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

Agenda — Jan. 16, 2010

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.

In Context by Clay Ramsey, President
Third Annual Writers Conference
Bios & Accolade
December Speaker Summary by Shyla Nambiar
Looking Ahead
Weekend with Lauretta Hannon
Atlanta Writers Conference Prep Workshop
Two Fundraising Seminars
Pix from Fall Prep Workshop
Share Your Atlanta Story on the Radio
January Speaker Profiles by G. Weinstein
Tip of My Pen by Fran Stewart
Writing Past Grief: a workshop
Oconee Arts Workshop
NE GA Writers Conference
Critique Groups
Officers & Board + Quarterly Schedule
Membership Information
Membership Form
In this month of new beginnings, I thought I would amuse you with a test of your memory of first lines. Enjoy!


B. Call me Ishmael.

C. Sing in me, Muse, and through me tell the story of that man skilled in all ways of contending, the wanderer, harried for years on end, after he plundered the stronghold on the proud height of Troy.

D. Someone must have slandered Josef K., for one morning, without having done anything truly wrong, he was arrested.

E. Well, Prince, Genoa and Lucca are now no more than private estates of the Bonaparte family.

F. There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparel’d in celestial light,
The glory and freshness of a dream.

G. I was born in the Year 1632, in the City of York, of a good Family, tho' not of that Country, my Father being a Foreigner of Bremen, who settled first at Hull.

H. In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I’ve been turning over in my mind ever since.

I. It was a dark and stormy night; the rain fell in torrents, except at occasional intervals, when it was checked by a violent gust of wind which swept up the streets (for it is in London that our scene lies), rattling along the house-tops, and fiercely agitating the scanty flame of the lamps that struggled against the darkness.

J. Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again.

K. It was inevitable: the scent of bitter almonds always reminded him of the fate of unrequited love.

L. Midway in our life’s journey, I went astray from the straight road and woke to find myself alone in a dark wood.

As you write the story of your life in the early days of 2010, what will be your first, your defining line? I wish you all the best in your endeavors this year, both authorial and otherwise. May this be an *annus mirabilis*, a year of miracles, for you.

-Clay
Do you want a literary agent to tell you what you’re doing wrong and doing right in your manuscript? Would you like to discuss your writing project with an agent to see if there’s any interest in the marketplace? Do you want the chance to earn a contract for representation leading to publication? If you answer, “Yes,” to any or all of these questions, then the Atlanta Writers Club has a conference designed for you:

On Saturday, May 15, 2010 the Atlanta Writers Club will present its third annual Atlanta Writers Conference. The goal of this conference is to give you access to top literary agents—from six renowned agencies—who will respond to your pitches, critique the work you submit in advance, and educate you about the current environment of the publishing industry and the likely trends for the near future. You could be offered a contract based on the materials you’ve submitted (several AWC members are still in the running after the 2009 conference). You might be asked to send additional pages or an entire manuscript for their review. You certainly will know more about how your work is perceived by industry professionals than you have ever known before.

You also will have fun, learn more about the publishing business, and get a chance to chat informally with these agents and your peers. In addition to the conference, we will host a social event on the evening of Friday, May 14. This is another chance for you to network with your peers and hear war stories and advice from the publishing trenches.

But wait—there’s more! We’ve invited Shamus-award winning historical mystery author David Fulmer to provide four separate talks during the conference—–from writing queries to his infamous sex and violence lecture—–to enlighten you and keep you entertained as you await your turn with an agent.

The conference will consist of three parts and you may participate in one, two, or all three of these events:
1. One-on-one critique sessions where the agents share their evaluations with those who have submitted 20 pages of work in advance
2. Pitch sessions so you can present your project to an agent
3. Mini-workshop on the publishing industry with Q&A

For details about the conference activities, profiles of the agents, and registration instructions, please go to our website: http://www.atlantawritersclub.org/events.html
Bios

**ROXANNE IVEY** is an inspirational writer and performing artist. A winner in the 2000 Artists Embassy International Dancing Poetry Contest, she was also commissioned by Atlanta’s High Museum of Art to compose and recite verse inspired by the paintings of Impressionist John Twachtman. Featured in *Unity Magazine* and on the web site of best-selling author James Redfield, Roxanne’s poetry has been published internationally.

Having recently completed *Beyond My Mortal Sky: A Memoir of Faith, Foolishness and Exile*, for which she hopes to find representation, Roxanne is now tackling another genre: screenwriting.

For more information, please see her profile at [www.linkedin.com/in/roxanneivey](http://www.linkedin.com/in/roxanneivey)

**Joseph Gatins**—For many years, I was a reporter and special projects editor with The Richmond Times-Dispatch, Richmond, Virginia, (1975-1996). Reared in Paris and Atlanta, I now live with my artist-author wife Fran in the mountains of Rabun County.

Recently authored and published a historical biography of family, *We Were Dancing on a Volcano: Bloodlines and Fault Lines of a Star-Crossed Atlanta Family, 1849-1989* -- and now I’m getting a quick lesson in the wonderful ways of self-publishing. For excerpts, interviews, reviews, events, etc., click: [http://josephgatins.blogspot.com](http://josephgatins.blogspot.com)

Graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (1968), and then served three years in the U.S. Army (1968-71). Side hobbies: First certified organic grower in Rabun, and very active with the Georgia Forest Watch conservation organization.

**David Lee Caudill**

I am very excited to be a part of the Atlanta Writer’s Club. My wife and four children are the center of my life. I’ve published one book of poetry but my true love is fiction. I still consider myself new in that area but I’m working hard to become more. A tremendous goal I currently have is to obtain a Master’s degree in creative writing so I may do something with writing in one facet or another for the rest of my life. Through the AWC, I look forward to learning from all the writers and interacting with them, as well as developing friendships that will last for a very long time.

**Accolade**

AWC member **Marion Blackwell** has recently published an article entitled “Courage Worthy of an Honorable Cause,” featured in the journal *Georgia Backroads*. It is a fascinating piece about the May 27, 1864, Battle of Pickett’s Mill, fought just north of Dallas, Georgia, as the Confederate forces successfully fought to slow Sherman’s march on Atlanta. Whether the reader is able to visit the Pickett’s Mill Battlefield State Historical Site, or must confine his exploration to the historical record, this article is a great place to start to learn more about this little-known chapter in Civil War history. It is Marion’s twentieth publication in books and periodicals.
At 1:45, the Atlanta Writers Club hosted a panel discussion on self-publishing with three authors, Jana Oliver, Bill York, and Wright Gres. George Weinstein guided the discussion by presenting questions that the authors took turns addressing. Their answers gave the audience insight and information on the nontraditional world of self-publishing.

The first question focused on their choice to publish themselves. According to Ms. Oliver, who writes paranormal romances and fantasy novels, her decision allowed her to build a platform and get name recognition. Mr. York, who wrote his first book when he was 73, published through I-Universe and believes that print on demand is the way to go.

Mr. Gres, who writes about sailing, started his own publishing company but outsourced tasks such as design and layout. On the issue of using a publisher like I-Universe, Mr. York related his own experiences with them and was satisfied that their services were as good as a big-name, traditional publisher, such as Random House. Ms. Oliver, who also owns her own publishing company and contracts out production and graphics, observed, though, that profit is less when choosing a self-publishing service. On the subject of marketing their books, Ms. Oliver’s advice was to “market your name, not your book title.” She has created her own website and attends conventions to meet people, while Mr. York, who specializes in writing on Native Americans, arranged book signings at small bookstores in Georgia and at powwows. Mr. Gres began promoting his book by contacting hometown newspapers and eventually sailing magazines. For authors who don’t have the resources of a big publishing company at their disposal, his advice was that they go out and sell the book themselves. As an alternative to self-publishing, Ms. Oliver suggested concentrating on small presses. Based on their experiences, the authors stressed points such as developing contacts, networking, and the value of perseverance.

For any writer interested in breaking into the competitive and increasingly tough world of publishing, these authors presented their own perspective on a viable option to the standard route.
February 20, 2010
1:45-2:30 Amanda Gable, author of The Confederate General Rides North, on the craft of fiction
3:00-3:45 Dr. John Evans teaches writing as a healing modality

March 20, 2010
1:45-2:30 Wendy Wax, author of The Accidental Bestseller, speaks about The Realities of a Writing Career
3:00-3:45 Jack McDevitt, science fiction author, on How to Ensure Your Work Gets Rejected: how new writers go wrong.

April 17, 2010
1:45-2:30 Shannon Clute on the basics of podcasting: why to do it and how to do it.
3:00-3:45 Richard Krevolin, screenwriter, playwright and author, on the power of story.

May 15, 2010
Atlanta Writers Conference at Westin Atlanta Airport (no regular meeting this month)

June 19, 2010
Annual club picnic at Hammond Park in Sandy Springs (no regular meeting this month.)
An Entire Weekend of Marketing Advice from Expert Lauretta Hannon

Saturday, January 23, 2010 12:30-4:30pm

You will have a terrific opportunity in January 2010 to learn the essentials about marketing your books and yourself and get one-on-one advice from best-selling author and marketing maven Lauretta Hannon in what she's calling a weekend of Marketing Mojo! MARKETING MOJO! Half-Day Workshop Saturday, January 23, 2010 12:30-4:30pm

This half-day workshop will cover all aspects of marketing your work. From The Essentials to the Power of Online Marketing, you'll be armed with the knowledge, tools, and resources to begin building your success now—whether you have a book deal or not. Many agents say that the trait most needed by writers is the ability and willingness to promote their books. Yet most of us neglect this critical part of the business of writing.

The Essentials
12:30-1:30pm
An examination of the cardinal rules of marketing and how to apply them to your specific goals. The Essentials provide the foundation for all of your marketing activities.

Building Your Platform Now
1:30-2:15pm
A step-by-step guide to position yourself in the marketplace and strengthen your presence and credentials. Learn how to market yourself to agents.

Break
2:15-2:30pm

The Great Online Adventure
2:30-3:30pm
Topics include: website creation, search engine optimization, guest blogging, social networking, and the Do's & Do Not's of online marketing. We'll focus on how your website should look and feel; what content should be included; and identify common mistakes made in website design.

Signings & Sales 101
3:30-4pm
How to set up book signings and sell books via retail outlets, your website, other
Internet sites, professional organizations, and at special events
Capturing Media Coverage
4-4:30pm
Tips and strategies that will get their attention
Your Instructor
Lauretta Hannon has garnered more than 200 awards for marketing and promotions and has been known for years as the most award-winning marketing expert in higher education. Her literary debut, *The Cracker Queen-A Memoir of a Jagged, Joyful Life* (Penguin Group), became a Southern Indie Bestseller three weeks after its release this year. She is featured in the October edition of *Southern Living* and is a commentator on National Public Radio's All Things Considered.

In addition, Lauretta offers seminars for writers through her Down Home Writing School.

The Location
Building NC Auditorium at Georgia Perimeter College in Dunwoody, our usual meeting location.

The Cost
This workshop is **FREE** to Atlanta Writers Club members who have paid their 2010 dues. You will have an opportunity to make a donation in advance or at the door to help the club pay for this event. If you would like to participate and are not yet a member of the Atlanta Writers Club, or have not renewed for 2010, please pay online or download, complete and mail the membership form with payment.

To Register
Simply RSVP to AWC VP George Weinstein. He will acknowledge your place on the attendance roster.

Marketing Mojo: One-on-One Marketing Critiques -- an AWC exclusive
Sunday, January 24, 2010 30-minute private sessions
Sit down with nationally acclaimed marketing expert Lauretta Hannon and get solutions for your specific challenges. In this 30-minute one-on-one session, Lauretta will analyze the effectiveness of your website, marketing strategies, and promotional ideas. She’ll also answer questions about anything and everything you’re curious about, from marketing yourself to agents to driving sales and capturing media coverage. These sessions will benefit everyone from the seasoned writer to the marketing neophyte.

Joanne Wyckoff, an agent with Zachary Shuster Harmsworth, was recently
asked to name the skill most needed by aspiring writers. Her response: "The ability to publicize their own book."

Don't miss this rare opportunity to get individual feedback on the most overlooked yet most critical contributor to your success.

**About the Expert**

Lauretta Hannon has garnered more than 200 awards for marketing and promotions and has been known for years as the most award-winning marketing expert in higher education. Her literary debut, *The Cracker Queen-A Memoir of a Jagged, Joyful Life* (Penguin Group), became a Southern Indie Bestseller three weeks after its release this year. She is featured in the October edition of *Southern Living* and is a commentator on National Public Radio's *All Things Considered*. In addition, Lauretta offers seminars for writers through her Down Home Writing School.

**The Location**

AWC member Neda Gayle is opening her home in Atlanta for these one-on-one sessions with Lauretta (you'll be given the address and directions after receipt of payment).

**The Cost**

The cost is $99.

This price reflects a 50% discount off Lauretta's normal fee. She is making this rate available as an exclusive for 2010 AWC members.

This offer is only open to the first 14 AWC members who register and pay. If you would like to participate and are not yet a member of the Atlanta Writers Club, or have not renewed for 2010, please pay online or download, complete and mail the membership form with payment.

**The Process**

1. RSVP to George Weinstein no later than December 5. He will reply with payment instructions.

2. Upon receipt of payment, George will send you a few questions, the answers to which will enable Lauretta to review your marketing plans and website in advance. Your responses will be due no later than December 12. An appointment time will be assigned to you for Sunday, January 24, between 9 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.
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 non-fiction 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.

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 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 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 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 gjweinstein@yahoo.com to tell him:

1. Which author you want as your first choice and second choice
2. Which session you want: critique or pitch or both
3. Whether you want lunch with the authors at the Winter workshop

You will receive George’s reply about whether a seat still is 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 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 gjweinstein@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 gjweinstein@yahoo.com no later than January 23.

***

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 gjweinstein@yahoo.com
Atlanta Writers Club Presents Two Fund-raising Seminars

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.
Quarterly Writing Contest

(Not an AWC managed event)

- **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/)
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 kindmess 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.
Speaker Profiles for January Meeting

by George Weinstein, VP and Program Chair

Celebrating the New Year in the C-1100 auditorium at Georgia Perimeter College in Dunwoody, AWC President Clay Ramsey will discuss club business at 1:30 before we begin an afternoon of talks focused on writing craft, writing about business, and the business of writing:

1:45-2:30

Susan Rebecca White and Alan Deutschman, spouses who work in very different genres, will talk about the two-writer household and how to learn from writers whose styles and interests are completely different from your own.

Born and raised in Atlanta, Susan White graduated from Brown University and holds a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from Hollins University where she was awarded a teaching fellowship and the James Purdy Prize for outstanding fiction. In 2007 she was awarded a fellowship at the Hambidge Center, an artist colony in the north Georgia mountains. Her debut novel, Bound South, was published by Touchstone / Simon and Schuster in February 2009. Bound South explores the daily clash between old-fashioned Atlanta traditions and twenty-first century reality, with three women narrators who all tell their story from the first-person point of view. No mean feat, that! Visit her website: www.susanrebeccawhite.com.

In a 22-year career as a journalist, Alan Deutschman has been Fortune magazine's Silicon Valley correspondent, GQ's "Profit Motive" columnist, and a contributing editor at Vanity Fair and New York Magazine. Most recently, he was a senior writer for Fast Company. He is the author of four business and leadership books: Walk the Walk: The #1 Rule for Real Leaders, Change or Die: The Three Keys to Change at Work and in Life, The Second Coming of Steve Jobs, and A Tale of Two Valleys: Wine, Wealth and the Battle for the Good Life in Napa and Sonoma. Alan speaks nationwide about leadership and change. Read more about him and his work at www.alandeutschman.com.

3:00-3:45...4:00...4:15...

Steve Berry is a writer of international suspense thrillers with over 10 million copies of his books in print worldwide. Rights to his eight novels have been sold in 50 countries and 37 languages. He wants to answer all your questions about the craft and business of writing, and he wants to instill in you his lessons about perseverance and dedication to the hard work of writing. It took Berry 12 years—85 rejections over five different manuscripts—before Ballantine Books finally bought one of his projects. His first two books, The Amber Room and The Romanov Prophecy, became national bestsellers. When he spoke to the club in January 2009, The Charlemagne Pursuit had opened at #9 on The New York Times list, and was selected as one of the 5 Best Thrillers for 2008 by Library Journal. His latest, The Paris Vendetta, also has debuted on the NYT bestseller list. Last year, Steve held forth for more than an hour, responding to every audience question with terrific insights and charming stories. How long will we keep him onstage this year? Read more about Steve Berry at www.steveberry.org.
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"

Start Where You Are – Bel Canto Flute

For the past year, I’ve read two to five mysteries each week in order to be able to carry on an intelligible and intelligent conversation with my weekly guests on Mystery Matters. Fortunately, I’ve managed to read a few other books as well. The most recent is Bel Canto Flute: the Rampal School by Sheryl Cohen. This non-fiction account chronicles her thirty years of study and friendship with Jean-Pierre Rampal. One of Cohen’s admonitions to her own flute students is: “Every day, start where you are” (p. 29). Good advice, indeed. I was delighted when Cohen went on to quote Basho, the 17th-century Japanese poet. I prefer a slightly different translation of this haiku:

Seek not to tread in
the Masters’ footsteps. Instead,
seek what they all sought.

Maybe it’s that end-of-the-year reckoning that’s moving me to such reflections, but I see a great deal of sense here for writers. Several months ago I found a mystery, whose author will remain nameless. I could almost see his instruction book close at hand: “Spice up your writing with similes,” the manual must have said. “I’ll put in three per paragraph,” said the author. “Be sure to include humor,” said the manual. “Jokes! Lots of jokes,” said the author. “Avoid predictability,” said the manual. “Whee! Look at all these plot twists,” said the author, who then wrote one of the most ludicrously convoluted stories I’ve ever encountered, a clear case of following in the Masters’ footsteps without looking for the greater vision.

Have you ever studied a bar of the mineral selenite? This crystalline form of gypsum often forms perfectly straight milky white layers. Those easily discernible layers are the basis for selenite’s place in the metaphysical hierarchy as a representative of Truth. Whether your writing is fiction or non-fiction, serious, humorous, light, dark, or somewhere in between, if you don’t have straight layers of Truth in there somewhere, you’re missing the boat. If you fail to seek what the masters sought, you’re not likely to hold my interest. And if, every day, you do not start where you are, you may find yourself lost in a swamp of misunderstanding and misplaced dreams, like an otter that is transported to a desert with nary a stream in sight.

I acknowledge that you may enjoy the three laughs per minute approach of our unnamed author. I’d rather read (and write) a more subtle, organic sort of humor. In my third mystery, Green as a Garden Hose, for instance, I have Ida describe her brother-in-law Kelvin as “an absolute zero of a man.” If you don’t get it, that’s okay. If you do, however, you glimpse one of those layers of truth and humor that adds richness to the printed page.

Cohen quotes Rampal as saying, “The flute is just a pipe, like a paintbrush is to an artist. Why would anyone think of a paintbrush when looking at a painting?” (p.10). When we force our instrument—our words, when we follow instructions diligently but lose sight of the joy that could suffuse those words, we produce art that is nothing but painfully obvious brushstrokes. This year, let’s agree to seek what the Masters sought, to infuse our writing with the passion and the truth that drives us, and to start—every single day—right where we are.

The music begins now.
Fran’s newest mystery A Slaying Song Tonight is available through her website http://www.franstewart.com.
By the time she was nine, Jessica Handler had begun to think of herself as the “well sibling.” She lost both of her sisters due to hereditary illnesses, and vowed to write a book to honor her family. Moreover, she wanted to understand the girl she was—her questions, fears, and triumphs—so she wrote *Invisible Sisters* to remember her family entirely, both the bad times and the good.

Based on Jessica’s Pushcart Prize–nominated essay, *Invisible Sisters* is a “clear-eyed, candid work [that] portrays the immense emotional toll that two daughters’ illnesses take on a family living in Atlanta,” according to *Publisher’s Weekly*. Jessica spoke to the club in October 2009 and now will present a 2.5-hour workshop on confronting the hardships in your life so you can produce your most powerful work ever.

**Date and Time:** April 24, 2010, 1:00-3:30 p.m.

**Location:** GPC-Dunwoody, NC-1100 auditorium

**Cost:** $20. Open to all 2010 members of the Atlanta Writers Club

**Workshop Description**

Robert Frost said, “no tears for the writer, no tears for the reader,” but how does a writer work effectively with emotionally difficult material, moving through his or her own trauma to create powerful and effective writing that serves the larger narrative?

In this seminar, the author will draw from the work of leading nonfiction authors to examine the rewards for the writer— and the reader—in confronting tears, finding joy, and meeting on the page the little known continuation of Frost’s quote: “No surprise for the writer, no surprise for the reader.”

Participants will create new work or expand existing work through a variety of in-workshop writing exercises. This workshop is open to fiction and nonfiction writers at all levels.

**Outline of Workshop**

Introduction, discuss universality of grief in NF. Examples from leading nonfiction writers incl. Joan Didion, Abigail Thomas, James Baldwin, & others.

All compelling writing is based on the writer’s obsession. Introduction to freewrite concept. In class free-write “what obsesses me?”

- Discussion of outcomes (reading of exercise not expected) re: what showed up in obsession, what can we use to build scenes?
- Discussion of scenic development techniques, dialogue recreation, sensory development.
- In-class writing exercise: scene development
- The emotional value to the writer – and the reader! – of the finding the ‘red hot center’ in your work. In-class writing exercise.

Question & Answer with participant-led discussion.

To register, e-mail AWC VP George Weinstein at george@atlantawritersclub.org to receive payment instructions.
Oconee Arts Foundation Plans January Workshop For Writers

Do-it-yourself publishing, working with literary agents and freelancing in hard times are among the topics to be covered at the Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation “Winter Wake-Up for Writers” Saturday, Jan. 30, in Watkinsville, Ga. Other panels will cover marketing a book once it’s published and the essentials of an effective writers critique group. The panelists will include published and aspiring writers. The five panels will run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Lunch is included in the $70 registration fee, which is discounted for OCAF members.

For a detailed program and access to a registration form, go to www.myocaf.com. Click on Education, then Literary Arts. A pdf Adult Registration Form is at the top of the page. Registration deadline is Jan. 23. If you have questions, e-mail wbe1955@aol.com or Cindy Farley at info@ocaf.com.

Contact: Wally Eberhard, wbe1955@aol.com, 706-543-5363

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Northeast Georgia Writers Conference

1:00–3:00 p.m. February 3, 2010
Peach State Bank, 3rd floor, 325 Washington St. Gainesville, GA 30501
Cecil Murphey
“Dancing With Dialogue”
“Dialogue isn’t real,” says Cecil Murphey, “but it must sound real.” To make your prose dance, he teaches the secrets of writing conversation that enlivens your writing and makes you a better writer. Murphey is the author of over 100 books, fiction and non-fiction: www.themanbehindthewords.com
Members: Free
Non-Members: $25 Pre-Registration is required
(No registration at the door) Details: www.negawriters.org
Contact Elouise Whitten, 770-297-0680 or HolmesLynda@bellsouth.net

Additional Northeast Georgia Writers Conferences

April 7, Wednesday, 1:00 p.m.
Julie Garmon
“Writing Real”
Fear Unmasked (Non-fiction)
Julie Garmon is a prolific writer of Guideposts stories: www.juliegarmon.com

August 4, Wednesday, 1:00 p.m.
Amy Wallace
“Fiction Writing”
Amy Wallace has written a trilogy published by Multnomah Books: www.amywallace.com

October 6, Wednesday, 1:00 p.m.
Sandra Brim, Ph.D.
“Structuring and Writing Poetry”
Sandra Brim is a professor at Brenau University, Gainesville, of Creative Writing and Poetry: www.brenau.edu
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 Heldermand at jmhelderman@comcast.net. 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 writing.

**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 pepatter-som@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 terrespen-ner@me.com or Richard Kirby at executiveim-pact@gmail.com.

**Conyers**

The group serving Conyers, Covingston, Madison and surrounding communities is full. Contact Zoe Courtman-Smith at zoe.courtman@gmail.com or 770-826-9425 to be put on a wait list.

**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 ricky-jacobs@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.

A **children’s and YA fiction** group meets every other Tuesday, 10 a.m.-12:15 at the Java Monkey on Church Street almost opposite the Decatur Marta Station. 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 and YA fiction** group meets on Thursdays 7-9 p.m. at the Dr. Bombay Coffee Shop, 1645 Mclendon Ave. The group is full at present. Phone Ricky Jacobs at 404-378-7365 or write ricky-jacobs@mac.com to be put on a wait list.

An **adult/YA fiction** group meets Thursdays 7 p.m.-9 at the 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 be 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 Sally Parrott Ashbrook at sally.parrott@gmail.com to get on her distribution list.

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. 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.

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 hrgresh@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 Schmanski at 770-377-1771 or kschmanski@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 tom-roberts129@hotmail.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 gjweinstein@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

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 Board

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Emcee of open Mic: Alicia Plant
T-Shirt Sales: Terre Spencer
Critique Groups: Jennie Helderman
Lending Library: Lisa Heidle

Upcoming Schedule of Saturday Club Meetings

February 20, 2010
1:45-2:30 Amanda Gable, author of The Confederate General Rides North, on the craft of fiction
3:00-3:45 Dr. John Evans teaches writing as a healing modality

March 20, 2010
1:45-2:30 Wendy Wax, author of The Accidental Bestseller, speaks about The Realities of a Writing Career
3:00-3:45 Jack McDevitt, science fiction author, on How to Ensure Your Work Gets Rejected: how new writers go wrong.

April 17, 2010
1:45-2:30 Shannon Clute on the basics of podcasting: why to do it and how to do it.
3:00-3:45 Richard Krevolin, screenwriter, playwright and author, on the power of story.
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 next page. 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 a 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 on line 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

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 __________________________

Home __________________________ Work/Cell __________________________

Phone __________________________ Phone __________________________

E-mail address __________________________

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