

Plotting Success

At the moment our website address is:
<http://thequillguild1.wixsite.com/sfwriters>

April 4th, 2017

General Meeting
Selby Library Auditorium
1331 First St., Sarasota
6 pm

Author and editor Liz Coursen will speak to the Sarasota Fiction Writers on Tuesday, April 4, at 6 p.m. at Selby Library. She will present a fun and fast-paced editing workshop, “Write Right, Right NOW! An Advanced Editing Workshop for Authors.”

“All authors — whether they are self-published or traditionally published, whether they are publishing their first book or their fiftieth — need to be darned good editors,” Coursen said.

Her books include “Shade in the Sunshine State: Reflections on Segregation in Florida,” “Self-Editing for Today's Business Owner” and the newly published “Write American! Business Writing in American English.”

Seven of Coursen’s 11 books are about American English punctuation and grammar. She will be sharing essential editing tips and tricks with at the Sarasota Fiction Writers meeting, including the “Top 10” editing mistakes that authors make “all the time.”

An experienced editor of award-winning fiction and nonfiction books, Liz will also discuss the No. 1 challenge every editor faces with every new manuscript.

Sarasota Fiction Writers meetings are free and open to the public. For more information about Sarasota Fiction Writers, please visit thequillguild1.wixsite.com/sfwriters. For more information about Coursen, please visit LizCoursen.com.

Sarasota Fiction Writers meetings are free and open to the public. For more information about Sarasota Fiction Writers, please visit thequillguild1.wixsite.com/sfwriters.

Sarasota Fiction Writers Critique Meeting

6:00 pm, Wednesday April 19th, 2017
 Books-a-Million, Gulf Gate Mall
 Bring 5 pages of work to read,
 At least ten copies, double-spaced, 12 font.

Attention ALL MEMBERS

October 1st is the club's New Fiscal year. Please mail in your dues:

Overdue or New Members: Please mail dues to: Sarasota Fiction Writers

Bob Spitzer
 2450 Harbourside Drive, Apt 213
 Longboat Key, FL 34228

We have elections coming up soon. We have one volunteer for the vote but we would like to see some more involvement from our members who have not yet served.

Please consider that if you are trying to submit query letters or contract an agent, holding a position in a credible, long-term writers group shows you are serious about improving your craft and may help you past the gatekeepers.

Current SFW Officers:

President: Jerry Keane — destiny716@comcast.net
Co-Vice Presidents: Fred Weiss — fweiss@binghamton.edu
Critique Monitor: Pat Gray – patrickgray1@msn.com
Co-Secretary Publicity: Grier Ferguson
Co-Secretary Newsletter: Dona Lee Gould – DGould497@aol.com
Treasurer: Bob Spitzer mbspitzer@gmail.com
Blogmaster Extraordinaire: Natalie Brown—ngbrown.us@gmail.com

Members please feel free to send a one- or two-sentence synopsis of your published works and a link to sales on Amazon or Barnes and Noble to Natalie. She will grab the cover art to post on the Member Titles pages on our new website. Another place to market – for free.

At the moment our website address is: <http://thequillguild1.wixsite.com/sfwriters>
 We are working to regain the original url, but Go Daddy is not being co-operative

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Writer's Block:

When your imaginary
friends refuse to
talk to you

BITS & PIECES

This is our announcement section of happenings and events in the lives of our members. If you have any info you want to share from the sale of a short story, publication of your book, a book signing, entering a contest, especially winning, or if you have a birth, wedding, or other event in your family you just want to share with your fellow members....

Please email me at Dgould497@aol.com and I will include your announcement in the letters. If you know of any upcoming contests, workshops, or conferences you plan to attend, or just want to inform the rest of us about one you like, please let me know. I would also like to know about other local writing groups. Sharing information helps everyone.

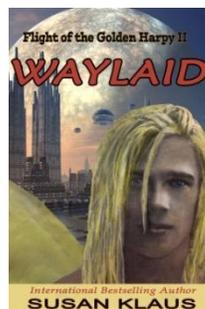
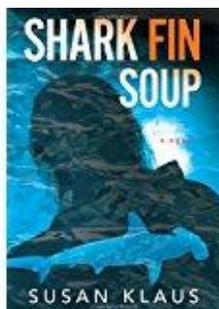
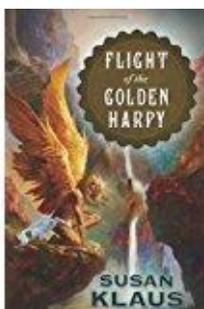
Please consider purchasing books written by your fellow members and support their efforts. Soon it will be your turn! Also, if the books are available on Amazon, write a four or five star review. (If you feel a member's book is lower than a four of five star, please just pass on the review. Amazon considers a three-star and lower a bad review.)

Good Reviews help sell books on Amazon.

Member Susan Klaus will speak about the "The Before and After You Write the Manuscript, the Do's and Don't's" on April 11, 7 to 8:15 PM at Ringling College in the Ringling Academic Center, rm 209. Public format. All welcome.

Over the last few months her books have been ranked in the top 100 on Amazon in numerous categories. She ranked #82 in the Amazon's Top 100 Best Selling Authors for Mystery/Romance. On Dec. 18 her award-winning thriller, *Secretariat Reborn* was on an Amazon Top 100 Best Seller list for thrillers/suspense in three categories, #10 in paid e-books, #11 in paperback books, and #12 in Kindle Unlimited. The novel stayed in the top 100 for five days and was also #863 in paperback for all genres.

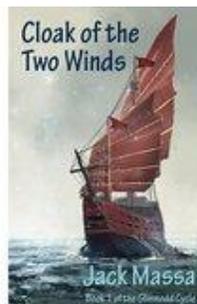
Last month her fantasies were on an Amazon Top 100 Best Seller list. *Fight of the Golden Harpy* was #6 in books, and *Flight of the Golden Harpy II, Waylaid* was #75 in free e-books.



New Member Jack Massa writes fantasy and science fiction. His new book, *Ghosts of Bliss Bayou*, was released November 14, description can be found here:

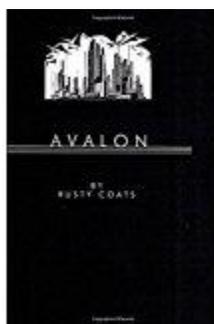
<http://triskelionbooks.com/ghosts-of-bliss-bayou/>

His epic fantasy novel, *Cloak of the Two Winds*, is now available in print and e-Book from Amazon. - <http://tinyurl.com/h2wyb6e>. His website is <http://triskelionbooks.com/>



Past Speaker Helaine Mario announced that her novel, *The Lost Concerto*, won first place at Florida Writers Associations Royal Palm Literary awards in the suspense category.

Member Rusty Coats announced his second novel, “Avalon,” was just published.

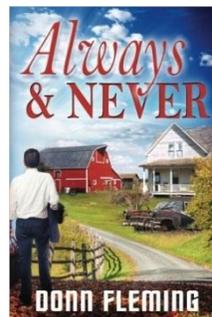
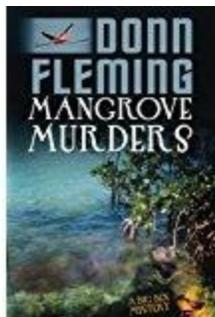


Featured as the first [Big Idea of 2017](#) on best-selling science fiction author John Scalzi’s website was a great nod.

Avalon was supposed to be the new City of Light: a clean, beautiful place to live, work and play - virtually. There was a cost, however, to this utopia. Programmers Disease. As the epidemic swept through the nation, society rushed in to shut it down. But, cyberspace, like nature, abhors a vacuum and every vice imaginable rushed in to fill the the elaborate Art Deco void. Avalon, a once shining city of virtual opportunity became the nightmare of sex, violence and gambling, and despite the Great Prohibition, everyone flocked there for a fix. Avalon. It is what you think.

Available: [Amazon](#), [Barnes & Noble](#), [Ink n Beans Press](#)
[Excerpt here](#).

Member Donn Fleming announced his new book launch. *Always & Never* joins *Sarasota Sunrise* and *Mangrove Murders* rounding out the Big Ben Mystery Series Trilogy. Available on Amazon/Kindle or personalized copies through www.donnfleming.com.

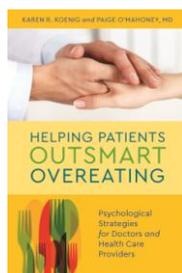


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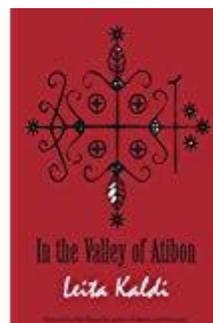
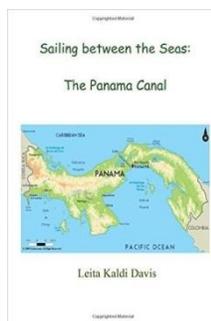
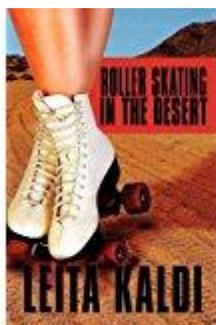
Member Elizabeth Stevens advised she sold some of her 22 books in December in Berlin, Germany, at the Book Fair at the Hamburger Bahnhof Museum of Modern Art. My three *lives d'artiste* (texts with original etchings) were acquired by the Kunstbibliothek of the Staatliche Museum.

Member Karen Koenig LCSW, Med, an eating disorder therapist, has written a new book that's coming out in January – “Helping Patients Outsmart Overeating: Psychological Strategies for Doctors and Health Care Providers.” The book is published by Rowman & Littlefield and is available for pre-order from Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

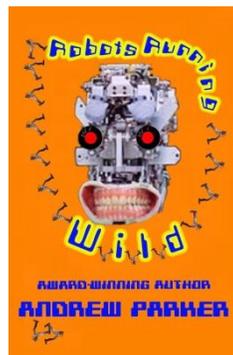
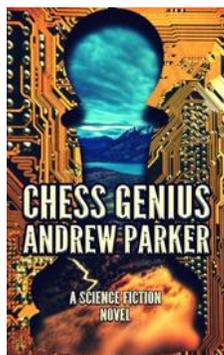
“Helping Patients Outsmart Overeating,” which Koenig co-authored with a physician, offers a new paradigm for doctors and health care providers who treat patients with eating and weight concerns. It describes how both providers and patients are frustrated by weight-loss plans and programs that fail long-term and presents a psychology-based explanation for why diets fail and how they, in fact, may adversely impact patients’ mental and physical health. It also includes strategies for doctors, health care providers and higher weight patients to help patients reach their health



New Member Leita Kaldi Davis worked for the United Nations and UNESCO, for Tufts University Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and Harvard University. She worked with Roma (Gypsies) for fifteen years, became a Peace Corps Volunteer in Senegal at the age of 55, then went to work for the Albert Schweitzer Hospital in Haiti for five years. She retired in Florida in 2002, and wrote a memoir of Senegal, Roller Skating in the Desert, and of Haiti, In the Valley of Atibon, as well as several travel memoirs available on amazon.com or email her at lkaldi@hotmail.com



Member Andrew Parker, winner of the 2016 Sarasota Fiction Contest, announces he has two books available in paperback or as a download from Amazon.com. Andrew was the final guest on Culture Coast and spoke about his literary endeavors, his awards, his two published books and the five he is still working on.

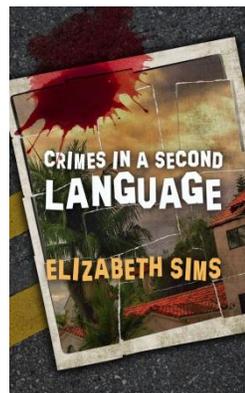


Member Simone Pipka advised her newest alt-right political blog is available at <http://bit.ly/2mXboke>

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**Member Elizabeth Sims** announced *Crimes in a Second Language*, her new standalone novel, is now available on Amazon.

“*Crimes* is a departure from series work for me,” she says. “This is a standalone novel about the relationship between two very different women in contemporary Los Angeles. The story was inspired by my late, great aunt and her relationship with a Mexican-American housecleaner.”



### **Is smart and dead better than dumb and safe?**

Elnice Coker and her husband Arthur, retired schoolteachers, move from Indiana to the Hollywood Hills in a last-ditch attempt at novelty and happiness. California alone can't do the trick, but when Elnice befriends her housecleaner, Solita, her life opens up to friendship and intrigue. Elnice teaches Solita English although Solita's common-law husband, Luis, is against it. The women build a secret, tentative friendship.

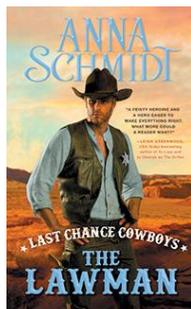
Meanwhile, wannabe novelist Jason M is busy writing faulty information into tech manuals for airplane-making machines at a factory in the Valley. One of a swarm of corporate saboteurs scattered around Los Angeles, he's bossed by a nameless, exacting mentor. But when he begins to have ethical doubts, he discovers it's harder to get out than it was to get in.

The lure of easy money casts its spell over everybody, and as Elnice and Solita grow closer, they encounter treachery and danger where they least expect it. The saboteurs intertwine, innocent lives hang in the balance, and as Elnice risks everything to dig deeper, she learns the value of rejecting safety—and living life to the max.

### **More news from Elizabeth Sims:**

“My blog, Zestful Writing <http://esimsauthor.blogspot.com/>, continues to cook along. We cover the writer's life, writing techniques, language use and abuse, and whatever else seems worthy to discuss. I continue writing articles for *Writer's Digest* magazine and their various special editions; currently you'll find my pieces in the January, February, and March/April issues. (After that, a bit of a break...but I've sent along some new ideas to the mag, so we'll see what's next.) I contributed to the recently published the new edition of the *Complete Handbook of Novel Writing*, from *Writer's Digest Books*. Also, I'm developing ideas for online teaching, so stay tuned for that. Am also working on *Best Boy*, the fourth in the Rita Farmer mystery series.”

**Member Jo Schmidt** (w/a ANNA SCHMIDT) a Wisconsin Seasonal member currently has novellas in two anthologies and the second in her Western series: Last Chance Cowboys was released in December. Romantic Times has already praised book 2—THE LAWMAN—as follows: Readers who yearn for a solid Western romance are sure to find Schmidt’s second Last Chance Cowboy installment as the perfect read. The realistic second-chance at love story — with its intelligent characters, sensuality and suspense elements — engages readers. 4 Stars.



Anna has three times been a finalist for the coveted RITA award for romance fiction and has twice before been recognized by Romantic Times magazine with their Reviewer's Choice Award. Check out her Amazon Author's Page for more on our award winning author.

[https://www.amazon.com/Anna-Schmidt/e/B001HOMA1A/ref=sr\\_ntt\\_srch\\_lnk\\_2?qid=1477949179&sr=1-2](https://www.amazon.com/Anna-Schmidt/e/B001HOMA1A/ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_2?qid=1477949179&sr=1-2)

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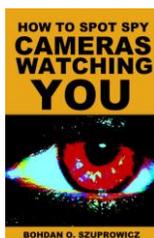
Member Bohdan O. Szuprowicz is now promoting one of his E-Guides dealing with surveillance.

Secret surveillance seems to be the order of the day. Do you know who is watching you, where, when and why? Check out our E-Guide on this subject by clicking the link below.

Perfect gift for your loved ones with mobile devices that can be delivered immediately anywhere in the world.

Here are some ideas what to put inside.

http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_noss_1?url=node%3D154606011&field-keywords=Szuprowicz



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**Member Robert Parkinson** announced that he and his wife launched their book “Be As Good As You Think You ARE” last month.



**Previous Member Karl Bossi** advised his daughter, Debbie Bossi, (<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0098149/>) was one of the Associate Producers of *KONG SKULL ISLAND*. Here is the trailer for the upcoming premier. The special effects have come a long way since the first King Kong movie. (copy and paste link)

<https://youtu.be/-JoHiLDrJ3M>



## Kong: Skull Island ALL Trailer & Clips (2017)

youtu.be

Official "Kong: Skull Island" Movie ALL Trailer & Clips 2017 | Subscribe ► <http://abo.yt/kc> | Tom Hiddleston Movie #Trailer | Release: 10 Mar 2017 | More htt...

**Previous Member Brenda Seabrook** announced her short story “Snow Devils” is in the anthology *WINDWARD, BEST NEW ENGLAND CRIME STORIES OF 2016* published by Level Best Books.



Last month her newest book launched: *SCONES AND BONES ON BAKER STREET: SHERLOCK'S (maybe) DOG AND THE DIRT DILEMMA*, by Belanger Books. Belanger exclusively publishes Sherlock Holmes books, scholarly books pertaining to the Holmes books, and books by the Baker Street Irregulars, which included President Franklin Roosevelt and Sir Winston Churchill.

"This is a fun mystery for young readers with an adorable dog who has a real nose for excitement and clues. The numerous illustrations liven up the pages, while sprinkles of historical information make it a real treat. Teamed up with Sherlock Holmes, Digby is a dog criminals and evil doers need to watch out for." - Tonja Drecker - prized children's book reviewer at Bookworm for Kids

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Member John Pearce announced the publication of his new novel, *Last Stop: Paris*, the sequel to *Treasure of Saint-Lazare*.

Here's the link to the Amazon page (it's KDP Select), where readers can find the Kindle, paperback and audio editions: <http://www.amazon.com/dp/B017OTZN4W>.

Author page is <http://amazon.com/author/johnpearce>.

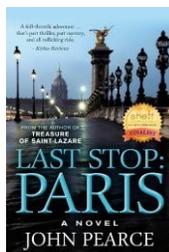
He will be attending a Book signing and Political event Saturday November 5, 2016 from noon until 3 pm in the Village of the Arts at 1004 & 1010 Tenth Avenue West, Bradenton, FL 34205. Stop in and buy a signed copy of either or both books.

Last Stop was picked as a 2015 finalist in the best indie book of the year competition sponsored by Shelf Unbound Magazine and Bowker.

The interview is on his blog, here: <http://wp.me/P2PhOq-OY>

John Pearce

Author of [Last Stop: Paris](#)
and [Treasure of Saint-Lazare](#)



And....

***** Member Dona Lee has returned from Italy** with exciting news. Read the email for details. You will also likely be seeing more about this new project from social media and marketing over the next week or two. Please forgive me, but I really need everyone's help and hopefully your co-operation in getting out the word on **The Italian Hotel Project**. I will be hosting Writer's workshops and retreats, as well as artist tours and retreats, cooking classes, video workshops for the Indie producer, and more. I hope you join me and follow the path to your passion.

Village Voices opens April 7th, 2017 for the Artwalk at 6pm. We have author signings and guest artists throughout the Village of the Arts and provide live music, wine and hors d'oeuvres as you stroll the streets visiting any of the 50 galleries and six eateries. Lots of fun and opportunities to discover new sensations.

Dona and Al are partners in a video production company. DNA Productions, LLC produces **book trailers**, music videos, workshops, small business commercials, and even a political parody serial for Youtube. We filmed a Flash Mob Dance up in Madeira Beach. If you need a video for your business, your book, your website, or any reason, commercial or personal, contact Dona for more information. (No weddings, the insurance is too pricey) We have registered commercial drones and can provide 4K and HD aerial videos when desired. You can see DNA Videos on Youtube at Al Musitano or Dona's Redneck White House Channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCphTzpNdHdWoe44C50yPDyw>

Her literary business, Plotting Success (named after our newsletter), is the canopy for many of the numerous projects she manages. Her **Author Services company offers editing, manuscript evaluations, and coaching on all aspects of writing.** We have helped numerous writers self-publish their books at a fraction of the cost charged by subsidy publishers AND you retain ALL your rights and royalties. Plotting Success also offers publishing services; formatting your manuscript for both e-book and tree book (paper) publication, including custom-created covers, and help with the upload to Create Space. After you are published, I offer coaching to help you focus your marketing plan directly to your readers. **All at a price far below subsidy and independent publishers.** And when you are done, you receive ALL royalties directly from Amazon's Createspace and Kindle divisions. References are available.

Culture Coast, a radio show interviewing musicians, authors, and artists of every venue is on hiatus and looking for a new host. Dona Lee has a new project taking up all her time—relocating to Italy. You will see much more in the cover letter of the newsletter as we are starting our fundraising.

For more information on any of the above feel free to contact Dona Lee at DGould497@aol.com or call 941-748-6865.

Want to advertise your published book? Your company? Your services?
If you would like to place an ad in our newsletter or know someone else who might like to place an ad, let me know. The cost is \$5.00 a month or \$50.00 a year for three to five lines of text.
Pictures will be extra.

Send requests to Dgould497@aol.com write SFW Ad Query in the subject line

Paid Advertising (Place your Ad here - \$5.00 a month or \$50.00 a year)

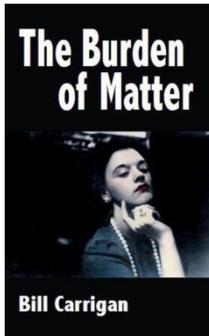


Florida Author's Book Gallery

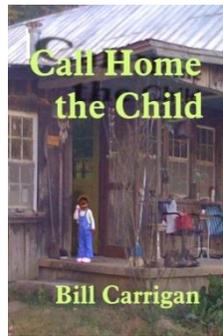


Contact me for help with editing, formatting for self publication, ghost writing, and more.
Reasonable rates, local references.

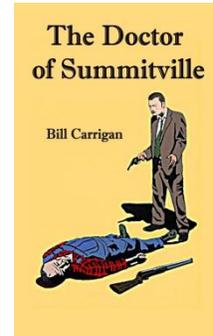
Read and enjoy the many works of our esteemed Bill Carrigan. All editions are newly edited and available on Amazon. (Search Books by Bill Carrigan) Read the first three chapters of any book for free. Kindle editions are 2.99 and paperbacks cost around \$10.00. Please review on Amazon after reading.



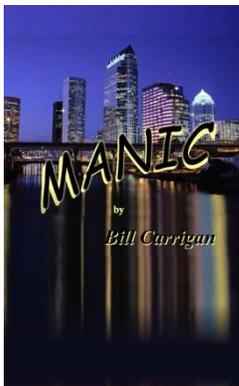
Anatomy of a WWII love affair in Washington D.C.



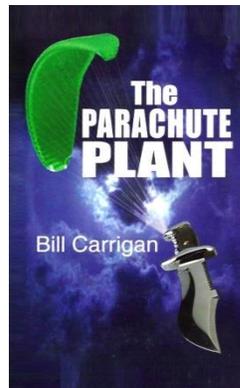
An interracial adoption in 1988 Virginia breaks bad.



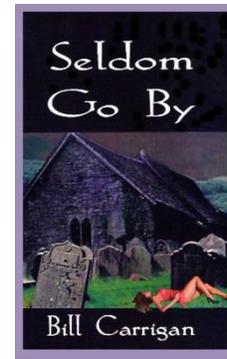
In 1927 a doctor's love affair leads to a death



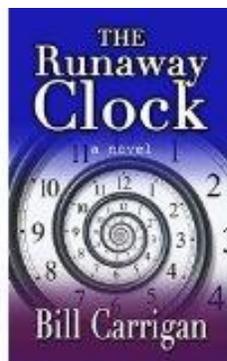
A young Tampa writer joins up with a killer to bring him down.



An Oregon doctor and wife solve gruesome murders.



Murders surround Aunt Esterleen at her mansion, Seldom Go By.



A scientist falls victim to premature aging after proving its cause.



A varied palette of tales and a translation of Poe's "Ulalume."

Other Voices, Other Rooms

Local area critique groups and meetings

An online writing blog for Sarasota and Manatee Writers includes all the vast resources available to local writers. The web address has been changed:

www.FloridaWritersAssociationManatee.com

I hope you check it out and find it useful. If you know of any other resources please feel free to add them or forward the information to me and I will add them.

There is a similar blog for Pinellas and Hillsborough writing events at:

<http://www.marylouihess.com/enews.html>

Florida Writer's Association Manatee

Critique group, bring six to eight copies of up to ten pages double-spaced.

Fiction and Nonfiction, shorts, articles, novellas, memoirs, & Novels

First & third Saturdays, at 4 pm April 1st, 2017 & April 15th, 2017

First & third Thursdays, at 6 pm, April 6th & April 20th, 2017

All meetings are held at **Village Voices & Eclectic Art Emporium**,

1010 10th Ave West, Bradenton.

For more information call Dona Lee at 748-6865

or email to Dgould497@aol.com

Florida Writers Association, Sarasota Branch

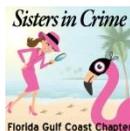
FWA-Sarasota Chapter

FWA Sarasota meets two evenings each month: on the FIRST and THIRD Wednesday. The training room of the Nokomis Volunteer Fire Department is located at the corner of US41 and Pavonia Road. Pavonia Road is the street that has the flashing emergency lights on US 41 south of Matthews-Currie Ford. Pavonia is about a quarter mile south of Albee Road.

The FIRST meeting of the month is dedicated to subgroups of various genres, will be April 5th, 2017. The members of each subgroup bring stories, poems, articles, or novel chapters for reading and critiquing. The SECOND meeting of the month April 19th, 2017 is the general meeting. A few members read to the entire group and then receive comments and suggestions from the group. The rest of the general meeting is dedicated to questions, discussions, progress reports, and general information about writing, publishing and marketing. A half hour of socializing is encouraged for attendees arriving at 6:00. The regular meetings begin promptly at 6:30 and last until about 9:00. Come join us on the FIRST and/or THIRD Wednesday

For questions you may email Ernie Ovitz at egovitz@gmail.com

Gulf Coast Sisters in Crime



HO! HO! HOMICIDE

April 1, 2017, 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM, at Fruitville Library with speaker Terrie Farley Moran. Author of the Read ‘Em and Eat Café and Bookstore series, Terrie won the Agatha Award for Best First Novel in 2015 with *Well Read, Then Dead*. She will be talking to us about her series where murder and sweet tea are always on the menu. Terrie’s short mystery fiction has appeared in Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine, Ellery Queen Mystery Magazine and various anthologies. She has been short-listed twice for the annual Best American Mystery Stories. And her story, “A Killing at the Beausoleil” was nominated for an Agatha Award for Best Short Story.

New SinC benefit available to chapter members only. Check it out!

<http://www.sistersincrime.org/default.asp?page=OnlineCourses>

Contact *Wendy Dingwall* for more information: www.wendydingwall.com

wendyldwriter@comcast.net. The Florida Gulf Coast Sisters in Crime email address is

flgulfcoastsinc@gmail.com This email address is monitored by Wendy Dingwall

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Memoir Group

A memoir writing group meets at the Braden River Library on SR 70 the fourth Tuesday from 1 pm - 2:30 pm. This month that will be April 25th, 2017. There is no fee.

Call 941 727-6079 for more information.

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### **AMI Gulf Coast Writers**

Gulf Coast Writers meet on the first Wednesday of each month at the library in Holmes Beach, 1:00 PM. Interested writers may read up to 1400 words of manuscript for critique. Bring multiple copies and/or contact Judy Allen at [judymallen10@msn.com](mailto:judymallen10@msn.com) for member listing to send readings by e-mail. The latter is preferred.

Or contact the library. 5701 Marina Dr, Holmes Beach, FL 34217 Phone:(941) 778-6341

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## **NEW FWA YOUTH WRITERS GROUP FORMING**

Pinnacle Academy will host our first Youth Writers Group in the area starting in 2017. The group will be monitored by creative writing teachers but is comprised only of youth 18 and under. It is an open group, membership to Florida Writers Association Youth Writers (\$15.00 annually). Stay tuned for more information and if you know any young writers, let them know.

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## **FICTION WRITER'S FORUM**

### **Critique group**

6:30 pm Second Thursday of the month April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
Books-a-Million, Gulf Gate Mall

6:30 pm Fourth Thursday of the month, April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
Books-a-Million, Gulf Gate Mall

Bring ten to fifteen copies of up to ten pages of your fiction.  
Books-a-Million, Gulf Gate Mall

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## **Sarasota Authors Connection**

### **Marketing & Publishing for Writers**

**When:** Monday, April 17, 2017, 6 pm

**Where:** Fruitville Library, 100 Coburn Rd. Sarasota, FL

**Speaker:** Guest Speaker is the always colorful and entertaining thriller author, David Hagberg, a N.Y. Times Bestseller. Hagberg will talk about "Branding Your Book" and whatever else comes to mind. Never fails to be a fun meeting.

## A Writer's Group in Lakewood Ranch

### Scribes Club

A writers group! It will be fun! Exercise the mind and develop the cranial muscle. Enjoy the "Smorgasbord for the mind" a potluck that all participants bring. This is the place for camaraderie and exchange of ideas. This offers an opportunity for honing your skills, as a writer. If you can pick up a pen you can write! So give yourself a chance to expand your horizons. Experienced writers please join and help others learn the skills you have acquired.



The club meets at Town Hall on the first and third Saturday of every month 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. To join email [AChaddha@aol.com](mailto:AChaddha@aol.com) , Aroon Chaddha.

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ABC - Artisans of Books



Marketing, PR, and Sales group

ABC is sponsoring a writing contest. See Contests below for more information.

General Meetings: Our members meeting moved to the Selby Library. They meet on the third Wednesday of each month from 1p – 3p.

They now accept authors of adult books as well as our children's authors

The membership fee is a flat \$25

The main focus is still on marketing and having some great speakers coming to share their information.

Contact Brenda Spalding:

www.brendaspalding@abcbooks4children.com

www.brendaspalding.com or Nancy Buscher for more information:

nancybuscher@yahoo.com

Applications are on the website:

ABCBooks4Children.com

#209 1532 US 41 Highway BP S

Venice FL 34293-1032

ABC– Artisans of Books is made up of book authors & illustrators, and mainstream authors. Our mission is to form a networking alliance of independently published, self-marketing, and aspiring artisans to exchange knowledge, share experiences, assist in marketing, and promote literacy wherever possible.

A Poetry group! (Not in Lakewood Ranch)

Selby Poets

Selby Poets meets on the 3rd Thursday of every month 10:00 AM – noon.

April 20th (10 am to noon) meeting of **Selby Poets** at the **Banyan Cafe** - located on the grounds of the **Ringling Museum**. 5401 Bay Shore Rd, Sarasota.(941) 359-3183

<http://www.urbanspoon.com/r/30/1282677/restaurant/Tampa-Bay/Banyan-Cafe-Sarasota>

Purchase of a drink (coffee, tea, soda) is expected. It is an informal group that gathers to encourage and ‘gently’ critique each other’s work. Park across the street – no entry fee to go to Cafe – walk or ride shuttle from entrance.

Everyone is welcome.

Bring 8 - 10 copies of one or two original poems to read aloud.

Open to the Public / Free

Contact: Gail Ghai

GGhai@ArtPoetica.com

And the Poetry Group is now growing into a second venue and day!

Starting January 2017

Braden River Library Poetry Workshop.

4915 53rd Avenue E Bradenton, Florida 34203 941-727-6079

First Tuesday of the month from 3-5 PM. This month April 4th, 2017

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Manasota Films Single Take Challenge

Please note the contest later in the newsletter. If you have written a short story that could be filmed in a single take...a one scene show, a humorous joke, a small horror story, anything without “special effects”, this might be your chance to see how you fare writing for video. This film can be shot on your i-phone or any video camera. They are not looking for high-end video. They are looking for innovation. Give it a shot. You might find another avenue of writing to explore. Rules and more information can be found under CONTESTS.

Manasota Films Group

Star Lite Room
1001 Cocoanut Ave, Sarasota, FL 34236
April 19th, 2017
7 PM

With the New Year, there will be a new location and a new format for this group of local film industry creatives. The group has members from every facet of the industry: Writers, Actors, Actresses, Film Crew, Extras, Directors, Producers, Set Designers, Make-up pros, Costume designers, and anyone else with a desire to be part of our growing film industry. Membership is **FREE** and currently they number over 1100. **Join up on Facebook by going to Manasota Films** and request to join.

For four years they have created Indie films and shorts and shared them on the big screen once a month at local theatres. Now they are changing the format to encourage everyone to work together and discuss what they need from each other to become more successful.

(HOWEVER, the New Florida Cinema film group will be picking up the slack under the leadership of John Lagerholm. See information on them below for meeting information.)

Monthly meetings of Manasota Films will be held at the private upstairs bar at The Starlite Room, at 10th and Coconut downtown Sarasota. The Starlite has established itself as the place to be for the performing arts and artists in Sarasota. Meetings will be in a much more open format, and will be more conducive to face to face interactions. They will have guest speakers, sharing of ideas, and discussions about how we can best support Sarasota's new film industry.

New Florida Cinema Film Group

April 5th, 2017, 7PM at Parkway 8, John Lagerholm launches a new offshoot of Manasota Films in order to continue watching indie films from regional producers. The **New Florida Cinema** is a group of independent filmmakers who meet monthly to showcase films on the big screen, primarily from Florida. They may change the format of the previous group to include CONSTRUCTIVE critiques on films - it's all wide open. Contact through Facebook.

Screen Writer's Circle

Thursday, April 13th, 2017

The Screen Writer's Circle meets at **Selby Library 5:30 to 7:30 pm.** in the second floor conference room.

Table readings must be scheduled with the moderator, Laurie Stoner. She has a group of producers, directors, actors, and actresses to perform the table readings.

They schedule 3 readings running approx. 40 minutes each.

There is more information on Facebook: Sarasota Screenwriters.

Please let Laurie know if you are planning on attending as they are outgrowing the room and only have seats for 30. See website: www.sarasotascreenwriters.com. A LOT of good feedback is coming in due to these professional table readings.

For more information contact Laurie Stoner at mlstoner52@gmail.com

New Screen Writing Group

SARASOTA'S SCREENWRITERS, STORYTELLERS AND CREATIVES

New screenwriting group, also covers storytelling.

Richard Keehn, an award winning screenwriter as well as the producer on the upcoming *Screenplay Show* by Rick Ramage invites you to his writing group no matter your skill level. Just bring your imaginative, curiosity and discipline. The major focus is on the art, craft and – my favorite – the business of screenwriting, but we also will delve into storytelling in general as the need warrants. So welcome. Everyone has a story to tell. It's time to tell yours.

For More Information Contact Richard @ richard@thescreenplayshow.com

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Florida Writers Foundation, a 501(c)3 non-profit formed to promote literacy, as well as enhancing the writing skills of children, youth, and adults is stretching out for members and volunteers across the state. Their volunteers and partners have already started to make a difference by visiting elementary schools for reading days, sponsoring poetry contests, donating books to under-privileged schools, and contributing funds to middle school contests. They have a new chairman, Tom Schwartz, who is working on fundraising including bringing in a nationally known bestselling author for the October Celebrity Workshop. They are establishing \$500.00 scholarships for students enrolled in a Florida College writing program. Please go to their website for more information. www.floridawritersfoundation.org

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For our writers to the north...

The SCBWI (Society of Children's Book Writer's & Illustrator's), critique group is led by Karen Hamade, (a FWA affiliated group). Any interested parties may contact her at www.brandonwriters.com and she will be happy to email the next meeting information. They are a children's book author critique group in Brandon, Florida, who primarily critique Picture and Chapter Books, Middle Grade, and YA. For meeting information, please use online 'contact' form at: www.brandonwriters.com

There are also Florida Writers Association Groups in Pinellas, Hillsborough (4), and Polk Counties. Check the website for details at www.floridawriters.net

For those writers to our south....

Peace River Writers (a FWA affiliated group)

Group Leader: Douglas Houck

Type: Critique and Discussion

Meets: First Saturday of every Month at 9:00 am

New Location: Wyvern Hotel

101 E. Retta Esplanade

Punta Gorda, Florida

There are also Florida Writers Association Groups in Englewood and Peace River. Check the website for details at www.floridawriters.net

Events



Children's Book Fair and family fun day

Saturday, April 29

9 am - 2 pm

**Bradenton Farmers' Market
on Old Main Street**

**All Local Children's Authors
and Illustrators Welcome**

**Cost: \$30 for a 10 x 10 space
to register please email:
market@realizebradenton.com**



Workshops & Classes

Florida Writers Association has a workshop coming up.

Details:

<https://floridawriters.net/conferences/focus-character-driven-stories/>

Date & Location

- April 29, 2017
- Hilton Orlando/Altamonte Springs
350 S. Northlake Blvd, Orlando FL 32701

Schedule

- 8:30 AM Registration Opens
- 8:55 AM Opening Remarks
- 9:00 AM Workshop: Characters by Tawdra Kandle
- 10:30 AM Break
- 10:45 AM Workshop: Dialogue by Darlyn Finch Kuhn
- 12:00 PM Lunch
- 1:00 PM Workshop: Plot Line by Arthur Doweyko
- 2:30 PM Break
- 2:45 PM Panel Discussion
- 3:45 PM Closing Remarks/Door prizes

Fee

Includes continental breakfast, lunch, and beverages

- \$89. Florida Writers Association Member
- \$109. Non-Member

Online registration closes April 22, 2017. Onsite registration available at www.floridawriters.net

Contests

Once a month Drawing for Free Author Website Setup!

How would you like to have a professional and customized WordPress author website set up for you completely free? Here at WordsandWriters.com we specialize in helping authors create effective websites to help market their writing products. This monthly drawing is our way of giving back to the writing community who work so hard to put their creative talents down on paper.



Here is how the drawing works:

1. Fill out the form on the website (WordsandWriters.com) to enter your name in the drawing.
2. We will draw one name from the entries once a month on the 20th.
3. The winner will be notified via email and will have two weeks to accept.
4. The website provided will be a basic website with these features:
 - A. Up to six pages of content
 - B. Social media links
 - C. Book Buy Buttons
 - D. Calendar and Blog
5. Your Cost: hosting fee of \$10/month or \$25/quarter or \$80/year.
6. The normal \$295 setup fee will be waived!
7. Our company (WordsandWriters.com) will provide the hosting, security, and backups.

Questions: Contact Joe Jacobson at 941-587-4530 or email at info@joejacobson.com

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### **Fiction500 Contest 3 is now open.**

Contest 3 is now open for entries. See the visual and text story prompt at [Fiction500](https://www.fiction500.com/).  
(<https://www.fiction500.com/>)

Stories must be 500 words or less. Contest is limited to 500 entries. \$500 first prize, \$200 second prize and \$100 third prize. Contest closes April 20 or when 500 qualified entries have been received, whichever comes first.

The Preamble to the US Constitution contains only 52 words. The Bill of Rights: 482 words. Lincoln's Gettysburg address was a mere 272 words long, and Lee's surrender at Appomattox contained just 107 words.

How powerful can you be in 500 words or less?

The entry fee is \$15, which entrant is required to pay via a secure online transaction at the time of the story submission.

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Ever consider turning your vision to film?

Make an award-winning film in under 8 minutes. Seriously, do it!

Announcing **The Second Annual Single-Take Challenge**,

celebrating the short "One-Take" film. The most fun you'll ever have making a movie.

OPEN TO ALL FILMMAKERS.

Brand new, One-take films only. Any genre, any length up to 8 minutes maximum.

Each film submitted must be a single, continuous take film. NO cuts, NO editing (other than sound, color correction, titles etc.). As this is a "Challenge", the more creative the film, the better. The winning films will be the ones that get the most "WOW!"

Prizes: A beautiful Grand Prize trophy for Best Film. Additional trophies for Most Entertaining Film and Extraordinary Cinematography.

What counts most in this contest is originality, creativity, imagination, and the ability to surprise.

Cutoff Date: **Midnight, August 15, 2017.**

Nominated films and winners will be shown on the big screen in beautiful Sarasota, Florida at the prestigious Florida Studio Theatre.

Admission fee: \$30 per film, or \$20 for Earlybird special.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Films must be NEW and original films. To ensure that your film has been created specifically for this event, you will be asked to include a certain item in the film. **READ RULES & TERMS BELOW FOR IMPORTANT DETAILS**

UPDATE - CELEBRITY JUDGES for 2017 include Sundance and South By Southwest award winning filmmakers JIM CUMMINGS ("Thunder Road"), SHANT HAMASSIAN ("Night of the Slasher") and BEN PETRIE ("Her Friend Adam").

Awards & Prizes

Grand Prize trophy for Best Film. Additional trophies for Most Entertaining Film and Extraordinary Cinematography.

Rules & Terms

READ THIS FIRST - VERY IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS! Before you make your film, the item which must be in EVERY film submitted is... "A Rabbit." You do NOT have to build your story around a rabbit, but you DO have to SHOW a rabbit -or- have a character SAY the word "rabbit" at some point in your film. It can be a toy rabbit, it can be a painting of a rabbit, etc.

WHEN YOU SUBMIT YOUR FILM, notify us when "rabbit" appears in your film (example: "the female spy character says the word rabbit at the 2:13 mark in the film" or "a rabbit can be seen resting against the wall at the 4:21 mark") Any questions - email us at

Singletakechallenge@gmail.com.

Now you're ready to get started. After planning out your film: 1) shoot your film, 8 minutes long max including credits. Don't forget to show or say the clue in there somewhere! 2) Submit your film on this website. Enter by July 15, 2017 for the discounted rate of only \$20. 3) Tell us where we can see or hear the clue "rabbit" in your film.

Now for the fine print:

GENERAL RULES

RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. Films must not exceed 8 minutes in length, including credits.
2. All non-English language films must have English subtitles or no dialogue.
3. A separate entry fee is required for each submission.
4. Submissions may NOT be withdrawn from the Festival once they have been entered, except at the sole discretion of the Festival.
5. All selected films may be excerpted (up to 2 minutes) for publicity purposes. Films submitted agree to be aired on Tampa Bay Entertainment and Education Network television and/or other venues.
6. After selection, notification letters will be sent electronically: please provide an email address.
7. Films are to be submitted via this web page unless specifically approved by the Festival.
8. Projects MUST be completed specifically for this Festival.
9. Filmmaker MUST have proper license to all copyrighted music, video, and images projected in their short film.
10. By entering the Challenge, you agree to abide by the rules. Films that are determined to have used FX to achieve the impression of single take will be disqualified.

GOOD LUCK

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Lone Star Contest

Northwest Houston RWA© is proud to announce
The 24th Annual Lone Star Writing Competition 2017
We'll begin accepting entries on April 1, 2017 so be sure to check the website.

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A place to find a few more Book Contests

HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM BOOK AWARDS CENTRAL

IF YOU HAVE NEWLY PUBLISHED TITLES TO PROMOTE, WE HAVE AN AWARDS  
CONTEST FOR YOU



Independent Publisher Book Awards - Axiom Business Book Awards - Living  
Now Book Awards  
Moonbeam Children's Book Awards - eLit Awards

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Do you have an Award-worthy book that deserves more attention? Book Awards are an efficient, affordable marketing tool that can make a huge impact on your marketing campaign. Each year, medals go to both established mid-sized publishers and first-time self-publishers. We reward those who exhibit the courage, innovation, and creativity to bring about change in the world of publishing. This spirit and expertise comes from publishers of all sizes and budgets, and books are judged with that in mind.

Get more attention. Get a shiny sticker for your cover. Get the recognition your book deserves!

Need entry information about any of these book awards contests? See details and links about each contest below, or email me to request guidelines or to deliver questions or comments: **Jim Barnes, Awards Director** - [jimb@bookpublishing.com](mailto:jimb@bookpublishing.com)

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Midlife Collage sponsors a weekly contest of midlife short stories. U.S. citizens and legal residents age 40 and older may enter. The Editor selects five stories for publication on their website each week. Readers leave comments and Facebook thumbs-up likes urging the panel of Judges to choose a contest winner. Readers also send the Judges their opinion of the best story on our Closing Arguments page. The contest period is Monday through Sunday noon PT. The first-place story enters the Winner's Circle and receives a cash prize of \$50. Winners of a \$50 cash prize are eligible for a \$100 contest, which we run quarterly. ANYONE, worldwide, age 18 or older can comment on the stories in a contest.

Updated web site address for submissions: You should be able to post a submission at the following link: <http://www.writermag.com/writing-resources/update-my-contest/?id=6863&title=Midlife%20Collage%20Contests>

www.MidlifeCollage.com

***yes, the spelling is collage not college.**

39th Annual Nimrod International Journal Literary Awards

The Pablo Neruda Prize for Poetry and The Katherine Anne Porter Prize for Fiction offer first prizes of \$2,000 and publication and second prizes of \$1,000 and publication, along with a trip to Tulsa to receive the Awards and take part in our annual writing conference. The postmark deadline for this year's Awards is April 30th, 2017. We're also happy to announce that we now accept online submissions!

The Awards are among the most distinguished literary prizes in the country. Past judges include Karen Russell, Stanley Kunitz, Marvin Bell, Mark Doty, Olga Broumas, W. S. Merwin, Denise Levertov, William Stafford, Ron Carlson, Linda Pastan, and John Edgar Wideman. Past winners include Sue Monk Kidd, Diane Glancy, Daniel Lusk, Felicia Ward, Ruth Schwartz, Angela Flournoy, Robin Coste Lewis, and Gina Ochsner.

One of the oldest "little magazines" in the country, *Nimrod* has continually published new and extraordinary writers since 1956. We are dedicated to the discovery of new voices in literature, and the *Nimrod* Literary Awards are a special way to reward talented poets and fiction writers.

For more information about *Nimrod*, please visit our website at www.utulsa.edu/nimrod.

Marketing Opportunities

North Port Free Radio Time

If authors would like to read poems or short stories, they can take advantage of a new opportunity on Monday nights at 97.5 radio station, which is in a strip mall south of Warm Mineral Springs in North Port. Readers meet at 7:00 and are taped at 7:30 at the Common Grounds Meeting Hall next door to the 97.5 radio station.

Because the project is getting off the ground, there's no problem for an author to find a reading slot. On Sunday at 3:00, people from all over the world can hear the authors on the INTERNET. By December, 97.5 expects to have the capability to be heard on the RADIO from Ft. Myers to Sarasota. This heightened media range was made possible by a large donation from a community member for a large tower.

For more information contact Dobie Pasco at sonnypasco59@yahoo.com

To pull this station up on the INTERNET, go to: KDWradio.com

The station is ALL volunteer.

KDW Radio is located at 12737 Tamiami Trail, North Port, FL

Station Manager: RJ Malloy 941 564-8737

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# Of Writing Interest

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Wordier Than Thou

Open Mic for Writers of Prose

Short fiction read to other writers in the back room of Sarasota Brewing Company.

No critique, just sign up at the front around 6:30.

Starts at 7 pm. Food and drink available for purchase.

Usually the third Wednesday of each month.

Check Facebook for verification

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**\*NEW\*** A new rich source for poets has been recommended by Pat Gray. For those of you who enjoy reading and writing poetry, please enjoy:

<https://archive.org/details/naropa?&sort=-downloads&page=2>

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Paid Publishing Opportunity.

Authors accepted for publication are paid. Thank you so much.

- The first issue of *Today & Yesterday*, an online international literary journal published by Laughing Fire Press, is available at todayandyesterday.co. (.co NOT .com)
- Featured in this issue are short stories, poems, a memoir, and an author interview from contributors either living in or from the US, Germany, Nigeria, Turkey, the Philippines, and Iran.
- Laughing Fire Press invites submissions for the next issue of the journal. Short stories, poems, essays, interviews, memoirs, and photographs that examine contemporary or historical socially-relevant subject matter are desired. Areas of interest include the arts, politics, popular culture, economics, science and technology, human rights, psychology, philosophy, and the environment.

Jed Lewis
 Publisher and Editor-In-Chief
 Laughing Fire Press
www.laughingfire.com
www.facebook.com/LaughingFirePress
 @LaughingFire

Romance Wanted!

Do you love writing romance as much as you love reading it? If you've written a full-length romance, Crimson Romance wants to consider it for publication! We're looking for romances in all the popular categories (contemporary, historical, romantic suspense and more!) Have an idea for a romance collection? Drop us a line and we'll consider it. Please submit your full story to editorcrimson@gmail.com with "Short Story Submission – [intended collection]" in the subject line. If we get enough submissions to publish more than one title in each category, we will.

- See more at:

http://www.crimsonromance.com/submissions/?et_mid=624366&rid=235541304#sthash.x3f1PFYf.dpuf

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Agents

A recommended source for finding literary agents:  
<http://www.ebookcrossroads.com/agents.html>

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## New Imprint Seeking Romance Stories with Heat

Untreed Reads is pleased to announce a brand-new imprint to expand our catalog of offerings. Untreed After Dark is our new line for romance stories that take the heat level up a few notches from our sweet stories. Even though there is a lot of romance on the market today, we feel that there are still niches to fill. That's the ultimate goal of our new line.

We do have some rules for this new line:

1. Every sexual orientation is welcome.
2. We would especially love to see romance stories about people of various ethnic backgrounds, people in their fifties or older, people with disabilities, 19th and 20th century historical (1800-2000), etc.

If you have looked around and said, "I don't see another story out there remotely like mine," you're probably what we're looking for.

3. Works need to be believable and real. No genies, werewolves, vampires, body-switchers, witches, aliens, etc. Need real people in real relationships/situations.
4. Sorry, but no works that take place before 1800. We feel that market has plenty of material already.
5. Only works 25,000 words or more will be considered. Short story collections, however, would be fine.
6. Cross-genre stories are especially welcome (romantic mysteries, for example).
7. As we are not specifically looking for erotica, the heat level is currently limited to "NC-17." Sex doesn't have to be in the story, but if it's appropriate for the work, that's fine.
8. The overall story is infinitely more important to us than a couple of hot scenes. We prefer to think of this as "literary romance/literary erotica." We want engaging characters with real romantic struggles and successes.
9. HEA (Happily Ever After) is NOT a requirement. Sometimes romance doesn't end with the two people ending up together, and that's perfectly OK. That's real.
10. Absolutely, positively NO: rape, bestiality, sex with underage people, or all the other things you would expect to be forbidden.
11. Previously published works are definitely acceptable, providing electronic rights have reverted to the author.
12. Works that have been published through a self-publishing venture (i.e.: Smashwords, Kindle Direct/Kindle Prime) will not be accepted.
13. Agents and current Untreed Reads authors may submit directly to: Jay Hartman. All others need to send works to [submissions@untreedreads.com](mailto:submissions@untreedreads.com)
14. All submissions need to be sent in their entirety in RTF, DOC or ODP formats, Times New Roman, 12 pt. This rule does not necessarily apply to current Untreed Reads authors or agents. If you are unsure if a work would be appropriate for us, please do feel free to query Jay Hartman at [jhartman@untreedreads.com](mailto:jhartman@untreedreads.com) .

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## Saw Palm – A Literary Magazine published by USF Tampa

Saw Palm is a literary magazine devoted exclusively to creative work from and about Florida. For more information, please see our website: <http://www.sawpalm.org/>

**Prepare Your Submissions for Saw Palm 2014, submissions are accepted between July 1 and October 1<sup>st</sup>.**

Saw Palm is a Florida-themed journal, however we welcome writers and artists from across the country and the globe as long as the work is connected to Florida (via images, people, themes, et cetera). We also welcome creative works from Floridians that are not obviously about someplace else. Please check out past issues, available for download as free PDFs. We publish one issue per year in the spring.

Saw Palm does not accept work that was previously published either online or in print. We welcome simultaneous submissions as long as you immediately notify Saw Palm of acceptance elsewhere. Response time varies between 1 to 6 months. Our general reading period is between July 1st and October 1st, however submissions for Places to Stand in Florida are accepted year-round.

All submissions must be made electronically through our online submissions manager. Please upload prose and poetry files in .doc or .docx formats only. Art, photography, and comics should be uploaded in .jpeg / .jpg format only. Paper submissions sent via snail mail will be recycled unread. Click here to submit.

### **Poetry**

We accept up to five poems per submission period at a maximum of 10 pages. Please send all poems in one document.

### **Fiction**

We ask that fiction submissions be no longer than 6000 words. Please send only one story per reading period.

### **Flash Fiction**

We accept up to three works of flash fiction (750 words or less) per submission period. Please send all stories in one document.

### **Creative Nonfiction**

We ask that submissions of memoir and essays be no longer than 6000 words. Please send only one piece per reading period.

### **Art & Photography**

We accept up to five submissions of art or photography per reading period. Please send files in .jpeg / .jpg format only. You may also include a URL if a portfolio of your work is online.

### **Comics**

We welcome submissions of graphic fiction and nonfiction of up to seven pages, whether in black & white, greyscale, or full color. Submit in .jpeg / .jpg format only. Keep in mind that the journal's dimensions are smaller (5"x7") than the average literary journal and so comics with small panels filled with intricate art are not well-suited.

### **Interviews**

We are especially interested in interviews of Florida writers and artists, although we're open to almost any Florida-related subject. Please query us about the interview subject first, via email.

### **Reviews** (appear on sawpalm.org)

We are interested in reviews of any Florida-related subject: author, book, film, tourist attraction, CD, website, beach, park, toll roads, snack stands, local landmarks—anything! These reviews will appear on [www.sawpalm.org](http://www.sawpalm.org). Unlike submissions of creative work, current or recent USF students and faculty are welcome to submit reviews. Size limit: 6000 words.

### **Places to Stand in Florida** (appears on sawpalm.org)

Please tell us what it's like to stand at a specific place in Florida at a specific time of day in 500 words or less. While we enjoy the unusual, locations should be public and accessible (so not your bathroom!) Please include GPS coordinates.

Unlike other categories, current or recent USF students and faculty are welcome to submit pieces for the Places to Stand series.

Poems submitted as part of the Places to Stand series are welcome but should be justified left and otherwise not have complex formatting and spacing. This is due to technical limitations in Google Earth.

### **Update March 2016:**

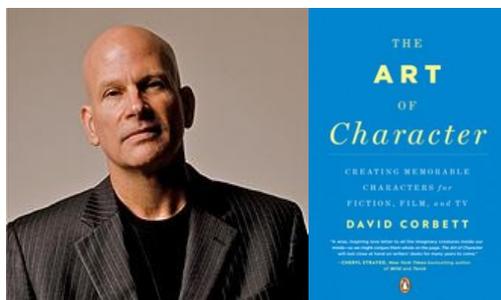
Sawpalm just released their 10th Anniversary Issue with the special theme—Florida-Cuba Connection.

They plan to return to the Florida theme for future issues. While submissions for the journal won't open until July 1st, they take submissions for the online literary map, "Places to Stand," year round. For this category, they accept short (500 word max) submissions of nonfiction and poetry that show what it's like to stand at a particular spot in Florida at a particular moment in time.

## Words of Wisdom

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Hello, fellow writers. This month I am going with a Writer's Digest Guest Writer, David Corbett, for your Words of Wisdom.



*This guest post is by **David Corbett**, who is the award-winning author of five novels, the story collection *Killing Yourself to Survive* and the nonfiction work, *The Art of Character*. David is a regular contributor to *Writer's Digest*. He resides in Northern California with his wife and their Wheaten terrier. Find him online at davidcorbett.com.*

Follow him on Twitter [@DavidCorbett_CA](https://twitter.com/DavidCorbett_CA).

Every writer's job is to give the reader what she wants in a way she doesn't expect. (And it's wise to remember that every agent and editor is foremost a reader, too.)

One of the first things to consider when setting out, therefore, is what kinds of expectations your story creates, so you can go about gratifying readers in surprising ways.

This is particularly true of writing in a genre, where conventions can seem ironclad—or all too often degrade into formula. And formula, by definition, surprises no one.

The suspense genres in particular have a number of seemingly hard and fast rules that a writer defies at his peril. And yet the most satisfying mysteries, thrillers and crime stories find a way to create a new take on those rules to fashion something fresh, interesting, original. In other words, while you don't want to mistakenly pitch your cozy mystery to an agent who wants only high-octane thrillers, you also want to make sure that when you connect with that cozy-loving agent, she'll be jumping to sign you because *your* cozy stands out from the rest.

Here's a map to help you navigate subgenre subtleties.

Mystery Novels

A crime is committed—almost always a murder—and the action of the story is the solution of that crime: determining who did it and why, and obtaining some form of justice. The best mystery stories often explore man’s unique capacity for deceit—especially self-deceit—and demonstrate a humble respect for the limits of human understanding. This is usually considered the most cerebral (and least violent) of the suspense genres.

Thematic emphasis: *How can we come to know the truth?* (By definition, a mystery is simply something that defies our usual understanding of the world.)

Structural distinctions: The basic plot elements of the mystery form are:

1. The baffling crime
2. The singularly motivated investigator
3. The hidden killer
4. The cover-up (often more important than the crime itself, as the cover-up is what conceals the killer)
5. Discovery and elimination of suspects (in which creating false suspects is often part of the killer’s plan)
6. Evaluation of clues (sifting the true from the untrue)
7. Identification and apprehension of the killer.

Additional Reader Expectations:

The Hero: Whether a cop, a private eye, a reporter or an amateur sleuth, the hero must possess a strong will to see justice served, often embodied in a code (for example, Harry Bosch’s “Everyone matters or no one matters” in the popular Michael Connelly series). He also often possesses not just a great mind but great empathy—a fascination not with crime, per se, but with human nature.

The Villain: The crime may be a hapless accident or an elaborately staged ritual; it’s the *cover-up* that unifies all villains in the act of deceit. The attempt to escape justice, therefore, often best personifies the killer’s malevolence. The mystery villain is often a great deceiver, or trickster, and succeeds because she knows how to get others to believe that what’s false is true.

Setting: Although mysteries can take place anywhere, they often thematically work well in tranquil settings—with the crime peeling back the mask of civility to reveal the more troubling reality beneath the surface.

Reveals: Given its emphasis on determining the true from the untrue, the mystery genre has more reveals than any other—the more shocking and unexpected, the better.

Mystery Subgenres

- Cozy: One of the ironic strengths of this subgenre is the fact that, by creating a world in which violence is rare, a bloody act resonates far more viscerally than it would in a more urban or disordered setting. **Reader Expectations**: A unique and engaging protagonist: Father Brown, Miss Marple, Kinsey Millhone. The crime should be clever, requiring ingenuity or even brilliance on the hero's part to solve. Secondary characters can be coarse, but never the hero—or the author. Justice triumphs in the end, and the world returns to its original tranquility.
- Hard-boiled: The hero is a cop or PI, tough and capable. The moral view is often that of hard-won experience in the service of innocence or decency. The hero tends to be more world-weary than bitter—but that ice can get slippery. **Reader Expectations**: A strong hero who can “walk the mean streets but who is not himself mean,” as Raymond Chandler once put it. A realistic portrayal of crime and its milieu, with detailed knowledge of criminal methods and investigative techniques. The style is often brisk and simple, reflecting the unpretentious nature of the hero, who is intelligent but not necessarily learned. Although the hero almost always sees that justice prevails, there is usually a bittersweet resolution. The streets remain mean; such is the human condition.
- Police Procedural: A cousin to the hard-boiled subgenre, with the unit or precinct taking over for the lone cop. **Reader Expectations**: Much like the hard-boiled detective story, but with a larger cast and special focus on police tactics, squad-room psychology, station-house politics, and the tensions between the police and politicians, the media and the citizenry.
- Medical, Scientific or Forensic Mystery: A refinement of the police procedural in which the protagonists—doctors, medical examiners, forensic pathologists or other technical experts—use intelligence and expertise, not guns, as their weapons. **Reader Expectations**: Similar to the police procedural, with extra emphasis on the physical details of analyzing unusual evidence.
- Legal or Courtroom Drama: The crime is seen through the eyes of the lawyers prosecuting or defending the case. **Reader Expectations**: A meticulous rendering of criminal court procedure and politics, along with how police and prosecutors work together (or don't).

Crime

In this genre the focus is on the contest of wills between the lawman hero and the outlaw opponent, and their differing views of morality and the aspects of society they represent. The greatest crime stories deal with a moral accounting on the part of the hero for his entire life, or provide some new perspective on the tension between society and the individual.

Thematic emphasis: *What is a just society?* The story world of the novel is out of balance, somewhere between a state of nature (where chaos prevails and those with money and/or guns wield power) and a police state (where paranoia prevails and the state monopolizes power). The hero hopes in some way to rectify that imbalance.

Other moral themes can include the challenge of decency, honor and integrity in a corrupt world; individual freedom versus law and order; and the tension between ambition and obligations to others.

Structural distinctions: There is seldom any “mystery” as to who the criminal is. Typically the story starts with a brilliant or daring crime, and then a cat-and-mouse game of wits and will ensues, with the tension created by the increasing intensity of the battle between the opponents. The underlying question is: *Will the cops prevail before the opponent stages his next crime?*

Given the similarity to war and action stories, the prose often tends toward the naturalistic.

Additional Reader Expectations:

The Hero: Usually a tough and capable cop (or vigilante) who believes in the society she defends despite its flaws, the crime fiction hero is often seen as an outcast but is revealed to be the most morally engaged character in the story.

The Villain: Routinely a tough and brilliant criminal who considers the system rigged and the society inherently flawed, he is often a kind of Luciferian rebel—the rogue individual *par excellence*—even if he commands a crew or organization.

Setting: This genre gravitates toward urban locales, but suburban, rural and even wilderness settings have all been used to great effect. Let the setting ground the moral theme.

Reversals: Just as the mystery genre, by focusing on the search for truth, obliges numerous reveals, the crime genre, by focusing on battle, obliges numerous reversals—with the hero and the villain trading knockout blows and suffering serious setbacks to their respective plans.

The Noir Subgenre

Here, the criminal, or someone who is morally compromised—perhaps even a cop—serves as hero. The moral calculus is usually Bad vs. Worse.

Generally, the “hero” finds himself in some sort of desperate situation, or is tempted into one by an opportunity he sees as his last, best chance at the brass ring. The lure of sex or money routinely leads to violence and often betrayal. If the hero is a cop, the reader is never quite sure whether he’s going to solve a crime or commit one. Or both. **Reader Expectations:** The real allure is the psychology of temptation and desperation, the little guy trying not to drown. Readers expect plot twists, often based on the hero’s inability to see what he’s up against.

Thriller

Where mystery stories represent the most cerebral of the three major suspense genres, and crime stories the most dramatic, thrillers are typically the most emotional, focusing on the fear, doubt and dread of the hero as she faces some form of what Dean Koontz has deemed “terrible trouble.” This genre is a hybrid of mystery and horror. However, the thriller also shares a literary lineage with the epic and myth. Monsters, terror and peril prevail.

Thematic emphasis: The dangerous world we live in, the vulnerability of the average person, and the inherent threat of the unknown.

Structural distinctions: The plot often proceeds along these lines:

A devastating crime is about to be committed, or has been committed with the threat of an even worse one in the wings.

The perpetrator is known, but his guilt is not absolutely certain—or the hero wishes not to accept the truth of his guilt. (The uncertainty enhances the suspense.)

The hero is under constant attack as she tries to definitively prove the perpetrator's guilt and/or stop the next atrocity. (Note the difference from the mystery genre, where the villain typically remains hidden.)

Additional Reader Expectations:

The Hero: Given the relentless attack the villain inflicts, and the emphasis on terror and dread, the thriller hero must be vulnerable—not just physically but psychologically.

The Villain: In the best thrillers, the villain either targets the hero specifically from the outset or learns through the course of the story what his particular weaknesses and wants are, and targets them for ruthless attack.

Setting: Whether as small as a cottage in the woods or as large as the planet, the world the hero seeks to protect represents everything she values. The stakes are ultimate.

Thriller Subgenres

➤ **Epic Thriller:** This usually concerns the threat of some catastrophe affecting whole communities, cities, countries, even the planet. The threat need not be total devastation—the assassination of a leader will do—but the *effect* of the action must be profound.

The villain can be a terrorist, a diabolical genius, or an ordinary person with an oversized grudge and a unique capacity for damage.

Given the scope of the threat, the protagonist must possess the skills to defeat the villain, and thus is often a soldier, a spy, a trained assassin, a cop, or a civilian with a special skill set. The action is brisk, even nonstop, and the climax needs to be both thoroughly foreshadowed (we need to know the basic parameters of the threat all along, and the measures being taken to stop it) and unexpected (plot twists are not optional—they're required). This is a pull-out-all-the-stops genre. **Reader Expectations:** A diabolical plot, a superbly capable and motivated nemesis, a hero with an impossible mission, breakneck pacing, and clever but credible plot twists.

➤ **Psychological Thriller/Suspense:** Here the threat is still diabolical but more contained, even intimate—usually targeting the protagonist and/or his family—and the hero is often a relatively

“ordinary” man, woman or child. The pacing is a bit more deliberate, to reflect the ordinary person’s difficulty understanding the exact nature of the threat—and the enemy—and then struggling to respond. The third act, however, moves briskly. **Reader Expectations:** Emphasis is on the eerie over the sensational. Twists again are key, with chapters routinely ending in one disturbing revelation after another. Character is more important than pacing, but pacing can’t be neglected. This subgenre demands an ability to reveal dread and panic without explosions or car chases.

➤ **Supernatural Thriller:** This subgenre is something of a hybrid, in that the nemesis presents an overwhelming threat—he might be Satan himself—and yet that threat is often focused on a single soul or a mere few, rather than the whole of mankind, at least within the story. **Reader Expectations:** An amplification of the powers available to the villain, whether the threat posed is truly spiritual or merely psychological in nature. Also, obviously, a credibly rendered menace from the spirit realm.

Stumbling into a mystery, thriller or crime story without understanding what agents, editors and readers expect is a recipe for disaster. Know what they want—and then find a way to gratify that desire in ways they don’t see coming. Your efforts will be rewarded with a resounding *yes*.

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That’s all for this month. Hope you enjoyed it.

Dona Lee  
“Plotting Success”

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Brunch for Writers

Change of Date

Our brunch in April will be at Pier 22 BUT we will be delaying one week and meeting on the Fourth Sunday, April 23rd as the 3rd Sunday happens to be Easter.

Please feel free to join us. Drop me a line and let me know you are interested so I have a rough idea of how many are expected.

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