December 18, 2010

Poetry Day event emceed by award-winning poet and AWC member Jill Jennings

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In Context, by
Clay Ramsey, President

There is an unspeakable beauty to this month. Certainly there are the exasperating aspects of the holiday season: the endless lines in stores, the erratic driving, the rampant commercialism, the relentless activity, the complex logistics of coordinating schedules, the noise, the expense, the rush. But if we pause, we’ll see that there are moments, gracious gifts of time, when we glimpse something truer and deeper and more magnificent than we usually experience at other times of the year. Even if you are not a child expecting a present or a religious believer expecting a miracle, there is still something splendid about December. These radiant weeks have inspired composition ranging from holy scripture to novels, short-stories, poems, plays - almost every avenue of creative expression has been explored to represent these festival days over the centuries. The reason is obvious. They touch primordial parts of our soul, elements of belonging and meaning and family and divinity and the best of our humanity, and are thus an inexhaustible source of reflection for our imagination. It is a month of wonder.

Now, wonder is not something grown adults usually talk about or ascribe to themselves. It is best left, we say, to children and fools: a child’s response to finding a dollar under her pillow where she had left a tooth the night before, a landscape created from the mind of Lewis Carroll for the amusement of his young friend, an emotion felt by the visitors to Oz before the curtain is pulled back, a reaction of the simipleminded to complexities they cannot understand. No, as educated, post-modern adults, we are supposed to be sophisticated, urbane, knowledgeable, having rejected the ignorance and superstition that supposedly feed such a mental weakness. We know the secret of Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny. We can talk about refraction and atmosperics to explain rainbows. We can deconstruct stories, explaining the power relations, colonial influences, and Freudian pathologies in the books of the patriarchal, European hegemony of the traditional literary canon. We can describe romance in terms of evolved mammalian behavior and neurochemical surges. Even God, the Mystery of Mysteries, is seen as nothing more than paternal projection, the residue of ancient delusion, a cosmic wish fulfillment. Or so some believe.

This month I’d like to make a case for regaining a sense of wonder. In fact I want to suggest that there is nothing that the writer needs more than a healthy, vigorous, consuming sense of wonder. By this I do not mean that we turn off our capacity for thorough analysis, or relinquish our hold (however tenuous) on reality, or jettison thousands of years of scholarship and scientific progress. I am not suggesting that we all write fantasy, or children’s stories, or sweet, naive fairy tales, either. Nor am I arguing that we no longer write steampunk, or gritty crime novels, or work that deals with the raw, ugly reality of life, sweeping unpleasant or unpopular issues under the carpet of civilized society. What I am suggesting, however, is that we reconsider the importance of wonder, tempered by experience, filtered through maturity.

Before we can discuss what that might mean for us as writers, there is a preliminary issue to consider. I think all wonder is preceded by mystery. Einstein, the high priest of twentieth-century physics, wrote, “The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is
the source of all true art and all science.“ (“The World As I See It”). Our effort to recapture wonder begins with the fundamental mystery of existence. Here Hamlet is our tutor: “There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio/Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.” (I.v.166-7). As writers, we tend to be observers, analyzers, and thoughtful spectators. If we are good, there is little that escapes us; all life is available to our pen. Even so, as careful as we may be to let no part of life go to waste, we still stand on a small island in an infinite sea of mystery. It’s easy to be jaded, easy to believe that we know everything. We have traveled in our imagination to the far reaches of the universe and plumbed the depths of the human heart. But as accomplished and as erudite as we may be, what we know is a speck compared to the vastness of what we do not. This month I would encourage you to connect with that mystery, that immense stretch of what you have no explanation for, that which you cannot decipher or categorize or easily understand. Stop long enough to acknowledge the unknown, as William Blake did, “to see a world in a grain of sand.”

When you do that, when you stare unblinkingly into the immeasurable mystery of life, you cannot help but be startled by the unexpected and be surprised at the deeper connections that radiate in all directions. You cannot help but wonder and sit in awe. It is a posture appropriate for these holy days, overwhelmed with a sense that who we are and where we are, what surrounds us and what is within us is more mind-blowing than anything we could have imagined. It is not the mind-numbing routine of corporate employment, or billing cycles, or home maintenance, or accumulation that makes us human; it is this – the capacity to wonder. Wonder leads to curiosity and imagination and hopefulness. And it is precisely this sense of wonder, I would argue, that stands at the beginning of the creative enterprise.

Nothing is beyond its scope. All literature, as expression of human thought in language, is an experiment in touching the mystery, whether as chick-lit, or epic poetry, or historical fiction. Indeed the very fact that we have the capacity for higher reasoning and communication is a mystery in itself.

And this is where the wonder leads – from mystery to comprehension and expression. We begin with profound marveling, then as writers we seek to capture this wonder and a piece of the infinite unknown in language. So, whether you are a poet or a novelist, a playwright or a journalist, take time this season to reconnect with the sense of wonder you had when you were younger and less world-weary. Open yourself to the mystery. Then so inspired, write your articles and stories and verse – your own witness to the strange, wonderful universe in which we live.
Attention Poets and Lovers of Poetry

Mark your calendar for our Saturday, December 18 meeting, which will begin at 1:30 and showcase a lineup of local poets, both famous and emerging for AWC’s first ever Poetry Day. Our program is headlined by three well-known Georgia poets, Memye Curtis Tucker, Amy Pence, and John Ottley, who will read from their books, followed by an open mic segment for AWC poets who have received invitations to participate. Master of Ceremonies is AWC’s own Jill Jennings, an award-winning poet in her own right, Vice President of the Georgia Poetry Society and author of the 2008 book, The Poetry Alarm Clock.

Memye Curtis Tucker

Winner of the 1998 Hollis Summers Poetry Prize, Ms. Tucker is known for her 1999 collection, The Watchers, (Ohio University Press), which has recently been added to the Georgia Center for the Book’s list of “Twenty-five Books All Georgians Should Read.” The author of three chapbooks whose poems have appeared in the Southern Review, Oxford Review, and the Georgia Review, she serves as Senior Editor of The Atlanta Review. In 2007 she was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Georgia Writers Association.

Amy Pence

A finalist for many poetry prizes, including The Walt Whitman Award, Amy’s latest book, The Decadent Lovely, is just out this month. Selected as a runner up for the 2010 Main Street Rag Poetry Book Award, the poems in this collection center on the powerful psychological and emotional journey of a young girl as her family relocates from traditional New Orleans to the neon streets of Las Vegas. Author of the chapbook, Skin’s Dark Night, she has had her poems in The Antioch Review, New American Writing, The Oxford American, and Quarterly West, and has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

John Ottley

Alpharetta poet John Ottley, Jr. is the author of three full-length books of poetry, the latest of which is The Seventh Deadliest Fear (Main Street Rag). John writes about war and love, joy and misery, and intimations of immortality in unexpected settings. Past editor of Midwest Poetry Review, John has served as a past president of the Georgia Poetry Society and treasurer of the National Federation of State Poetry Societies. His work appears regularly in The Reach of Song, and he is an often-sought judge for poetry competitions. A veteran with several Army decorations and badges, before his retirement, John managed two orthodontic associations and is the only non-dentist ever to receive The Southern Association of Orthodontists’ Distinguished Service Award.
Photos from October, 2010 Meeting

Neil Goldstein

Zoe Fishman
POETS FOR POSITIVE CHANGE:

Whether you're harnessing the healing power of language to transcend personal trauma or transform social ills, this group is open to all literary artists dedicated to the constructive use of their creativity.

TRANSFORMING LIFE THROUGH LANGUAGE

Beginning this January, we'll meet in person on the fourth Saturday of every month, 3:00 p.m. at Dr. Bombay's Coffee Shop, 1645 McClendon Avenue, in Candler Park. And starting immediately, we'll connect continuously as an on-line group at www.linkedin.com.

For more information, please contact Roxanne Ivey at unitypoet@gmail.com.

Help Lorraine

If you live in Duluth, AWC member Lorraine Norwood needs your help. If you have pre-1970 photographs of ordinary life in Duluth, please call Lorraine. Think school and church functions, parades, holidays, events, businesses; in other words, anything that shows pastimes in Duluth. The photos will be included in an upcoming book to be published by Arcadia Publishing, the nation’s leading publisher of local and regional history. To share your photographs and stories, please contact Lorraine Norwood at 678-372-3770 or slorrainenorwood@gmail.com. She can even come to your home/business and scan the photos on site.
Parul Kapur Hinzen

Parul is a graduate of the MFA program at Columbia University. Her stories have appeared in Wascana Review, Allegheny Review and Frank. As an arts and culture journalist, she has published in The New Yorker, The Wall Street Journal Europe, New York Newsday, Esquire, GQ, Art in America, ARTnews, Conde Nast Traveler and The Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Her essays on historic New York architecture appear in the book Landmarks of New York II (Abrams). She has written a novel about twin sister artists in Bombay in the 1950s, Inside the Mirror, for which she's seeking a publisher, and she is at work on a second novel. Currently she blogs on books and the literary scene in Atlanta for the popular arts website ArtsCriticATL. Check out Books & More at www.artscriticatl.com

Sheila Cayolle

AWC member Sheila Cayolle recently won a first place prize in the “Best Interior Design” category in the first annual Purple Dragonfly Book Awards contest, sponsored by Five Star Publications. The contest, which recognizes excellence in children's literature, honored her book Morning Rain, a story that describes what a little girl sees from her window during a thunderstorm. This gentle and entertaining picture book is ideal for beginning readers. It retails for $8.95 at www.pontpub.com and can also be purchased at www.unibook.com.

Congratulations, Sheila!
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

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I have written several screenplays, one of which, CRYSTAL RIVER (starring Sean Patrick Flanery, Powder), I produced and is now available on Netflix and Amazon.com. A couple of others have placed in screenplay contests, but as of yet, I haven’t hit the proverbial Hollywood jackpot. So, instead of waiting for around for something magical to happen, I decided to try my hand at fiction, and I am now in the process of writing (and editing...and editing) my first novel. I am inspired by women’s stories, relationships and the never ending search for love. I used to work for two soap operas in New York, so, I guess that says it all!
Patrick is a founding partner of Ames Scullin O’Haire (http://www.asoy.com), a fourteen-year old communications company in downtown Atlanta. Clients include Food Lion Supermarkets, Mitsubishi Electric, Georgia Aquarium, Heartgard, Georgia Natural Gas and Applebee’s Restaurants in Atlanta. In his career, he’s written award-winning ad campaigns for major agencies in Dallas, Chicago, San Francisco, and Baltimore. Early on in his career, he even worked as an advance man for The Clyde Beatty–Cole Bros. Circus.

He received The 2007 Silver Medal Award from the Atlanta chapter of The American Advertising Federation in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the Atlanta advertising community. He also writes a popular blog called The Lint Screen (http://www.thelintscreen.com).

Buzz Bernard

Buzz is now a member of International Thriller Writers (ITW). ITW is an honorary society of authors who write books broadly classified as “thrillers.” The organization boasts over 1300 members from 22 countries.

Members familiar to the AWC include Steve Berry, David Fulmer and Mitchell Graham.

Buzz’s debut novel, Eyewall, will be released in May 2011 by BelleBooks (under the Belle Bridge Books imprint).

Buzz Bernard has signed with BelleBooks for his first novel, EYEWALL, one book that has me calling Buzz for the weather. This is a CAT 5 hurricane that hits St. Simons Island, Georgia. Yeh, right where I live. I went out and bought two more cat carriers and told Buzz he better give me days to get out. I don’t watch TV.

From the first paragraph it takes you in time sequence from early Sunday morning Labor Day weekend till it passes . Everyone thinks it is headed for Hilton Head Island, South Carolina; everyone but one meteorologist who no one takes seriously.

Just when you have paid $1500 for a weekend at the beach...
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

(be sure 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.
All of the following events will take place at Georgia Perimeter College in Dunwoody in the C-1100 auditorium:

**December 18, 2010**

Poetry Day event emceed by award-winning poet and AWC member Jill Jennings

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David Darracott

David is a native of Atlanta, Georgia and a graduate of Emory University. He received a Hambidge Fellowship for fiction in 2009 and 2010. Widely published in nonfiction, his work has also appeared in literary magazines, and most recently his short story, “Claire’s Rabbits,” won an award in the 2010 *Gemini Magazine* short story contest. Currently, he is shopping a new novel, *Internal Security*, to agents and editors. Though fiction is his passion—first, last, and always—fly fishing and golf run a close second.
In 2008-2010, we offered preparatory workshops with well-published authors to help AWC members get their manuscripts and pitches ready for the Atlanta Writers Conference with literary agents and publishers each May. During these conferences, 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 2011 Atlanta Writers Conference Prep Workshop, the opportunity to submit your work and give your pitches to fiction and nonfiction authors who have succeeded in this difficult business. Their mission is to help you make your manuscript sample and/or your verbal presentation as solid and professional as possible, so you can succeed when you query on your own, attend literary events, and participate in the Atlanta Writers Club conference with the agents and publishers in May 2011.

OVERVIEW:

The preparatory workshop is structured the same way the Atlanta Writers 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.

This session should give you the recommendations you need to make your work shine for the Atlanta Writers Conference. Be sure to register ASAP—spots for the prep workshop will fill up quickly. Here are the details:

PARTICIPATING FICTION AUTHORS:

David Fulmer (www.davidfulmer.com)—Author of nine historical mysteries, including the critically acclaimed The Blue Door, his popular New Orleans mysteries with Valentin St. Cyr, and his newest, The Fall. 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 (www.joshilynjackson.com/)—Author of four mainstream novels, including Backseat Saints and the New York Times bestseller The Girl Who Stopped
Swimming. Her first two works, gods in Alabama and Between, Georgia were #1 BookSense Picks, making her the first author ever to receive that honor in back-to-back years. The editor of BookPage remarked in a review of her work, “Every now and then...a remarkable writer comes along to reenergize American Fiction. So it is with Joshilyn Jackson.” Joshilyn will critique all fiction genres, from mainstream to sci-fi/fantasy.

Haywood Smith (www.haywoodsmith.net/)--Author of twelve novels encompassing historical fiction and women’s fiction, including the hugely best-selling Red Hat Club series and her latest novel Waking Up in Dixie. Haywood first participated in the 2008 Atlanta Writers Conference prep workshop, and participants still talk about the helpfulness of her critiques and advice. She will critique all genres of popular fiction except occult (vampires, etc.) and erotica.

PARTICIPATING NONFICTION AUTHORS:

Jackie K. Cooper (www.jackiekcooper.com/index.html)--Author of five memoirs, including his latest from Mercer Press, The Sunrise Remembers, as well as entertainment reviews that run in a number of newspapers. Jackie is a contributor to The Huffington Post. In addition, his short stories have been used as commentary on Georgia Public Radio. Jackie will critique all types of nonfiction and—as an entertainment critic—can also help with fictional works.

Lauretta Hannon (http://thecrackerqueen.com)--Author of the memoir The Cracker Queen--A Memoir of a Jagged, Joyful Life, which became a Southern Indie Bestseller three weeks after its release and in 2010 was named one of the Top Twenty-Five Books All Georgians Should Read, according to the Georgia Center for the Book. Southern Living called her “the funniest woman in Georgia.” Lauretta has written for Creative Loafing in Savannah, read her essays on National Public Radio, and regularly conducts writing workshops. Lauretta will critique any nonfiction works.
Jedwin Smith (www.jedwinsmith.com/)--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 nonfiction works as well as fiction.

REGISTRATION PERIOD FOR 2011 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.

- Your 20-page manuscript sample for critique is due by December 20, 2010.

- The Prep Workshop will be held on Saturday, January 29, 2011, from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with an hour for lunch, at Georgia Perimeter College in Dunwoody.

COST:
You must be a 2011 member of the Atlanta Writers Club to participate in this workshop. If you are not, add $40 to the costs below to cover your membership for 2011.

The cost is $100 for a critique and $30 for a pitch. If you would like to eat lunch with the workshop authors, add $10 to the total. Thus, to participate in all activities including lunch with the authors, the total is $140, or $180 if you need to renew your club due for 2011 or join.

TO REGISTER:
RSVP to Atlanta Writers Club VP of Programs John Sheffield at dacejohn@aol.com to tell him:
1. Which author you want as (A) your first choice, (B) your second choice, and (C) your third choice
2. Which session you want: critique or pitch or both
3. Whether you want lunch with the authors at the Prep Workshop

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

In addition, John will provide you with 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 first person on standby will take your place.

REFUND POLICY:
If you paid for a critique but cannot make it to the January 29, 2011 event, you will receive a refund if (A) you have not submitted your work and (B) you notify John Sheffield at dacejohn@aol.com no later than December 20, 2010. If you paid for a pitch but cannot make it to the January 29, 2011 event, you will receive a refund if you notify John Sheffield at dacejohn@aol.com no later than January 15, 2011.

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We hope you take advantage of the Prep Workshop. This should help you present your best work whenever you query or speak with an agent/publisher, and especially at the Atlanta Writers Conference in May 2011. Conference information and the opening date for Conference registrations will be announced in January 2011. If you have any questions, please direct them to John Sheffield at dacejohn@aol.com.
From the Tip of My Pen

Hiking and Beekeeping

Fran Stewart
Author, Editor, & Speaker

Well, the time comes in most everyone’s life, I suppose, when we wake up one morning and finally get it – if I don’t take care of this body of mine, it’s going to keep going downhill.

My wake-up call (actually the most recent in a string of them, but I’ve been ignoring all the others) came when I had to stop half-way up the flight of stairs from my living room to my office. I live in a split-level. That flight is only nine steps long.

Later that day I went to the Gwinnett Environmental & Heritage Center, a couple of miles from my house. I'd never been there, but the Beekeepers Association was putting on a special program that I wanted to see. The GEHC is housed in the "greenest" building in this county. I also wanted to explore that, from the growing plants on the roof to the circular stream of “reuse water” that’s used in the A/C plant.

I met the woman who runs the “Moon Walk” program – monthly evening/night hikes -- and picked up a map of the extensive walking trails (labeled easy, moderate, and hard) around the place.

Then I went to see the Beekeepers. Did you know that the pesticide Sevin, touted as the safest pesticide ever invented (as proclaimed by a research company that was hired by the manufacturer of Sevin – DUHH), kills honeybees very quickly? Not quickly enough, though, to keep them from returning to their hive and spreading the killer among their companions. I spoke with a woman who'd had all of her hives wiped out when one neighbor spread Sevin on his just-tasseled corn. The honeybees found all these lovely pollen-laden tassels, and the hive keeper came home from work one day to find dead bees on the ground all around her hives.

Enough of my ranting. The point is – I attended a meeting of the Gwinnett County Beekeepers the next week, and I'm planning to spend the fall and winter getting ready (building a couple of hives, painting them, getting my equipment and learning what to do, and what not to do), and then, around March, I will install bees in my two hives.

Incidentally – honeybees are pretty safe. Yes, I will probably get stung some, but their venom is not neurotoxic, the way wasp and yellow-jacket venom is, so I'm not worried about me or my grandkids. No need for epi pens or anything like that. And a world without enough honeybees is a world in which we’d all starve, so I'm going to do what I can, and learn a lot in the process.

Anyway, in October I went for my first hike at GEHC. I took the Creekside Trail, labeled as “moderate.” Right. Up and down a packed dirt trail, up and down, across a creek (there was a bridge, thank goodness). The down parts were hard and the up parts were harder. At least it was mostly in the shade.

Thankfully, I’d taken water with me. All told, I hiked no more than a mile and a half, but got back to the center sweaty and exhausted. Went into the gift shop to gloat about having survived. One of the women said, “I hear you’re a writer. What do you write?” That led to my getting six of my books out of the car to show her. She wrote a check and had me autograph all six of them. I had to wipe the sweat off my forehead so I wouldn’t drip on the books. And I’d always heard that writers should be sure they’re “dressed to meet the public” – ha!

The upshot of it is that I’m leaving here in about twenty minutes or so to go take another hike. My plan is to hike three times a week, until I don’t get out of breath anymore. I’m planning to live to be a hundred-plus, and I want the next forty years to be healthy and happy (which won’t happen if I can’t walk up my own stairs).

On top of all this, I’ve been appointed as the Publications Chair for the National League of American Pen Women. I had no idea what I was getting into. I thought I’d be proofing the quarterly magazine. Turns out I’m in charge of the magazine, any other publications of NLAPW, and the website, which is in the process of a major re-vamping.

The PubChair is a voting member of the national executive board (something else I didn’t know about when I said yes), and I’m required to attend three of the four board meetings each year. They’re held in Washington DC, and I pay for my own transportation there. The good news is that I can stay at the Pen Arts Building, an old (supposedly haunted) mansion where Todd Lincoln once lived. They’re putting me up in the “Owl’s Nest,” a fourth-floor room with four beds and a resident ghost. Fourth floor – ALL THOSE STAIRS!

The hiking, the bees, and the ghost will probably all turn up in my next mystery. When you write, use whatever comes your way. There's no telling where it will lead.

Fran’s started a blog about her beekeeping experiences. Check it out, become a “follower,” and leave a comment or two. http://beeskneesbeekeeping.blogspot.com

You can sign up for Fran’s newsletter at her website www.franstewart.com.

Each week she features an author whose work she enjoys. If you’d like to be considered for a feature spot, contact Fran – put “Feature Author” in the subject line fran@franstewart.com.

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Steve Berry
Writer’s Workshop and Fundraiser on January 15, 2011

History Matters

New York Times bestselling author 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
use this link- http://www.atlantawritersclub.org/forms/Berry_20110115a.pdf

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.
use this link- http://www.atlantawritersclub.org/forms/Registration_Berry_20110115.pdf

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. Critiques are private, not shared with group at present time. Facilitator is Evan Guilford-Blake at ejbplaywright@yahoo.com.

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.

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.

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.

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
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 Rd. 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 imayaya@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 Borders on Barrett Parkway.
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 giweinstein@yahoo.com to get on his distribution list.

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

Woodstock
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 you 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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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
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<td>President</td>
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<td>George Weinstein</td>
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<td>Cindy Wiedenbeck</td>
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<td>Community Outreach VP</td>
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eQuill Publisher: Gene Bowen

Other Volunteers:

Historian/By-Laws: Adrian Drost
Photographer: Jennie Helderman
eQuill Copy Editor: Gene Bowen
Emcee of open Mic: Alicia Plant
T-Shirt Sales: Terre Spencer
Critique Groups: Jennie Helderman
Lending Library: Open
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](http://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](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.