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

October 16, 2010

1:45-2:30 Phillip DePoy, author, playwright, and director, on integrating the events of your life into the plot of your book

3:00-3:45 Phil Nutman, author and screenwriter, on writing horror and supernatural fiction

In Context by Clay Ramsey, President ........................................2
Pix from September meeting ........................................4
Marty’s Award, Bio, Book signing ...................................5
Profiles of October Speakers ........................................6
Sign & Paint with Words, Bio ........................................7
Bios ...........................................................................8
Bios ...........................................................................9
AWC Fall Writing Contest ..........................................10
Scratch Fall Writing Contest ........................................13
Bragg & Brewer Workshop Pix ..................................14
Wellness & Writing Conference ....................................15
Looking Ahead ..........................................................16
Down Home Writing School .......................................17
Tip of My Pen by Fran Stewart ....................................19
Steve Berry Workshop .................................................20
Critique Groups Info ..................................................21
Officers & Board ..........................................................23
Membership Information ............................................24
Membership Form ..........................................................25
October is National Arts and Humanities Month, a four-week celebration of the creative imagination. Whether the artistic expression is poetry, or painting, or sculpture, or dance, or drama, or literature, or any other media that the human mind uses to express itself, all artistic forms are commemorated this month. This observance of the best of human inspiration has nudged me to think about the Atlanta Writers Club and our identity. Historically we were founded in Atlanta and have existed for almost a century to support and encourage those who are engaged on some level with the literary arts in the South. Although we aspire to reach out to the nation and the world, we call Atlanta our home. We also recognize ourselves as writers, whether fledgling dabbler or grizzled veterans, whether we furiously write at night and on the weekends or receive a paycheck as a “professional,” whether young or old, poet or journalist, screenwriter or novelist, we see ourselves as writers, people who love books and words and the act of creating something new with language. To complete the parsing of our name, we are finally a Club, an organization, a society built to form a home for those who write, a harbor from the tempests of the publishing industry, a place to be equipped for the struggle, to be consoled in defeat and to be celebrated in victory.

This month I wish to linger over the last component of our name, to ponder what it means to be a Club, a community of writers. In an effort to be a thoughtful writer, I tried to think of a literary precedent, an image that we can turn to as we consider the communal aspect of our existence. I thought of Plato’s Republic first. But then I remembered he banished poets from his ideal society and knew this wouldn’t do for a defining image of the AWC. I thought of More’s Utopia next. The beauty and tolerance of this imaginative society was appealing until I thought of its probably satiric purpose and the mess humans have traditionally made when they tried to construct such “ideal” communities. I even thought of Dante’s Paradiso: the beatific vision, the exclusion of discord and imperfection, the truly flawless existence (you see what I think of our aspirations as writers). But that had eternal and religious connotations I did not want to invoke. More practically, there were the French salons and English coffeehouses of the 17th and 18th centuries, but they were too political to emulate. The Gonquin Round Table was too exclusive and artist colonies too bohemian. Academic and popular literary societies have existed since the dawn of the Enlightenment, but what could inspire? Finally I remembered a book I had read years before, truly one of the most delightful and charming books I have ever read: Silverlock. And I found my image.

For those who have not yet had the genuine pleasure of reading it, Silverlock is an epic fantasy written in 1949 by John Myers Myers. The protagonist is a dreary, unimaginative business major named A. Clarence Shandon who washes up on a special island after a storm at sea. The island, he learns, is called the Commonwealth of Letters. As Shandon tries to orient himself in this foreign land, his archetypal guide, Golias, renames him Silverlock and leads him from adventure to adventure. What makes this tale so lovely and enjoyable is that every character he encounters, every situation into which he stumbles, every place he visits on his odyssey is taken from literature, history and mythology. Most of the fun of the novel is identifying people and places and scenes from beloved classics, seeing how Myers adopts and adapts them, meeting them out of the literary context in which they were born. Some you
will immediately recognize, some you will have heard about, and some will be completely unknown to you, pushing you to find their origins and in the process discovering whole new areas of literature for your enjoyment.

This Commonwealth of Letters, this fictional world in which the story unfolds, provides a useful picture of what I envision the Atlanta Writers Club to be. As opposed to what William Hazlitt called an “Aristocracy of Letters” in one of his essays, I want to suggest that we consider the relationship among ourselves to be a Commonwealth, literally a society formed for the “common well-being” of its members. In such an arrangement democratically elected leaders guide a free association of participants. The purpose is for mutual improvement. Everyone has a voice. Everyone is honored as significant. Everyone makes a contribution and everyone is benefited. In our case, the binding commitment is to advancing the cause of literature, improving one’s own skills as a writer, supporting other writers in their labors, working to extend the gifts of literacy and literature to an ever-widening audience, and finding new ways to celebrate the written word.

At least that is how I think of our own Commonwealth of Letters. I think of us as a lighthouse in a dark world in which images are preferred over words, in which reading is increasingly limited to tweets and knowledge is reduced to sound bites, in which books are not honored and libraries are empty of patrons. I want us to be that “shining city on a hill,” that place of illumination where there is a wide range of educational resources available for writers – books and lectures and podcasts and recordings and archives designed to help with all aspects of negotiating the craft and business of writing. I want us to have an international scope, to see our calling as writers as a global responsibility, to interact regularly with writers from Europe and Africa and Asia and South America, to break free from a constrictive parochialism and encounter the issues of the entire planet. I want to continue to host authors who have national and international stature, expanding our range of speakers to inspire our members to reach beyond what they could have imagined possible. I want us to have substantive retreats and conferences and extended workshops to provide a context for real growth and development. I want an increasing number of our members to conquer the challenges of publication, and be involved, as leaders in the field, with other boards and organizations that support and advance the arts. I want us to push back the veil of ignorance and intellectual poverty by systematically working against illiteracy and indifference. I want us to be a generator of ideas, a lighthouse for the imagination, a spa for the weary, a school for the inexperienced, a banquet hall for the accomplished, a network for the disconnected, a fortress for the battered, a place to call home for all those who have taken on the task of writing, however humble or eminent that might be.

That is my vision. I want the AWC to jettison those ideas and practices that hobble us, and aspire to great things. We can and should be more than just a group that meets once a month. We have the potential to be such an influential Commonwealth of Letters. In this month in which the Arts and Humanities are honored, let’s once again take up the challenge of forming such a community right here and right now. Will you join me in the work?
Photos from September 18, 2010 Meeting
Marty Aftewicz receives award

Former AWC President and Membership VP Marty Aftewicz receives the Master of Excellence for Commitment to the Community in Atlanta award from WELCOME Magazine.

On Monday evening, September 13, Marty Aftewicz, former President and Membership VP of the AWC, still enthusiastic member and trusted advisor, was honored at the 5th Annual MECCA Awards Ceremony at the Atlanta History Center for his contributions to the community in his previous role as head of the AWC. The MECCA Award (Master of Excellence for Commitment to the Community in Atlanta) is sponsored by Lea O’Neal, publisher of the local periodical WELCOME Magazine. Marty was one of ten recipients who were honored for their exceptional efforts on behalf of non-profit organizations. We join Marty in the celebration of his achievements and are thrilled that this award not only recognizes Marty’s work, but also acknowledges the expanding role of the AWC in the wider community.

Congratulations, Marty, and thanks for representing the AWC so admirably!

Frank Cox

AWC Member Frank Cox was recently named a Finalist in the Pirates Alley Faulkner Society 2010 Writing Competition (Essay). Congratulations, Frank!

Book Signing

Long time AWC member, Lynda Fitzgerald, will be signing her latest release, LIVE Ringer (April 2010) at The Book Worm Bookstore in Powder Springs, GA on November 11 from 2-4 p.m.. If you’re in the area, stop by and say hi to Lynda. The Book Worm Bookstore is located at 4451 Marietta Street in Powder Springs. Visit their website http://www.thebookwormonline.com/ for details. Also check out Lynda’s website at www.fitzgeraldwrites.com.
Our October 16 meeting presents a two-fer, or rather, a two-Phil. In the month of ghosts and goblins, it’s only fitting to bring you experts in mystery and horror. As with all things AWC, however, you’ll get much more from these gentlemen. Read on:

1:45-2:30 p.m.

Phillip DePoy is the Edgar Award-winning playwright of Easy (New York Magazine’s vote for best mystery play in the country). He is also the author of 10 novels, two published plays, and 37 theatre pieces that have seen production throughout the United States. He has directed, composed music, or written plays for most theatres in Atlanta and throughout the region for the past twenty-five years.

His Dell mystery novels, featuring Atlanta character Flap Tucker, have been called the best regional detective fiction on the market today. Too Easy was a Shamus Award finalist. Phillip’s new stand alone novel, The King James Conspiracy, is a historical thriller about a murderer attempting to stop the new English translation of the Bible and has been compared favorably to Umberto Eco’s The Name of the Rose.

In addition to mining the distant past for materials, Phillip has considered contemporary life and his own history when creating his plays and books. At 1:45 p.m., he will discuss integrating the events of your life into the plot of your book. Read more about Phillip DePoy and his work at www.philipdepoy.com.

3:00-3:45 p.m.

First published at age 15, expatriate Englishman Philip Nutman’s writing career began as a movie reviewer. By the age of 18, he was contributing feature articles to film magazines and wrote for the horror journal Fangoria for over ten years. He has written over 1,000 feature articles for media as diverse as The Atlanta Business Chronicle and Penthouse. He also worked for five years as a producer’s assistant for BBC-TV before selling his first horror short story. By age 26, he’d sold a novel-length version of that story—Wet Work—to Putnam Berkley. His work has garnered four nominations for a Bram Stoker Award by the Horror Writers of America.

Beyond prose fiction, Phil also has written and edited more than 50 comic books and over a dozen screenplays, several of which have been optioned by different producers, and he has begun to produce movies himself. For his latest work, he’s returned to short stories with a horror collection titled Cities of Night.

Acclaimed Hellraiser author Clive Barker has written, “Philip Nutman has brought a fresh eye and deep enthusiasm to the business of horror. The genre is much enriched by his insight and creativity. He’s a vital and original talent.” So it’s no wonder that at 3 p.m. Phil will hold court on writing horror and supernatural fiction. But if you want to talk about comic books or film, he’s your man too. Explore his fantastical world at www.philipnutman.com.
Sing with February's Words
February 30-5

Come into the family of literature. We'll have fun raising a daughter, then starting a family. And then I retired five years ago to commit to writing and raising two more children (now four & five years old).

My first writing hero was Erma Bombeck, because if I didn't laugh at my life, I might cry. For those crying times, I later discovered Rick Bragg. Having come from a southern back ground steeped in sweet tea, soaked in alcohol, dysfunction and social unacceptability, he reminded me that I have something to prove. I'm a writer. Watch out! Here comes trouble.

See Myrna’s blog at www.mibwritenow.com

Karen Paul Holmes will teach a writing class at John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, NC. This camp for adults features fun classes in the fine arts as well as crafts, cooking, blacksmithing, writing, folk dancing, nature studies, and more. Stay on campus for the full experience. Tuition $546

Come get inspired. Through music and other arts, we'll stir the creative juices. We might listen to Beethoven or Elvis, look at paintings by Monet or Finster, read literary masters or contemporary writers -- all to generate ideas for our poems, fiction, or essays. You'll receive editing tips and one-on-one critiques to make your work stronger and more readable. Open to anyone who needs inspiration and help perfecting the art of writing.

About the instructor: Karen Paul Holmes, an award-winning writer, has work published in business magazines, literary journals, and anthologies. Her enthusiasm for teaching has given her top ratings for her writing workshops at international conferences. She also taught poetry to students through the Georgia Poetry Society's "Poets in the Schools" program. Karen is a writing coach, poet, freelance writer, and the editor of the North Carolina Writers' Network Netwest News.

For more information, see www.folkschool.org

I'm likable, but I'm a bit of a trouble-maker. Being the baby and only girl in a large, military family with a lot of double standards, I felt I had something to prove. It's a trait that can get you into trouble, but it can also get you through life.

I started writing at six years old. The Sweet Potato Monster was my first piece. It was a literary success. The story won me a reprieve from eating the tubers my southern-fried mamma served every other night. After winning the Potomac Sweet Potato Battle of '74, I've been writing albeit in the closet or for work, ever since. I worked for a small town community news paper in Nashville, before joining the US Navy to finance my college education and prove to my brothers that I could get through boot camp. During the Navy, life interrupted writing, and I spent the next 15 years conquering the financial industry, raising a daughter, and then starting a family. I retired five years ago to commit to writing and raising two more children (now four & five years old).

My first writing hero was Erma Bombeck, because if I didn't laugh at my life, I might cry. For those crying times, I later discovered Rick Bragg. Having come from a southern back ground steeped in sweet tea, soaked in alcohol, dysfunction and social unacceptability, he reminded me that I have something to prove. I'm a writer. Watch out! Here comes trouble.

See Myrna’s blog at www.mibwritenow.com
A Delicious Step in the Writing Process

AWC member, Valerie Hudgins, is cooking her way through the writing process. Valerie, who created the online and podcast persona Veggie Val, was a guest chef at the EcoLife Expo at Atlantic Station Saturday, September 25. She explained that her cooking demos, classes, podcast interviews and even her daily twitters are all part of the writing process - that of platform-building for her humorous, non-fiction book entitled, *The Vegetarians Have Landed - Etiquette, Recipes and Lessons for the Veggie-Curious.*

Valerie submitted the manuscript in time for the AWC review last December, which she says gave her the confidence to complete the book. Next, she dedicated a year to developing the platform to entice an agent or publisher. Valerie explained, “In the book I follow my bliss rather than my education or professional experience. So, as far as credentials go, even after twenty years as a vegetarian, I figured some real life application was in order before I seek an agent.” GoingVeggie.com was born and soon took on a life of its own. Veggie Val now enjoys a successful step in the writing process - cooking, teaching, interviewing and making use of social media - even before the agent hunt begins.

Labrador retriever owner/trainer/handler LINDA REHKOPF is a journalist specializing in canine care, health, and training topics. Her work has appeared in many local and national magazines, newspapers, and websites and has been nominated for a number of awards from the canine writing community. Linda and her Labrador retrievers compete in obedience and rally competitions are active members of Happy Tails Animal-Assisted Therapy Group in the metro Atlanta area. She lives in Marietta, Georgia and is enjoying the publication of her first book: *DogLife: Labrador Retriever.*
Tonya Bagwell

Being born and raised in the south is what I would consider to be a blessing. I just so happened to have been born right in the middle of the Bible Belt in Birmingham, Alabama. From age two my mother learned quickly I was definitely a willful and rebellious child with curiosity being my strongest characteristic. I explored everything within my reach and fatigued her daily.

As I grew and my world became broader, my curiosity turned to books and I devoured them. I was captivated with reading. I began writing at the age of 16 spurred on by the idea I believed I could write a novel. Being inexperienced did not sway my belief or desire but being young with a busy schedule the most I wrote throughout high school were short stories and poems. As a teenage girl, romance was my genre of choice.

As life became life my writing took backstage for a long time. In my late teens and early twenties, the desire for food, shelter and clothing became most important, so I pursued a career as a typist and bookkeeper but finally I went to college to study interior design. Throughout the years though, I have continued to write for my own enjoyment. Now that I am older and in a slower pace of life, I am looking forward to devoting a good measure of my time to writing and improving in that artistry.

Linda Kenney Miller

Linda Kenney Miller is a graduate of Fisk University with a B.A. in English. She taught English and Reading in the District of Columbia Public School System, while taking graduate courses at Howard University, where she published Realism in Black Poetry as part of a curriculum guide for public school teachers. In 1975, she entered the health care field, working as a medical administrator for her father, Howard W. Kenney, M.D., and remained in the field for over thirty years.

In 2000 Linda decided to embark on the journey to become a writer. After taking writing classes, researching book writing and publishing and working closely with a literary developer, she wrote her first novel based on her grandfather’s life. Linda’s grandfather was John A. Kenney, M.D., the son of ex-slaves who raised himself up to become a doctor and the personal physician to Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver at Tuskegee.

Linda is currently taking leave from her medical management career to establish a publishing company, Harper House Publishers, with the intention to resurrect and publish other writer’s works which focus on history that has been extenuated over time. Beacon on the Hill was awarded the 2008 & 2009 Best Books Award in Fiction - Historical from USA Book News. The book also garnered an Indie Excellence Award, a Benjamin Franklin Award and a Georgia Author of the Year Finalist Award.
ELIGIBILITY:

1. The AWC Fall Writing Contest is open to: All current, paid club members. (To join AWC, please contact the Membership VP, Terre Spencer.)

   Submissions must be original, unpublished, and un-awarded work.

DEADLINE:

   November 20, 2010. (Submissions received after this date will automatically be disqualified.)

AWARDS:

Three award levels in each category. (Awarded at January, 2011 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>Article</td>
<td>1000 words</td>
<td>Any subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Story</td>
<td>2000 words</td>
<td>Any subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile Fiction</td>
<td>2000 words</td>
<td>Any subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious Poetry</td>
<td>32 lines</td>
<td>Any subject</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

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 chramse@gmail.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

(Continued on page 12)
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 Clay,

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 web site.

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Mike Buchanan, co-author of The Fat Boy Chronicles, will be signing copies during National Educator Week at these locations: Barnes and Noble Events: Sunday Oct 10 in Alpharetta, GA, 4-6:30. Oct 11, Athens, GA, 7PM. Oct 12, Morrow, GA, 4-6PM. Oct 13, Macon, GA, 4-7PM. Oct 14, Norcross, GA, 4-7PM. and Oct 16, Cumming, GA, 2-4PM.

To learn more about the book and movie, visit www.thefatboychronicles.com
Now accepting entries for the Scratch Fall Quarterly Contest

**submission criteria:** Two Categories

1. **any subject short fiction**
   from flash to novel excerpts, screenplays, scripts, 5000 words max*
   Please include name, address, phone, title and word count within body of email. Stories must be original, written in English and previously unpublished. Once submitted, entries cannot be altered.
   All entries will be considered for general online publication as well as for the scratch anthology

2. **poetry**
   submit up to two poems in any style, 40 line maximum per poem
   Poems must be original, written in English and previously unpublished.
   Once submitted, entries cannot be altered.
   All entries will be considered for general online publication as well as for the scratch anthology
   No translations, please.

**how to enter:** Post $10usd entry fee via PayPal using button on web site. Then cut and paste your story or poem into the body of an email please do not send attachments, and send to:

```
contestentry@scratchcontest.net
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(besure to note in your email
the name used with PayPal, if different from entry)

**deadline:** December 23, 2010

Winners announced January 3, 2011

**scratch:** the writing contest itching to discover new writers and poets.

Selecting winners every quarter. Submit today.
Photos from 9/25 Workshop with Rick Bragg and Sonny Brewer
2010 Conference Invitation

Is writing your daily “practice” like that of a Zen master or a yogi?

“The Three A’s of Mindful Journaling: Attention, Awareness and Acceptance” could help you deepen your practice and cultivate your wise inner guide.

Or maybe Susan Borkin’s “Psychological Journaling: Write, Creativity & the Pursuit of Happiness” will take you to another level by helping you increase joy, happiness and life satisfaction.

Do you help others recover from illness?
Atlanta local Jean Rowe from the Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University talks about compassion fatigue and shares several writing techniques that help address the toll caregiving can take on the caregivers.

Does writing really promote wellness?
Hear about the research from our keynote speakers Roy Fox and Brenda Stockdale, or learn some techniques to test the premise on your own from Claudia Hough and Elaine Hadley in “War Stories: Writing and Healing” or from Barbara Stahura in “Journaling after Brain Injury.”

How are writing and wellness being integrated into high school and college curricula today?
Tim Blue brings more personal writing into his high school students’ assignments. Laura Milner explores the benefits and limitations of traumatic narratives with her college students (and brings some of them to share their experience). And Jennifer R. Thomas is enhancing health professional education with narrative medicine. Hear their stories and experience their approaches for yourself.

You know you have a memoir in you... but just how do you get it on paper?
Diana Raab, annual presenter and award-winning author of 8 books, guides you through transforming journal entries into a completed memoir in “Memoir: From Notebook to Manuscript.”

Check out all 13 workshops described in the complete program online and register at www.wellnessandwritingconnections.com

October 22-23, 2010
8:30AM - 4:30PM
Georgia Tech
Global Learning Center
84 5th Street NW
Atlanta, GA 30308

Register for conference
All of the following events will take place at Georgia Perimeter College in Dunwoody in the C-1100 auditorium:

**October 16, 2010**

1:45-2:30 Phillip DePoy, author, playwright, and director, on integrating the events of your life into the plot of your book

3:00-3:45 Phil Nutman, author and screenwriter, on writing horror and supernatural fiction

**November 20, 2010**

1:45-2:30 Intellectual property attorney Neil Goldstein answers your questions about copyright protection, contracts, and the business side of publishing.

3:00-3:45 Literary agent and novelist Zoe Fishman with a Q&A on getting an agent in an uncertain publishing environment

**December 18, 2010**

Poetry Day event emceed by award-winning poet and AWC member Jill Jennings
Saturday, October 9, 2010
11am-4pm with complimentary lunch included
Lessons and solutions for taking your project from inception to published work. You will leave with a concrete plan to complete the project you’ve longed to finish. Expect to be energized and inspired by this lively, interactive experience. This seminar is for writers working at any level and in any genre.
In this seminar you’ll learn:

- How to determine the best genre for your project (novel, essays, memoir, fantasy, young adult, etc.)
- How to start and stick to it no matter what
- Why you should listen to some folks and not others
- How to banish writing blocks forever
- Why you must set goals and timelines
- How marketing can catapult you to success even before your work is complete
- How to avoid the Top Ten Mistakes writers make when looking for an agent
- How to navigate the business of publishing: finding an agent, drafting the book proposal, and designing your career.

Cost: $89 for AWC Members
Location: Historic Dallas, Georgia, at The Ragsdale Inn.
Email Lauretta at hannonlauretta@gmail.com for more information or to register.

About the Instructor
Lauretta Hannon is a bestselling author and commentator on National Public Radio's All Things Considered. She has taught and encouraged writers for nearly twenty years. As a writer she has captured more than 100 national awards. Her memoir, The Cracker Queen--A Memoir of a Jagged, Joyful Life, was named one of the Top 25 Books All Georgians Should Read. This seminar is presented as part of her Down Home Writing School.

Don’t Wait for ‘Em to Die: The Memoir Workshop
Saturday, October 16, 2010
11am-4pm with complimentary refreshments included
Writing a memoir is a powerful, life-changing act, whether you ever publish it or not. This seminar addresses the issues and challenges specific to the memoir.
In this seminar you’ll learn:
- How speaking your truth will set you free
- How to handle painful subject matter
- How to recognize the real F-word: FEAR—and put it in its place
- How to deal with the opinions and reactions of family and friends
- How to revive old memories and fill in the gaps
- What The Zone is and why you have to go there regularly
- Why authenticity matters more than anything else
- How marketing can make all the difference
- How to protect yourself legally

Cost: $89 for AWC Members
Location: Bailey’s Diner in Historic Powder Springs, GA
Register now. Space is limited. Email: hannonlauretta@gmail.com
Presented by the Down Home Writing School/more info at thecrackerqueen.com
Polly the Alarm Cat – Writing About Animals

Once upon a time, a couple of million years ago, a human’s only relationship with a four-legged creature was as eater or, in a less-fortuitous circumstance, as eatee. Don’t quote me on the number of years—my knowledge of pre-history is somewhat less than precise. Suffice it to say that at some point long ago a truce of sorts developed as dogs joined the throng around the campfire.

I’d be willing to bet it was a whole lot later that cats agreed to share their territory with humanity. Still, it happened, and look where we are now. The pet food industry in the U.S. brings in a whopping number of billions of dollars annually. And the books written about cats and dogs? Well, I did an internet search that resulted in an almost endless list. I’m probably somewhere in that list because of Marmalade, the orange and white tabby cat who lives with the librarian in my Biscuit McKee mystery series.

You see, having lived with numerous cats over the last two decades (yes, I was in my forties before I ever had a cat, an orange and white tabby who came from the humane society), I feel I know them as well as any human can know a feline.

Still, about ten years ago, I got quite a surprise when an animal communicator told me that my slate-gray Polly was upset with me because she wanted a job. “A job?” I said. “What kind of job do you give a cat?”

“You’ll figure it out,” she told me.

That night, I set my alarm thirty minutes earlier than usual, since I had to get to an early morning Board meeting in Atlanta. Polly eased onto my pillow and looked at me. “Would you wake me up at six o’clock?” I said in her general direction. It was hard to look her in the eye, since, even though I’m extremely near-sighted, she was too close to my eyeballs for me to focus on her.

The next morning, a few seconds before the alarm sounded, Polly patted my cheek three times. Pat, pat, pat. A coincidence, I thought.

The next morning, at six, pat, pat, pat. And the morning after that, as well. That was ten years ago, and she’s still at it. Daylight savings time always throw her into something of a tizzy, but we’ve adjusted. I also found out that she has a snooze button. If I stroke her back and mumble, “Ten more minutes, Polly,” she goes away and comes back—I kid you not—about ten minutes later. I can pull the snooze-button trick three times. After that the pat, pat, pat turns into a paw placed firmly on my eyelid. Good incentive to get up.

So, see? I’ve done it. I’ve written, once again, about a cat. Your assignment is to write about a four-legged animal that you’ve known and loved. Or known and been scared of. Or known and despised. I’ll bet it turns out to be a good story.

Fran works as a free-lance editor, often with a cat on her lap.
Steve Berry, one of our most popular and successful authors, has over 11 million books published worldwide. An accomplished instructor as well, he has taught writing to audiences around the globe. Steve also is passionate about preserving history—he is the founder of the nonprofit History Matters—so he has teamed up with the Atlanta Writers Club and Eagle Eye Book Shop to present a 4-hour writer’s workshop, with all proceeds to benefit the Historic Oakland Foundation, Oakland Cemetery (www.oaklandcemetery.com). This is the final resting place of Margaret Mitchell, author of Gone with the Wind, among many other notables.

Steve Berry will teach the craft of writing, including the Four “C’s” of story structure, effective dialogue, point of view, and the all-important 10 Rules of Writing in three 50-minute sessions, followed by a Q&A session. This workshop is not restricted to members of the Atlanta Writers Club; the first 175 people registering and paying the contribution amount will be admitted.

To download the flyer, which includes the registration form, click here.

**DATE & TIME:**
Saturday, January 15, 2011
12:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

**LOCATION:**
Georgia Perimeter College, Dunwoody Campus
2101 Womack Rd.
Dunwoody, GA 30338

**CONTRIBUTION:**
$85 - Early Bird special through November 30, 2010
$100 - December 1, 2010 - January 15, 2011

Attendance is limited to the first 175 registered attendees. All reservations after that will be put on a waiting list. You will receive an email confirming your reservation or stand-by status. Walk-in registration and payment the day of the event will be accepted as space permits.

**REGISTRATION:**
The Atlanta Writers Club is collecting registrations and contributions but, unlike most AWC events, payments must be made to Historic Oakland Foundation.

Click here to download registration form, which includes payment and mailing instructions.

Contact John Sheffield at dacejohn@aol.com if you have any questions.
AWC sponsors critique groups throughout the metro Atlanta area. 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.net. The AWC may soon offer additional and alternative opportunities for feedback and information sharing among club members. Genre groups and e-publishing groups are among the ideas that are being discussed. If you are interested in contributing, then email Jennie.

Online Groups

AWC-NF-Critique@yahoogroups.com is a nonfiction group led by Terre Spencer at terrespencer@me.com.

Fiction Critique Group 1 is led by Derek Koehl at Derek@nonhappyendings.com.

Fiction Critique Group 2 posts its rules at its website. Please read carefully before applying. Writing samples are not required now but will be after the number reaches twenty. Facilitator is Evan Guilford-Blake at ejbplaywright@yahoo.com.

Online Poetry Group—-is there interest in starting this group? If so, reply to Shyla at zinnia11@peoplepc.com.

Conyers
The Conyers critique group meets every other Wednesday at 6:30 at the Whistle Post Tavern in Conyers, GA. We are looking for new members. If you’d like more information, please contact Nancy at ncfletcher50@gmail.com.

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.

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 rickyjacobs@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.

Austell
An all-genre group meets in the café area of Borders in Austell on the first and third Sundays at 6 p.m. Contact Marjorie Gore at 770-317-4061. People not on the email distribution list should call Marjorie Gore to confirm the time.

Buckhead/Midtown

Poetry group. The Buckhead/Midtown poetry group meets on the fourth Saturday of each month at 11 a.m. Group is nearing capacity. To be included on the distribution list for meeting details, please email Karen Holmes at karen.holmes@comcast.net and give a brief description of your writing experience.

The Buckhead Novel/Fiction Critique Group meets every other Tuesday evening at 7PM at the Starbucks in Lindbergh Plaza. The group is closed. Contact Patricia at pepatter.son@bellsouth.net to be placed on a wait list.
A nonfiction group meets Thursdays 6:00-8:00 p.m. at Urban Grounds in Avondale Estates. Contact Jane Howe at janeonline@bellsouth.net.

A nonfiction group meets Tuesdays 7-9 p.m. at Urban Grounds in Avondale Estates. Email Rebecca Ewing at rebeccaewing@earthlink.net.

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 Chocolate Coffee located in a shopping center at the intersection of Clairemont and North Decatur Road. The group is full and closed. Contact Ruth Gresh at hrgresh@hotmail.com to be added to a waiting list.

Lawrenceville

The novel/short story group Fiction Crafters meets every other Wednesday 10 to 12 at Applewood Towers. The group is full. Contact Barbara Connor at 678-226-1483 or ima-yaya@charter.net to be put on a wait list.

Lawrenceville/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 770-241-4832 for location and to get on his distribution list.

Marietta

An all genre group meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays from 7-9 p.m. at the Main Library on Roswell St. The group is full and closed. Contact Linda Sullivan at lindasullivan3@gmail.com.

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.

Guidelines that might help your group be the most effective:

1. Remember to comment on the TEXT, not the author.
2. Remember to speak from your own perspective.
3. Give honest feedback.
4. Always give positive feedback at the first, middle and last of the critique.
5. Honor the author’s own voice. Do not try to make their writing sounds like yours.
6. Remember to keep the writer’s work and the conversation of such private.
7. Remember to consider the goals of the writer and include that in your feedback.
8. Don’t be nitpicky, but be specific.
9. Allow time for other’s comments.
10. Remember to keep a sense of humor.

Guidelines that might help when you are receiving critique:

1. Remain open-minded
2. Don’t argue or defend your writing. Do ask for clarification. ("Help me understand what you mean.")
3. Be open to receiving feedback.
4. Identify to the group what type of feedback you seek for any particular submission. (ideas, line edits)
5. Do not bring your ego to the meetings.
6. Remember to keep a sense of humor.
7. Learn to accept praise as well as criticism
8. Remind yourself why you are there.
9. Remember, feedback is just one person’s opinion. If it doesn’t fit, let it go. HOWEVER, if you receive the same feedback from more than one person be sure to pay attention to it and consider what they are saying.
10. Pay attention to those comments you receive over and over again. Learn from them and self correct.

2010 Sylvia Dickey Smith
The Atlanta Writers Club Board

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<td>President</td>
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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 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
2011 Membership Dues • Donations • Contact Information

☐ Renewal—please update us with changes only  ☐ New Member—welcome, your membership is through 12/31/2011
☐ Family Member—additional contact information only

First Name: ____________________________________________  ☐ Primary Member: __________________________________
Last Name:____________________________________________

Please register your last name accurately—this is how your AWC membership will be filed
Street Address: _________________________________________
City: ___________________ State: ___________ ZIP _________
Primary Phone: _________________________________________
Secondary Phone: _________________________________________
Email: ________________________________________________

Website: ______________________________________________
☐ List my website on the AWC website ____________________
LinkedIn Profile: ________________________________________
☐ Link to me ____________________________________________
Facebook name: _________________________________________
☐ Friend me ____________________________________________

Writing genre(s): _______________________________________  ___________

________________________________________________________________

Ways you might contribute to your club:
________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

2011 AWC Membership Dues
(covers remainder of 2010 and through entire year of 2011)

$40 Membership through 12/31/2011 $_________

Add any family member for $20 each $_____________
(Please supply family members’ contact information using 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
Mail to: Kimberly Clamara • The Atlanta Writers Club • 10256 Rillridge Court • Alpharetta, GA 30022
(Please note—this is a new address as of August, 2010)

Date: ____________________________  __________

Name: ____________________________ has donated $__________ to the Atlanta Writers Club.

This amount is not associated with any services provided in exchange or related to this contribution.

Please retain this lower portion as your donation receipt.