



December 2004 Issue

Do Unto Others

Next Meeting: December 16, 2004

- **6:45 – 7:15 pm Potluck Nosh:**
Bring your favorite snack and a brief work you'd like to read.
- **7:15 – 8:15 pm Guest Speaker:**
Frances Ely, CPA, will explain how writers can maximize their tax returns.
- **8:15 – 8:30 pm Club Business:**
Updates on outreach efforts.
- **8:30 – 8:50 pm Our Turn:**
Sara Martin will lead us in a discussion of what constitutes good description.

The Atlanta Writers Club was founded in 1914.

We are a social and educational club where local writers meet to discuss the craft and business of writing.

We also sponsor judged contests for our members and host expert speakers from the worlds of writing, publishing, and entertainment.

PLEASE NOTE:

PRE-MEETING NOSH: Potluck at Rock Spring Presbyterian Church's Loudermilk Activity Center, 6:45 - 7:15 pm. Bring your favorite snack and a brief reading to share with us.

AWC meets the **third Thursday** of each month, September through May.

MEETING LOCATION: Rock Spring Presbyterian Church (Loudermilk Activity Center in back): 1824 Piedmont Road NE 30324. This is south of the major intersection of Piedmont Road and Cheshire Bridge Road. For a detailed map: <http://mapsonus.switchboard.com>

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.atlantawritersclub.org

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Deadline for the January E-Quill is December 30th!

Contact acting E-Quill Editor: George Weinstein, gjweinstein@yahoo.com, 770-552-5887

WRITE IT AS YOU SEE IT: “Do Unto Others”
by George Weinstein

Last month I wrote a column about the benefits of getting others to edit your work, unaware that serendipity was a phone call away. A friend I’d met at the Iowa Summer Writing Festival called to ask me to critique the first hundred pages of his manuscript. Now here was my chance to give a fellow writer the help I recommend we all seek. What an honor that he asked me to review his work, to pass judgment on something into which he’d put his efforts and ego. And what an awesome responsibility!

What I had thought of as a noble task became scary once I started to edit his story. I’d read a scant ten pages in Iowa; the edgy prose and challenging protagonist I remembered became annoying and distasteful, respectively, across a hundred pages. So, how frank should I be? Does a critique necessitate brutal bluntness? Rather, should I use obliqueness and obfuscation to convey with subtlety how much more work I thought he needed to do? My negative reaction represented my opinion only. I could be way off, the same charge we always level at editors and agents when they reject our work.

I did what I’d want anyone to do for me: render opinions as honestly and politely as possible.

Here are some tips on offering feedback. Always critique the work, not the author. Note places where you like the prose: what strikes you as clever, intentionally humorous, or poetic. Offer suggestions for improvement rather than an unhelpful “This Needs Work.” If something you’d like to see changed is a matter of taste or opinion, as opposed to an unassailable grammar error, explain your reasoning if possible.

I didn’t expect my friend’s work to improve my own. However, a number of criticisms I noted in his piece also could apply to areas of my new novel-in-progress. I’m grateful that he’s helped my work too!

No one likes to receive negative feedback. I don’t know yet how my friend will react to the comments I sent back to him. But I do know that I gave his work the attention he requested and rendered my opinions honestly and with the sole intention to improve his story, as he—and all of us—deserve. This experience reinforced my view that we can’t know the quality of our writing until others read it. I hope my friend will seek multiple opinions. I hope he will use the suggestions he agrees with and discard those where he thinks I blew it and that his work will improve accordingly. I hope you get the chance to experience both sides of critiquing and see how your own writing will improve from giving as well as receiving it.

See you on December 16.

OFFICER LIST FOR THE ATLANTA WRITERS CLUB—2004-2005 Term:

President: George Weinstein, 770-552-5887	First VP: David Ryback, 404-377-3588
Membership VP: Angela Harvey, 404-578-2002	Treasurer: Kathleen Craft Boehmig, 678-393-9324
Publicity VP: Lu Ann Sodano, 770-739-4749	Secretary: Teresa Gernazian, 404-636-8447
Contests VP: Adrian Drost, 770-998-7015	Quill Editor: George Weinstein (acting)

OTHER CONTACTS:

Historian/Photographer/By-Laws: Adrian Drost, 770-998-7015	
Copy Editor: Richard Anderson, 770-992-8332	Poetry Editor: Dorothy Worth, 404-636-1316
Speaker Interviews: David Ryback, 404-377-3588	Achievements: Fran Stewart, 770-682-7483

PRE-MEETING NOSH: DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO READ?

Members or guests who wish to read a brief work they've written may do so during our 6:45-7:15 pre-meeting social. Please bring your favorite snack to share.

DECEMBER SPEAKER INTERVIEW: "Cold Finances from a Warm Lady"
by David Ryback

What a surprise! Expecting a dull lunch with a boring accountant, I made my way to Snellville for a first meeting with Frances Ely. Sure, we discussed taxes and finances, but in a way that was personal and exciting. Beyond that we talked about her two boats at the lake; her marksmanship with her semi-automatic, 9-millimeter SigSauer; and her six birds—five parakeets and a bright orange and turquoise sun conure parrot. Frances Ely breaks the mold of the accountant stereotype. She takes her clients under her wing and treats them as her "babies." I was ready to switch my account to her right then and there.

So what should she talk to our group about, she asked. "Don't worry about it," I said. I knew she has so much to share, both in terms of expertise and her ebullient and charismatic personality. So, if you want to hear about cold finances in a warm way, how to deal with them as a writer (or any other vocation), and get all that from a trustworthy and most interesting lady, don't you dare miss this next meeting. Or the IRS will get you!

DECEMBER OUR TURN: "Painting a Picture"

Following our guest speaker's presentation and a brief summary of club business, Sara Martin will lead us in a discussion of what elements good descriptions comprise. Please bring your favorite examples of spot-on details that nail down an unforgettable scene.

ANGELA HARVEY- THANKS!

Last month, Angela Harvey, one of our newest members, accepted the roll of Membership VP to help our club grow. She brings the enthusiasm and energy the club needs to rekindle its former vitality. Please welcome Angie (angelalenore@msn.com, 404-578-2002) and express your gratitude for her service.

MEMBERSHIP DUES PLEA #1

If you have not paid your annual \$30 by November 30, your membership has lapsed. If you value this newsletter, our monthly speakers, and the fellowship and wisdom of your peers, please use the attached membership form on page 7 and mail your dues to Kathleen Boehmig today!

MEETING RECAP: NOVEMBER 18, 2004**by George Weinstein**

While our turnout remains low (fourteen members and one guest), our enthusiasm is high. Four members read brief works during the potluck nosh. Our guest speaker was Tommy Nobis, All-Pro linebacker and a leader in stewardship and community service. Mr. Nobis began by saying that he's always tried to follow the career advice of his parents: "Find something you really enjoy." That led directly to his involvement in football, which he has enjoyed, and which has rewarded him in every way possible, for forty-nine years.

Mr. Nobis's family and coaches stressed the value and necessity of giving help to others in the community. In 1969, while still the star player for the Atlanta Falcons, Mr. Nobis helped lead the founding committee for Georgia Special Olympics. His involvement in that program continues today. Helping others win, he said, is even more satisfying than your own victories.

Prior to his retirement from the gridiron in 1976, he founded the Tommy Nobis Center in Marietta. In its first year, the center trained twenty-nine disabled clients so they could get jobs. As of today, more than twelve thousand men, women, and children have completed training. Nearly everyone who undergoes the thirteen-month (on average) skill-development regimen finds productive work, and the vast majority retains those jobs or receives promotions. The food industry, corporate mailrooms, and grocery chains widely support the Nobis Center and benefit from such well-trained and motivated employees.

At the end of every day, Mr. Nobis says, he asks himself, "What kind of impact have I had on somebody else?" That is his litmus test for success. All of us can apply that to our own conduct and careers. Other lessons he's learned include the following:

- You're never too old to learn something new.
- The real professionals in any walk of life work continue to improve their skills; they study those who are successful and learn from them.
- Positive involvement in others' lives is infinitely more satisfying than self-absorption.

Following Mr. Nobis' speech, George Weinstein dispensed with the post-session topic to discuss vital club business: shrinking membership and our inability to attract many new members. Given that Atlanta continues to experience substantial growth, it is disappointing that more writers are not learning about the club or, if informed, are unwilling to join due to the timing and location of our meetings. We enjoyed a frank discussion about the necessity of moving the club closer to the northern arc of metro Atlanta, where the majority of growth is occurring, and holding meetings on weekends instead of battling the Thursday-night rush hour. More discussions on this topic will continue. No changes to meeting time and location would occur until after May 2005.

MEMBERSHIP DUES PLEA #2

If you have not paid your annual \$30 by November 30, your membership has lapsed. If you value this newsletter, our monthly speakers, and the fellowship and wisdom of your peers, please use the attached membership form on page 7 and mail your dues to Kathleen Boehmig today!

FROM THE TIP OF MY PEN – A Writer’s Tip of the Month:
“New Year’s Resolutions for Writers”
by Fran Stewart

1. I will write nothing but scintillating prose, if I can figure out how.
2. I will avoid clichés like the plague.
3. I will maintain a consistent point of view at all times. She thinks she can do this?
4. I will use spell check. Eye Will knot trussed spill Czech.
5. I will buy useful reference books. I will use them.
6. I will write every day.
7. I will not compare myself to published writers (such as Sue Grafton who wrote this rule).
8. I will encourage other writers.
9. I will ask opinions only of people whose opinions I trust.
10. I will read. I will learn from my reading.
11. I will laugh when I think I have writer’s block. Laughter opens the valves.
12. I will make profiles for my characters. I will therefore recall who has black hair and who has blond.
13. I will keep a list of these resolutions and will resolve them again next year.

MEMBERSHIP DUES PLEA #3

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ACHIEVEMENTS & ACCOLADES

(Submit all Achievements & Accolades to Fran Stewart, myownship@earthlink.net, 770-682-7483)

Four AWC members, **Kathleen Craft Boehmig, Ava Chambers, Margo Fallis, and Penny Holder**, have stories in the just-released book *Sacred Stones*. The publisher, Maril, is doing two more books: *Sacred Fire* and *Sacred Water*.

Past president **Dr. James C. Bryant** had an article, “Enduring Legacies,” published in the November issue of *Savannah Magazine*.

Fran Stewart served on a panel of writers at the Cape Fear Crime Festival in Wilmington, NC October 30th. Doggie In The Window Press, a small, independent publishing company in Duluth, issued the second edition of her mystery, *Orange as Marmalade*, October 21st. *Yellow as Legal Pads*, her second murder mystery, is also being released in December by Doggie In The Window Press.

JANUARY MEETING PREVIEW

Ken Foskett is the author of *Judging Thomas*, a comprehensive and authoritative biography about Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, which reveals much about American—and Georgian—history while it portrays this lightning rod for political, racial, and gender-conduct issues. Mr. Foskett is an investigative journalist for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.

SPRING WRITING CONTESTS

Categories:

Humor (prose or poetry)	Maximum 1000 words
Flash Fiction	Maximum 250 words
Dialogue	Maximum 1000 words
Inspirational	Maximum 1500 words

Objectives: Provide encouragement, challenge and value to promote writing.

Eligibility:

Paid members may submit one entry per category.
Work must be original, non-published, never have won a cash prize or award at any organization.
Contests are open to current paid members with strict adherence to submission procedures.

Submission Procedures:

Entries must be typewritten on letter-size white paper in standard font size and character. Prose must be double-spaced. Poetry may be single-spaced.
Submit only one copy; retain one copy for your own files.
Place Category and Title in the upper left corner of the first page, and number subsequent pages.
Place Title in upper left corner of all pages.
No personal name on the manuscript!
Include a 3x5 card with: *author's name, title, category, and number of words.*

Awards:

First place	\$50
Second place	\$30
Third place	\$20

Honorable mention cited at the discretion of the judges.
If fewer than 3 entries per category are submitted, the board reserves the right to modify the awards.

Deadline:

Entries must be received by Adrian Drost no later than **March 17, 2005**.
No time extensions are allowed.

Mail to:

Adrian Drost, 500 Periwinkle Drive, Roswell, GA 30075-4328
Entries can also be handed to Adrian at the March meeting.

Membership Dues, Donations and Information Update

Please make checks payable to The Atlanta Writers Club (AWC):

2004-2005 one year Membership Dues: \$30 per member \$ _____

Donation in the amount of \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Please mail with checks payable to *The Atlanta Writers Club* to
Kathleen Boehmig, 740 Gable Ridge Rd., Roswell, GA 30076

- Dues must be paid no later than November 30, 2004 to remain active.
- Non-active members will be removed from *The E-Quill* mailing list.
- Current membership year runs from 9/1/04 through 8/31/05

Member Information: (Please complete this section in full to update our files.)

Name _____

Address _____ City/Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____ Birth Date (MM/DD) _____

E-mail address _____

Sponsor (if any) _____

Tell us about yourself:

1. Please circle your three primary interests novel/ poetry/ short-story / humor/
 nonfiction/ fiction/ juvenile/ travel/
 drama/ screen-writing/ other

2. Please identify you experience level published submitted none

3. Please tell us how long you have been writing <5 yrs <10 <20 or >20

4. Please tell us what you expect from the club _____

Date: ____/____/____