



Write Connections

Volume 22 Number 8

August 2007

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.

General Meeting August 1st

Wednesday August 1: General Meeting, 7 p.m., John Germany Library. Marcia Freespirit of local JimSam Inc. Book Publishing will talk about what it takes to self-publish, and the advantages of working with a publisher “in your own backyard.” She will also speak about that often neglected part of getting your book to market...your marketing plan.

JimSam Inc. is a full service contract publishing company. Authors retain the full rights to their written works of art when utilizing the company’s publishing, marketing, and distribution services. “We ensure that the look, feel and format of the end product are all in alignment with the creator's expectations. We welcome inquiries from authors that promote our mission and vision. JimSam Inc.'s commitment is to become an internationally recognized contract publishing house that specifically caters to books, promotions, seminars and educational programs seeking to improve relationships and empower women.”

About Marcia Freespirit:

Recently nominated as a finalist for the Tampa Bay Business Journal 2007 Business Woman of the Year. As an author, publisher and business leader, Marcia has led organizations to experience tremendous growth, while increasing profits and improving services to thousands of clients. Dedicated to helping others reach beyond their goals, she encourages authors and businesses to set their sights beyond expectations.

Through her own experiences of physical and emotional abuse, failed relationships and personal tragedy, Marcia is able to pull from a wealth of experience and strength. She is remarkably able to relate to people from all walks of life and diverse backgrounds. Her own story of surviving pain and crisis is shared in her memoir, *Gladwoman*.

www.JimSamInc.com

News: The Florida Suncoast Writers' Conference will be on hiatus for 2007. Its sponsor, the Department of English of the University of South Florida in Tampa, finds itself unable to continue the conference under its current funding arrangements. For several years the conference has faced rising costs far in excess of its ability to raise fees. During the coming year, the creative writing faculty of the department will be examining options which may allow the department to revive the conference in a fiscally viable form.

Note: Prose, notices, press releases and one time book promotions may appear in newsletter if space permits and you submit to the editor before the 20th of each month.

"A Writer's Life...Calendar and Notes" from TWA president Sandra Kischuk

I remember falling off my bicycle as a child, and driving black cinders into my elbow (much like a tattoo!). No amount of digging by my parents or my neighbor could get it out...I was going to have a dirty-looking elbow for life. Of course, I did as most kids do—got back onto the bicycle—and promptly fell off again. (I was not a coordinated child.) The nice part about it was that I skinned my elbow even more...and scraped all of the cinders right out of it.

If I had decided to sit at home, feel sorry for myself, and nurse the bloody elbow, I would probably still have cinders in it today. It was only by *focusing on something else* that it resolved. And even if I hadn't fallen off my bicycle again, I still could have chosen whether I spent the rest of my life worried about what other people would think about the smudge on my elbow or the scar on my knee where I fell on broken glass outside my grandma's nursing home or the finger I whacked with the hammer a few years ago, permanently distorting the joint.

I wrote a poem a month ago. Part of it was:

*I gave up long ago trying to hide my wounds,
Not certain whether to put on new bandages
Or if peeling away what was already there
Made things less obvious, so people would
Talk to me instead of my past.*

Yes, the past provides marvelous experiences for us to draw on in our writing. Having the courage to dig into it, to say, "Yes, I was not a coordinated child, and even as an adult, I walk into walls," or whatever *your truth* is makes your writing unique. Too many times, we get locked into that past. When we decide that the past determines our future and refuse to recognize our lives are growing thing we change and direct today, it is like writing the same sentence over and over again.

A pencil can be used to write *new* things—It can also be used as a tool of punishment. Who of us didn't get the elementary school assignment of writing the sentence, "I will not...(whatever we did that was wrong)"? We weren't told to write it just once. Most of us found it easier to fill the first position on the page or chalkboard all the way down with the first word, then write the second from top to bottom, and on until we reached the final period.

Whether that writing exercise actually kept us from further wrongdoing, we were more careful to not get caught, or getting writer's cramp just kept us busy and out of trouble for a brief period of time probably depends on how sensible we thought the directive. To this day, I don't remember *what* I wrote, just that I did it.

I also remember *drawing* the same picture over and over—not that someone told me I had to or that I was punishing myself by doing it, but I *knew*, intuitively, that I hadn't yet gotten it right. It wasn't until later that I learned the skills and techniques of *seeing* that changed how I drew. Learning to see also changed my writing.

The challenge then...write something *new*. Explore a new genre. Try thinking from the position of a different character. Visit new places and see if you can integrate that into your writing. Unbound by the past, you may discover or develop skills that make your writing all the more interesting and rewarding

Wordsmith 2006 & 2007

Unclaimed reserved copies of Wordsmith 2006 & 2007 are no longer reserved or free. All Wordsmith 2006 and 2007 are now on sale at \$10.00 per copy. Shipping is \$3 per book. Send checks to James Young at the address below.

James A. Young
2826 Keysville Rd East
Lithia, FL 33547

ATTENTION

Start Planning For St Petersburg Times Festival of Reading

- **Saturday, October 27:** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.—St Petersburg Times Festival of Reading. This event is of special benefit to TWA members. Each year TWA purchases one or more booths at this event for TWA members to promote and sell their books. This has turned out to be a great opportunity for our published authors. Last year they sold over \$500.00 worth of books. And authors can keep the proceeds of their book sales. Get your seat at the table reserved early lest you get left out. It's first come, first serve. Seats are limited. So, go ahead, mark your calendar and then call Sandra Kischuk: 813.935.7760 to reserve your seat at the table.

TWA Critique Group – Al Lucas, Coordinator

2nd & 4th Wednesday at 7:00 pm. NO MEETINGS IN DECEMBER.

Please send your submissions and other appropriate information to Al Lucas, ALthePhilosopher@aol.com. All genres are welcome. We accept short stories, novel chapters, and even poetry. 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 you see Borders, you're too far north.

Visitors are welcome to attend if interested in joining, but only members' works will be discussed, generally 4-5 pieces per session. Dues are only \$35 yearly beginning the month you join. For further information, visit our Website at: www.tampawriters.org

The Poetry Group

4th Thursday of each month. Barnes and Noble Booksellers (North) Just south of Stall Road which is just south of Fletcher on North Dale Mabry. 7 PM, way in the back of the store.

Yes, the Tampa Writers Alliance has a meeting for poets. We meet at the Barnes & Noble Booksellers (North) just south of Stall Road on North Dale Mabry Hwy. We get together at the tables in the back on the 4th Thursday of each month at 7 PM. If you're lucky, all you'll need is a bunch of copies of your work (We average about 15 poets per meeting, plus who-knows-what.) Copies are not even compulsory. You can read yours or sing yours or have someone else do it for you. If you only appreciate poetry, bring your favorite to read. We go round and round the table. If you want critique, ask for it. Otherwise, we're there just to enjoy hearing each other emote and comment. Seriously, something bazare almost always happens, so be ready. As for that, we always manage to have a lot of fun anyway, yes, in spite of everything. Give us a try. Free admission.

Warner D. Conarton, Tampa Writers Alliance Poetry Group Coordinator

e-mail: warnerdconarton@netscape.com

Web-page: warnerconarton.com

Wizards of Words

The 2007 **WOW** (Wizards of Words) Writers' Conference will take place September 14, 15 in Tampa, Florida. Featured presenters are **Florida authors, Tim Dorsey, (international best-selling mystery author); Linnea Sinclair, RITA (c) award-winning author of Sci-Fi Romance; John Strelecky, international best-selling author of *The Why Cafe*.** Florida authors presenting workshops are: Rita Milios, MSW, *The Mind Mentor*, author, psychotherapist & speaker, Susan C. Haley, The Power of Networking; A. J. Rodriguez, D'Maria Scaglione and Betty Fasig, conducting Story Time for Children.

Bob Sanders, co-founder of Mundania Press Publishing, will speak on "**How to Get a Publisher to Say Yes.**" The Young Writers workshop will be conducted by Claudette Milner & Associates.

For advance online registration and complete schedule of workshops and presenters go to: www.wizardsofwords.org. Saturday lunch is complimentary. Advance hotel registration may be made at the Quorum Hotel, 700 North Westshore Blvd, convenient to I-275. (813-289-8200) <http://www.quorumtampa.com/> Conference rates available.

Dahris H. Clair - Committee Chair, WOW Conference, wizards5@verizon.net

TWA Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone (_____) _____

Cell Phone (_____) _____

Email _____

To join TWA and receive full membership benefits, fill out the application above and mail it with your check for **\$35** (payable to Tampa Writers Alliance) to:

**James A. Young, Treasurer
Tampa Writers Alliance
2826 Keyville Rd E.
Lithia, FL 33547**

“Thoughts while chained in handcuffs, shackles & leg irons in the back of a prison transport van”

The cars and trucks on I-95 North go really fast. We were flying along at 85 or so, and the traffic flashed by like those Nascar shots. When you haven't driven a car in 30 years, and only ride on the highway every few years, you lose the "normality" of speed, and the sense that everyone is flying along in a river of steel becomes disconcerting.

Most of the vehicles look so shiny, new and expensive. I see millions in car payments zooming past us. It's unusual to see an old, dented heap pattering along, and when I see an old battered Chevy filled with migrant workers, my first thought is uh oh, border patrol, racial profiling. Those guys are going to get stopped.

It's a hard 2 ½ hour ride from Tomoka in Daytona to the prison hospital at Lake Butler in North Florida. I'm amazed at all the thick brush that grows to the edge of the interstate, & better understand how those wildfires close down the highways. With all the prison labor, I wonder why they don't have road crews clear all that undergrowth.

Riding on Highways 13, 16 & 17, I am dismayed at all the junk & rundown appearances of the shabby houses right next to the highway. Starke looks especially depressed.

When we get inside the prison, the guards proceed to unchain our bonds. The handcuffs have cut my wrists, & the guard hands me paper towels to clean the blood. The bone bruises are worse, but the hardest part is trying to scratch your nose or ear when your hands are cuffed & secured in your lap with waist chains. We're glad to get them off nonetheless.

At the Lake Butler prison hospital, you get a better idea of how many prisoners are dying. Some emaciated, desiccated men on stretchers look no different than the ones in Darfur on ABC News. Healthy human skin has a glow, a sheen to it, that you don't notice until you see someone dying of AIDS, their coal black flesh seems opaque, dull, flat, no glow, no life. Smiles reveal dying gums, frightening.

I am lucky. An outside dermatologist zaps a laser on four cancerous spots on my head & one on my right cheek the size of a quarter. When I come out, the smell of burning hair & flesh still fresh, a man with a seeping bandage on his neck asks if it hurt. "It feels like he held a cigarette lighter to my head," I say.

On "24" they torture suspects by burning them with lit cigarettes. That wouldn't work on me. A cigarette can't touch a hot laser.

I see a few men I've known over the past 30 years of imprisonment—much older, grayer, frailer, sadder, more lost, little hope. They tell me of others who've died, were released, came back, sickened & died, so many, too many to keep track of, but what else do they have to do?

We ride back, & I crane my neck to see all the stores, malls, billboards, pastures, cows, trees, bridges, the "River," (St. Johns) people, students, cars, golf courses, tennis courts, that so many thousands pass each day without a sideways glance. I try to fill my brain with fresh images, snapshots of society, to hold & cherish in my mind after the prison fences & razor wire come into view, & I'm sent back to my cell, alone.

Charlie Norman: freecharlie2001@yahoo.com

TWA Directory

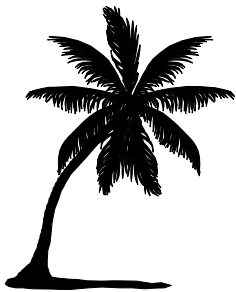
TITLE	NAME	PHONE	E-MAIL ADDRESS
President	Sandra Kischuk	813-935-7760	sjkischuk@juno.com
Vice President	Michael Pleasant	813-325-0314	pleasmw@aol.com
Secretary	Cathie Astl	813-994-5455	cathieastl@hotmail.com
Treasurer	James A. Young	813-737-1688	jayoung@mindspring.com
Member-at-Large	Robin Knowles	813-645-7640	rhknowles@aol.com
Poetry	Warner Conarton	352-588-3228	WarnerDConarton@netscape.com
Write Connections Editor	James A. Young	813-391-1139	jayoung@mindspring.com
Critique Group	Al Lucas	813-899-0438	ALthePhilosopher@aol.com
Wordsmith Editor	Sandra Kischuk	813-935-7760	sjkischuk@juno.com
Website	Jim Chaplin	813-835-4255	jpcflorida@hotmail.com
Publicity/Public Relations	Adele-Ida Walter	813-932-6902	adeleidawalter@hotmail.com
Contest Coordinator	James A. Young	813-391-1139	jayoung@mindspring.com

TWA WEBSITE

WWW.TAMPAWRITERS.ORG

Adele Walter's one act play "Oh My God" is scheduled to be performed by the Carrollwood Players the weekend of August 3-5 2007. Congratulations Adele!

Stay Cool and **Write On!**



Tampa Writers Alliance
Write Connections
 c/o James A. Young
 2826 Keysville Rd E
 Lithia, FL 33547