



November/December 2010  
Volume 9, Issue 9

# WRITING CURRENTS

Peace River Center for Writers

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## The North Pole's Got Talent By Dot Minzer

This year Santa has a big problem. The famous television producer, Seymour Starz, has been lurking around. He is on the hunt for original acts for his television show, North Pole's Got Talent. Awed by opportunities for lights, cameras, and television stardom, everyone deserts Santa right at his busiest time of year in order to practice their acts for the show. With only the faithful Melody at his side, how will Santa ever be ready for Christmas Eve on time?

Laugh while Rudolph selects the appropriate music for the reindeer dance. Chuckle as the elves perform with the most outrageous music instruments. Then cast your vote and hold your breath along with the contestants as they wait for the winner to be announced.

Actually, everyone is a winner the night of the show. Several large prizes will be raffled off and all the kids in the audience will receive presents from Santa. The show, raffle, and presents are all free, but tickets MUST be reserved ahead of time to guarantee no one will be disappointed.

Anyone who would like to become involved - either in the show's production or as part of the gift wrapping/gift giving team - is welcome. On November 18, during Thursday evening's Gallery Walk, stop by the Literary Suite in the Atelier of Herald Court Square in downtown Punta Gorda. Some of those Christmas characters will be there to meet you and ask for your help. Needed are donations of toys, journals and writing materials for the kids as well as paper and tape to wrap them.

If you'd like to donate, please contact :

Arlene Kincaid 941-625-7312- email – [mak36@embarqmail.com](mailto:mak36@embarqmail.com)

Mary Grace Patterson, 941-575-0739 - email [scooterpoohbear@centurylink.net](mailto:scooterpoohbear@centurylink.net)

For further information, to reserve tickets, contact

Peace River Center for Writers at 941-637-3514 – email [prcw@edison.edu](mailto:prcw@edison.edu)

Mary Patterson at 941-575-0739 – email [scooterpoohbear@centurylink.net](mailto:scooterpoohbear@centurylink.net)

To be in the show or help with its production contact

Dot Minzer at 941-637-7742 – email [dotminzer@comcast.net](mailto:dotminzer@comcast.net)

To learn more about the Literary Suite event on November 18 contact

James Abraham at 941-740-3071 – email [Book-broker@hotmail.com](mailto:Book-broker@hotmail.com)

## NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER ACTIVITIES

**KIDS STUFF** will meet on Saturday, November 13<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, in 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) for critique. Writers without a ready manuscript are also welcome.

**OPEN MIC AT FISHERMEN'S VILLAGE** will take place on Monday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, and on Monday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, at Fishermen's Village on the center stage. Grab a bite to eat at the Village Oyster Bar or the Village Fish Market, and enjoy the show! 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.

**WRITER'S TEA**, facilitated by Mary Grace Patterson and Arlene Kincaid, will meet Nov. 16 in a new home, the Artisans' Atelier in Herald Court. The group will meet at The Literary Suite, a gathering place for writers in the Atelier. "Our group is an informal collection of kindred spirits who share writing, and give input if asked," Patterson said. "We enjoy a leisurely round of reading, snacks, and conversation. We meet the third Tuesday of the month from 1 to 3 p.m." For more information, call Mary Grace Patterson at 575-0739 or Arlene Kincaid at 941-625-7312. The Artisan's Atelier is located in the Herald Court Centre parking structure at 117 Herald Court in Punta Gorda. Enter on Olympia Avenue, across from Spazzi's and behind the courthouse. For information on the Literary Suite, please call James Abraham at 941-740-3071.

**OPEN MIC 2 AT HAVA JAVA** will be held on Friday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, and again on Friday, December 17<sup>th</sup>. Shirley George emcees. Located at 2711 Tamiami Trail in Port Charlotte, we begin at 6:30pm, and the readings and performances run until 8:30pm. Bring your poems, stories, excerpts, and music, and share, or just come to listen and grab a bite to eat.

**CRITIQUE CIRCLE** will be held Monday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>, in room O-116. The group is limited to six readers, but there is no attendance cap. This is so that all readers have time to receive feedback. If you just wish to attend to give feedback, or get an idea of how a group critique flows, please come to check it out! Readers should sign up beforehand so we know how many will be participating, and should bring six to eight copies of their work. Bring pens and pencils to scribble feedback as well!

### Board of Directors

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Thank You to Our Renewing Members:

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Frank Desguin  
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Doug Houck  
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Welcome to Our New Members:

Sonya Burton  
Rebecca Elam  
Linda Keyes  
Christie A. Logan  
Natasha Neal  
Joyce Puls  
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## November is National Novel Writing Month By Story Boyle

The blank page can be the scariest thing in the world for a writer, and often they find themselves staring at it, fussing over well-crafted sentences that never come about. That's why I love National Novel Writing Month, known as NaNoWriMo, or just NaNo, for short. NaNo began in 1999 as a small project piloted by Chris Baty, with only 21 participants. Over the years, it's grown to almost 170,000 participants. The goal is to scribble, type, jot, or pound out 50,000 words in 30 days. It's a challenge. Going in, I know I'm not going to produce anything high quality. At the end, I will have one of the most valuable things a writer can have—a text. A text is no longer a blank page. Texts can be edited, changed, inverted, clipped, you name it! Editing is so much easier than a slug-fest with an empty screen or page. By focusing on quantity of words, on just getting it all down, you're free to make mistakes. The best part is you have a whole 11 months to get that

manuscript into shape before the next NaNo!

To participate, sign up on the NaNo site, <http://www.nanowrimo.org/>. Participation is free. Then consider joining the PRCW in our November fiction workshops. Remember, 1,667 words per day!

### Board of Directors Meeting

Join the PRCW for the next two meetings of the Board of Directors on Friday, November 12<sup>th</sup>, and on Friday, December 10<sup>th</sup> of 2010 in room O-116. The meetings start at 10am and run until about noon. Your input as a member matters. Come early, come late, come and be heard!





## WRITERS SEEK THE WILDERNESS

One traditional view of writing holds that the quiet solitude of nature is the driving force of creativity. Writers like Thoreau sought the wilds and simplicity in order to better reflect on humanity.

On Saturday, November 13, The PRCW will carry on that tradition, setting forth into the back country of Babcock Ranch with a group of writers in the spirit of inspiration and education. Dr. William Wilcox, professor of biology at Edison State College, will lead the wilderness tour, loaning his expertise on the ecology of southwest Florida.

Following the trip into the backwoods of Charlotte County, the PRCW will host a picnic on the Babcock grounds in the early afternoon, with an open mic, poetry, and performance, celebrating native Florida. Hot dogs will be provided.

Tickets are available in advance for \$25. Please RSVP by Saturday November 5. The tour group will meet at 10am in the parking lot of Wynn-Dixie at the corner of Highway 17 and Highway 74. The intersection is about 2.5 miles north of I-75 in Punta Gorda. Participants carpool out to Babcock.

### **Nin Andrews at Edison**

By Natala Orobello

On the evening of September 25, 2010, Edison State College in coordination with Peace River Center for Writers declared their dedication to the arts by inviting prose poet Nin Andrews. Edison State College received a grant from Florida Literary Arts Coalition, and so far, Charlotte and Lee campuses have organized events. John Pelot, English Professor and Vice President of PRCW, took the initiative and invited Nin Andrews as our first presenter. Those of us who work at Edison State College and are on the PRCW board hope this event will be the first of many.

Nin Andrews writes mostly confessional prose poetry, with mixed northern and southern roots. Her work is down to earth, comical, honest, and peachy keen Southern. Her sometime hidden Southern drawl accentuates her poetic storylines and the humor she seems to find in daily events like bathing (or not bathing) in your brother's bath water. Andrews began the evening with a poetry workshop, followed by the sale of some of her works, and then an hour reading.

I have never enjoyed a poet more. I have listened to the likes of Joyce Carol Oates (who by the way is very funny) and Allen Ginsberg (not so funny) and though both were profoundly intense and thought provoking, I was not as intrigued as I was Saturday night. First, she began with some of her poems reflecting her father's southern background and then a few on her mother's northern roots, and she admits she doesn't think it was a match made in heaven. Then, she proceeded to read a few about her Catholic school days, funny regardless who attends, and finally she read poetry that was inspired by her professor husband's emails from students. Of course, the professors as well as the students found those the most comedic.

At the end of her reading, Ms. Andrews took questions from the audience. She was reflective and quite thorough with her responses. This thin, blonde poet is a unique combination of northern style and southern comfort. She's an easy voice to listen to, and as my husband said when we were on our way home, "I could have listened to her all night."

# November 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6 <b>**Words and Deeds: Writing Fiction</b>
7	8 <b>Open Mic at Fishermen's Village</b>	9	10 <b>**Babcock Wilderness Presentation</b>	11	12 <b>Board Meeting</b>	13 <b>Kids Stuff</b>  <b>The Writer's Tour of Babcock</b>
14	15	16 <b>Writers' Tea</b>	17 <b>**Boot Camp for the Novelist</b>	18	19 <b>Open Mic at Hava Java</b>	20
21 <b>Celebrate Authors</b>	22 <b>Critique Circle</b>	23 <b>**Boot Camp for the Novelist</b>	24	25	26	27
28	29	30 <b>**Boot Camp for the Novelist</b>	<b>** Indicates a workshop</b>			

# December 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<b>**Indicates a workshop</b>		1 Dress Rehearsal: The North Pole's Got Talent	2	3 Show: The North Pole's Got Talent	4
5	6	7 <b>**Push for Poetry Publication</b>	8	9	10 Board Meeting	11 Kids Stuff
12	13 Open Mic at Fishermen's Village	14	15	16	17 Open Mic at Hava Java	18
19	20	21 Writers' Tea	22	23	24	25 Christmas
26	27	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve	

## **Last Time at the Board Meeting...**

...on October 8<sup>th</sup> Janice Jaén, Michelle Fanslau, James Abraham, Mary Grace Patterson, Doug Houck, John Pelot, and Story Boyle were present.

Meeting commenced at 10:02am. The minutes were amended as James Abraham was not present at the last meeting. The amended minutes were approved. The financial report was present by Doug Houck.

Mary Grace Patterson motioned that the PRCW bring the Peace River Ghost Trackers to speak for a special Halloween event, sharing ghost stories. Michelle Fanslau suggested that the event be associated with Haunted College, pending discussion with Michael Bean, who is running the Haunted College event as a free event. Special pricing was discussed.

John Pelot provided a summary of the October 2<sup>nd</sup> fundraiser “Equinozio di Autunno.” He brought up publishing the winning essay from the “Legacy of 911” contest in the November/December newsletter.

Doug Houck discussed the Babcock Ranch tour, including the ticket pricing (\$25), and the picnic and open mic component afterward, summarizing the details.

Doug Houck presented information regarding the upcoming Celebrate Authors program November 21<sup>st</sup> at Fishermen’s Village. He suggested it focus on children’s books and literature. Moving the Open Mic was discussed.

Concerns after gift storage for the Christmas show were raised by Mary Grace Patterson. Michelle volunteered her office and Story a portion of the PRCW office for gift wrapping and storage between the dress rehearsal on the 1<sup>st</sup> and the show on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of December.

Carl Parrott was absent, and the poetry contest was not discussed.

Michelle Fanslau presented the new draft of the Memorandum of Agreement between Edison State College and the PRCW. Restrictions on office time were lifted. The workshop revenue split was renegotiated. It was not approved, pending the following modification: the agreement as presented accorded 3 non-academic meetings per month. The PRCW is requesting that number be changed to 5. The issue was tabled until the next meeting.

Michelle Fanslau also presented the business model outline. One suggestion made in the document was to distribute marketing duties and volunteering among member-led committees, increasing PRCW involvement.

Without further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:10am.

**Don't forget, the PRCW is now on Facebook! Search for “The Peace River Center for Writers at Edison State College” on Facebook and “like” our page!**

**Peace River Center for Writers at Edison State College**

**26300 Airport Road, Punta Gorda, FL 33950 • Room B-114**

**Phone: 941.637.3514 • Email: [prcw@edison.edu](mailto:prcw@edison.edu)**

**Web Site: <http://peacriverwriters.org>**

## November and December Workshops:

### **Words and Deeds: Writing Fiction**

**Doug Houck**  
**Saturday, Nov 6**  
**10am to 12pm**  
**Room O-116**

This two hour workshop will focus on the art of using words, sentences, and paragraphs to tell stories. We will: examine the roles of setting, characterization, narration, plot, and dialogue; examine work written by others; and discuss the work and ideas of those attending the workshop.

Dr. Houck has written two historical novels, the *Illustrated History of Chautauqua County*, New York and served as the principal writer for the forthcoming *Illustrated History of Charlotte County*.

### **Babcock Presentation**

**Dr. William Wilcox**  
**Wednesday, Nov 10**  
**6pm to 8pm**  
**Room E-113**

In preparation for our Writers' Tour of Babcock, Dr. William Wilcox has agreed to present a lecture on the ecology of Wilderness Preserve, so the fiction and non-fiction writers alike can have a better understanding of native Florida. Dr. Wilcox is a professor of biology at Edison, and teaches South Florida Environments.

### **Boot Camp for the Novelist** **Story Boyle, Doug Houck, James Abraham**

**Wednesday, Nov 17**  
**Tuesday, Nov 23**  
**Tuesday, Nov 30**  
**7pm to 9pm**  
**Room D-206**

This three part workshop will be co-taught, and cover topics such as what separates a novel from other literary forms, ways to overcome writer's block, the history of the novel, and the final steps of editing and publishing. Each session will include time to write, talk about your ideas and writing problems and work them out on the page or screen. Held in the computer lab, there will be computers available, so you may bring a flash drive, your laptop, or an old fashion notebook and pen.

### **Push for Poetry Publication**

**Story Boyle**  
**Tuesday, Dec 7**  
**6pm to 8pm**  
**Room TBA**

They call it the "slush pile." It's like a mountain. How do you scale it? This one-time workshop will be a practical guide to sending out your poems, from the first steps of choosing markets, to drafting cover letters and emails, to finally organizing and keeping track of your submissions. Story Boyle has been submitting her work for



**All workshops will take place on the Edison Charlotte campus. Please call ahead to reserve a spot, as we must have at least three participants to run a workshop. Workshops without at least three participants will be canceled. Workshops fees are \$10 per hour for members and \$20 per hour for non-members. For more information, contact the PRCW at (941) 637-3514 or by email at [prcw@edison.edu](mailto:prcw@edison.edu).**

**Thank you to all the people who made our fundraiser and awards dinner, *Equinozio di Autunno*, a success!**

Janice Jaén  
Art Davis  
Jan Britland  
Carol Mahler  
John Pelot  
Tom and Pat Land  
Marie Merchant  
Doug Houck  
Mary Grace Patterson  
Catherine Bukovitz  
George Hart  
Michelle Fanslau  
Chris and Marcy Corridino  
Elizabeth Kenney  
Natala and Michael Orobello  
Publix Supermarket at  
Colonial Burnt Store  
Promenade

**During our fall fundraiser, we announced the winner of the “Legacy of 911” essay contest. The winning essay, by Edison student, George Hart, is reprinted here.**

### **The Old Man and 9/11** **By George Hart**

What a wonderful afternoon it was. I was fresh out of the Police Academy walking my own foot post in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. My assignment that day was to protect a primarily Hassidic community where the people were friendly and not much happened. This day would change me and create a link to a day seventeen years later. While walking down the sidewalk, making my rounds, I noticed the old man. Now, when I say old man I am not being disrespectful. You could tell by looking at his appearance that he had endured hard times; his face was weathered and worn, but not bitter. I know this look; my father had the same appearance having endured a North Korean prisoner of war camp. As I walked towards him I moved over to give him room to pass. To my surprise he stopped, reached out to shake my hand, and then hugged me. The old man thanked me for being there, wished me well and to have a long life. As I thanked him for his kind words I could not help but notice a

number tattooed on his wrist. When I returned to the precinct I told my training officer of this incident and he explained to me that the old man was a rabbi in the Hassidic community. The number on his wrist was a tattoo that the Nazi guards had put on him at the concentration camp. It felt great that he had taken the time to thank me that day, but I really could not fully appreciate the reason why he had taken the time to thank me until many years later.

Seventeen years later on September 11, 2001, I was working at the NYPD Launch Repair Shop on Randal’s Island and assigned patrol on a 36 foot launch with Police Officers James O’Meara and Harry Strapman. Our job was to set up a fire line on the Hudson River. The mission for us was to keep civilian boats from getting too close to the shoreline just in case the second tower, which had not fallen yet, toppled into the river. In complete disbelief the three of us watched the second building “pancaking” down. You could see the people on shore running towards the water in a futile attempt to escape the oncoming avalanche. The cloud, which resembled dirty snow, swallowed the crowd in a violent rumble. Could anybody have survived? It took a minute for the three of us to comprehend what had just happened. I saw it happen and I still could not believe my eyes. Sounds of screaming for help quickly brought us back to reality. Could we enter the cloud, which by now was hundreds of yards into the river? We knew we had to go for it, enter the cloud and try to get to those people out. Harry Strapman, who was the pilot, inched our boat forward into the cloud. We went from daytime to midnight in an instant. Our flashing blue light was a comfort to us but to the crowd on shore it was life! When the

*(continued)*

crowd saw our light you could hear a cheer like the home team had hit a grand slam coming from the shore. The crowd screamed “NYPD, NYPD, NYPD”. Harry, our pilot, guided the launch to the crowd like a moth to a light. When we made shore, what I expected to see was total panic, chaos, and madness brought on by a fight for life. What I saw were the bravest people in the world waiting patiently as if they were in line for the next bus. How wonderful it was when I asked for women and children first, that the crowd responded by bringing the women and children to the front so we could bring them on board. This process continued for most of the morning aided by civilian boats that had also responded to our nation’s version of a “Dunkirk” style evacuation.

What does this have to do with the old man? He came from a place where his government was evil and imprisoned him. When he hugged me like his long lost son it was because he knew I was there to protect him. To the old man I was a symbol of freedom and all that is good about this country, not me personally, he did not know me. The old man had seen the worst that man could do to other men. He recognized that the person in the uniform was there as a barrier between him and evil. What I learned on September 11 was that evil can destroy a building but it did not destroy the old man and it cannot destroy all that is good about this country, the people of this country, the bravest people in the world. They are what make this country great!

God bless the people of America; God bless the U.S.A.

## Celebrate Authors!

November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010



It’s time to Celebrate Authors! On Sunday, November 21<sup>st</sup>, the PRCW invites authors to come sell their work and talk with folk about their writing at Fishermen’s Village. The event begins at 10am; setup begins at 9am. It’s a great opportunity to tell people about your book! This year we will focus on children’s literature (though other genres are welcome), and just in time for the holidays Fishermen’s Village will be festively decorated, and there will be activities for the whole family!

Spaces are available for \$10, bring your own table. If we provide you with a table, the cost is \$25. For tables or more information, please contact Story Boyle at 941-637-3514 or email the PRCW at [prcw@edison.edu](mailto:prcw@edison.edu).

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