



GCWA is on the Move

Word of Life Church is remodeling, so July will be our last meeting at this location. To accommodate our growing membership, we are scouting a permanent home for 2025.

For the remainder of 2024, meeting sites may vary. Check the [website](#) for the most up-to-date information.

Thank you for your patience!

GCWA Annual Writing Contest Update

Our annual writing contest closed at the end of June with 89 entries, evenly distributed between fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Nine judges are hard at work reading and critiquing the final winners.

Winners will be announced at the August 17th GCWA monthly meeting, and a celebration is planned for our September session. Contest winners who wish to read their stories will be able to do so during that event.

Best of luck to all GCWA members who participated in this year's contest!

Looking for Volunteers!

The Communications Team needs volunteers!

We need one person to assist with Social Media engagement and multiple folks to take photos during our member events (one person per event).

Thank you for your support!

Email: Communications@GulfWriters.org

Your Presence is Requested

Are you present on the GCWA website? It's simple to start meeting friends, colleagues, and potential collaborators in GCWA!

As a dues-paying member, you will have access to information not available to the general public.

Log in with your email address and password. Your email address serves as your user ID. If your login is not recognized, select "forgot password," and you'll be directed to create a new one.

Create a Bio

Once you're logged in, check out the **MEMBERS** tab at the top of the page. From the drop-down menu, a click on **Members Area** will take you to your account. Upload your photo and bio (250 words) and other information you'd like to share.

Submit your Book(s) Details

To submit book covers and synopses, click on **Member Book Submission** Under the **MEMBERS** tab to find the instructions and form.

Last, but not least, take a look at the other member tabs: read a few bios and browse member works by author and genre! **Enjoy.**

GCWA Monthly Meetings

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

Saturday, 7/20/24 – [Judy Pearson](#), will share insights on the importance of accuracy and research in your stories.

Saturday, 8/17/24 – [Craig Handel](#) & [Dave Kratzke](#) reveal marketing tips to help sell your books.

Saturday, 9/21/24 – Celebrating GCWA Contest Winners

Saturday, 10/19/24 - TBA

Saturday, 11/16/24 - TBA

Visit www.Gulfwriters.Org/Calendar for current info



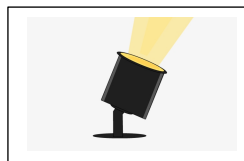
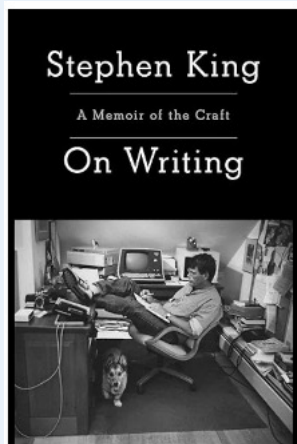
Writing Advice from Stephen King

By Charley Valera

At a recent panel discussion, I recommended authors read Stephen King's "[On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft](#)" for many reasons. King not only provides names, email addresses, and helpful resources but also answers questions we have as writers. If you purchase the e-book version, you can access links to editors, agents, publishing houses, and more.

This small but mighty book contains writing tips you can use immediately—here are 10.

1. **Read Often:** To write well, you must read extensively to help understand different styles and improve your writing.
2. **Write Every Day:** Consistency is crucial. Write daily, even if it's just a few hundred words.
3. **Cut Unnecessary Words:** Reread and remove words and phrases to make your writing clear and direct. It's easier the second time around.
4. **Use Active Voice:** Whenever possible, use active voice instead of passive to make your writing stronger and more engaging.
5. **Write for Yourself First:** Write with yourself as the primary audience. If you enjoy what you're writing, others likely will too.
6. **Develop Thick Skin:** Be prepared for criticism and rejection. Learn from it rather than be discouraged. Try not to be overly possessive.
7. **Write Honestly:** Be true to your voice and experiences. Authenticity resonates with readers.
8. **Create a Routine:** Establish a writing routine that works for you, aiming for a defined daily word count.
9. **Revise Thoroughly:** The first draft is just the beginning; the real work happens in revision.
10. **Avoid Adverbs:** Be critical of adverbs, especially in dialogue, as they can often weaken writing instead of strengthening it.



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT Curtis Ayers

Editor's Note: The Member Spotlight is a regular feature that celebrates our members' journeys and their accomplishments. This article is based on a recent interview with Curt.

The Journey of Every Man

Curt Ayers, author of three books, writing under the pen name, C.P. Tertius, shared his journey with Cheryl Lynn Dratler. Here are insights from the conversation.

Ask and you shall receive.

Curt has no secret formula. His first novel, "Every Man Truly Lives Alone," was published in 2011. He had lived in Southeast Asia for decades following the Vietnam War. In Bangkok at the time of publishing, he walked into booksellers and asked if they would put his book on their shelves – and they did. Back in the U.S., living in Mississippi, he participated in the Mississippi Book Festival and garnered speaking engagements and book signings at several libraries. Locally, he simply walked into Barnes & Noble and spoke with the manager. "There's no magic, you just ask, wherever you can."

Find a writing routine that works for you.

With extensive past technical and marketing writing, fiction was new to him. Curt's first challenge was developing a writing discipline. The routine that worked, and one he recommends to new writers, is to write "at least one page a day, no matter what. Sometimes it turns into two, or a whole chapter, but even if it is 2:00 a.m., write one page." This tactic helped him persevere, even when writing was not a priority. It took him two years to write the book and another year to find a publisher that would publish military "fiction" as well as veteran's memoirs.

Negotiate with and educate your editor.

The year he spent finding, then working with an editor was his biggest challenge. Curt explains that Thai and similar languages are very different from romance languages, taking years of immersion to perfect. His editor wanted to change language references—adding capital letters and sentence breaks when such things don't even exist in the language. He was also at odds when the editor requested more "colorful language" which he felt unnecessary. "I did add a few 'damns and hells' just to keep things moving forward."

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The Journey of Every Man

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Another common editorial concern was that the story needed more dialogue. He accomplished that in the latter part of the novel, but he chuckled. "I had to explain the protagonist didn't speak the language in the beginning! There just *wasn't* dialogue possible for the first part of the story." Later, the protagonist's developing language skills and the introduction of new characters allowed for more dialogue. Ultimately, this story structure suited Curt's goals.

Maintain integrity and anonymity where needed.

"Every Man..." could be a fictionalized version of much of Curt's life but he doesn't confirm nor deny it. A significant challenge was maintaining integrity about classified military activities and events that were important to his story line. He changed names, locations, times, and details of happenings while omitting certain information that may have compromised government operations and practices.

And, with keen sensitivity, Curt worked to portray the cultures and values of Southeast Asia accurately, receiving praise from readers who had "been there, done that." His cultural insights enabled him to paint a true picture of the plight of stateless refugees, which Curt wanted to convey to readers.

His two subsequent anthologies, "Tales from Home and Around the Globe" and "More Tales from Home and Around the Globe," are a wide mix of anecdotes. Curt uses fictitious protagonist names to protect the innocent – and the guilty. "I don't want to embarrass myself or anyone else," he said.

Go hybrid.

Curt used a hybrid publisher for his recent books, and highly recommends it as an alternate publishing venue. "It was a much faster process with the hybrid publisher."

Take Your Pick



Lifetime GCWA member and former president, Richard Georgian has amassed more than 3,500 books over many years and is offering them to GCWA members for a nominal donation—an amount of your choosing.

Richard's assortment ranges from classics to full collection sets, to rare, signed works. Covering several walls, you will find every genre including works on the writing craft as well. This is an amazing opportunity!

Members may call Richard after 10:00 a.m. at 239.989.6090 to schedule a visit, review titles, and enjoy home-baked cookies. When calling, please provide your name and mention you are a member of GCWA. Happy Reading!

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.

Petite Passages

We love printing GCWA members' short works!

Do you have a 250-word excerpt from your work? Maybe you are adventurous enough to write a Flash story of 250 words (brief fiction or nonfiction pieces that tell a whole story). Perhaps you have a poem that fits the bill.

Let us Share Your Petite Passage. Share it with us at Communications@GulfWriters.org

Editor's note: Here is an excerpt from Laura Schueneman's Work in Progress, "How to Murder Your Man's Mistress."

By Laura Schueneman

Large, silent snowflakes blanketed the American elms lining Central Park's streets, empty but for a single horse-drawn carriage. Its passenger, Bogdan Komarov, was reminded of holiday weekends at his dacha, riding in horse-drawn sleds and making snowmen with his daughter, who topped them with his nicest hats. The crime boss sighed and smiled.

Adjusting the red blanket covering his legs, Bogdan pulled out his cell phone, and typed. *Dear Heidi, lots of snow in New York. Mama and Papa miss you.*

The carriage approached a secluded spot with a view of Wollman Rink, where young families enjoyed an afternoon surrounded by gleaming skyscrapers. "Here, please," Bogdan said to the driver, and they came to a halt.

It was a moment before Bogdan spotted Yuri among the skaters. The accountant glided slowly, allowing his wife and giggling daughters, in matching pink coats, to catch up with him. The six-year-old, her tiny legs moving as fast as they could, reached out to her papa and fell, causing the four-year-old to collapse on top of her and dissolve into laughter.

"Watch this, girls," Yuri said to the three of them. The former Olympic hopeful accelerated around the rink before moving to the center, where he went into a tight spin, amid his family's cheering and clapping.

"No bowtie today, Yuri?" mumbled Bogdan as he aimed his Barretta M82 semi-automatic rifle. He fired. Yuri continued to spin, his blood spattering the surrounding skaters before his body fell to the ice, spinning three more times before slowing to a stop in a crimson puddle. Wollman rink filled with screams.