

WRITER'S ALLIANCE
OF GAINESVILLE

TOPICS
COMING
IN FUTURE
ISSUES

- Warning Signs: How to Spot a Literary Agency Scam!
- How to Build Up Your Writing Bio

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The WAG Digest

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 3

APRIL 15, 2009

From Manuscript to Masterpiece!

Join us for the next speaker in the Writers Alliance of Gainesville (WAG) Speaker Series. Julie Ann Howell, founder of Peppertree Press, will speak at 2:30 p.m., April 26, at the Tower Road Branch of Alachua County Library, 3020 S.W. 75th Street.

Julie Ann Howell, Publisher/Founder/President of Peppertree Press will discuss how to publish your manuscript from start to finish; so you the author can get your book into the hands of your readers. The Peppertree Press is an Independent Book Publishing Company that offers professional publishing with a personal touch! Peppertree Press accepts all genres and provides professional editing, graphic design, illustrating, worldwide distribution and so much more.

Julie Ann lives in Sarasota, Florida with her husband and family. She has a degree in early childhood education and taught for six years. She is currently the publisher/founder/president of the Peppertree Press, a book publishing company and a literary magazine. She has written and published two children's books and is working on her first novel.

Julie Ann is a member of Pen Women's group and the Florida Writers Association. She is an avid speaker and travels to a variety of schools, writers groups and



organizations to give insight on publishing from start to finish.

Please visit Julie Ann's Web site at:
www.peppertreepublishing.com



POD CORNER: Pods Are Popping Up All Over



“Genre-specific pods are a key extension of the Writers Alliance of Gainesville (WAG) and as such promote good writing through constructive criticism.”

Dorothy Staley

Genre-specific pods are a key extension of the Writers Alliance of Gainesville (WAG) and as such promote good writing through constructive criticism. As Pod Coordinator, I'm really a match maker of sorts—matching prospective pod members with appropriate pod hosts. In each issue of the WAG Digest, I will update members on existing pod activities, the creation of new pods, pod vacancies, pods wanted and *The Pod of the Month* feature story. If you have information, updates, or questions for POD CORNER, please call me at 468-2355 or e-mail me at

dasapr41@yahoo.com.

April's Pod of the Month

From Pod Host, Robin Ecker: I hosted my first pod meeting on February 6 in my home. Perky Granger, Shari King, Fred Bowdoin and I focused on getting to know each other and working out procedural details. Novel-writing would be our first priority, short stories second, poetry last. We agreed to submit work via e-mail the week before each meeting. With only four members, we decided not to set limits as to how many of us can submit or the number of pages, but agreed to do so should it become necessary. We handed out copies of our work for critique at the next meeting.

Our pod meets every Thursday, from 4:00 to 6:00 PM and has grown to five with the addition of Frank Fiordalisi. Although there was some concern that afternoon meetings might not be convenient for working people, we decided to keep a time convenient to us. To date, we continue to meet at my home, but would consider other venues in West Gainesville. Perky will be going up north for the summer, and although she'll continue to telecommunicate, we could use one more member. Interested in joining this pod, e-mail Robin, at recker5975@aol.com.

Wanted: Science Fiction Pod

Michal Meyer wants to join or host a novel pod, specifically Sci-Fi fantasy. He's worked as an editor and has some experience writing and critiquing among friends. Michal is willing to bike to a coffee shop in the downtown area (Coffee Culture or Books a Million on 13th) for meetings. Interested? E-mail him at michal_meyer@yahoo.com, or call him at 352-328-4280.

Liz Wilson's Memoir Pod Has Room for Two More

Up and running with three members, Liz would love to have a full pod. A 30-year veteran journalist, she's been a reporter, editor, and columnist. To date, her pod meets on Wednesdays in a member's home, but could meet Tuesdays at any convenient location. Interested in memoir writing, e-mail Liz at wilson5321@bellsouth.net or call 375-2987.

Looking for a Novel Pod in Southwest Gainesville

Adventure novel writer, Jay Carter, is looking for a pod in Southwest Gainesville, closer to home. If you know of such a pod, please contact Jay at jaycarter@aol.com or call him at 371-8420.

Short Fiction Pod Where Art Thou?

Bruce Hoch is looking for a short fiction pod. Contact Bruce at jablonskiii@gmail.com or 375-8815.

Active Pod Hosts as of April 13, 2009:

Ecker, Robin. West Gainesville Novel/ Short Fiction Pod. Recker5975@aol.com or 472-3820.

Seguin, Stephanie. Non-Fiction. seguin@stephaniesays.net or 380-9934

Staley, Dorothy. Waldo Novel Pod. Dasapr41@yahoo.com or 352-468-2355.

Wilson, Liz. Gainesville Memoir Pod. Wilson5321@bellsouth.net or 375-2987.



Pod Host Guidelines/Questionnaire

Do you want to host a genre-specific writers' pod?

Here is a list of guidelines for members and hosts of the WAG pods.

Thank you for volunteering to be a pod host. The following questions are designed to help determine host qualifications and placement.

Writing Background: Do you have writing experience in the genre you wish to host? Please note: We do not expect pod hosts to be published authors. That is one of the goals of pod membership, not the beginning of host requirements.

- **Purpose of Critique:** Do you understand and promote critiquing as a way to help writers improve?
- **Time and Location:** Where and when will your pod meet?
- **Online Capability:** Can you e-mail pod members and electronically transmit manuscripts for review?
- **Required Status Reports:** Are you willing to e-mail monthly status reports summarizing the activities of your pod for the WAG Digest? These reports do not have to be long. We will publicize the progress of WAG pods in the monthly newsletter, help recruit members and generally inform the membership about pod progress.
- **Contact Information:** What is your e-mail address and telephone number?

A Note About Pods:

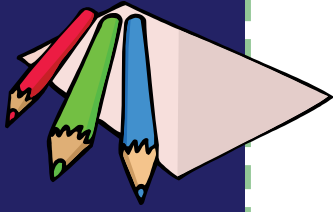
Genre-specific pods are an extension of the Writers Alliance of Gainesville (WAG) and as such should adhere to recognized writing guidelines. It is the responsibility of pod hosts to promote good writing through constructive and thoughtful criticism.

- Would you like information about suggested critique methods?
- Are all members of your pod current members of the Writers Alliance of Gainesville?
- Have you been a member of other writing groups or had organized critique experience?

A Message from Dorothy Staley, Writers Alliance Secretary and Pod Coordinator

As WAG Pod Coordinator, I will help establish and maintain pods by linking pod hosts with interested members, providing status updates in the WAG Digest, and arbitrating problems should they arise. Thank you for your interest in being a pod host and we look forward to the start of your new experience .





“Themeless
fiction is a
headless body.
Nachos with no
salsa. It’s *novellus
interruptus!*”



Good Writing and Good Fiction Are Not the Same

Kal Rosenberg

We all know about “elements of fiction” such as plot, character, setting and voice. Some add “tone or mood” to the list. But the one least understood and most neglected by beginning writers is *theme*, yet theme is the crucial building block—the linchpin—of a successful short story, novel or memoir. You can produce, say, ten pages of brilliantly crafted sentences packed with metaphor, innovative phrasing and emotional impact, but unless the element of “theme” is plainly visible, all you have are ten pages of good writing. But you don’t have good fiction or memoir.

“Theme” answers the reader’s subliminal question, “*why* should I read this,” “*how* does this speak to me,” “*what* is the point here.” Or, simply, “*why* should I give a crap about this.” You must justify readers’ time and effort, seeing as how there are so many things there are out there to care about.

Theme is about making readers *care*, and I don’t mean making them care starting on page eighty-seven (when they at long last get to the *really really* good parts), but making them care from the get-go: page one, paragraph one, sentence one.

Good fiction (or memoir, which—like it or not—must come to terms with similar structural issues) is more than just good writing. Good fiction/memoir must bring us *news*. About our history and about the world. About our spiritual, emotional or cultural life. It must bring

us new knowledge or illuminate and reinforce that which we already know. It can’t just stand there in all its well-written glory without a point and claim to be good fiction.

When you commit a story to the page, first ask yourself why you are telling us this. What is it you want us to come away with? What—in one short sentence—is your *point*? Figure out why on earth we should care about your story. Answer this question concisely. (This one sentence is more than likely the answer to the question people always ask you: “what is your book *about*.”)

This is also the question that most flummoxes writers who haven’t gotten a firm grip on their own purpose.

Your theme—hence, your book, story or memoir—cannot be clear to others if it is unclear to you or fails to be clearly and simply expressed. And without its clear simple expression your “good writing” won’t metamorphose into good fiction.

Themeless fiction is a headless body. Nachos with no salsa. It’s *novellus interruptus!* So, don’t start your story until you clarify your theme. Then keep it before you like a talisman. It is your beacon, whose light you follow in order to tell the story. The plot, characters, setting, voice and mood are each important, but are the garments you employ to clothe the critical element: your theme.



Freshen Your Poetry by Going Back to the Basics

Wendy Thornton

Want a simple method for improving your poetry? Try writing using traditional poetic forms. In these days of rap music, spoken word, free verse, it seems paradoxical to go back to formal poetry for inspiration, but the discipline necessary to write a villanelle or a series of haikus will train you to hear new rhythms, refine your style and eliminate wasted words.

Try writing that most efficient of poems, the haiku. Haiku was originally a Japanese form of poetry consisting of specific rhythmic syllables.

Bashō's "old pond" haiku:

古池や蛙飛込む水の音

Rough translation:
old pond
a frog jumps
the sound of water

Westernized versions have been created which have 3 lines consisting of 5-7-5 or 3-5-3 syllables. Haikus have historically been designed to include an image from nature, but once again, English versions sometimes break this convention.

Check out the simplicity of this modern haiku:

child-sized hand imprints,
glimpses of the car's paint
snowball-sized

Kelly Shepherd

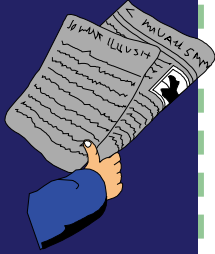
Examples of haiku are available on the Haiku Society of American Web Site:

<http://www.hsa-haiku.org/>.

You may think of the sonnet as something you were forced to read in high school. But sonnets are a wonderful way to sharpen your ear for rhythms. The sonnet is a poem of fourteen lines, usually written in iambic pentameter.

Italian sonnets have the rhyme scheme (ABBAABBA). If you're writing a Shakespearean sonnet, the rhyme scheme will be (ABAB CDCD). This may seem like a challenge to those who have scrupulously avoided rhyme schemes, but that's the point. (Continued Page 6)

Freshen Your Poetry (Continued)



Check out examples of sonnets on the Web site: <http://www.sonnets.org>. And if Shakespearian sonnets bored you in high school, you're in for a surprise. Sonnets have come a long way. Take for instance, this poem from A.M. Juster, a finalist for the Nemerov award:

Untamed Daughter

"...come, Kate, come, you must not look so sour."

The Taming of the Shrew

"Sound

complicated?

It is – and

challenging.

But writing

villanelles will

humble you

and absolutely

improve your

poetry."

At fourteen, she loves being critical
and tells me, "Shakespeare uses language well
but could have been, like, more original..."
I sputter, but rebuttals fail to jell.
All those recycled plots make it appear
to her this playwright was a plagiarist –
no better than that girl expelled last year –
so "they" should take him off her reading list.

Come, Caitlin, let it go. Great writers borrow
like gamblers low on cash. A shopworn source
in Shakespeare's hands becomes Verona's sorrow,
Miranda's tenderness or Lear's remorse,
but we can mark him down a point or two
because he tamed a Kate as fierce as you.



When you've mastered the haiku and the sonnet, why not try a villanelle? This poem has nineteen lines made up of five triple lines and a quatrain. The poem usually has two refrains, one that shows up in the first and third lines of the first stanza and then at the close of each subsequent stanza. The final quatrain is concluded using two refrains. The remaining lines of the poem have an alternating rhyme. Sound complicated? It is – and challenging. But writing villanelles will humble you and absolutely improve your poetry.

One of the most famous villanelles was written by the Welsh poet, Dylan Thomas in 1951.

Freshen Your Poetry (Continued)

Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night

*Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.*

*Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.*

*Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.*

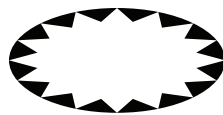
*Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learned, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.*

*Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.*

*And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.*

“One of the most famous villanelles was written by the Welsh poet, Dylan Thomas in 1951.”

Challenge yourself. Write a haiku, a sonnet, and a villanelle. In no time, you'll find that your free verse is sharper, your spoken word poetry is stronger and you approach your poetry with a fresh eye.





“look for
contests that
offer copies
of the journal
or subscriptions
to the magazine
as part of the
entry fee.”

Markets, Conferences, Conventions and Speakers

Writers Contests:

Remember, writers' contests are very competitive. Send your best work and make sure it is professionally presented. Join one of the WAG pods for great critique, or vet your work with one of the many local writers' organizations to create the best impression.

And when you get published, submit your publication information to our newsletter by sending an e-mail to wagmail@cox.net so we can promote our very talented local writers!

Bacopa

Writers Alliance of Gainesville (WAG)
Annual Literary Journal

WAG members, send us your work! The Writers Alliance of Gainesville will be publishing a literary journal, *Bacopa*, featuring the best writing from North Florida and beyond. Remember, members of WAG get one free contest submission. Go to this Web site for information and to submit:

<http://www.writersallianceofgainesville.com/>

2010 CONTEST Submission Guidelines

Contest Submission Period

July 1 through October 31, 2009

Prizes (Each Genre)

- First Place—\$350.00
- Second Place—\$75.00
- Honorable Mention—Authors and Titles listed in *Bacopa*.
- First and Second Place winners and selected Honorable Mention winners will be published.

All authors whose work is published in *Bacopa* will receive one free copy.

Categories and Word Limits

- Fiction—3,300 words
- Non-Fiction—3,300 words
- Poetry—50 lines per poem

Poetry—Submit up to three poems per contest submission

Markets, Conferences, Conventions and Speakers



Atlanta Review

Poetry Contest – Deadline – postmark by May 8, 2009

Prize - \$2009

Entry guidelines: <http://www.atlantareview.com/page6.html>

* * *

THE NEW LETTERS LITERARY AWARDS

Next postmark deadline: May 18, 2009.

The \$1,500 New Letters Prize for Poetry
for the best group of three to six poems

The \$1,500 Dorothy Churchill Cappon Prize for the Essay
for the best essay

The \$1,500 Alexander Patterson Cappon Prize for Fiction
for the best short story

Guidelines: <http://www.newletters.org/awards.asp>



Markets, Conferences,
Conventions and Speakers

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CALYX,
A Journal of Art and Literature by Women,
announces the eighth annual
2009 Lois Cranston Memorial Poetry Prize.

Final Judge: Marilyn Chin

Submission dates:

March 1, 2009, through May 31, 2009.

Guidelines: <http://www.calyxpress.org/lois.html>

* * *

GLIMMER TRAIN
Guidelines for the SHORT STORY AWARD for NEW WRITERS
category:

<http://www.glimmertrain.com/shorawfornew2.html>

To make a submission: Please send your work via our new online submission procedure. It's easy, will save you postage and paper, and is much easier on the environment. **Dates:** The category will be open to submissions for one full month, from the first day through midnight (Pacific time) of the last day of the month. **May.** Results will be posted on July 31.

Reading fee: \$15 per story.

Prizes:

1st place wins \$1,200, publication in *Glimmer Train Stories*, and 20 copies of that issue.

2nd-place: \$500

3rd-place: \$300

Other considerations:

- Open only to writers whose fiction has not appeared in any publication with a circulation over 5,000. (Entries, of course, must be unpublished.)
- Stories not to exceed 12,000 words. (No minimum, though it's rare for a piece under 500 words to read as a full story.)
-





Markets, Conferences,
Conventions and Speakers



The Antigonish Review Announces Two Writing Contests!

9th Annual
GREAT BLUE HERON POETRY CONTEST

&

5th Annual
SHELDON CURRIE FICTION PRIZE

\$2,400 in Prizes!

Deadlines:

Fiction entries must be postmarked by May 31, 2009

Poetry must be postmarked by June 30, 2009

Guidelines: <http://www.antigonishreview.com/contest.html>

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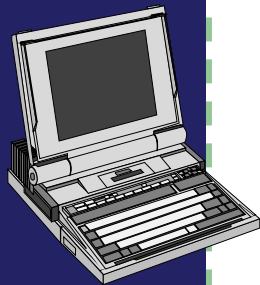
SOUTHERN POETRY REVIEW Guy Owen Prize Contest

\$1000 and publication in *SPR* awarded to the winning poem selected by a distinguished poet. Send 3-5 unpublished poems (10 pages max.), postmarked between March 1 and June 15. Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope for reply only, and a check for \$15 payable to *Southern Poetry Review*.

COMPLETE GUIDELINES:

<http://www.spr.armstrong.edu/guyowen.html>





Markets, Conferences, Conventions and Speakers

New Millennium

Awards for Fiction, Poetry, Nonfiction, and Short-short Fiction

\$1k Each Category

Deadline: Midnight June 17, 2009

Online submissions accepted

Complete Guidelines: <http://www.newmillenniumwritings.com/awards.php>

Call for submissions - Anthologies

Deadline: 05/04/09.

Submit to:

Pockets. 1908 Grand Avenue, PO Box 340004, Nashville, TN 37203-0004.

Theme: Cooperation in the Family. ONLY Christian topics for children.

Type: Stories (1,400 words MAX), poems (24 lines MAX), and articles (1,000 words MAX).

URL: http://www.upperroom.org/pockets/writer_guidelines.asp

Deadline: 05/15/09.

Submit to: *A Cup of Comfort*. Submit via online form:

<http://www.cupofcomfort.com/memberlogin>.

Theme: For Mothers.

Type: Personal essays (2,000 words MAX).

URL: <http://www.cupofcomfort.com/CallForSubmissions>

Deadline: 05/15/09.

Submit to: *Women's Studies Quarterly*. Submit via various e-mail addresses. See Web site.

Theme: Citizenship. ONLY women/feminist topics.

Type: Prose, poetry.

URL: <http://www.feministpress.org/wsqa/#callformaterials>

Markets, Conferences, Conventions and Speakers

Upcoming Conferences and Workshops

The University of North Florida is launching the **UNF Summer Writers Workshop, August 4 - 7**, an intensive workshop modeled after the acclaimed Iowa Writers Festival. The final day, Friday, August 7, will feature a day-long series of workshops on everything from screenwriting to Internet marketing, from self-editing to character development and dialogue. Three tracks will cover Craftsmanship, Publishing and Marketing. Stay tuned for further details.

* * *

The **Florida Heritage Writers Workshop**, Friday, **September 11**, kicks-off the 2-day **Florida Heritage Book Festival** in downtown St. Augustine. The workshop is held at the **Casa Monica Hotel** and features sessions with mystery writer **Tom Cavanagh**, literary agent and author **Lucienne Diver**, thriller writer **T. J. MacGregor**, award-winning journalist **Shawn Bean**, and many others. Early bird registration is only \$50 (includes lunch), and the registration form will go up on the [FHBF website](#) soon.

* * *

Speaker Information

Children's book speaker

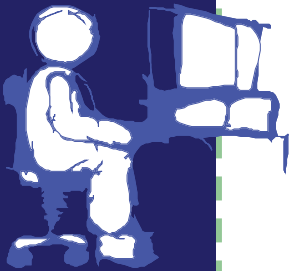
Local UF professor John Cech speaking in Ponte Vedra:

As Professor of English and Children's Literature at the University of Florida, **John Cech** directs the Center for Children's Literature & Culture. He's also an author of books for children and adults and the guest speaker at this month's Ponte Vedra Writer Chapter meeting,

Saturday, April 25 at 10:30 a.m. at the Ponte Vedra Library, 101 Library Blvd.
Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida 32082

Cech's topic: "Children's Books: Trends, Markets, Mysteries, and What's Always True."

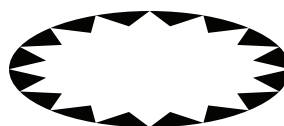
This is your chance to learn more about children's books from one of the nation's preeminent experts in the field.





Writer's Alliance of Gainesville
A not-for-profit Florida corporation
p.o.box 358396
gainesville/florida/32635-8396
[352-336-8062/wagmail@cox.net](mailto:wagmail@cox.net)

The Writers Alliance of Gainesville (WAG) promotes, encourages and supports aspiring and experienced regional writers. This goal is accomplished via WAG monthly meetings, public readings, ongoing small critique groups, a literary journal, writers' contests, and collaborations with schools and civic organizations to foster creative expression through the written word.



Announcing A CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS:

The Writers Alliance of Gainesville is pleased to announce that we're ready for submissions to our new literary journal, Bacopa. (Want to know what Bacopa is? See the picture below. Maybe you've seen this plant around Gainesville.)

**WE DON'T CARE WHERE, WHEN, OR IF
YOU'VE PUBLISHED.**

We just want quality fiction, nonfiction, and poetry for our new literary journal. Open submissions deadline 6/30/09. Cash Contest entries July 1-October 31, 2009.

**Visit WWW.bacopaonline.Com for further
information**

