

Writers' Notes

The Newsletter of
Women Who Write, Inc.

Spring/Summer Volume 19, Issue 1

*And the day came
when the risk it took
to remain tight inside
the bud was more pain-
ful than the risk it took
to bloom.*

—Anais Nin

President's Message



WWW President Ginger Pate reads to some young fans.

Greetings,

There are many ways to volunteer for Women Who Write, from helping one of the committees listed in our Directory to being on the Board. Volunteering offers an opportunity to meet and work with fellow writers, as well as a chance to step out of your comfort zone and reap the rewards of a job well done. There are two members I'd like to mention in this issue of **Writers' Notes** who did just that. Both were somewhat nervous but nevertheless volunteered to interview another member

The first, a brand-new member, interviewed one of our founders, whom she did not know. The second asked the Board if she could interview a long-time member whom she admired. Both were able to gain confidence by bringing their interviews to their critique groups before submitting them.

Think you might know who they are? Go to our website: womenhowrite.org and read their interviews.

Women Who Write's 25th Anniversary Celebration

by Dana Punzo

On October 17th WWW celebrated its 25th Anniversary at Café Beethoven in Chatham. The party was a success with an array of tasty appetizers and tempting desserts. The cake was as delicious as it looks in this picture included for members to share.



There was a champagne toast to the original members. Victoria Fann, whose inspiration helped build our organization, was a member until shortly before WWW became incorporated. Victoria and Tracy Coan, a past president, were both recognized for their importance to WWW and were honored for their contributions. Dolores Rems, Mary Lee Waldron and Pat Weissner all spoke about how WWW started and what it was like to be a member for 25 years.

Our 25th Anniversary was a festive and memorable occasion for all who attended!

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A Note from the Editor



In our next issue of Writers' Notes, you will find a new face at the top of this column. After several very enjoyable though hectic years as Editor of **Writer's Notes**, I am passing the pen to Michelle Hollander, our newest board member and a talented writer (as you will see in her article featured here and on our website). I want to thank the many volunteers who have helped me on Writers' Notes, from writing to mailing, and all the best to our new editor!

Michelle's piece, as well as Amy Simonson's report on our recent memoir workshop, touch on a point I'd like to expand upon.

Although we are connected through our website and WWW publications, there is really no substitute for the face-to-face exchanges that members experience, as those articles so aptly remind us. And for many members the greatest benefit offered by Women Who Write is the pleasure of meeting other writers in a comfortable and low-key environment, and sharing both the vagaries and delights of the writing life. And so, in addition to our writing groups, workshops, conference and **Goldfinch** launch, Women Who Write presents a Winter Gathering and the occasional celebration, such as our 25th Anniversary party.

This issue includes coverage of all these events, and I hope that in the coming 12 months, all our members will be able to attend at least one or two, and get to know some of the very talented and interesting Women Who Write.

Editor:

Maggie Roycraft,

Assistant Editor:

Dorothy Ryan

Photographers:

Debbie Gerrish,

Juanita Kirton,

Dana Punzo,

Maggie Roycraft

Success Stories



Mira Peck (center) with friend Monica Doshi & poet Cat Doty at her book launch. Mira's book, *My Men* received an honorable

mention in the general fiction category at the 2013 Great Midwest Book Festival.

Deborah Gerrish's poem, "Amusement Park" was accepted by *The Journal of New Jersey Poets*. The reading was May 13, 2014 at County College of Morris.



Ethel Lee Miller has just finished up her East Coast book tour for *Seedlings, Stories of Relationships*.

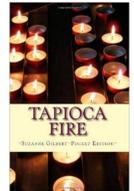


Ali Skylar's blogpost was published by Maria Shriver as part of her *Architects of Change* series under "A Woman's Experience."



Amy Reade's first novel, *Secrets of Hallstead House* is scheduled for release on July 1, 2014, by Kensington Publishing. It will be available as an e-book and in print on Amazon.

Michele Kriegman, under the pen name 'Suzanne Gilbert,' indie published a quest novel called *Tapioca Fire* on Amazon. It has been selected for the 2014 NJ chapter of Concerned People for Adoption, reading list.



Ronnie Hammer's book, *En Garde, My Battle With Breast Cancer* was bought by Canyon Ranch to sell at its gift shops.



Ginger Pate took home the Silver in the 2013 Moonbeam Children's Book Award, Board Book/Cloth Book category, for her book, *Look Left, Look Right, Look Left Again*.

A Great Idea--from Ronnie Hammer

I discovered a new marketing tool for authors: I met an author named Emmy Laybourn who gave me a 4x6 eleven-page first chapter of her book, *Monument 14*. Her publisher, Feiwel and Friends, an imprint of Macmillan, published this giveaway--a terrific way to get your book noticed.

[editor's note: Thank you, Ronnie!]



Kim Pfennigwerth attended the NJ-SCBWI Fall Craft Weekend and it turned out to be a real-life fairytale—Kim has signed to be represented by Liza Pulitzer Voges at Eden Street LLC.

Two Announcements from WWW President Ginger Pate:

--WWW plans to have an Author's Page on our website. Marcia Ivans, web coordinator, will be involved in this and we'll be working on it this summer. We'll accept one picture of the book cover, a short description of the book, and where to buy it.

--To avoid date conflicts with Women Who Write programs, if you are planning an event which would include WWW members, please send a courtesy contact message to our VP Programs, Debbie Gerrish.

Goldfinch Launch

by Babette Bergner

Forty members and friends were lucky enough to attend the 2014 Goldfinch Launch, May 15 at the Bernardsville Library. A room filled with gifted writers--Wow--how to measure up to their talent?

I'll never see another cicada again without hearing "mate, mate, mate," as Vivian Fransen quotes in her poem. I'll never notice Juanita Kirton's hair again without remembering how her description of its changes marked her growth as well as the changes in our society. All entries are worthy of a review, but space limits this report. If you weren't there, you may have a sense of what you missed by studying Elsie Boehm's fascinating cover. Join me in congratulating Joanne Flynn Black and crew for producing a publication to view with pride, and Debbie Gerrish for organizing this successful event.



Joanne Flynn Black, Editor -in -Chief of the Women Who Write literary journal, **Goldfinch**

Our New Women Who Write Board

The Women Who Write May 12 board meeting marked the start of our new board year. Here are the current members and their positions. Feel free to contact any board member if you have a question or suggestion regarding our organization.

President: Ginger Pate
 Treasurer : Martha Van Loon
 VP Membership: Amy Reade
 VP Programs: Debbie Gerrish
 Secretary: Elsie Boehm
 Trustees:
 At-Large: Maggie Roycraft, Beatriz Velazquez

Conference: Mary Olmsted
 Goldfinch Editor: Joanne Flynn Black
 Publicity: Dana Faulkner-Punzo
 Nominating Committee: Dorothy Ryan
 Website/Technology: Marcia Ivans
 Writer's Notes Editor: Michelle Hollander



Left to Right, Front: Officers, Amy Reade, Martha Van Loon, Deborah Gerrish, Ginger Pate, Elsie Boehm,
 Back: Trustees, Maggie Roycraft, Dorothy Ryan, Marcia Ivans, Michelle Hollander, Dana Punzo, Joanne Flynn Black

Poetry Workshop with BJ Ward

by Mira Peck



BJ Ward, American poet and our workshop leader on April 26, 2014, was relieved that the nine writers showed up for him and not for B.J. Ward, the voice actress famous for playing Velma in Scooby-Doo. The title of his latest poetry collection, *Jackleg Opera*, links this inadvertent tie to the free-verse poems enlivening his book. An active educator in a number of realms, BJ skillfully placed poetry in the broad context of society and literary history.

BJ asked us to pick a year and an object, then write a poem, or prose, in which we discover something new. He reminded us that long lines create tension while short lines relieve tension and that the last word in a line has a shimmer; the middle word doesn't. A poem is the tip of an iceberg, with ninety-five percent below the surface, he said, and a good poem stays in the room with you after you read it. [You can find more from Mira's report at womenwhowrite.org]

From the Keyboard to the Café:

Women Who Write Brunch at Café Beethoven

By Michelle Hollander



Members meeting, chatting, sharing at WWWW gathering

For most New Jersey residents, the day was probably just another freezing Sunday in a series of freezing Sundays. But for the Women Who Write members who gathered at Café Beethoven in Chatham for an extraordinary brunch, January 12th was memorable one, warm and wonderful in ways that ran counter to the weather.

Speaking with fellow members over sandwiches and salad, without a submission to critique or any other purpose but to enjoy each other's company, reminded me that the organization isn't just a group of poets, novelists, playwrights, memoirists, children's and young adult authors, and writers of other genres. It's a group of *women* – mothers, sisters, daughters, friends, professionals, and of course, writers as well – all of whom have fascinating stories to tell, both on the page and shared over coffee.

A brief disclaimer: before the brunch, I was probably among the members most unlikely to submit a piece like this to *Writers' Notes*. After all, not only had I not attended many WWWW events, but my writing group – the new online group – doesn't even meet in person, which has been a great advantage.

Although not as "wired" as, say, my teenage daughter, I proudly admit that I had lobbied for an online group. So, when former membership chair, Melissa Azarian, actually set the wheels in motion, I didn't hesitate to sign up.

Much as I'd hoped, the new group quickly gained momentum, as the members started to exchange submissions and critiques. We got to know each other a little through our emails, but for the most part, we focused on what we'd written. Then something wonderful happened: several of us attended the September conference and had the opportunity to put faces and voices with names and stories. Still, busy with the conference and split among the different tracks, our time together was fairly limited.

And then something even more wonderful happened: one member decided to attend the January brunch, emailed the rest of the group, and soon, most of us sent in checks. The result of spending a couple of hours together "offline" at Café Beethoven? A veritable symphony of lively discussion about ourselves, our families, jobs, writing ambitions, blogging, tweeting, and many other topics, further enhanced by the company of other women writers and lots of delicious food.

I remain enthusiastic about the flexibility of the group's format, but I can also see how, after just two short hours of talking across a real table, the discussion has moved in different and exciting directions. Will we continue to share our writing via email? Sure, but will we also try to meet in person occasionally? Absolutely.

Special thanks to Marcia Ivans for organizing this very fine event!



The Women Who Write Online Group at our Winter Gathering

WWW Third Annual Writers' Conference

by Debbie Amadei & Maggie Roycraft



Women Who Write opened its third successful annual writers' conference September 28, 2013 with a welcome by Women Who Write President, Ginger Pate, and Conference Chair, Pat Weissner. Each of the 77 attendees had chosen one of three writing tracks: prose, poetry or children's literature.

Literary agent Barbara Poelle and Author Peggy Ehrhart presented to the prose track. Two poets offered workshops: Sean Nevins, award-winning poet and Director of Drew University's MFA in Poetry & Poetry in Translation and Rene Ashley, also an award-winning poet and a Fairleigh Dickinson faculty member. The Children's Track featured Brett Wright, Associate Editor, Bloomsbury Children's Books, and Laura Biagi of the Jean V. Naggar Literary Agency.

Jita Fumich of Folio Literary Management and Daniel Nayeri, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt captured the attention of the general session with the final presentation, "eBooks 101: An Author's Toolbox for Digital Publishing." [More at womenwhowrite.org]

Christina Baker-Kline Memoir Workshop

by Amy Simonson

March 27, 2014 will go down in personal history as one of the most memorable evenings I've experienced as a writer. Not because I received a letter of acceptance or landed an agent, but because I spent the evening with twenty very talented, supportive, nurturing members of Women Who Write and one New York Times bestselling author, Christina Baker-Kline.

Ms. Baker-Kline, who wrote *Orphan Train*, led a memoir workshop that was informative, thought-provoking and emotional. Of course it was emotional! What else would it be with 21 poets and writers all in one room? But it was emotional in the best sense of the word. This group of women, a bouillabaisse of age, ethnicity and cultural backgrounds, shared stories of immigrant parents making new lives in America, cheerful and disconsolate memories from childhood and moments of maternal insight. Ms. Baker-Kline was generous with her time and support; she was encouraging and down-to-earth. She set a great example for us up-and-comers, and I hope to follow in her footsteps whenever I have the opportunity to help other writers.



Christina Baker-Kline leading the Women Who Write workshop at the New Providence Library

WWW's 25th Anniversary Party



LIPCOMING EVENTS

Women Who Write's

Fourth Annual Writers' Conference

Save the date of **Saturday, September 20th** for Women Who Write's fourth Annual Writers' Conference at the Madison Community House in Madison, NJ. There will once again be poetry, prose and children's tracks featuring talks and workshops as well as the option of critiques in all three genres, and a general session of interest to all attendees. Check our website for updates and to learn when registration begins. Early registration is advised, given the success and popularity of this conference.

June 29, 7pm: Poetry reading, Mark Doty, followed by Q&A, and book signing, College of St Elizabeth, Convent Station, NJ
Information: <http://www.cse.edu/academics/artists-and-writers/schedule.dot>

September 9, 7:30 pm-9:30 pm "The Voices in Your Head," a look at the characters who drive your story; Marietta B. Zacker, agent, Nancy Gallt Literary Agency at the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, Anthroposophical Society, 138 West 15th St., New York, New York 10011
<https://www.scbwi.org/>

Member Events

July 7-August 16 *Beginning Your Novel*, a 6-week course taught by Michelle Cameron. Wednesdays, 7-9pm at the Writers' Circle, 426 Springfield Ave., Summit, NJ info@writerscircleworkshops.com.

September 13-14 The Blairstown writing group will be hosting *Emerging Voices*, a writers' retreat at the Kirkridge Retreat and Study Center, Bangor, PA. Cost: \$250.00--full weekend; \$150.00--Saturday only. Information: juanita.kirton@gmail.com



Juanita Kirton, Blairstown Writers Group

October 26, 2014 Dr. Juanita Kirton will facilitate a showcase presentation and workshop at the Madison Community House, Madison, NJ, 10:30am-3pm. Free to all WWW members--all levels, all genres. Limit 18 for workshop. The showcase/presentation, *A Dream*, a one woman monologue and Q&A, is open to all. A workshop on reading aloud, a writing exercise, and an exploration, "Why Prompts," will follow. Anyone who has heard one of Juanita's dynamic readings will want to take advantage of this opportunity. Signup deadline is September 15, 2014. Contact juanita.kirton@gmail.com.



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