

Poet of Tolstoy Park

By Sonny Brewer

In 1925, when 67-year-old Henry Stuart is given a year to live, the path he must follow is immediately clear. Stuart leaves his Idaho home and moves to a ten-acre patch of isolated paradise in Fairhope, AL, which was founded by freethinker Henry George, who shared Stuart's love of Tolstoy. Stuart's decision shocks his sons and his lifelong friend, Preacher Will Webb, but his drive to live out the remainder of his life in simplicity and solitude is irresistible. Once he lands in Fairhope, Stuart's all-consuming project is to build a round shelter of cement and eat only food that he grows himself. First novelist Brewer brings honor to this real-life, little-known eccentric, from whom we could learn a great deal. Balancing the friendly curiosity of Stuart's neighbors against Stuart's desperate need for privacy and self-reliance, Brewer offers a gloriously imagined vision of one resourceful life. It will not escape those who fall in love with this beautiful novel that Stuart's cement beehive stands today in its original location, which is now a parking lot.

Available at Wayne & Preakness in Fiction

A Green Journey

By Jon Hassler

Agatha McGee is following a dream, though it might be late in the game. She's just retired from a career of teaching and travels to Ireland in search of the romance she never had time for. And along the way, she not only discovers people she would never have let herself know before, but learns through experience, at long last, that love is unpredictable, unstoppable, and never appears as we dream it will.

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Lunch at the Piccadilly

By Clyde Edgerton

Welcome to the Rosehaven Convalescence Center in beautiful Listre, North Carolina. Recuperating after a recent fall, Lil Olive sits on the front porch, chitchatting with and rocking right alongside the regulars. There's tiny Maudie Lowe with her cane that seems too tall; Beatrice Satterwhite, whose fancy three-wheeled walker is a Cadillac among Chevrolets; Clara Cochran, who cusses as frequently as she takes a breath; and L. Ray Flowers, the freelance preacher who strums a mean guitar, and who reveals his dream of forming a national movement to unite churches and nursing homes ("Nurches of America"). Keeping a watchful eye on them all is Carl, Lil's middle-age bachelor nephew with a heart of gold and the patience of a saint. But Lil is restless, eager to get back to her own apartment. She wants some adventure. And before long, tranquil Rosehaven is turned upside down. . . .

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The Three Miss Margarets

By Louise Shaffer

Three elderly white Georgia women, all named Margaret, share a deep friendship and a dark secret in this winning debut by actress and television writer Shaffer. For reasons not entirely clear even to her, Laurel Selene McCready has inherited her mother's grudge against "the three Miss Margarets," upstanding icons in rural Charles Valley. Returning home drunk late one night, she spies the three ladies congregating unaccountably in a deserted cabin. The body of Vashti Johnson, a renowned African-American geneticist who had returned to Charles Valley to visit her mother, is soon discovered in the cabin, prompting an investigation by the police, as well as by Laurel Selene and her new boyfriend Josh, a journalist who's writing a book about Vashti. As the three Miss Margarets struggle with how much to reveal about Vashti's life and death, they also reflect on their own longtime intimacy and on the race hatred in their community that led, decades ago, to a series of ghastly crimes.

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Gardens of Covington

By Joan A. Medlicott

The three 70-ish friends, who live together in a North Carolina farmhouse, are busy growing and learning through life's experiences. Stalwart Hannah, who is still involved in her plant nursery business, rallies the town's forces to combat a ruthless developer and save the area's natural beauty. Sweet, soft Grace and beau Bob open a tearoom together. And dreamy Amelia falls hard for a scoundrel who is sure to hurt her. Two weddings figure prominently Russell remarries after much family conflict, and an elderly friend (and virgin bride) marries an old codger. The story ends happily with disputed land being given as a gift (and saved from development) for transformation into the Gardens of Covington.

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Killing Thyme

By Peter E. Abresch

Take a few ambitious chefs, a handful of amateur cooks on a weeklong tour of Baltimore's greatest restaurants, season with a bit of competition for a spot on a new TV show, *A Dash of Thyme*, throw in a ruthless killer, and voilà, a perfectly seasoned dish of homicide for amateur sleuths James P. Dandy and his ladylove Dodee Swisher. Before the pair arrives in Baltimore for the Elderhostel-sponsored cooking class extravaganza, the chef supposed to lead the group dies from eating poisoned mushrooms. When a second chef falls dead while sampling a bit of endive, it's clear that the main course is murder. A third death—this time a very wealthy member of the cooking tour itself—leads Jim and Dodee on a culinary caper as delicious as it is deadly, with a clever killer eager to serve them just desserts.

Available at Wayne & Preakness in Fiction



Drives Like a Dream

By Porter Shreve

Here is a lively story about 61-year-old Lydia Modine, a respected automobile industry historian who fears that her relationship with her three-grown children will unravel when her ex-husband remarries. With these children now living far from their Detroit suburban family home, Lydia, a deeply caring parent, begins to concoct a series of misguided fabrications about her life and relationships to lure them back. While caught up in creating a family drama, Lydia is also pursuing a new research project that begins to focus on the role of her own talented designer father in the production of mid-century American automobiles. Her research creates a mystery even as it stirs up memories of her parents' lives. Peppered with an assortment of memorable characters, this entertaining novel effectively combines a tale of loss and letting go with an examination of a large industry's past.

Available at Wayne & Preakness in Fiction



About Schmidt

By Louis Begley

Once a highly successful lawyer of the old school, married to a topnotch book editor whom he loves deeply, Albert Schmidt is in the process of losing it all. His wife has died, he has left his firm early to cope with his loss, and his only daughter is now marrying a man whom he considers crass and grasping and who is, unaccountably, Jewish. Writing in fine form, Begley achieves an extraordinary balance in this tart and stylish book. Perhaps Schmidt was at times a distant father, an unfaithful husband, even a touch anti-Semitic (an issue which Jewish author Begley treats with great sensitivity) but he's still getting a rotten deal from his self-absorbed Yuppie daughter, who is quickly deserting him for her fiancé's family. "Since I am not dead yet I don't think you'll get Mom's and my silver just now," he responds to one thoughtless request, and he soon takes up with a young Puerto Rican waitress who is far more vibrant and devoted than his stuffy offspring. Making us side with the flawed and prickly Schmidt is no mean feat, and Begley is to be commended.

**Available at Preakness in Fiction;
at Wayne on Audio-Cassette**

