February Speakers

Marsha Cornelius – Member Minute
Christopher Swann – 1st Guest Speaker
Marion L. Thomas – 2nd Guest Speaker
...founded in 1914
We are a social and educational club where local writers meet to discuss the craft and business of writing. We also sponsor contests for our members and host expert speakers from the worlds of writing, publishing, and entertainment.

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Social Media VP: Gene Bowen
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Treasurer: Ron Aiken
Historian/By-Laws: George Weinstein
eQuill Publisher: Gene Bowen

February EVENTS
10th George Yancy event
10th Laureen Willig & Deanna Raybourn event
17th Monthly AWC Meeting

Between newsletters there’s FaceBook.

http://www.facebook.com/people/Atlanta-WritersClub/10000367043383
http://twitter.com/atlwritersclub
February 17 meeting

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Letter From the President

Writer’s Block

My greatest fear is that my imagination will go on vacation. My solution? Keep writing. Keep feeding my imagination with the beauty of life. I am a firm believer that aspiring authors should live, laugh, and write. In that order. Marion L. Thomas

I’ve completed three full manuscripts (one published) and a screenplay, and I’ve never had a case of writer’s block while writing any of them. But when it comes to writing a 500-word piece for the monthly eQuill? Egad! Writer’s block? Heck. It’s a writer’s wall. First of all, coming up with a subject to interest a club of writers. How do I put a fresh take on something most members have heard a thousand times before in a critique group or workshop, and, oh by the way, who the hell am I? What’re my credentials? So, I turned to my fellow board members for inspiration … and a clue.

A few members advocated going for a run, but the only thing I run for these days is the occasional drop shot in a tennis match. Jennifer takes a walk, trying to be the character that’s giving her problems.

But I am the character giving me problems.

Mike suggested thinking about what was missing in the story.

Uh, the story. Now what?

He revised one of his manuscripts by introducing a dog as a companion to a lonely widower. The dog wound up in almost every chapter, became a principal character, and added an element of depth to the main characters. “Maybe next time I’ll introduce a freshman quarterback from Hawaii in the last chapter. He only plays for Alabama in the second half of the National Championship Game and leads them to a miraculous victory. Nah - no one would believe a ridiculous plot twist like that.”

Go Dawgs!

Mike’s writing is set in the South and listening to bluegrass music as he walks through a wooded park nearby puts him in touch with his roots.

Wrong music, wrong roots, but I do listen to jazz.

Clay recommended writing in free association until ideas begin to take shape and the raw material for coherent writing appears. Or, reading something in a completely different genre, editing something I’ve already written.
Letter From the President

Writer’s Block

But doing those things only feed into my habitual procrastination.
George writes something else: another chapter, a new character sketch, or even start another outline or story. Any of those feels more productive than staring at that blank page.

How about a blank computer screen?
Jennifer does some writing prompts to stretch her mind. Pictures always inspire stories for Valerie so she goes to a stock photo website and browses through photographs that relate to what she’s writing.

Tools of procrastination.
Yvonne says to her it’s usually a sign she’d gone in the wrong direction. “I go back a bit and see where I strayed and correct it.”

The problem is I stray before the first word.
Thanks to my fellow board members for their helpful comments, and should you encounter a case of writer’s block, their tips will help you get over it.
Clay had the best suggestion of all; when confronted with writer’s block, try to be kind to yourself, and don’t blame yourself or question your abilities. So let me put away the cat-o’-nine-tails, pour myself a glass of pinot noir and listen to some Trane.
Amazon bestselling author **Marsha Cornelius** has written seven novels. Her latest, "Into the Pond" is a sequel to *Up To No Good*, a humorous cozy mystery about a nosy neighbor. Her debut novel, *H10N1* received a 5-star review from Midwest Book Reviews as well as nearly 200 5-star reviews on Amazon. In 2013, her third novel, *Losing It All* was a top pick in the self-published category by *The Guardian*, the British daily newspaper. Over the years her books have received AIA Awards, BRAG Medallions, and a nomination for Georgia Author of the Year. All of her books can be found on her author page: https://www.amazon.com/Marsha-Cornelius/e/B005HJP39W.

**Christopher Swann** is a graduate of Woodberry Forest School in Virginia. He earned a B.A. in English from Washington and Lee University, an M.A. in English and creative writing from the University of Missouri-Columbia, and a Ph.D. in creative writing from Georgia State University. He has won awards and recognition from GSU, Washington and Lee University, and the Heekin Group Foundation’s Tara Fellowship for Short Fiction. He lives with his wife and two sons in Atlanta, where he is the English department chair at Holy Innocents’ Episcopal School. Christopher’s novel, *Shadow of the Lions: A Novel*, has been nominated for the 54th Georgia Author of the Year Award (GAYA) in the First Novel category.

Award-Winning Author and Speaker, **Marian L. Thomas**, has penned five engaging novels to date. Her books have been seen on national television stations such as the Oprah Winfrey Network, Ovation, and the A&E Network. She has been featured in print magazines, newspapers and a guest on local, national and online radio stations. For her book, *I Believe In Butterflies*, Marian ranked among the top 100 Most Popular Authors in Literary Fiction on Amazon. She spent most of her teen years in Oak Park, Illinois, but now resides in a suburb of Atlanta with her husband. She enjoys a good bag of popcorn, a plate full of pasta, and a grape pop.
Monthly Meetings
Pre-meeting Mixer

The pre-meeting mixer will be from 12:30 to 1:30, and again will feature a one sentence contest. At the January mixer, almost 40 members chose the challenge and participated in the first one-sentence story contest. Members had to use the word “water” in a sentence not to exceed forty words. Award-winning author, Brian Panowich, our first guest speaker, was gracious enough to judge the submissions. He chose Beth Stallings’ entry, and she received a gift card from A Cappella Books. Congratulations, Beth.

“She thought that he had what she needed, what she was looking for, and although he disappointed her over and over, she still felt safe, still felt as though she were gliding, gliding through water, with him, to the end.”

Brian singled out Ed Garber’s sentence for making him laugh.

“4:30 this morning I woke up knowing the word that’d be chosen, ‘water’, just knew it. I think we have to talk.”

Other notable entries were;

“The town’s demise began innocently enough with a single snowflake, its silent landing going unnoticed as people naively watched others fall; it ended quickly with a boom that shook and split the earth before anyone realized the snowflakes weren’t made of water. - Becky Hodge

“Water both drowns and baptizes,” he said, holding a pail over my head, but I said, “After last night’s party, there’s nothing left of me to save.” - Janna Zonder

Thanks to all who took up the challenge.

For this month’s contest, you are to write a story of not more than fifty words using the photo below as inspiration.

Put it on a 3-by-5 index card with your name on the back.

Only stories submitted at the February member meeting will be accepted, and the winner will receive a gift card from a local independent bookseller.
Monthly Meetings

Future Guests & Events 2018

**February 17th**
- Marsha Cornelius – Member Minute
- Christopher Swann – 1st Guest Speaker
- Marion L. Thomas – 2nd Guest Speaker

**March 3rd**
- Spring Workshop (Writing a nonfiction book proposal) with Sandra Johnson

**March 17th**
- T.M. (Mike Brown) - Member Spotlight
- Sansanee and David Fulmer – 1st Guest Speakers
- Kim Wright Wiley – 2nd Guest Speaker

**April 21st**
- Patricia Holt – Member Spotlight
- Deb Hunter – 1st Speaker
- Melisa Cahnmann-Taylor
Monthly Meetings

January Photos by Ron Aiken

Bobbie Kornblit

Bobbie Kornblit, Marilyn Baron, Melissa Klein

Brian
Monthly Meetings

January Photos by Ron Aiken

Brian Panowich
Register now to attend the May 4-5, 2018 Atlanta Writers Conference, at the Westin Atlanta Airport Hotel.

http://atlantawritersconference.com/about/

Whether you are...
- In search of an agent or a publisher
- Working on a manuscript and in need of feedback
- Seeking to learn more about the writing craft and/or publishing business
- Working on a screenplay
- Trying to build your network of industry contacts

...this is your opportunity to take the next big step toward your writing goals.

Want to get published?

The May 4-5, 2018 Atlanta Writers Conference offers you access to a group of 12 editors and agents seeking manuscripts for every major fiction genre and nonfiction topic, as well as graphic novels and poetry and short-story collections. More than two dozen of our members have signed with agents or editors they met at our Conferences, and a number of those have scored major book deals. You could be next. Even if your work is not ready to submit, you'll benefit from the many educational sessions on the craft and business of writing. We'll even help you learn how to turn your book into a screenplay.

NEW for this Conference: to help you get your work ready for the manuscript critique—or just get detailed feedback on the start of your book to help in its development—you can now submit your materials in February 2018 to a professional freelancer editor of your choice and receive detailed editorial feedback (line-by-line, content, and developmental editing). This "prep critique" is free to those who register for the Conference All-Activities Package deal.

Agents and editors at the May 4-5, 2018 Conference will:
* Critique a manuscript sample you submit in advance and possibly ask to see more to consider it for representation/acquisition
* Critique your query letter to improve it for the Conference pitches and future use
* Respond to your pitch and possibly ask to see your manuscript to consider it for representation/acquisition
* Provide hours of Q&A
* Select the best manuscript samples and pitches for our award ceremony--maybe they'll call your name!

You'll also enjoy:
Conference, cont.

* A new workshop on turning your book into a screenplay, presented by Emmy-nominated screenwriter, producer, and educator Patricia Meyer
* Presentations on the craft and business of writing from local best-selling authors
* Networking with presenters and participants
* Prize giveaways for free manuscript and query letters critiques, pitches, and more

We’ve filled the two-day conference with great experiences:

Friday, May 4:
* Query letter critique panels that pair one editor and one agent who will help you get your query in shape for the Saturday pitches
* Screenwriting workshop by Emmy-nominated writer, producer, and educator Patricia Meyer, to give you the tools to turn your book into a screenplay
* Free talks by Patricia Meyer on creating three-dimensional characters and the art of rewriting
* Q&A panel with our six guest editors
* Social mixer with all twelve editors and agents and our workshop presenter

Saturday, May 5:
* One-on-one manuscript critique sessions with your choice of editors and agents
* Pitch sessions with your choice of editors and agents
* Q&A panel with our six guest agents
* Free talks by best-selling local authors Emily Carpenter and Buzz Bernard on writing craft, working with publicists, lessons learned about traditional publishing with large, mid-size, and small presses, and the tools you'll need to be a successful author in the current environment
* Award ceremony and prize giveaways

Registration is now open!

For full details about Conference activities:
http://atlantawritersconference.com/the-conference

For pricing options:
http://atlantawritersconference.com/the-cost

Learn about our guest editors and agents:
http://atlantawritersconference.com/the-editors-and-agents

After you've read all the Conference details on the website—including the deadlines and refund policy—use the registration tab to secure your place at the May 4-5, 2018 Atlanta
As past Conference participants will tell you, the spots fill up fast, so don't delay.

The Atlanta Writers Conference is presented exclusively for members of the Atlanta Writers Club. If you are not a current member or your membership will lapse prior to May 6, 2018, you can join/renew as part of your Conference registration--you do not need to do this as a two-step process.
AWC 2018 Writing Contest
Guidelines

ELIGIBILITY:
1. The AWC 2018 Writing Contest is open to: All current, paid club members. Please check your membership status before submitting your entry. (To join AWC, please contact the Membership VP, Yvonne Green, at yvonnegreen1000@gmail.com.)
2. Submissions must be original, unpublished, and previously un-awarded work. Entrants may submit only one piece to only one category per contest year.

DEADLINE:
Midnight, March 17, 2018. Submissions received after this date will automatically be ineligible.

AWARDS:
Each award carries a $300 cash prize, a plaque, and publication in The Blue Mountain Review. Winners will be announced at our club meeting on April 21, 2018.

CONTEST CATEGORIES:
Terry Kay Prize for Fiction (Maximum, 3000 words)
Rick Bragg Prize for Nonfiction (Maximum, 3000 words)
Natasha Trethewey Prize for Poetry (Maximum, 90 lines)

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 (.docx) will be accepted.
* Font: 12 pt, Black, Times New Roman
* Margins: 1 inch
AWC 2018 Writing Contest
Guidelines, cont.

✦ 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 Prize Category should appear in the upper left corner

PAPER ENTRIES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

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

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

There is no template for the SSF; you create the document yourself (see below) and send it as a separate attachment. The entry and SSF both must be sent as attached Word documents (.docx). The SSF is used for identification purposes by Clay Ramsey only. Judges never know the identity of any author; they see only the blind entry document.

IMPORTANT: Name the documents by title, i.e. Title.docx and SSF-Title.docx

Example: if the entry title is Moon Fire, the document should be named Moon Fire.docx (this is the document that will be sent to the judges) and the SSF should be named SSF-Moon Fire.docx (this is the document that will be seen only by Clay Ramsey).

Standard Submission Form (SSF):
The SSF must include the following information:
   Author’s Name
   Prize Category
   Title of Entry
   Word Count (Line Count for poetry)
Named the document: SSF-Title.docx
Attach the entry document and your SSF document to an email addressed to Clay at chramse@gmail.com. Your EMAIL MESSAGE MUST INCLUDE:

Subject Line: AWC 2018 Writing Contest

Your name, phone number, prize category, title

Example:

Dear Clay,

I have attached [Title] for the [Prize Category] and the corresponding SSF.

Thank you,

[Your name]

[Your phone number]
Member Q & A with Glenn Parris

By: Yvonne Green

Glenn Parris began writing out of boredom during his medical residency at Emory University over twenty years ago. While watching a television documentary on dinosaurs during one of his long days on-call, he asked “what if” questions which turned into an idea that became his first novel. Almost fifteen years later, he began writing again after attending a medical writers conference his wife, Carla, gifted to him for his birthday. His second novel, *The Renaissance of Aspirin* (XLIBRIS) was published three years later. Parris, a board-certified rheumatologist, and a fan of science fiction since grade school, also writes short stories.

**How long have you been a member of the Atlanta Writers Club?**
About seven years.

**What do you get out of your membership to the Atlanta Writers Club?**
Learning from speakers at monthly meetings and conferences. At conferences, I talk to agents, editors, and other writers about ideas, writing, and what’s happening in the publishing industry.

**You began writing after watching a documentary on dinosaurs. What inspired you?**
I learned that all of our conclusions about ancient life are based on 3% of the fossil record. Ridiculous! I asked myself several questions: 1) What if the dinosaurs didn’t die off? 2) What if they just left? 3) What would happen if they came back? Those questions and the ideas that followed propelled me to write the story.

**What made you want to write?**
I was disappointed that I didn’t see character personalities I knew or could even believe in books that I read. I decided to see if I could write. The books and movies I enjoyed while growing up in the sixties, seventies and eighties were no longer in vogue in the nineties, so I wanted to recapture what I missed and decided to give it a try.

**What was it like publishing your first novel?**
I was thrilled to see my book in print, I won’t lie. But because I rushed the process and wanted to get it done on an artificial deadline, I had some screw ups with the editor, proofreader, and graphic designer. I learned a lot from that experience. The most important take home lesson - Patience.

**How did you get interested in science fiction and fantasy?**
The first three novels I ever read were: *The Rescuers* by Margery Sharp, *Operation Time Search* by Andre Norton, and a short story collection, *Flight of the Horse* by Larry Niven. I loved the worlds and characters they created. I was in the fifth grade. I was hooked after reading them.
Member Q & A with Glenn Parris

By: Yvonne Green

Did you feel uncomfortable being a science fiction geek in high school?
I attended the Bronx High School of Science in New York. We were ALL geeks. A few notable alums of the high school include author Samuel L. Delaney, astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson, actor/director John Favreau, activist Stokely Carmichael, and actor John Cryer. I was also a member of the Science Fiction Book Club.

Who are some of your favorite authors today?
Frank Herbert, Orson Scott Card, and Octavia Butler. Three authors who wrote novels that broke the established molds. I had the pleasure of meeting Octavia Butler several years ago. As an FYI, Frank Herbert received over one hundred rejection letters before Dune was published by a publisher of technical manuals.

What books are you reading now?
I’m reading The Mote in God’s Eye by Jerry Pournelle and Larry Niven (1974). I recently finished Ring World, also by Larry Niven (1970). These are older stories that I never got a chance to read when I was younger. Recent novels: The Order of the Seers by Cerece Rennie Murphy, Golem and Jinni by Helen Wecker, The Underground Airline by Ben Winter, and The Martian by Andy Weir.

Do you primarily write science fiction?
Yes, but I also enjoy writing paranormal fantasy, medical fiction, historical fiction, and fantasy.

What are you working on now?
I just published a short story: Unbitten, A Vampire’s Dream. It’s available on Amazon and Audible. I’m also writing a science fiction novel, Dragon’s Heir, and I’m finishing the sequel to The Renaissance of Aspirin. Another short story, The Tooth Fairies, may be published as part of a larger publication in the near future.

What’s your writing process?
I usually write in the middle of the night when everyone else is asleep, my favorite music playing in the background. When I get ideas during the day and can’t sit and write, I’ll dictate it into my phone using an app or send myself an email. I’m part plotter and part pantser. For me, character comes first, and they seldom follow my plans.

How can the Atlanta Writers Club better serve you?
I’d like to have like-minded members as beta-readers who write or enjoy science fiction. If anyone is interested, please contact me at gparris744@bellsouth.net.
What advice do you have for new writers?
The same advice Octavia Butler gave me when I met her over twenty years ago. She told me to do several things after I finish the story. She said put it in a drawer, forget about it, come back later, and rewrite it. The late Michael Palmer gave me the same advice in different words; “All writing is re-writing.” But the epiphany struck me like a bolt of lightning when a stranger came up to me at a conference, looked me in the eye and said, “The most powerful button on the keyboard is the DELETE key.” Game changer! I have erased whole passages that I thought were very good but didn’t fit the story. I used to fear that I could never reproduce anything so great again. Then I rewrote something that was so much better and advanced the story. That stranger disappeared into the crowd and I never saw him again to thank him.
“So the writer who breeds more words than he needs, is making a chore for the reader who reads.”

- Dr. Seuss

People have different opinions about editing. There’s the rough draft, the creative spewing, when you eat, sleep, and dream your book. You drive friends crazy, calling them at odd hours to ask things like – What was the name of the tea place on Newbury Street? Or, What if Dorrie finds her husband’s stash? Or, Can people pump their own gas in New Jersey (something I wish I had asked)

When you finally finish your first draft and lean back, high-fiving the air, you might want to treat yourself to a night out or a trip to the beach, because, alas, there’s more. Editing – the crash after the high, the house-clean after the party. Tedious but necessary, it can be as time-consuming as writing your first draft. Some techniques work for some; others for others. This was my editing experience with The Pocket Wife:

1. I was a member of two critique groups that offered invaluable feedback. I didn’t agree with everything they said and didn’t make all the changes they suggested, but they often caught things I did not. (Wait. This guy opening the car door for the mystery woman? You killed him off three chapters back.) I also looked over what I’d written at the end of every writing day and made changes as I went along, so when I finished my first draft, it included the input of my critique groups and my daily changes.

2. I read through the manuscript on the computer, made lots of major changes and killed my darlings, saving many of the slain in other versions to be resurrected later.

3. I printed up that draft and read it stretched out on the sofa with a glass of wine, sitting at the kitchen table drinking tea and before I fell asleep at night, the way I’d read any other book. It’s amazing how different words look on a printed page. By the time I got to the last chapter, I had cross-outs everywhere, scribblings up and down the margins. I typed in my changes.

4. After that “go-round,” as my father would say, I read the whole book again, out loud, to my cat, occasionally in a British or Midwestern accent to alleviate the boredom. My ear caught gaffes my eyes hadn’t and I was again amazed at how many really bad or repetitious things I’d overlooked.

5. When I’d fiddled sufficiently, I signed up for the Atlanta Writers Club conference, met with an agent, sent her my entire manuscript as she’d requested, and breathed a sigh of relief.
6. Until she turned it down. “If at some point, you feel like writing this from one or two
POVs instead of five, I’ll take another look,” was her blithe response, but I held on
like a puppy with a sock.

7. When the agent was happy with my vast edits and after a short burst of drama at
auction, *The Pocket Wife* went to my editor at Harper Collins. She added a few
suggestions and returned them to me handwritten on the manuscript. They were
important – *The toll for the George Washington Bridge is now $12.50* – but fairly
quick fixes, which I made and sent back to her.

8. At this point, the book went for copy edits and back to me with several small ideas/
corrections to accept or reject. This was my last chance to make small plot or
character changes. Then, back it went again to the copy editor, this time primarily
for punctuation, which can be more important than you might think:

> “Making love to me is amazing. Wait, I meant: making love, to me, is amazing. The
absence of two little commas nearly transformed me into a sex god.” – Dark Jar Tin
Zoo, Love Quotes for the Ages. Specifically Ages 19-91

A few thoughts:

1. Edit for content. Make sure there is tension. Make sure there is an arc. If you have
subplots, either tie them in to the main plot or keep them brief. Don’t take your
readers too far afield with lengthy side trips. Make your characters memorable.

2. Edit for sound. Use the best words you can to sweep your readers through the
ambiance and plot you’ve created, but be aware of the fine line between too much
and too little. A straight-up telling of events: *The bird flew. It was blue* is certainly not
worth $25.99. On the other hand, you don’t want to bog the reader down or stop the
progression of the plot with too much wordiness, even if it is beautiful. Not sure
whether to cut something? Try reading it without what you’re thinking of cutting and
see how it sounds.

3. Consider asking a couple of avid reader friends or acquaintances you know will be
brutally honest to read your manuscript before you send it out. They can tell you
what worked for them and what didn’t, where they got stuck or what took them out
of the story, not as writers or editors, but as readers, and that’s who you want to
reach.

Whether you do your own editing or hire someone to help, your voice is the most important
factor. You might need to reign it in or whittle it down here and there, but be careful not to
edit and rewrite enough to mute the colors or slow the dance. Your unique mix of
characters and mood and words, that’s your voice. Let it sing!
Q & A with Terra Weiss
by William Black

The Atlanta Writers Club Spring Conference will be held on Friday and Saturday, May 4th and 5th and if you’re still deciding whether or not to sign up for the Spring Conference, maybe thinking your work wouldn’t benefit from the comments you’ll receive, then read this short interview with AWC member, Terra Weiss, who sat down computer screen to computer screen with me to talk about her own experience.

How long have you been seriously writing?
November 2017 marked the five-year anniversary of my novel writing journey. The path from writing to publishing a book is not a wee jaunt for most, that’s for sure. It certainly hasn’t been for me, and I’ve started to take pride in my collection of rejection letters. I have some frame-worthy doozies!

The novel you submitted at the Fall Conference, was it your first?
Yes, Wingmom is technically my first and only completed novel, but I feel compelled to mention that I’ve done over 20 rounds of major revisions and six complete rewrites of the dang thing.

What did the agents/editors like about your work?
It was unanimous: they all thought I had a talent for dialogue. Perhaps from a lifetime of talking too much? My elementary teachers always told my parents that I constantly distracted other students with "the gift of gab." It’s nice to finally turn my um, superpower? into something positive.

Did you agree with their criticism, or will you be keeping the parts you strongly feel are the valuable parts of your story?
I actually took every single piece of advice I received at the 2017 AWC conference because it was all invaluable. Actually, I’ve taken most of the advice I’ve received from editors and agents over the years. As hard-working professionals in the book-selling trenches every day, they know their stuff. The only time I haven’t implemented feedback was when an agent or editor didn’t seem to grasp what I was trying to do with my humor or understand my genre. Humorous writing is very subjective (as with all writing), and sometimes you come across folks who just don’t like your work. That’s okay, and once you realize that it’s normal and expected, it becomes easier to let it roll off your shoulders and move along. You’re never going to please everyone all the time. The important thing is to find those who appreciate your work and “get” what you’re doing. As long as you’re getting positive responses overall, you’re headed in the right direction.

What’s your background in writing?
I have an MBA from Arizona State University, which I used in writing Wingmom because my main character, Sophie, is a business executive. I did technology marketing and copywriting in San Francisco for several years, which I also used in the story. I was a...
Q & A with Terra Weiss
by William Black

senior writer for the YMCA, a ghostwriter for CEO’s of several technology companies, and have written for several humorous websites and professional blogs.

How about a shout out to your critique group? Or DO you belong to one?
Yes and yes! I would be nowhere without my writing partners, Grace Wynter, Katina Ferguson, Cristina Crayn, Curt Shannon, Jill Cobb, Kay Heath, Roger Johns, Deena Short, Brenda Lowder, Jake Miller and the many members of the amazing Atlanta Writes group. I could go on for days, as writing a book truly does take a village, but a very special thank you to all my wonderful beta readers, “tea but really wine” group members, and editors too.

Is there a second novel in progress? How does it differ from Wingmom?
I do have a second novel in progress, Wingmom Goes Hollywood. It’s different from Wingmom in that the stakes are higher, the romance is hotter, and the humor is more risqué. Skye is even nuttier (in a good way, of course), and the new heroine, Riley Glenn, gets entangled in a dangerous love triangle with her ex and the elite Hollywood Director, Maddox Winter. The unyielding paparazzi ensure their struggles are on display for the world to see.

Which writers do you admire most?
My favorite writers are Liane Moriarty, Sophie Kinsella, Jojo Moyes, and Robin York. Since I love them all, I try to mix my favorite elements of theirs into my books, although I write a flavor of crazy that’s all my own.

Are there any points you’d like to make to encourage other writers?
There are so many, but I’ll keep it short and sweet: always keep writing. If you do that, everything else will fall into place. The rejections sting. The harsh critiques stink. And losing contests: that just plain sucks too. But it’s all part of deal. Even on the most craptastic days, peel yourself out of bed, get that coffee and Visine, and peck along on that trusty keyboard of yours. Join a Twitter support group if you have to. (I may or may not be speaking from personal experience.) Okay, I lied: I’m going to make this response a bit longer with a short story. After the 2017 AWC Fall Conference, someone came up to me and asked me what my secret was. I wanted to laugh because I’d been pitching Wingmom for over four years. I’d had some success before, but nothing like that day. My secret was that I’d waited long enough for people to care. The book had always been there, but I’d found the right words at the right time: Comedic Women’s Fiction was back en vogue, baby. So my “secret” was working my tail off and hanging on like faux fur lint until I’d finally snagged that pesky stroke of luck.

We, uh, have a little more time, Terra. Anything else?
I can’t emphasize this enough to new writers: don’t put all your eggs into one novel basket. I know it’s so tempting, but once that first book is written and edited, you need to start working on other things while you’re pitching that book. There are several reasons
Q & A with Terra Weiss
by William Black

for this: the first is that it keeps you writing. The second is that you learn something new with each new piece, so don’t deny yourself an opportunity to grow. Lastly and most importantly: man, it feels great to say “yes” when an agent or editor asks you if you’re working on something else!

I believe your work was singled out for special recognition by three different Agents/Editors at the conclusion of the November Conference.
Yes, and it was one of the happiest and most shocking moments of my life! Good thing I’d worn my favorite pair of boots.
    Best Manuscript Award: Jennie Conway, Editorial Assistant, St. Martin’s Press.
    Best Manuscript Award: Melissa Danaczko, Agent, Stuart Krichevsky Literary Agency.
    Best Pitch Award: Patricia Nelson, Agent, Marsal Lyon Literary Agency

Was this the first time your work had achieved awards from writing organizations?
No. Wingmom is a two-time Georgia Romance Writer’s Maggie Award finalist, a Pitch Madness finalist, a six-time Atlanta Writer’s Conference (AWC) Best Manuscript Award winner, and a two-time AWC Best Pitch Award winner. My other novels, Wingmom Goes Hollywood, is a Maggie Award finalist, and Labor of Lies is a Maggie Award finalist and AWC Best Manuscript Award winner.

Sounds like everything is moving right to publication. Have you decided who you’ll ask to write blurbs for you?
No, but I have a wish list of authors I want to write blurbs for my published book and I’m not above tears and begging.

Maybe someone in the club would write something pithy. I don’t think you’d even have to look very far.
(No comment)

Terra? Are you still there?
(Still no comment)

Terra? Okay, let me know if I can do anything for you.

Look for Terra at one of our next meetings. The first hour or so is always a social get-together to discuss any projects you have in progress, or find out how your fellow writers find time to work. Terra will certainly stand out from the crowd. Just look for the most enthusiastic woman in the room, and she probably knows Terra and will introduce you to her. Maybe she’ll ask you for a blurb!
4 Reasons Not to use Flashbacks
By: Jenna Milly

I found this article interesting because I’m a big fan of the popular CBS television drama, *This Is Us*, and the show’s writers use a boat-load of flashbacks.

Discussing whether flashbacks are a good idea with writers is about as easy as trying to choose your favorite Star Wars movie. There really isn’t one definitive answer. We just want to say that avoiding flashbacks more often than not is probably a good rule of thumb for all screenwriters.

**No. 1 — Flashbacks take you out of the main plot**

Your audience likes your character and your storyline, so why do you want to yank them from it by taking them to another time? I know, I know, it’s because you need to explain something. But you see, that right there is the reason why you shouldn’t be doing it. Writers aren’t supposed to “explain” things in scripts. You do have to give the audience information, but it needs to come through plot and character — and always if you can, through conflict. It’s better to see your character react to the information the writer wants to get out there in the here and now rather than have it explained in flashback.

**No. 2 — Flashbacks prevent you from moving story forward in another creative way**

Learning about some terrible deed or deep back story is an excellent way for us to get closer to your character and understand him or her in a way that illuminates the plot. But if you let this conflict play out in the present with those who surround your character, it will undoubtedly make for better conflict. Let’s look at Jaws for example. Do we need to see what happened to Chief Brody in New York City that made him abandon his job and move to the island? Why is he afraid of the water? These are questions that could be answered in flashback, but instead the writer chose to advance the plot around these questions, giving the audience a deeper experience by leaving some things unsaid.
4 Reasons Not to use Flashbacks
By: Jenna Milly

No. 3 – Flashbacks give everyone an amateur vibe

It’s a tough one to hear, but flashbacks are often used by new writers because it is an easy way to explain something that happened in the past. And, that’s not to say that they can’t be used sometimes, but more often than not, you can find a work around. Challenge yourself to see how you can get this information out without going back in time. It could come out in dialog. Your character could find an old object – like a necklace or a ring – and speak to someone else in the present about how he or she is feeling. Or better yet, another character notices how upset your protagonist is when he or she picks up the ring and then pushes for answers. This is how you get conflict – in the here and now – into a scene and also give us the information that would come out in the flashback. That said, if you want to do a campy horror mashup, like Wayne’s World, then maybe a flashback could bring a comedic a vibe to your film.

No. 4 — Flashbacks take the best moments away from your actors

What’s worse, seeing the terrible childhood and abuse on screen or seeing an actor relive those moments with years of anger, frustration and sadness on his or her face? Why take this moment of remembrance and have your director cast it with another actor who isn’t even playing the role of the protagonist? You’re robbing your cast of being able to express this moment again, in the here and now.

These are just a few reasons why challenging yourself to avoid flashbacks could make your scenes more exciting, your dialog more interesting and your script more appealing to cast.

It’s a tribute to the quality of This Is Us’ writers that these flashback pratfalls don’t prevent me from thoroughly enjoying the program.
Interview

Colson Whitehead: I Have to Know the Destination

Pulitzer Prize-winning author Colson Whitehead talks about how the rejections of his first manuscript pushed him forward and why he enjoys exploring different genres.

“I became a writer once I realized no one liked my stuff. I just had no choice but to keep going and start a new novel.” In an interview for Louisiana Channel, Pulitzer Prize–winning author Colson Whitehead talks about how rejections of his first manuscript pushed him forward to pursue writing and why he enjoys exploring different genres.
International Women's Voices Day
Nedra Pezold Roberts

On International Women's Voices Day (Jan. 21st), Nedra Pezold Robert’s play *Performance Review* was presented in theatres and other venues coast to coast as part of Little Black Dress, Ink.'s festival, *Volume Control*.

Little Black Dress INK is an experiment in support, inspired by recent revelations in numbers on the subject of just how few female playwrights actually get produced. Through outreach, education, and producing opportunities, Little Black Dress INK strives to create more production opportunities for female playwrights while also strengthening the female playwright network.
The Writer's High Retreat®
"The perfect weekend writing retreat"

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PATTI CALLAHAN HENRY
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NYT Best Selling Author, Pulitzer Prize-
winning Former Journalist, and Literary
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Sponsors:
Atlanta Writers Club
Broadleaf Writers Association

Visit www.thewriterhigh.com for registration details
Gwinnett County Public Library Presents

George Yancy, Ph.D.
Professor, Philosopher, & Author

February 10, 2018 at 7:00 pm
Snellville Branch
2740 Lenora Church Road in Snellville

George Yancy, Professor of Philosophy at Emory University, works primarily in the areas of critical philosophy of race, critical whiteness studies, and philosophy of the Black experience. He is particularly interested in the formation of African-American philosophical thought as articulated within the social and historical space of anti-Black racism, African-American agency, and questions of identity formation.

He is known for his powerful and influential conversations with philosophers on race at The Stone, New York Times. Yancy is also the “Philosophy of Race” Book Series Editor at Lexington Books.

Free and open to the public. Books will be available for purchase and signing.
Gwinnett County Public Library Presents

Lauren Willig

Deanna Raybourn

Saturday, February 10, 2018 at 3:00 pm
Books for Less
2815 Buford Drive #108A, Buford, GA 30519

February is for Romance & Mystery!

Lauren Willig is the New York Times and USA Today bestselling author of the Pink Carnation series and several stand alone works of historical fiction, including The Ashford Affair and the collaborative novel, The Forgotten Room (co-written with Karen White and Beatriz Williams).

Her latest novel, The English Wife, is a Book of the Month Club Selection, and a Doubleday Book Club and Literary Guild Featured Alternate Selection.

Deanna Raybourn’s novel Silent in the Grave won the 2008 RITA® Award for Novel with Strong Romantic Elements and the Romantic Times Reviewers’ Choice Award for Best First Mystery. The Lady Julia Grey series has been nominated for several other awards, including an Agatha, three Daphne du Mauriers, a Last Laugh, four additional RITAs, and two Dilys Wins.

The program is free and open to the public. Books will be available for purchase and signing.
We depend on our members for support, and ask for volunteers to help out with some of the many exciting programs heading our way in the coming months. We'll need check-in volunteers for each of our future monthly meetings. If you would like to volunteer for a specific meeting, please let VP of Operations Jennifer Wiggins know which month you prefer. Or, if you would like to volunteer but are unsure about your availability until the time gets nearer, she will gladly include you in her list of volunteers to contact at a later date. Please respond to: jennifer.wiggins1@aol.com.

If you have difficulty in finding a critique group that meets at a convenient location and fits your schedule then you might consider the Atlanta Writers Club Fiction Online Critique Group. This group encompasses all genres of fiction writing from flash fiction to short story to novella to novels. All subject areas are welcome, although content warnings are appreciated. Group members are also encouraged to exchange information on any aspect of writing or publication, including query letters and self-publishing.
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Membership Renewal—What to Expect

The AWC has an automated system for tracking memberships and alerting members when it's time to renew. You will receive an e-mail from the system (showing Officer Emeritus George Weinstein’s e-mail address george@atlantawritersclub.org) one month before your membership expiration date. If you haven't renewed within a week, you will receive another e-mail every seven days, with a final e-mail one week from expiration. If the expiration date for your membership passes without renewal, the system will mark your membership as expired. It is a good e-mail practice to check your spam/junk folder to see if any legitimate e-mail has been misfiled there, possibly including the email you'll receive from george@atlantawritersclub.org prior to the expiration of your membership.

We appreciate your continued support of the Atlanta Writers Club. Your membership dues make it possible to bring fabulous speakers to our meetings, provide generous cash awards for our annual writing contest, and sponsor scholarships, literary prizes, and local writing festivals.
Membership Information – The Atlanta Writers Club

Regular membership dues are $50 per year per person. Students can join for $40 per year. Family members of active AWC members can join for $25 per year.

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, our members gather to listen and learn from two guest speakers who cover a broad range of topics and genres, and come to us from many facets of the literary world. Our speakers include published authors, literary agents, editors, playwrights and poets, just to name a few. Please refer to our list of upcoming guest speakers in this newsletter.

**Workshops.** Your membership provides access to outstanding writing workshops. Some are free with membership and others are provided at a discounted price. Watch for announcements about upcoming workshops.

**Twice-Yearly Writers Conferences.** This is your opportunity to spend time face to face with a literary agent or editor and have the chance to pitch your work. Conferences include agent Q & A panels, writing workshops, and a social gathering where you’ll get to meet and talk with the agents and editors in a more informal setting.

**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 read each other’s writings and recommend modifications.

**Writing Contests With Cash Prizes.** At least one contest is held each year with a variety of formats and topics.

**Monthly Newsletter.** Our monthly newsletter, the eQuill, provides the opportunity for our members to advertise their book launches and book signings to a wide reaching mailing list. And, it will keep you up to date with news about writing opportunities and literary events across the Southeast and beyond.

**Decatur Book Festival Participation.** The Atlanta Writers Club has a tent at the Decatur Book Festival each year, that’s staffed by member volunteers. It’s a great way to get involved in the largest book festival in the area.

Potential members are invited to attend a first meeting as our guest. After that, we’re sure you will want to become a member and take advantage of all the benefits that come with it. 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 Ron Aiken at ron@atlantawritersclub.org
Membership Form

? New Membership [Individual] [Family]

? Renewal [Individual] [Family]

? If this is a Renewal, please update your information?

First Name: ___________________________ Last Name: ___________________________

Cell Phone: ___________________________ Other Phone: ___________________________

Email: _______________________________ Alternate Email: ___________________________

First Name: ___________________________ Last Name: ___________________________

Cell Phone: ___________________________ Other Phone: ___________________________

Email: _______________________________ Alternate Email: ___________________________

? For additional family members, please use additional forms?

I would like to become involved with the AWC as a: ? Meeting Volunteer ? Conference Volunteer

? Decatur Book Festival Volunteer ? Other (please specify):

AWC MEMBERSHIP DUES

Individual [$50.00]: $__________

Family [add family members for $25.00 each]: $__________

Membership is for ONE YEAR

Student [$40.00]: $__________

Make checks payable to: Atlanta Writers Club

Tax Deductible Donation: $__________

Total: $__________

Mail check and form to: Atlanta Writers Club

C/O Ron Aiken, Treasurer

155 Glen Eagle Way

McDonough, GA 30253

The Atlanta Writers Club is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible.

Name: ___________________________ donated $ _________ to the Atlanta Writers Club.

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No goods or services were provided in exchange for or in association with this donation.

? Please keep this portion of the form as you receipt?