

ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15

PRESIDENT'S COVER LETTER by Gary McLouth

As prologue to report synopses of the GCWA Executive Committee reports, I add this brief commentary for the year (April 1, 2014 – March 31, 2015) served as President of the GCWA.

Like all organizations, self-formed and self-sustaining, the Gulf Coast Writers Association lives on the energies of its membership. The past year has been one of significant living. Individuals have invested themselves in the multiple efforts devoted to the accomplishment of a single purpose: writing, we call it.

Unlike most other organizations created to enhance and involve individual efforts to achieve the goals of the whole, the Gulf Coast Writers Organization exists to support the goals and objectives of the individual: writers, we call ourselves. Yet, we know that we need each other for the unique support one writer can provide another writer. And, we know the false promise of too much, and the agonizing disappointment of too little. But we stay the course, knowing, intimately, that surrender encourages doubt, and even, self-loathing.

I suppose we could proceed to quote the icons of our craft, eulogize the pace setters who have hoist their banners for all to hail; instead we simply humble ourselves in the activities of the mundane where our flags fly in the democratizing wind of breathing together. As one of America's original icons (I intended not to quote icons) said, "We shall all hang together, or we shall all hang separately."

* * * *

The work of our Executive Committee on behalf of the GCWA has steamed us along a course of exploration and accomplishment while maintaining a strong base of support from the engine room. Education, information, theory and practice, and tributes to artistic and monetary achievements all staples of the GCWA diet.

To the Executive Committee members departing, (please stand) Judy Loose, Denise Holbrook, we acknowledge and celebrate your leadership and contributions. For the future board members who must measure their performance by the standards you set, Good Luck! (APPLAUSE)

Personal Statements by Executive Committee members follow: Denise, Cyndi, Don, Irene, Barbara, Alice, Judy.

Brief reports from each of the GCWA Executive Committee members follow. I encourage you to take a copy of this report as you depart for the day. There will also be copies of the report posted on our website: www.gulfcoastwriters.org

MEMBERSHIP REPORT: Irene Smith

See attached chart showing statistics—

PUBLICITY and PR: Barbara Burnett

Press releases and announcements have been sent to area newspapers and magazines on deadlines appropriate for publication. GCWA has been promoted in print and by word of mouth in timely fashion, and dates, times and locations of meetings and events critical to GCWA involvement have been publicized throughout membership circles and the community at large.

WEBSITE: Judy Loose

The GCWA website has continued to track events, contests, opportunities, announcements and resources (books, links, etc.) related to writing. We also publish members' biographies, published books and "good news." Members' blogs and websites have been added on their own page, and PayPal has also been added to facilitate member dues payments.

Many compliments regarding the website's wealth of information and writer resources have been received from the membership and the community.

AD HOC COMMITTEES:

The Facilities Search Committee has explored a number of potential future sites for GCWA residence without finding a satisfactory replacement for Zion Lutheran Church. The committee's quest will continue during the coming year.

Writing Critique Group Committee: Bob McCarthy has been instrumental in leading the efforts to develop writing critique group opportunities for GCWA members. His knowledge of resources and people, plus his clarity of vision and practice is yielding positive results. This new and necessary initiative promises to expand the reach and relativity of the GCWA as a service organization for writers.

2014 - 2015 Program Report: Denise Holbrook

This year, with the approval of the executive committee, I instituted formal surveys of the members with the goal of discovering their needs and desires.

The major need was to help the membership understand and embrace the digital side of publishing (e-books, author platforms, marketing through social media, etc.). Presenters included: Rodney Smith, CEO, Little Pond Publishing, *Self-publishing as a step towards building a platform to attract an agent*; Mary Patton, CTC Foundation, Digital Book Division, *Turning your hardcopy into a digital book*; and Anne Dalton, Esq., who provided guidelines on what we could and couldn't use of the available material online, *Defamation, Invasion of Privacy, Right of Publicity and other tort legal issues for writers*.

There is still much to cover, and while the workshop format is the logical format for addressing much of it, some topics could be offered at the monthly general meeting. The majority of suggestions called for the inclusion of instruction and practice in our general meeting format, and many of the year's meetings responded accordingly.

April: Jim Gustafson led a group of GCWA poets, raised awareness and appreciation for poetry, and showed all writers how practicing the economy of words could tighten their work.

July: Jeremy Pilarski (FSW English Faculty) directed our attention to common errors in writing.

September: Thomas Hayden, Senior Editor, Fort Myers News Press, put members through a writing exercise intended to differentiate writing style for newspapers, as opposed to editorial forms.

October: Richard Georgian led a session on Critique Groups, followed by a brief practice period.

November: Artis Henderson, author of *Unremarried Widow*, used her experiences to help members create a successful memoir.

January: humorist and storyteller, Kim Weitkamp, spoke on the science of storytelling

February: FSW Professor Marty Ambrose, *The changing world of publishing: traditional, indie and hybrid*.

The survey results further included requests for additional instruction on the elements of writing; another session on critique groups that provide more time for reviewing and editing; and practices of effective marketing. Accordingly, presenters have been confirmed for the first months of the 2015-2016 programming year to address poetry (April) and Point of View/Voice (May).

Two popular speakers have agreed to return during the summer: Rik Feeney will present a how-to session on e-publishing (June) and FSW Professor Jeremy Pilarski has been invited to cover

more common writing errors (July). I recommend that another session on critique groups be scheduled for August.

It has been a privilege to serve as the Programming Chair for the past two years. I humbly thank the membership for the opportunity, and I wish my successor an equally wonderful experience.

Sincerely,

Denise Holbrook

Special Projects Year End Report *by Alice Oldford*

It has been a busy year for special Projects.

In September we joined the committee of the Southwest Florida Reading Festival accepting responsibility for the storytelling tent. The Executive Board believes our involvement in this community event is important for growth and development in our organization. In addition, to manning the storytelling tent, we have purchased a table to disseminate our flyers and chat with prospective members. As part of the committee, GCWA is eligible for partner promotion.

In October, we arranged for 8 tables to accommodate our children's authors at the Alliance Fall for the Arts festival. Attendees noted book sales were moderate. This is a very interactive venue, and authors who could offer activities posted the most success.

Also in October, we opened our annual writing contest for submissions. This year we added a fourth category, children's stories. When we closed entries on December 31, we had received 72 submissions – 20 in fiction, 13 in non-fiction, 30 in poetry and 9 in children's.

Early in November we tried a new venue for book sales, Buckler Craft Fair held at Lee Civic Center. We purchased 5 table spaces and divided the time incrementally so that 16 of our members were able to take advantage of this opportunity for sales. Sales were generally good with some authors enjoying a great deal of success.

In January we sponsored a digital workshop offering our members hands on instruction to begin building an author's platform on the internet. We rented a computer lab at Florida Southwestern College, and invited Joe Jacobson to develop and facilitate the class. There were 15 attendees who walked away with basic websites and counsel to begin a blog. This was an intense, results-oriented training. The future plan is to offer instruction on utilizing the social media.

One of the most important things we've learned this year is that our members need to upgrade their writing skills. This became very apparent to our judges for the writing contest as they considered each submission. We had been mulling offering a writer's conference in 2016, and the judges' findings confirmed the need. I am looking forward to forming a committee to tackle that project.

Don Cappelli

**Proposed Budget for Fiscal Period
April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015**

Estimated Expenses	Notes	Budget
Consultant Fees	\$175/mo. for 12 mo.	\$ (2,100.00)
Web Costs	Historical	\$ (300.00)
Facilities	\$120/mo. for 11 mo.	\$ (1,320.00)
Supplies	Historical	\$ (825.00)
Publicity	Historical	\$ (44.00)
Programs Speakers	Historical	\$ (1,375.00)
Spec. Projects & Writing Contest	Historical	\$ (1,500.00)
Memberships	Historical	\$ (150.00)
Insurance	Historical	\$ (390.22)
Professional Assoc.	Historical	\$ (120.00)
Capital like Computer and Programs	Historical	\$ (600.00)
	Total Deductions	\$ (8,724.22)
Estimated Income		
New Members	Based on 3 new members monthly @ \$40 ea	\$ 1,440.00
Renewals	Based on a 75% renewal rate	\$ 6,600.00
Contest Entry Fees	Historical	\$ 550.00
Guests	Based on two a month	\$ 110.00
Misc.	Historical	\$ 100.00
	Total	\$ 8,800.00
		\$ (8,724.22)
		\$ 8,800.00
	Budget	\$ 75.78



GULF COAST WRITERS ASSOCIATION

Website: <http://www.gulfwriters.org>

**Member Information Sheet
February 21, 2015 General Meeting Attendance
For March 24, 2015 Executive Board Meeting**

Members Attended	67
Guests Attended	16
Members Affiliated Groups	
New members	8
Total Attendance	83
Member total	238

March 28, 2015 Program of Events

10:00 am – Meeting called to order
 Announcements – President
 Officers Reports
 Welcome Visitors

Election of Corporate Board members – Richard Georgian presiding

Outgoing:	Candidates:
Carol Drummond	Judy Loose
Richard Georgian	Larry Stiles
Pat Janda	Pat Janda

Financial Report – Don Cappelli – 2015-2016 budget resolution. Open for discussion by members.

Proposed Budget for Fiscal Period April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016

Estimated Expenses	Notes	Budget
Web Consultant Fees	175/mo. for 12 mo.	\$2,100.00
Web Costs	Historical	\$200.00
Facilities	\$125/mo. for 11 mo.	\$1,375.00
Coffee & Snacks	\$40/mo. for 11 mo.	\$440.00
Supplies	Historical	\$975.00
Publicity	Historical	\$44.00
Programs	Historical	\$1,375.00
Spec. Projects & Writing Contest	Historical	\$1,500.00
Memberships	Historical	\$150.00
Donations & Grants	New	\$100.00
Insurance	Historical	\$427.00
Professional Assoc.	Historical	\$120.00
Capital	Computer & Programs	\$600.00
	Total	<u>(\$9,406.00)</u>
Estimated Income		
New Members	Three new members/mo.	\$1,440.00
Renewals	75% renewal rate	\$7,140.00
Contest Entry Fees	Historical	\$700.00
Donations	New	\$100.00
Returning guests	Two /mo.	\$110.00
Misc.	Historical	\$100.00
	Total	<u>\$9,590.00</u>
	Budget Surplus (Loss)	\$184.00

March 28, 2015 Program of Events

Continued

President's Annual Report

Membership – 238 as of 1 March
Financial – \$12,096.37 as of 1 March
Attendance – 835 total for meetings

Meetings/Speakers 2014-15:

April: Jim Gustafson, et al —The seasons of poetry
May: Anne Dalton, Esquire—Legal issues for writers
June: Rodney Smith—Self-publishing: building a platform
July: Jeremy Pilarski—Mechanics of Writing
August: Mary Patton—Turning hardcopy into a digital book
September: Thomas Hayden—Writing for Newspapers
October: Critique Groups Workshop
November: Artis Henderson—Writing a Memoir
January: Kim Weitkamp—The Science of Storytelling
February: Marty Ambrose—Business/Politics of Publishing
March: Annual Meeting and Contest Awards

Events 2014-15:

Alliance for the Arts	October 18, 2014
Buckler Craft Fair	November 1, 2014
GCWA Writing Contest deadline	December 31, 2014
Digital Workshop	January 31, 2015
Southwest Florida Reading Festival	March 21, 2015
Writing Contest Awards	March 28, 2015

Outgoing Executive Committee – Appreciation

President – Gary McLouth
 Secretary – Cyndi Anthony
 Treasurer – Don Cappelli
 Membership – Irene Smith
 Programming – Denise Holbrook
 Publicity – Barbara Burnett
 Special Projects – Alice Oldford
 Webmaster – Judy Loose

March 28, 2015 Program of Events

Continued

Networking break Call to Order

Outgoing Executive Committee – Appreciation

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Election of new Executive Committee

Nominating Committee: Richard Georgian, Pat Janda, Martha Jeffers, and Gary McLouth will present the slate of candidates.

New Executive Committee candidates:

President – Gary McLouth
Secretary – Cyndi Anthony
Treasurer – Don Cappelli
Membership – Irene Smith
Programming – Michael Neal
Publicity – Barbara Burnett
Special Projects – Alice Oldford
Webmaster – Jennifer FitzGerald

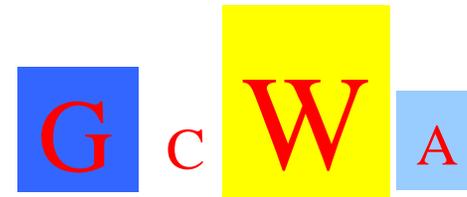
Nominations from the floor (any member in good standing may be nominated & will be asked if they would serve).

Members elect the Executive Committee for the 21th season of GCWA

Break Networking

Next GCWA meeting April 18, 2015 at Zion Lutheran Church
National Poetry Month – Jim Gustafson and Larry Stiles.

WELCOME TO



Gulf Coast Writers Association, Inc

A Florida Non-Profit 501(c)(3)

2015 Annual Election Meeting

Awards Ceremony & Networking

WWW.GULFWRITERS.ORG