



Write Connections

Volume 19 Number 3

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The TAMPA WRITERS ALLIANCE is an organization of adult writers—amateur and professional, beginning and advanced—who share a keen interest in improving skills and resources. Its members, who number about 100, create works of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry; as well as stage and screenplays. In addition to its monthly general meeting, the TWA conducts workshops in specific aspects of writing, provides free assistance to scholastic and literary groups, sponsors an annual writing contest open to all writers, and publishes a yearly anthology.

Writing Teacher Staci Backauskas to Discuss Editing

Our next General Meeting will be held at 7:00pm on Wednesday, **March 3rd**, in the **CHILDREN'S LIBRARY** (due to a scheduling snafu) of the John Germany Library, 900 Ashley Street, downtown Tampa.

Owner of Triple Moon Productions, Backauskas is a writer, writing teacher, and consultant with nearly 20 years of experience in marketing, advertising, training, and small business. She has written seven books, as well as articles for numerous national and local publications, including *American Profile*, *Imprint*, *Entrepreneur Start-Ups*, and *The Carrollwood News*. She has been widely published on the Internet as well, and currently teaches creative writing for Life Enrichment Center in Tampa.

Backauskas is the author of "Desiree's Dream Job—A Career Transition Fable" and "Desiree's Dream Kit—A Practical Guide for Intentional Career Transition." She is also the author of a novel, *The Fifth Goddess*, which details a woman's journey toward self-acceptance, examining what happens when we refuse to confront the pain in our lives.

In addition, Backauskas is the founder of **The Follow Your Bliss Foundation**, a non-profit organization distributing scholarships and providing a support network to those living their dreams. Ten percent of all monies earned by Triple Moon Productions go to the foundation.

MARCH 2004 Renewals

MAUREEN BROOKS  **ANN T. COOK**  **LIZ CORREA** 

JEFF CORYDON  **BEVERLY DEASON** 

REBECCA ELLIOTT  **ED KURTZ**  **JIM MACEACHERN** 

KAREN MCKINNEY  **DENISE PASSMORE** 

JAMES YOUNG 

Members may bring their \$25 annual dues to the next General Meeting, or mail it to:

Frank Cáceres, Treasurer—34731 Double Eagle Court Zephyrhills FL 33514.

Members receiving *WC* via the US mail, your renewal date is on your label.

Most people do not aim too high and miss, they aim too low and hit.

—BOB MOAWAD

An English professor announced to the class; "There are two words I don't allow in my class. One is gross and the other is cool."

From the back of the room a voice called out, "Yeah? So, what are the words?"

El Nuevo Presidenté — From the mind of Chaplin, the Writer

Allow me to introduce myself. I have been a member of TWA since August, 1999, and for a couple of years was quite active as the editor of Write Connections and on the ExCom. Back in January of 2002, business dictates made me back off for a while. My writing accomplishments include having had two books published and having made my living for a couple years as a business writer and advertising/marketing guy.

Now a few questions for you. Why are you a member of TWA? What do you get out of being a member? What do like about TWA? What do you not like about TWA? What would you like TWA to do or be that it is not or not doing now? If you are not coming to our first Wednesday of the month general meetings, why not? What would prompt you to come? You will soon have an opportunity to have your voice heard as I will be sending each member a questionnaire covering these and other concerns you may have.

Your feedback will be very important in helping me set the course of our TWA for the next two years. It is important to me that our organization serve the needs of its members. The only way to do that is to discover what our members want and need and that means at least a minimal participation from everyone to speak out by responding to the questionnaire. I thank you in advance and hope to meet you at our March 3rd general meeting.

POETRY WORKSHOP

The meetings are held at Barnes & Noble's south in the Café, near Kennedy at 7pm in the café on the LAST THURSDAY of the month. The MARCH meeting will be 3/25/04. Contact Workshop Coordinator Lark Underwood at thellark@hotmail.com or go to www.tampawriters.org for more information.

THE CRITIQUE GROUP ---Warner Conarton, Coordinator

The Critique Group met on February 11th at Barnes and Noble Booksellers (north). The one just south of Stall Road on N. Dale Mabry, at 7 PM. We had a full house (22) and a busy night. We went around the table five times and most everyone had something to say about the following submissions: Neville Goedhals' **Annunaki**, Martha McIntosh's **What to Do**, Mark Yacht's **Film Noir IV**, Joan Nelson's **The Titanic Exhibit** and Chris Battle's **Butterflies for Breakfast**. By that time we were pretty well burned-out and it was time to quit anyway.

If you're a TWA member and want your work critiqued, contact me at warnerc@quixnet.net and I'll give you instructions. If you are not a member and want to come by and check us out, there's always an extra chair we can drag over from somewhere.

MEMBERS IN MEDIA

BRYAN MECKLEY had his short story "WORK WEEK" published on Outsider Ink. The link is www.outsiderink.com.

Information for this feature needs to be sent to the editor by the 20th of each month.

The Florida Review Editor's Awards

The Florida Review is now accepting entries for its annual Editor's Awards, a contest designed to reward quality fiction, memoir, and poetry. Winners in each genre will receive \$1000 and publication in the Fall 2004 issue, and all entrants receive a one-year subscription to the journal. *The Florida Review* is a national literary magazine published semiannually at the University of Central Florida, whose mission is to publish the best contemporary literature. It has earned a Citation of Achievement from the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines, has been listed in *Writer's Digest's* "Fiction Fifty," and has featured such internationally renowned writers as Margaret Atwood, William Trowbridge, Stephen Dixon, Grace Paley, Lorrie Moore, Mark Doty, and Tobias Wolff

GUIDELINES:

- 1) Submit only previously unpublished work.
- 2) **Fiction** and **Memoir** submissions may be up to 10,000 words.
- 3) **Poetry** submissions may be 40 lines maximum per poem. The best group of 3-5 poems will be selected. There are no restrictions on form or style.
- 4) Include a separate title page with the author's name, address, telephone, and email address. The author's name should not appear anywhere on the manuscript.
- 5) A reading fee of \$15.00 for each prose entry or group of poems includes a one year subscription to FR. Make check or money order payable to *The Florida Review*.
- 6) Manuscripts will not be returned. Include SASE for notification of winners.
- 7) Simultaneous submissions and novel and book chapters are not eligible.
- 8) Honorable mentions in each category may be selected for publication.
- 9) Reading begins: December 1, 2004. Entries must be postmarked by April 1, 2004.
- 10) Winners will be announced on FR's website (<http://www.flreview.com>) by June 11, 2004.

Send submissions to:

The Editor's Awards (Indicate genre entered)
The Florida Review
Department of English
University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida 32816-1346

Can Book Doctors Help My Writing Sell?

By Robyn Conley

Book Doctors are freelance editors who diagnose and help heal any unhealthy places in your writing. Can they help you sell what you've written? Although there's no guarantee of your novel or article selling after going through a book doctor, they can help your chances of making your work more marketable. They do this by helping you polish and perfect your content and sentence structure.

Because I'm a writer first and a book doctor second, I have a great deal of respect for each writer's style and voice. When they submit work to me, I look for ways to help tighten flabby sentences, without disfiguring their style. If their work suffers from some speech impediment, I'll prescribe dialogue suggestions and exercises that will breathe more life into their writing. Sometimes an anemic point of view dulls the narrative and we have to fortify those areas with more emotional iron.

Does everyone need a book doctor? Certainly not. If you're lucky enough to be in a well-rounded critique group, you're probably already receiving objective feedback regarding your writing. Sometimes having even one buddy read your work and offer that objectivity, gives you all the assurance you need to submit your stories or articles. Most of my clients are folks who work such long hours that they barely have time to put their creativity on paper, let alone go over it the number of times it takes for a solid revision to emerge. And revising is crucial. The objective eye is crucial. We love our beautified, poofed-up words too much to nip and tuck them right away, but to be successful writers we must learn to groom and exercise our babies so they're as lean as inviting as possible.

How do you do that? I use a checklist in my client work and in workshops that shows writers what to look for in their own writing. It's the same list that serves as the anchor of my book, BE YOUR OWN BOOK DOCTOR, where I have the liberty of going into more detail, but I can sneak in a few of the categories below:

1. **Give Anesthesia Its Due**-- give yourself permission to NOT edit right away or you'll stifle any objectivity before revising.
2. **Respiratory Therapy** -- read your work out loud to pick up on long sentences, point of view problems, or unrealistic dialogue.
3. **Speech Therapy** -- study your work for bland tag lines, bland dialogue, or dialogue that is so long in places it loses its authenticity.
4. **Pumping Up the Heart Rate** -- circle those passive verbs and find stronger, more descriptive ones to make your writing stand out above someone else's in the slush pile. There are other elements I look for, of course, regarding plot and structure, and all the necessities of each genre or non-fiction category. But always, I respect the writer's unique approach to their material and suggest changes that will enhance that style, not change it.

Writers who are considering using a book doctor often ask me how they can make a good choice; after all, there are different styles of editing, just as there are of writing. First and foremost, make sure that the doctor/editor has been in the field for a while and can prove it with either a list of client or publisher references. If they aren't willing to provide those items up front, then look elsewhere. Likewise, if a literary agency you've submitted to offers to represent your work, "...after you send it through this editorial service..." look elsewhere. Most likely that agency is tightly connected with the editing service and makes a nice kickback income, rather than an agency income off its writers. There are legitimate agencies that refer book doctors, but those agents will give you at least two or three people they trust for you to query. I've been enjoying my practice for almost thirteen years, and during that time many of my writer patients have made such wonderful progress that they've become cured—published. What a super feeling that is for me!

If you have any questions you'd like to ask the book doctor in future issues of WRITE CONNECTIONS, I'd be happy to address them. Just email me at: bookdoctor@earthlink.net & include "**Tampa Writers Alliance Question**" in your Subject line. If you'd like to visit my website—www.robynconley.com—to learn more about me and my services please do.

Happy writing and revising!

TWA Directory

TITLE	NAME	PHONE	E-MAIL ADDRESS
President	Jim Chaplin	813-835-4255	jpcflorida@hotmail.com
Vice President	Sandra Kischuk	813-935-7760	sjkischuk@juno.com
Secretary	Martha McIntosh	813-839-7277	martham@rapidsys.com
Treasurer	Frank Cáceres	813-783-3385	twa-treasurer@novelguy.com
Member-at-Large	Cathie Astl	813-994-5455	cathieastl@hotmail.com
Critique	Warner Conarton	352-588-3228	warnerc@quixnet.net
Editor	Lark Underwood	813-908-3095	the1lark@hotmail.com
Publicity	Lucy Parker	813-996-1130	lvparker@cytex.com
TWA WEBSITE			WWW.TAMPAWRITERS.ORG

PINAWOR (Pinellas Authors and Writers Organization)

This writers' group meets each Saturday, 9:30 am to noon, at the Highlands Recreation Center Complex, 400 N. Highlands Avenue, Largo. Contact **Elenora Rose Sabin, 727-345-3376** or elanora36@yahoo.com

GENERAL FYI

- ☛ TWA meets each calendar month on the 1st Wednesday at the main Tampa library. The only exceptions are those first Wednesdays coinciding with a holiday, in which case the membership is notified in the newsletter of the alternative date/day several months in advance.
- ☛ The January meeting is a "writing workshop" & the February meeting is a staged reading of the winners of the Script category from the previous year's writing contest. Even-numbered year Februaries are also the months TWA elects its new ExCom.
- ☛ The writing contest Awards Banquet is held in January to avoid the holiday crush & allow us better venues and prices. It is usually scheduled for the latter part of the month.
- ☛ To receive your free membership copy of THE WORDSMITH, our annual anthology, you must have been a member in good standing (paid up!) by the 31st of December of the previous year (i.e to get the 2004 WORDSMITH, you must have joined by 12/31/03) and you must have "actively selected" to receive one. Contact Lark Underwood and "actively select" your copy. We only print a few archival copies beyond what we need for members, so if you do not let us know you want one, when it comes time, you'll have to either regret your lack of attention/effort or pay for a copy—if any are left.

Lifelong Writers, the membership arm of the *Florida Center for Writers*, meets 7pm to 9pm the 3rd Wednesday of the month at the MMH building at USF. Open to all writers and aspiring writers.
Contact **Martha Lakis**, at 813-974-8021 or mglakis@admin.usf.edu for more info.

PASAWOR (Pasco Authors and Writers Organization)

This group meets the 1st & 3rd Mondays, 12:30 to 3:00 pm, at the Pasco Art Council-5744 Moog Rd in Holiday, FL.

Tampa Writers Alliance *Write Connections*

c/o Lark Underwood, Editor
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