



GCWA Members – Spring Programs Meeting Updates

Join us **Saturday, March 21** for our next GCWA meeting. [at 10:00 am at St. Hilary's Episcopal Church.](#)

A writer's life is like no other. If you want to sustain a long-term career, you must maintain a dual focus on the craft of writing and the business of publishing. Don't miss **"Riding the Wind: How to Survive and Thrive in a Constantly Changing Publishing World."**

Our presenter, **Marty Ambrose** teaches composition and creative writing at Florida Southwestern State College and delivers workshops worldwide. She is an award-winning author of nine novels, including her forthcoming book, *The Secret Diary of Rome* available in April, 2026.

April is National Poetry Month! Start planning now for a fun and fast moving [Poetry Slam](#), held at our **April 18** meeting! Details and entry information are on the website. Sign up early and bring your best!

Afterward, we gather for lunch at a nearby restaurant.

ONLY TWO MORE DAYS!!

2026 GCWA Writing Contest



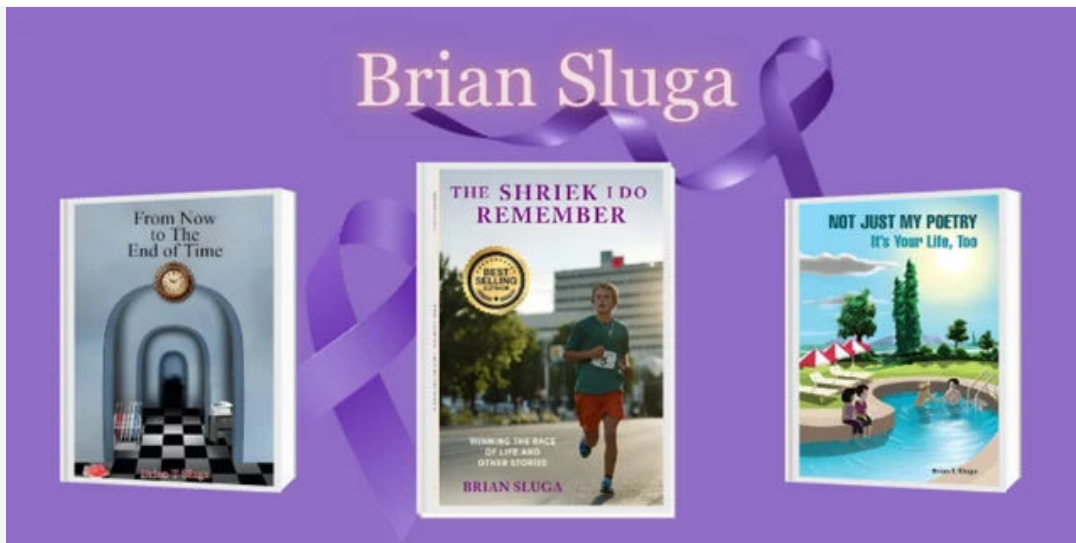
One longstanding hallmark of the Gulf Coast Writers Association is its [annual writing contest](#). Submissions are open until **March 15, 2026**. Complete information and submission form are on the [GCWA website](#).

Writers may submit work in three genres:

- Fiction
- Nonfiction
- Poetry

First-, second-, and third-place prizes will be awarded in each genre. Writers may submit multiple pieces in one or more genres. Monetary prizes are awarded!

Member Spotlight: Brian Sluga



[Brian Sluga's](#) award-winning memoir, *The Shriek I Do Remember*, and his inspiring message about recovering from cancer and living a full life is now available. Brian's message is one of hope, faith, perseverance, and gratitude. Read his Member Spotlight interview on the [GCWA website](#) to learn about his writing journey and advice to other writers.

Petite Passages

Editor's Note: The following Petite Passage is from [Patti M. Walsh's new memoir, Chick Stories](#), a memoir of personal essays, including "Acting Up."

from "Acting Up" by Patti M Walsh

Before my friend Martha married her husband, she and I had our own chick adventure: an overnight stay in Midtown Manhattan and an evening at the legendary Cheetah nightclub near Times Square.

Located on Broadway near 53rd Street, the club held 2,000 people and was billed as the world's largest disco and the birthplace of salsa. Standing out like dainty thumbs in a velvet-roped queue of clientele in leopard-print jumpers and sparkly, body-hugging dresses, we somehow made it past the bouncers in our cute miniskirts.

After paying the \$4 admission fee, we didn't dance and we didn't mingle. Instead, we parked ourselves on the balcony that overlooked the main dance floor and pretended not to gawk. Under thousands of strobing, colored lights and a giant chrome mobile, go-go dancers pranced on polka dot-like podiums while the beautiful people gyrated to heavy, thumping disco music.

For a few magical hours, we were fashionable, glamorous, and privileged at a world-famous disco. Wow.

We're always looking for compelling prose or poetry to highlight our members' talent. Submit a 250-300-word excerpt from your work to:



FOUR types of editors? Yes. Really.

By [Joe Diorio](#)

When I was a newspaper reporter my editor took my story – this was back when reporters wrote using typewriters and copy paper – told me my story wasn't up to snuff, folded the copy paper in three, and gleefully threw it in the trash.

That seemed harsh but that was my first exposure to a developmental editor, albeit a really mean one. Had he kept the story he'd be functioning as a copy editor. If he suggested I make some changes to improve the flow of the story, then he'd have been a line editor. And if he found some typos he would have been a proofreader, but not before throwing a glue pot at me for making those mistakes.

(Yes, newspapers once used glue kept in tubs called glue pots. I told you this was a long time ago. And my editor's motivational tactics were, at best, questionable.)

There are four types of editors – developmental, line, copy, and proofreading. All make sure the written word is clear and concise, and each has a distinct purpose.

I hired a developmental editor to evaluate my Work In Progress (WIP) and see if there was a "there there." That's basically what a developmental editor does: they will tell you in no uncertain terms if you are on to something or if you are smoking dried banana peels. In my case, the developmental editor gave me gentle advice on my story, what was good about it, and what could be done to improve it. I am taking every drop of her advice and am completely rewriting my WIP. (Message me if you want her contact information. She's awesome.)

On my previous book, a line editor was making sure the writing flowed, catching instances where I had used the same name on two different characters, and even suggested moving a chapter or two (honest, just two chapters). A copy editor

made sure my grammar was spot on, and the proofreader made sure I was spelling things correctly and grammar was consistent.

Four distinct skillsets. Each is vital to the overall product.

Be cautious, with a good editor you need thick skin. A developmental editor won't throw your work in the trash, but they'll help you understand why the story needs to be trashed or just revised. Good line editors, copy editors, and proofreaders are all awesome, but they can make you question your decision to become a writer.

They're all part of the village it takes to create your book.

And as I say at the end of every chapter of my first book, "Let's write carefully out there, people."

Joe Diorio is the author of ["A Few Words About Words. A common-sense look at writing and grammar"](#) and ["Crisis Communications and the Art of Making Nothing Happen"](#)

Events

[Joe Diorio](#), who authored this month's Craft Corner above, is having an **Author Signing** on **Saturday, March 21st at Flutterbuy Books and More**, located at 840 SW 4th Street, Unit 7, Cape Coral, FL 33991. He is the author of ["A Few Words About Words. A common-sense look at writing and grammar"](#) (Beaufort Books, 2021), and ["Crisis Communications and the Art of Making Nothing Happen"](#) (Beaufort Books, 2025). Royalties from both titles are being donated to the Harry Chapin Food Bank of Southwest Florida.

[Southwest Florida Reading Festival](#)

GCWA was proud to participate in the 27th Annual Southwest Florida Reading Festival, Saturday, March 7. The GCWA tent hosted 12 of our member-authors with their books and promotional goodies. The authors and other volunteers also encouraged a number of attendees to join GCWA.

Writers in the GCWA morning tent were; Lori Swick, Amy Pontius, Joyce Blevins, Ed DeJesus, Sara Fisher-Pointer, and Rita Angelini. In the afternoon were Carol Light, Carolyn Bronson, Richard Allen (Drummer), Sharmin McKenney, Christopher Schroder and Donna Wyland.

In addition to our local authors, the festival featured over 24 other famous authors. Several of our members enjoyed dinner with prestigious authors at the Meet the Authors dinner the night before the Festival.

GCWA IS SEEKING

COMMUNICATIONS VOLUNTEERS

We are looking for a volunteer who is willing to secure book reviews of our members' books - written by fellow members. We are looking for previously and newly written reviews. If you are interested in helping, please email:

communications@gulfcoastwriters.org.

GCWA

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