



WRITING CURRENTS

A newsletter from the Peace River Center for Writers at Edison State College

The Language Keeps a-Changin’

-By Joyce Schenk

In my early writing days, I felt confident in my grasp of the language. In fact, I stupidly thought English tended to be rather stable. Changes, I had decided, came slowly, allowing us to easily absorb any new words into our personal vocabularies. I recall having a discussion on the subject with a longtime English teacher. His reaction was immediate and unexpected. "You are so wrong!" he said with conviction. "The English language is always in flux, reflecting the needs and interests of society." Today, certainly older and, I hope, a bit wiser, I realize my teacher friend was right. The creativity of our culture is constantly evident in the words we use every day. Here's an example I recently read about. A worker was told her job was being phased out. Rather than saying she had been fired, management sent her this message: "Your function has been outsourced due to our recent restructuring." Unfortunately, a pink slip, by any other name, is still a pink slip.

One of the most rapidly changing portion of today's vocabulary deals with the constant evolution of technology. In the world of computers, new words crop up almost daily. Only a few years ago, the following sentence would have sounded like some obscure code: "The google search I did on his name led me to his blog." Now, for those not current with computerese, the gist of the statement is that the writer went on-line to look for a subject using the search engine Google. The information he uncovered took him to the Web log kept by the person he was gathering information on. Another example of our changing language is the phrase coined by American journalists during the war in the former country of Yugoslavia. The term "ethnic cleansing" sounded more like a laundry operation than the slaughter of thousands of civilians.

British essayist George Orwell anticipated such verbal twisting of reality when he said, "Political speech and writing are largely the defense of the indefensible." Other recent entrants into the language deal with lighter subjects. For instance, today's Realtors and home decorators often speak of a home's "bling," that undefinable something making one property stand out above its neighbors. Gossip columnists, too, have been coining their own additions to the language. Now that wealthy women are often seen dating younger men, the female version of "bibmo" has been gender corrected to "himbo." And the young daughters from rich families who are absorbed in shopping and partying are now referred to as "heirheads." For those of us in the writing field, it's a constant struggle to stay current with what's happening in the language. Though English continues to change, our goal is, as it has always been, to choose the exactly right word to convey our meaning to our readers.

One of my favorite writers, Mark Twain, had a timeless saying for this never-ending search for perfect expression. He said, "The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug."

“If any man wish to write in a clear style let him be first clear in his thoughts; and if any would write in a noble style, let him first possess a noble soul.”

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

June Workshops

All workshops are held at Edison State College's Charlotte Campus, 26300 Airport Rd., Punta Gorda, FL. Please arrive 15 minutes early to facilitate registration.

Painting with Words

Saturday, June 13

10 to noon

This workshop will be presented by Steve Reilly, writer for the *Charlotte SUN*. The use of imagery in poetry, fiction and non-fiction prose can bring character and life to writing. The workshop will include examples where authors created visual imagery in their writing and how that helped to lend a sense of reality and focus into their work.

Marketing 101: How to Sell What You Write

Saturday, June 20

10 to Noon

Join veteran freelancer Joyce Schenk to brush up on the basics in this hands-on workshop covering marketing concepts such as selecting a target publication, obtaining writer's guidelines and conducting a market analysis. Other topics to be discussed will include what editors are looking for, how to develop a query letter and how to avoid rejection. Participants are asked to bring two magazines familiar to them to begin their personal market study.

Wonderful WORD

Thursday, June 25

3:00 to 5:00 pm

Would you like to learn more about Microsoft WORD, or just brush up on your WORD skills? Then this is the workshop for you! Join Dawn Thomas and learn how you can use tables, text boxes, formatting skills, and more to make your documents look like they were created by an expert.

Reminder

The next board meeting for the Peace River Center for Writers at Edison State College will be on June 9th at 4:00 pm in room SA116 on the Charlotte Campus of Edison State College. All members are encouraged to attend board meetings and invited to share interests, concerns and suggestions. Participation is an important part of our program.

Something to Think About...

English was invented by people, not computers, and it reflects the creativity of the human race, which, of course, is not a race at all. That is why, when the stars are out, they are visible, but when the lights are out, they are invisible. Why is it that writers write but fingers don't fing, grocers don't groce and hammers don't ham? If the plural of tooth is teeth, why isn't the plural of booth, beeth? One goose, 2 geese. So one moose, 2 meese? One index, 2 indices? Doesn't it seem crazy that you can make amends but not one amend? If you have a bunch of odds and ends and get rid of all but one of them, what do you call it? In what other language do people recite at a play and play at a recital? Ship by truck and send cargo by ship? Have noses that run and feet that smell?

JUNE 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 <i>Thomas Hardy</i> born 1840	3	4	5	6
7	8 Open Mic 6:30 pm	9 Board Meeting 4:00 pm	10	11	12	13 Kids Stuff **Painting with Words
14 <i>Harriet Beecher Stow</i> Born 1811	15	16 Tiny Tea 1:00 to 3:00 pm	17	18	19	20 Critique Circle **Marketing 101
21	22	23	24 <i>Ambrose Bierce</i> Born 1842	25 **Wonderful WORD	26 <i>Pearl S. Buck</i> Born 1892	27
28	29	30	**Workshops 			

June Activities

KIDS STUFF if you have an interest in writing children's literature, PRCW@ESC has the group for you! Join fellow members on the second Saturday of each month to swap ideas and receive feedback about your writing. This month Kids Stuff will meet on June 13 from 10 to noon at Edison State College.

TINY TEA will be on June 16 from 1 to 3 pm. Bring your work and some snacks to share and join fellow PRCW members for some great feedback and idea swapping. Tiny Tea is for Center members and their guests.

OPEN MIC Read or recite poems, essays, short stories, or anything you have written. Singer-songwriters are invited to perform original works. Listeners are welcome too! The next Open Mic is Monday, June 8, 6:30 to 8:30 pm at Center Stage in Fishermen's Village. Open Mic is free and open to the public.

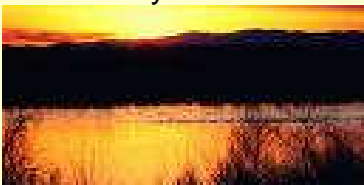
CRITIQUE CIRCLE Shirley George facilitates at a free Critique Circle for Center members. This month the Circle will meet on June 20, from 10 to noon at Edison State College. This is a great chance to get some feedback on your work. To register call the Center at 637-3514 or email prcw@edison.edu.

I'M NOT IN THE MIDWEST ANYMORE

I begin to notice...
there is life on the small lake
as gators splash,
ducks land,
turtle heads bob
and Cormorants fish.

I hear cries from migrated Killdeer,
old friends from the north.
I forget what season it is.
The temperature rises to 74 degrees
as a fresh winter sun begins morning heat
burning fog off still water.

I do not miss cold.
My bones no longer ache.
-By Patricia Cable Deeder



NAMING THINGS

Grasping the illusion of the sound of words
Printing them in persistent scribbles
On sheets of paper without lines
Holding them up, naming things

The memory of imaginary words
Turns a phrase to become a clause
Tailored by persistence and habit
To name a thought

Thoughts derived from memory
Of a forgotten time banished
By an expanding universe
And motion observed.

-By Douglas Houck



April Tiny Tea

Betty Dodds opened up our celebration of National Poetry Month at the April Tiny Tea, reading cherished poems written by her father. In his later years he wrote a humorous, *Hooked by a Trout*, the fish he lost, a WWII poem written on old faded parchment and a delightful rhyme about *his girl*. Betty's true story, a book in progress, addressed a personal disaster that dealt with fire and flood.

King Arthur's Castle came to life as **Paul Holmes** slid into appropriate voice reading from his children's book written for his grandson with references to the great table, catapults and magic as his usual play on words humored and entertained. Paul's *Peace River Writer* poem and poems relating to school and his children's books, inspired. His colorful hardcover book offered new ideas for publishing a book with photos recording family trips.

Arlene Kincaid's automobile poems, *Daddy-O*, about purchasing an auto and a car on fire gave a humorous look at what could have turned serious, followed by another body part, *Toe*. A poetic celestial reply, *Packing a Suitcase for Heaven*, offered an unusual perspective. A poem for after Charley triggered memories of blue tarps. An ode to the semiannual celebration of nasty irritation, Arlene's poem, *Love Bugs Season*, caused everyone to chuckle and cringe.

Patricia Cable Deeder shared recently created poetry, *Pause* and her latest sensual, *M&M*. Also, *Cades Cove, Tennessee*, a poem with family and historical connections to an outdoor living museum. Patricia poked fun at lost symbols with the poem, *En Dash Disappointment* and faced *Fear* followed by an *Unwanted Attachment*. To celebrate a few favorite poets, Patricia read, *When You Come*, by Maya Angelou and *Frequently the Woods are Pink*, by Emily Dickinson.

Favorite topics for the afternoon gathering consisted of meeting with retired educators, the process of writing poetry, more of Paul's family Paris trip, family showing up for visits, ties to Tennessee and helpful critiquing.

Tiny Tea is held the third Tuesday of each month. Please bring a snack to share, samples of your poetry, a work in progress, a fresh-off-the-press or wild words you just want to have fun with. Read a few pages of your story, in the throes of creation, leaving everyone wanting more. Members, feel free to bring a friend. Reserving a place is not necessary...just show up. No charge.

-By Patricia Cable Deeder

MYTHOLOGICAL ALLUSIONS

Achilles heel: In Greek mythology, the warrior Achilles was made invulnerable by being dipped into the River Styx. Only his heel—the place he was held by when being dipped—was left unprotected, which led to his downfall when it was struck by an arrow. An Achilles heel refers to a person's vulnerability or fatal flaw. *He was a shrewd business man and investor, but his Achilles heel was gambling.*

Gordian knot: According to Greek legend, King Gordius tied a wagon to a column with an extremely complex and intricate knot, which many tried and failed to undo. An oracle declared that whoever could un-tie the knot would rule the world. With a single stroke of his sword, Alexander the Great cut the knot in two, and went on to rule Asia. A Gordian knot is an intractable problem, and to cut the Gordian knot is to resolve a difficult problem with swift and bold action. *The president believed he could cut through the Gordian knot of growing civil unrest by sending in the National Guard with tear gas.*

“We write to taste life twice, in the moment and in retrospection.” ~ Anais Nin

The Dimensions of Love

The height must surely be
The spiritual flight to the Holy Other,
The width, the filial sight and sound
Of others like me,
The depth, the sexual probing
Of mysterious oneness.

The fourth dimension of time
Fully present, significantly past
And eternally future.

The fifth dimension
Yet to be known
Some kind of new being
Some kind of final love-communion:
A quantum physics
Realized to the power of love.
String theory ties us all together
Like so many priceless pearls.

-By Diane Strauser Alvarez

SUNSET, 8 PM

my watercolors have dried
judy's pastels are put away
the sun is setting
at babcock-webb

the sleeping alligator
rises and moves slowly
submerging itself
in the shallows

a pair of great blue herons
flap wings slowly
perhaps in a
mating ritual

two sand hill cranes
face each other like
college professors
waiting for their students

the sun slips behind
the row of trees
and the almost-full moon rises
over a circle of peach clouds

it is a cool, quiet time
we had thought about walking
in the mosaic mud but we head home
with paints and with clean feet
-By Nancy Seale Osborn

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A Request

Marie Merchant, the Let's Go Editor and Weekly Sections Coordinator of the SUN, has requested that any members of the Peace River Center for Writers at Edison State College interested in writing a feature article for the SUN contact her at: mmerchant@sun-herald.com.

When Gators Walk

The gators are walking. I've seen the saurian's' tracks on our sandy dirt road, long sinuous curves of their broad tails, imprints of their splayed feet, and once, the rectangular outlines of the scales of the belly skin of one monster who rested on his journey down the road. We followed one in the car the other day. Tail raised, body lifted on stubby legs, hightailing it for parts unknown. He galloped ahead of us for a quarter mile, then tiring of the pace set by the metal monster behind him, took a right turn into the palmettos.

Why are the gators on the move? Watch the clouds of dust their feet stir up in the dry baked sand. Notice the withered leaves of even the native plants, the grass blades withered and red. They're in search of water in this arid season. Moving from shallow pond to river, where a few deep cool holes remain. They'll return by night to the pond as the water lowers, to reap the feast that shimmers in the muddy flats. But in the heat of the day, they'll retreat to the river again, linger in the cool depths.

We watch our parched landscapes wither and wilt. This is our dry season, but we've received less than a third of the rainfall we should have, on top of a three year drought, and a third of not much is indeed very little. All of South Florida is under water restrictions, but in North Florida, rivers run swollen from the deluges that soaked Georgia last month. We need to learn to be like the gators. Pack up and leave if you can't take the drought. Or, if you have the endurance, lie low and wait: the rains will be here in June and all will be green again.

-By Karen Smoke

Thank you to Our Renewing Members

*Dana Finnegan
William Mraz
Jane Varley*

Welcome to Our New Members

*Edward Callahan
Mary Dixon
Jasmine Mize
Katherine Murphy*

BACK HOME

I awoke to predawn glow
on crowded soybean fields
with glistening dew upon still leaves.
A rich green
tree line divide
welcomed...
sunrise.

-By Patricia Cable Deeder

Illustrated History of Charlotte County

The Peace River Center for Writers at Edison State College has signed a contract with the Historical Publishing Network to research and write an Illustrated History of Charlotte County. The book is being done with the Charlotte County Historical Society and will be out sometime next year.

The book will "kick off" the celebration and commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the first European land folks on the North American continent when Ponce de Leon visited Florida in 1513 and sailed into Charlotte Harbor.

-By Doug Houck

Thursday Morning

Small, black birds flew toward the electric pole;
flower petals fluttering with the rhythm of the wind.

claws tapped wire, like dominoes they fell,
wrapping around the plastic rope.

The breeze blew cool morning wind,
crisp against ice-covered car windows.

As if seeds scattered the ground,
the small, black petals dropped down to the grass,
like dead flies, straight, flat and quick,
their bodies stiff and cold.

As claws touch the morning mist,
blades of grass bowed beneath them.
one touch to the ground and the bird's bodies
shocked back into life,
scattering around, pecking at ice drops.

The mechanical beast still sleeps,
frozen by icy wind,
awaiting the sun to warm its plastic mirrors.

-By Kayla Cloonan



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A Daughters Visit

You came.
We smiled
We laughed
We sighed.
I love you.

You went.
We hugged.
We kissed.
We cried.
I love you.
-By Paul Holmes

Congratulations!

To: PRCW@ESC member Janice D'Errico has just had her first book published. *"My Insanity: Held Hostage by Depression's Grip"* is now on sale through amazon.com, barnesandnoble.com, and booksamillion.com (and, of course, publishamerica.com - the publisher). Since having her book published she has been in contact with the Dr. Phil show about a possible appearance, and is waiting to hear back from them.

To: PRCW@ESC Member Paul Holmes, who was honored at the May 13th Charlotte Harbor Visitors and Convention Bureau's Tourism Unity Luncheon with the presentation of the 2009 Eco-Tourism Award for his work as an environmental communicator. Paul received the award for his voluntary work promoting the Charlotte Harbor area as a leading Eco-Tourist area.

Way to go Jan and Paul keep up the good work and write on!



PRCW@ESC member Paul Holmes receiving the Eco-Tourism award

Mountain

I want to tell you something that's been said a thousand times
Something that I've never found the words to say myself
My mother never gave them to the man she calls her own
Fountains bubble dry, and the memories who linger
Oh, they jab us with their tiny twisted claws

My mother was an artist and she painted spirit eyes
Her own were so enchanted by the strokes she could not see
No person made a point to tell her beauty lived alone
And she believed in blind men
She told us our father never saw

The winds raged in the morning on the day her hand was held
Continuing to bluster on for thirty years or more
Now that I am older I know what her words have weighed
The stars look so much dimmer
Oh, the sun is not too far

My father was a married man since he was just a child
His adolescence proved to be a karmic state of mind
The years I spent resenting him are broken glass
And I now forgive him
Although through what I've learned, the pain is still so dark

What I've been trying to tell you is that mountains seem too large
We try to break them with our squinting eyes and trembling hands
Our ways are so familiar we don't try to turn around
And so we are left stranded on a pile of earth

If you are one who knows as I do what you cannot break
You can see through spirit eyes just like my mother made
Oh, can't you see my smile reflected on the mountain?
Though its base is wide, we can walk around
We can walk around

-By Rachael A. Robinson

FOREIGN WORDS AND PHRASES

Ad absurdum

(ad ab-sir'dum) [Lat.]: to the point of absurdity. "He tediously repeated his argument *ad absurdum*."

Ad infinitum

(ad in-fun-eye'tum) [Lat.]: to infinity. "The lecture seemed to drone on *ad infinitum*."

Ad nauseam

(ad noz'ee-um) [Lat.]: to a sickening degree. "The politician uttered one platitude after another *ad nauseam*."

Aficionado

(uh-fish'ya-nah'doh) [Span.]: an ardent devotee. "I was surprised at what a baseball *aficionado* she had become."

Angst

(angkst) [Ger.]: dread and anxiety. "Sylvia's teenage *angst* was nothing compared to the parental *angst* experienced by the two individuals whose duty it was to raise her."

The Ten Best English-Language Novels Of the Twentieth Century

The Board of the Modern Library, a division of Random House, published its selections in July 1998.

1. *Ulysses*, James Joyce (1922)
2. *The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald (1925)
3. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, James Joyce (1916)
4. *Lolita*, Vladimir Nabokov (1958)
5. *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley (1932)
6. *The Sound and the Fury*, William Faulkner (1929)
7. *Catch-22*, Joseph Heller (1961)
8. *Darkness at Noon*, Arthur Koestler (1941)
9. *Sons and Lovers*, D. H. Lawrence (1913)
10. *The Grapes of Wrath*, John Steinbeck (1939)

Design

Our poems have already been created...

We just slide words on a page.

-By Patricia Cable Deeder



Bio of the Month-Kate Chopin

Kate Chopin-1851–1904 was an American author born in St. Louis of Creole-Irish descent. In 1870 Chopin married a Louisiana businessman and lived with him in Natchitoches parish and New Orleans. In these places she acquired an intimate knowledge of Creole and Cajun life, which she was to draw upon for many of her stories. After her husband's death in 1883, she returned with their six children to St. Louis and there began to write. Two collections of tales, *Bayou Folk* (1894) and *A Night in Acadie* (1897), earned her a reputation as a local colorist, but her novel *The Awakening* (1899) caused a storm of criticism because of its treatment of feminine sexuality. In depicting objectively a woman's confused groping toward self-understanding and self-acceptance, Chopin seemed to threaten the mores of her time although she did not explicitly attack them. Largely ignored for the next 60 years, her work is now praised for its literary merit as well as for its remarkable independence of mind and feeling.

Kisses and a Seven Year Old Boy

From a peck on the cheek, to a hug that threatens to break you're back,
Kisses come in many shapes and sizes.
Everyone wants to kiss you, but you'd rather they didn't, at least most of them.
Always welcome, a kiss from an affectionate puppy,
With whiskers that tickle,
Muscles that ripple,
And a wagging tail that says, "Come out to play."

A kiss from an Aunty, is a special kiss,
It's like a kiss on loan from your mother, an insurance policy.
It says, "When your mothers not there, I will be,
Whatever you need, whenever you need it, just ask, that's what Aunties are for."

A kiss from a Grandma is like being smothered in love,
It's softness, it's apple pie, it's Christmas and your birthday all rolled into one.
No one is allowed to kiss a boy like his grandma,
Until his first girlfriend.
A kiss from Grandad is one of those manly affairs,
But you feel in the strength of his hug, that your Grandfather really cares.

To a young boy a father's kiss is special,
It's full of love and reassurance,
It tells him that what he just did was correct,
And that his father is very proud of him.

Last thing each night before he goes to sleep,
First thing in the morning and all through the day.
"There, there - don't cry- it'll be OK, let me kiss it better,"
A kiss from your Mother is still the best one of all.

-By Paul Holmes

**"I have tried simply to write the best I can. Sometimes I have good luck and write better than I can."
Ernest Hemingway**

Print this Page to Play the U.S. Authors Word Search

T R E G N I L A S F A I T S H I S A
F E W F T S O R F N A M T I H W I N
U J E H A R E P O O C E H R I N V S
E A N R A U U H A W T H O R N E I H
M M E T T R L M I O N W W O H W T E
N E G N E S T K B E N T E N E R D L
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E M E R W F N G E N C L L I E N O Y

Albee

Barlow

Bellow

Bradstreet

Bukowski

Cooper

Dickinson

Dos Passos

Dreiser

Eliot

Emerson

Fante

Farrell

Faulkner

Fitzgerald

Freneau

Frost

Hawthorne

Hemingway

Howells

James

Lewis

Melville

Miller

Norris

O'Neill

Poe

Pound

Salinger

Stevens

Taylor

Thoreau

Trumbull

Twain

Wharton

Whitman

Wigglesworth

Wilder

Williams