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A Publication of the Seacoast Writers Association

THE Seacoast Writer



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SPRING CONFERENCE MEMORIES

The weather outside might have been a tad grey, but inside the McConnell Center the atmosphere was warm and inviting. The SWA Spring Conference reunited old friends and created new friendships among fellow writers.

Keynote speaker **Rebecca Rule** kept the audience laughing with her humorous anecdotes. She advised us to find the right words and place them on the page in a form that is meaningful. Use words that the reader can take to heart. Good writing should have order and rhythm.

AND THE WINNERS ARE . . . (Drum roll, please!)

We thank our contest judges for a job well done. They had the daunting task of selecting the winners from the pool of excellent entries. And thank you to Pam Gjetnum, the SWA contest director, for her usual outstanding job of keeping track of all the submissions, both signed and unsigned copies, and making sure they all got to the right judges and ended up in the right places. Congratulations to the following:

Fiction

1st Place: "Ruby Finnegan" by **Michelle Valdez**, Concord, NH.

2nd Place: "January Girl and the Three Gifts" by **Maren Tirabassi**, Portsmouth, NH.

3rd Place: "Dusty Road to Chimayo" by **Jonathan Bohm**, Hampton Falls, NH.

Honorable Mention: "Deadly Justice" by **Patricia Relgstad**, Manchester, NH.

Fiction Judge, **Carla Gericke, JD, MFA**, is the program director of the New Hampshire Writer's Project. Her work has appeared in anthologies, literary journals, and online. Her writing has been honored by awards and scholarships from various organizations including *A Room of Her Own Foundation*. She teaches writing workshops and has served as a judge of several writing contests. Here's what Carla had to say:

"In general, I was looking for stories that successfully executed the elements of short story writing together with something new or surprising. I looked for stories that gripped me from the start, had a strong voice, a sense of setting, and some pathos or epiphany at the end. Many entries were well executed, making the selection of winners difficult. In the end I chose stories that stayed with me, that lingered in my mind and made me look at the world in a slightly different way."

Essay

1st Place: "West of Independence" by **Matthew Deane**, Newmarket, NH.

2nd Place: "The Seventh Berry" by **Henry Spence**, Effingham, NH.

3rd Place: "Judge Not" by **Janet Knowles**, North Hampton, NH.

Honorable Mention: "Mystery Tour" by **Roland Goodbody**, Portsmouth, NH.

Essay Judge, **Beverly Beckham** wrote columns and editorials for the *Boston Herald* for 19

years and currently writes a weekly Sunday column for the *Boston Globe* plus a monthly column for the website grandparents.com. She is the author of *A Gift of Time*, a collection of personal essays; *Back Then*, a memoir of childhood, and is a contributor to the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series. She is a frequent guest on radio and TV as well as a keynote speaker for organizations nationwide. She has been honored by Mothers Against Drunk Driving and by the Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress.

Beverly said she was looking for essays that had a definite beginning, middle and end. A personal essay should have emotional content, but not be cloying. She looks for authenticity of emotion. Sparseness is a virtue — every word should count.

Poetry

1st Place: “Back Then We Did Things Like That” by **Mary Spofford French**, Hopkinton, NH.

2nd Place: “The Lesson” by **Don Kimball**, Concord, NH.

3rd Place: “You First” by **Patricia Callan**, Dunedin, FL.

Honorable Mention: “My Mother’s Lipstick” by **Pamela Starr Nisetich**, Sudbury, MA.

Poetry Judge **Alfred Nicol’s** second collection of poems, *Elegy for Everyone*, published in June 2010 was chosen for the Anita Dorn Memorial Prize. His first book of poems, *Winter Light*, received the 2004 Richard Wilbur Award. Nicol edited *The Powwow River Anthology*. His poems have appeared in *Poetry*, *The New England Review*, *Dark Horse*, *First Things*, *Commonweal*, *Crisis*, *The Formalist*, *Light*, *The Hopkins Review* and others.

Alfred found the winning entries to have character, foreshadowing, plot, dénouement, and imagery. He enjoys the skillful use of meter, rhyme, persona and irony.

YOUR COMMENTS ON THE CONFERENCE

Many participants commented on how fortunate we were to have **Rebecca Rule** for our keynote speaker. They considered her presence a “bonus” to the conference.

Those who attended **Lara Bricker’s** *Writing True* workshop said that she was a “wonderful presenter” who “engaged with the audience.” Some said that the workshop was the best they’d ever attended.

The Gallants’ workshop, *Sweating the Small Stuff*, was a “good mix of listening and writing.” Those attending this workshop said it was “a great event with the two presenters playing off one another.” It was “informative, practical fun.”

“Very good,” “excellent” were some of the comments heard after **George Geer’s** *How to Get Published* workshop. Workshop members found George to be entertaining and informative.

James Kelly’s *Plotting the Dark Art* workshop garnered much enthusiasm. One attendee said, “I gained insight into an area that I’ve had problems with in the past.” Another said, “James Kelly exhibits a passion for writing that has motivated me to work harder.”

Judging from participants’ comments, our conference workshops scored high marks.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW

*The Seacoast Writers Fall Conference is scheduled for Saturday, October 22, at the McConnell Center in Dover, NH.

**Currents VII*, the journal of prizewinning SWA contest entries will be coming soon.

*Our fall newsletter will contain all the details on both of these exciting events.

A THANK-YOU

Former SWA Secretary Joan Castro and her family wish to thank all those who contributed to the purchase of a seat at the Music Hall, a gift from Seacoast Writers in honor of her late husband, Carlos Castro. Donations topped the \$1,000 mark. Excess funds collected and any later contributions received in his name will be used to support the presentation of filmed live performances from the Metropolitan Opera, London’s National Theater, and any other similar programs.

MEMBER NEWS

Congratulations to **John-Michael Albert** who was recently named Portsmouth's Poet Laureate. Well-known to Poetry Hoot participants and SWA conference attendees, Mike's talent, humor and boundless energy make him an excellent choice for the position.

Nancy Donovan's children's picture book *Oscar, the Herring Gull* will be published by PublishingWorks early this summer. Nancy says the book is suitable for ages 4-8. The book includes a lot of wonderful information on seagulls, much of which Nancy learned in her docent training and during a subsequent project at the Seacoast Science Center at Odiorne Point, Rye, NH. To obtain early copies of the book, contact Nancy at her email address (beachtreetheC@comcast.net).

We are very proud of Board member and *Currents* Editor, **Cornelia (Cornie) Provost**. She recently received her M.Ed. from New England College. Cornie hopes to become a Certified Reading Specialist. She'll be nurturing a new generation of readers! Thank you, and congratulations for a job well done!

SWA Social Media Editor **Tammi Truax** recently had an article published in *UNH Magazine* about her interpretation of the novel *Peyton Place* and the life of its author Grace Metalious. It can be found online at unhmagazine.unh.edu/w11/truax.html. Truax is a freelance writer who contributes regularly to the *Portsmouth Herald* and *Seacoast Scene* while juggling several book projects. She also blogs at aintiawriter.blogspot.com.

KATHY BOSS IS NEW CONFERENCE COORDINATOR

BY PAT PARNELL

Welcome **Kathy Boss** as the new Conference Coordinator for the Seacoast Writers Association. I am delighted to announce that a recent SWA Board of Directors meeting confirmed Kathy Boss to replace me as SWA Conference Coordinator. Kathy resigned last year after 2-1/2 years as Executive Director of the New Hampshire Writers Project in order to complete her training as a secondary school English teacher and to begin her career in that field. She will also continue working on her own writing as part of the area writing community. Her special writing interest is in the genre of essay and fiction. She has published two children's books.



Kathy was born in Australia and raised in Nova Scotia and New England. She now lives in Hampton with her sons. Before going with NHWP, Kathy worked in the nonprofit sector for educational organizations, theaters, and museums.

Kathy's experience with the NHWP will be invaluable as SWA Conference Coordinator; she has been running Writers' Day Conferences for over 250 people, much larger than SWA's usual 60 - 75. She has wide acquaintance with writers, publishers, and agents all over the area: potential workshop presenters, contest judges, and keynote speakers.

Although at age 87 I have slowed down somewhat, running out of energy more quickly than I used to, I have thoroughly enjoyed serving as your Conference Coordinator. I had done considerable planning for the October 22 Fall Conference before I learned that Kathy might be available. She and I will work closely together to give you a smooth transition. I know she will be delighted with the members of the Board of Directors, who are highly competent and self-motivated in fulfilling their conference responsibilities.

"Friend" Kathy on Facebook or contact her at kdboss@hotmail.com with any suggestions or questions.

PUBLISHER SEEKS MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSIONS

Off The Grid Press is seeking complete poetry manuscripts, typed, paginated, and 50 - 100 pages in length. Submissions deadline: August 31, 2011. The competition is open only to poets over 60 years of age. The judge is Carl Dennis. The winner will receive \$1000 and publication. For information about Off The Grid Press and guidelines for the contest, go to offthegridpress.net/submissions.

In Memoriam

Our dear friend and long-time SWA President Chuck Grosky passed away on May 31. Prior to his presidency, he served as SWA Secretary.

Born in Brooklyn, NY, Chuck retained a bit of his Brooklyn accent even though he moved northward, graduating from Haverhill High School and Boston University. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1966 to 1970. He was the former Vice-President of Human Resources at Northeast Credit Union, a job which suited him well. Chuck possessed an ever-cheerful spirit and great kindness. Even in his long battle with lung cancer, he remained of good cheer. His enthusiasm for life could light up the darkest day.

Those who were fortunate enough to have been in Chuck's writing group at the Portsmouth Public Library recall his gentle mentoring skills and his own superb writing style. He was never too concerned about being published himself; the writing was enough fulfillment for him. Even so, one of his short stories aired on a local radio station.

For all of us who knew Chuck, his loss will leave a huge empty space in our hearts. He leaves his beloved wife, Susan, their three children, grandchildren, and many close relatives and friends. At his request, donations may be made in his memory to the Help the Helpless (helpthehelpless.org), a charity for disabled children of India.



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**Writing Conference Winners
on pages 1 and 2.**

Watch for Currents VII - Coming Soon

**Mark your Calendars
Fall Conference
Oct. 22nd**

