



February 2006 Issue

Board Meeting Report

Next Meeting: February 18, 2006

- **1:00 – 1:15** *Potluck Nosh*: Bring your favorite snack.
- **1:15 – 1:30** *Share Your Writing*: Read a short work of two minutes or less.
- **1:30 – 2:15** *Guest Speaker*: Laurie Abkemeier, nonfiction literary agent for DeFiore & Company will reveal how to get an agent and a book deal.
- **2:15 – 2:30** *Club Business*: Spring Contest, Spoken Magazine, and club improvements.
- **2:30 – 3:00** *Our Turn*: Barbara Jones will tackle political correctness in writing and will invite you to share your own literary pet peeves.

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, 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** TBA
- **May 20, 2006** Darnell Arnoult, poet and novelist

Deadline for March E-Quill submissions is February 25th

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

WRITE IT AS YOU SEE IT: “January 2006 Board Meeting Report”
by George Weinstein, President

The AWC board—composed of the officers listed at the bottom of this page—met on January 21 to discuss further improvements to the club. Here’s what we came up with:

- We’re throwing out the confusing, archaic method of marking time in this club, where we didn’t have a “year” that coincided with the calendar, but rather a “term” that began in September of one year and went to August of the next. Given that the club is going on ninety-two years old, remnants of past ways of doing things have continued to cling to some of our procedures and structure. No more! Current members hereby have their memberships extended from August to the end of December 2006, giving everyone four months free of charge. All new memberships will run according to the calendar year.
- Everything has a cost however. Website maintenance fees and postage charges continue to rise, and we’re a cash-poor club, so we need to raise our dues by a few dollars. To soften the blow, we’re giving everyone this September through December for free. Starting in January 2007, though, memberships will increase by—drum roll, please—\$3. Three bucks. That’s all. It’s the expense of one cup of coffee for you, but for the club, it’s the difference between solvency and depleting our meager savings. I bet I had you scared for a moment.
- Because we’re extending everyone’s memberships, officer roles get extended until January 2007 as well, so you’re stuck with the others and me until then. Sorry. Like the rest of America, we’ll hold elections in the fall. Insert emotionally charged political comment here.
- One of the AWC’s former presidents has offered a very generous endowment to keep the club in the black, with only one condition: we need to achieve tax-exempt status first, so that contributions would be counted as charity. This would enable members to declare a deduction on their income taxes. That’s a tall order, but our own Adrian Drost is already pursuing this. Much work lies ahead. We’ll keep you posted about this exciting development.
- We’re planning a couple of summer workshops. Marketing guru Peter Bowerman has agreed to teach a half-day course on book promotion. I’m soliciting ideas for another summer workshop. Someone suggested a seminar on how to write and read poetry. Please let me know if you have any other ideas and we’ll pick the most popular one.
- Angela Harvey is investigating the creation of a blog or message board for our website, and we’d like to add more links, so your recommendations are welcomed.

As you can see, we keep trying to make the club more useful to you and give you the best value possible. If you have other ideas, please contact me now or at our next meeting on February 18.

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

Please bring your favorite snack to share during our pre-meeting social that begins at 1:00 p.m. At 1:15, members or guests can read a brief work they've written. Please limit your reading selection to two minutes or less.

FEBRUARY SPEAKER INTERVIEW

“If Only We Could Find the Magic” by Joan F. Harmon, First VP

How do you grab the attention of a publisher, other than submitting an innovative, novel idea that appeals to the masses? We might dream of a fairy godmother, magic wand in hand, sending a spark of light and awaken those busy publishers to the captivating manuscript in front of them. Oh yes, if only we could find the magic.

Literary agent Laurie Abkemeier comes as close to being a fairy godmother as any author could expect. She is fully committed to the authors she represents, directing the promotion of their nonfiction work through editing, contract negotiation, press releases, and sometimes input for the jacket design. She enjoys what she's doing and is good at what she does.

Since becoming an agent in 2003 with DeFiore and Company, headquartered in New York, Laurie has placed nearly two dozen books with various publishers such as Algonquin, Ballantine, Penguin, Rodale, Ten Speed, and Warner. She was responsible for five *New York Times* bestsellers while working as an editor for Hyperion.

Humor and cleverness are what gets Laurie's attention. Her recent success with author John Grogan and his book *Marley and Me: Life and Love with the World's Worst Dog* goes into its twentieth printing this week with 870,000 copies to date. *Marley and Me* climbs into the number two spot of the *New York Times* nonfiction Bestseller List this week, according to John Grogan's blog site.

With a busy work schedule and two young children, four and seven, Laurie has graciously agreed to speak with us on Saturday, February 18, about writing, publishing, and promoting nonfiction work. Don't miss the opportunity to explore the nonfiction world of writing with this highly successful literary agent who maintains an office in the Atlanta metro area.

FEBRUARY OUR TURN

“Political correctness.” The term drips with contempt and is usually uttered with a sneer, but we've all seen attempts to appease everyone invade our language. Writing that could soar instead lies burdened under cumbersome he/she sentence structures and cloying inconclusiveness that couldn't possibly offend anyone—except those of us with an ear for lyrical prose. AWC member, award-winning writer, and satirist Barbara Jones takes on this barbed topic and invites you to share your own literary pet peeves.

JANUARY MEETING RECAP

by **George Weinstein**

Author of the *Well-fed Writer* series and publicity expert Peter Bowerman launched his January 21 discussion with some advice: to sell books, we must fall in love with S&M—that is, Sales and Marketing. Self-promotion is simply our means of letting the world know we're out there and that we have books to sell.

From book title to press releases, we must make a consistent promise that our offerings match consumers' needs. Remember that everyone has a built-in tuner dialed to station WIIFM, What's In It For Me. Thus, we need to express the merits of our books in terms of benefits for the readers. Rather than tell what the book is, tell the audience what it will do for them.

Part of effective self-promotion is determining one's own Unique Selling Proposition. What do you do better than others, or what does your book do that others don't? Remember to express those qualities in terms of benefits for your audience.

Peter concluded with advice about getting the writing right. Write the way you talk at your best, and be sure to edit and proofread your work. Tell your audience only what they need to understand, instead of regurgitating everything you know. Be a storyteller, since people love stories and perceive a good tale as a benefit to them. And finally, embrace self-delusion: don't listen to anyone who tells you not to follow your dreams.

Following Peter's talk, Richard Anderson distributed the Fall Contest Awards (see below), and Mike Buchanan led a discussion of other marketing ideas that led to publicity and book sales.

FALL CONTEST WINNERS

<u>Category</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Award</u>
Light Verse	John Sheffield	<i>What Punctuation?</i>	First Place
	John Witkowski	<i>Parliament of Owls</i>	Second Place
	James Stevens	<i>Macbeth, Like</i>	Third Place
	Terry Segal	<i>The Gravity Game</i>	Honorable Mention
Juvenile	Adrian Drost	<i>The Ladybug</i>	First Place
	Sara Martin	<i>The Princess Becomes Queen</i>	Second Place
	Joan Harmon	<i>Down Into the Dark</i>	Third Place
	Edna Hawkins	<i>Two Skunks Scent Us Traveling</i>	Honorable Mention
Short Story	Edna Hawkins	<i>All God's Children Got Shoes</i>	First Place
	Pat Patterson	<i>If Only</i>	Second Place
	Buzz Bernard	<i>Blowup</i>	Third Place
	James Stevens	<i>The Curse of James Dean</i>	Honorable Mention
Serious Poetry	Terry Segal	<i>Free</i>	First Place
	Pat Patterson	<i>Winter Wind</i>	Second Place
	Joni Vance	<i>Weight of Reality</i>	Third Place
Nonfiction	Patrice Dickey	<i>Back to the Garden</i>	First Place
	Kathleen Boehmig	<i>Song of the Mockingbird</i>	Second Place
	Joni Vance	<i>One Eighth of an Inch</i>	Honorable Mention
	James Sevens	<i>Dinner at Mr. B's</i>	Honorable Mention

REMEMBERING EDNA HAWKINS

Our dear friend and longtime club member Edna Hawkins passed away on January 11. Here are some memories contributed by her contemporaries and admirers:

Edna Hawkins was always the most enterprising writer I have known. I surmise that she entered just about every contest the club ever held and won many of them. She always seemed to have lively opinions and was willing to express them in speech or in print. Her sense of humor was always stimulated by the wonders and worth of the natural world. She lived richly with her perception of humanity and the truths she daily discovered. We shall miss her sorely, and are saddened by the sense of loss we feel.

—Jeanne Osborne Shaw

Edna was a fine writer, prolific in many genres and well published. She wrote up to the end. I'll always remember that tall, stately, nice-looking woman.

—Dr. Kathleen Byers Lindsey

At Edna Hawkins' funeral, her granddaughter Holly, a professional journalist who works in Los Angeles, paid tribute to Edna for heading her into her career. "Edna was not a Faulkner," Holly said, "but she was an inspiration." Edna took Holly to the public library at age eight to get her own card. She continued to keep in touch with Holly throughout her journey. That word "inspiration" said what I was thinking about Edna. That's what she was to me. In early December, she called me to talk about the fall contest. Edna, at 92, had entered all five categories. I (age withheld) had entered only two. Every month, when I picked up the free Senior News at the local library, I looked to see if Edna had a poem published therein. Usually she did. She wrote prolifically. At her age and almost totally confined to her bedroom, she had devotionals for teenagers published last fall. She must have kept in touch with the world of youth to the extent that an editor found her writings relevant to the readership. Primarily, she WROTE. She dug into the treasure trove of her life experiences, memories, and imagination to produce humor, serious pieces, poetry, and prose. I hope to still be writing and being published at age 92, inspired by Edna's example.

—Sara Hines Martin

Edna has taught me so much from her lifetime love of the written word and her zeal to get it right every time. Her legacy lives on in her work and in the very talented and accomplished writers she raised: her daughter Carole and granddaughter Holly.

—George Weinstein

In Edna's own words:

When I am gone, release me, let me go;
I have so many things to see and do.
You mustn't tie yourself to me with tears.
Just be happy that we had so many years.

I gave you my love, you can only guess
How much you gave me in happiness,
I thank you for the love you each have shown,
But now it's time I traveled alone.

So grieve a while for me, if grieve you must,
Then let your grief be comforted by trust.
It's only for a while that we must part,
So bless the memories within your heart.

I won't be far away, for life goes on,
So if you need me, call, and I will come.
Though you can't see, or touch, I'll be near
And if you listen with your heart, you'll hear
All of my love around you, soft and clear.

And then, when you must come this way alone,
I'll greet you with a smile, and a "Welcome
Home."

THE SPRING CONTESTS

By Richard Anderson

Spring brings light and growth, rebirth and revival; it's a time to plant new seeds and to watch Nature's wondrous return from dormancy. Echoing the season, our spring contests are designed to rejuvenate our writing, to challenge us in new modes of growth and to bring forth exuberance and joy.

This spring we offer four contest categories; each should entertain and challenge you while also giving you practice with a valuable writing skill or tool. They may also enhance your finances, as up to \$100 in prize money will be given out in each category. While these forms are short, they are not simple. **Read the rules on page 7 carefully.** Then start writing! Entries are due not later than **18 March 2006**. Here are the four Categories:

EDNA HAWKINS MEMORIAL INSPIRATIONAL CONTEST

This writing should appeal to our nobler thoughts and emotions. It may be motivational, stimulating, provocative, encouraging or all of the above. It may be fiction or nonfiction. There is a 500-word limit.

FIBONACCI FICTION

This form will challenge our creativity and skill with words. It highlights the effects of sentence structure and length on meaning and emotions. It is based on the mathematical Fibonacci series, an infinite series of numbers that starts with zero and ends up with, well, infinity. Each succeeding member of the series is the sum of the preceding two, thus:
0,1,1,2,3,5,8,13,21,34,55,etc.

Our series will be abbreviated. Each sentence in the Fibonacci story has the corresponding number of words as the series. The first paragraph starts with a one-word sentence and ends with a 55-word sentence. Sentences in the second paragraph descend from 34 words long to one, according to the series. Total length of the story is 231 words in 19 lines in two paragraphs. For example: Fire? Ice? Which one! I can't tell. My senses are totally warped. Etc.

THE 360

This form requires us to make every word count and is a triple challenge to our imaginations. The 360 is a triplet of stories, fiction or nonfiction, each *exactly* 60 words long. The last somehow circles back to the first, e.g. via a character or scene or phrase; the second should nicely arc across the other two, but each has its own title and must be complete in itself. You may wish to use a different voice or POV in each 60-word story—or not. You may wish to focus on dialogue in one, narrative in another—or not. Make this a learning experience for yourself and a joy for the judges.

Total length is 180 words, not including titles.

FIXED-FORM POETRY

Fixed form poetry is currently somewhat neglected in favor of free verse and free form, but the discipline of the fixed forms has something of value to offer the writer and presents additional challenges. You may enter any one of three short form poems: Villanelle (19 lines), Sonnet (14 lines), or Rondeau (13 lines). Each has specific structural and rhyming requirements, with which the writer should become familiar. My reference here is Michael Bugeja's book, *The Art and Craft of Poetry*.

THE SPRING CONTESTS (cont.)

PRIZES are \$50 for first place, \$30 for second, \$20 for third, and a warm, fuzzy feeling and the respect of your peers for Honorable Mention.

MORE RULES: You may enter all categories, but not more than one entry per category. Prose forms must be double-spaced; poetry should be single-spaced. Use Times New Roman font, size 12, for all entries. Place Title and Category at top of first page. Clearly identify additional pages with Page Numbers at the top along with the Title. Do not place your name on your entry.

SUBMIT as a Microsoft Word e-mail attachment to BEARDEDONE@charter.net. Put your name, entry title, and category in body of the e-mail. Use "Spring Contest" as the subject. Alternatively, print your entry on white, letter-sized paper; attach a card with your name, entry title, and category; and mail to Richard Anderson, 136 Manor Way, Carrollton, GA 30117.

FIRST CALL FOR SPOKEN MAGAZINE

The Spoken Magazine is one of the oldest continuing programs of The Atlanta Writers Club. The popularity of this event is rooted in the sharing of good writing by oral presentation. This year our March 18th meeting will be dedicated to the Spoken Magazine, and we are delighted that *Kathleen Mainland* has again agreed to emcee the event as well as select the works to be presented.

The rules are few. Your work should be short enough to be recited or read in three minutes or less (this amounts to approximately no more than two, double-spaced pages). You may enter serious works or humor, prose or poetry, even one-act plays if they fit the time constraint. The object is to entertain.

Submit your entries directly to Kathleen by post or e-mail not later than 10 March. The appropriate addresses are: 1225 Citadel Drive, NE, Atlanta, GA 30324, or via e-mail at kate144@juno.com.

Most members will want to read or recite their work themselves. If you prefer Kathleen to read it for you (and she does it magnificently) be sure to mention that with your entry.

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 February 8 and 22. 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:

“Cats & Dogs” by Fran Stewart

Years ago, I read about a political science professor who assigned his students the task of listing 100 reasons why capitalism was good for our economy. When they came back to him with their lists in hand, he told them to write 100 reasons why capitalism was ruining our economy.

That particular exercise might not impress us unless we happen to be writing articles about inflation. The concept, though, of looking at each issue from multiple sides, is an enlightening one for writers. Take cats and dogs, for instance. If you’re a dog person, you already know why dogs are wondrous creatures. You know their many benefits—their soul-felt love, their single-minded devotion, their sheer exuberance. Other than pooper-scoopers, though, have you thought about the downside of the story? No fair asking cat people to fill you in, as I’m sure they could. The cat people need to be making their own list, about the advantages of dogs.

“Why?” you ask.

I’ll tell you. As writers, it behooves us (*love* that word!) to flex our imagination, and what better way than to argue, Socratically, for the *other* side? When we question our own opinions, it becomes easier for us to draw life-like characters who are unlike ourselves. The trouble, now, is that I’m going to have to follow my own advice and put a dog person or two in my murder mysteries. But first I’ll need to make up a list. When we understand our fictional characters, they become multi-dimensional. We are no longer satisfied with drawing them as stick figures on a flat canvas.

Why would you even want to write a person whose psyche was hidden from you into your novel or short story? How can you write convincingly about a person who is a vegetarian unless you know all the reasons that could be motivating that character? Just think about it: you might even learn to like rutabagas.

OUTREACH PROGRAM LAUNCH

Based on your feedback in November, we’ve improved our outreach program for new and struggling writers, and are ready to present it to the public. The new title is “Write The Way You Want To.” Thanks to Patricia Patterson, we already have our first session scheduled. Please join us on Saturday, February 25 at 11 a.m. in the Chapter 11 that just opened in Ansley Mall.

ACHIEVEMENTS & ACCOLADES

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

Dr. James C. Bryant, a former AWC President, published "From Penfield to Macon: Mercer's Problematic Move" in the Winter 2005 issue of *Georgia Historical Quarterly*. He also published "New Life for an Old Tradition" in the January/February 2006 issue of *Savannah Magazine*.

Dr. Terry Segal wowed the fifth graders at The Davis Academy with her presentation on how to illustrate stories. Her efforts garnered a \$100 donation for the club—thanks, Terry!

Membership Dues, Donations and Information Update

Please make checks payable to The Atlanta Writers Club:

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 30075-4328

- Unpaid members will be removed from *The E-Quill* mailing list.
- 2006 Membership Year runs from 1/1/06 through 12/31/06

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: ____/____/____