



GCWA Members - Exciting Programs

GCWA Meeting Updates

Saturday, July 18, is our next GCWA meeting. [Join us at 10:00 am at St. Hilary's Episcopal Church](#). Our presenter is **Nancy Koucky, owner of NRK Designs**.

Nancy, an **award winning designer** will discuss book layout and cover design for print or e-book conversion. Topics that will be presented will be cover design elements, recommended fonts and sizes, font pairing strategies, and the nuances of paragraph formatting, including indentation and justification.

Afterward, we gather for lunch at a nearby restaurant.

Member Spotlight: Patti M. Walsh

[Patti M. Walsh](#) is an award-winning author whose middle-grade novels, *Ghost Girl* and *Hounded*, are inspired by Celtic mythology. She also writes adult fiction and non-fiction. Her recent release, [Chick Stories, a Memoir of Adventures Lived, Laughter Shared, and Lessons Learned with My Girlfriends](#), is a memoir-in-essay. With a background in education and corporate communications, she lectures on Celtic mythology. Read her interview on the [GCWA website](#).



Petite Passages

Editor's Note: This month's Petite Passage is taken from *Lessons from the Coal Bin: Words and Thoughts Regarding My Life Journey* by Lee Bomgaars who grew up in small-town rural America. After becoming a dentist, he moved to New York to practice with the US Naval Dental Corps. Later he established his children's dentistry private practice in Chicago. He retired in 2007 and now lives in Florida, where he is an active volunteer in his church and local community.

What are Your Prized Possessions Worth?

By Lee Bomgaars

"Step right up—only fifty cents for three more balls!"

"You can do it—only another fifty cents and this baby will be yours!"

"You have it made; you almost had it last time!"

"I can see this beauty on your mantle now!"

Cry after cry came from this carnival barker at Arnold's Park amusement venue in Lake Okoboji, in the summer of 1950, when I was eleven years of age. Tear after tear flowed down the cheeks of a mother holding her small child in her arms, as I witnessed my first lesson in what I now understand as "perceived value."

The prize at hand that day was a most popular mantle horse clock in shining gold array with either a marble-like or wood-like base. I have very little knowledge of what the item may have cost to purchase, but I saw the husband probably spend the majority of his weekly paycheck in his attempt to win the prize. I did know the value of money at that time because I was employed in our local Jack Sprat grocery store, and we were selling bread for twenty-three cents per loaf.

I don't remember if the family ever went home with the prize, but I do remember that we had one of those clocks in our home when I was older. I guess I must have felt secure in knowing that we were in the "in crowd" as owners of this prestigious item.

Also very popular at that time were “buffet lamps,” which resemble in style the old kerosene oil lamps that were a staple part of lighting in many homes prior to electric lights. These lamps were sold in pairs with red glass bottoms and dangling bauble stalactite type décor.

This incident in an early experience of life has never left me. It formulated an evaluation that I have applied to every aspect of my living. Every transaction, whether financial, emotional, or spiritual, must be evaluated from a perceived value perspective.

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



Zinsser was Wrong.

- By Joe Diorio

Writing is work. But it can and should be fun.

I never agreed with William Zinsser’s assessment in his book, *On Writing Well* where he said writing is lonely, difficult, and the words rarely flow easily.

People can have fun writing. And they often do.

In my book, *A Few Words About Words. A common-sense look at writing and grammar* (Beaufort Books, 2021), I shared the story of a television news editor in Nashville, Tennessee who was writing a caption for a story about a charity run by Nashville area resident and former National Hockey League player Mike Fisher. In addition to being a former NHL player, Fisher is the husband of County Music superstar Carrie Underwood. So, to identify Fisher, this clever news editor wrote, “Mike Fisher. Still married to someone famous.”

That’s accurate. And fun.

Give people a chance to have fun when they write and they will jump at it.

Just recently, I posted something on Threads where I asked, "Rather than writing 'please find the attached' in an email, what would you say?"

The internet did its thing. Big time.

"Verily, I say unto you, on this day I did attach a file to this correspondence," @gawanthegorgays wrote.

"If you read right to the end, you'll get a prize!" said @odaayi.

"There's an attachment. I'm confident you can find it. Don't let me down," said @d.j.runnels.

"Clickity clackity – check the attachedy," said @themcgahan.

"Find enclosed the fruit of my labour. The essence of my effort. The bain (sic) of my existence. Hours I will never get back. Screaming inside," wrote @katiekater220.

"Yoda voice – Attached it is, find above you will, open you must, mmm," said @79_pete_d.

"Yo, bruh, deets attached," wrote @claire_gosney, adding "This was a job application we received. He ended it with 'bell me'."

"Don't bother," said @hereforprizes. "Just send one with the subject 'Oops' and the attachment, and they'll think they missed the other one."

More than a few were NSFW, but here is a PG-13 one that made me laugh out loud, "Unlike your relationship with your father, the document I referenced is securely attached." That gem was from @kitkatgrilli

My modest post on Threads in one day generated 15,000 likes, 1,200 suggestions, and nearly 1,000 reposts.

People don't just like to write for fun. They crave it.

Take that, Zinsser.

And let's write carefully out there, people.

Joe Diorio is the author of two books, *A Few Words About Words. A common-sense look at writing and grammar* (Beaufort Books, 2021) and *Crisis Communications the Art of Making Nothing Happen* (Beaufort Books, 2025). He lives in Southwest Florida and toils at writing every day.

Celebrations

FAPA President's Book Award

Julie Moore is the author of [I Am Their Voice](#) and a member of GCWA.

Her book is an award-winning medalist in the 2026 FAPA President's Book Awards. She will receive the honor in Orlando at the FAPA conference and awards

banquet.

Julie is a volunteer for the AFTD Association supporting those going through what she experienced.

Thank you, Julie, for your service to your country and your dedication to helping others.

GCWA IS SEEKING COMMUNICATIONS VOLUNTEERS

We are looking to secure multiple volunteers to take on small, even "byte-sized" Communications roles and tasks. If you are interested in helping once or regularly with a small role for the newsletter, media contact, or social media, please email: communications@gulfcoastwriters.org.

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GCWA

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