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A Brief Biography: Joe Survant

I grew up in Owensboro on the Ohio, hunting, fishing, camping and contracting a chronic love for rivers, woods, and damp bottoms where weeds "in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush." When I was a senior, I met my wife, Jeannie Ashley, and, with my friend, science fiction writer Terry Bisson, started the first literary magazine at Owensboro High.

After high school, I went off to U.K. where a creative writing class with Robert Hazel (the only one I ever had) , literature classes with Robert White and Bill Axton, and friendships with other writers, notably Lamar Herrin, Richard Taylor, and Louise Natcher Murphy prompted me to change my major from physics to English; there was also some encouragement from calculus and organic chemistry. By the time I was a senior I was writing madly and was editor of the campus literary magazine, *Stylus*, following Richard Taylor.

After graduating from U.K. in 1964, I went to the University of Delaware on an NDEA fellowship, married Jeannie, and began a dissertation on Sterne and Joyce. In between seminar papers, I continued writing poetry and twice won the Academy of American Poets Prize at Delaware. Three years later, I came back to teach for two years (1967-69) at U.K. , without having finished my dissertation. After two summers spent wrestling with Sterne and Joyce, I gave up my job at U.K. and went back to Delaware where I managed to get a one year dissertation fellowship and Jeannie her first teaching job. I completed my doctorate in 1970. Since then I've been teaching writing and contemporary literature at WKU and living with my wife in Warren County where our daughters, Anastasia and Alexandra were born.

A year (1983-84) spent teaching at the Universiti Sains Malaysia in Penang on a Fulbright Fellowship and traveling in SE Asia was pivotal for my writing. The stimulus of SE Asia and the free time opened up by my light teaching load (because of a political squabble between radical and moderate Muslims over the use of English in the classroom) resulted in a renewed focus on my writing which I had allowed to become too secondary to my academic life. I wrote daily for the first time in years and completed my first book , which I named *In the Forest of Rain*. Although I managed to publish over twenty poems from this manuscript, both here and in England, including a group which won the 1987 Frankfort Arts Foundation Poetry Contest, I was unable to find a publisher. A portion of *In the Forest* was finally published on July 4, 2001 as *The Presence of Snow in the Tropics* by Landmark Books of Singapore, after the editor heard me give a reading at the National University of Singapore in 1999 and a poem of mine was published in the newsletter of the Singapore Buddhist Society that same year. When I returned to Bowling Green in the fall of 1984, I helped set up, along with Frank Steele and Mary Ellen Miller, the creative writing major at WKU.

Survant Bio, page 2

By the early '90s, tired of the lyric voice pacing the narrow room of its own consciousness, I was experimenting with joining the lyric to a narrative, hoping to hold on to the intensity of the one and gain the story of the other, all in the context of Kentucky's rural past. The first result was a chapbook, *We Will All Be Changed*, which won a competition from State Street Press and was published by editor Judith Kitchen in Brockport, NY in 1995. The next year *Anne & Alpheus, 1842-1882*, a continuation of *We Will All Be Changed*, won the Arkansas Poetry Prize and was published by the University of Arkansas Press.

At this point I made the decision to write a type of epic of rural Kentucky in three books, each set in a different century. I designated *Anne & Alpheus* as the nineteenth century volume and began work on a series of poems set in 1916 and 1917 centering on the rafting of logs down the Rough, Green, and Ohio Rivers to the mills in Evansville. Somewhere along the way the lyrical voice of the sequence was hijacked by Sallie, an itinerant herb woman who wanders through the book with her dogs, hearing voices and perhaps cursed with second sight. *Rafting Rise* was published by the University Press of Florida in November of 2002.

In order to gain more time to write, I have just begun an early partial retirement at WKU where I will teach only in the springs. I plan to begin work this summer on the eighteenth century book, the final one of my Kentucky trilogy. Its working title is *The First West*. I have no idea where it will go or what people will inhabit it. I look forward to finding out.

Fulbright scholars learn as well as teach

8-28-84

By DEBI WADE
Daily News Staff Writer

Three Western Kentucky University faculty members spent the past year teaching courses in unfamiliar classrooms. In fact, not only were the classrooms unfamiliar, but the school, the city, the country and even the language were new experiences.

Dr. Ronald Eckard, Dr. James Baker and Dr. Joseph Survant each received a Fulbright Senior Lectureship last year, enabling them to spend a year not only teaching in a foreign country, but learning a lot as well.

Eckard, who taught English as a second language to university students in Ankara, Turkey, discovered his surrogate country was behind the United States in some areas but miles ahead in others.

"I tried to go with no preconceived ideas about the quality of living there, hoping I would be pleasantly surprised," he said.

The university provided him a completely furnished apartment, "with a phone that was working — that was a feat in itself!" he said.

It takes up to eight years in Turkey to get a telephone installed, according to Eckard. "And people here complain if it takes eight days," he said.

Baker, who taught American studies to university students in Taipei, Taiwan, said he found the Chinese to be more efficient than Americans in connecting utilities.

"And it's very easy to call for repairs," he said. "They seem to stay open all the time."

In Turkey, many products didn't have the high quality Americans have come to take for granted, Eckard said. Items Americans would consider irregular sell in Turkey at first-class stores for first-class prices.

But in other areas, like bus transportation, Turkey left the United States sitting in the dark ages.

Both inter-city and intra-city bus systems are dependable, perhaps

because so few people can afford cars, according to Eckard. A new car in Turkey costs about 20 times a university professor's monthly salary.

"Nobody thinks of having more than one car; it's just unthinkable," he said. "And here we think nothing of a teenager or a university-aged student having a car."

In addition to the frequent, inexpensive intra-city bus system, the Middle East Technical University at which Eckard taught had private buses traveling from the city to the school about six miles away.

The inter-city bus lines are similar to large U.S. airlines in their treatment of passengers, with reserved seating, refreshments and video shows on some non-stop trips, according to Eckard.

"They're much better than anything in the United States, like Trailways or Greyhound," he said.

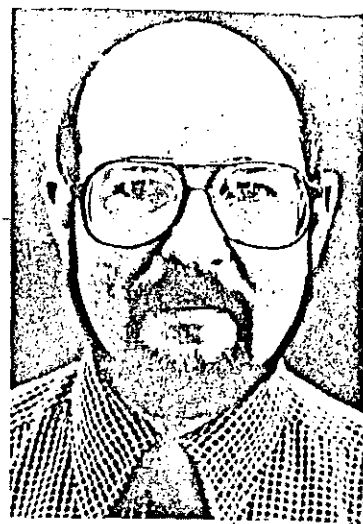
Buses are also a major form of transportation in Taipei, which has about 2.5 million people living there, according to Baker. A car is out of most families' financial reach. There are only about 200,000 automobiles in the city, although there are about 600,000 motorcycles, Baker said.

"People don't really need the car the way we do here," he said. "A car is something most families dream of (but it's out of their range)."

The bus system in Malaysia, where Survant taught American and comparative literature to students at the Universiti Sains Malaysia in Penang, was dependable, but wasn't up to par with the systems encountered by Eckard and Baker. Almost everyone in Penang owned a car or a motorcycle and only the poorest people used the bus system.

So when Survant and his family arrived in Malaysia, not only did they have to find a house to rent, but they also had to purchase a car.

Although three races, Malay, Indian and Chinese, inhabit Malaysia, the nation's official lan-



DR. RONALD ECKARD

guage is Bahasa Malaysia. But many people speak English because of the British colonization of the island years ago. "So if we had had a language problem we would have really had a problem" finding a house, buying groceries and performing other day-to-day activities, Survant said.

Schools there are taught in Bahasa Malaysia, so Survant's oldest daughter attended a school taught in English — a boarding school for missionaries' children that also accepted day students.

Baker's 15-year-old daughter also attended a school taught in English during their year in Taipei.

The majority of people in Taiwan speak a dialect of Chinese called Mandarin, and Baker discovered that few people spoke English away from the university.

"So I learned some Chinese," he said. "You had to do that to get by. They say it takes 10 years to become fluent in Chinese, so one year isn't going to make that much difference. At least I could buy apples and give the cab driver directions."

Eckard tried to learn a little



DR. JAMES BAKER

Turkish before he left the United States last autumn, but was glad he didn't have much time to listen to the tapes or study the books he had purchased here. The books were written in 1944 and much of the Turkish language had been changed through the government's attempt to purge the language of Arabic or Persian words.

All three faculty members commented on the respect the students have for teachers, as well as the competitiveness of the educational systems.

"Taiwan is Chinese. It's a very Confucian background and training," Baker said. "The professor is everything — the wise sage — to be respected above anything."

Most American teachers would consider that situation ideal, but Baker found it severely inhibited classroom discussion of the material being studied.

"I had to move them a little to the left to get them to respond," he said.

Survant said Malaysians afford more respect to people with academic doctorates than they do those with medical doctorates.



DR. JOSEPH SURVANT

"We're treated like professionals — something we lost in this country 30 years ago," he said.

Students may have been especially attentive because just being accepted by a university is a feat in itself.

"Getting into the university is highly competitive," Eckard said.

High school students often spend seven days a week in school, five days in public school and the weekends in private schools, preparing for two national university entrance exams, according to Eckard.

"I mean I have seen nothing like that devotion to education anywhere in the United States," Eckard said. High school classes focus on traditional subjects — no band, no orchestra, no typing courses.

After high school, students prioritize a list of 18 majors they would like to study. The government's council on higher education not only selects a major for the student who passes both tests, but also chooses a university — all based on the test scores.

One of Eckard's students who had taken a year of physics re-took the

entrance exams so she could change her major to English. The year of physics credits did not count toward her degree, so she essentially started over.

The senior year of high school is so competitive in Taiwan students sometimes commit suicide because of their grades, Baker said. Taiwanese students are also assigned to a university and a major based on test scores, although they may have more of a choice in where to study for their master's once they've earned a bachelor's degree.

But that isn't always the case, either. Baker said 167 students interviewed for 18 graduate positions in the only American studies program in Taiwan.

The Malaysian government isn't as directly involved in placing students, according to Survant, but Malays are given preferential treatment over Chinese and Indians.

One of Survant's Indian students waited for six years to get into a university with a strong literature program. She finally gave up and entered a literature program at the science university.

Because Survant taught in English, he said the students taking his courses were "the cream of the crop. They were a pure pleasure to teach and they were just hungry for American literature and American culture.

"It's going to be a shock dealing with the average freshman at Western," he said.

Survant's students were so genuinely interested in the course that the class met three nights a week in addition to regular day classes just to cram in all the information they could.

"And everybody showed up," Survant said. "Not just the faithful few."

People you know

D.N.
10-21-84

Articles published

Two professors at Western Kentucky University have had articles published.

Dr. M.A. Rahim's article, "Social Desirability Response Set and the Eysenck Personality Inventory," was published in volume 116 of Journal of Psychology.

Joe Survant's articles were published while he was serving as a Fulbright senior lecturer in Malaysia during the past year.

"Narrative Time and the Spatial Metaphor: Phenomenology as Problem and Cure" was published in the March issue of Journal of Evolutionary Psychology. "The Bear That I Have Sought" appeared in the fall 1983 Publications of the Arkansas Philological Association.

named to a committee that governs the American Advertising Federation's National Student Advertising Competition.

The committee will approve the scoring criteria to be used in judging about 130 entries from colleges and universities throughout the nation.

Named to committee

Carolyn Stringer, associate professor of journalism at Western Kentucky University, has been

Fulbright honor given

Dr. Joseph Survant, a Western Kentucky University English professor, has received a Fulbright Senior Lectureship teaching American literature and comparative literature at the University Sains Malaysia in Penang in Malaysia.

Survant and his family leave in July to live on Penang, a mall island off the Malaysian coast.

D.N. 6-19-83

Survant publishes

This past year Joe Survant published 14 poems in the following magazines: Zone 3, Rilke's Children, The Journal of Kentucky Studies, Rhino, The Jefferson Review, and Stand Magazine (England). His manuscript, "In the Forest of Rain," was a finalist in the 1988 National Poetry Series Competition.

D. N. 2-19-89

WKU faculty awarded

Two faculty members from Western Kentucky University are among 21 Kentucky artists who have recieved 1990 Al Smith Fellowships from the Kentucky Arts Council. The fellowships were awarded in the fields of writing, choreography and musical composition.

Dr. Michael Kallstrom of the WKU department of music and Dr. Joseph Survant of the department of English have been awarded \$5,000 each.

A panel of nine distinguished artists from outside Kentucky made the selections from 151 applicants.

Kallstrom was given the fellowshipp on for his musical compositions and Survant for his poetry.

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Messenger-Inquirer

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/ ■ Owensboro native and Western Kentucky University English professor Joe Survant read selected pieces of his poetry at an American studies conference in Singapore on May 28. The conference, sponsored by the National University of Singapore and the United States Information Service, was titled, "Asia and America at Century's End."

SURVANT, JOE

WKU English prof to appear on cable

Western Kentucky University English professor Joe Survant will be the guest on Upsouth on Insight Cable Channel 2 at 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays during the month of November and December.

Survant will read from his poetry book, "The Presence Of Snow In The Tropics." Galen Smith is the host of the show.

Daily News

NOV 25 2001

Kentucky poet laureate

WKU professor given coveted designation

*Around me the urgent voices
of sapling rebuds and saffras
were like a choir of locusts. I felt*

JAN 09 2019

*the dying maple blaze in the distance
and smelled the dark wet ashes of the earth. I tasted winter in
my mouth like a strong lover.*

Then I began to turn and dance within my golden circumstance.
From "Golden Circumstance" a poem in Joe Survant's newest book of poetry, "Rafting Rise."

By ALICIA CARMICHAEL
The Daily News

acarmichael@bgdailynews.com/783-3234

Joe Survant, a semi-retired English professor at Western Kentucky University, wrote in the voice of his character, Sallie, in the poem "Golden Circumstance." But he now has his own unexpected reason to dance.

The Owensboro native, who lives in rural Warren County and has

See DESIGNATION, 6A

Clinton Lewis/Daily News
Western Kentucky University professor
Joe Survant is the 2003-05 Kentucky
Poet Laureate.

DESIGNATION, from 1A

taught at Western for 32 years, has been named Kentucky Poet Laureate for 2003 through 2005. He will receive the title from Gov. Paul Patton in April in Frankfort.

"In a way it kind of validates your writing," the 60-year-old Survant said. "As a poet, I don't have a big name in the nation. I'm not being invited to Oprah's Book Club. So this is a way of validating my work outside of myself or a small group, and plus, it's an honor to represent your state in any position."

Survant was nominated for the title by Kentucky State University professor of English Richard Taylor, who has also been poet laureate.

The Kentucky Poet Laureate Committee, which is part of the Kentucky Arts Council and includes an editor, a language specialist, someone from state library and archives, writers and educators, chose Survant from a pool of candidates. The governor approved the selection.

Pam Sexton, chairwoman of the poet laureate committee, said Survant was chosen because "He is a published poet of wonderful work. (And) He has exhibited over a long period of years a dedication to the arts" in Kentucky through his writing and teaching.

Survant has been nominated for poet laureate before. He has also served on the poet laureate committee. It once cost him a shot at the poet laureate title, Sexton said.

"He chose to stay on the committee" rather than to be considered a candidate, she said.

Sexton specifically rotated Survant and others off the committee recently so they would

have a chance at the spot.

She said Survant, who will now become an ambassador for poetry and literature in Kentucky, has been especially deserving because he has "been in the trenches for a long time, and it's not easy to be a poet in today's world, and to convince young people of the importance of poetry," something many consider frivolous or for a certain group of people.

Survant has had four collections of poetry published.

"Rafting Rise," which was published last year by the University Press of Florida, is a collection of narrative poems about logging. It is set in 1916 in the Green River basin, near where Survant grew up. Survant is considering turning it into a novel. His other books include "We Will All be Changed," "Anne and Alpheus, 1842-1882" and "The Presence of Snow in the Tropics."

As poet laureate, Survant may talk to school groups, literary clubs, university classes and just about anyone who asks him, if he has time, he said. But he's not making big plans for what he will say.

Survant will replace current poet laureate Jim Baker Hall.

He said the title couldn't come at a better time. Since he only teaches spring semesters at Western these days, he will have all summer and fall to travel as poet laureate and to write.

He plans to next write a book of poems about the first white Europeans who came into this part of Kentucky in the 18th century.

"I'm doing a little reading now and letting things percolate," Survant said.

Poet laureate stresses the power of poetry

By JASON DOOLEY

The Daily News

For Kentucky Poet Laureate Joe Survant, William Blake's "The Tyger" has been one of the most important poems ever written.

Survant, an English professor at Western Kentucky University, had known the poem for years when he decided one evening to read it to his daughter, then about 18 months old, at bedtime one night.

"For a whole week, every night she asked for 'The Tyger,'" he said. "Then she went back to 'Mickey Mouse and the Kitten Sitters' and didn't say any more about it."

But a year later on a trip to the zoo, Survant's daughter showed that "The Tyger" had stayed with her.

When she saw a tiger in its enclosure, she spontaneously recited the opening stanza of Blake's poem, Survant said.

"That showed me how children latch onto language and the power it has for them," he said. "That, as much as anything, is why I became a poet."

Survant recited "The Tyger" again Sunday as part of the Southern Kentucky Poetry Salon's kickoff for the Southern Kentucky Festival of Books and National Poetry Month.

Other members of the salon also recited poems that inspired them as children, including works by Emily Dickinson, William Stafford, Dorothy Parker and William Butler Yeats.

The salon typically meets

every Thursday at 4:30 p.m. at the Unitarian-Universalist Church on Nashville Road, and the public is welcome, said salon member Dory Hudspeth, who recited Parker's "Resume" on Sunday.

"The more people we get interested in poetry, the better," Hudspeth said. "That's one reason we wanted to do this (Sunday), to let people know we exist."

Poetry's power lies in its ability to conjure vivid images and in the music of its language, Survant said.

"The rhythm and the sound of the words have an effect on the brain long before the intellectual part of the work kicks in," he said. "Great poetry speaks in images instead of words."

Kentucky.com

Posted on Fri, Apr. 25, 2003

 **HERALD-LEADER**

JOE SURVANT, AN OWENSBORO NATIVE AND UK GRADUATE, WILL SERVE TWO YEARS

By Charles Wolfe
ASSOCIATED PRESS

FRANKFORT -Joe Survant, a poet who teaches creative writing at Western Kentucky University, was installed yesterday as Kentucky's poet laureate.

Survant has a two-year appointment with a mandate to promote and encourage participation in the literary arts across the state. The installation ceremony traditionally is held on Kentucky Writers' Day, or April 24, birth date of Kentuckian Robert Penn Warren, the first poet laureate of the United States.

Survant, a native of Owensboro, succeeds poet James Baker Hall of Sadieville, who teaches at the University of Kentucky.

Survant is a graduate of UK and has a doctorate from the University of Delaware.

"I was always deep into literature since I was a little bitty kid," Survant said in an interview. But he also enjoyed science and math, and his father encouraged him to be a scientist or engineer, so he began college as a physics major.

The influence of certain writing teachers at UK, including poets Robert Hazel and Robert White, "moved me ... in the direction that I was already probably designed to go. It was going against the grain by going into physics," Survant said.

He said he also was influenced by writers already at the university, such as Bobbie Ann Mason and Richard Taylor, and some who had moved on but whose names still lingered, especially Wendell Berry and James Baker Hall.

"You kind of got drawn into that culture of writing, and I became aware that there was a great community at UK, already a tradition at UK," Survant said. "It's important for young writers to know that there is this tradition and become aware of it."

The General Assembly established criteria for the poet laureate's position in 1991, but it was 1995 before the first in the new program, poet and novelist James Still, was appointed by Gov. Paul Patton.

Appointed between Still and Hall were poet Joy Bale Boone of Elkton and Taylor, a poet-novelist who now teaches at Kentucky State University.

The program is open to Kentucky authors whose work has received critical acclaim and has been influenced by living in the state. The poet laureate is appointed by the governor.

WKU poet, teacher Survant installed as poet laureate

FRANKFORT (AP) — Joe Survant, a poet who teaches creative writing at Western Kentucky University, was installed today as Kentucky poet laureate.

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Daily News
APR 24 2009



Joe Survant

Poet Laureate of Kentucky

Joe Survant serves as Kentucky's Poet Laureate in 2003–2004. The Poet Laureate Selection Committee coordinated by the Kentucky Arts Council chose Survant to succeed James Baker Hall. Survant officially assumed his duties on Kentucky Writers' Day, April 24, 2003. Joe Survant is a graduate of the University of Kentucky and earned a doctorate at the University of Delaware. He is a professor of English at Western Kentucky University, where he has taught since 1970. His books include *Anne & Alpheus 1842–1882* and *Rafting Rise*, the first two installments of a trilogy covering life in rural Kentucky. Survant's poetry has also been published in more than twenty magazines. You can sample his work below and on the inside back cover.

Upon the Water's Face

Alma Lee Medley
1908–1997

My mother's last sister
sits in a worn, green rowboat
folding and refolding her hands.
They signal as
the boat moves out.
Our few words scatter
like little herds of waves.

She is drifting away,
her husband
thirty years ahead.
*Remember the picnics
on your big screened porch?
Even Uncle Tommy . . . , I begin.
Who are you? she asks.*

She is moving further out,
the wind is eating all our words.
Then I see it, a long brown
rope trailing the boat.
I reach out to draw her back,
but it is only a strand of moss
dissolving in my hands.

The Warning

Loosestrife has escaped its limestone
wall and come into the yard
raising its purple spikes, signaling
in the fescue. Wild grapevines roam

the woods making their final choices.
The thicket is lit by blazing star
and trumpetweed's dull glow
flickers in the fallen leaves.

Their stubborn lives have occupied
the marshy floor. More and more
I see their insistent purple
flowers, feel their quick fire

burning like memory underground.
Loosestrife is in our yards
and at our doors. "Live," it whispers
in our sleep, "I'm coming."

(from *Rafting Rise*)

The Angel

"Here is the time that can be uttered, here is its home. Speak and confirm. More than ever things are falling away . . ."

Rilke, "The Ninth Elegy"

The angel floats
like a maple seed
above the ground.
She drifts over
dense thickets bright
with the flowers
of blackberries
and over
orderly regiments
of grass, gathering
lawn by lawn.

She even sees
the common yarrow
as it spreads along the road,
how slender its wand,
how finely divided its leaves.
Yet she will not touch them.
Neither will she walk
on the freckled ground,
even as lightly as the
parachutes of dandelions
drifting behind enemy lines.

We must not believe
in her who passes
through our bodies and
through the earth
disturbing no particle of atom.
She will not teach us
the knotted language of thistle,
which we must know.
She will not take us
under the hill,
where we must go.

Anne Waters September 7, 1882

This fall comes early
and hard.
Ears of uncut corn
drop in the dry fields
and tobacco withers
silently in the barn.
Already
in the heart
of the hackberry tree
five chosen leaves
turn red as blood
and the light takes
on a fearful intensity.
In the evening
I walk through the
fields down to where
the river goes
into the ground.
Once I heard her voice

in the falling water.
I don't believe it
will be silent now.
He is wherever I look,
in the horse lot,
in the barn,
and on my eyes
like a light-fed image
that will not fade.
What does nature know
of those who've entered her,
or of us who still work
and walk about the world?
Perhaps those who die
do not drop out of the world.
They remain.
The world takes them,
and they are changed.

(from *Anne & Alpheus, 1842-1882*)

—Joe Survant



Daily News/Joe Imel

Western Kentucky University English professor Joe Survant relaxes in his campus office. Survant had a book of poetry published while teaching in Malaysia.

Poetry his 'spiritual' playground

"The greatest poetry says things that you can't say in any other way. It has a sort of spiritual element to it."

— WKU English professor Joe Survant

By **ALYSSA HARVEY**
The Daily News

aharvey@bgdailynews.com/783-3257

Joe Survant wrote "Maya," a poem from his latest book "the presence of snow in the tropics," about things that just didn't seem real.

"It's about the illusion of the world, the way we perceive the world as illusion," the Western Kentucky University English professor said. "Physical things are far away. They're not really real."

Everything seemed far away to Survant in 1985 when he whisked his family to Penang in Malaysia, where he taught at the Universiti Sains Malaysia for a year. "I had a lot of time to write and read," he said. "I wrote poetry about my experience — and it was an experience for me, my wife and two daughters."

The book was published July 4 in Singapore, but only after years of Survant shopping it around. The poems didn't fit into any particular genre.

"I have published individual poems here and in England, but no one would take these," he said. "They were too foreign, I think. A lot of the poems were about religious practices. They're too strange."

Then in 1999, Survant attended the American Studies Conference in Singapore to give a poetry reading. Lesley Yeow, an editor at Landmark Books, a small press, was in the audience and heard Survant's poems.

"She liked them," he said. "She was involved in the foundation of the book. I tended to defer to her judgment because she knew the culture. Fortunately, our tastes coincided."

For Survant, getting the poems published in Singapore was an honor.

"The people there thought enough to publish it," he said. "The culture it was published for accepted it."

Survant's love for poetry began when he was a young boy. He got his first poems published when he was a student



Joe Survant
Poet, professor

*The cattle stood facing east.
Their bodies shine like lumps
of coal in the rising sun.
They stand in the center of the worn
geometry of their paths. Sun
warms their black hides, making
light upon them tremble.
Hard hooves have vanished.
Around them the yellow heads
of dandelions collapse and rid
themselves of ragged bodies
rising from milky roots.
Nearby the tight brown coats
of cattails emphatic on the margins
of the pond have begun to dissolve
into flakes of air-borne down.
I am here watching, wearing
my heaviness like a coat.
Hard matter in its home around
me seems poised to disappear.*

'Maya'
by Joe Survant

See POETRY 2B

▲ POETRY

From Page One

at Owensboro Senior High School.

"I think poetry is the most efficient use of language possible in that it can say something with few words," he said. "The greatest poetry says things that you can't say in any other way. It has a sort of spiritual element to it."

Survant has two other published works: "Anne and Alpheus 1842-1882," monologues between frontier man and woman surviving the hardships and recording the small triumphs of life in rural 19th-century Kentucky, and "We Will All Be Changed," a prequel to "Anne

and Alpheus" that is now out of print.

"I got letters from (readers) wanting to know what happens to (Anne and Alpheus)," Survant said of "We Will All Be Changed." "So I wrote 'Anne and Alpheus.'"

He considers "Anne and Alpheus," a winner of the 1995 University of Arkansas Press poetry award, to be the first book of a three-book series of historical-based poetry he wants to write about Kentucky.

The next one, called "Rafting Rise," will be published by the University Press of Florida in

about a year and will take place in 1917 in Ohio and McLean counties. The third book will be about 18th-century Kentucky, Survant said.

"I want to tell what it was like to come into this country," he said. "That one's going to take some researching because I don't know what life was like."

Survant looks forward to next summer when he'll have more time to devote to his writing.

"If you work on a regular schedule, you'll struggle a lot, but you'll get these gifts. They'll write themselves. I have no idea where it comes from."

At the Overlook

(WKU 1906-2006)

Wandering in the woods
of 1770, Skaggs and Drake
stopped just here
measuring where they were
against the sun and hill,
then hid from mindless heat
under that elm now by Cherry Hall.
Chewing their cold meat
they could not know
how the stone they sat on
would be bent.

Now, at the overlook
the sun makes its red
mark on the walls
of the Dripping Springs.
Below, a thin fog
spreads the rumor
of coming cold.
Late classes are ending
and students scatter
like schools of minnows
started in a stream.

Gordon Wilson's limestone
absorbs the sun
until it reaches
the early pink
of metal coils
first flushed by
a rising pulse of heat.
The stone trenches
behind Van Meter
darken as the
buildings glow.

The students have dwindled
down to three
waiting impatiently
on the steps
for rides.
They do not see
what is happening
to the rock
around them.
The professor's voice
is fading.

They do not heed the warning
on Gordon Wilson's frieze,
*Milton, Goethe,
Keats, Burns.*
They are anxious
to re-enter their lives.
They do not yet know
what they are part of,
people and days stretched
behind like cairns
for a hundred years.

The three old
buildings bob
on the hill's crest,
heavy with the
century's ballast,
but Van Meter's prow
pushes through
the waves of darkness
as they rise,
the time
that follows now.

Joe Survant
19 November 2005

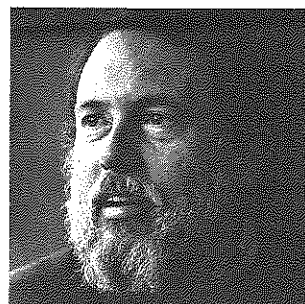


I. Description

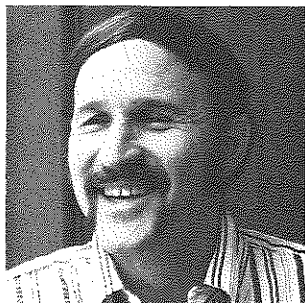
HUMAN VALUES IN THE ARTS is a series of sixteen information discussions on the arts funded by the Kentucky Humanities Council and Western Kentucky University. These discussions will focus on the arts as they reflect the values by which ordinary people live their lives. The art forms covered in these discussions -- painting, sculpture, architecture, music, fiction, poetry, drama, and film -- all help to enrich and clarify life by helping us understand the nature of man and his relationships to his fellow man, to his environment, and to his God.

The arts are unique in that they reflect values in everyday experience. By distilling the variety of life's common experiences, the arts help us to realize certain human values in a deeper and fuller way than a lifetime of personal experience.

These discussions will attempt to explore the arts in such a way that anyone with an open mind and a sincere curiosity can understand that the arts do say something important about his or her own life.



Joe Boggs



Joe Survant

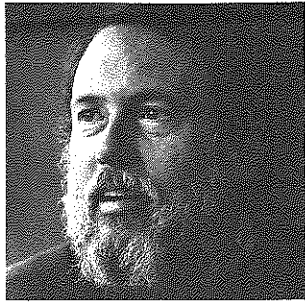
II. Topics and Format:

Human Values in Poetry
Human Values in Fiction
Human Values in Drama
Human Values in Painting
Human Values in Architecture
Human Values in Sculpture
Human Values in Music
Human Values in Film

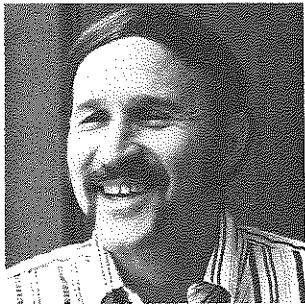
Sample topics to be explored include ideas about marriage, the family, death, and life. A discussion will be provided with movies, and recordings will be shown. An informal open house will follow each presentation. Refreshments will be served for these discussions, and refreshments at the mid-p



Values in the Arts



Joe Boggs



Joe Survant

II. Topics and Format:

Human Values in Poetry	J. Survant	(2 meetings)
Human Values in Fiction	J. Survant	(2 meetings)
Human Values in Drama	J. Survant	(2 meetings)
Human Values in Painting	J. Survant	(2 meetings)
Human Values in Architecture	J. Boggs	(2 meetings)
Human Values in Sculpture	J. Boggs	(2 meetings)
Human Values in Music	J. Boggs	(2 meetings)
Human Values in Film	J. Boggs	(2 meetings)

(16 weeks)

Sample topics to be explored within these arts forms include ideas about masculinity and femininity, love, marriage, the family, death, and religion. Stimulus for discussion will be provided through reading, color slides, movies, and recordings which tell us something about ourselves and the world we live in. An informal open exchange of ideas and responses related to these topics will follow each presentation. To create and maintain the informal atmosphere necessary for these discussions, enrollment must be limited. There will be a break for coffee and refreshments at the mid-point of each session.

III. Places and Times:

Fall: Monday nights, 7:00-9:30 p.m., August 27 - December 17, 1979.

Allen County Public Library,
Scottsville
Mary Wood Weldon Memorial
Library, Glasgow.

Spring: Tuesday nights, 7:00-9:30 p.m., January 15- May 6, 1980.

Harbin Memorial Library,
Greenville.
Logan County Public Library,
Russellville.

IV. Fees

There are no fees for this program, but, for those interested, continuing education credit is available for \$5.00 administrative fee.

V. For further information and/or registration call:

- A. Glasgow: Mr. Jim Hyatt, Librarian, 651-2824
- B. Greenville: Mrs. Helen Gardner, Librarian Librarian, 338-4760
- C. Russellville: Mrs. Lillian Noe, Librarian 726-9889 (or) Mrs. Evelyn Richardson, Regional Librarian, 726-9889
- D. Scottsville: Mrs. Ann Brown, 622-4984 (or) Mrs. Lola Weaver, Librarian, 237-3861
- E. Western Kentucky University: Mr. Joe Boggs, 745-3043 (or) Mr. Joe Survant, 745-3043