



Markings

The Tallahassee Writers Association Newsletter

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For information on the included items and more, please visit www.twaonline.org.

President's Message

TWA Year starts busy, stays busy

by Marci Elliott, President

Summer is almost here and the Tallahassee Writers Association has been moving full-steam ahead since the beginning of the year.

Our new officers, committee chairs and board members are settling comfortably in place and getting things done, always updating and taking on tasks behind the scenes to continue making the TWA the vibrant, productive and helpful organization it's intended to be.

Our **2011 Writers Conference and Book Festival** in March was a huge success, with an attendance of 120-140 people – it's hard to give an exact count because some attendees attended only selected events. Members and other attendees are still raving about our workshop leaders and speakers, including keynote speaker **Cassandra King**, and all the things we learned from them. Cassandra, a best-selling Southern novelist and wife of the well known novelist, Pat Conroy, struck



Novelist Cassandra King gives the keynote address at the 2011 TWA Writers Conference luncheon.



Creative nonfiction writer Lee Gutkind signs a book for a fan at the 2011 TWA Writers Conference luncheon.

a chord with many of our author members with her Southern style and down-to-earth speaking manner that won our hearts.



A scene from the dining hall at the Writers Conference

Note: Business Membership in TWA includes a free business card-size ad in each edition of *Markings*. Sign up today! See the last page for ads.

With the Writers Conference/Book Festival hardly over, the TWA began making plans to participate in the April 2 **"Springtime Tallahassee,"** the annual community-wide celebration of spring. We had a double booth, loads of inquiries about the TWA, and lots of book sales by our local author members. Many thanks to **Michael Whitehead, Jenny Crowley, Lucy Turner, Donna Meredith** and **Bob Crowley** for making this a big success.

Nine TWA writers took part in **Tallahassee Community College's "Author Talks"** panel from April 11-14. TCC's Paula Anderson organized and coordinated this. Our writers spoke to students about the writing profession, their personal experiences, how to break in, submissions and other aspects of writing. Thanks to Paula and TCC for inviting us to participate.

Soon after "Springtime Tallahassee," the TWA took part in the May 7 **Book Fair in the Park** sponsored by the LeRoy Collins Leon County Public Library. Again, we had a lot of interested traffic and book sales by our participating author members. Thanks to Library Director **Kay Hohmeister, Donna Cirenza** and our other friends and partners at the library for including us in this terrific event.

On May 9, at least eight TWA members took part in the annual **Young Authors Conference** at Sealey Elementary School. This is one of our favorite activities of the year, and we salute Sealey's media director, **Lenita Joe**, for organizing this wonderful event.

Meanwhile, we've had amazing speakers in our **Speaker Series** at the monthly general meetings and have more coming up, and we have more workshops in the near future, including the October 1 immersion master class in character emotional development, to be led by renowned therapist/counselor/writing coach **Margie Lawson**. This is definitely a workshop that serious writers will not want to miss.

Our esteemed **Conference Committee**, headed by **Donna Meredith** and **Karin Kelly**, didn't miss a beat. Even before the 2011 Writers Conference began March 18, the committee announced that the keynote speaker for the 2012 conference would be NYT bestselling author **Steve Berry**. Although it's a year away, start planning now not to miss this dynamite author and another dazzling writers' conference.

So as you can see, the Tallahassee Writers Association has been busy, busy, busy – and will be even busier

in the months ahead. It's all because we believe so deeply in our mission: to provide networking, support, education and guidance to local writers.

As our website says, the road to better writing begins with us. We believe it.

Program notes

By Marsha Lyons, Program Chair

The monthly general membership meetings of the TWA feature the **TWA Speaker Series**. These are held the third Thursday of each month at the American Legion Hall on Lake Ella off North Monroe Street.

May 19

Anne Petty, who is currently the senior production writer and content developer at Learn Something, Inc., presented "Dealing With Rejection."

Anne, who holds a Ph.D. in English from Florida State University, is a highly experienced writer, editor and publisher. She is also the author of essays and books, of both fiction and non-fiction, including literary comment.



Anne Petty

Anne's talk covered the typical kinds of rejections that publishers write, how to interpret a publisher's rejection message, and what to do next. The presentation included examples of author responses to rejection letters, positive and negative, with advice for when and how to follow up on a rejection letter.

Audience members were invited to share memorable rejections they received, how they felt about them, and what changes to their manuscripts they made, if any, as a result.

The following speakers have confirmed and are tentatively set for these dates.

June 16

Katya Taylor will do a combined program on writing poetry and Haiku in preparation for the upcoming Penumbra contest deadline of August 31.

July 21

Although the dates for his teaching at the FSU School of Film have not yet been set, we are still holding out hopes that movie and TV scriptwriter and producer **George Geiger** will be able to participate.

August 18

Tallahassee Democrat digital communities editor **Holly Moore** and multimedia reporter **Amanda Nalley** will speak on writing and journalism in the electronic age.

Plans set for 2012 conference

Steve Berry to be keynote speaker

Even before the 2011 TWA Writers Conference began, the Conference Committee – headed by **Donna Meredith** and **Karin Kelly** – announced that NYT bestselling author **Steve Berry** would be the keynote speaker. Berry is known for his popular novels, including the *Cotton Malone* series. Check out his website, www.steveberry.org, which is packed with information about Steve.



Steve Berry

Next year's conference is set for **March 4-6, 2012**, at the Holiday Inn on North Monroe Street in Tallahassee. Make plans now not to miss it. Thanks, Donna and Conference Committee!

Immersion master class set for October 1

The TWA will sponsor a one-day immersion workshop on character emotional development led by expert **Margie Lawson** on Saturday, October 1, 2011.

The workshop fee for TWA members is \$55, and \$65 for nonmembers.

Lawson will present the all-day master class on "Empowering Characters' Emotions" at the Holiday Inn on North Monroe Street. The class will break for lunch,

which will be on your own.

Margie Lawson has been a college professor, clinical trainer, sex therapist, director of an impotence clinic, hypnotherapist and director of an employee assistance program. She holds a master of science degree in counseling psychology with an additional post-master's specialization in psychiatric counseling and marriage and family therapy.

She is the founder and president of the Lawson Writer's Academy, which teaches online courses in various aspects of writing and editing. She is known by writers throughout the country and specializes in the psychology of writing and the psychological nuances of the writing craft.

It isn't every day that the TWA offers opportunities like this immersion master class by Margie Lawson. If you're serious about writing and want to take your character development to the next level, plan now to attend the October 1 Margie Lawson workshop.

More information on this event will be announced.

TWA members win Florida Book Awards

Four TWA members have won awards in the **Fifth Annual Florida Book Awards Best of 2010**, the nation's most comprehensive state book awards program.

Among the statewide winners in eight categories were the following local authors/TWA members:

Jan Godown Anino won the gold award in children's literature for her book, *She Sang Promise: The Story of Betty Mae Jumper, Seminole Tribal Leader*.

Mark Mustian won gold in general fiction for his novel, *The Gendarme*.

Lu Vickers won the bronze award in Florida nonfiction for her book, *Cypress Gardens, America's Tropical Wonderland*.

Mary Jane Ryals won bronze in general fiction for her novel, *Cookie and Me*.

"The culture of books in the Sunshine State continues



to prosper," said FBA Director Wayne A. Wiegand of Florida State University. "These FBA winners clearly prove it."

The Florida Book Awards program was established in 2006 to recognize, honor and celebrate the best Florida literature published the previous year.

It is coordinated by The Florida State University Libraries and co-sponsored by the Florida Center for the Book, State Library and Archives of Florida, Florida Historical Society, Florida Humanities Council, Florida Literary Arts Coalition, Florida Library Association, "Just Read, Florida!," Florida Family Literacy Initiative, Florida Association for Media in Education, Florida Center for the Literary Arts, the Friends of FSU Libraries, Florida Chapter of the Mystery Writers of America, and the Florida Writers Association.

The eight Gold Medal winners were recognized March 23 at the Historical and Cultural Awards Ceremony sponsored by the State of Florida's Division of Cultural Affairs at the R.A. Gray Building in Tallahassee.

All award recipients were recognized at the Florida Library Association conference banquet May 5 in Orlando.

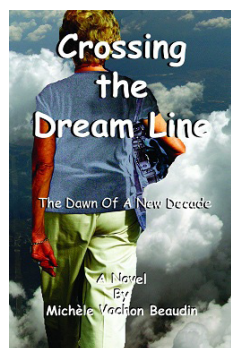
Congratulations to Jan, Lu, Mary Jane and Mark!

To learn more about Florida Book Awards, visit the website, www.floridabookawards.wordpress.com.

More award winners

Michèle Vachon Beaudin's book, *Crossing the Dream Line*, was selected as a winner in the **2011 Living Now Book Awards** in the women's fiction category.

Michèle's first novel, *Crossing the 50-Yard Line*, met with some success as her heroines reflected on reaching the often-dreaded 50th birthday. Both books are primarily about women trying to redefine their existence after having often diluted their own identity while spending years helping others reach their goals.



Beaudin's portrayal of women bears no resemblance to how the media depicts mature women. The characters of her novels do not show any symptoms of aching bones, mood swings or exaggerated change of life issues. They are simply women, still young at heart and healthy, who have perhaps another 50 years to live and wish to assess how they want to

experience this last half of life.

The Living Now Book Awards celebrate the innovation and creativity of newly published books that enhance the quality of our lives, from cooking and fitness to relationships and mature living.

In addition to being an award-winning author, Michèle is an award-winning photographer and artist. All of her books are available on the Internet at your favorite bookstore or at www.immiges.com or www.immigesandwords.com.

Congratulations, Michèle!

TWA member **Peggy Kassees** is the winner of the **UpAuthors** contest for best opening chapter. She won in the Urban Fiction/Horror genre and is the contest's overall winner as well.

"If there is such a thing as a perfect first chapter, P. E. Kassees wrote it," judges said.

Peggy won for the first chapter of her yet-to-be-published novel, *Les Gens: Into the Night*.

Congratulations, Peggy!



Peggy Kassees

TWA contests open for entries

The Penumbra poetry contest is up on the TWA website, and we've already had some submissions.

As announced earlier, all our TWA contest submissions – for Penumbra and Seven Hills – can now be made online through **Submishmash**, which will be easier and faster for contestants, judges and contest organizers. **Donna Meredith** explained how to send submissions to Submishmash at our TWA general meeting, Thursday, May 19 at the American Legion Hall on Lake Ella.

Save postage, paper, and a trip to the post office by submitting online.

We are accepting submissions for the 2011 Seven Hills contest: up to 2,500-word short stories, creative nonfiction, or children's picture books; and 500-word flash fiction. Fee is \$17 per submission for nonmembers, and \$12 for TWA members with paid dues.

Prizes are \$100 for first-place winners; \$75 second; and \$50 third. All prize-winners and honorable mentions will get publication in the *2012 Seven Hills Review*.

TWA's Penumbra poetry contest is accepting only online submissions through www.sevenhillsreview.submishmash.com/Submit.

Poetry up to 50 lines, any style or subject will be accepted. Line length may be edited to fit chapbook publication format. Three-line haiku entries need not conform to strict syllable count.

Prizes for poetry winners are \$100, \$75 and \$50; haiku, \$50, \$35, \$20. Fees are \$6 per poem and \$4 per haiku.

Deadline for Seven Hills and Penumbra contests is August 31, 2011.

See our website, www.twaonline.org or www.tallahasseewriters.net for details and submission guidelines.

Poetry contest offers \$50,000 prize

The **Montreal International Poetry Prize** will award \$50,000 for a single poem in any style and in any English dialect.

To reflect its global perspective, the Montreal Prize has assembled an editorial board of accomplished poets from Australia, Canada, England, Guyana, India, Jamaica, Malawi, Nigeria, Northern Ireland and the US. These poets will select 50 poems for the competition's shortlist, which will be published in a unique global poetry anthology, representing the very latest work from around the world. From these finalists, Andrew Motion will select the winner of the prize.

For more information visit the website www.montrealprize.com.

Kansas contest invites entries

Writers everywhere are invited to enter the 2011 **Whispering Prairie Press Writing** contest of Olathe, Kansas. Prizes of \$100 to \$25 will be awarded in the genres of poetry, flash fiction and essay-writing. One honorable mention will be given for every 10 entries. All work must be original.

Entry fee is \$5 for each entry, or three entries for \$10. Postmark deadline is June 30, 2011.

For more information visit the website <http://>

www.kansascityvoices.com. Whispering Prairie Press publishes *Kansas City Voices* magazine, now in its ninth year.

Mama's Comfort Food launched

Our own TWA Southern fiction writer **Rhett DeVane** launched her new book, *Mama's Comfort Food*, with a first-class launch party April 6 at the Mockingbird Café. Party-goers and Rhett's fans enjoyed nibbling on finger-food prepared by the talented MBC chefs and listening to the local jazz group, The Zach Bartholomew Trio.

There were also fun door prizes and of course, lots of laughter and visiting with good writer friends. Rhett will donate a portion of her profits to help local breast cancer patients via TMH Foundation and A Woman's Place.



80-Proof Lives launched

Felicia Thomas celebrated the debut of her young adult fiction novel, *80-Proof Lives*, on Feb. 5 at the Gadsden County Public Library in Quincy.

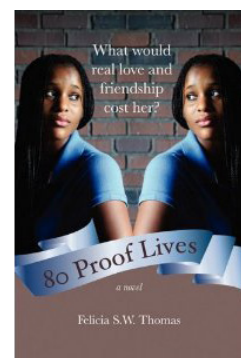


Felicia Thomas

Felicia says she first became a writer as soon as she learned how to read. In 2009, she took a creative writing course in Charlotte, N.C. and knew she was serious about writing.

Her *80-Proof Lives* is about 15-year-old Fla Frye, who feels lonely, unloved and destined to go nowhere after graduation, according to the book's description on Amazon.com. To pay off her mother's beer tab, she is forced to clean house for the local madam and bootleg queen, Miss Lipstick.

TWA member Liz Jameson wrote in her review about *80-Proof Lives*: "Fla's plight is handled expertly by author Felicia Thomas in her ground-breaking new book, *80-Proof Lives*. The reader is moved to cry or to celebrate with Fla as she



determinedly makes her way through her fifteenth year of a cruel life.

“Finally, Thomas brings the reader up short with an unpredicted plot twist that explains a great deal and may cause the reader to thunk herself in the head and ask, ‘Why didn’t I see that coming?’”

Congratulations, Felicia! For information on Felicia and her book, visit her website at **www.feliciaswthomas.com**.

Upcoming events

The Bookshelf and Gallery in historic downtown Thomasville, Ga., will host an independent authors fair Saturday, July 9, from 1 p.m.-3 p.m.

Participating in the upstairs gallery space will be independently published authors from the local area, including Tallahassee, Thomasville, Valdosta and other surrounding towns. These authors will have an opportunity to sell their books in the Bookshelf’s shop, autograph copies and interact with and answer questions from aspiring authors and committed readers alike.

Bookshelf spokeswoman Sarah Turner anticipates a large crowd for this event, as it is the culmination of the Independents Week celebration, set for the week of July 4.

If any TWA members are interested in participating, contact Sarah at **sarahnoelturner@gmail.com** or phone her at **229-228-7767** (work) or **850-545-9428** (cell), or at **http://bookshelfandgallery.com/**

Recent events

Original reading and art showing

Friends and fans joined us at the 621 Gallery on Sunday, May 22, from 4-6 p.m. for an original reading and art showing. This event was a part of a reading series put on (alternating monthly) by Anhinga Press and Apalachee Review. Apalachee Review featured readings by **Lu Vickers, Jackie Jauristi** and **Caitlyn Pezza**.

Young Authors Conference

TWA members took part in the annual **Young Authors Conference** on May 9 at Sealey Elementary School. Some of the participants took part for the first time, while several had attended in previous years.

Media Center Director **Lenita Joe** organized the YAC, which recognizes Sealey Elementary’s best and brightest

writing students selected by teachers school-wide. The students meet with writers in the media center, showing and reading books they have written and “produced” themselves. The TWA members tell the children about their writing, books and other works they have written, and about opportunities in future writing careers.

At the end of the event, the writers and children eat lunch provided by the Sealey Parents-Teachers Organization, and Mrs. Joe awards certificates and prizes to the children.

Many of the TWA participants have commented that the YAC is one of their favorite TWA events of the year, and plan to continue taking part in every YAC. Many thanks to Lenita Joe and the staff of Sealey Elementary and its PTO for making the YAC such a huge and enjoyable success.

TWA members who took part in the Sealey YAC this year were **Felicia Thomas, Michele Beaudin, Leslee Horner, Leland Raymond, Ted Simmons and Donna Meredith**.

Springtime Tallahassee

TWA members and guests enjoyed our double booth in the Springtime Tallahassee celebration April 2 downtown. Participating authors reported a good day with lots of interest among booth visitors asking for information on the TWA, along with excellent sales of the authors’ books.



The Springtime Tallahassee booth offered books for sale and information on the TWA.

Michael Whitehead, Jenny Crowley, Lucy Turner, Donna Meredith and **Bob Crowley** were instrumental in making the Springtime Tallahassee booth a big success, and we plan to continue participating in this annual community event.



Michele Beaudin discusses her books with a customer at the Book Fair.



Leland (Lee) Raymond offers books for sale at the Book Fair from his CyPress publishing company.

Book Fair in the Park

Some of your favorite local authors were at the Downtown Marketplace on May 7 in the Book Fair in the Park sponsored by the LeRoy Collins Leon County Public Library and organized by operations manager **Donna Cirenza**.

Music was provided by Hot Tamale. Local children's author **Adrian Fogelin** and **Catty Cay** from BBC were among the speakers.

Debbie Macomber book tour

New York Times bestselling author **Debbie Macomber**



Debbie Macomber

signed books at the Downtown Marketplace on Saturday, April 30. The Tallahassee Writers Association hosted Macomber's book tour in Tallahassee, and immediate past president **Donna Meredith** represented the TWA at this event.

With 140 million copies of her novels in print around the world, Debbie Macomber can easily lay claim to the title of one of America's favorite storytellers. Drawing on her own experiences and observations, she writes heartwarming tales about small-town life, home and family, enduring friendships and women who knit. Not bad for a woman who is dyslexic and didn't learn to read until she was in the fifth grade.

If you're not familiar with Debbie Macomber's work, check out some of her books. Some of her longtime fans have raved about her writing.

Welcome, new members

Welcome to all our newest TWA members, several of whom joined us during our 2011 Writers Conference and Book Festival. We're happy to have all of you on board.

Markings staff makes changes

New faces are now doing the TWA *Markings* newsletter.

Well, make that one new face and one "old" face.

Vicky Laurienzo, TWA vice president and a longtime graphic artist for one of Florida's largest state professionals' organizations, has joined the Markings staff as graphic designer. The new masthead design, layout, photographs and other artistic embellishments you see in this newsletter are Vicky's outstanding work.

TWA President **Marci Elliott** replaces **Ted Simmons** as newsletter editor. Ted stepped down as editor at the beginning of the year to take over as executive director following **Anne Holt's** resignation.

Marci and Ted previously worked together on the former Big Bend Writers Guild for high school students. Marci was newsletter editor prior to last year and has agreed to resume editing since Ted has taken on his new position as executive editor.

Articles, announcements, news items, awards, photographs and other newsletter content are welcome from TWA members and associated writing

contributors. **Deadline is the first Monday of every month, beginning June 2, 2011.** Send all newsletter submissions and photographs for consideration to **Marci Elliott** at marci2elliott@aol.com.

Leland ("Lee") Raymond, publisher and owner of CyPress Publishing, will continue his longtime role as our indispensable distributor. Lee is the one who keeps up with our newsletter distribution list and sends *Markings* directly to your e-mail inbox.

Membership and benefits guidelines revised

Changes have been made also in our TWA membership application and benefits.

Our revised application, available on our website at www.twaonline.org, now includes membership levels with benefits updated and listed, thanks to the hard work and long hours of our past president, **Donna Meredith**.

Under the updated benefits, the TWA will promote members' book-launch parties by advertising them on our website and in the *Markings* newsletters. In coming

months, we will revise the ads that are included in the newsletter.

E-zine for Southern writers to debut

A new online magazine for Southern writers will debut in late summer 2011, said editor-in-chief **Susan Reichert**.

Appropriately called Southern Writers Magazine, it will also be published traditionally since there are people who prefer to hold the magazine in their hands and because there are still a few people who do not have computers yet, Reichert said.

The three areas that *Southern Writers Magazine* will focus on will be to encourage and nurture authors, help authors sell their books, and educate in the technology that is available to writers.

"I believe this will create a strong network for authors as well as opportunities to grow," Reichert said. "It is my intention to highlight authors and their books."

Watch for more information this summer.

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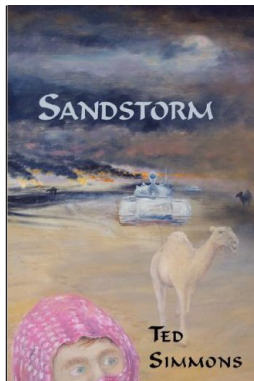
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