



WRITING CURRENTS

Peace River Center for Writers

State of the Center

By John Pelot

I like the summer in Charlotte County. The pace slows down, although there is always plenty to do. Traffic slows, even on 41. The tides are high for boaters and most afternoons we are blessed with cooling rains and natural fireworks. These things are good. However, for the Peace River Writers, it is also a time when we struggle with finances. After reading assorted meeting notes and newsletters over the seven years I've been a board member, the good part of summer is bitter sweet for our non-profit.

We lose our part-time residents who normally participate in readings, fund raisers, and other PRCW sponsored events. Even our full-time residents seek escape to the mountains, the Keys, and cooler climes. Also, most of our grants for programming are for fall and spring because of the increased population.

In summer, the Edison State College does not have as many classes or student activities due to state funding. The PRCW is similar. We depend on charitable contributions, workshops, grants, and a few fund raisers during the year. Membership dues are also very important. Our expenses are few, however we do pay the college for space when we earn money through workshops. During the summer, all of these avenues narrow. This is also all the more reason to become involved whether you are a member, a board member, or someone interested in joining a writer's group. For me, our mission is to rise from summer and continue Carol's dream.

In 2001, I was teaching part-time at Edison. I had worked with Carol Mahler for a couple of years and we'd both been to graduate school in North Carolina, so we began to talk to each other. One afternoon Carol called me up and wanted my opinion on an idea of hers. I was honored and surprised she would call me, but I think she knew my commitment to the humanities, and especially writing. She asked if I thought Charlotte County needed, or even wanted, a center for writers. She explained that with our county located between Sarasota the Ft. Myers, two powerhouses in the arts, our residents either had to travel or do without. We have a strong Visual Arts Center, a symphony orchestra with excellent programming, and wonderful resources in our historical societies. But there wasn't a place committed to writing, and this was her mission.

Carol wanted to enrich our youth and implemented programs in elementary and high schools. She reached out to another of our most precious resources: the seniors in our community. These folks have seen it, done it, and have much to write about it. I remember a night at the *Summer Mood* cafe (the building didn't survive Charley), when my students, many of them aged 19 -25, read their work alongside members three times their age. I think both

generations were impressed by the other. This is what Carol was talking about when she told me about her idea for a writing center. The Peace River Center for Writers helped to facilitate an interest in the written word within Charlotte County. Carol, and many others, have given much to help enrich our community.

We strive to better serve our members. We had a very successful full moon boat ride with 76 passengers and in June, a celebration of food and the written word at Fishermen's Village. Our president, Doug Houck, executive director Story Boyle, and board member, James Abraham, worked with Kathy Burnam, marketing director of The Village to plan the event. The popular Christmas program should arrive ahead of Santa in December. We have two open mics now, and readers coming to a place near you. There is a bright future ahead.

For the last two years, Carol Mahler has successfully written two grants for poetry programs. Kathy Futch, a founding board member, brought readers to Edison during national poetry week in 2008. Last year, we had a similar program. But we have far more events scheduled in 2010. Our president, Dr. Doug Houck, was asked by FHC to write a new, much larger grant. We are joining other proponents of the arts to provide Charlotte with an exciting new year. Currently, we are waiting on approval for the grant. We are confident this will happen, but even if we receive the funds the majority goes to our readers and workshop leaders.

We are still in a somewhat tenuous place, though things do look bright. We are now members of the Florida Literary Arts Coalition and will have nationally known readers for two events this fall. We also have an important fund raiser planned for early October. New workshops are in the planning stage, and in November we will ride the buggies at Babcock ranch once again. We are always going through change, but some things stay the same. Summer is nice for me, but for our non-profit, I look forward to what is to come.

AUGUST ACTIVITIES

OPEN MIC AT FISHERMEN'S VILLAGE will take place on Monday, August 9th, at Fishermen's Village on the center stage. Beginning at 6:30pm, poets, writers, essayists, and songwriters from Charlotte County and beyond will take the stage to bring you two hours of pure creativity. Come to perform or come to listen; we'll save you a seat in the audience... or some time at the mic.

KIDS STUFF will meet on Saturday, August 14th this month, returning to its regular location of room O-116 on the Edison Charlotte Campus. If you have an interest in writing for children, from picture books to young adult novels, this is your group! Laura Aldir-Hernandez facilitates this adventure into the ins and outs of writing for children. Please bring 8-10 copies of your manuscript or writing excerpt (please limit to 5 or 6 double spaced manuscript pages at a time). Writers without a ready manuscript are also welcome.

OPEN MIC 2 AT HAVA JAVA will be held on Friday, August 20th, and will be emceed by Shirley George. Located at 2711 Tamiami Trail in Port Charlotte we'll begin at 6:30pm. Come out to our ever-growing Open Mic 2! Bring your poems, stories, excerpts, and music, and share them or just come to listen and grab a bite to eat.

BAKING CONTEST

Too young to have a job, too old to need a sitter,
mature enough to devote the summer to
baking contests at Brighton Beach.

My three good friends and I follow this simple recipe:
Arrive daily at precisely 10 am.
Wear two-piece swimsuit.
Lie face-up on bright, wide-striped towel.
Position parallel to each other on the hot beige sand.

On the hour, the day's designated timekeeper bellows, "Baste!"
With military precision, we slather all exposed skin with dark
tanning oil.
Four hours later, "Dip." Ten-minute group-swim in the ocean.
Move to tree-shaded palapa, gossip begins.

One hour later, day's clock-watcher yells, "Time!"
We rush to our green wood lockers, face a wide mirror.
Very delicately, counting in unison, "One, two, three."
Each moves the strap off her right shoulder and we
compare original color skin with the baked-on-brown.

The girl with the greatest difference in color is the winner.
The prize? A hot fudge sundae with three balls of ice cream,
the important banana concealed by oozing chocolate fudge,
colorful flakes, chopped walnuts,
whipped cream, chocolate sprinkles, crowned with a red cherry,
washed down with a chocolate egg cream.
The losers salivate.

When I think of those days, I question the reward.
Had we known the cosmetic consequences,
would we have done anything differently?

Marsha J. Perlman
(member of Pine Island Writers)

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for "The Peace
River Center for
Writers at Edison
State College" on
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become a fan of the
page.**

August 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 Open Mic at Fishermen's Village	10 Board Meeting	11	12	13	14 Kids Stuff
15	16	17	18	19	20 Open Mic at Hava Java	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Summer Time

Boca Grande is my favorite place to go to the beach
when the sand is so hot, that it burns bare feet.
The umbrellas line the shoreline like little hideouts from
the sun,
and then run back in the water for more splashing and
fun—
lots of fond memories I have of the beach,
watching wave runners and boats and those big lizards,
gazing at the old lighthouse, I've taken a picture or two—
while little kids learn what to do—
and their mothers are screaming at their little boy blue—
get back here, not so far out ,one more time and your
coming in!
We know full well when summer comes rolling around,
cause all of the snowbirds have left town.

—Joe Hendrickson

Fishermen's Village

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SUMMER

Lazy summer days
of watching clouds float by.
Lying in the grass,
our eyes toward the sky.

Warm refreshing breeze
blowing gently through our hair.
Our youth still present,
life without a care!

But like the daily tides,
unrelenting, moving on,
just close your eyes a moment
and our youth has all but gone.

Summertime has faded
and autumn comes to call.
We raise our families....
life starting over after all.

How many cloud formations
have passed us overhead?
Warm sea breezes blowing
through THEIR hair instead.

So fleeting that time went by.
Not to worry, do not fret
for retirement years
can be the best times yet!

Children grown, on their own.
Grandkids now look to the sky.
Cloud formations come again
just as they did for you and I.

So summer never really ends,
there's always youth to take our place.
But it goes by so quickly
they call it the Human Race!

Nancy Leake
7-20-10

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