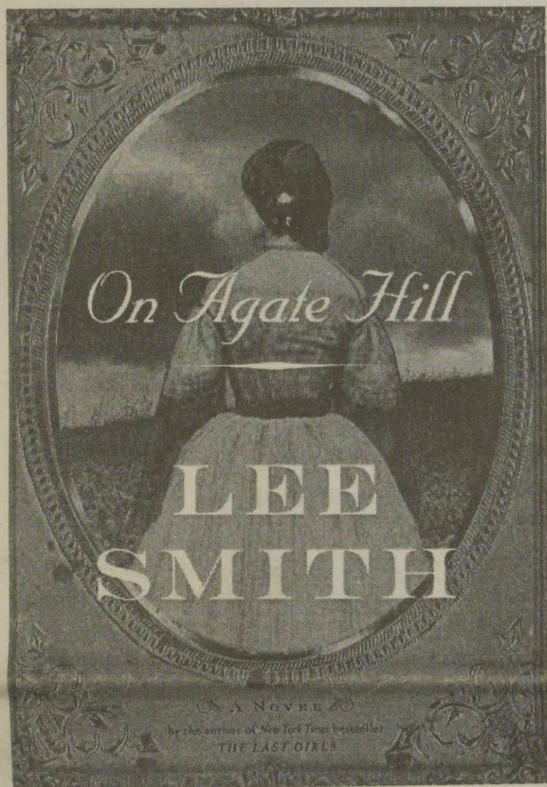




# TWR Reader's Guide 2007



## The author: Lee Smith

### The Author

"I had a wonderful childhood in Grundy, Virginia," Smith says..

"I was the only child of much older parents, who really never thought they could have a child...My dad ran and owned the dime store in town, and I spent more time with him than I did at home. My first job down there was taking care of the dolls...I also would spend hours looking out on the store (through) this two-way glass mirror window. So I would be up there all the time, looking out and just watching people as they shopped.

"I would watch people stealing things, I would watch people having big kisses, I would see fights, I would see everything, and nobody could see me. And I would write it all down. I thought later, this is the perfect childhood for a writer. You've got the omniscient point of view,

and you get to see everybody, and wonder what they're thinking, and why they're doing what they're doing."

"My parents were wonderful," Smith continued, "very encouraging. I always was an avid reader and a writer of little books...I couldn't stand for my favorite books to end, so I'd write more onto the end of them. I'd write more onto the end of *Heidi*. I loved the Nancy Drew books, and I would insert myself there, and it would be Nancy Drew and her best friends, George, and Beth, and Lee—and they would all have adventures together.

"My parents, instead of being horrified by this deeply weird little child who would stay up under the covers all night long, were delighted with any kind of child. My father built me a little writing house down on the riverbank, and I would spend long hours down there. My best friend and I published a newspa-

per of the neighborhood, which we copied out laboriously by hand, and sold for a nickel a piece all over the neighborhood.

"I was looking at them the other day, and some of them are hysterical. We got in lots of trouble because, for instance, we wrote an editorial (about) my neighbor across the street—'George McGuire is Too Grumpy'—and we had to go apologize."

### The Career

*Fair and Tender Ladies*, Smith's seventh novel, had been a breakthrough for her. In this story about Ivy Rowe and her Appalachian Virginia universe, Smith inhabited her character completely, was transported, and created a captivating voice. The seed for this act of imagination was a packet of letters she had purchased at a flea market.

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## The Book: *On Agate Hill*

*On Agate Hill*, Lee Smith's twelfth novel, immerses us immediately in the world of the Reconstruction Era South, as Molly Petree, an orphan, goes to live with her Uncle Junius on his North Carolina estate. We encounter Molly through her diary, unearthed by Tuscan Miller, a flighty college student, whose report to her professor introduces the story.

"I live in a house of ghosts," announces Molly's first entry, dated May 20, 1872. She

feels like a "ghost girl," spying out from her hideaway onto horrifying and hilarious developments. Junius' tenant, Selena—whose husband has vanished—schemes to marry and control Junius. Junius' sister, Cecelia, arrives with comic pomp to rectify the craziness.

Molly calls herself a bad girl, but, despite her language and rebelliousness, it is hard to feel that she is. The Civil War produces a dark angel to rescue Molly, as Simon Black, the soldier

whose life Molly's father had saved, arrives to dispatch Molly to a private girls' school, Gatewood Academy.

Though Molly's diaries are the centerpieces of the novel, they are not the only exhibits. Most noteworthy is the journal of Gatewood's headmistress, Mariah Rutherford Snow, who heads her entries, "For No One's Eyes." She's intelligent, loyal to her husband (who misuses her), and obsessed with exposing Molly's bad character. Luckily, Molly makes

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## Lee Smith, cont.

Fame and acclaim had come to Smith with her fifth novel, *Oral History*, which was also ambitious. As with *On Agate Hill*, she used a college student to introduce the voices that would collect in her novel, except that, with *Oral History*, it was a tape recorder and not old journals and letters that preserved the heritage.

You get the sense that Smith feels that a stronger connection with traditional Appalachian ways would restore modern society. Her father had been very much connected to those ways, and Smith had grown up in her father's five-and dime store. Yet, to view Smith's fiction along this one spectrum would miss a lot.

For instance, there's Smith's concern for the underreported role of women in Appalachian history; and for the passive role of women in much of modern society. *Black Mountain Breakdown*, Smith's fourth novel, explores these themes. Its heroine, a politician's wife and former beauty queen, cannot escape the patterns of her woman's role in Appalachian Virginia. ("Breakdown" carries the meaning of a repeated phrase in blue grass music.)

*Black Mountain Breakdown* represents another milestone in Smith's career. It had been her first published novel after an eight-year hiatus. With her first novel, *The Last Day the Dogbushes Bloomed*—written for course credit at Hollins College—she achieved

immediate success in a Book of the Month Club contest and with publication by Harper & Row.

Her next two novels were accepted by the same publisher until the publisher realized they weren't selling and dropped her, as did her agent. It wasn't until Smith found a new agent and a good editor, Faith Sale, that she was able to make writing her career again.

"I write for the reason I've always done so," Smith says, "simply to survive. To make sense of my life. I never know what I think until I read what I've written. And I refuse to lead an unexamined life."

Likewise, Katie, one of the characters in Smith's tenth book, *The Devil's Dream*, discovers who she is by deciding, on the spur of the moment, to sing a song that goes back a long way in her family. She finds her voice. Song is a major motif in Smith's fiction, representing women's culture—as do other women's art forms, such as Florrie's cake-making skills in "Cakewalk," and Candy's hairdressing skills in *Family Linen*.

Smith won O. Henry awards for her short stories, "Mrs. Darcy Meets the Blue-Eyed Stranger at the Beach" and "Between the Lines" (both later published in *Cakewalk*). The North Carolina Literary and Historical Association bestowed its Sir Walter Raleigh Award for fiction on *Oral History* in 1983; and, in 1984, Smith won the North Carolina Award for Literature, given by the

there can come an attraction between two people," she writes, "that is going to last though all hell breaks loose and longer than death." Tuscany's opinion is clearly not authoritative. We readers can find enough themes to make us feel that we've read several books.

### A Few Selected Themes

#### 1.

In her hideaway, Molly stashes a box of phenomena. Many rare items in that box are the results of excursions into the coun-



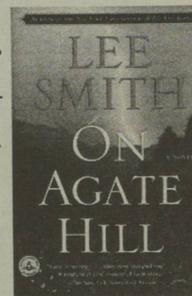
state. *Fair and Tender Ladies* won both the Sir Walter Raleigh Award and the Weatherford Award for Appalachian Literature.

Many other distinctions have come Lee's Smith's way—including the Southern Book Critics Circle Award for her best-selling novel, *The Last Girls* in 2002. She has established a career based on a variety of approaches, strong storytelling voices, regional as well as national popularity, and critical as well as mass appeal.

*Saving Grace*, a masterful and traditionally told Dickensian novel, follows the daughter of a snake-handling preacher in Haywood County. Each character, despite flaws, is treated with dignity—in other words, honestly.

*On Agate Hill* combines many of Smith's strengths. As Together We Read programs will indicate, it enables multiple levels of appreciation. While garnering critical acclaim, the novel has been picked up by chain stores. The TWR buzz continues to be significant.

tryside with Mary White, Cecelia's sickly daughter. Children's fantasies and keepsakes are so fascinating and telling, Haywood County Library is leading the way toward making them the core of an innovative program. Students and artists



The paperback edition of *On Agate Hill*, published by Algonquin in Aug. 2007

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Last year, as we Western North Carolinians were wrapping up our reading of the 2006 Together We

Read book—Ron Rash's novel,

Saints at the River—we

proceeded to choose the 2007

pick. Over 100 site coordinators

nominated candidates and then

narrowed the list to six finalists;

then, the public voted, and the

choice was Lee Smith's latest

novel, *On Agate Hill*, published in

2006. The book is now available

in trade paperback from

Algonquin Books; and is available

in audio from Recorded Books and

on NetLibrary (ask your librarian).

## The Book, cont.

friends. Sadly, Mariah has a breakdown.

Molly and a Gatewood teacher, Agnes, go to teach in the one-room Bobcat School in Ashe County. Thus begins a new section of the book, resulting in Molly's marriage to a native and her initiation into mountain culture. What happens next has to be withheld for the sake of not spoiling the book for new readers. Suffice to say, courtroom documents become part of the mix.

Ultimately, states Tuscany Miller in her concluding letter to her advisor, Molly's story is about unlikely love matches. "Sometimes

## Supplemental Book for middle schoolers: *The Land*

*The Land* by Mildred Taylor (Phyllis Fogelman Books, 2001)

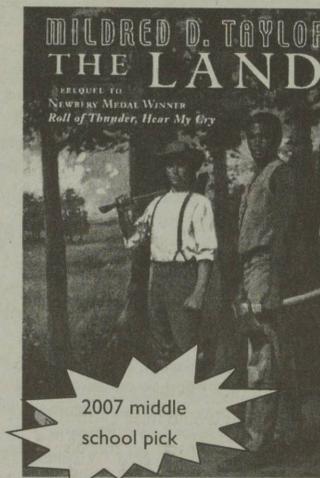
*The Land* depicts the life journey of Paul-Edward Logan—son of a white landowner and an African-American former slave—from his childhood on a Southern estate to his ownership of land. (Taylor's previous novel, *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, told the story of Cassie Logan, Paul-Edward's granddaughter.) Like *On Agate Hill*, *The Land* begins during the generation after the Civil War; but whereas the plight of an African-American youngster (Washington) is a subplot in *On Agate Hill*, it is the core of *The Land*.

In *On Agate Hill*, Molly Petree, an orphan at her Uncle Junius' ruined estate, befriends

Washington, son of Junius' cook. The friendship cannot last into adulthood. When Junius dies, Washington takes off. Only in Molly's last reflections do we learn that Washington had overcome many obstacles and become a lawyer in Pennsylvania. (Lee Smith does not romanticize history; her novel also includes examples of African-Americans whose fates are grim.)

The story of an African-American male's hazardous hero path to dignity and self-reliance is a very important one in American literature. In *The Land*, Paul's path begins with his being victimized by Mitchell, the black son of one of Paul's father's tenants. Mitchell has it out for Paul because he thinks Paul acts superior—black, but the son of the boss. Paul appeals to his

father and his white half-brothers for help, but eventually works out his problem himself.



2007 middle school pick

## The Book's Themes

—cont. from page 2

will combine to place key items in specially made and provided display boxes. See the art prompt, "The Phenomenon Box."

#### 2.

At Agate Hill, Molly befriends Washington, son of the African-American cook, Liddy. This friendship has to end, as Molly grows up. The subplot provides the ground for looking at race relations in the post-War South, and connects well with the suggested supplementary book for middle school readers, *The Land* by Mildred Taylor.

#### 3.

Molly's time as a student at the Gatewood Academy, and then as a teacher in Bobcat School, provides anecdotal material about alternative schooling. Lee Smith had been a teacher—of seventh graders in a Nashville girl's prep school; language arts students at the Carolina Friends School in Durham; and writing students at different universities. Collect stories about different schooling methods; and good and bad learning experiences.

#### 4.

Lee Smith wrote a ballad for *On Agate Hill*. The title of her novel is

## Picture book: *My Great-Aunt Arizona*

*My Great Aunt Arizona* by Gloria Houston (HarperCollins, 1992)

Gloria Houston's picture book (illustrated by Susan Condie Lamb) celebrates her great-aunt, a teacher in a mountain "blab school." It was not unlike the blab school at which Molly Petree taught in Bobcat. (See *On Agate Hill*, pages 232-7.)



2007 picture book pick

Houston's warm memories of schooling makes one wonder about what has changed in mountain schools—what has gotten better and what worse. One feature that Aunt Arizona's teaching featured was a personal relationship with students and community. Teacher stories tell a lot about what's happening in education.

#### 5.

There'll be much theater this year, too. Molly attends a tableaux vivants performance with Cecelia and Mary White, and is impressed by the pageantry. Yet, the more pertinent dramatic form that derives from

the novel is the monologue—to which diaries, journals, and letters are related. Barbara Bates Smith, working with musician Jeff Sebens, does a remarkable job turning Smith's novels into one-woman shows. She has one for *On Agate Hill* that she is taking around. Also, Reader's Theatre groups continue to play an important part in popularizing the reading of novels at various locations.

## EXCERPT FROM THE LAND

Paul confronts Mitchell, a bully

"You know, Mitchell, you way stronger'n me, and 'cause you are, there're a whole lotta things you can do I can't. But there are some things I can do and you can't, like read and write and figure. Maybe you think I feel better'n everybody else 'cause I can do those things and you can't, so I was thinking. What if I taught you to read and write and figure? Then you'd pretty much know what I know and there wouldn't be any reason for you to think I'm thinking I'm so smart."

Mitchell scowled. "What I want t' read and write and figure for?"

"'Cause it's something worth knowing," I reasoned, "and 'cause most white folks don't want us knowing how, 'cause once we do know, we can learn all sorts of things white folks know. You ever think why it is most white folks don't want us to know how to read and write and figure? My daddy says it's 'cause they need us as workers and so they don't want us knowing much as they do. Long as they figure they know something we don't, they can figure they're smarter than us..."

"And what you 'spect me t' do for you?" he asked. *The truth was, all I expected from Mitchell Thomas was for him to stop beating up on me, but I was realizing now with those words that Mitchell was more than just a bully. There was a pride in him too, and there'd have to be an exchange of learning for this truce I was proposing to work. "You could teach me to fight," I said.*

## Phenomenon Boxes: A Reading and an Activity

### Intro

A box of mementoes and oddities is the key to the heroine's secret life in *On Agate Hill*. As a child, she finds such things fascinating. As an adult, she rediscovers her box of phenomena, and it continues to offer clues. A graduate student finds and mines it a century later for a thesis. We all have such objects in our lives. The objects tell stories. To release their stories and give them their importance, they only need to be framed in a special way—such as placement in a treasure box or mounting in a shadow box. Even a McDonald's toy can become an icon if viewed in a certain way. Put it side by side with a rag doll once owned by a nineteenth century child, and you get a view of history.

Before going to the guidelines for creating phenomenon boxes and stories, read the *On Agate Hill* excerpts (to the right) that tell of the activities of Molly Petree, the self-described bad girl, orphaned after the Civil War and sent to live on her broken uncle's North Carolina estate.

### MAKING THE PHENOMENON BOX

**Choose an object.** There are a few ways you might do this.

- Pick the oldest object you have in your possession. For the sake of this project, do not pick large objects such as a chair.
- Think of an early memorable experience, and find an object associated with it.
- Pick a family heirloom.
- Contact a legendary person and solicit an object that represents his or her story (like an item for a mini-Hall of Fame).
- Go out on a search for amazing objects. You can give yourself a higher chance of success by picking a meaningful or

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### Excerpts from *On Agate Hill*

1. Molly's first diary entry introduces her uncle Junius and his housekeeper, Selena, a manipulator.

I am like a ghost girl wafting through this ghost house seen by none. I truly think I would blow away save for this piece of fools gold I keep here in my pocket for good luck. Often I take it out and turn it this way and that in the sun just to see it shine. Mamma loved gold jewelry but I am not a thing like Mamma. I am NOT. I like rocks instead. All of her jewelry is gone to the Yankees except for a few pieces which Selena has wheeled out of Uncle Junius. I have to say, it kills me to see Mamma's jade ring from the Orient on the little finger of Selena's fat hand and the coral bead necklace around her neck, I wish it would choke her dead.

Molly takes an imagined reader to her hiding place in Uncle Junius' house.

At the top of the steps you turn left and enter the sisters room where I sleep with little Junius for company. Now you must go into the long closet which is big enough for old trunks and dress forms and even a chest of drawers. At the very back is a long row of hooks for hanging dresses. If you push the green dress with the black ribbon trim aside, you will find another door, that little low door which you must push HARD and then WELCOME to my cubbyhole!

Ever since I found it three years ago I have been bringing things up here, this is why it is furnished so nicely, and all by me! I have found this little red chair with the painted flowers on it by the side of the road, I imagine it had fell off of somebody's wagon. I carried it up here with my heart in my throat but no one said one thing about it. I call it my fairy tale chair. I stole the blue velvet cushion from Mama Marie, she has been looking

for it ever since, and blaming her servant. I made my table from a plank and two ammunition boxes stood on end. This little white chair belonged to my little brother Willie.

Nora gave me these pastel crayons, and Frankie the milk glass vase. These Aurora roses are from her garden all overgrown. She used to say, There is nothing like flowers to dress up a house and flowers soothe the soul. So all together this is an elegant spot don't you think? As you see I have enough light coming through the cracks in the wall to read and write by, and here are my fairy lights that I use when its too dark to see, sweet gum balls that I float in lard in two of Fannies finger bowls, she thought the negroes took them too but it was me. Here, see this really big chink next to the chimney, it is like a window giving out onto the back yard, so I can see everything that goes on out there. Everything! But nobody can see me.

2.

From her cubbyhole, Molly sees Junius' sister Cecelia arrive to take charge of the chaotic household. Cecelia brings her granddaughter Mary White, sickly and full of fancies. The two girls and Washington (son of Liddy, the black cook) have adventures together.

Aunt Cecelia says Mary White will be up and about by the end of the week. I hope this is true for we have so many things to do and take care of. She has been here for over a month now, I can not believe it. The time flies along so fast. Now it is July with its hot thick yellow days. Dog days, Old Bess says, if you get a cut or a sore place now it will never heal. But we don't care, we slip off to the river where we have a Willow House right out in the running water just downstream from where Washington took us fishing that time with Spence.

It is cool and green in the

continued on page 6

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR *ON AGATE HILL*

- What do you think of Tuscany Miller's insertions? What would you think of the novel without them?
- In what ways is Agate Hill haunted? The ghosts listed on pages 14 and 15 outnumber the living family members nine to four. Can you relate to the post-Civil War period? Are there times as haunted as it?
- Smith depicts the Agate Hill estate in some detail. Can you picture it? Can you draw a map? What are the ways of making a scene memorable?
- How many different kinds of approaches does Smith take to her material? For instance, there's the comedy of manners involved in Aunt Cecelia's arrival (page 40). What other story-telling styles are there? How do they work together? (For instance, what different and contrasting modes does Smith have going in Mariah Snow's story?)
- Molly's child-eye's view enables Smith to present a mythological or tall-tale style at times (see comparison of Selena to a Greek goddess, page 32; and Spence's fish-catching prowess, page 35). How much of this approach can a book sustain (e.g., as in Pat Conroy's *Prince of Tides* and Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homeward, Angel*)?
- How does Smith incorporate music into her novel? Might one create a playlist of music mentioned? (See pages 18, 90, 256, and 261.) Listen to *The Road to Agate Hill*, a CD by noted folk musicians Alice Gerrard, Gail Gillespie, and Sharon Sandomirsky.
- Junius says he does not care to associate with any God who has done what He's done (page 22). What was his religious

belief system before this despair, do you think? On page 204, Mariah Snow comes to the conclusion that Simon Black is the Devil. How does *On Agate Hill* represent religion? How has the concept of the devil evolved in history?

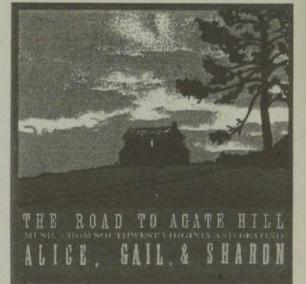
- The hearing of ghostly hoofbeats is a premonition of the death of Junius and Fanny Hall's son, Lewis Polk, at Gettysburg (page 25-6). Do you credit premonitions? Molly has premonitions on pages 91 and 271.
- How many secondary characters is Smith able to depict fully? Do you feel as if you know Selena's life and point of view?



- How important is fantasy play in our lives? Are we all fiction writers when we engage in it? When have we done so? See the doll play with Robert E. Lee, pages 45-9. And see Molly's comment about the boyfriend of Selena's daughter, Victoria—"a real live man doll" (page 54).
- How does *On Agate Hill* portray race relations? (See pages 61, 62, 79-81, 113, 176, 228, and 265.)
- What is the world of *On Agate Hill* as reflected by the literature it cites? ("Wyncken, Blynken, and Nod" and "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," p. 57; *Gulliver's Travels*, p. 65; *Romeo and Juliet*, p. 70; *Robinson Crusoe* and *The Odyssey*, p. 96; "Infant Catechism" and "The

Fairies," pp. 123 and 125; Psalm 121, "Annabelle Lee" and "The Lady of Shallott," p. 138; *Paradise Lost*, p. 152 and elsewhere; *Macaria*, p. 169.)

- What do you know of fairy rings? (See p. 75)
- How does Molly's diary compare to other published diaries? Or to diaries you've written?
- What is the food of *On Agate Hill*? (See pages 95, 202, 223-4, 243, and 249.)
- In exploiting the rich heritage of folklore in North Carolina, to what extent does Smith credit supernatural reality, and to what extent does she walk the line between supernatural and common reality? Consider, for instance, the view of Selena as the witch or evil manipulator.
- Simon Black appears on page 106. Is he a realistic character? Is he a kind of archetype? How is his character or archetype added to by Mariah Snow's attraction to him?
- Which minor character would you like to follow further into his or her life? What do you imagine happening? Has Smith chosen the best characters on whom to focus?
- Selena tells Molly (on page 115), "The problem with a man is, you think you want one but then you get him and then you don't." How do women's experiences in the novel confirm or contradict this advice?
- How does Molly capture the lives of her mother, father, and brother on pages 118-120. She calls her sketches of them "tableaux vivants."



*The Road to Agate Hill: Music from Southwest Virginia and Beyond* is a CD produced by noted folk musicians Alice Gerrard, Gail Gillespie, Sharon Sandomirsky, and Bob Carlin. It includes the songs, "Agate Hill," which had inspired Lee Smith; and "Molly and the Traveling Man," written by Lee Smith. (5-String productions, [www.5-string.com](http://www.5-string.com), 5SP-CD06003) Cover art by Nora Rogers, design by Delpino Design

Together We Read is engaged in many innovative programs. Currently, it is developing a letterboxing activity, using compelling passages as clues; and in a YouTube project, for which actors "confess" passages from books on film.

## On Agate Hill Phenomenon Box Excerpts, cont.



An old Southern plantation house, not unlike Uncle Junius'.

(Library of Congress photo.)

“There is a lot of other stuff in this box too including...a little heart-shaped stirrup, marbles, rocks, and dolls, and a large collection of BONES, SOME HUMAN AND SOME NOT!”  
—Tuscany Miller, the flighty student who finds Molly Petree's treasures in an old house

Willow House. Long lacy branches fall down all around us making a screen for perfect privacy, so none can see where we sit on our three white rocks to read or eat a fancy lunch on magnolia leaf plates. Liddy lets us take whatever we want from the kitchen without a word. Time you had some fun, girl, Liddy said to me. While we are in the Willow House, time stops still it seems, and all we can hear is the music of the river in our ears. But we are not alone for a whole big family of lizards live here too, the little ones so fast it breaks your heart to see them move like bright green streaks across the rocks. An old old granddaddy snake suns himself back on the bank then slides into the water so slow its like he is not even moving but then he is gone.

And the most exciting part—though we have not seen them yet—Mary White and I have reason to believe that a band of fairies comes here also. Mary White knows all about fairies and now I do too. They wear little green jackets and red caps with an owl feather sticking up at a jaunty angle. They come to ride the frogs and hunt the skittery waterbugs that play back there in the shallows. They live on fried waterbugs and flower pudding, Mary White says. One day we surprised these fairies and almost saw them—but they flew away fast on their gossamer wings leaving only a rainbow shimmer in the air and an owl feather floating in the little pool by the littlest rock where it went round and round in a magic way for as long as we watched, until Mary White plucked it up from the water to put in our collection of phenomena. Mary White says the fairies are coming back soon, she can feel it. She says we must go to the river in the light of the moon if we really mean to see them. So we are planning to do this on the next full moon, I can not wait.

Several times we have walked down the road and through the woods to Mister Gaithers big field to pick the berries that grow all along the stone fence rows. Liddy makes pies and preserves with these but they are best ate right off the bush in our opinion. Washington gets to go with us then, to shoo off stray dogs and

carry the basket, though usually Aunt Cecelia will not permit him to be in Mary Whites company saying, I don't care what you think Junius, he is a servant boy. This is just another example...

Yet when we came back from berry picking yesterday, even Aunt Cecelia said, Why upon my soul Mary White, I do believe you are better, this country air must agree with you. She pushed back Mary Whites sunbonnet and stared at her intently, stroking her face with a pudgy finger. Why look you have roses in your cheeks, she said in a different voice, then almost said something else, then turned away abruptly. Go on in the house now and clean yourselves up for supper, and you—to Washington—you run on now, theres a good boy.

Washington headed down to the barn. But first we took the berries to Liddy who gave us some clabber to eat and then we ran straight up the stairs to this cubbyhole where we keep all our collections.

Now, I said.

And Mary White said Yes and I took it out of her bloomer pocket where we had wrapped it round and round in honeysuckle vines so no one could tell what it was. Careful, be careful, she said as I started slowly pulling the vines away. She jiggled up and down when excited. Her pale blue eyes were huge. I took my time unwrapping it. But finally it lay revealed on the floor, the bones of a HUMAN HAND minus two fingers and the thumb.

I had almost stepped on it as we were walking home. Just in time I looked down to see two finger bones sticking up out of the ground like flower bulbs growing. It was like they were pointing at the sky. Oh my God, I cried, then, Stop!

They ran back.

Look! I pointed down.

Lord Jesus. Washingtons eyes got real big when he saw it. Less go on now please Molly. Less go on home.

What! Mary White looked all excited. Then she stuck out her bottom lip. Why we will do no such thing. We are going to dig

him up for our phenomena collection, aren't we Molly? For this is a poor brave dead soldier.



Library of Congress photo

Oh yes, I said. You all just stay right here, while I ran back to the creek and got two flat rocks for digging. I handed one to Washington. He wouldn't take it.

All right then. I gave it to Mary White. She got down on her knees immediately and started scraping the dirt away. Be careful, she said. We want to keep him all hooked together if we can. Remember that song? How does it go? Then she sang, Headbone connected to the neckbone, neckbone connected to the backbone—

Now hear you the word of the Lord! I sang at the top of my lungs.

But the hand was not connected to anything else, and we didn't find any more bones there either, though we dug for a pretty long time.

Washington refused to help us. Yall is crazy girls, he said from the shade of a tree.

We wrapped the bones in honeysuckle and washed off our hands good in the creek before we left. Now the bones are here in a fancy little box I have had forever, just waiting.

And sure enough, when we asked Uncle Junius about the creek, he said, YES there was indeed a skirmish there toward the end of the war, some of the country home guard surprised by Shermans bummers, and three men dead.

Mary White knows how to do very fancy handwriting with many curls and flourishes. On the shoe box she has written, YANKEE BONES, Property of Mary White Worthington and Molly Petree. This is the jewel of our phenomena collection so far.

continued on page 7

## On Agate Hill Phenomenon Box Excerpts, cont. to end

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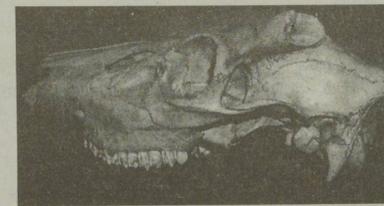
Fifty-five years later, Molly—after spending her adult years in Ashe County, teaching at the Bobcat School and marrying a local musician—returns to Agate Hill and goes to her cubbyhole to reflect on her childhood. Added to her collection is something that had belonged to her mother, a token that explained why Simon Black had become Molly's protector and patron.

This is the box of her life.

This is her diary.

In fact everything in this cubbyhole is exactly the same, like the village in the paperweight Ben Valiant gave me so long ago. I

don't know where that has got to now. I believe I left it at Chattie's house up on Bobcat. But here is the box containing our collection of phenomena, which you may recall—the man doll Robert E. Lee still vanquished, tossed in a heap with Margaret and Fleur those beautiful brides, all vanquished, and so long dead. The photographs of Simon Black (how young he was!) and my father (how handsome!) gone off to war. The filigree casket of fool's gold, three poetry books,



two catechisms, the green liqueur glass from Venice, my mother's silver hairbrush. A sizable number of animal bones, especially jawbones, skulls, and feet, though I gave the Yankee hand to Mary White, and where is it now? Enscornced in the world of light.

There is one new addition to this box of phenomena which you have not yet seen. Here. Isn't it heavy, surprisingly heavy? It is a heart-shaped stirrup forged by Simon Black for my mother, Alice Heart, years ago at Perdido, when they were about ten years old. Children. They were just children. I know all about it now. I know the whole story of Simon Black.

## Making the Phenomenon Box, cont.

continued from page 4

mysterious place.

f) Sort through any collection of objects and pick one for how it would look in a shadow box.

g) Find an object that you think an archaeologist 300 years from now would find interesting.

h) Find a series of objects based on a theme—for example: things that represent your neighborhood; the worst examples of commercial products on the market; objects that have been loved to death (or worn down with use).

Examples of objects gotten from each of the above methods:

- A trilobite fossil.
- A printed program from an early Beatles concert.
- An 1950s IBM electric typewriter
- A retired coach's whistle.
- A turtle shell.
- A Zelda cartridge for a Game Boy.
- A Styrofoam cup

h. A teddy bear

Now, choose the one that would work best. For the sake of this example, let's go with the typewriter—a family heirloom. Since it's too large an object for the shadowbox, we'll use just one of its keys—a specialized key for typing Greek letters.

**Prepare your object for display.**

There are going to be all kinds of challenges in doing this. You may have to manipulate your object to make it fit the way you want. You may need to clean it or preserve it. It will have to be mounted in a way that doesn't damage or distract from the object. You may want to include other material with the object in the shadowbox—not documentation, for that will go on the placard beside it.

The goal is to make the object an icon. See the National Museum of American History ([americanhistory.si.edu](http://americanhistory.si.edu)) for examples.

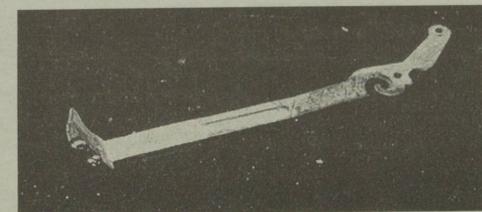
**Give the object a precise name, date, and source, if possible.**

Example of naming an object:

The α/ω key for an IBM Executive Bold Face 2 proportional typewriter, special ordered by Alfred Neufeld, 1956 (collection of Rob Neufeld).

**Tell the story.** Be concise and straightforward about the facts. Put it in historical context. Tell a very specific anecdote that captures the spirit of the person or things with which the object is associated.

(See example to right.)



**Technically describe the object and its function.**

Example: Custom made steel alloy key for 1952 model IBM Executive typewriter.

### EXAMPLE OF ICON STORY

My father had a cottage industry. He typographically produced the final copy for the most advanced scientific journals of the 1950s and early 1960s (such as the *Journal of Experimental Theoretical Physics*). They yielded the highest pay; and they required several racks of specialized keys. Before computers, and before the IBM Selectric typewriter, typewriters had fixed sets of keys in their keyboards. In order to type specialized characters (foreign alphabets, mathematical symbols, etc.) my father's employer had preferred to install a flat-headed hammer key that would strike an easily replaceable bar-shaped key that hung from a bridge above the paper. The problem with this system was that blurred impressions sometimes resulted from slightly miscued strikes. For cleaner copy, my father preferred to special order from IBM customized keys that he then installed into the keyboard after removing standard keys. He got quite adept at removing and inserting keys quickly. When he received the specialized keys, he had to tool them so that they struck perfectly. In the mid-1960s, when computerized typesetting was being introduced, my father preferred to stick with his craft, and his work diminished. Still, I retain from my childhood the memory of getting strips of paper with words printed on them stuck on the bottoms of my slippers. When a typing error was made, the correct word was typed on another piece of paper, which was then laid over the original copy on a light box. Wrong and right words were both stripped out with a razor blade. The right word was taped in from behind. The wrong word became litter—isotope" typed with an "o" superimposed on an "i," for instance.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS cont.

continued from page 5



Photo courtesy Ramsey Center Collection, Renfro Library, Mars Hill College

African-American life in Reconstruction Era North Carolina is represented in many ways in *On Agate Hill*. The Hall family's cook, Liddy, stays at Agate Hill, but her son, Washington, goes north. There are other black workers on the estate, and when one is threatened by a white mob, Spencer Hall, a brain-damaged veteran, is killed while defending him.

21. On pages 122, 250, and 260, Molly is still calling herself a bad girl. Does her opinion of herself ever change?
22. The first-person voice is powerful, yet most classics are written in the third person. Third person allows multiple points of view, but so does first-person, if the writer does as Smith begins doing in Part 2, using additional first-person testimonies. Third-person does allow the author to be the narrator and take liberties that a first person narrator can't. What shape and attitude would *On Agate Hill* have taken if it had been told in the third person?
23. What would it sound like if you told the whole truth about things that concerned you? Would it be the truth? Would it be healing, as is assumed today? What does Mariah's journal do for her?
24. Why is the beginning of *Paradise Lost* the passage that Mariah recites to herself when her husband is claiming his "Conjugal Rights"?
25. The Carolina Mountain Club has made a re-creation of *On Agate Hill* picnics a part of its plans, using Hemphill Bald (see events). The pertinent passages are on pages 157 and 238. How would you recreate the hikes and picnics?
26. Does Mariah Snow's story bear out the saying, "The more you know about any character, the more you empathize with him or her?" How does Smith plot Mariah's personal drama? (See especially page 181.) Does Mariah's deep secret (revealed on page 210) represent a large societal one?
27. Spence's death is quite sensational (page 176). How do characters die in the novel? How does that compare to causes of death today?
28. Tuscany notes that the story of Molly's and Agnes' journey to Ashe County is recorded in Agnes' journal, on file in the Historical Society Reading Room at the Ashe County Public Library in West Jefferson. What's there?
29. Ashe County was once part of the State of Franklin (see page 226). Does that say something about local character?
30. Martha Fickling tells Molly that when she had been a young orphan girl, she'd taken up with an "old man," the owner of a lumber camp, where she worked as a cook (page 229). This leads her to utter the line that is quoted by Tuscany Miller at the very end of the novel ("Sometimes there can come an attraction..."). What do you think of this take on things? Is there an alternate moral to the novel?
31. Young Molly, vowing to be honest, uses vulgar language at times. Martha Fickling, the Jefferson innkeeper also has quite a tongue, and is beloved. Is vulgar language sometimes appropriate and effective? How is it used in today's culture?
32. Could Chattie Badger possibly be a real name? Or is it the kind of name only an author would make up? (See page 231.)
33. What are the methods of the "blab school" in Bobcat? How do they compare to schooling today? (See pages 232-237.) See also the elementary school selection for TWR 2007, Gloria Houston's *My Great-Aunt Arizona*.
34. There's some trouble in the Bobcat community of Ashe County, but would you say that life is pretty good there? Are there some aspects of living there that you would like to see emulated in your community? Are there any aspects of Bobcat life that correspond with the stereotypical view of Appalachia as a backwoods?
35. What do you know of the language of dance calls? (See page 257.)
36. Is there a need for the "Jacky Jarvis Church of Love and Light and Redemption for All," or is it Jacky's scam or joke? (See page 261.) Does everyone have a church, gospel, and missionary society in them?
37. How long-lasting is the influence of historical horrors and hurts? How does the Civil War affect events in this novel? For instance, there's the way Jacky's mother had been tortured (page 265). And, of course, there's Simon Black's story (beginning page 335).
38. Molly writes many letters to Mary White, including the one in which she tells Mary White that she had followed a vision of Mary's red coat to the hollow tree in which Jacky had set up camp. It is here that Jacky proposes and Molly accepts. "At last this is my own true love story, for you, Mary White," Molly writes, "though I will remain forever your own." (See page 272.) What is the nature of Molly's and Mary White's bond? Why does Molly dedicate her story to Mary White? What is Smith's take on love stories?

continued on page 9

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS cont, to end

continued from page 8

39. Molly keeps faith with her desire for a demon lover. What is the legacy of the demon lover in literature and ballads?
40. The fourth section, "Plain View," jumps forward twenty-four years to a court document—with Jacky's cousin, Black Jack (B.J.), swearing to tell the truth. Why were there no intervening documents? What kind of a witness is cousin Jack?
41. Agnes comments (on page 220) that "the all-too-swift passage of time in its flight...cloaks even our most important moments." What would you name as the five key moments in the novel? How does that compare with others readers' nominations?
42. Is there any doubt about what had happened to Jacky? See Jack's testimony, page 306. See Molly's final reflections, page 359.
43. How does the original ballad about "Molly and the Traveling Man" hold up as a traditional ballad?
44. Does *On Agate Hill*'s final section wrap up all the story lines?

To what extent are the different resolutions surprising, sad, joyful, anticlimactic, ironic, enlightening?

45. Simon Black's life story is revealed toward the end of the novel. What would you think about this story if it were a stand-alone short story? (How do you evaluate a short story?) How does it compare to *Cold*

*Mountain*? How does it compare to the rest of *On Agate Hill*?

46. What feelings about the whole saga are you left with after reading Molly's final entry? And after reading Tuscany's end notes?
47. Tuscany reveals that Molly Petree died on July 23, 1927. Molly's last entry is that day. What does that signify?

## ORAL HISTORY CONNECTION

In order to enhance reading in the community through a link with oral history, TWR has produced a 15-minute audio CD that uses the 2007 Big Read book, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, to illustrate the book's

theme, "walking in another person's skin." Rebecca Williams, TWR's Oral History Coordinator, has worked with TWR Director Rob Neufeld, and studio engineer Evan Bradford to produce "Color Lines: Reading between the Lines of the Racial Perspective in *To Kill a Mockingbird*." Contact TWR for a free copy; or to learn about further oral history opportunities. The Big Read is an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with the Institute of Museum and Library Services and Arts Midwest.

Actors (l. to r.) Stephanie Hickling, Savannah Crespo, and Jody Anderson perform a passage from *To Kill a Mockingbird* for TWR's audio CD.

## LEE SMITH WRITES ABOUT HER MOTHER'S RECIPE BOX

My mother's recipe box sits on the windowsill above our kitchen sink where my eye falls on it twenty, maybe thirty times a day. I will never move it. An anachronism in this modern kitchen, the battered box contains her whole life's story, in a way, with all its places and phases, all her hopes and the accommodations she made in the name of love, as I have done, as we all do. An odd green-gold in color, she "antiqued" and then "decoupage" it with domestic decals of the Fifties: one depicts a rolling pin, a flour sifter, a vase of daisies, and a cheerful, curly-headed Mom wearing a red bead necklace; another shows a skillet, a milk bot-

tle, a syrup pitcher, three eggs, and a grinning Dad in an apron.

Oh, who are these people? My father never touched a spatula in his life. My mother suffered from "bad nerves," also "nervous stomach," and colitis. She lived mostly on milk toast herself, yet she never failed to produce a nutritious supper for my father and me, including all the four Food Groups, for she had first come to our remote Appalachian town as a home economics teacher. Our perfect supper was ready every night at six-thirty, the time a family ought to eat, in Mama's

opinion, though my workaholic continued on page 10



Duke University Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library

"I've always been very interested in how...we arrive at any given version of the facts...It's highly arbitrary. Who found a bunch of letters? Whose attention were they brought to? Any version we have of history is just a certain version."

—Lee Smith in interview with Thomas Bell of Creative Loafing

## LEE SMITH WRITES ABOUT HER MOTHER'S RECIPE BOX

continued from page 9

daddy never got home from his dime store till 8 or 9 p.m. at the earliest, despite his best intentions. Somewhere in that two-hour stretch, I would have been allowed to eat alone, *reading a book*—my favorite thing in the world. My mother would have had her milk toast. And when my father finally had his own solitary supper, warmed to an unrecognizable crisp in the oven, he never failed to pronounce it “absolutely delicious—the best thing I’ve ever put in my mouth!” and my mother never failed to believe him, to give him her beautiful, tremulous smile, wearing the “Fire and Ice” lipstick she’d hurriedly applied when she heard his car in the driveway. Well, they loved each other. They were deeply, passionately in love, to my horror and embarrassment—two sweet, fragile people who carefully bore this great love like a large glass object, incredibly delicate, along life’s path.

My mother’s recipe box reflects the journey. She was born on Chincoteague Island, off Virginia’s Eastern Shore, in 1908; her father, a high-rolling oysterman and harness racer, killed himself when she was only three, leaving a pile of debt and six children for my grandmother to raise alone. She turned their big Victorian home into a boardinghouse, and it was here in this boardinghouse kitchen that my mother learned to cook. Her recipe box holds sixteen different recipes for oysters, including Oyster Stew, Oyster Fritters, Oyster Pie, Scalloped Oysters, and the Biblical-sounding Balaam’s Oysters. Clams are prepared “every whichaway,” as she would have put it. There’s also Planked Shad, Cooter Pie, and Pine Bark Stew. Mr. Hop Biddle’s Hushpuppies bear the notation, “tossed to the hounds around the campfire to keep them quiet.” Mama notes that the favorite breakfast at the boardinghouse was fried fish, corn meal cakes, and hot coffee. These corn meal cakes remained her specialty from the time she was a little girl, barely able to reach the stove, until her death 84 years later in the mountains so far from her island home. I imagine her as a child, biting her bottom lip in concentration, and wiping perspiration off her pretty little face as she flips those corn meal cakes on the hot griddle. Later I see her walking miles across

the ice in winter, back to college on the mainland.

Her lofty aspirations were reflected in her recipes: Lady Baltimore Cake came from Cousin Nellie who had “married well and got herself a butler;” the hopeful Plantation Plum Pudding and Soirée Punch were contributed by my Aunt Gay-Gay down in Alabama, the very epitome of something Mama desperately wanted to attain. She wanted me to attain it, too, sending me down to Birmingham every summer for Lady Lessons (“Don’t point; Don’t make a scene; Don’t sit like that!”) The Asparagus Soufflé came from my elegant Aunt Millie who had married a Northern steel executive who actually cooked dinner for us himself, wearing an apron. He produced a roast beef, which was bright red in the middle; at first I was embarrassed for him, but then it turned out that he’d meant to do it that way all along; he thought red meat was good, apparently, and enjoyed wearing the apron.

But the recipes Mama actually used—these soft, weathered index cards covered with thumbprints and spatters—reflect her deep involvement with her husband’s family and their Appalachian community: Venison Stew, Mrs. Owens’ Soup Beans, Ava McClanahan’s Apple Stack Cake, my grandmother’s Methodist Church Supper Salad, and my favorite, Fid’s Funeral Meatloaf. I also love her bridge club recipes, such as Chicken Crunch (cut-up chicken, mushroom soup, celery, water chestnuts, Chinese noodles) and Lime Angel Mold. (All the bridge club recipes involve mushroom soup, or jello, or Dream

Whip.) I can see Mama now, greeting her friends at the door in her favorite black and white polka dot dress.

Here’s the recipe for Mama’s famous loaf bread, which she made every week. I make this bread often myself, because the smell of it baking in the oven brings my mother back to me so vividly. In my memory she’s always in her kitchen, and she’s always cooking, smoking a Salem cigarette, and drinking a cup of coffee from the percolator which is always going in the corner; Johnny Cash sings “Ring of Fire” on the radio while the coal train roars along the mountainside behind our house. Somebody else is always in the kitchen with us—a neighbor from down the road, a friend from out of town, some of our innumerable cousins—eating and drinking, rocking and talking, always talking, giving us the real lowdown on somebody. I write and draw at my own little table, but really I’m all ears: I live for these stories.

I never did turn into the kind of lady Mama had in mind. The Lady Lessons didn’t take, though I married a man who eats rare meat, wears an apron himself upon occasion, and makes a terrific *risotto*. But I live for stories, still, and many of them still come to me in my mother’s voice, punctuated by her infectious laugh, her conspiratorial “Now promise you won’t tell a soul...”

—Lee Smith



Site coordinators meet with Lee Smith at her Ashe County cabin.

### Lee Smith's fiction

#### Short Stories

News of the Spirit (1997)

Me and My Baby View the Eclipse (1990)

Cakewalk (1981)

#### Novels

On Agate Hill (Algonquin, 2006; trade paper, Aug., 2007)

The Last Girls (2003)

The Christmas Letters (1996)

Saving Grace (1995)

The Devil's Dream (1992)

Fair and Tender Ladies (1988)

Family Linen (1985)

Oral History (1983)

Black Mountain Breakdown (1980)

Fancy Strut (1973)

Something in the Wind (1971)

The Last Day the Dogbushes Bloomed (1968)

## SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING TOGETHER WE READ EVENTS

**Thursday, September 13 @ 1 and 7:30 p.m.**

Book discussion, *On Agate Hill*

Fairview Public Library

1 Taylor Rd. Fairview, 828-628-5837

**Friday-Sunday, Sept. 14-16, Fri-Sat @ 7:30; Sun. @ 2**

Barbara Bates-Smith, one-woman show, “On Agate Hill,” with musician Jeff Sebens, dir, by Suzanne Tinsley  
North Carolina Stage Company, 15 Stage Lane, Asheville, 350-9090

**Fri. and Sat., Sept. 14 and 15**

Carolina Mountains Literary Festival  
New Burnsville Town Center, Burnsville  
cmlitfest.org

**Tues., Sept. 18 @ 2 p.m.**

Book discussion, *On Agate Hill*

North Asheville Public Library

1030 Merrimon Ave. Asheville, 251-4991

**Tues., Sept. 18 @ 6 p.m.**

The Memory Box, Its Meaning and Making: craft class with local craft instructor Renae Dotson

Marianna Black Public Library

33 Fryemont St. Bryson City, 488-3030

**Thurs., Sept. 20 @ 2:30 p.m.**

Book discussion, *On Agate Hill*, moderated by Rob Neufeld

Skyland/South Buncombe Library

260 Overlook Rd. Asheville, 684-1827

**Sun., Sept. 23 @ 2:30 p.m.**

Music and Highlights from the Reconstruction Period presented by Freddy Bradburn

McDowell County Public Library

90 West Court St. Marion, 652-3858

**Mon., Sept. 24, @ 6:30pm**

Book discussion, *On Agate Hill*

Madison County Public Library

1335 N. Main Street, Marshall, 689-5183

**Wed., Sept. 26 @ 6 p.m.**

Lee Smith on David Hurand’s “Conversations” show, with Dr. Carol Boggess and Rob Neufeld, WCQS-FM 88/1

**Wednesday, September 26, 6 pm**

Literary Links Stroll, Downtown Tryon  
894-8721

**Thurs., Sept. 27, 12:45-4 p.m.**

“Reading Roadtrip,” bus trip from Polk

County libraries to TWR kickoff

894-8721.

**Thurs., Sept. 27, 2 p.m.**

Together We Read Kickoff with Lee Smith  
Ferguson Auditorium, A-B Tech Community College, 340 Victoria Rd. Asheville  
Lee Smith presentation; Reader’s Theatre by Jan Caldwell and Peter Carver’s drama class; music by Talley Family Band.

254-1921 x310

**Sat., Sept. 29**

Carolina Mountain Club Day Hike to Hemphill bald, recreating hiking experiences in *On Agate Hill*

Call 236-0192 for details

**Tues., Oct. 9 @ 6pm**

Book discussion, *On Agate Hill*, moderated by Janis Wright

Marianna Black Library

33 Fryemont St. Bryson City, 488-3030

**Thurs., Oct. 11, 7 p.m.**

Barbara Bates Smith, one-woman show, “On Agate Hill,” music by Jeff Sebens  
Hendersonville County Public Library—Kaplan Auditorium

301 North Washington St., Hendersonville  
697-4725

**Thurs., Oct. 11, all day**

Lee Smith speaks to Ashe County Middle School students, filmed for distribution

Ashe County Middle School

255 Northwest Lane, Warrensville

**Fri., Oct. 12 @ 10:30 a.m.**

Book discussion, *On Agate Hill*

Transylvania County Public Library

212 South Gaston St. Brevard, 884-3151

**Sat., Oct. 13 @ 10 a.m.**

Book discussion, *On Agate Hill*

West Asheville Library

942 Haywood Rd. Asheville, 251-4990

**Sat., Oct. 20, @ 7 p.m.**

Dr. Dan Pierce, UNCA History professor, presents “Reconstruction and the Role of Women”

Madison County Public Library

1335 N. Main Street, Marshall, 689-5183

**Week of Oct. 22-28**

Lee Smith Book Week

Throughout North Carolina

Bookstores throughout North Carolina

celebrate Lee Smith and her work

**Wed., Oct. 24, 4-6 p.m.**

Book discussion, *On Agate Hill*  
Hendersonville County Public Library—Kaplan Auditorium

301 North Washington St. Hendersonville  
697-4725

**Fri., Oct. 26**

Mars Hill College and Madison County Gala  
Mars Hill College, 100 Athletic St. Mars Hill, NC 28754, 689-1443

One-woman show by Barbara Bates Smith; talk by Dr. Lucinda Mackethan; music; book discussion; exhibits; and food.

**Sun., Nov. 4, 2 p.m.**

Songcatcher Social  
Adam Miller, folk-music expert, performs show that represents *On Agate Hill*.

Polk County Public Library

1289 West Mills St. Columbus, 894-8721

**Mon., Nov. 12, 7 p.m.**

Speaker on and discussion of *On Agate Hill* at the Avery County Library, co-sponsored by Avery County Historical Society

733-9393

**Sat., Nov. 17, 11 a.m.**

For Children’s Book Week, a country fair—a multi-station craft, music and story time extravaganza

**Mon., Nov. 19, 7 p.m.**

Speaker on and discussion of *On Agate Hill* at the Mitchell County Library. Co-sponsored by Mitchell County Historical Society, 733-9393

**Fri., Nov. 30, noon**

Discussion of *On Agate Hill* and Lee Smith’s other work led by Lee’s friend, and a Smith scholar, Gloria Underwood

Polk County Public Library

1289 West Mills St. Columbus, 894-8721

**Sun., Dec. 2, 2:30 p.m.**

Together We Read Finale with Lee Smith  
Pack Memorial Public Library  
67 Haywood St. Asheville, NC 28801  
688-2511

**Many more programs are yet to be scheduled.**

Thanks to those agencies that have already hosted programs.

See [www.togetherweweread.org](http://www.togetherweweread.org) for both.

*I would like to support Together We Read through a tax-deductible contribution.*

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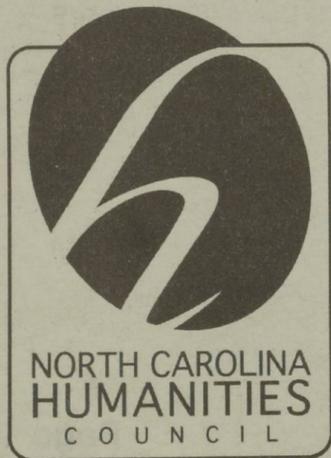
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CHECK OUT THE WEB

WWW.TOGETHERWEREAD.ORG

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- A-B Tech Community College
- Friends of Buncombe Libraries
- The Buncombe Libraries Trust Fund
- Community Foundation of Western North Carolina
- Asheville Citizen-Times
- Mountain Area Information Network
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- Polk County Library
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**IT'S FOR YOU AND YOURS**

**BOOK DISCUSSIONS: THE CORE PROGRAMS**

The reading guide makes discussion of the TWR book an easy choice. Readers can make contact with the author.

**COLLABORATIONS**

Many program sites combine their efforts with local agencies to sponsor events, gain audiences, distribute the book, support existing programs, and tap resources.

**USE IN SCHOOLS**

TWR is attentive to school-aged students and class curricula. Materials are provided for suitable assignments. Writing, art, heritage, literature, civics, and science can be integrated. Guest instructors are available.

**Together We Read Board 2007**

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This Reading guide has been created and written by Rob Neufeld, Director of Together We Read. Consult TWR for re-use of any of the material. The guide has been published with funding from Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College; and printed by Iwanna.

**Participating organizations and sites in 21 counties**

- Accent on Books
- Albert Carlton-Cashiers Library
- Appalachian Regional Library System
- Appalachian State University
- Asheville-Buncombe Library System
- Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College
- Ashe County Public Library
- Asheville Citizen-Times
- Asheville High School.
- Asheville Middle School.
- Asheville Poetry Review.
- Avery-Mitchell-Yancey Regional Library
- Avery County Schools
- Avery County Historical Society
- Barnes & Noble Booksellers
- Big Ivy Community Center
- Black Mountain Center for the Arts
- Black Mountain College Museum and Arts Center
- Black Mountain Library
- Blue Moon Bookstore
- Blue Ridge Community College
- Brevard College Library
- Brevard College
- Building Bridges
- Buncombe County Schools
- Burke County Library
- Canton Central High School
- Carolina Mountain Club
- Carolina Mountains Literary Festival.
- Center for Creative Retirement
- Center for Diversity Education.
- Children First
- City Lights Bookstore
- Cyrano's Bookshop
- Deerfield Episcopal Retirement Community
- East Asheville Library
- Enka-Candler Branch Library
- Fairview Elementary School
- Fairview Library
- Fireside Books
- Fletcher Branch Library.
- Friends of Mountain History
- Givens Estates
- Graham County Public Library
- Haywood Community College
- Haywood County Arts Council
- Haywood County Library
- Henderson County Public Library
- Highland Books
- Highland Farms
- Historic Carson House
- Hudson Library
- Isaac Dickson Elementary School
- Isothermal Community College-Polk Campus.
- Isothermal Community College-Spindale Campus
- Jackson County Public Library
- Lanier Library
- Literacy Council of Buncombe County
- Literacy Council of Haywood County
- Lees McRae College
- Madison County Public Library
- Madison County High School
- Malaprop's Bookstore
- Marianna Black Library
- Mars Hill College
- Mars Hill Public Library
- Mars Hill Seniors
- Martin Luther King Jr. Association of Asheville Buncombe County
- Mayland Community College
- McDowell Arts Council Association
- McDowell Technical Community College
- McDowell County Public Library
- McDowell County Schools
- Mitchell County Historical Society
- Mitchell County Schools.
- Mountain Area Information Network.
- Mountain Gateway Museum
- Mountain Lore Bookstore
- Moss Memorial Library
- Murphy Public Library
- Museum of the Cherokee
- N.C. Writers Network West
- North Asheville Library
- Osondu Booksellers
- Pack Memorial Library
- Phillips and Lloyd Bookstore.
- Pisgah High School.
- Polk County Public Library
- Polk County Historical Society Museum
- Randolph Learning Center
- Reader's Corner
- Rutherford County Library
- Saluda Branch Library
- Saturday School, Isaac B. Dickson Elementary School
- SCORE
- Sister Cities International
- Skyland Books
- South Asheville/Oakley Library
- South Buncombe/Skyland Library
- Southwestern Community College
- Swannanoa Library.
- Swannanoa Valley Museum
- The Bookshelf
- Thomas Wolfe Memorial
- Transylvania County Public Library
- Tri County Community College
- Tryon Fine Arts Center.
- Tuscola High School
- UNCA
- Valley Cruces School
- Warren Wilson College
- Weaverville Library
- West Asheville Library
- Western Carolina University
- Western Piedmont Community College
- Wilkes County Public Library
- YMI Cultural Center
- YWCA.