

Press Release

The Way We Say Goodbye by Chris Cox

“It made me laugh! It made me cry!” Surely, there is no older cliché to describe a book than that one, yet how else can Chris Cox’s new book of essays, *The Way We Say Goodbye*, be described? In one chapter, Cox recalls using his position as a young newspaper reporter writing a review of a community theater production of “*The Diary of Anne Frank*” as a means to persuade the lead actress to go out with him, while in another chapter he is coping with his father’s death. In between is the stuff of life, with essays on a variety of topics, including chronic complainers, family reunions, romantic failures, and his brother’s insistence on grabbing a bite at a fast food drive-thru on the way to the hospital with his wife already in labor. Give the book to ten readers, and they will most likely choose ten different favorites. Such is the variety and range of *The Way We Say Goodbye*.

Cox, a native of Sparta, NC, who now lives in the small town of Clyde in western North Carolina, has been writing columns since his junior year of high school, when he discovered the syndicated columns of Lewis Grizzard, William F. Buckley, and Mike Royko in the *Winston-Salem Journal*. He read all three obsessively, especially Grizzard, who is clearly an important influence on his work.

“He was a southerner, like me,” said Cox. “When I discovered his column, it was like a whole new world opened up for me. I couldn’t believe that someone would pay you to write about your dog or your troubles with women. I mean, even as a teenager, I had a dog and I had troubles with women...why couldn’t I write about those things, too?”

So Cox began writing columns for the local upstart newspaper, *The Blue Ridge Sun*, and except for a couple of brief stop-outs, he has been writing columns for newspapers ever since, including gigs with the *Watauga Democrat*, *The Asheville-Citizen Times*, *The Waynesville Enterprise-Mountaineer*, and *The Smoky Mountain News*, for whom he still writes a bi-weekly column. He has won numerous press awards on both the state and national level, and his column was cited several times by the nation’s most esteemed critic of writing both good and bad, the late James J. Kilpatrick, a syndicated columnist whose “*Writer’s Art*” column appeared in over 500 newspapers until his death in 2010. In fact, Kilpatrick wrote a blurb for the back jacket of Cox’s first book, *Waking Up in a Cornfield*, which was published in 1999.

Like the first book, the new book is a mix of essays that are sometimes funny, sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes wistful, and sometimes bittersweet. The one constant is the quality of the writing, and his empathy for the people he writes about.

“The depth of his writing comes not from using big words or spinning a web of complex thought, but from his reverence and appreciation for and the voice he gives to the everyday experiences that give life meaning,” wrote Bob Bamberg, who penned the first review of the new book. “He finds a lot of humor in everyday life and you’ll find more than a cackle or two between his pages....but his real forte is painting pictures with words. I consider myself a writer and pretty good with metaphor, but in Chris Cox I have more than met my match.”

Cox will kick off his book tour with a reading in the small town of Sparta, NC, where some of the residents may very well see themselves in the pages of his new book. Some are even mentioned by name.

“I actually called around and got permission from several people to use their names and tell certain stories in the book,” Cox laughed. “I think most of the stories are fairly harmless. I may have implicated one of my childhood friends in the commission of a crime, but I think the statute of limitations has expired on that particular incident.”

Cox’s books, *Waking Up in a Cornfield* and *The Way We Say Goodbye*, will each be available for \$15 +tax (\$16.05) at all tour events. For more information on the book and tour dates, you can find him online at www.chriscoxbooks.com