

Gulf Coast Writers Association, Inc.  
General Meeting  
February 21, 2015  
Zion Lutheran Church

**Welcome and Intro**-- President Gary McLouth opened the meeting at 10:05 am. He offered his condolences on behalf of Gulf Coast Writers Association to Barbara Burnett and her family in the loss of her son and informed us that Don Cappelli was in the hospital with a possible heart attack. Gary asked all to join together in a moment of silence to recognize the joy of life and the pain of loss.

**Announcements:**

Gary/Irene: The digital workshop held at FSW was attended by fifteen paying customers. Good reports were given of the overall experience. Our next workshop will focus on the social media and how it can be used to a writer's advantage.

The SWFL Readers Festival will be manned by six of our members. Gary said that there are two main opportunities for GCWA to participate: Individuals can practice selling books to an audience that is seeking something to read and GCWA members can represent the association as a group of writers who want to spread the word of our mission and membership opportunities. Gary suggested that authors donate three copies of their own book(s) to be placed on the GCWA table and offered at no cost as an incentive for passerby's to stop for a look. Jennifer Fitzgerald will see that the books are on the table.

Denise encouraged the members to attend the "Evening with the Authors" dinner that precedes the SWFL Readers Festival. It is on March 20 @ \$45.00.

Our next meeting will be at Covenant Presbyterian on March 28.

Gary announced that the Executive Board authorized by unanimous vote, February 17, 2015, the adoption of guidelines for the expulsion of an executive board member. The guidelines are defined by Florida State Law. The executive board anticipates that similar guidelines will be proposed and added to the GCWA (membership) by-laws within the coming year.

Irene reported that as of today there are 231 members (two new ones today and four by mail). She reiterated the importance of members signing in when attending general meetings. It not only helps with the planning of activities but helps in anticipating growth and the need for suitable venues in the future.

Bob McCarthy, GCWA member, is further developing the network of writers groups meeting throughout SW Florida. Bob will be putting into action many of the recommendations members have made that will enhance our value to each other as writers and readers. Gary asked that we endeavor to help Bob complete this goal.

**Good News:** Although Gary reminded the members to share news that was “new” and not promotional only two out of the six followed his instruction.

**Welcome Visitors**—Gary asked all first time visitors to stand. Visitors were asked to quickly introduce themselves telling a little about themselves and how they heard about our association. Twelve persons shared.

**Non-Fiction Reading:** Gary read an excerpt from *Why I Write*, by Joan Didion.

After a short break, Denise introduced Marti Ambrose as our guest speaker. Marti is a professor of English and Communications and the author of *Mango Bay Mystery Series* for Avalon Books. Marti teaches an online creative writing course and is currently working on her fifth book.

Marti spoke on navigating the road to publication in a world of digital technology. She said there were three gates of publishing:

- 1) Indie (formerly known as self-publishing)
- 2) Traditional (having agent and publisher)
- 3) Hybrid (traditional and backlist indie publishing)

Marti encouraged all writers to get their name out into the public eye. Some suggestions of doing this were: Using the Vine video app, Instagram, blogging, writing articles for magazines and local papers (Family Circle, Gulf Shore Life), Author’s Central, Goodreads, and attending writers’ conferences.

Her watchword for us is PERSERVERE. Do not give up.

Meeting adjourned at noon.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cyndi C Anthony, Secretary