



Dear GCWA Family...

Hi all!! Can we chat for just a minute?

Those of us who've been members for more than a few years already know: GCWA might not exist right now. First a pandemic shut down our in-person meetings for nearly a year. Then, just as we were beginning to recover from that, a hurricane named Ian roared through our community, making it nearly impossible to find a place to meet, not to mention the immense personal losses many of our members endured. We limped along on the sheer stubbornness of a handful of people who refused to let GCWA fold. And somehow — somehow — we're now pushing 200 members on the roll, with a third of you showing up faithfully every month. That's not luck. That's a comeback story.

This group has survived — and thrived — because many members have generously shared their time, ideas, and talents. And we deeply appreciate everyone who currently helps make our meetings welcoming, engaging, and productive. It is the sincere desire of your Executive Committee to continue providing you with a relevant and encouraging experience each month, but that takes a lot of plain old muscle and commitment, and the EC cannot do this alone. If we want to continue to offer things like snacks and Zoom support at our monthly meetings, as well as expanding our offerings to things like workshops and conferences, we need your help.

On our website, we proclaim: *"From modest beginnings to a vibrant community of writers, GCWA remains rooted in its founding vision: to provide a home where writers can learn, connect, and thrive."* You may

have ideas about things GCWA can offer to continue fostering the camaraderie and creativity we've become known for.

Here's where you come in...

Wanna get involved?? Current opportunities include:

- **Hospitality** (Meeting refreshments and coffee): Coordinate refreshments, set up coffee, other beverages and snacks before meetings, and help tidy the refreshment area afterward. Be responsible for storing and transporting coffee supplies to monthly meetings.
- **Tech Support** (Audiovisual and Zoom coordination): Assist with meeting technology, including setting up audiovisual equipment (laptop/projector/amplifier), starting the Zoom meeting, monitoring participants, and helping resolve basic technical issues. *Note: We currently have one volunteer (thank you **Dallas Adams**) but it would be good to have backup.*
- **Meeting Setup** (Sign in table supplies, Name tags, Retractable sign and other signage storage and setup): Be responsible for storing and transporting sign-in supplies when Membership VP is out of pocket in off-season. Store the group's retractable sign and other signage between meetings and bring it out for setup when needed. *These duties could be split between two or more people. Again, think backup.*
- **Exec Committee-related positions:**
 - Program vice president: Help plan and coordinate meeting programs, identify topics or presenters, and support the president with program-related responsibilities.
 - Communications assistant: Under direction of Communications VP, this person supports media announcements and outreach. Experience in journalism, editing, reporting, or related communications work would be especially helpful.
 - Newsletter editor: Falls under the umbrella of Communications. Manage the newsletter's schedule and content, gather member contributions, edit submissions as needed, and coordinate distribution.

Sharing these tasks allows us to keep the group running smoothly while giving more members an opportunity to contribute their skills and ideas.

You don't need experience. You don't need to commit forever. You just need to be willing to show up half an hour early once in a while, preferably with a smile. If that's you, reach out to me or any EC member — we will gladly show you the ropes and buy you a coffee for your trouble. Or give you a hug — your choice.

This group survived a pandemic and a hurricane. Help us keep the momentum going into the next chapter.

Not to be missed...

In other news, join us **Saturday, September 19 (10 a.m.–12 p.m.)** at [St. Hilary's Episcopal Church](#) in Fort Myers as we welcome award-winning author [Joni M. Fisher](#) — known for suspenseful stories about heroines who refuse to wait to be rescued, woven through with friendship, family, faith, and crime — for an instructive workshop on the craft of suspense. Fisher will show writers how to engineer anticipation, dread, and uncertainty through high stakes, ticking clocks, foreshadowing, red herrings, and cliffhanger pacing, while deepening emotional pull through vulnerable characters, deep POV, and impossible choices. You'll also learn the art of controlling what readers know and when — withholding information, layering clues, and ending scenes at the moment of maximum danger — to keep pages turning until the very end. Don't miss this chance to learn from a master of the genre!

Wrapping it up...



GCWA

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Thank you for reading all the way to the bottom of this! As always, if you have any questions, problems, or suggestions, please feel free to reach out to me directly at president@gulfcoastwriters.org

See you Saturday!! And don't forget to...

Keep writing!!

Warmly,

Christie Zarria

GCWA President

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