

Write



Gulf Coast Writers Association Newsletter

September 2005

www.gulfwriters.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In recent years I have developed a habit of thinking, so far so good. The September 11 Anniversary has come and gone, the peak of the hurricane season has passed, and again it appears as if the wrath of nature skipped over Southwest Florida. At least, so far so good!



GCWA President
Sissel W. Robertson

We may count our blessings, but who can keep from mourning New Orleans and Mississippi? I spent a year in New Orleans once. Had the likes of Katrina hit, I may have perished — for I was poor then. Adversity is serious research, which if nothing else provides rich material for writing. How do non-writers endure life's many storms, within us or around us? Writing has always added layers of meaning to my life, providing hope and comfort. Even so, thank God, I will not write an account of Hurricane Katrina!

So far so good. However, some nagging questions persist: What, if anything, could have been done to prevent or lessen the devastation of Katrina? Were greenhouse gasses from fossil fuels or the loss of coastal wetlands factors? Should we even build this close to shore or below sea level?

Regrettably, I cannot recall who authored the following phrase, "Nature we can live without, but we cannot live without nature." Clearly, nature manages quite nicely without us, but without it, we would have no life, no resources — and no economy. Whether or not one "enjoys nature" is irrelevant. To date, science and technology have not given us the key to conquer nature and probably never will. Should we explore better ways to live in

and with nature? Will we submit to her wisdom as to a tough, revered teacher, or will we continue to treat our environment as a liquidation sale or as an enemy to be exploited? Environmental consciousness is coming of age and, as it does, so will the field of environmental writing.

GCWA is extremely pleased to announce Dr. Bill Hammond, FGCU Professor of Environmental Studies, as our featured speaker on September 24. Over the years, I have met some extraordinary people, but perhaps none as informed, inspiring, empowering, artistic and influential as Dr. Hammond. Do not miss this meeting! I absolutely guarantee that you will learn something new and useful, and that you will enjoy every minute as well.

So, God willing, until we meet again — keep writing!

Sissel W. Robertson

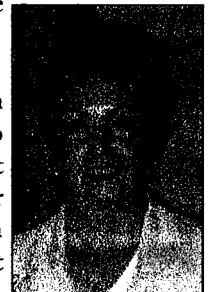


Ann Maier

August 27th
GCWA Meeting
Speakers

Ann Maier's presentation focused on grant funding for organizations, who the grantors are and how to find them. Ann can be reached at Seeks@aol.com

Jan Tourté's presentation focused on how to get the best use out of your computer for writing purposes. To learn more about Jan visit www.tutorjan.com



Jan Tourté

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Write! welcomes your news, essays, articles, jokes or quotes about the writing world; events; book reviews; member profiles; excerpts from members' longer works; poems; short short fiction; and pen-and-ink artwork. Submissions should not exceed 300 words, and please enclose a brief bio.

Submit by e-mail to D. L. Foor by the first of each month for possible inclusion.

Classified Ads. The cost is \$5.00 for 30 words. If you wish to go over 30 words or add graphics, it is \$10. You must send a check and your ad by the first of each month. The advertising fees will offset costs of printing and mailing our monthly newsletter **Write!**

Mail submissions, your ad and \$5.00 to: **GCWA Write!**, c/o D. L. Foor, P. O. Box 101155, Cape Coral, FL 33910-1155, e-mail: DLFPoe4@yahoo.com

MEMBER NEWS:

☺ Tony DiCosta writes a monthly book review column called "Builder's Bookshelf" for the nationally published magazine, *Cruisin' Style*. He also provided the cover photography for September's *Evangel* magazine along with an accompanying article titled "Mountain of Change." The article and cover were derived from a visit to a high-altitude Mission to Mayan Indians in Guatemala.

☺ Dr. Carol Kennedy is conducting an ongoing PARENTING POWER WORKSHOP, on Thursdays, 7-8:30, at Calvary Baptist Church in Cape Coral. You can begin the workshop on any Thursday so come and join her! Excerpts and activities on literacy, parenting and grandparenting are taken from her popular book, *THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF PARENTING ~FROM A TO Z~SO HELP ME GOD!* If you have any questions, call Dr. Kennedy at 694-5943.

GCWA will hold a workshop on Memoir and Biography at the Collier County Library on October 15, 2005 from noon to 2:00 p.m.

WRITING SEMINAR

Saturday, October 1, Noon-2:00 p.m.

at Barnes & Noble, Tamiami Trail, Ft. Myers, FL

Join us for our annual writing seminar presented by GCWA and facilitated by Pat Janda and Ruben Colon. The topic will be "The Many Aspects of Fiction." Meg Price will discuss "What is a Story?" and "Story and Characterization." Lesa Hauser will cover "The First Five Pages" and "Passive Voice." Ruben Colon will share his expertise on "Formatting and Common Errors in Manuscripts." The seminar is free and open to the public.

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Member Gallery

All in a Day's Work

By Lesa Hauser

Now would you look at that! It's not every day I find a dead fairy on the beach. They're almost immortal. But there she is, wings in the sand, soggy.

What stopped her? It's my job to find out. That, and I'm supposed to pick her up, give her a little shake which starts her ticker or heart . . . whatever they have inside those tiny bodies . . . and she'll fly again. Fairies don't talk, so she can't tell me what happened. And they don't hang around after I get them back from wherever they go when they're dead.

Almost daily I find damaged dragons. A dragon will start admiring his handsome self, staring at his reflection in a bucket, a pond or a pool. Pretty soon the simple creature hypnotizes himself and, the next thing you know, his head gets wet. No more fire. Wouldn't you stop staring in water if you breathed flame? Vain creatures, dragons.

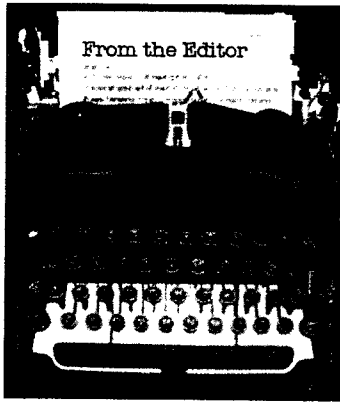
Unicorns? They're supposed to be graceful, but not a week passes that I don't figure out what happened to one of those horns. Usually knocked off by a tree. Too much head tossing by horned horses, if you ask me. Doesn't require much to figure out what happens to unicorns.

Now, take your elves. They damage themselves too. They're into everything. Elves are so curious that they're bound to get into mischief. No problem figuring out elfin enigmas. They'll tell you all about it. Elves talk all the time but fairies never.

It's been an eon since I've seen a fairy down. So, what happened to her and who are my suspects? Did she have an accident with a dragon lost in his own beauty? With a unicorn's ill-timed head toss? Or an elf sticking its nose into fairy business? It's all part of the job when you're a mythological detective.



Drowned Fairy by Lesa Hauser



Dear Members,

Ah. Rejection.

How many is too many? I suppose when you can wallpaper the bedroom and the inside of your garage door and all your relatives and friends have decoupage rejection-slip trash cans with matching bath mats.

And most of the form rejection letters are so impersonal. No keep up the good work, or you are awesome try again, or gee I wish I'd written that but we just don't have room. Here are a few of the words the dictionary associates with the noun, *rejection*: refuse, useless, worthless, discard, eject, cast out, and so on. Geez, you'd think writers were plague carriers!

A poet friend of mine once told me that he always schmoozed with the editors in his cover letters. Now, this guy has been published all over the world and has been translated into several languages. He suggested I schmooze also.

So I wrote something like this in a cover letter to a high-end glossy sci-fi magazine: Dear Editor, I subscribe to your magazine and appreciate the high quality of the publication and the work within, so I am submitting my poem for your consideration.

The Editor wrote back: Dear Poet, I am very happy that you appreciate the high quality of our magazine and the work we publish, so you'll understand why we won't accept your poem.

Had a form rejection lately? Consider yourself lucky!

Creatively yours,
Diana L. Foor

Chicken Killing Day

By Joan Grindley

"Grab him, Grandma, grab him!" I shouted as the large colorful chicken took off, feathers flying.

The hen careened around the yard in a crazed manner; but then you would too if you had just had your head cut off. It was Chicken Killing Day, and Grandma was at her best.

We had just come home from the market and she had picked out three of Mr. Cohen's finest hens. We brought them home in Grandma's car in a crate with a board nailed over the top to keep them from jumping out.

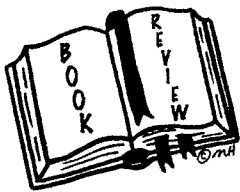
"Keep an eye on them Joan," Grandma ordered. "Remember last month — one escaped and hopped all over the back of the car. She almost forced me off the road with her shenanigans."

Grandma laughed and I giggled too, remembering the incident. I had been terrified, but was not about to admit it.

When we got home, Grandma lifted the crate out of the back seat of the car and into the front yard. A huge barrel had been set up next to the garden. Grandma put the crate down next to the barrel and proceeded to remove the lid — very carefully. She grabbed the first hen and, quick as a wink, put the lid back on. She held it tight around the neck, ignoring the squeaks and squawks, and placed the neck over the open barrel. Her other hand held the axe. She lowered it fast and clean and all I heard was a loud bump and a squawk. She released the hen immediately and allowed it to run around the yard.

Grandma pretended to chase the headless creature, mostly for my benefit. In a few moments the body went rigid and dropped to the ground. Grandma picked it up, with little fanfare, laid it on some brown paper, and returned to the crate to capture the next victim . . .

I was twelve years old before I knew you could buy a chicken, already deceased, in the local meat market. My mother did not follow in Grandma's footsteps when it came to chickens.



By Ruben Colon

Wonder When You'll Miss Me

By Amanda Davis

Amanda Davis was a fine writer. Her tragic death along with her parents in a plane crash on a North Carolina mountain the same year of her debut novel extinguished the light of promise for her future writing. She was 32 years old.

This coming-of-age beautifully written novel about a sixteen-year-old named Faith Duckle, runs the gamut of what is called the dark side of life: dysfunctional family, battle with obesity, suicidal tendencies, institutionalized in a mental facility and vicious sexual abuse by a group of high school students – later, she avenges herself on the chief abuser (whom she had a crush on), by slicing his face with a kitchen cleaver. She runs away from home and hitchhikes in a search for a friend who worked in a circus. She finds the big top, joins the midway and is delegated to the most menial task – cleaning up after the elephants and horses – without pay. Eventually she earns the respect and a place among the performers, becomes an aerialist and finds redemption.

In *Wonder When You'll miss Me*, Amanda Davis used several writing devices to great effect.

Alter ego: Device used to display the inner conflicts and underlying emotions of the main character without the constant use of “she thought.” The alter ego in this story is called “the fat girl” by Faith. Always present, the fat girl is ever ready to annoy, egg on, argue or fight – and eats constantly. At the end of the story, Faith banishes her ghost – “the fat girl” – forever.

Flashback: Used to familiarize the reader with Faith’s background and how she ended in a mental institution. There is some confusion at beginning of story whether narration is in flashback or real time.

Anaphora: Greek, meaning to bring back or repeat. This device involves the repetition of a word or words at the beginning of two or more successive clauses or sentences. The device is used to strengthen a particular feeling the author wishes to awaken in the reader.

Example: “The calmer I sounded, the calmer I was.” The anaphora in this story works every time.

With its peaks of hope and valleys of despair, the story almost mirrors the personal life of Amanda Davis, and she was more than qualified her to write this story – her life, as someone said, is equal to a Rafael Sabatini novel.



A critique group will be forming in October. Only criteria . . . a completed screenplay or treatment. For more information contact Jeri Magg at jerimagg@comcast.net.

CLASSIFIEDS

Clarissa — a novel by Ruben Colon. Betrayal, disaster, romance and adventure. To order: Amazon.com or from the author at exlibris@bigplanet.com.

Check out Dr. Carol Kennedy's three books! They motivate and inspire! Dr. Carol speaks about topics related to literacy, parenting and triumphing over life's setbacks.
<http://www.drcarolkennedy.com> or call 239-694-5943

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THIS MONTH'S MEETING

September 24, 2005

GULF COAST WRITERS PRESENTS

Florida Gulf Coast University Professor Bill Hammond will be the guest speaker at the next Gulf Coast Writers Association meeting September 24th. Having been a major factor in saving the Six Mile Cypress Slough Preserve, Dr. Hammond will be talking about how to best develop environmental writing and how it applies to one's own literary pursuits.

This topic will go hand-in-hand with a writers' competition that will be formally announced at the meeting. Please arrive early.

Meetings are held the last Saturday of each month. No meeting is held in December.
Beacon Executive Suites, 8359 Beacon Blvd. Ft. Myers. Doors open at 9:30 a.m. Meeting starts at 10:00 a.m.
Directions: Route 41 north of College Parkway. Turn right on Crystal Drive.
Proceed straight to Beacon Blvd. Turn left. Pass Villas Elementary School on left.
Beacon Executive Suites is on the left.
For more information contact Pat Janda at phdair@comcast.net