

 Chattanooga
Writers' Guild

News & Updates

Greetings, fellow writers! During my semester of student teaching, I had several students who caused me more than a small amount of stress. There was Heather, who absolutely hated everything about me and would never do anything I asked her to do. John, who would deliberately get into arguments with other students so he could be sent out of the room to work by himself. Lila, who was brilliant, but didn't want to draw attention to herself so she did only mediocre work. James, who sometimes went hunting with his dad before school and one day accidentally brought his skinning knife to class. And Greg, who both played a large role in my decision to not teach, and also became one of my favorite students.

This was back in 2006, and Greg had recently moved to our small Texas town from New Orleans, after Katrina had wiped away his whole life. His school had been destroyed, along with his school records. We were only just beginning to understand that Greg had been receiving special education services, but we weren't sure why. Greg was 15 and still in the 9th grade. Greg liked to pat me on the head as he entered the classroom.

One day after I went to go check on John, who was finishing a worksheet by himself in the hallway after snapping one of his classmate's pencils in half, I turned around to find Greg had locked me out of the classroom. It was my last class of the day, and after the kids left, I called my dad and cried, "I don't think I want to be a teacher after all." I had four more weeks of student teaching left before graduation, and no plans for what else I could possibly be. But I knew I didn't want *this*.

That week, we finished up *Romeo and Juliet* and on Monday I handed out copies of our new reading unit, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. When I gave the book to Greg, something happened. As I recall the memory now, I see it as though Greg swallowed a light bulb. His mouth dropped open to a huge "O", and his face *lit up*. "I know this book!" he exclaimed. "We read it at my old school!"

And just like that, the kid who used to spend the class period wadding up worksheets and throwing them across the room became the kid asking if he could be the first student chosen to read aloud. When we had discussions, Greg always had an opinion or a contribution, an explanation. He only became upset if we *didn't* read or discuss the book that day.

I've never regretted not using my teaching degree, but I do wonder about all the Gregs I never got to teach. I hope that Greg from New Orleans is doing ok. And James, and Lila, and John.

Not so much Heather, though.

I'm Kate Landers and I bake chocolate word pies with whipped verbs on top. I also answer the emails sent to newsletter@chattanoogawritersguild.org.

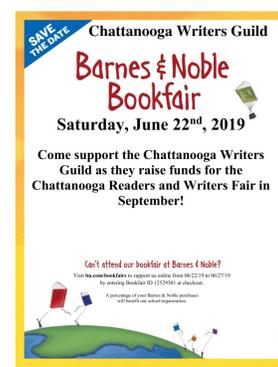
The CWG wishes to thank **Deborah Levine** for her terrific program last night: The Liberator Series: Art of the Historical Memoir.



Fundraiser for the Chattanooga Readers and Writers Fair

On **June 22** when customers at Barnes and Noble (in Hamilton Place mall) refer to CWG, a portion of sales will be donated to our organization to support the [Chattanooga Readers and Writers Fair](#). Come listen to

authors Susan Spurgeon, Janie Watts Spataro, KB Ballentine, MJ Kobernus, Cynthia Robinson Young, and Mark Anderson read from their books between 2 and 4 p.m. Bring the kiddos for a children's reading at 11 a.m. Members may come as volunteer participants or as shoppers.



SAVE THE DATE

The Chattanooga Readers and Writers Fair is a celebration of all things literary, for and by the entire community. This year it will be held on Saturday, September 7 at the Downtown Library. There will be authors, vendors, food, games, prizes, and children's activities. More details coming soon!

TODAY is the LAST DAY for the CWG Spring Writing Contest. Send us your fiction, non-fiction, and poetry! Prizes include cash and publication in our anthology. Details at chattanoogawritersguild.org. Hurry up and push that SEND button!

Need help thinking of something to write about?

Quick! Write a poem or short story based on one of the pictures below:



Word to Know: **Temerity**, n.

Fearless daring

He was not a viable candidate, because he lacked the *temerity* needed for the leadership position.

Mad Blab

How to play: Say the following nonsensical sentences aloud and try to guess the name of the famous literary work you're saying. Answers at the bottom.

**Bridge jet Joan says tire he
Thou sun main ghost treat
Bro sack neigh shun**

Member Spotlight with Carol White

What was your first job? Krystal's, age 15. Our manager's motto was, "If you have time to lean, you have time to clean."

What does your writing area look like? Right now, it's our screen-in porch. I take my laptop down there and enjoy the spring breezes (and pollen).

What object in your life have you had the longest and why do you hang on to it? A black cat stuffed animal, given to me by my parents when I was born.

Who is your favorite character from a novel? Scarlett O'Hara. Complex, flawed, aggravating, a survivor.

What is your biggest time-waster? MSNBC

Tell us about your muse or source of motivation. My source of inspiration is my dog, Grendel (now deceased). Grendel is a brindle Mountain Cur who is the first person narrator of the murder mystery I'm writing. Grendel is a bit of a curmudgeon, but is literate with a 19th century voice and has overdeveloped dew claws which allow him to use a mouse and keyboard.

Where is your favorite place to go in Chattanooga? Chattanooga has so many amazing places, but I would have to say Missionary Ridge. Missionary Ridge is Grendel's home and is where my murder mystery is set. Missionary Ridge has everything: location, views, cool homes, history, and cannons! And for the purposes of my novel, eccentric neighbors. :)

Assuming necessities will be provided, what 3 things would you take to a Martian colony? My laptop is a necessity, right? So other than that, my kindle, loaded with books. Olives. My current dog, Fafnir.

What is something you are looking forward to? Finishing Murder on Missionary Ridge: A Grendel the Dog Mystery. I'm working on the second draft.

Member to be featured next? Susan Spurgeon



Mad Blab answers: Bridget Jones's Diary; The House on Mango Street; Prozac Nation

STAY CONNECTED

