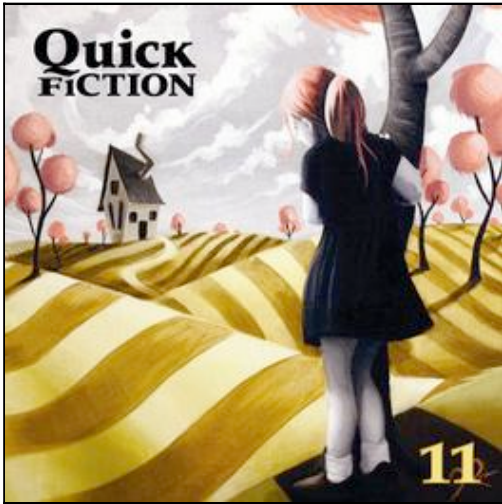


Less is more with Salem-based Quick Fiction magazine



By Maggi Smith-Dalton/salem@cnc.com
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Salem -

Like a delicious gourmet appetizer, what's in it can be consumed in a bite, but the ensuing flavor fills the senses and lingers long.

Nothing in it lasts longer than two pages. It's "cute and distinguished ... a little square of fiction." In this age of tiny iPods, miniscule iPhones and tissue-thin cell phones that double as digital cameras, it'll fit in your pocket, barely bigger physically than a CD. The cover arrests your attention, the content keeps it.

It's Quick Fiction magazine, born in 2001 in Jamaica Plain and now produced in Salem.

"We wanted a project and we wanted to do something that's worthwhile," publisher Adam Pieroni says of the magazine's birth. The "we" is Pieroni and his wife, Jennifer Cande Pieroni, who is Quick Fiction's editor-in-chief.

Quick Fiction, their "baby," is a small-press literary magazine of "micro-fiction," stories of 500 words or fewer. Its audience, Pieroni tells the Gazette, is writers, former teachers, graduate students, readers who first received the magazine as a gift or people "who just find us."

The young publisher says they began the project with zero subscribers, but by the first issue published, they had 60. Now, in 2007, they have an approximate 500 subscribers. Subscriptions are the basic base of distribution and income for the commercial enterprise, and the magazine is currently breaking even, Pieroni says, although the costs of producing it are rising fast. Pieroni pointed out that paper is increasingly expensive, and the recent postal rate hike really hurt.

Both he and his wife also work at full-time jobs besides producing Quick Fiction. He is a full-time graphic designer for a law firm, and she is director of development at Jumpstart, a nonprofit organization devoted to building literacy, language, social and initiative skills in young children. But Quick Fiction is not a hobby, it is a serious commercial and artistic endeavor for both.

The magazine is promoted at events: Readings at bookstores like Feed Your Head books in Salem and Grub Street in Boston; bookfairs devoted to small presses and literary magazines; and conferences such as those sponsored by the Association of Writers and Writing Programs, which is based at Virginia's George Mason University. AWP's stated mission is to "foster literary talent and achievement, to advance the art of writing as essential to a good education, and to serve the makers, teachers, students and readers of contemporary writing."

"Most of the writing tends towards magical realism," Pieroni tells the Gazette during a recent interview at Jaho Coffee & Tea on Derby Street. Although there are many definitions, and the term has metamorphosed since its introduction, "magical realism" can be understood as fiction that is structured to display a rational, everyday, normal sense of reality that also, simultaneously, incorporates an acceptance of the supernatural as concurrently — and equally — real.

Magical realism is not fantasy, but engages readers in their own assessments of just what is truly "real." As such, magical realists have many sources of inspiration to draw from — in particular, sources drawn from diverse cultures inform this branch of serious fiction.

Writers for the magazine do not receive pay. Pieroni describes his contributors: "The smallest proportion are established writers, although almost all of them have been published in literary magazines."

Asked what his greatest challenge is in publishing Quick Fiction, he pauses, thinks a minute, and then

speaks. "Having time to have a better relationship with our readers," he answers. "I feel it's very important ... it's an honor to have anyone interested in this writing."

As for his greatest joy in publishing the magazine, he says, "That's easy. I guess someone comes up to us at a book fair and says 'It's my favorite magazine ... I love the cover ... I love the content.'"

Future plans include the establishment of a small-press book publishing venture, a challenge to which he looks forward. "I like to create things from scratch... to figure out how things work," Pieroni says. He feels his wife's many talents and skills ensure they'll build something great together.

The two have their moms to thank for meeting, since their parents worked together when they were growing up. But each went their own ways to college: Adam to Indiana University at Bloomington to earn a bachelor's in English, Jennifer to Emerson College in Boston, and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in writing, literature and publishing.

While in college, Pieroni launched a large, hardcopy magazine entitled Coked and Ready, which lasted for two years. It published fiction, photography, poetry and art. Jennifer was asked to submit a story, and the two young writers continued a relationship that eventually resulted in their marriage.

After graduation, they lived in Jamaica Plain, where the Boston Women's Heritage Trail will lead you past the historic homes of artists and writers like Sylvia Plath and the atmosphere is liberal, artsy and activist. They moved to Salem two years ago.

The English poet Lord Byron wrote, "But words are things, and a small drop of ink, Falling like dew, upon a thought, produces That which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think."

Quick Fiction magazine may be a "small drop of ink," almost literally, but its publishers hope its little stories, like tiny seeds, will blossom from that dew — and produce a garden of thought in the world.

Visit Quick Fiction magazine at www.quickfiction.org.

Jim and Maggi Dalton

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ABOUT JIM & MAGGI

Jim and Maggi Dalton perform music of popular/vernacular, folk and cultivated traditions, covering time periods from the Middle Ages to the present, focusing largely on American, Celtic and British Isles repertoire. They specialize in music of the 19th and 20th centuries. Instrumentation: mostly plucked strings and voices.

Concerts and programs contain commentary designed to place the music performed in historical context for the audience. Programs reflect the continual and ongoing research in which the two delight. They also perform original songs and compositions.

Jim and Maggi have released two recordings to date, and have designed a full spectrum of programs which they present nationwide. They have been featured often on radio and television. (PBS, ABC, NBC, CBS affiliates, Cable Networks; NPR stations, NewsRadio, interview programs across the USA; feature stories in newspapers and magazines, i.e., *The Philadelphia Inquirer & Courier-Post*) They have performed at nationally-known venues (i.e., Colonial Williamsburg, Seneca Falls, the Harriet Beecher Stowe House) and countless local and regional venues nationwide.

They have served as artists-in-residence at various colleges, public history sites, community and educational centers, presenting series addressing American history and other topics in the humanities, using music as the core of each session.

Previous audiences and sponsors have said:

"engaging, scholarly, delightful, warm, intelligent, flexible, humorous, talented, versatile, enthusiastic, personable, joyful ..."



~Send for our complete info package
in our "sunny yellow folder" for
descriptions of our programs, classes,
and concerts ~

Multi-instrumentalist *Jim Dalton* is an educator, conductor and award-winning composer and arranger.

As a performer, he specializes in historical and ethnic playing styles on a variety of plucked string instruments including guitar, mandolin, banjo, mandocello, Renaissance lute, bouzouki etc.

He also plays piano, organ, recorder and tin whistle.

In addition to duo performances with his wife, soprano and guitarist Maggi Smith-Dalton he maintains an active career as a freelance musician -- playing in chamber music ensembles, jazz and world music groups and in opera/theater and symphony orchestras.

He is a member of the New England Mandolin Ensemble.

His compositions have been performed across the U.S. and Canada and in Europe.

His choral composition, "The Rocky Road to Dublin," won first prize in the 1997 Toronto Camerata Competition. Two of his pieces for carillon have been published in anthologies by Fenwick Parva and the Friends of the Albany Carillon.

His composition for solo mandolin, "Gifts of the Bard," is published by Wolfhead Music.

His works are available through these publishers and Singing String Music Publications.

Jim is on the faculty of The Boston Conservatory, teaching music theory, ear training and world music courses for both the Music Theory and Music Education Departments. He has written articles for Blues Revue Magazine and is the author of *Mandolin for Beginners*, published by Workshop Arts, Inc./Alfred Publishing.

He is a frequent guest lecturer on topics such as composition, choral arranging and Irish traditional music. In the 2004-2005 year Jim received a MACRO research grant (Univ. of Wisconsin) to study and analyze palindromic compositions in concert music repertoire and presented this work at the 2005 Macro Musician's Workshop in Madison, WI.

Singer and musician, independent scholar, author and educator, *Maggi Smith-Dalton* has sung as a soloist with choirs and choruses both here and abroad, acted and sung in professional theater productions and produced/participated/performed in radio and television projects and programs.

She is a frequent guest lecturer -- on the integration of humanities and the arts, on folklore, and on American music and history, to name a few topics.

She has given lecture/demonstration programs at the college level (i.e., The New England Conservatory, The Boston Conservatory) and in numerous professional-development courses for educators and teachers at all grade levels.

Maggi enjoys an active performing career, which, after eleven years of work in cabaret, musical theater, and nightclub singing, has included more than two decades of concert performance nationwide and abroad, in partnership with her husband and as a soloist with choirs and in concert.

In addition, she authored a prize-winning short story and writes often for newspapers and magazines (including history and cultural/arts/educational feature articles, and a regular history column for the *Salem Gazette*).

Maggi's work in mainstream media included producing a cable TV series and programming and hosting musical theater, arts interview, and classical music shows for NPR public radio, commercial, and community stations.

A former Chairperson of the Haverhill Cultural Council, Maggi served as Musical Theater Director at Hill House (a community Arts Center) in Boston's Beacon Hill; as Director of "Adventures in Art," a summer arts program; and as a director of children's choirs.

With a background in teaching multiply-handicapped children, Maggi continues interest in and study of music therapy. She is working on a children's book; and is always working on a variety of writing projects.