We are a social and educational club where local writers meet to discuss the craft and business of writing. We also sponsor contests for our members and host expert speakers from the worlds of writing, publishing, and entertainment.

Facebook link
http://www.facebook.com/people/Atlanta-WritersClub/100000367043383

Twitter link
http://twitter.com/atlwritersclub

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Agenda — Nov. 21, 2009

1:45-2:30 Danny Schnitzlein, picture-book author, discusses the do's and don'ts of writing for children.

3:00-3:45 Romance Writers Roundtable.

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In Context, by Clay Ramsey, President

On November 2, 1901, President Theodore Roosevelt issued a Proclamation that established a Day of National Thanksgiving for Thursday the 28th of that same month. Lincoln, at the height of the Civil War in 1863, had formally established the national holiday of Thanksgiving, but Roosevelt felt compelled to issue this statement, calling the country to give thanks. In his speech he expresses his sorrow over the recent loss of President McKinley, encourages the nation to steadfastness along the path of “strong, orderly, popular liberty,” points to the many blessings that our country enjoys, and then makes a compelling statement:

Let us remember that, as much has been given us, much will be expected from us, and that true homage comes from the heart as well as from the lips, and shows itself in deeds . . . by the way in which on this earth and at this time each of us does his duty to his fellow-men.

What makes this such a startling sentence is that he does not say just to celebrate privately. He says to celebrate by public expression of gratitude, and not just with words, but with actions. Essentially he says, “Be thankful, but do something about it.”

As you gather with family and friends this month to enjoy turkey, dressing, laughter, football and everything else that means Thanksgiving to you, I want to draw your attention to two projects that the Atlanta Writers Club is committed to, two ways that we as an organization have chosen to express our gratitude for what we have by doing something good for others.

The first is the Townsend Award. We have decided to contribute $5000 toward the Townsend Prize for Fiction, established in 1981 and named for Jim Townsend, the founding editor of Atlanta magazine, associate editor of Atlanta Weekly Magazine, and mentor to such authors as Terry Kay, Pat Conroy and Anne Rivers Siddons. It is offered every two years to a Georgia writer who has produced an exceptional novel or short-story collection. We will join Georgia Perimeter College (GPC), the Margaret Mitchell House, and Georgia Center for the Book in recognizing Georgia talent, and further contribute to the regional literary culture. This would be one gift we would offer to a noteworthy author.

The second is a GPC Student Scholarship. We have also agreed to contribute $5000 to establish a scholarship for a deserving GPC English major. Part of our donation would go directly to a student beneficiary, while the balance would go to set up a self-sustaining, endowed scholarship that would continue to help defray the cost of education for students in perpetuity. With this we would be not only recognizing talented potential, but influencing all future generations of writers.

As our membership expands, our programs develop and our influence grows, it is tempting to congratulate ourselves and settle into a satisfied complacency, tending to our needs and our concerns. It is at just such a time that we need to look beyond the boundaries of the AWC, to see how we can have a meaningful impact on others. We think these two projects are a good place to start.

In the coming months we will find ways to raise money for these projects. We will have fundraisers, such as the seminars by Marc Fitten in December and Jack Riggs in February, to teach you more about the business and craft of writing, respectively. Details about these workshops are in the pages of this newsletter.

There is another way you can benefit from the club and, in return, help us reach our goals: because we are now a 501(c)(3) non-profit, all donations to the AWC are tax-deductible. To make your donation, simply go to this link on our membership page: http://www.atlantawritersclub.org/membership.html#donate, or, if you prefer to donate by check, download the membership form, complete the appropriate sections to indicate your donation amount, and mail it with your contribution to the address provided.

I know there are many worthy charities that compete for your limited resources. Even so, consider giving to these causes. They are good in themselves, good for all writers in Georgia, and good for the AWC.
The National Creative Society is pleased to announce the 2009 National Creative Society Literary Competition and Awards. This competition will provide unique opportunities for Middle School and High School students to compete for cash prizes to be used towards higher education opportunities and career development. These awards will be in addition to the several thousand dollars’ worth of scholarships that the NCS awards each year to deserving students in creative endeavors.

Entry in the competition must be with parental permission and approval. Entry forms may be obtained at the National Creative Society information booth on Saturday, October 17, 2009, or may be downloaded from the National Creative Society website after that date. Students do not have to be attending schools that sponsor NCS chapters to be able to participate.

The NCS booth will be located at the Sara Hightower Regional Library as part of the Georgia Literary Festival celebration, and will be staffed by volunteers from 9:00 am until 5:30 pm on that day. The entry period will be from October 17, 2009 until December 31, 2009. Entries postmarked after December 31, 2009 will not be considered. Prizes will be awarded in April or May of 2010 as part of the annual National Creative Society Art Showcase, which is held each spring.

The competition will be divided into two divisions: Middle School and High School. The Middle School category will be for students in grades seven and eight, and the High School category will be for students in grades nine through twelve. The competition is open to all students in the grade levels mentioned, including students who are in the home school setting.

In each category, students will submit literary work in one of the following areas:
• Essay. An acceptable submission will be a three to five page essay on any subject.
• Poetry. An acceptable submission will be a selection of three to five poems.
• Fiction. An acceptable submission will be a three to five page short story or an excerpt of a longer work.

The submissions will be judged by a panel of educators, writers, and parents. Successful entries will demonstrate a combination of literary merit and grammatical execution that sets them apart from other entries. The decisions of the judges will be final. Entries will not be returned, so entrants should be sure to keep a copy of their work. Full details and complete rules for this competition will be on the application.
The prizes for the High School Division will be as follows:
• First Place. $1000.00
• Second Place. $250.00
• Third Place. $150.00

The prizes for the Middle School Division will be as follows:
• First Place. $300.00
• Second Place. $200.00
• Third Place. $100.00

The National Creative Society is sponsoring this literary competition as a part of their mission to encourage creativity within the next generation.

(Not an AWC managed event)

Quarterly Writing Contest

- **Scratch**, the quarterly writing contest itching to discover new talent.
- This contest seeks new short fiction and offers rotating guest judges who are authors, agents, editors and publishers.
- Help them discover new writing talent. Let them help you build publication credits.
- Small fee to enter, cash prizes and publication every month, plus annual anthology.

For more information and links to ENTER this month, go to [http://www.scratchcontest.net/](http://www.scratchcontest.net/)
October Speaker Summaries, by Shyla Nambiar

At 1:45, Jessica Handler, author of the memoir *Invisible Sisters*, spoke to the club on one of the most important aspects of creating memoirs: research. She spoke of her own experiences in writing of her sister’s illness and emphasized a dual approach to handling research: the factual elements of what is being researched and the emotions that result from that particular research. She defined memoir as a “lyrical examination” of events and advised aspiring memoirists to use a double-entry notebook to capture facts and the feelings corresponding to them. Ms. Handler suggested a plethora of tools by which the memoirist can review the factual details of a life, such as keeping and using journals and saving grocery lists, birthday cards, and ticket stubs. She even recalled her own experience of going to Billboard magazine and researching a radio station’s list of top hits at a particular time for a particular song. Interspersing her presentation with humor and possessing a thoughtful, informative style, Ms. Handler stressed the writer’s unique perspective on selected events and voice, stating that “voice is a defining characteristic of memoir.” She also offered useful information on Internet resources. Her advice to writers interested in the art of memoir was to “find the bones, dig them up, and make them sing.”

At 3:00, songwriter and country singer Tralena Walker and songwriter Tom Webster, who has his own recording label, employed an entertaining performance and lecture format to discuss songwriting and how it can improve writing. Ms. Walker sang a diverse range of songs, from the moving “Dancer” to the NASCAR-inspired “Driven By a Dream.” Starting off with the song “No One Ever Loves Me But You,” the duo, who have been writing songs together for 27 years, explained the importance of the song’s title in grabbing the listener’s interest. Unlike a novelist, who can take time in developing a book, the songwriter has three minutes to get across the content of a song and every line counts. For songwriters in the audience, Ms. Walker diagrammed the structure of a typical commercial song and its rhyme scheme. Before Ms. Walker sang, the two explained the origins of the songs and related anecdotes about them. Their stance on the dichotomy between art and commerce was that a song has got to be commercial sounding to succeed in today’s market. Like a work of fiction, songs have many different levels of meaning, and there must be continuity throughout. During their presentation, Ms. Walker and Mr. Webster also imparted fascinating insights into the nature of the country music industry and what it takes to get ahead in this competitive field.
The Atlanta Writers Club Presents Two Fundraising Seminars

**Date:** Saturday, December 12, 2009  
**Time:** 1:00-4:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Georgia Perimeter College in Dunwoody  
**Cost:** $20 to Atlanta Writers Club members

Marc Fitten, author of *Valeria’s Last Stand* and editor of *The Chattahoochee Review* literary magazine, will present a three-hour seminar on agent and publishing topics requested by our members:

- Things a writer needs to know about the current market and publishing biz.
- What keeps a query letter from being among the 99% that go in the garbage daily?

What are the deadly mistakes that kill a manuscript in the 1st 5 lines/1st paragraph/1st page?

Marc spent nearly a decade living and traveling in Europe, gathering stories and research that helped him to create his novel *Valeria’s Last Stand*. Prior to Bloomsbury publishing his novel, Marc was published in *Prairie Schooner, The Louisville Review* and *Esquire.com*. For more about Marc, please visit [www.marcfitten.com](http://www.marcfitten.com).

**To register** for Marc’s seminar, e-mail AWC VP George Weinstein at gjweinstein@yahoo.com.

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**Date:** Saturday, February 27, 2010  
**Time:** 1:00-4:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Georgia Perimeter College in Dunwoody  
**Cost:** $20 to Atlanta Writers Club members

Award-winning author of *When the Finch Rises* and *The Fireman’s Wife*, Jack Riggs will address a craft-of-writing topic suggested by several members in a seminar he’s calling “Oh Give Me a Home, Where My Characters Roam: The Importance of Character and a Sense of Place in Fiction.” Here’s the write-up he provided:

We all come from somewhere, and we are all on a journey to someplace else. During that time, the geography that surrounds us matters. It plays on our minds, affects our moods, thoughts, and actions. When a writer is creating story, she or he must be concerned with a sense of place and how it might affect the character. Historical place and present geography must be considered. In this workshop on Character and Sense of Place, we will discuss ideas on how best to set character in a geography that not only feels right, but is authentic to the story and true in the reader’s mind.

**To register** for Jack’s seminar, e-mail AWC VP George Weinstein at gjweinstein@yahoo.com.

The Atlanta Writers Club will use the funds raised by these seminars to support the 2010 Townsend Award, given to the best work of fiction during the preceding two years by an author living in Georgia. This is an opportunity for the club to increase its standing in the local literary community by working alongside the Georgia Center for the Book, Margaret Mitchell House and *Atlanta* Magazine, together with the Townsend Award sponsor and provider of our meeting spaces, Georgia Perimeter College.

Jonathan Maxwell’s critically acclaimed new history of the top Nazi leadership, Murderous Intellectuals: German Elites and the Nazi SS, is now available at Tall Tales Book Shop, Eagle Eye Book Shop, Charis Books, and the Blue Elephant Book Shop.

There is a large group book signing scheduled for December 12 at Eagle Eye Book Shop in Decatur. Any author wanting to participate in the signing should contact AWC member Jonathan Maxwell (Vldmax@aol.com).
Evan Guilford-Blake writes plays and short fiction for children and adults. He’s had six plays published or about to be, including, last month, *Nighthawks* (neoNuma Arts), his first in a trade edition. He’s also had stories in the recently issued anthologies *Fearsome Fascinations* (Outrider Press) and *Christmas Traditions* (Adams Media) both available through Amazon; and online at http://www.jscribes.com/dreidel/ (Dreidel) and http://www.rambleunderground.org/underground_winter09_009.htm (*The Thing with Feathers*).

*Nighthawks*, inspired by Edward Hopper’s famed painting, is paired complementary one-act plays. The first takes place in 1943, the second in 1983; each explores the loneliness and the racial and social prejudices of their respective eras. The play has been produced 13 times and won three national competitions.


Information about his other work is at his website: www.guilford-blake.com/evan

I’ve always loved writing and my little sister is my biggest fan. She says “Sis, you are already famous; your fans just don’t know it yet.” It started with my mom promising $1 a page for a short story. I wrote about a little boy with a crush on his teacher. No money, but I realized this Passion. That something life won’t let you make time for. You fight to get paid for because it’s what you were made for. It’s what I was made for. Although fear set in for a while, I’m pass that now. I’m excited about AWC. I look forward to learning the craft, the art and sharing with like-minded people. That’s my story and I’m sticking to it.

I have been actively writing for around 12 years. For most of that time, I have been writing non-fiction articles, essays, and training material. I thought I had no imagination until I decided to play around with fiction and found an instant love for it. Earlier this year, I submitted one of my fiction stories in the ‘Catch the Wave’ writers conference and won first place. I joined the Atlanta Writers Club because there are few writers in my immediate circle of friends, and I desire to be around like-minded people. I also would value networking with fellow writers and establishing both professional and personal relationships.


You Can Beat the Odds

Surprising Factors Behind Chronic Illness and Cancer

Brenda Stockdale

Discover a powerful shortcut to beating the odds when fighting for your health. With this practical guide, you will become skilled at using scientifically-based techniques that have helped survivors for more than a decade. You will learn that shocking risk factors - greater than smoking, diet, or cholesterol - can make the difference between robust health and life-threatening disease. Even your genetic inheritance isn’t as fixed as you might have imagined!

If you already enjoy great health, this program can help you keep it; but if facing illness, you will find ground-breaking discoveries from leading experts, synthesized so you can harness all the available technologies quickly and easily. The result is a compendium of essential information for a lifelong program of how to stay strong and healthy.

“If you only read one health book this year, let this be the one.” —Joan Borysenko, PhD, Harvard scientist, author of Minding the Body, Mending the Mind

“This powerful and life-changing book offers scientifically-based and mind-blowing research about health and wellness as well as practical strategies for incorporating this knowledge into your everyday life. Whether you are challenged by a serious or chronic illness or you enjoy vibrant health and want to keep it that way, this book will open your eyes, touch your heart, and provide potent strategies for beating the odds. Read it now!” —Kathleen Brehony, PhD, author of After the Darkest Hour

“This book offers its readers step-by-step instructions for self-administered interventions that deliver potent immune system therapy. Highly recommended.” —Robert Krikorian, PhD, Associate Professor of Psychiatry and Director, Cognitive Disorders Center, University of Cincinnati Academic Health Center

“This work offers tremendous insight into the lives of patients and their families dealing with life altering illness. I have seen this program turn a sense of an uphill uncertain battle to one that empowers individuals and their families to believe that their journey will be a fulfilling and uplifting one.” —Gerry Goldklang, MD, Medical Oncologist, Georgia Cancer Specialists

Brenda Stockdale provides a superb and empowering series of strategies for those undergoing a journey through a cancer or chronic illness diagnosis. A MUST READ for anyone looking for ways to optimize treatment and quality of life.” —Andrew L. Salner, MD FACR, Director, Helen & Harry Gray Cancer Center, Hartford Hospital


Sentient Publications’ books can be ordered from National Book Network, 800-462-6420. They’re also available from Ingram, Baker & Taylor, and other wholesalers and distributors.
Share your Atlanta Story on the Radio

Dana Goldman of WABE 90.1 FM has extended an invitation to the members of the Atlanta Writers Club to apply to participate in a new series called 'The Radio Story.' In her words, “Radio Stories are sincere, stirring, and surprising true-life tales of encounters with Atlanta. If your story is selected, we’ll match you with a WABE staff person to edit, record, and produce your piece for use on the air. We are looking for stories that express an original idea or portray a unique moment with clear, creative writing. Different from a political or finger-pointing commentary, our hope is that the series will uncover great true-life moments that show the unique texture of the city. For example:

+ Can you share a unique moment you experienced in a neighborhood?
+ Can you talk about a random act of kindness that you witnessed or experienced?
+ Does your ‘field of expertise’ allow you to see Atlanta in a unique way?
+ Were you witness to a moment of Atlanta history?

You can learn more about the Guidelines for Submission (and hear a few of the pilot stories) at:

http://www.pba.org/programming/programs/citycafe/radiostory/

This is a wonderful opportunity for AWC members to explore a new media outlet and expand their platform and publication resume. If you are interested in applying to share your Atlanta story on the air, send your story to citycafe@wabe.org.

Check Out the AWC Lending Library

The AWC has a large membership with many published authors. Through those authors’ generosity, we are establishing the new AWC Lending Library. AWC members will now be able to read donated works free of charge. Before each AWC meeting, a volunteer member will staff a table on which will be displayed the novels available to our "readers". These books can be checked out for a period of one month—from one meeting to the next.

It’s easy to see what’s in it for the member: an opportunity to read this diverse body of work without spending a dime. What’s in it for the contributing author? A chance to connect with a broader readership from among our members. So if you’re a published author, please consider donating one copy of each of your published works to our new lending library. If you’re a member, please feel free to stop by and check out the books available. And if you like what you read, spread the word. There’s no better publicity than word of mouth.

To donate a book to the AWC lending library, please contact Lisa Heidle at Lheidle@yahoo.com. Of course, since this is a new concept for the club, we need books. Please contribute.

Note: Lynda Fitzgerald founded this idea for the club, but is currently on a leave of absence. We thank her for this idea and implementing the concept, and appreciate Lisa Heidle temporarily assisting us with this administration.
FALL 2009
WRITING CONTEST

ELIGIBILITY:
1. The AWC Fall Writing Contest is open to: All current, paid club members. (To join
AWC, please go to http://www.atlantawritersclub.org/membership.html.)
2. Submissions must be original, unpublished, and un-awarded work.

DEADLINE:
November 21, 2009. (Submissions received after this date will automatically be disqualified.)

AWARDS:
Three award levels in each category. (Awarded at January, 2010 meeting.)

FIRST PLACE  $50 CASH PRIZE
SECOND PLACE  $30 CASH PRIZE
THIRD PLACE  $20 CASH PRIZE

CONTEST CATEGORIES:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Specifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flash fiction</td>
<td>1000 words</td>
<td>Any subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memoir</td>
<td>2000 words</td>
<td>Any subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Adult Fiction</td>
<td>2000 words</td>
<td>Any subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light poetry</td>
<td>20 lines</td>
<td>Rhymes, metered, limerick etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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CONTEST GUIDELINES:
Manuscript Format. Failure to adhere to the following format will result in disqualification.

- DO NOT place your name anywhere on the manuscript entry
- Only Word files (.doc) will be accepted. (Files with .docx may not be viewable by judges, therefore we recommend saving and sending the file as a .doc)
- Font: 12 pt, Black, Times New Roman
- Margins: 1 inch
- Line spacing: double – yes, even for poetry.
- White background (no colors, photos, graphics or images)
- Page size & layout: 8-1/2 x 11; Portrait
- First page: Title and Category should appear in the upper left corner
- Subsequent pages: Title - upper left corner; Page number - upper right corner
AWC Fall Contest Rules

SUBMISSION RULES
Failure to adhere to any of the guidelines will lead to disqualification.

Send ONE ENTRY and the corresponding Standard Submission Form (SSF) to Contact@TaraCoyt.com.

The entry and SSF must be sent as attached Word documents (.doc).
IMPORTANT: Name the documents by title, i.e. Title.doc and SSF-Title.doc
Example: if the title is Moon Fire, the document should be named Moon Fire.doc and the SSF should be named SSF-Moon Fire.doc.

Standard Submission Form (SSF):
Prepare and submit an SSF for each entry that includes the following information:
Author’s Name
Contest Category
Title of Entry
Word Count (Line Count for poetry)
Named the document: SSF-Title.doc

You may enter all 4 categories, by sending separate email entries.
PAPER ENTRIES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

When sending the attached Word documents, your EMAIL MESSAGE MUST INCLUDE:
Subject: Line: AWC Fall Contest
Your name, phone number, category, title
Example:
Dear Tara,
I have attached [Title] for the [Category] and the corresponding SSF.
Thank you.
[Your name]
[Your phone number]

Winning entries may be posted on the AWC website.
Speaker Profiles for November 21 Meeting
by George Weinstein, VP and Program Chair

Back home in the spacious auditorium of Building NC on the campus of Georgia Perimeter College in Dunwoody, we’ll host a children’s writer with a penchant for monster stories and a trio of romance writers who bend the genre every which way but still hold true to the essential elements of love and relationships.

1:45 -2:30
Danny Schnitzlein had several careers before becoming an author of children’s books, including television writer, video editor, artist, and painting instructor. Throughout his life, though, he was fascinated by monsters and fantastical beasts. He writes, “As a kid I was nutty about Halloween. I would dress as a monster and visit every street in my neighborhood. Then I’d dress as a different monster, visit all the houses again, and hope no one recognized me.”

Inspiration for his kids’ books has come from the ordinary as well as the bizarre. Danny’s first book, The Monster Who Ate My Peas, was inspired by his childhood hatred of vegetables. Among other awards, the book was selected to represent the state of Georgia at the 2004 National Book Festival. The Monster Who Did My Math--another nod to a common childhood phobia--was listed as one of the Best Books of 2007 by both Parent and Child Magazine and Atlanta Parent Magazine. His newest book, Trick or Treat on Monster Street, was inspired by a “what if”: “I wondered, what if there was a place where monsters celebrated Halloween completely backwards from the way we celebrate it?”

Join us for Danny’s discussion of where to draw your own inspiration and the do’s and don’ts of writing for children. Read about him and his work at www.dannyschnitzlein.com.

3:00-3:45
Romance writers roundtable: Anna DeStefano, Tracie Howard & Jennifer St. Giles

Did you know that romance novels remain the most popular genre in modern literature, comprising more than half of all paperback books sold every year? If you haven’t considered writing in this genre, it’s a great place to get started—or to build an entire career, as these authors are doing:

Anna DeStefano is the national best selling author of classic romance for Harlequin and Silhouette, and contemporary paranormal romantic suspense for Dorchester publishing. She’s a Romantic Times Reviewer’s Choice Award winner, a Cataromance.com’s reviewers choice award winner, and a Romance Writers of America Golden Heart winner. Anna also is the former president of Georgia Romance Writers. Learn more about Anna and her work at www.annawrites.com.

Tracie Howard is the author/coauthor of six novels that uniquely depict the glamorous side of contemporary urban culture. Her follow-up to the best-seller Gold Diggers is Friends & Fauxs (Broadway Books), a titillating glimpse into the world of celebrity, pop culture, friendship, and betrayal. She is a former columnist for Savoy magazine and has been named an Ebony magazine style icon. Tracie’s website features her books, blog, and a bazillion photos: www.traciehoward.com.

USA Today bestselling author Jennifer St. Giles writes contemporary paranormal novels for Pocket Books and gothic-paranormal historical fiction for Berkley Publishing. She is a Daphne du Maurier Award winner, recipient of two National Reader’s Choice Awards, the Romance Writers of America Golden Heart Award, along with Romantic Times Reviewer’s Choice Award for Best Historical Gothic/Mystery. Read more about Jennifer at www.jenniferstgiles.com.
From the Tip of My Pen

Author, Editor, Talk Show Host:
Mystery Matters - where murder is an open book a weekly internet radio show featuring your favorite mystery writers
Click here for the radio show -
FranStewart.com
"Healing the World through Teaching the Power of Gratitude"

Esoterica – The Art of Explaining Specialty Items

Over the past number of months, I’ve shared with several of my friends my decision to end Mystery Matters, my internet radio show, at the end of this year. Lyn Hammond Gray, my friend who wrote her doctoral dissertation on Stellar Psychology, told me, “Well of course. You’re a Capricorn with Libra rising.” Now, that may mean something to you, but it certainly didn’t illuminate anything for me.

Then, another friend, whose interests lie in numerology, said, “Well of course. You’re an eight.” I am? Wish I knew what that meant.

Now comes the question I keep asking in this column: what does this have to do with writing? Any time we write about esoteric ideas—ones that our readers might not understand readily—it is our duty to explain ourselves so that any basically intelligent reader can grasp whatever we’re dealing with, whether it be something in the setting, the action, the dialogue, or the back-story.

The challenge is to give the information without sounding preachy, boringly erudite, or downright haughty. How to do this? Well, it certainly helps if we have our facts straight. Research for a novel can be great fun. I interviewed Jeri Westerson, author of the Crispin Guest medieval noirs, in September. She told me she’d wanted to know what it felt like to stab someone with a sword. None of her friends would volunteer, and she couldn’t very well ask her protagonist—he lives in 14th century London.

Jeri bought the biggest slab of meat she could carry, nailed it to her son’s swing set (he was at school), and proceeded to experiment with great vigor. Did I mention she happens to own a fine sword and several daggers? Listen to the interview to learn how she disposed of the body once she’d finished hacking at it. When I read a Jeri Westerson book, I feel sure that Crispin’s experiences are “real,” because of the subtle way Jeri works that esoteric information into the mystery.

That leads me to the second point: Don’t tell. Do show. If you’re writing someone who is adept at numerology or the tarot or listening to the voices of dead people—all experiences that many of us might not be familiar with—please don’t lay out three paragraphs of explanation. Put your character into a situation that involves that particular art and show her working her way through it. You can use comments, questions, or even sarcasm from other characters to further your reader’s understanding.

My newest book, A SLAYING SONG TONIGHT will be a departure from my Biscuit McKee mystery series. It’s a dark story revolving around a serial killer in the Midwest who begins her killing in December of 1892 and is finally caught—forty Christmases and thirteen bodies later—in December of 1931. What, you may ask, is esoteric about that? Well, serial killings for one, and courtroom scenes for another. Then add in the historical element. For research I attended an aggravated assault trial; plowed through dusty, fragile archives of court cases from 1880 to 1940; contacted seemingly ancient ranchers and farmers who knew such things as whether or not their grandparents had screen doors in 1892. This research was not as hair-raising perhaps as stabbing a slab of meat, but still satisfying in its own way. Then there were the internet forays to find out when Jingle Bells was written (1857, early enough to be my killer’s favorite song).

I’ve been saying for six years in these columns that it’s important for writers to stretch their wings. Well, this stretch, particularly the wicked plot twist halfway through the book, put my wings to the test indeed. But why would I depart so drastically from my cozy Biscuit McKee mystery series? Well, naturally I would. I think about something for quite a while but then act very quickly, because I’m a Capricorn. And I always look for balance; it’s that Libra-rising thing. Then again, I’m an eight. When I find out what that means, I’ll let you know.

Fran thoroughly enjoys meeting her favorite authors and finding some new favorites on her internet radio show Mystery Matters each Friday morning at 10:00 eastern time. That one-year project will end with the final show that airs on Christmas Day 2009, a perfect time to introduce her newest book, A SLAYING SONG TONIGHT.
ANNOUNCING
THE 2009-2010
ATLANTA
WRITERS
CONFERENCE
PREP
WORKSHOPS

In 2008-2009, we presented two preparatory workshops with well-published authors to help AWC members get their manuscripts and pitches ready for the Atlanta Writers Conference with literary agents in May 2009. All of the agents remarked on the polished work they reviewed and the smooth pitches delivered, so it’s evident these workshops helped. Therefore, we’re pleased to announce the 2009-2010 Atlanta Writers Conference Prep Workshops, the opportunity to submit your work and give your pitches to fiction and nonfiction authors who have succeeded in this difficult business. Their mission is to help you make your manuscript sample and/or your verbal presentation as solid and professional as possible, so you can succeed when you query on your own, attend literary events, and participate in the Atlanta Writers Club conference with the agents in May 2010.

OVERVIEW:
The preparatory workshops are structured the same way the agent conference is set up: you can submit the first 20 pages of your manuscript for critique in advance, and, on the day of the prep workshop, the author you chose will give you 15 minutes of verbal feedback about your work. We’ll break for lunch and then you can practice explaining (“pitching”) your project to the same author or a different one and you will receive advice about better structuring your pitch for use in query letters and face-to-face encounters with agents and publishers, a process lasting for 10 minutes.

To check on your progress implementing the author’s suggestions, you can receive another critique and/or pitch session with the author of your choice in early 2010 so you and the author can evaluate your progress and continue to smooth the rough edges. If you’re not ready for the Fall 2009 Prep Workshop, you can meet with the author of your choice for the first time in early 2010.

These two sessions should give you the recommendations you need to make your work shine when it’s time to register for the agent conference in 2010. Be sure to register ASAP—spots for both workshops will fill up quickly. Here are the details:

PARTICIPATING FICTION AUTHORS:

David Fulmer—Author of seven historical mysteries, including the critically acclaimed The Blue Door, his popular New Orleans mysteries with Valentin St. Cyr, and his newest, an e-book titled The Last Time. His works have won the Shamus Award for mysteries and the Benjamin Franklin Award for audiobooks, and he was an LA Times Book Prize nominee. He also regularly teaches the craft and business of writing in classes held at Eagle Eye Bookshop. David will critique mainstream fiction, mysteries, thrillers, and suspense.

Joshilyn Jackson—Author of three mainstream novels, including the New York Times bestseller The Girl Who Stopped Swimming. Her first two works, gods in Alabama and Between, Georgia were #1 BookSense Picks, making her the first author ever to receive that honor in back-to-back years. The editor of BookPage remarked in a review of her work, “Every now and then…a remarkable writer comes along to reenergize American Fiction. So it is with Joshilyn Jackson.” Joshilyn will critique all fiction genres, from mainstream to sci-fi/fantasy.
PARTICIPATING NONFICTION AUTHOR:

Jedwin Smith—Author of the award-winning nonfiction books *Fatal Treasure* and *Our Brother’s Keeper*, which *Publishers Weekly* called a “muscularly written, starkly honest memoir.” Jedwin started critiquing work at our 2008 prep workshop and enjoyed it so much—and proved so adept at it—that he began teaching writing at Eagle Eye Bookshop as well as providing one-on-one coaching for writers. Jedwin will critique any non-fiction works (memoir, history, military, self-help, etc.) and even fiction works.

If demand dictates, we will try to add other authors to these workshops.

REGISTRATION PERIOD FOR FALL 2009 PREP WORKSHOP & CRITICAL DATES:

- Registration is NOW OPEN and will continue until each author has filled the 10 spaces allotted for critique sessions and 12 spaces for pitching. Standby lists for each author will be created as necessary.

- For the Fall 2009 Prep Workshop, your 20-page manuscript sample for critique is due by October 31.

- The Fall 2009 Prep Workshop will be held on Saturday, December 5, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., with an hour for lunch, at Georgia Perimeter College in Dunwoody (or the GPC campus in Clarkston if a scheduling conflict arises).

REGISTRATION PERIOD FOR WINTER 2010 PREP WORKSHOP & CRITICAL DATES:

- Registration is NOW OPEN and will continue until each author has filled the 10 spaces allotted for critique sessions and 12 spaces for pitching. Standby lists for each author will be created as necessary.

- For the Winter 2010 Prep Workshop, your 20-page manuscript sample for critique (either reworked using the author’s Fall Workshop feedback or a new piece if you didn’t attend the Fall Workshop) is due by January 2.

- The Winter 2010 Prep Workshop will be held on Saturday, February 6, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., with an hour for lunch, at Georgia Perimeter College in Dunwoody (or the GPC campus in Clarkston if a scheduling conflict arises).

COST:

You must be a member of the Atlanta Writers Club to participate in these workshops. If you are not, add $40 to the costs below to cover your membership for the remainder of 2009 and all of 2010.

For the Fall 2009 Prep Workshop, the cost is $100 for a critique and $30 for a pitch. If you would like to eat lunch with the workshop authors, add $10 to the total.

For the Winter 2010 Prep Workshop, if you signed up for the Fall Workshop too, the cost for reevaluation of your work is $75 for a critique and $25 for a pitch. If you would like to eat lunch with the workshop authors,
add $10 to the total.

If you didn’t sign up for the Fall Workshop but want to participate in the Winter Workshop, or you participated in the Fall Workshop but want a different work evaluated this time, or want a different author to critique it, the cost is $100 for a critique and $30 for a pitch. Again, if you would like to eat lunch with the workshop authors, add $10 to the total.

**TO REGISTER:**
RSVP to Atlanta Writers Club VP George Weinstein at giweinstein@yahoo.com to tell him:
1. Which author you want as your first choice and second choice
2. Which workshop you want: Fall or Winter or both
3. Which session you want: critique or pitch or both
4. Whether you want lunch with the authors at the Fall and/or Winter workshop

You will receive George’s reply about whether a seat is still available with an author for the sessions you desire. If a seat is not available, you’ll be placed on standby for your first or second choice (whoever has the shortest standby line).

In addition, you will receive payment instructions and the deadline for payments. Once he receives your payment, he will provide a reminder about the due date for your 20-page manuscript and submission instructions if you chose that option, and/or he will recommend some books to help you work on your pitch.

If you RSVP but do not submit payment by the deadline, you will be dropped from the roster and the next available person on standby will take your place.

**REFUND POLICY:**
For the Fall 2009 Prep Workshop, if you paid for a critique but cannot make it to the December 5 event, you will receive a refund if you have not submitted your work and you notify George Weinstein at giweinstein@yahoo.com no later than October 31. If you paid for a pitch but cannot make it to the December 5 event, you will receive a refund if you notify George at giweinstein@yahoo.com no later than November 21.

For the Winter 2010 Prep Workshop, if you paid for a critique but cannot make it to the February 6 event, you will receive a refund if you have not submitted your work and you notify George Weinstein at giweinstein@yahoo.com no later than January 2. If you paid for a pitch but cannot make it to the February 6 event, you will receive a refund if you notify George at giweinstein@yahoo.com no later than January 23.

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We hope you take advantage of the Fall 2009 and Winter 2010 Prep Workshops. They should help you present your best work whenever your query or speak with an agent/publisher, and especially at the Atlanta Writers Conference in May 2010. Conference information and the opening date for Conference registrations will be announced in February 2010. If you have any questions, please direct them to George Weinstein at giweinstein@yahoo.com.
Membership Information – The Atlanta Writers Club

Membership dues are $40 per year. Also, we now have our family memberships, where each additional family member can join for $20 and earn full membership benefits. We will gladly accept your cash or checks at any AWC event, or you can mail your payment to the address on the membership form on the last page of this newsletter. You may also renew via PayPal at www.atlantawritersclub.org.

We are one of the best literary bargains in town. The Atlanta Writers Club is simply a group of writers that work together to help each other improve their skills and attain their writing goals. Anyone can join, with no prior publication requirements. Here are just a few membership benefits:

- Monthly meetings. On the third Saturday of each month, approximately 100 of our members gather to listen and learn from two guest speakers from varied areas of the literary world. Please refer to our list of upcoming guest speakers in this newsletter.
- Workshops. Your membership provides access to outstanding writing workshops, and some are free with membership. Watch for announcements for upcoming workshops.
- Critique Groups. We now have approximately twenty (20) different critique groups available to members. Scattered about the Atlanta metro area, these critique groups meet regularly to work with each other to read each other’s writings and recommend modifications.
- Dinner with Authors. I routinely attend many author book signings so I wondered how I could spend just a few minutes with some of these authors to ask them an impromptu question, or just learn more of their successful habits. In the past several months, our members have had that experience, with authors Nathan McCall, Jedwin Smith, Carol O’Dell, James O. Born and others. We are currently working to schedule others, and there is no admission fee to these special dinners. Members are only required to pay for their own consumption at the restaurant. The Atlanta Writers Club pays for the author and their guests.

I could continue with additional benefits, but alas, this is only a newsletter. You may join The Atlanta Writers Club at any of our events or meetings. Or pay online at our website, using PayPal at http://www.atlantawritersclub.org/membership.html.

If you have additional questions, contact AWC president Clay Ramsey at clay@atlantawritersclub.org.
The Atlanta Writers Club Board

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Upcoming Schedule of Saturday Club Meetings

November 21, 2009
1:45-2:30 Danny Schnitzlein, picture-book author, discusses the do's and don'ts of writing for children.
3:00-3:45 Romance Writers Roundtable.

December 19, 2009
1:45-2:30 Self-publishing panel of speakers.

January 16, 2010
1:45-2:30 Susan Rebecca White and Alan Deutschman, spouses who work in very different genres, talk about the two-writer household and learning from other writers who are completely different from oneself.
3:00-3:45 Thriller superstar Steve Berry returns with Q&A on the craft and business of writing
AWC critique groups cover the Atlanta metro area like the dew. Check the list below to find a group that fits your needs. If you don’t find one and would like to start a new group, contact Jennie Helderman at jmhelderman@comcast.com.

The AWC may soon offer additional and alternative opportunities for feedback and sharing of information among club members, such as online groups or genre groups such as historical fiction or mystery writers. One such group, Business Writers, is announced below. And thanks to AWC members who have made these suggestions.

Announcing new Business Writing Group

Anyone interested in a group focused solely on business writing, please contact Walter Lawrence at 404-374-9269. Initial meeting will be at 1776 Old Spring House Lane, Suite 100, Dunwoody 30338 at the office of Richard Kirby whose book, FAST TRACK Your Job Search (And Career), was profiled in the October 2009 eQuill. Walter Lawrence, CPA and freelance writer, teaches his own accounting courses in ten states. His class materials have been developed into how-to workbooks for participants. Date of meeting TBA.

Decatur

A fiction group meets Saturday mornings 9:30-12 at the Indie Book Store on Ponce de Leon near the post office. The group is full at present. Phone Ricky Jacobs at 404-378-7365 or write rickyjacobs@mac.com to be put on a wait list. You will be asked to submit about five pages of your writing and a brief bio.

An adult/YA fiction group meets every other Sunday, 3 p.m.-5:45 at the Indie Book Shop on Ponce de Leon near the post office. The group is full at present. Phone Ricky Jacobs at 404-378-7365 or write rickyjacobs@mac.com to be put on a wait list. You will be asked to submit about five pages of your writing and a brief bio.

Buckhead/Midtown

Poetry group. Contact Karen Holmes at karen.holmes@comcast.net to be put on the distribution list and notified of future meeting dates.

An all-genre group meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday nights at 7 at Starbucks at Lindburgh. Group is closed. Contact Patricia Patterson at pepatterson@bellsouth.net to be on a wait list or to form a new group.

A nonfiction group meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday nights from 7 to 9 at Caribou Coffee, 4500 Roswell Road. Contact Terre Spencer at terre.spencer@me.com or Richard Kirby at executiveimpact@gmail.com.

Conyers

A new group is forming to serve Conyers, Covington, Madi-
Chocolatte Café on Clairmont and Church Streets. The group is full at present. Phone Ricky Jacobs at 404-378-7365 or write rickyjacobs@mac.com to put on a wait list. You will be asked to submit about five pages of your writing and a brief bio.

A nonfiction group meets Tuesdays 7-9 p.m. at Urban Grounds in Avondale Estates. Email Rebecca Ewing at re-beccaewing@earthlink.net to get on her distribution list.

A nonfiction group meets Thursdays 7-9 p.m. at Urban Grounds in Avondale Estates. Contact Sally Parrott Ashbrook at sally.parrott@gmail.com.

Dunwoody

Georgia Perimeter College's Learning and Tutoring Center sponsors Writers' Circle, an ongoing group of students and community members who enjoy the writing process and seek the support and insight of other writers. Meets 1st and 3rd Fridays, 1-3 p.m. in LTC Dunwoody campus, LRC (Library Building), Rm 3100. During school breaks, the group meets at Borders Bookstore. Contact Gelia Dolcimascolo at 770-274-5246 for further information.

Emory

A fiction group meets every other Wednesday at 6:30 at Panera's in the shopping area on North Decatur Road opposite the main entrance to the Emory campus. E-mail Ruth Gresh at hrgrsh@bellsouth.net for date of the next meeting.

Lawrenceville

The novel/short story group which meets every other Thursday 10 a.m. to noon is full. Contact Barbara Connor at 678-226-1483 or imayaya@charter.net to be put on a wait list; or contact Jennie Helderman at jmhelderman@comcast.net.

Lawrence/Snellville

An all genre group meets on the first Saturday of every month 10 a.m. to noon at a member's home. Contact Ken Schmansi at 770-377-1771 or kschnansi@yahoo.com for location and to get on his distribution list.

Marietta

An all genre group meets on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays from 7-9 p.m. at the Main Library on Roswell St. Contact Tom Roberts at tomroberts129@gmail.com.

Midtown

An all-genre group meets on alternating Wednesdays at Borders at 1745 Peachtree St. Contact Hollis Wright at 404-964-3702 for time and dates.

Roswell

An all genre group meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays 6:45 - 8:45 p.m. at the Atlanta Bread Company near the corner of Hwy 92 and Woodstock Rd. Contact George Weinstein at 770-552-5887 or giweinstein@yahoo.com to get on his distribution list.

Sandy Springs

An all genre group meets twice monthly on Mondays, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at the Roswell Library. Contact Lynn Wesch at lewesch@me.com to get on her distribution list.

Woodstock

Anyone interested in a critique group in Woodstock please contact Jennie Helderman at jmhelderman@comcast.net.

A poetry group meets but with no set time. Contact Jill Jennings at 770-516-2482 or magistra_jennings@yahoo.com for more information.
THE ATLANTA WRITERS CLUB

2010 Membership Dues, Donations and Contact Information

Please make checks payable to The Atlanta Writers Club: □ NEW □ RENEWAL

2010 Membership Dues (covers remainder of 2009 and all of 2010):
- $40 - Membership is valid through 12/31/2010 $_________
- Add any family member for $20 each $_________
  (Please supply their contact information using the form below or a separate form)
- Students, ages 25 and under, pay only $30 year-round $_________

Tax Deductible Donation in the amount of $_________
Total $_________

Please mail with checks payable to The Atlanta Writers Club to Marty Aftewicz, 115 Ashford Circle, Dunwoody, GA 30338

- 2010 Membership Year runs from payment date through 12/31/2010
- If you are renewing, please indicate only your name below unless other contact info has changed

Member Information: (Please complete this section in full to update our files.)
Name ____________________________________________
Address ___________________________________________
City ____________________________ Zip ________________
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Phone __________________________ Phone __________________________
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Today’s Date: _______ / ______ / ______
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Retain lower portion for donation receipt.