

The Georgia Authority

Monthly Memos from the Georgia Writers Association

Volume 1, Issue 1

February 2012

Upcoming GWA Events:

- Saturday, February 11: *Writing in the Twilight Zone: How to Get Rejected Every Time*, Jack McDevitt, award-winning science fiction author
- Saturday, March 10: *Building, Branding, and Bonding with Authentic Writing*, Lisa M. Russell, GWA Administrator FREE!
- Saturday, April 14: *The Art of Story*, Margaret South, screenwriter and producer.

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW A VIDEO PREVIEW OF UPCOMING EVENTS](#)

This Month's Memos:

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Seven Steps to Becoming an Expert

By Sandy Weaver Carman

The world is looking for experts. Perhaps you know one. Perhaps it's you.

In just a generation, we've gone from daily newspapers and the evening news to Google news alerts, Facebook shares, and tweets as our primary sources for information. And we've begun looking at those who provide the best information as experts. If they have a book, then their expert status is elevated even higher.

Are you an expert? Do you have a book? And do you provide your expertise and insights freely and often? Then you're part of the new wave of celebrities, though you may not feel like it just yet. Here are seven things you can implement quickly to be on your way to Celebrity Expert status:

1. Tweet often. Thirty tweets a day is not too many, so long as most of them aren't self-

serving. Dish up advice, tips, tricks, and news in your area of expertise, and once in a while, dish up news of your next webinar, book, or speaking engagement. Be heavy on content, light



How Do I Build A Platform?

on self-promotion.

2. Have a presence on Facebook besides your personal page. Interact as your business page (formerly "fan" page) and offer up the same sort of good info you offer on Twitter, but much less of it. Seven to ten

posts per day is plenty on Facebook.

3. Embrace Google+. Google+ results are integrated into Google search results, meaning that if you're on Google+, you have a better chance at landing on the first page of searches, where experts live.

4. Post videos showcasing your expertise on your YouTube channel. Don't have one? Create one and use it. Share the basic information in your area of expertise freely, and when people need to hire an expert, they'll remember how helpful you are.

5. On LinkedIn, update your status once a week and look for questions you can answer. Many people post questions to showcase their expertise—ignore those and look for people who really could use your help. When you've genuinely helped

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Second Saturday Sneak Peek: Jack McDevitt

by Karen Pickell

Want to be a successful, published author? Brunswick, Georgia, resident Jack McDevitt can tell you how to do it. A master of science fiction, McDevitt has written award winning short stories, novellas, and novels. His first novel, *The Hercules Text*, won the Philip K. Dick Special Award. In 2003, Omega received the John W.

Campbell Memorial Award for best science fiction novel, and in 2006, *Seeker* won the Nebula Award.

McDevitt's love for science fiction grew from watching *Flash Gordon* and *Buck Rogers* as a boy in Philadelphia. While in college, he won the LaSalle College Freshman Short Story Contest. Later that year, he discovered

David Copperfield and became discouraged, thinking his own writing could never measure up to that of Charles Dickens.

McDevitt gave up writing for more than twenty-five years, during which time he was literally a jack-of-all-trades, working as a naval officer, taxi driver, customs officer, motivational

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Every Writer Needs a Writer Friend

by Karen Pickell



How many times have you read over that story you wrote last month, trying to imagine how your words will sound to strange ears? How many weeks have you let that poem sit in a drawer, hoping that if you wait long enough, you'll be able to perceive it as an outsider rather than as the owner of its secrets?

I've been there, and it's a lonely place to be. We creative writers thrive on putting our ideas and imaginations down on paper. We dream of the day when our first novels will be gobbled up by hungry readers. Yet, when it comes to sharing our works-in-progress, we get defensive. We worry, perhaps rightly so, that the average reader—our spouses or friends—won't be able to see beyond the scaffolding of our early efforts to visualize the architectural masterpiece we're building with our words.

We need writer friends.

I can almost hear what you're thinking right now: *I can do this on my own.* It's true that writing is a solitary endeavor. We can learn the basics just by reading good books. We must practice daily on our own in

order to make any real progress. But how can we know when our work is ready to send out into the world? Feedback from other writers can be invaluable in learning how our stories will be received.

Even though I spent years of my life afraid to tell anyone I even wanted to write, I've discovered that sharing my work with others invested in the craft of writing is a necessary part of the process of learning to write well. When I take a story into a workshop—one that I've revised on my own over the course of several months and that I feel is close to being publishable—more often than not, my peers point out places where the story is hard to follow, where a character isn't believable, or where I've left out details necessary for a reader to enter a scene. And I had been ready to send it out!

The wonderful thing about talking with other writers about my work is that they understand how dear it is to me. They know about the long hours I've labored to get some semblance of my idea onto the page because they've been

there themselves. A writer friend can critique my work without crushing my self-confidence. Because my writer friends expect the same from me in return, I'm learning how to locate what works, as well as what doesn't, in a creative piece. It feels great to tell a kindred writer-soul how his words stuck with me for days, or to point out a possible solution to a problem another struggling writer like myself is having with her manuscript.

Bonds formed in critique groups can last a lifetime. You've been on the battlefield together; you'll be friends no matter where your lives lead. How wonderful it will be to share a published story's success with a writer friend who supported you in your fight to make your words into everything you wanted them to be.

And how proud you'll be knowing you also helped another writer succeed.

Karen Pickell is a MAPW student at Kennesaw State University and an assistant editor of *Flycatcher: A Journal of Native Imagination*.

Sandy Weaver Carman is the CEO of Voicework on Demand, Inc., an audio production company, and partners with people who want to take work they've already done and create a new revenue stream.

Becoming an Expert (continued from page 1)

them, they'll remember you when a larger issue needs to be handled.

6. Network with other experts. No, they are not your competition; they are your classroom, your sounding board, and your cheerleaders.

7. If you don't have a book, write one. Nothing says "expert" like a book with your name on the cover. If you don't know how to start, find a writing coach. If you have a book, be sure that it's available in

every way that someone would want to interact with your information: physical book, e-book, and audio book. Meet people where they are and your message will resonate that much more with them.

The last step is the most important. Remember, nothing says "expert" like a book with your name on the cover. And with people reading and listening to books on their phones and tablets, it's important to offer your book in as many

formats as possible. Don't miss a big part of your audience by skimping on this piece of expert advice.

Second Saturday (continued from page 1)

trainer, and English teacher. But he began to regret not pursuing a writing career. With encouragement from his wife, Maureen, he wrote "The Emerson Effect," which kicked off his literary career when it was published in *Twilight Zone Magazine* in 1981.

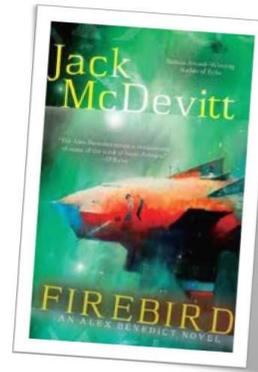
In the time since he turned his focus to writing, McDevitt has never written a story he hasn't published. His catalogue includes eighteen novels and four short story collections. According to McDevitt, "When people talk about good fiction, they are talking about the *ride*." Jack McDevitt knows how to take readers on a great ride.

Writing in the Twilight Zone: How to GET REJECTED every time

February 11, 2012 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM KSU Center

Jack McDevitt, science fiction writer begins a conversation about the more common blunders that signal editors a work is not to be taken seriously.

Georgia Writers
ASSOCIATION



2012 Second Saturday Speakers Series

Member News and Events

- Creating Compelling Characters, a unique writing workshop experience with award-winning author Susan Hubbard, will take place April 29 - May 4 at Lily Creek Lodge in Dahlonega. Fee includes workshop (limited to 10 participants), lodging, and all meals. www.lilycreeklodge.com/WriterRetreat.html (Submitted by **Carol Malcolm**)
- Metro Atlanta-based *Flycatcher: A Journal of Native Imagination* launched online in January of 2012. Through writing and visual art, *Flycatcher* strives to explore what it means—or what it might mean—to be native to this earth and its particular places. Issue I features work from Georgia authors such as Janisse Ray and Raymond Atkins, as well as an interview with Barbara Brown Taylor. To read the first issue or to consider submitting, please go to www.flycatcherjournal.org (Submitted by **Kathleen Brewin Lewis**)

Around Georgia - February 2012

- ◆ February 1, Vincent Carretta, *Phyllis Wheatley: Biography of a Genius in Bondage*, Decatur Library Auditorium, www.georgiacenterforthebook.org
- ◆ February 9, Novelist Padgett Powell & poet Ellen Bryant Voigt, Georgia State University, workshop.gsu.edu/events.php
- ◆ February 15-19, Savannah Book Festival, www.savannahbookfestival.org
- ◆ February 17-18, Carson McCullers' 95th Birthday Celebration, various locations in Columbus, www.mccullerscenter.org
- ◆ February 21, Deborah Scroggins, *Wanted Women: Faith, Lies, and the War on Terror*, Decatur Library Auditorium, www.georgiacenterforthebook.org
- ◆ February 24-26, Springmingle Conference, hosted by Southern Breeze Region of Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators, Marriott Atlanta Century Center, southernbreeze.net
- ◆ February 27, Peggielene Bartels, *King Peggy*, Jimmy Carter Library, www.georgiacenterforthebook.org

Get Writing!

Write about the
biggest lie you've
ever told.

What does "a
string of
laughter" make
you think of?

Prompts courtesy of
creativewritingprompts.com

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Submissions

Please send your member news and events to The Georgia Authority editor by the 20th of each month.

Please contact the editor for guidelines if you wish to contribute an article to The Georgia Authority.

The Georgia Authority

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About GWA

Georgia Writers Association is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization that works across the state to encourage and strengthen the proficiencies of writers in both the creative and the business aspects of the writing life. We do this through an array of speakers and programs at regular meetings. GWA sponsors workshops, conferences, seminars, contests, and other events. We encourage the formation of satellite groups, critique groups, and other writer resource groups. We encourage the funding of guest authors to various Georgia counties. Our online publications are an attempt to educate and inform the diverse literary community of Georgia. Accomplished Georgia writers are recognized through the Georgia Author of the Year Awards.

Become a member for discounts to workshops & conferences, exclusive online resources, and more!

Join today at www.georgiawriters.org

Sit a Spell with Gary Parkes

By Leslie O'Bryant

Meet Gary Parkes, a writer. He is a happy man, because he knows what he likes and he likes what he does.

Gary works as a mortgage loan originator and owns a freelance marketing company. Media Seahorse (www.mediaseahorse.com) helps many different entities improve their social media presence, gain market exposure, and increase sales and awareness, including businesses, non-profits, and of particular interest, writers. Media Seahorse is "sized small enough to give each book the attention it needs, when it needs it, and where it needs it." Some clients that Gary has worked with include Stevi B's, Taste of Italy, GoBahama.com, and authors Brad Meltzer and Doug Mason, to name a few. He spends much of his day online and represents his clients effectively and efficiently with systems he has developed.

Gary has always enjoyed every aspect of writing. When he was younger, he edited his high school newspaper, and today he especially enjoys read-

ing periodicals, listening to books on tape, and writing narrative non-fiction. Most of his writing, whether it is volunteer or for work, relates to marketing and has grown as he has adapted to the different styles that new technologies



bring. He understands, especially with today's social media, that we work in a world of six degrees of separation.

Originally from a small town in Long Island, New York, Gary has lived in Woodstock, Georgia, since 1997. He and his wife, Stacie, have two daughters—Abbie, 12, and Delilah, 8. The most recent addition to the family is a little puppy named Dexter.

Gary has many interests. He likes to scrapbook, quilt, and garden. He is co-president of the Carmel Elementary School PTA and also writes the organization's newsletter. He does public relations for Carmel as well as for Woodstock Middle School and the Chabad Jewish Center. As a community blogger for 11Alive.com, he recently covered Paula Deen's visit to the BJ's Wholesale Club at Woodstock.

Gary's writing style and his advice follow these simple rules: "know your audience" and "less is more." Gary is able to write and communicate in all aspects of his life, and he's happy because he's doing what he loves and gives priority to the people and things he cares about most. Gary Parkes made his destiny because he was not afraid to work towards his goals.

Leslie O'Bryant writes, volunteers, reads, quilts, and teaches in Woodstock, where she lives and laughs with her husband and four daughters.