

## From the Quill Editor...

At long last, here is the November edition of The Quill. October was an exciting, busy month for the many SCWW members who attended our annual conference in Myrtle Beach. After three days of intensive workshops, panels, slush fests, speakers and a silent auction, I must say I know many of you better. If you didn't get a chance to stop by The Quill booth or one of my intensive workshops, feel free to drop me a line and tell me more about you and your chapter of SCWW. Also, I'd like to know what changes members would like to see made in The Quill. Please send any comments or suggestions to [carriemccullough@bellsouth.net](mailto:carriemccullough@bellsouth.net).

### Calls for Submissions

#### Janice Holt Giles Short Fiction Prize Announces Call for Entries Arts

Across Kentucky magazine is accepting entries to the third annual Janice Holt Giles Short Fiction Prize. The winning story will be published in Arts Across Kentucky and the author will receive a \$500 prize and an invitation to read at the annual literary festival held each August at the homestead of Janice Holt Giles outside of Campbellsville, Kentucky.

The 2008 Janice Holt Giles Short Fiction Prize contest judge is Lee Smith. Smith has written a number of highly acclaimed novels and short story collections including the New York Times best-seller, *The Last Girls* and her most recent novel, *On Agate Hill*. Winner of the Pen/Faulkner Award and two O. Henry Awards, Smith recently retired from teaching creative writing at North Carolina State University.

The Janice Holt Giles Short Fiction Prize is open to all fiction writers. Only an original unpublished short story in English may be submitted. Any subject matter or writing style is welcome. The winning story must be suitable for a general audience. If a submitted story is published elsewhere during the judging process, the author is asked to contact Arts Across Kentucky so their story can be withdrawn from consideration.

For other rules and information, visit [www.artsacrossky.com](http://www.artsacrossky.com) or e-mail Nancy Bronner at [nancy@artsacrossky.com](mailto:nancy@artsacrossky.com).

#### Pine Mountain Sand & Gravel Seeks Submissions for 2008

Inspired by a multitude of poems, stories, jokes, and tall tales about vultures 'or' 'buzzards,' as many of us call them ' the theme for the upcoming issue of PMS&G is 'Vultures.'

They're looking for a range in exploring the theme, just as there has been a range in cultural viewpoints on these birds throughout human history: In Ancient Egypt, the vulture hieroglyph was used for the word mother. In Southern Africa, a particular kind of vulture is synonymous with the word for lovers, as they are always seen in pairs. The Cherokee call them 'Peace Eagle,' since they kill nothing in order to live. The scientific name for the common turkey vulture

is Catharsis Aura, or "Golden Purifier," a term that signifies the birds'™ importance to our environment. Today's™ American Heritage dictionary uses the term to characterize predatory, greedy people seeking profit.

Send a cover letter with your name, address, phone, e-mail address, a short bio (50 words or less), and a list of the titles submitted. Poets, please limit submissions to 5 poems or 10 pages. Prose writers, limit submissions to 5,000 words. Artists, send any 2D art, including drawings, photos, comics, etc., that can be scaled effectively to a digest-sized page. Series formats are welcome. Submissions will not be returned.

Send submissions by Dec. 1, 2007, either by e-mail to [frankiefinley@yahoo.com](mailto:frankiefinley@yahoo.com) (pasted into an e-mail or as a Word or PDF attachment) or by traditional mail, with an SASE for reply, to Pine Mountain Sand & Gravel, c/o Frankie Finley, 1757 Normandy Road, Lexington, KY 40504.

## **Author Invites SCWW Members to Help Other Writers**

Here's™ a call for submissions from former SCWW faculty member Chris Roerden:

*Some members might recall that I led two sessions at last year's SCWW and served on the closing editors' panel. Because my South Carolina publisher has asked me to revise Don't Murder Your Mystery for ALL writers, not just mystery writers, I stayed home this fall to write. The revised edition, available June 2008, will be titled Don't Sabotage Your Submissions: An Editor Tells Writers How to Avoid Hasty Rejection.*

*Here's where you come in. I want to feature writers in the next edition that I didn't have a chance to feature in the original edition. I'm seeking up to 145 excerpts from unpublished, as well as published writers, in all genres and all forms of fiction (novels, short stories, scripts " even creative nonfiction).*

*Each excerpt will exemplify the effective use of specific fiction-writing techniques, such as: Dynamic dialogue, fresh body language, description that doesn't stop the action, intriguing hooks that keep going . . . and going. These are but four of the 24-plus positive fiction-writing techniques that I analyze and advocate. If your excerpt/example is selected, you will be featured in the second, expanded edition of the book that: won this year's Agatha Award for Best Nonfiction Book; was a finalist for this year's Macavity Award, chosen by members of Mystery Readers International, the largest organization of its kind in the world; was a finalist for this year's Anthony Award; was a finalist in ForeWord Magazine's Book of the Year Awards; is an alternate selection of the Writer's Digest Book Club.*

*You will receive a copy of your own review and full credit, as in any review, and retain all rights to your work. No purchase is required and no fees or payments are involved.*

*Complete guidelines and a form for submission can be downloaded from <http://www.marketsavvybookediting.com/contestapp.pdf> or received for a large SASE sent to P.O.Box 16024, High Point, NC 27261. Deadline is Nov. 22, 2007. For more information, reviews, and the first four chapters, free, of the award-winning book, see [www.bellarosabooks.com](http://www.bellarosabooks.com).*

## **Gulf Coast Association Seeks Anthology Submissions**

Co-Editor of the Gulf Coast Writers Association has sent an invitation for SCWW members to submit work for an upcoming anthology. The GCWA, founded in 1986, sponsors two yearly contests and produces its own publication, "The Magnolia Quarterly."

Writers will find all the information they need to submit at the following address: <http://gcwriters.org/anthology.htm>.

All profits from the anthology go directly to GCWA.

## **Yemassee Journal Announces Short Story Contest**

Yemassee invites SCWW members to submit fiction for the annual William Richey Short Story Contest. The top prize is \$1,000 this year.

Yemassee, the literary journal of the University of South Carolina's™ Master of Fine Arts creative writing program, is a relatively small journal and the editors are interested in finding fresh, new voices to publish alongside those of more established authors.

## A Member Shares Why We Write

### Why We Write

*By Craig Faris*

Over the past year I have felt older than ever and as our southern drought grew, so seemed my depression over the prospect of sitting behind a computer every night, especially after eight hours of sitting behind a computer at my day job. It wasn't supposed to be like this. Writing used to be so much fun, and it was. It was like sitting down with a good book and eagerly returning every night to find out what was going to happen next.

My first book took me three years of writing nearly every night, from the time my kids went to bed until the clock struck 1 a.m. After 970 pages and 226,800 words, my story was finally finished. Unfortunately, I didn't know what I was doing, but at least I learned how to type. About 25 rejection letters later I joined a writers group and started a second novel. This one was a much more reasonable length, (125,000 words) but with a full time job, it still took me over three years to complete. Again it was the characters, the story and how they were going to resolve the conflict that was eagerly anticipated each evening.

I soon discovered that the greatest thing about belonging to a writers group was the positive support and the opportunity to read segments of the story for critiques. Good or bad, they kept me challenged, kept me on my toes and above all, those little smiley faces and checkmarks kept me inspired to bring in equally good pages the following week. The writers group is still together, but I seldom visit these days. They now only meet twice a month and when they do, it seems harder and harder to get up the will power to go.

Countless times I have asked myself what was missing and I never seemed to find an answer. I had been published seventeen times in anthologies, and thirteen of my short stories had won regional literary awards, but none of those seemed good enough to enter in a national competition, much less make the cut in the few magazines that still publish short fiction. My writing career felt stagnant. I had finished two unpublished novels and was even commissioned to write a non-fiction book about a childhood friend who killed her abusive father and ended up appearing twice on the Oprah Winfrey show and Larry King Live. Still, I could not find enough inspiration to make the story jump off the page. It was a great story, but my heart wasn't in it.

Over the past year the only time I really enjoyed writing was when I dug out the manuscript of an old short story called "House of Ruth" and decided to flesh out its characters by adding about a thousand words to the original's 1,750 words. In 2005 this shorter version had garnered the Carrie McCray literary award for best short fiction, but the word limit made it somewhat confusing and left the reader with only a hint of characterization. As I rewrote the story, I fell in love with it all over again and it occurred to me that it had never been published. I had resisted the temptation to submit "House of Ruth" to our regional anthology competition for one simple reason; of all the pieces I had written, this had become my personal favorite. My heart was in it and the storyline and subsequent ending had been as much of a surprise to me, as to those who read it.

This, I discovered, was what I missed the most about writing fiction. It's the suspense, the anticipation of the unknown. The non-fiction book was suspenseful, but I already knew what was behind the door at the end of the long dark hallway, and that made it twice as difficult to write when compared to fiction. Last May I finally felt the "House of Ruth" manuscript was ready to fit upon a hook and toss it out into the swirling mass of national competitions just to see if I might get a nibble. And there it went, the brief moment of inspiration gone, followed by the long drought of non-writing that continued through the summer and fall.

Until today.

The nine by twelve envelope on the table this evening was buried among the other junk mail. Other than the return address of F.W. Publications, it looked like a promotion for the latest book of the month club. It almost went into the trash, but as I tore open the letter and read its contents, a smile came over me that was so noticeable it stopped my wife in mid sentence.

“Craig, what is it?” she said.

I read the cover letter again, this time aloud.

F.W. Publications, Inc.  
4700 East Galbraith Road  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45236

Dear Craig,

One of my most enjoyable tasks as editor of *Writers Digest* is passing along good news to writers. This is one of those fun occasions. It is my pleasure to tell you that your manuscript, *House of Ruth*, has been awarded Honorable Mention in the Genre Short Story category of the 76th Annual Writers Digest Writing Competition. Enclosed is your Certificate of Achievement to honor your accomplishment. This year’s contest attracted over 19,000 entries. Your success in the face of such formidable competition speaks highly of your writing talent, and should be a source of great pride as you continue in your writing career. I congratulate you again on your accomplishment, and wish you the best of luck in your future writing.

Respectfully, Maria Schneider, Editor *Writers Digest*

I guess it took me moment to realize that in this particular case, an Honorable Mention was in the top one-half of 1 percent of the total entries, which to me was amazing especially since my friend, Betty Beamguard had found two minor typos in the manuscript after it had been sent off. Thus I had pretty much given up on the entry.

There was no check, only a simple certificate indicating the aforementioned award. But to me, it needed nothing more. It was that checkmark beside our name on the blackboard of elementary school all over again. It was that little pat on the back that brings you back to the chair, opens the story file and takes you into that glorious realm once again. It’s all we need.

It’s why we write.

## Member/Chapter News

### A Brag from Columbia Chapter I

Columbia Chapter One’s prolific writer of magazine articles has followed up his “Off-Roading in South Carolina” article which appeared in the September -October issue of “Sand Sports” magazine with fiction. “The Skeleton” will appear in “Dammed In Dixie” available through: <http://www.lulu.com/content/1046461>

Congratulations Bill.

### SCWW Member Publishes Inspiring True Story

*How Many Angels Does It Take: The Remarkable Life of Heather Brooks* by Betty Beamguard is the story of two extraordinary women, Heather Rose Brooks and her mother, Dr. Janice Strang, plus the people who have helped them throughout Heather's life. Heather is known for her delightful laugh and for driving a horse-drawn carriage with her feet. Because of Heather's disabilities due to severe cerebral palsy, this incredible accomplishment required a host of angels of the earthbound variety and a lot of hard work and persistence on her part.

See pictures and learn more about Heather by following links at [www.home.earthlink.net/~bbeamguard](http://www.home.earthlink.net/~bbeamguard).

## We Need Your Opinion!

The South Carolina Writers' Workshop board of directors would like to hear from you!

We are trying to make our organization more responsive to the needs of our membership, and would appreciate your input. Soon we will begin making plans for next year's *Petigru Review* and conference.

Would you please take a few moments to give us the benefit of your perspective?

Depending upon your connection speed, and whether or not you attended the conference, the survey shouldn't take but about 5-10 minutes. There are ninety-nine questions, but you won't be asked to answer all of them.

Your answers to certain questions will determine which questions you'll be directed to. For example, if you attended the conference this year, we won't ask why you didn't come.

The questions with asterisks require answers. This is because the survey needs that information to direct you to specific questions.

For conference attendees, the survey will take a little longer, because we need your feedback, and we combined the conference survey with the general membership survey this year so there would be only one. This is, hopefully, easier for you to respond to, and also easier for us to analyze.

Your responses are completely confidential. No one will be able to differentiate your answers from all the others. If, for any reason, you exit the survey before you've finished, you can start over from the beginning by clicking the link again. Your first response will be over-written by your second.

The survey will be open until November 19. This should allow everyone time to complete it, and all us time to analyze the results before our next meeting.

If you do not have internet access, and are receiving The Quill via the postal service, please call Susan Boyer at (864) 370-9262 to complete your survey over the telephone.

Due to costs and timing considerations, we won't be mailing surveys with an SASE this year. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

Here is a link to the survey: [https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=zxs3ym\\_2fK88ggtx\\_2f16FeHPg\\_3d\\_3d](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=zxs3ym_2fK88ggtx_2f16FeHPg_3d_3d)

Thanks so much for your help!

SCWW Board of Directors

