



December 2005 Issue

**Peace, Joy, and a
Top Ten List!**

Next Meeting: December 17, 2005

Early Starting Time (December only)

- **12:30 – 12:45 Potluck Nosh:** Bring your favorite snack.
- **12:45 – 1:00 Share Your Writing:** Read a short work of two minutes or less.
- **1:00 – 2:30 Guest Speaker:** Shelia P. Moses, award-winning novelist and biographer, will discuss writing young-adult fiction. Book-signing will follow Q&A.
- **2:30 – 2:35 Club Business:** Mid-year review.
- **2:35– 3:00 Our Turn:** Buzz Bernard facilitates “Writing the Synopsis.”

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.

NEW MEETING LOCATION: Sandy Springs Regional Library Meeting Room: 395 Mount Vernon Highway, Sandy Springs, GA 30328. (404) 303-6130. The library is one mile north of I-285 and west of GA 400. For detailed directions, look inside this issue, view our website, or go to <http://mapsonus.switchboard.com>

VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
www.atlantawritersclub.org

2005-2006 Schedule of Saturday Club Meetings (1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.):

- **September 17, 2005** Patrice Dickey, motivational speaker on creativity
- **October 15, 2005** James A. Moore, horror writer
- **November 19, 2005** Jedwin Smith, journalist, nonfiction author, two-time Pulitzer Prize nominee
- **December 17, 2005** Shelia P. Moses, award-winning novelist and biographer
- **January 21, 2006** Peter Bowerman, freelance writer and motivational speaker
- **February 18, 2006** Laurie Abkemeier, nonfiction literary agent for DeFiore & Company
- **March 18, 2006** Spoken Magazine (members read their works) hosted by Kathleen Mainland
- **April 15, 2006** Maralys Wills, author in six genres, award-winning educator
- **May 20, 2006** Darnell Arnoult, poet and novelist

Deadline for January E-Quill submissions is December 26th

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

WRITE IT AS YOU SEE IT: “The Infamous End of the Year List”
by George Weinstein, President

After a few quarts of eggnog at the holiday office party, book reviewers enjoy compiling lists of the year’s best work: Fiction, Biographies More Fictional Than Actual Novels, Latest Apologist Screeds, etc.

Many of us who write for publication dream of seeing our own books appear on such Top Ten lists. I could encourage you to envision such a list, to see every detail with your book in the number one slot, and to voice your desire to the universe; or, even better, I could implore you to sit down and finish writing the darn thing. However, in an effort to amuse you and simultaneously fill up my allotted editorial space—hoping you won’t realize that I have absolutely nothing worth passing on this month, no pearls, no insights, zip—I’ve dispensed with my usual kindly and earnest advice-column blather and forthwith present my Top Ten List of Books People Have Not Written, but I Wish They Would:

10. Sins of Omission: A Compendium of Everything You Could Do Instead of Writing—Why You’d Make More Money but Hate Every Second of It
9. Sins of Commission (Sequel to #10): Okay, You’re Writing, But Are You Telling a Story or Merely Putting Random Words and Punctuation on a Page?
8. Who Proofreads the Infinite Monkeys’ Typing? Exciting Careers in the Field of Copyediting
7. First, Let’s Kill All the Agents: Shakespeare’s Early, Forgotten Works
6. Ten Little Publishers: How Agatha Christie Dealt with Rejection
5. Marquis de Sade Even Scribbled with His Own Excrement—Removing Your Last Excuse Not to Write
4. “Because That’s Where the Money Is”—Why Willie Sutton Robbed Banks Instead of Self-Publishing
3. From *Green Eggs and Spam* to *Hurry Potter*: Make a Fortune on the Fringes of Plagiarism
2. They Won’t Let Me Sleep! The Care and Feeding of Incurable Characters
1. Does Anyone Miss the Thursday Night Rush Hour? The Rebirth of The Atlanta Writers Club

Looking forward to whatever you have to say on Saturday, December 17.

OFFICER LIST FOR THE ATLANTA WRITERS CLUB—2005-2006 Term:

President: George Weinstein, 770-552-5887 **First VP:** Joan Harmon, 404-351-5691
Membership VP: Kathleen Craft Boehmig, 678-393-9324 **Treasurer:** Adrian Drost, 770-998-7015
Publicity VP: Lu Ann Sodano, 770-739-4749 **Secretary:** Angela Harvey, 404-578-2002
Contests VP: Richard Anderson, 770-830-6131 **Quill Editor:** George Weinstein, 770-552-5887

OTHER CONTACTS:

Historian/Photographer/By-Laws: Adrian Drost, 770-998-7015
Copy Editor: Richard Anderson, 770-830-6131 **Poetry Editor:** Dorothy Worth, 404-636-1316
Speaker Interviews: Joan Harmon, 404-351-5691 **Achievements:** Fran Stewart, 770-682-7483

NOSH & READ—Early Start in December

Please bring your favorite snack to share during our pre-meeting social that begins, this month only, at 12:30 p.m. At 12:45, members or guests can read a brief work they've written. Please limit your reading selection to two minutes or less.

DECEMBER SPEAKER INTERVIEW

“I Gave My Heart to the Pages of My Stories” by Joan F. Harmon, First VP

“It is only dreaming when you want to do something, but it is different when you come to the realization that you really can do it. When I knew that I really would be a writer, I gave my heart to the pages of my stories,” says Shelia P. Moses, our guest speaker for December 17. She was named a finalist in the 2004 National Book Award for Young People's Literature and won the Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book Award for *The Legend of Buddy Bush*.

As Shelia introduces the family and friends who lived on Rehobeth Road in Rich Square, North Carolina, where she grew up, the ninth of ten children, her heart does indeed shine through the pages. The story, told from the viewpoint of twelve year old Pattie Mae Sheals, is set in the year 1947 in rural North Carolina. Although fictional, the story is based on the real events surrounding Goodwin "Buddy" Bush, who lived in Rich Square, North Carolina. He was falsely accused of raping a white woman, and (physically) survived the brutality of racism by getting away from the vigilantes who were intent on taking his life.

The years of research and interviews from her work with Dick Gregory and his memoir *Callus on My Soul* were a true test to her commitment to writing professionally, the author says. Her intense research also successfully captured the essence of Dred Scott's experiences as a slave and his eleven-year legal struggle to become free, through her latest book, the engaging slave narrative *I, Dred Scott*, written for ages 10-14.

Come meet, greet, and dialogue with this unique author as we seek to raise our level of consciousness another notch. After speaking with us, Shelia will sign copies of her books for those of you wishing to complete your holiday gift list. You may also visit her website at www.mosesbooks.com.

DECEMBER OUR TURN

Buzz Bernard will lead a discussion about writing the synopsis, often cited as the most difficult project that would-be authors must undertake. Many agents and publishers insist on seeing this all-encompassing, absurdly brief summary of your epic that spans tens of thousands of words. As with the query letter topic we covered in November, please bring examples of what's worked for you and what hasn't.

NOVEMBER MEETING RECAP

by John Berlin

“Hear Ye! Hear Ye!” It was Standing Room Only at the November meeting of The Atlanta Writers Club. You may have celebrated Halloween, but if you missed this meeting you passed on the biggest treat.

Now why was that, said the writer to his quill?

Well, it was because the meeting captured hearts with the three ingredients for which we all thirst: laughter, learning, and language. And there were a number of additional pluses.

We had a record-breaking forty-one attendees, which had the nice effect of giving one a sense of great momentum—always a good feeling for a writer.

The meeting had a unique pre-start presentation by Kathleen Craft Boehmig and George Weinstein, with a model program that The Atlanta Writers Club intends to take on the road to schools and community groups. Entitled, “The Will And Wherewithal To Write” this paradigm investigates why we do, or do not, write, and articulates the treasure chest of tools, methods, and resources available to anyone. I learned by just listening to the group participate as it worked through the program.

Things just kept getting better when Correspondent/Author Jedwin Smith stood up and spun his magic. He's a low-key, real-talking, hard-walking, heart-giving, tough-living guy, who happens to be an author who writes like he talks. (Shades of the opening workshop by Kathleen and George—I wonder if they planned it that way?) Jedwin is of the earth and has stayed where he was made: simple and sinful, yet bountiful and a fountain full of gratitude and gracious words. What a gift, as he captured and enraptured us with his life lived on life's terms. Even the meeting room itself was smiling.

For a close we had an excellent and highly useful presentation with tips and samples of Query Letters to get your book past the wild animals that guard the seemingly secret doors of “The Publishers.”

JANUARY MEETING PREVIEW

Award-winning freelance writer, author of the best-selling *The Well-fed Writer*, and marketing guru Peter Bowerman will speak to us about promoting yourself and your book to maximize sales, ignite the all-important Word of Mouth that spreads your message before you, and fan the flames all the way to the bestseller list.

FALL WRITING CONTESTS—“The Write and the Wrong”

by Richard Anderson, Contests VP

November 19th. The best efforts of 20 members of The Atlanta Writers Club who submitted 38 contest entries have been received and catalogued.

This date is the anniversary of another literary treasure. President Abraham Lincoln delivered his Gettysburg Address 142 years ago, dedicating the national cemetery where thousands of Union and Confederate soldiers had died in fierce battle five months prior. Legend and schoolbooks have Lincoln reading the speech he had scratched on the back of an envelope the previous day. In fact, he drafted his address days earlier and edited it several more times on the eve of the Gettysburg ceremonies.

Few of us will ever write the equal of this 271-word masterpiece, but we can learn from it the importance of careful and thoughtful editing to achieve precision in our words and ideas, to achieve a deep emotional response, and to eradicate errors.

As I compiled the fall contest entries I was astonished at the lack of editing apparent in some entries—missing words, missing identification, missing page numbers, even missing pages. While many entries followed the rules perfectly, many more than I would have expected from mature writers did not. I could not read all of the entries (and do not presume to judge them); yet, there seemed to me a clear correlation between the quality of writing and adherence to contest rules.

All contests and publications have submission rules. Even minor infractions are sufficient for works to be rejected without ever being read. We strive to accommodate all contest entries unless there are serious breaches in format or word count, so the judges read almost all submissions. But if they become confused or irritated because a piece lacks identification or numbering on all pages, your chance for a favorable review is diminished. Careless attention to such details suggests careless writing.

It will be interesting to check my conjectures when the judges return their assessments of the contest entries in January. Of course that's an illusion that neither they nor you will ever know.

CLUB-SPONSORED CRITIQUE GROUP CONTINUES

The Atlanta Writers Club sponsors a critique group at the Village Veranda coffee shop in Alpharetta on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month from 7 to 9 p.m. The next meetings are December 14 and 28. All members and guests are welcome. This group focuses solely on critiquing one another's work. The only rules are as follows:

- 1) Limit of 500 words for the piece to be critiqued
- 2) Bring at least ten copies so others can read along and provide written comments
- 3) Arrive on time and sign up, since only eight people can share their work on a given night

The Village Veranda (678-240-9202) is located at 52-B North Main St. (Hwy. 9) in Alpharetta, on the same block as the Welcome Center. Heading north on N. Main St., turn left onto Church St. and then make an immediate left to access the Village Veranda parking lot. We meet upstairs.

FROM THE TIP OF MY PEN – A Writer’s Tip of the Month:

“Resolutions, Again” by Fran Stewart

Last year at this time, I came up with a list of what I considered to be quite reasonable resolutions. Resolutions for writers, that is. In the past year, I’ve pulled out that list occasionally and reflected, as writers will do, on it. This year is a rewrite, called for by my Inner Editor. Here they are:

- I will write nothing but scintillating prose, if I can figure out how.
Oh, nonsense. Scintillating prose gets old fast if that’s all there is. Good old short Saxon words and simple straightforward sentences have a lot to be said for them. Forget *scintillate* and go for *sense*.
- I will avoid clichés like the plague.
I’ve managed to use a few in my books, usually between quotation marks, coming out of the mouths of characters who tend to think in clichés. I’m going to relax and allow a few here and there.
- I will maintain a consistent point of view at all times. She thinks she can do this?
This I do only because my editor redlines POV’s when I’m not consistent. I get away with it by hitting *enter* twice and getting into someone else’s head. Where there’s a will, there’s a way (see cliché resolution above).
- I will use spell check. Eye well knot trussed spill chick. – This one stays as is.
- I will buy useful reference books. I will use them. – So does this one.
- I will write every day.
Nope. Some days I will think a lot, or do other things like buying groceries. Some days I will allow myself the time to nurture myself. And then I will go into a long spell where I write every day, all day long, and thoroughly enjoy it.
- I will not compare myself to published writers (such as Sue Grafton who wrote this rule).
Yes, I will. I will compare like crazy, and I will learn from their strengths. I will also learn from what I perceive to be their mistakes. I will, however, never get discouraged by those comparisons.
- I will encourage other writers. – Yes.
- I will ask opinions only of people whose opinions I trust. – Yes.
- I will read. I will learn from my reading. – Yes.
- I will laugh when I think I have writer’s block. Laughter opens the valves. Big fat YES.
- I will make index cards for my characters. I will therefore recall who has black hair and who has blond.
This year, I will remember to look at those index cards.
- I will keep a list of these resolutions and will resolve them again next year.
Or revise them as necessary. I love re-writing!

ACHIEVEMENTS & ACCOLADES

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

Bernie Blanton wrote a devotional for the stewardship booklet of Oakhurst Baptist Church in Decatur and has one in their Advent Publication.

Sara Hines Martin signed her book *More Than Petticoats: Remarkable Georgia Women* at Westville's first annual book fair. She will speak about her book and sign it at the Jimmy Carter Center on December 15th.

Membership Dues, Donations and Information Update

Please make checks payable to The Atlanta Writers Club:

2005-2006 Membership Dues: \$30 per member \$ _____

Note: Students, ages 25 and under, pay only \$20 year-round

Donation in the amount of \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Please mail with checks payable to *The Atlanta Writers Club* to
Adrian Drost, 500 Periwinkle Drive, Roswell, GA 30075

- Unpaid members will be removed from *The E-Quill* mailing list.
- 2005 Membership Year runs from 9/1/05 through 8/31/06

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

Name _____

Address _____ City & Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

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: ____/____/____