Gender-based violence is a global problem, a human problem, that all of us have a moral obligation to confront in our communities, neighborhoods and families." Both will be featured at Hampton Hall Clubhouse, Bluffton, on Thursday, March 6th.

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The series is completed on Wednesday, April 30th at the Sea Pines Country Club, Hilton Head when all-time favorite author, **Mary Alice Monroe** presents *The Summer Wind*, her second novel of the *The Lowcountry Summer Trilogy*. In this novel the Muir sisters continue their summer at Mamaw's historic Lowcountry home, *Sea Breeze*. Dora, the southern good wife, starts breaking a few of her rigid rules. Carson pursues the dolphin Delphine to find love, and Harper begins to explore the landscape of Sullivan's Island and her heart. While overseeing the young women, Mamaw and her faithful housekeeper Lucille face difficult decisions for themselves and for *Sea Breeze*.

Lunch is served at noon at all USCB Lunch With Author Series events, followed by the author talk, Q & A, and book signing. Reservations are necessary and made by calling 843-521-4147 or emailing kingsley@uscb.edu. The all-inclusive price for each luncheon is \$42. The whole series is available for \$270. Books are available at each luncheon.