



Write Connections

Volume 19 Number 11

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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.

WHY DOES A WRITER NEED A LAWYER?

Entertainment attorney Kevin D. Astl of Wesley Chapel will discuss legal issues for writers at our next General Meeting which will be held at 7:00pm on Wednesday, **NOVEMBER 3RD**, in the auditorium of the John Germany Library, 900 Ashley Street, downtown Tampa.

A graduate of the University of South Florida, Astl earned his a law degree from Mercer University in Macon, GA. He specializes in music industry law; however, his practice includes many areas of entertainment law, including film and television. He also works as a writers' agent. His talk will cover what he does as an agent, what happens when a writer is presented with a contract, and other ways an attorney assists writers. His wife is writer Cathie Astl, Member-at-Large on the TWA Executive Committee (ExCom).

A frequent speaker at professional meetings, Astl has appeared several times on WTVT-FOX 13's, "Ask-A-Lawyer," a televised, on-air question-and-answer session, and on radio call-in shows.

In addition to his legal practice, he is a musician, songwriter, and drummer. He is a member of various legal associations, as well as the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences (NARAS); the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP); and the Florida Motion Picture & Television Association (FMPTA), where he serves as a member of the Board of Directors and legal advisor to the Tampa Chapter.

NOVEMBER 2004 Renewals

WENDI CHRISTNER  **FRANCIS CROFT**  **SUSI CROFT** 
BRUCE HUNT  **ANITA JIMENEZ**  **UTHAYA KUMAR**  **GREG McCOLM** 
PHILIP SCHNEIDER  **TIM WRIGHT** 

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 33541.

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

IN MEMORIAM

Past TWA president WILLIAM PENROSE died October 4th. Bill was executive vice president of the Florida Motion Picture & Television Association and a member of the Kiwanis Club. He retired from the US Air Force after serving 25 years.

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ANN SMITH, 2-year TWA member, lost her nearly 20-year-long battle with ALS, earlier this year. Her family and friends are participating in the 11/6/04 Bay Area WALK TO D'FEET ALS in her memory.

"...THE RIGHT WORD..." – JIM CHAPLIN

There should be appreciable benefits for belonging to any group or organization in which one invests his or her time and/or money. In the case of having made the choice to belong to TWA, you do have definite benefits that accompany your membership. Of course, whether one takes advantage of these benefits is entirely up to you.

Take for example, the Mental Health benefit. What? You didn't know about the Mental Health benefit?

OK. Examine why you're here. You are a writer/creative person/journalist/scribe/poet/novelist/columnist/hopeful/professional/ novice/none of the above who has gravitated to TWA to further your knowledge/skills/interests/entertainment/education/rub-elbows-with and generally benefit from an association with like-minded others.

Your TWA ExCom is dedicated to creating programs and activities to enhance opportunities to stimulate the writers brain and satisfy the needs of the members we serve. Your participation, either passive or aggressive, is a definite Mental Health benefit. Passively, you're involved vicariously in what your TWA is doing. Aggressively, you actually take part in what your TWA is doing; critique groups, attending general meetings, annual writing competition, poetry workshops, monthly social gatherings, New Member Party, TWA's participation in the St Pete Times Festival of Reading in November, the annual awards banquet in January or the free February ski trip to Colorado. Your TWA membership Mental Health benefit - make of it what you will.

Speaking of the St. Pete Times Festival of Reading...this year we're doing something new... providing—as a benefit for, and at no cost to—TWA members who have published books a table to display and/or sell their books. The only condition is you must do at least one 2-hour shift at the Festival.

Thanks for being a TWA member. Like in any other endeavor, you only get out of it what you're willing to put in. We hope you find your membership worthwhile and the benefits rewarding.

POETRY WORKSHOP

The meetings are held at Barnes & Noble's south, near Kennedy in the Café at 7pm on the LAST THURSDAY of the month. HOWEVER, the **NOVEMBER** meeting will be **11/18/04**, due to **Thanksgiving**. Contact Workshop Coordinator Lark Underwood at the1lark@hotmail.com or go to www.tampawriters.org for more info.

TWA Critique Group for Children's Writers

Paul May is starting a critique group for TWA members who write for children and young adults. All formats are welcome (picture book manuscripts, short stories for children, middle-grade and young adult novels, poetry, scripts, etc.) The group will meet in Brandon on the first and third Mondays of the month. For more information, contact Paul May at paulmay@tampabay.rr.com

THE GATHERING IS ON HIATUS UNTIL FEBRUARY.

MEMBERS IN MEDIA

BRYAN MECKLEY's short story "VILLAIN" was published in Megaera. The link is:

www.megaera.org/Megaera/fall04/meckley.html

EVE DAYTON recently had article published in September 27th issue of "**Advance**," featuring the Loan Forgiveness program for nurses.

MARTHA McINTOSH's article "**On the Home Front: Pearl Harbor**" was published in the Prime Time section of the Tampa Tribune on 6/29/04. It is about a close-knit family during WWII, and how for a young girl, the more things changed the more they stayed the same.

MARC YACHT's flu article addressing the alternatives to vaccine was published in both the St. Petersburg times (local sections) and the Tampa Tribune (Pasco). His 3-part series addressing issues in health care that touches on liability, health insurance costs, and the uninsured is currently being published in both the Tampa Tribune (Pasco) and St.

JEFF CORYDON's will have an article and photo published in The St. Pete Times' "Seniority" section Tuesday, October 26 as its monthly "Times Remembered" feature.

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

NOVEL POD

As of October 14, 2004, TWA has five novel pods meeting regularly. For more information, or if you are interested in starting a novel pod in your area, contact Paul May at paul@paulrmay.com

Location	Facilitator	Email Address	Status
Brandon	Sarah Byrn	sarakali@tampabay.rr.com	Open

Brandon	Al Lucas	althephilosopher@aol.com	Open
Carrollwood	Wendi Christner	ForWendi@aol.com	Closed to new members
Carrollwood	Lark Underwood	the1lark@hotmail.com	Closed to new members
Citrus Hills	Lou Kiefer	kiefers@digitalusa.net	Open

**THE ART AND NECESSITY OF CRITIQUE:
How To Give And Take Criticism Without Coming Apart At The Seams**
by Hilari Bell

OK, now that I've found/created a writers' group, what do I do with it? I doubt if anyone actually asks the above question--at least in the way I mean it, which concerns manners more than writing skills, but they ought to ask it! Nowhere is courtesy more important than with your critique group --and with all the ego writers invest in their work, that can prove tricky.

Anyone who critiques anything should be able to practice the simple technique of offering praise for whatever is good first, then tactfully pointing out the problems, and ending with more praise. After all, the point of the exercise is to convince the writer to fix their work. A long string of criticism is more likely to convince a writer that you "just didn't get it" than it is to convince her that you're an insightful reader, who understands what she was trying to do, and whose comments she should seriously consider.

*A quick sidebar: A critique is also not the place for soapbox oration, or the exercise of any form of wit—especially sarcastic wit. This is easier to avoid with verbal critiques, since you're looking the person in the eye and watching their expression change. But before I hand over any written critique I edit out both those things--and my critiques are the shorter and the better for it.

But critiquing others--though it's a skill you sometimes have to work on—usually isn't nearly so filled with pitfalls as the painful art of being critiqued. I learned my first lesson about What Not To Do before I ever started writing myself, from my grandfather. He would write a short story or memoir, and hand it out to members of the family, earnestly asking them to critique it for him. If you simply told him it was great and handed it back, he would ask again for feedback, for suggestions, for criticism. But if you ventured even the mildest criticism, he would spend the next half an hour—following you from room to room if necessary—explaining why he had written it that way, and why that was the best of all the possible alternatives, and why he couldn't possibly change a word of it.

So the first thing I learned at Granddaddy's knee was don't try to justify or explain what you've done. It may be that your reader is dense, or it may be that you aren't getting the point across--but which ever it is, explaining what you intended the reader to understand is a waste of everyone's time. If it's relevant to something that's being discussed later, or you want your critiquers' ideas for ways you might succeed in getting the point across, then a brief and calmly-worded explanation is OK. But what you should always bear in mind when your work is being critiqued is that you're there to listen, not to talk.

To disagree with a critiquer is a good, and even a necessary thing—it's just one person's opinion, after all. The trick lies in disagreeing without saying so. It doesn't matter if the person who's critiquing you is totally off target, clueless as a great detective's sidekick, and even expressing herself like a tactless boor—you don't have to tell her that! In fact, you don't have to say anything to a critiquer you disagree with except "Thank you. I'll think about that." Just sitting there and nodding is an even better technique—and taking notes is not only courteous, it's a good way to conceal your expression.

The final thing that you should always say to a critiquer is "Thank you." And no matter what you think of the opinions, you should mean that sincerely. This person has given time, thought and effort to help you. You should appreciate all those things whether or not you use the suggestions.

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Hilari Bell's previous Writing Tips can be seen on her website: www.sfw.org/members/bell

Creativity is allowing yourself to make mistakes. Art is knowing which ones to keep.

--Scott Adams

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
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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
Events Coordinator	YOU?		
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. February is also the month—every 2 years—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. Contact Barbara Harrington at bshadowbooks@ij.net or call 727-572-6345.

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