



GCWA is on the Move

GCWA is still looking for a permanent location to accommodate our growing membership. If you have a recommendation, please send to executive@gulfwriters.org.

The January meeting on Saturday, 1/18 will be at Lakes Regional Library, 15290 Bass Road, (Gladiolus Road) Ft. Myers.

Lee Library Has Writers' Resources

Lee County Library System regularly presents live and online events and programs. It also provides access to Libby and Hoopla, online platforms that provide free access to e-books, audiobooks and videos. Talk to your local librarian. See Charley Valera about making your book available.

Resolutions for Aspiring Authors Workshop

Start the New Writing Year off right! During this session on January 7, we will discuss writing and publishing goals and create personal action plans. We will share resources, engage in group writing, and reflection. [Registration required](#); 13 seats available as of this writing.

Literary Agent Presentation

[An Inside Look at Working with a Literary Agent: A Conversation with Seth Fishman](#) is a Lee Library online program to be held January 28.

The library is part of a **collaboration of online author talks**. See the listing of [Online Programs](#) for information of past and future online events.

Ideas Needed – GCWA 30-Year Celebration!!

January is the beginning of the 30th anniversary year of Gulf Coast Writers Association. Can we find a way to commemorate our beginnings and look forward with new purpose? A way that brings us together as writer-friends and helps us find new meaning in our writing lives, Do we go on a short retreat? Do we conduct a workshop series? Do we have a party? Or do we do all these and more?

This organization belongs to each of us, and we should all have a say in how we prioritize our needs and wants. There is new energy among our membership, and every view should be represented in ongoing decisions. Send your thoughts and ideas to the GCWA Executive Committee by January 30, 2025, to: executive@gulfwriters.org



GCWA Monthly Meetings

Mark your calendars for the following meeting dates @ 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Saturday, 1/18/25 – [Brenda Spalding](#), award-winning Florida writer presents *Beyond the Book – "The Alligator Dance."* The book, inspired by a local news article regarding prosecution for alligator egg poaching, sent Brenda on a three-year journey of research and writing. Meeting to be at [The Lakes Regional Library](#)

Saturday, 2/15/25 – Lee County Library System

Visit www.GulfWriters.Org for the latest info!



Writer Beware!

by Charley Valera

[initially posted on Gulfcoast Writers Facebook page]

“Caveat emptor” translates from Latin as “let the buyer beware.” For writers sharing our work with the world, it’s an important reminder. After years of researching and writing, there’s nothing like the sense of accomplishment of publishing. But with that excitement comes a new challenge: the attention of people who lack good intentions.

It seems like every other email, phone call, or text is from someone who’s “chosen” my work for something big. These messages often come from impressive email addresses, phone numbers that appear legitimate, and even names that sound familiar. But many are, unfortunately, from scammers. They promise big opportunities but come with hidden motives and high fees.

One recent example was a message from “Maya Page, Senior Project Manager of the Acquisition Team at Explora Books in Vancouver, Canada.” She called, texted, and emailed, claiming her company had “a verified list of TV and film producers” ready to work with me. Her goal? To sell expensive services by promising exposure.

If you’re getting similar messages, remember to stay cautious. WriterBeware.com is an excellent resource for checking the legitimacy of these companies. Their site has a detailed list of overpriced and unethical third-party services targeting writers. Check their blog or Facebook page before making any commitments: [Writer Beware Scam Archive](#).

Additionally, consider using tools like Apple’s “Hide My Email” for registering on websites. This keeps your personal information safe and cuts down on unwanted contact. And remember, you’re not alone. As members of Gulf Coast Writers, we have each other to navigate the writing and publishing world. Sharing our experiences and staying connected strengthens our community. Let’s continue writing, supporting each other, and enjoying the journey together!



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Editor’s Note: The Member Spotlight is a regular feature that celebrates our members’ journeys and their accomplishments. This feature will return in the January 2025 Gazette

Member Good News!

GCWA wants to share and celebrate our members’ successes. Please submit yours to: Communications@GulfWriters.org to be included in The Gazette’s next edition.

Ginger Wakem’s debut mystery thriller, “[Trust No one, Promise Nothing](#)” is available on Amazon and her [website](#), after a six-year writing journey. If you’re a fan of intricate thrillers, this riveting tale of love, betrayal, and the pursuit of redemption will keep you on the edge of your seat. Ginger also has a [podcast interview](#) available in which she discussed the book and her writing process.

Patti M. Walsh’s newest book, “[Hounded](#),” is available on [Amazon](#). Patti’s second novel is best described as the Karate Kid meets Percy Jackson in a middle-grade contemporary novel based on Celtic mythology. It follows her popular novel, “Ghost Girl.” Several GCWA members reviewed the book for Amazon and attended Patti’s successful book launch.

Jeanne Meeks’ new middle-grade novel, [FREAKS, INC.](#), recently went live on Amazon in paperback and e-book. “Bullies and bad guys are thwarted when the school’s “freaks” discover their new superpowers.”



We love printing GCWA members' short works

Do you have a 250-word excerpt from your work? Maybe you have a flash story of 250 words (brief fiction or nonfiction pieces) Perhaps you have a poem that fits the bill. Let us Share Your Petite Passage. Share it with us at Communications@GulfWriters.org

Here are two recently written poems by Brian Sluga, who has two poetry books available. His debut nonfiction book about surviving cancer is in editing now.

Freedom**By Brian Sluga**

Universal forces beyond my grasp can take away everything from me but one thing, my freedom to communicate.

Life is an impersonal experience without resistance, ignorant of death. The false security of communication has no status of existence.

Freedom to be who I want to be, to control what goes on in my head. The freedom to let go of what's weighing me down.

Today, you don't want to try to take away from me my freedom. The sun will shine tomorrow, and the moon will always show up, outside my window.

Given all that, there are a few things that surprised me about generally feeling overlooked. It wasn't in front of me though.

I knew it to be true. My word is my oath as I hold out my hands. I see myself in front of a wide-open world, full of hopes and dreams. It's that brightness that fills me with life and indeed freedom.

Runners Water**By Brian Sluga**

Runners and drinking water
all dance together
in celebration

before they subside
in the end
the race succumbs to the finish
line

we all either stumble and fall
or crossover to the other side
into a lackadaisical world

of loneliness only a runner
would ever understand

Holiday Social Recap

On December 7th, the Gulf Coast Writers Association celebrated their inaugural holiday party with style and cheer. Check out all the details and lots of photos on the [GCWA Facebook page](#). If you haven't joined the page, be sure to do so – members are posting valuable information and updates regularly. A big "thank you" to the coordinators and members who donated items for baskets and personal books for sale.

