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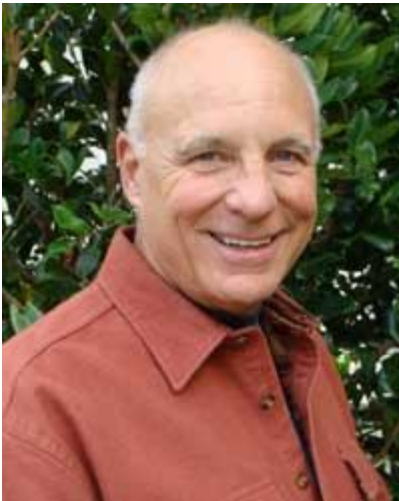
The TAMPA WRITERS ALLIANCE is an organization of adult writers—amateur and professional, beginning and advanced—who share a keen interest in improving skills and resources. Its members, who number about 100, create works of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry; as well as stage and screenplays. In addition 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.

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## Regular Meeting

Wednesday, January 7th, @ 7pm, Barnes & Noble at the Carrollwood location,  
11802 N. Dale Mabry Highway, Tampa, FL 33618..

January's guest speaker is Andy Bowen. Mr. Bowen has recently completed a children's Christmas book: The story of a talking Christmas tree, *A Tree's Christmas* is a limited edition children's book that will make a meaningful, lasting gift for the young ones in your life. Personally autographed by the author, Andy Bowen, the numbered 2008 commemorative edition is available only online at [www.atreeschristmas.com](http://www.atreeschristmas.com). At \$9.95, the gold-leaf embossed hardback is a true Christmas value. Visit [www.atreeschristmas.com](http://www.atreeschristmas.com) to buy yours today, or post a blog, as Christmas morning will be here before you know it!



Lifelong journalist James Andrew Bowen, who grew up in the rural South, was inspired to write "A Tree's Christmas" after the most memorable Christmas season his family had ever enjoyed. That year, the glorious Christmas tree was again the center of the family's celebration, so it was with a sense of real sadness that he and his daughter took off its decorations, to be stored in the attic for another year. Then, as is the ritual in many parts of rural America, they carried the tree out into the garden, where it would wait to become mulch for next year's vegetables. But this Christmas was different. When he and his daughter realized the other trees around the garden were looking down on the poor Christmas tree, lying there in the cold, the idea for "A Tree's Christmas" came to him.

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## Greetings from TWA President Michael Darling

The awards banquet for the TWA Writing Contest will be held on Thursday, January 15<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at the Golden Corral in Temple Terrace. All TWA members and their guests are welcome to attend. Anyone who has not already done so, please RSVP to the TWA Treasurer, Paul DuBose at [PPDuBose@aol.com](mailto:PPDuBose@aol.com). Cost is \$20 per person unless you participated in the writing contest.

Christine Taylor, the TWA Secretary, is also a member of the Central West Region Florida Committee National Museum for the Women in the Arts. She has extended an invitation to all TWA members. You are invited to come out to Center Place in Brandon on Thursday January 8, 2009 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. or anytime during the exhibit from January 5 through January 31. This group of talented artists is putting on an interesting and enjoyable exhibit. As writing professionals in the creative field, let's all show support by visiting the exhibit! Please invite everyone to:

### **CENTER PLACE *Presents* WOMEN OF RIGHT BRAIN**

619 Vondenburg Dr., Brandon, FL 33511

***Opening Reception Thursday, January 8, 2009, 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM***

Please join me in welcoming our newly appointed Write Connections Newsletter Editor, Paul DuBose! Jim Young has done a wonderful job with coordinating and distributing the newsletter. Paul's experience in writing newsletters with other organizations in the past will certainly help him keep up the quality of Write Connections.

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## Press Releases

Linda Burhans offers an inspirational message of unconditional love, loss, joy, sorrow and a healthy dose of humor in "Good Night and God Bless"

Guaranteed to make you laugh through your tears, the extremely personable Burhans is available for speaking engagements and workshops for caregivers, health care and assisted living facilities, civic organizations, clubs, churches, and all others seeking wisdom and comfort from someone who has traveled the universal path of love and loss.

In tribute to her mother's memory, Burhans is donating a portion of the proceeds from sales of "Good Night and God Bless" to the Gulf Coast Oncology Foundation and The Hospice of the Florida Suncoast.

To schedule a speaking engagement or interview with Linda Burhans,

Please contact: 727-365-8383

[www.LindaBurhans.com](http://www.LindaBurhans.com)

[www.GoodNightAndGodBlessTheBook.com](http://www.GoodNightAndGodBlessTheBook.com)

[LindaBurhans@aol.com](mailto:LindaBurhans@aol.com)

**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 20<sup>th</sup> of each month.**

## "A Writer's Life.." by Past President Sandra Kischuk

### RENAISSANCE MOMENTS

I heard an interesting theory last week about the incredible "flowering of the Renaissance," that burst of intellectual and artistic creativity which changed our concept of beauty and brought about mechanical understanding and advances that were not even fully realized until centuries later.

The theory was that this incredible cultural realignment was the result of the plague, the "Black Death" which decimated Europe's population by an estimated 30 to 70 percent in the 1340s and killed one-third of the population of China. This horrific experience changed how people viewed the world and life. Societal constraints on "appropriate" thought patterns were loosened by a disease that tore the fabric of a culture apart. Religious communities were especially hard hit because members of the religious orders served as caretakers for the victims.

In 1665, five people in the British village of Eyam died from plague. Everywhere, people were fleeing, hoping to escape the pestilence. Instead, they carried the plague-infested fleas with them, hastening the spread of the disease. Eyam's rector, William Mompesson, convinced the village to go into quarantine. For a year, the villagers isolated themselves from the outside world, leaving money at the outskirts of the village in exchange for food which people from neighboring villages left.

A year later, when outsiders finally came into Eyam expecting there would be few survivors, they found that half the town had lived through what was expected to be a guaranteed death sentence.

In 1996, Dr. Stephen O'Brien of the U.S. National Institutes of Health was researching how some individuals appeared to be immune to the HIV virus, which affects the body in a way similar to plague by tricking it and taking over white blood cells. Studies showed a mutated form of a particular gene, "delta 32," prevents the HIV virus from entering cells and infecting the body. Repeated attempts to induce HIV infection in blood samples from individuals with the delta 32 gene mutation failed—it appeared to prevent the HIV virus from hijacking the white blood cells. In performing genetic testing on the descendents of Eyam plague survivors, O'Brien found delta 32 present in 14 percent. This is significant.

An international group of scientists testing for the presence of delta 32 around the world found that native Africans, East Asians, and Indians had none. The only places where the level of delta 32 matched that in Eyam were regions in Europe which had suffered plague and in America, settled for the most part by European plague survivors and their descendents. This may, in part, explain why HIV infection and AIDS are so much more virulent in Africa, where there is no genetic protection at all and also, why the disease is so much more prevalent in the African-American population than in the Caucasian-American population. The discovery of delta 32 also suggests a direction for a potential pharmaceutical intervention—to develop a drug that mimics delta 32 and *prevents* the disease from even infecting the body, rather than trying to treat HIV after it has established itself within the cells.

No solution today, but still a potential to comprehend...

A cure for the plague was not what stopped the disease, nor was it an understanding of how it was transmitted. Epidemiologic theories were decades away. In the end, the survivors just "picked up the pieces," and moved forward.

Like the mythological phoenix, the bird which rose, reborn, from the flames of a funeral pyre, the Renaissance followed the raging storm of the bubonic plague. An explosion of creativity and knowledge started in the 14<sup>th</sup> century in Italy, which had been especially hard hit by the plague, and spread across the European continent. It assimilated mathematics from the Islamic world and revived the knowledge of classical Greek texts which returned to Europe when the Byzantine (Turkish) Empire collapsed.

Many years ago, when I was dealing with a tough past, I referred to processing that past as "walking through the fire," knowing that was what I needed to do to come out the other side. The rebirth required the conflagration, to be fully (and painfully) consumed in order to be reborn. My feeling was that I wanted to flee. I didn't.

Maybe the Renaissance required the plague in order to become what it was.

How do you define your Renaissance?

The FWA St. Petersburg Writers Group will have Dr. Roy Peter Clark, Senior Scholar at the Poynter Institute, as our speaker.

Dr. Clark will discuss the City of Writers project that he is working on and then conduct a workshop based on his latest book,

Writing Tools: 50 Essential Strategies for Every Writer.

The meeting will be held January 8th at the St. Petersburg Main Public Library, 3745 9th Ave N (corner of 37th St.) beginning at 5:30pm and concluding by 7:45pm.

The FWA St. Petersburg Writers Group holds monthly meetings on the 2nd Thursday of each month.

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## **TWA Critique Group – Mac Wheeler, Coordinator**

**2nd & 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday at 7:00 pm. NO MEETINGS IN DECEMBER.**

Please e-mail submissions to Mac Wheeler, [mwheeler@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:mwheeler@tampabay.rr.com). In the subject line of your e-mail, mention "TWA Critique Group." This 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. That's just south of Stall Road. Fletcher Avenue, an interstate exit, is the intersection just north of Stall Road.

Visitors are welcome to attend, but only members' works will be discussed, generally 4-5 pieces per session. Works to be critiqued are distributed to TWA members via e-mail approximately two weeks before the next scheduled meeting. The author has a chance to respond after verbal critiques are finished. Emphasis is on constructive criticism.

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If you would like to attend the Critique Group and give it a once-over, it is best to let the coordinator know ahead of time so he can forward you the pieces being critiqued that meeting. Otherwise, it's sometimes difficult to make complete sense out of what people are saying about the submissions. Also, so that you can better participate. Such notification, however, is not a requirement. You're always welcome.

Mac Wheeler, 813-237-5140 *Read about my novels, or read one of my short stories at:*

<http://web.tampabay.rr.com/macwheeler/>

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## **The Poetry Group**

**4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of each month @ 7:00 p.m. NO MEETINGS IN DECEMBER.**

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 bizarre 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](mailto:warnerdconarton@netscape.com)

Web-page: [warnerconarton.com](http://warnerconarton.com)

## Tampa Writers Alliance

### Benefits of Membership

**Meet and get acquainted with other writers.** TWA hosts two member parties a year. These provide all members a chance to make new friends and enjoy old ones.

**Educational programs of interest to writers.** Each monthly meeting offers an opportunity to learn something that may help your writing skills grow.

**Writers critique group.** Two monthly critique group meetings offer members a chance to have their manuscripts evaluated by their peers.

**Poetry critique group.** Two monthly poetry critique group meetings offer members a chance to have their poetry evaluated by other poets.

**Eligible to promote and sell books at St Pete Times Festival of Reading.** Each year TWA pays the fees necessary for one or more booths at the one day St Petersburg Times Festival of Reading. TWA members can promote, display and sell their books at TWA's booth.

**Eligible to join others in judging manuscripts for Hillsborough County Teachers of English annual writing contest.** Each year TWA members are asked to judge manuscripts for HCTE. This opportunity allows our members to apply their knowledge and skills in helping young writers find their talent.

**Eligible to enter annual writing contest and win hundreds of dollars.** Each year TWA awards over \$2,000.00 in prizes to the best entries in our writing contest.

**Attend TWA's Annual Awards Banquet.** In January of each year our members gather to recognize the winners of the writing contest.

**Free copy of Wordsmith anthology.** Each member entering the writing contest is eligible to receive a free copy of TWA's Wordsmith anthology. The Wordsmith contains all the winning entries from the writing contest.

**Receive TWA's "Write Connections" newsletter with information on events, writing contests, programs, conferences, etc.** Every month our members receive news of interest to writers.

### Tampa Writers Alliance Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_ New \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_

Membership dues are \$35.00 renewable annually from date of membership. Visit [www.tampawriters.org](http://www.tampawriters.org)

To join or renew membership in TWA and receive full membership benefits, fill out the application above and mail it with your check for **\$35.00** (payable to Tampa Writers Alliance) to:

**Paul DuBose Treasurer, TWA**  
**501 Royal Wood Court**  
**Valrico, FL 33594**

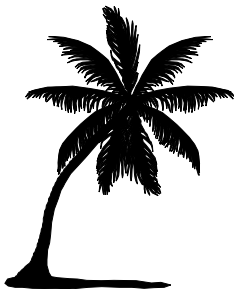
## TWA Directory

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>PHONE</b>	<b>E-MAIL ADDRESS</b>
President	<b>Michael Darling</b>	813-662-1615	darling@HopliteRenegades.com
Vice President	<b>James Durlacher</b>	813-770-2346	onekewlkat@hotmail.com
Secretary	<b>Chris Taylor</b>	813-996-2713	DesigningChris@tampabay.rr.com
Treasurer	<b>Paul DuBose</b>	813-685-2033	<a href="mailto:ppdubose@aol.com">ppdubose@aol.com</a>
Member-at-Large	<b>Vacancy</b>	N/A	N/A
Member-at-Large	<b>Ken Dye</b>	708-707-7286	JDye608@aol.com
Poetry	<b>Warner Conarton</b>	352-588-3228	WarnerDConarton@netscape.com
Write Connections Editor	<b>Paul DuBose</b>	813-685-2033	<a href="mailto:ppdubose@aol.com">ppdubose@aol.com</a>
Critique Group	<b>Mac Wheeler</b>	813-237-5140	<a href="mailto:mwheeler@tampabay.rr.com">mwheeler@tampabay.rr.com</a>
Wordsmith Editor	<b>Sandra Kischuk</b>	813-935-7760	sjkischuk@juno.com
Website	<b>James Durlacher</b>	813-770-2346	onekewlkat@hotmail.com
Publicity/Public Relations	<b>Adele-Ida Walter</b>	813-932-6902	adeleidawalter@hotmail.com
Contest Coordinator	<b>James A. Young</b>	813-391-1139	jayoung@mindspring.com

**TWA WEBSITE**

**WWW.TAMPAWRITERS.ORG**

**Stay Cool** and **Write On!**



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