Writers' Notes

The Newsletter of Women Who Write, Inc.

Summer 2015 Volume 20, Issue 2

President's Message

Greetings,

The Board members of the past two years have been involved in so many changes within WWW: a new website; new insurance to protect Board members; additional standing rules of behavior for members, which initiated a new position on the current Board – "Trustee-at-Large: Mentor"; a different approach to our Conference; an afternoon vs evening Winter Gathering; and, the return of the Open Mic (an old favorite of WWW members). We also re-configured the *Goldfinch* process, initiated a new email system, started an authors' group, and even created a Facebook group for current members.

All of these changes wouldn't have been possible without a dedicated group of Board members. Retiring members Maggie Roycraft, Martha Van Loon, Dorothy Ryan and Beatriz Velazquez will be truly missed as they had such an exceptionally strong impact because of their dedication to WWW.

It's important to have a full Board and we are continuing to have that with the welcome additions of our new Board members: Gigi Collins, Sarah Ducksworth, Cherie Pritchett and Marlaina Cockcroft. Below is a photo with a listing of our present Board members for fiscal year 2015-2016. (Some members are missing from the photo.)

Wishing every member a successful year of writing!

- *Ginger Pate*

2015-2016 Board of Trustees

Back Row: Dana Faulkner-Punzo, Conference Co-Chairperson; Trustee-at-Large, Sarah Ducksworth; Joanne Flynn Black, Goldfinch Editor-in-Chief

Front Row: Amy Reade, VP Membership; Cherie Pritchett, VP Programs; Ginger Pate, President and Conference Co-Chairperson; Elsie Boehm, Secretary; Gigi Collins, Treasurer

Missing: Marcia Ivans, Website Liaison; Michelle Hollander, Writers' Notes Editor; Trustees-at-Large Debbie Gerrish and Marlaina Cockcroft

Mark Your Calendar

Women Who Write's Fifth Annual Writers' Conference will be held on Saturday, October 24, from 8:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Madison Community House, 25 Cook Avenue, Madison, NJ.

The conference is open to all writers and will offer a range of topics: Children's Writing, Prose (including Memoir), Nonfiction, Screenplays, Poetry, and Self-Publishing. Attendees may also request a 15-minute, one-on-one critique session with an editor or agent during the day of the conference. However, material to be critiqued must be submitted by September 10.

For more information and to register, go to www.womenwhowrite.org

Have Travel Plans, Will Write

by Michelle Hollander

Thanks to those of you who responded to the latest *Writers' Notes* survey on "Writing on the Road." Not surprisingly, some of us always write when we travel, others do what they can when they can, and one naysayer among us leaves her pen at home.

When asked for the "best, worst or most unusual experiences you've had while writing during a trip," you shared some wonderful anecdotes and impressions.

♦ *On a recent trip to New Orleans, I was guest to two warm and gracious locals who, combatting uncooperative weather, shared with me the city they grew up in and the city they love, and resulted in a flash fiction piece and many, many notes sure to become other stories and more. I was so very fortunate and am extremely grateful.*

Continued on next page

A Note from the Editor

As Labor Day quickly approaches, students everywhere will soon be tasked to describe how they spent these past couple of months in words or pictures or, for the youngest among them, some sort of show-and-tell.

And while many will roll their eyes, others will relish the chance to find just the right way to express how much fun that night at the carnival was, or what made sunset at the shore so beautiful, or how crazy that delay at the airport made their mother (and really, who would have guessed that she knew so many colorful curses?).

While the kids write *about* their vacations, many of us use our vacations as a time to write. For me, Hotel=Writing Opportunity, so I bring my laptop anytime I travel.

Distractions abound, but much as running or walking in a new locale adds to the joy of the workout, I find that writing in different places sparks new ideas and enthusiasm. Based on the feedback many of you shared via the Writing on the Road survey, I have plenty of company.

Writing on the Road —continued from front page

- *In November 1999, I spent three weeks traveling in northwest Ireland by myself. It was a low-key trip. I rented a car and drove, stopping when and where I felt moved to stop. I met interesting people, drank Guinness every day, and developed a liking for hot tea with milk and sugar in the morning upon waking, and in the evening after a long day of driving, walking, and absorbing the landscape. I walked, read and wrote a fair amount during this contemplative trip.*

- *I was writing on the beach in Hilton Head, S.C., when two small children jumped into my lap. My pen went flying as I tried to steady the unexpected load of little humans. I glanced around and realized that the tide had come in – very quickly – and the kids avoided the sandy onslaught by jumping on me! My shocked brown eyes met two pairs of mischievous blues.*

- *Getting inspiration in the middle of the night while my family is sleeping, and having to camp out in the bathroom to write.*

Keep exploring...and writing!

Writers' Notes editor: Michelle Hollander

Copy editor: Marlaina Cockcroft

Success Stories

"Prisoners of War," a short story by **Marie Castronuovo** was accepted and published by WRITINGRAW.com, an online fiction e-zine, in their May issue.

Ann Frommer, author of *Tailgunner War Defines Us* and *Tailgunner R3*, is now working with the Liberty Foundation to support the Memphis Belle and B-17 restorations. The Liberty Foundation purchases Ann's two novels at a discounted volume price and then uses the proceeds from its book sales to help fund these important historical projects.

Julie Maloney just returned from leading her fifth International Writer's Retreat in Greece on the island of Alonnisos in the North Sporades. As director of Women Reading Aloud, she welcomed writers from Germany, England, Canada, Greece and of course the USA from CA, CO, MA, PA, NY and NJ. Writers wrote every morning and most evenings, and spent the afternoons swimming, hiking, sipping cappuccinos at the port or simply staring at the Aegean Sea from their private balconies. Julie also led her seventh sold-out Writer's Weekend Retreat in Sea Girt, NJ this past April.

Lisa Napolitan's short story, entitled "Jackson at 1st," appeared in *HelloHorror,* and her micro prose, "People of Places," was published in *Font*. In addition, her short story, "With Arms Stretched Out," was recently accepted for publication and will appear in the forthcoming Women's Issue of *Narrative Northeast.*

Congratulations to *Goldfinch* editor **Joanne Flynn Black** and to the WWW members whose writing was published in the 2015 edition of *Goldfinch:* **Babette Bergner**, **Betsy Burr**, **Tami Charles**, **Marlaina Gray Cockcroft**, **Vanessa Coggshall**, **Sarah Smith Ducksworth**, **Dana Faulkner-Punzo**, **Lynn Fernandez**, **Suzanne Gilbert**, **Karen Haefelein**, **Ronnie Hammer**, **Sarah Hare**, **Lisa Salerno Honecker**, **Linda Howe**, **Marcia Ivans**, **Kristen Jaccodine**, **Juanita Kirton**, **Maureen Lanagan-Haggerty**, **Alice Lazzarini**, **Linda P. Morgan**, **Mira Peck**, **Donna Piken**, **C.L. Pritchett**, **Kathleen Schumar**, **Emily Thompson**, **Beatriz Velazquez**, **Mary Lee Waldron**, and **Susan Willett**.

Update from Amy Reade, Director of Membership

WWW Registration: We've had 103 registrations so far this year—both renewals and new members. Thanks to everyone who has renewed or joined Women Who Write!

Annual Coordinators' Meeting: This year's meeting will take place on Sunday, October 11 at the Ruth Lockwood Library in New Providence. Last year's meeting was held on Saturday, October 19, 2014, in the New Providence Public Library. We hosted a guest speaker, Ann Ordway, a lawyer and mental health professional who works at Fairleigh Dickinson University. Ms. Ordway addressed the coordinators regarding communication basics and how to solve problems that may crop up during critique group meetings and other Women Who Write events.

Open Mic, Open Minds

by Cherie Pritchett

On Thursday, June 25, 2015, the Bernardsville Library provided a beautiful setting for the Open Mic of Women Who Write. As the sun started to set through the picture windows surrounding us, we were treated to inspiring literary works that captured the attention of everyone in attendance, including friends and family members. The event also drew newcomers who expressed interest in joining Women Who Write.

At times the audience exploded into joyous laughter, and then fell silent in poignant moments of somber reflection. The writing represented many genres such as creative non-fiction, poetry, memoir and children's fiction. The participants ranged from courageous novices to published authors, some of whom were featured in *Goldfinch*, our annual literary magazine, which was made available for purchase that evening.

Special thanks to all our members who graciously volunteered their time and talent at the Open Mic.

The Disney World of Book Conventions

by Carol Van Den Hende

Tom Smarch Photography

I've just signed with a literary agent and we're preparing my first manuscript for editors. "Don't submit at the end of May. Publishers are too busy with Book Expo," he advises about their biggest trade show. The show opens to the public over the weekend as a reader event, branded "Book Con." I recruit my critique partner, copywriter and poet friend, Genie, to go with me.

We arrive to the Javits Center not knowing what to expect. The first thing that hits us is that we're not the only ones interested in attending. The queue snakes four blocks long around the convention center.

I'm a marketing strategist by profession, so I observe how exhibitors try to get attention for their wares. The hawking starts while we're still in line: *Publishers Weekly* hands out free magazines. When we get to the Will Call ticket booth, our entry badges are imprinted with the title for Judy Blume's new novel.

Inside, the organizers drum up the fervor of a rock concert. Thousands of fans throng inside a massive hall to gain entry into celebrity panels. This creates the feeling of scarcity. The slate of stars speaking about their books includes Mindy Kaling from *The Office*, Aziz Ansari from *Parks and Recreation*, and teen-scream-inducing *The Fault in Our Stars* author, John Green.

Genie and I locate the cavernous show floor, crowded with hundreds of booths. Our senses are overwhelmed with the buzz of presentations and conversations, authors signing books, and tacky photo ops with giant hot dogs or a costumed Junie B. Jones. The variety in the offerings is staggering, from fantasy to literary fiction, cookbooks to romance, and memoir to mystery. Posters and piles of books abound. I despair…how would I ever get my book to break through?

It hits me - Book Con is like the Disney World of books, with almost as much noise, hyper-stimulation and commercialism. Like Disney from a parent's point of view, some events suck: sound engineers talk about putting *Star Wars* into an audio book but it's so loud we can't even hear them.

Other events transport. Helen Phillips arrives on stage with her editor and publisher to speak about ushering her debut novel to print. She floats up to the speaking platform in a sweet Peter Pan collared dress and no hair. She's beautiful and otherworldly. She speaks with grace and poise. I hope that if I'm ever invited to an event to share my debut novel, that I can be as eloquent.

In this commercial show built to entice readers, I feel a bit off-kilter for much of the event. It's not like the writer's conferences I've attended. I do relate to a panel of authors. Kristan Higgins, Meg Cabot, Robyn Carr and other romance writers speak about their writing careers. I daydream a bit about being on a panel myself. Genie tells me she's inspired by so many people making a living from creative careers. Having had our fill of the frenzy of BookCon, we step out into the relative calm of 11th Avenue.

After Book Expo, the editor to whom I'm submitting admits she needs a few days to catch up before she can read our submission. No wonder. If Book Con is any indication of Book Expo, she's been busy!

Member Events of Interest

Poetry & Pastries, an Open Poetry Reading, will be held on Tuesday, September 29 at Café Beethoven, 262 Main Street, Chatham at 7:00 p.m.

Poetry & Pastries is open to all, with a small fee for coffee and delicious cakes. Listeners are always welcome, and everyone who signs up can read. According to Marcia Ivans, who has facilitated this event for 12 years, it's been an interesting assortment of poetry over the years.

Please contact Marcia for more information: marciaivans@gmail.com.

Other Events of Interest

Morristown Festival of Books will feature more than 25 authors on the evening of Friday, October 2, and all day Saturday, October 3, rain or shine. The line-up includes both fiction and non-fiction writers in various genres.

Authors will speak and answer questions for one hour at one of several convenient Morristown locations. Book sales and signings, following author presentations, will be held at a tent on the grounds of the historic Vail Mansion.

Visit http://morristownfestivalofbooks.org for more information.

To avoid date conflicts, please contact Cherie Pritchett, Programs VP, if you are planning an event that will include WWW members.

Guidelines for Submitting to *Writers' Notes*

- Please submit in a Word document (cannot be read-only); 12-point Times New Roman or 10-pt Gill Sans MT (preferred).
- Please query before submitting, so we can determine length and be sure there is space for the article.
- Submissions are edited for length, grammar, etc. and will be formatted to the newsletter. Try to place the most important points of your piece in the first paragraph, journalistic style, since space may require us to make cuts.
- Success stories & events may be submitted at any time, without queries.
- By all means send pictures to accompany your submissions. Photos may be cropped.
- Deadlines for each issue are announced via email.
- Submit to **writersnotes@womenwhowrite.org**

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