

# Write Connections

A publication of and for the Tampa Writers Alliance

Volume 20, Number 3, April 2005



*Celebrating over Twenty Years of Service to Our Members and the Community*

## April 6 - TWA's Annual Writers Workshop

**Five mini-seminars designed to help all writers in areas of common concerns.**

Featuring short and to-the-point presentations, the Tampa Writers Alliance's Annual Writers Workshop will be offered at the group's monthly meeting, Wednesday, April 6, at 7 p.m. in the Auditorium of the John F. Germany Main Library, 900 N. Ashley Dr. Topics to be presented by TWA members and friends will include getting an editor's interest, online research methods, liability issues in writing and photography, self-publishing, and using photography in your writing.



### **Sandra Kischuk**

Award Winning Author  
...How to get an editor's interest: The ins and outs of writing and sending effective query letters.

### **Lucy Parker**

Author of *How to Start a Home-Based Writing Business*  
...Getting the facts straight: On-line research methods.



### **Attorney Kevin Astl**

...Liability issues for writing and photography.



### **John Taylor**

Thriller Author and Publisher  
...Independent Publishing - Making it profitable - or at least fun.

### **Bruce Hunt**

Adventure and Travel Author and Photographer  
...The use of photography in writing.



**Denis Patrick O'Connor, Col.USAF (Ret)**, was a true officer and gentleman. He was a WWII pilot, a seaman, father of three sons, a grandfather, writer, *bon vivant* and a world traveler. He made one last exciting adventure, a trip to Argentina with his son Mark. He wrote on February 7th that he loved Buenos Aires. He planned to return to Tampa on the 15th. He died Feb. 9, 2005. Denis Patrick O'Connor, a charming Irishman, cast a tall shadow. We lost a friend and writer. I will miss him. Jedd Pope

## WHAT'S HAPPENING WHEN and WHERE

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.

The Tampa Writers Alliance meets each calendar month on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday at the main Tampa-Hillsborough library, downtown on Ashley Street starting at 7:00 P. M. 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” and 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 Executive Committee.

The writing contest Awards Banquet is held in January to avoid the holiday crush and 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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.

The University of South Florida also maintains an archive of Alliance information that includes twenty years of anthologies, newsletters and miscellaneous records.

See the Group columns for specific dates, times and locations for the other meetings

*Go to the Tampa Writers Alliance web site at  
<http://tampawritersalliance.com>  
for updates and archives of past events and newsletters.*

## The Right Word

TWA President’s Message, April 2005

Just about a year ago, shortly after being sworn in as TWA’s 2004-2006 president, I sent our membership a questionnaire in an attempt to find out why they had joined TWA and what they hope to get out of being a member. One common theme running through the responses was a desire for TWA to create an atmosphere that would provide members the tools that would help them hone their skills and grow as writers. We set out to develop a series of programs that would do just that.

At 7pm on the first Wednesday of each month we hold our TWA General Meeting in the auditorium of the John Germany Tampa Public Library in downtown Tampa where these programs are presented. For our April 6 general meeting, we’ve called on the talents of five of our accomplished members, each to present a mini-seminar in their fields of their expertise.

I won’t duplicate the information you’ll find elsewhere in this issue of Write Connections regarding this program, be sure and check it out. For any member who truly wants to learn and grow as a writer - how to tackle the elements necessary for success, being exposed to the knowledge of ways that can further your success - this evening of mini-seminars is a valuable benefit of your TWA membership.

Of course, to reap the rewards of that benefit, you need to make the effort to be there. Each session runs fifteen to twenty minutes so you’ll get to see all five and then have your questions answered. This can be a very exciting evening, we do hope you will be there.

On another subject, in an effort to provide more opportunities to our writing members, at their March meeting, your TWA Executive Committee approved adding another category to your 2005 Writing Contest; Science Fiction/Fantasy, and thanks to the generous support of one of our TWA members who kicked in an extra \$50 out of his own pocket to the prize money pool, we’ve upped the first place cash prize for this new category to \$150. Along with last years addition of the Novel category, the new Sci Fi/Fantasy category provides two new opportunities in the past year in which our writer-members can enter their work. That’s progress.

I do hope you are getting all you can out of your TWA membership. It’s there to be had, just for the taking. Till next we meet, here’s hoping your quest for finding the ‘right word’ is successful.

Jim Chaplin

## FWA Carrollwood

April 16: Meet Michele Bardsley, a multi-published author whose next work of erotic fiction, "CUPID, INC.", will be released by New American Library (an imprint of Penguin Putnam), will present "Some Like It Hot", a discussion on the elements needed for romantic fiction and why stories with sizzle sell big in today's market.



Also read her terrific article in the latest Writers Digest about her recent Writers Digest prize - a trip to New York to meet with publishing agents.

## From the Tampa Tribune

We're looking for a dozen people who would like to join The Tampa Tribune's inaugural Board of Community Columnists.

If you enjoy writing and expressing an opinion, here's your chance to be regularly seen and heard across the region.

The expectation is that you would write one column a month, attend bimonthly meetings to discuss issues and good writing, and follow the ethical principles of journalism. It's a one-year commitment so that we can rotate another round of people onto the board next year.

We want our Board of Community Columnists to reflect the diversity of our region in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, geography, political ideology, you name it. Most of all, we are looking for interesting people with whom readers might enjoy spending some time.

So if you're interested, here's what you should do. Send us two or three samples of your writing, along with a head-and-shoulders photo. Include this information: your name, mailing address, home phone number and e-mail address, if you have one.

Send your samples to [rgoudreau@tampatrib.com](mailto:rgoudreau@tampatrib.com). Or by mail: Rosemary Goudreau, The Tampa Tribune, 200 S. Parker St. Tampa, FL 33606

## Executive Committee action adds Science Fiction/Fantasy to the 2005 Tampa Writers Alliance Writing contest.

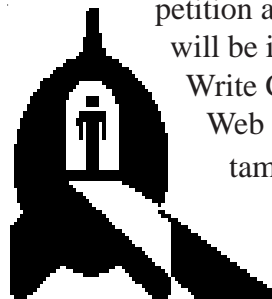
At their March 13 ExCom meeting, the committee added one new element, Science Fiction/Fantasy, to the line up of categories that writers may enter their work in. Requirements are similar to the Fiction category with a cap of 2,500 words for submissions. Each story must be a complete work in itself as opposed to chapters from a book length project



There is no entry fee for Tampa Writers Alliance members. There is a \$10 fee for non-members wishing to submit their work. The new Science Fiction/Fantasy category joins the Fiction, Non-Fiction, Poetry, Novel, Script/Screenplay and Ed Hirshberg Award for Excellence in Florida Writing categories. The contest opens for entries June 1 with an October 1 closing deadline. First place winners in all categories (except the Ed Hirshberg) receive a \$100 prize with \$50 for 2<sup>nd</sup> place and \$25 for 3<sup>rd</sup>. Winner of the Ed Hirshberg Award has the option of a paid tuition to USF's 2006 Florida Suncoast Writers Conference or \$150 in cash.

All winning entries in all categories will be included in the 2006 edition of WordSmith, TWA's annual anthology.

Complete details for this years competition along with rules and entry forms will be included in your May issue of Write Connections and on TWA's Web site at: <http://tampawritersalliance.com>.



*Denis,*

*He knew how to live and how to die. I hope to go like that. Unexpectedly, fast and with people I love.*

*Joan Strauman*

## POETRY WORKSHOP

### NEW DATE AND PLACE FOR THE POETRY GROUP

The TWA Poetry Group will meet on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of every month (excluding December) at the Barnes and Noble Booksellers (NORTH) which is just south of Stall Road on North Dale Mabry. (Stall Road is just South of Fletcher. If you see Borders, you are too far north.) We will be meeting next on March 24<sup>th</sup>, at 7 PM. We have a table reserved in the back.

The Poetry Group met last on February 24th. Five members were present, Lark Underwood, Ersula Odom, Susan Levasseur, and Warner and Ella Conarton. Lark, Ersula, Susan and Warner each presented several poems for discussion (and appreciation.)

Perhaps the shortest poem presented was one by Warner Conarton. It had been awarded "Editor's Choice" by Sol Magazine, competing with hundreds of other entries, and qualified him to compete with 10 other poets for Poet Laureate 2004 of that e-zine magazine. (He did not win.) Note: Poets interested in any and all aspects of poetry are invited to visit the Sol Magazine web site at <http://www.sol-magazine.org>. The subject of this particular contest was "Watching the Stars at Night" and the form required was as follows:

**WALTZ WAVE** This form, named for poet Leo Waltz, asks for a one-stanza titled poem, with nineteen lines; each line has a set number of syllables. Pattern: 1, 2, 1, 2, 3, 2, 1, 2, 3, 4, 3, 2, 1, 2, 3, 2, 1, 2, 1 Words may be split into syllables to fit the pattern. This form seems to educe a soothing cadence as the lines gently increase and decrease, so it is suggested that topic chosen for this form also be soothing.

TWA Poets and Songsters and *the interested* are invited to attend the Group. Make a half-dozen copies of any poems or song you intend to present (to pass around.) We're looking forward to meeting you. Check with me to get on the PG e-mailing list.

Warner Conarton  
Poetry Group Coordinator  
warnerc@quixnet.net

## Dark Night's Starry Span

Stars  
suck me  
up,  
swirled  
Into space  
to all  
dark's  
daunting  
distances,  
from measure to  
infinite.  
Knowing  
then  
of up's  
far secrets,  
drawn back  
down,  
I am  
vast.



## Granddaughter Hand Prints on my Windowpane (Alyssa)

Little hands.  
Busy little hands.  
Curious, touching everything, squeezing,  
Pulling, poking.  
  
Left their prints on my kitchen window.  
I saw them.  
Then again through tearful eyes.  
A reminder of your last joyful presence

Ella Conarton

## TWA Critique Group

If you haven't attended the TWA's critique group recently, look at what you've missed:

-Al Lucas' "Hi steppin off Da Crack," a shockingly realistic story of drug addiction.

-Marc Yacht's Film Noiresque mystery novel "Lady of the Band."

-Doug Maloney's intriguing Cold War spy novel, "Archangel."

-Charles Greenwood's "Spear Carrier," an inside experience of "The Battle of Ap Gu" in Vietnam in 1967.

-Martha McIntosh's "Tales by Grandma" series of her childhood experiences.

There's more. But to read them you have to attend the meetings. Here's what's coming:

-Ella Conarton's childhood memoirs, "Rooster Soup" and "Chocolate Squares."

-Charles Trent Alling's "Pony Walker," a western novel set in the 1870s.

-Warner Conarton's play "Waffle House Blues."

-Jedd Pope's modern romance short story "The Chief's Daughter."

As you can see, the group evaluates fiction, non-fiction, and all genres. Some of our members are just beginning their writing career, others are award-winning authors, and some are professional writers. Consequently, each piece generates a wide spectrum of opinions. We give honest feedback in a positive and gentle manner designed to spare your ego but not your frontal lobe. Our feedback helps you improve your writing.

The group meets the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month from 7-9 PM in the right rear of the Barnes and Noble Bookstore at 11802 North Dale Mabry Highway (next to Piccadilly cafeteria). That's just south of Stall Road.

If interested, please email me at [charles.greenwood@yahoo.com](mailto:charles.greenwood@yahoo.com) for more information and the submissions for the next meeting. Please be aware that only TWA members may submit pieces for evaluation by the group.

I hope to see you at the next meeting!

Charles Greenwood  
Coordinator

### Three of the top entries in the Bulwer-

**Lytton contest**—AKA Dark and Stormy Night Contest— (run by the English Dept. of San Jose State University), wherein one writes only the first line of a bad novel:

"As a scientist, Throckmorton knew that if he were ever to break wind in the echo chamber, he would never hear the end of it."

"Stanley looked quite bored and somewhat detached, but then penguins often do."

"Like an over-ripe beefsteak tomato rimmed with cottage cheese, the corpulent remains of Santa Claus lay dead on the hotel floor."

Anyone interested in being in a writing pod in Pinellas County? Call award-winning author, screen writer and actress Miriam Goodspeed at 727-787-1464. (*adjectives added by ed. -Miriam's too shy*)

### **Attention, attention....**

The following members are due to renew. The Tampa Writers Alliance is preparing for another grand year of excitement. New contest categories and exciting speakers. Please pay at the next meeting or send your check to the treasurer - see back page for address:

Beyer, Mark  
Corsones, Allison  
Corydon, Jeff  
Dayton, Vee  
DiCamillo, Dominique  
Elliott, Rebecca  
Ferland, Bea  
Kurtz, Edward  
MacEachern, James  
McKinney, Karen  
Meckley, Bryan  
Moscardini, Charrie  
Parker, Lucy V.  
Passmore, Denise  
Welcks, Michelle

## Are You In or Out of the Shell?

As of March 10, the Tampa Writers Alliance has six active novel pods. Sandi Scionti is starting up a new pod for nonfiction writers in the South Tampa area. She can be reached at [sciontis@verizon.net](mailto:sciontis@verizon.net)



For TWA members who may not be familiar with the concept, novel pods are small clusters of writers working on long pieces (fiction or nonfiction). Novel pod members meet to give each other more detailed criticism than would be possible in our regular critique group meetings.

Novel pods are typically limited to four or five members. Keeping the group small allows writers to read long submissions, usually around fifty pages. In a two-hour meeting, only two or three writers might be critiqued. This model allows for in-depth discussions about character development, plot flow, chapter transitions, etc. While joining a novel pod requires a serious commitment to the other writers in the group, many of our TWA members have enjoyed the benefits.

Typically, novel pod members send submissions via email to the pod facilitator, who then forwards them to the group. Manuscript submission standards are highly recommended (double-spaced, numbered pages, header with title / author / page number, etc.). Members read the submissions and write their critiques before the meeting. Occasional time is allowed to discuss marketing strategies, queries, and other publishing information.

The novel pods are sanctioned by the Tampa Writers Alliance. As such, all who participate should be TWA members in good standing.

For more information, or if you are interested in starting a novel pod in your area, contact Paul May at [paul@paulrmay.com](mailto:paul@paulrmay.com). Curious? More to come on PODS next month! Impatient? Ask at the General Meeting March 2nd.

Location	Facilitator	Email Address	Status
Brandon	Sarah Byrn	sarakali@tampabay.rr.com	Open
South Tampa	KC Lucchese	kclukz@earthlink.net	Open
Carrollwood	Wendi Christner	ForWendi@aol.com	Closed to new members
Carrollwood	Lark Underwood	the1lark@hotmail.com	Open to 1 intermediate or advanced writer
Citrus Hills	Lou Kiefer	kiefers@digitalusa.net	Open

### Paul R. May has added two published stories to his list of writing credits.

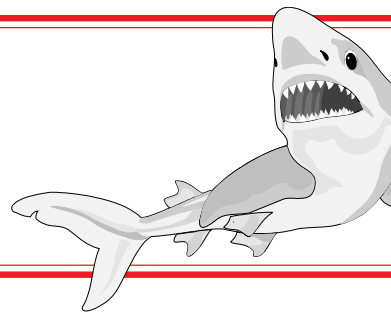
The first story, “Mr. Sadler’s Smile,” has been published on a new online short story site for children, Dragonfly Spirit.

The second, “Jodie’s Dream Journal,” is under contract and will come out next month on Story Station, a branch of the Viatouch site for parents, teachers and children. Links to the stories can be found in the writing credits section of Paul’s site at <http://www.paulrmay.com>

A recent survey conducted by the University of Dayton’s Erma Bombeck Writers’ Workshop found that humor writers who earned more than \$5,000 last year were more likely to sit down and write until a humorous idea came to mind, while those who earned less than \$500 were more likely to wait for a funny idea to hit them. The survey also showed that the biggest challenge for high-earning humor writers was finding the overall concept for a piece—not writing individual jokes.

The moral: Write whether you’re feeling inspired or not. Eventually, the right concept will come to you, and you can laugh your way to the bank

# From the Shark's Den



**I have attended too many funerals and read too many obituaries for my liking this year.**

So it is fitting that we are adding a Science fiction/fantasy category to our contest in honor of MaryAlice (not a typo, she crunched it all together) Thomas. MAT would be pleased at a little irreverence and paranormality creeping though the halls and point out the obvious - that I am getting too darn serious about destiny.

For those of you who didn't know MaryAlice, she grew up as a child sleeping in and later living out of a trunk while she traveled with her vaudeville performing family, then served in the Women's Army Corps, attended Florida State soon after it returned to co-ed status and taught in a business school - all unsubstantiated, but revealed by MaryAlice interwoven into fantastic tales with such wonderful believability and humor, much like her award-winning stories and poems. MaryAlice, swirling about in her flower-print muumuu, served as the VP of Tampa Writers Alliance, Critique Group coordinator, Write Connections editor and high school contest judge; and supported just about anything that the Alliance tried. Now if only I could write something she would be proud of, and enter it in the Sci Fi/Fantasy contest category.

**And then the news about Denis.** I personally owe Denis a significant debt for his sharp critiques of my novels, but even more for sharing his life and adventures through his articles. Who really would believe a story about rising from a mid-western kid admiring barnstormers to be first a Royal Canadian Air Force pilot, then a US Army Air Corps combat veteran in the Pacific, a military attache in Europe, captain of a luxury sailboat cruising the Mediterranean, a navigator on tramp steamers?

**Isn't this really fiction, I would ask?**

Nope - this was Denis' life.

**And he is the Tampa Writers Alliance.**

If you are one of the many who can't or don't make the meetings, try one. You will meet writers of all types and sizes, maybe not as heroic as Denis, as charming as dear Bill Penrose, as exotic as MaryAlice or as full of tall tales about gangsters in Tampa as Harold Love.

Every meeting has a speaker who will tell you something about writing that you didn't know, so inspirational that you will revel in your new-found knowledge. I have not made many of the recent meetings myself - got all the great excuses. I am looking forward to getting to know the Astls (is he really a lawyer), and the other new (to me) members I met at the banquet who are now the heart and soul of the Alliance. And also meet those who walk in off the street and realize TWA has a lot to offer.

**Every good volunteer organization has a core that keeps it running.** I was introduced to TWA by the Crofts in 1994 and met Ann Cook and Jeff Corydon who were then the president and critique coordinators - I forget in which order - and joined a novel pod with Tim Wright and others. Several of the "old hands" have maintained their interest over the years, and many new faces have taken up the slack as others have departed.

**Now you may - and can.** Lucy Parker has managed our PR for years, and needs a break. Lark has shouldered a tremendous load ever since I suggested to her that she should be an officer and she took charge of the whole shebang! I know the Executive Committee is working to fill out the various positions, so perhaps I'm a bit tardy in my comments. But there is always something else that needs doing or coordinating.

**Want to help judging high school student and teacher fiction?** Got an idea for something new we can do to service our community? Belonging to TWA is a wonderful opportunity to learn and take away new skills and networking contacts, but it is also an excellent organizational base to help more kids (big and little) enjoy reading and writing.

**Enough preaching!** Over the next couple of months your *Write Connections* will include articles that will help you write the award-winning article or short story you have banging around in your head - as soon as you send it in to me, along with photos of all the neat literary events happening around town.

**I'm tired of filling space with jabber and big fonts - send me something GREAT to print!**

*Pinawor*, Pinellas Authors and Writers Organization, meets each Saturday at the Highlands Recreation Complex, 400 N. Highland Avenue, Largo, from 9:30 to Noon. Contact Elenora Rose Sabin at 727-345-3376 for more information.

*St. Petersburg Writers' Club* meets at 7 p.m. on the first and third Thursday of each month at the Piccadilly Restaurant, 1900 34th Street N., St. Petersburg.

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## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Tampa Writers Alliance is a nonprofit, self-help support group for aspiring and published writers of fiction, nonfiction, poetry, scripts and plays. Annual membership dues are \$25 and include the monthly newsletter, *Write Connections*, and one copy of the *WordSmith*, our anthology of annual contest winners.



To join or renew, please make your check out to Tampa Writers Alliance and mail to:

**Frank Cáceres**  
**34731 Double Eagle Court**  
**Zephyrhills, FL 33541**



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