



GCWA 2025 WRITING CONTEST ACCEPTING SUBMISSIONS

The annual [GCWA 2025 Writer's Contest](#) is accepting submissions from through **June 30, 2025, at 11:59 p.m. EST**. The contest is open to all. With low entry fees and significant prizes for winners, this is a great opportunity for writers to get their words into the world.

Submission guidelines for fiction, nonfiction and poetry works are on the GCWA website, under the [Contest tab](#). Pieces must be submitted electronically. There is no limit on number of entries that may be submitted. The online submission form is located on the Contest page. Writers are encouraged to read previous winning entries.

Winners will be notified by August 15 with a celebration at the September meeting. First place entries will be published in The Florida Weekly.

GCWA Monthly Meetings

Mark your calendars for the following meeting dates @ 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Monthly meetings will now be at **St. Hilary's Episcopal Church** at 5011 McGregor Blvd, Fort Myers.

Saturday, 5/17/25

Don't miss this presentation: **Avoiding Trademark Troubles in Your Writing** with **Bridges DelPonte**. Please join us in May with this [Zoom link](#) if you are unable to attend live!

Saturday, 6/21/25 - TBA

Visit www.GulfWriters.Org for current info.

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.



April Meeting Recap

The meeting opened with the announcement of the death of **Leoma Lovegrove**, artist and Gulf Coast Writers benefactor (see article below). A condolence card was available for members to sign.

Our new, regular meeting location is **St. Hilary's Episcopal Church**, 5011 McGregor Blvd. in Fort Myers at the foot of the Midpoint Bridge.

Flyers were distributed and attendees were asked to share or post flyers at community clubhouses, churches or temples, with book club friends, and others, inviting them to come on the writing journey and join GCWA.

Raffle tickets were sold for one admission to the virtual **15th Annual Nonfiction Writers Conference** May 7-8. The event is sponsored by the Nonfiction Authors Association. New GCWA member, Suzanne Willis, won the raffle which garnered \$95 toward the **GCWA 30th Anniversary celebration November 8**.

Arthur Wenk, whose publications include prestigious academic works on music history, bibliography, and choral conducting and photography and western culture. He authored a series of murder mystery novellas with musicologist Axel Crochet as sleuth. He spoke about his writing journey, from academia to his novellas, reading several passages. He holds a doctorate and three master's degrees and is now taking a hiatus from writing to focus on a four-year theology program. He advised aspiring and established writers to "never give up."

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Win The Micro-Moments To Maximize Attention

By David Kratzke

Distractions are everywhere. It's likely your family, friends, or colleagues aren't even listening to you because they're busy checking incoming beeps on their phones.

According to Microsoft research from 2013, average attention spans have dropped to eight seconds. That's shorter than a goldfish, clocking in at nine seconds. With increasingly less time to make an impact, how can you serve up messages that resonate with your target audience?

Learn To Love Impressions

Much like Real Estate is about location, Marketing is about frequency.

Everyone wants to count the likes, shares, follows, comments, and clicks. Strong click-through rates and healthy engagement are critical, but you can't generate those results without a high frequency of impressions that impact your audience.

An impression is recorded when your digital ad or shared content appears on someone's screen. Impressions build your brand identity and expand your company's digital footprint. More impressions equate to reaching a larger audience and ultimately creating the opportunity for more prospects to click and ultimately buy your book or read your piece!

Win The Micro-Moments

Micro-moments are those slivers of time when you are multitasking. For example, when a commercial during a football game piques your interest, you look up that product on your phone from the couch. Or when you click a recipe while you're cooking that meal.

Be Top-Of-Mind At Decision Time

For instance, "decision time" could be conducting research at a store before making a purchase.

The ideas above all offer opportunities to engage customers and to help build a strong brand image. If you've effectively leveraged your impressions and won your fair share of micro-moments, then book sales and fans will follow as you and your writings are searched before even considering bestselling new releases.

Petite Passages

Editor's note: This prose poem was written by Claudia Geagan and published in Gyroscope Review, an independent poetry magazine. "Naked" was nominated by Gyroscope for a Pushcart Prize. Pushcart Prizes are awarded annually to writers whose pieces are nominated by the journals in which they are published.

Naked

By Claudia Geagan

Come to me, old women of the world. I want to line you up on a beach, arm in arm, head on shoulder, hand on hip, naked, exposed, vulnerable and glorious. I want to push the shutter of my lens, capture your brave eyes, enshrine your Caesarean scars, and expose your soft inner flesh.

Come to me you grandmothers and great aunties, you women who have defined your lives by other people. Take off your hand-painted tee shirts. Show me your pancaked feet. Do not be alarmed by your battle scars. I want to immortalize them in photos. Let me put my hand of love against the warmth of your rounded belly and point my fingers to your heart. Let those who have looked away so long feel the glow of your naked soul. Let them feel with their eyes your unfathomable worth.

Show off your skin and bone. Let the indifferent, even the cruel, look at the v's of our womanhood and know the seat of all creation.

We love printing GCWA members' short works!

Do you have a 250-word excerpt from your work, a flash story of 200- 250 words (brief fiction or nonfiction), or a poem that fits the bill?

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

Volunteers Needed!

Volunteers are needed to provide **water and treats** for monthly meetings. If you can help for one meeting, please contact [Christie Zarria](#).

Claudia Geagan thanks those who volunteered to serve as judges for the 2025 Writing Contest.

Leoma Lovegrave Passes

Beloved Lee County artist [Leoma Lovegrove](#) passed away April 10, 2025 at age 72. Leoma lived her life as a “work of art,” as a Pine Island artist known for her colorful, whimsical paintings. Leoma had [just opened her new gallery in downtown Fort Myers in November 2024](#). Her previous gallery in Matlacha was badly damaged by Hurricane Ian but had reopened before the move to Fort Myers.

When Jeanne Meeks first heard of Leoma’s losses, Jeanne asked her to write her story for the “Storm Stories” collection. Leoma shared her personal story of devastation in “Masterpieces from the Muck.” It was Leoma’s drive, “Ever Forward,” that motivated new artwork, that was displayed at the Alliance for the Arts book launch for “[Storm Stories – Hurricane Ian](#)”. The internationally known artist created and donated the book’s cover artwork in her unique and colorful style. Although she did reopen her island gallery after repairs, Leoma opened her new gallery in downtown Fort Myers in November 2024, with GCWA members in attendance. Leoma was the largest purchaser/reseller of “Storm Stories” books. She ordered and sold through her gallery well over a hundred copies. She was a great supporter of GCWA. She will be missed.



Leoma created this dramatic artwork specifically for the cover of “Storm Stories: Hurricane Ian”

Lee and Charlotte Libraries Offer Writing Programs

Mystery Writing Workshop, May 20**

Fort Myers Regional Library 1651 Lee St

***Writing workshops will resume monthly when the downtown library reopens following renovations. Check with the library for the reopening date. Each month features a different topic or genre.*

Join librarian, Tali Trenkamp, for a creative writing workshop that will explore the hallmarks of the Mystery genre, review famous examples of compelling mystery stories, and participate in group and individual writing activities. Refreshments provided.

Jump Write In, May 13 (and subsequent second Tuesdays) at Punta Gorda Library, 401 Shreve St.

Monthly sessions with Jahna Leonard explore creative writing with guided readings, exercises, and more! From poetry to prose, we will cover it all. Find tips, new ideas, and helpful hints, while having fun.

Write on @ The Writing Lab, May 8 (and subsequent second Thursdays) at the Punta Gorda Library.

The Writing Lab for monthly sessions where writers can work on a current project or pick up a new one. Whether writers are finishing a novel or perfecting poetry, this is a great space to work in.

Each session includes independent time for writing will be divided into two parts. The first part will focus on writing – short stories, novel-in-progress, or poetry. Staff are available to assist. Writers may share work, followed by facilitated discussion and feedback.

Lee Library System regularly presents **live and online events and programs**. Join bestselling author **Dr. David Rosmarin** as he discusses his impressive nonfiction work “[Thriving with Anxiety](#).” You don’t want to miss this practical, empowering presentation! Catch this Online Author Talk, May 7 at 2 PM. [Register](#) and see additional information [here](#).

Another May Online Author guest is **Liann Zhang**, author of the diabolical debut thriller, “[Julie Chan is Dead](#).” Upcoming and previously broadcast events can be found at the [Online Author Event website](#).

The GCWA Gazette

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Visiting Fort Myers, award-winning storyteller, **Sean Martinelli**, shared his experience finding warm stories in cold D.C. His new series, “The Heart of It,” airs on 40 stations in the nationwide TEGNA network. He reconnected with fans, shared two moving video segments, and answered questions.



Art Wenk presenting at GCWA Mtg | Credit: Laura Schueneman



Sean Martinelli and Family at GCWA Meeting | Credit: Mary Charles

Share Your Expertise

The Communications team continues to request additional support with providing meaningful content for our members.

Shoutout to Dave Kratzke who stepped in to write this month’s Craft Corner. With an association full of writers, many of you likely have a compelling “aha” that you can share with us. Stories are approximately 250 words.

Send your ideas to: communications@gulfwriters.org.

Other communication needs are around promoting GCWA across social media and backing up for our wonderful photographer, Ginger Wakem.

Thank you in advance