

Corydon author introduces second novel

by Willa Clark

Cath Gregory Blackford has been writing stories as long as she can remember. In fact, her first efforts at putting together a story line came even before she could put her ideas down on paper. As a young girl, Catherine Gregory created scripts and had her dolls acting out plays.

When she learned to write, she created plays. As an adult, she still writes plays for her church to use in holiday programs, but it is her latest novel that will be the focus of attention June 30 at a book signing at Bredeaux Pizza in Corydon.

Titled "The Friends of Dixie Magruder," this story is set in a comfortable Iowa community, a town small enough to hold the warmth, strength and laughter of old friends, large enough to hide a surprise around every other corner.

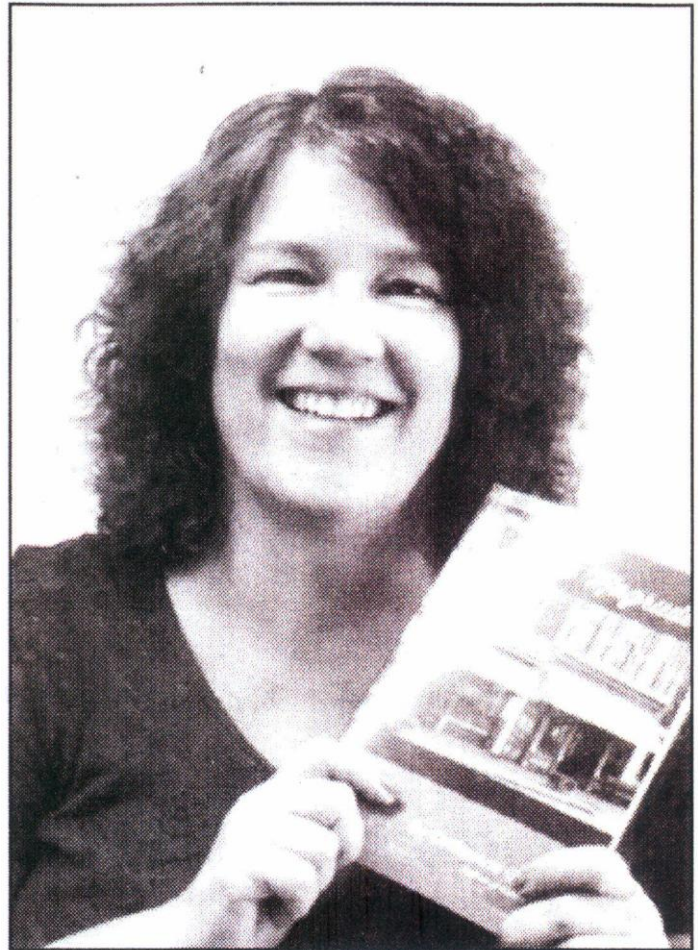
Blackford, who uses her given name Catherine Gregory when she writes, says she begins a novel much like she would a play, with a dialogue. But a great novel is more than dialogue. It needs settings and action, laughter and tears.

"The Friends of Dixie Magruder" has plenty of laughter and its own share of tears. Written from a Biblical world view, the novel is in a contemporary setting. Blackford says the current era, and the laughter, set it off from most other Christian novels.

"Life is funny," she says. And she's right. This is not a "heavy-handed" work, nor is it what might be called "preachy." Her characters examine how being a Christian should affect the choices they make, but they definitely enjoy laughter, too.

Blackford is not the first writer in her family. Her mother wrote short stories as a child, but didn't pursue writing as a career. Her father had two books in print, one a collection of his own war stories and another about his 25 years in the FBI, but he wrote them mainly to preserve stories of his life for his family. Blackford says she inherited the copyright to her father's books and may someday have them reprinted.

The book signing on Saturday will be five years to the day from the day Blackford introduced her first novel, also at Bredeaux. Blackford has already started her third, which will be a sequel to "The Friends of Dixie



Cath Gregory Blackford

Magruder."

Blackford says as she writes, her characters become more real. Although the characters may take over and drive the story as they are developed, Blackford generally has the end of the story in mind when she starts and has not yet had a character change that anticipated ending.

But the story of Dixie Magruder's friends certainly doesn't end the way the reader might expect. It is not only full of laughter, but unexpected twists, heart-felt emotions and spiritual insight.

Stop in at Bredeaux on Saturday, have some refreshments with Blackford and take a look at her latest book. You may want to buy one and have her sign it. But perhaps there should be a warning on the label. This book is difficult to put down.