Welcome to the monthly
Greater Lehigh Valley Writers Group Newsletter
Mostly May 2024 into June 2024
The intent of this newsletter is to give information and tips to our authors.

For the month of May (the lusty month of May), there is a general membership meeting and workshops in the morning and afternoon on Saturday, 18th, (not the usual fourth Saturday) starting at 10:00 am.

11:00 - 12:00 Morning Program:
Angel Ackerman: Blogging and the Socials. An overview of different ways to share your life online (and by your life, I mean your author brand). In this hour, we will discuss various ways to distribute messaging online with the long-term goal of developing a "platform" and a "brand," and practice speaking to our ideal "client."

Topics: WordPress (and why I like it), how to pick your social media avenues, where to turn for advice, and how to decide what to share.

Zoomlink to regular meeting and Morning Program, No registration needed.

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87111838974?pwd=ZjZSSWpJbkpZMFVpTEZJL3dwd1Vzd09

Meeting ID: 871 1183 8974
Passcode: 984411

1:30 - 3:00 Afternoon Workshop:
Any person under 18 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or guardian to attend this or any other GLVWG event.

Angel Ackerman: Leveraging Your Blog and Social Media.

Bring your laptop, and we’ll do hands-on work. We’ll look at the WordPress interface and develop content management plans and do some content creation for whatever
platforms participants wish to work on: X (Twitter), Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Facebook.

Get started on using social media and blogging as a public relations powerhouse. Consider your life and goals and how these items can work together to leverage your author message. Then, over the summer, collect content.

We'll be using what we created and learned to dip into NEWSLETTERS with SUBSTACK in the September (tentative schedule) workshop.

You must register to attend this Afternoon Workshop:


Register Here.

This month’s Member Spotlight : Robert Gelik

Robert Gelik remembers thinking, “I could do this,” while reading in a high school literature class. A degree from Duquesne University in hand a few years later, he saw broadcasting as the future of communications. The novelist notion was stored in his cranial attic. Giving up a short-lived radio career—and the fantasy of being the next Johnny Carson—he heeded well-intentioned parental influence phrased as: “You need a job that will put bread on the table,” and chose a career in newspaper journalism. For four decades, he wrote all manner of hard news and feature stories, and satirical opinion columns, as well as editing and mentoring younger colleagues and interns.

After retiring, the “I can do this” writing bug bit him (again). He's spent the last eight years working on short and long fiction pieces, often laced with sci-fi and humor. Along the way, he picked up the third-place award in the fiction competition at this year’s Write Stuff Conference. A flash fiction piece garnered first place at a Pennwriters conference five years ago. Another flash fiction work recently was selected for inclusion in an anthology to be published in June.

A Pittsburgh native, now living in Blakely, a Scranton suburb, Robert discovered GLVWG via the Zoom Café during the early Covid years. In addition to writing, he’s an award-winning photographer, an avid crossword solver, amateur genealogist, cook (especially ribs with from-scratch BBQ sauce) and baker (cranberry-orange scones), but not a candlestick maker.
Flash Literature Winners

Below are the winners of the Flash Fiction Contest held during the Write Stuff Conference. Congratulations to:

**Fiction**
First: Travel Agency -- Ann Stolinsky  
Second: [no title] -- Karla Reidinger  
Third: A Little Goes A Long Way -- Robert Gelik

**NonFiction**
First: Mystery of the Burning Bush -- George DeVault  
Second: [no title] -- Rosemary Detrolio  
Third: [no title] -- Susan Kling Monroe

**Poetry**
First: Lint Trap -- Judy Speicher  
Second: A Word of Warning -- L.N. Passmore (Ginny Shepherd)  
Third: Grief -- Karla Reidinger

For the month of May, the fiction winner’s works can be read below.  
In June, we will present the nonfiction winner’s works.  
In July, the poetry entries.  
Again, congratulations!

**Travel agency by Ann Stolinsky**

The man stopped and looked puzzled. Time Travel Agency?  
He gave the building in front of him a second glance, then a third, before he opened the door and walked in.  
“Hello Mr. Campbell. How are you today?”  
“How did you know my name?”  
“Just a lucky guess. You look like a man I worked with in Chicago.”  
“How does this work?”  
He left after being told how the travel agency functioned.  
The clerk turned to his coworker.  
“He’ll be back.”  
“Yes.” The second man looked at his watch. “In a few minutes. The boss is a little late today.”
Karla Reidinger (no title)

Alone on a dark, winding road, Mavis felt a primordial fear. Of What? Suddenly a deer loomed in front of her! She jerked the wheel hard to the left, jamming the brakes. Her head snapped forward, then back into her headrest. The Jeep spun off the road, thumping abruptly into a berm. Mavis blacked out momentarily. The next thing she remembered was the airbag deflating, hanging like a limp balloon from its space on the steering wheel. Her shirtfront was sprinkled with white powder. Her heart thud-a-thudded, thud-a-thudd. She opened her door to an eerie silence.

“A Little Goes a Long Way” by Robert Gelik

Melinda measured out a quarter inch of toothpaste onto the brush. She admired her thrifty handiwork, as she did each evening. Her husband, Jim, at the adjacent sink, watched as he’d done thousands of times since their wedding 47 years ago. Before she began brushing, he smiled at her in the mirror and tossed a familiar barb. “You know, your toothbrush is adult size. You can use more. Indulge.” Melinda picked up the banter gauntlet. “You know, you can sleep on the couch. Again.” After rinsing and a minty kiss, they padded hand in hand to the bedroom.

Our Notices of Contests
GLVWG does not endorse any of these following events—they are supplied to our members solely for informational purposes.

**Horror Writing Contest**
FanStory.com Inc.

Genres: Fiction, Horror, and Short Story
Share a horror or thriller story to enter this writing contest. Write about anything, but the object is to terrorize or thrill your reader. Cash prize!

Top Prize: $100
Entry fee: $10
Deadline: November 12, 2024

**Francine Ringold Awards for New Writers**
University of Tulsa

Genres: Fiction, Poetry, and Short Story
The Francine Ringold Awards for New Writers honor the work of writers at the beginning of their careers. $500 prizes will be awarded in both the fiction and poetry categories, and the winning manuscripts will appear in the spring issue of Nimrod. Winners will have the chance to work with the Nimrod board of editors to refine and edit their manuscripts before publication.

Top Prize: $500
Additional prizes: Publication
Entry fee: $12
Deadline: July 15, 2024

This month’s **Featured Publishers**

**The Gilded Weathervane**

The Gilded Weathervane is a new online journal, “grounded in the beauty and experience of rural living in its variety of expressions.” They publish poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, and artwork. Right now, they’re seeking submissions for their first issue.

**Moonday Mag**

Moonday Mag is a new print and online publication of “fantastically strange” writing. They publish science fiction, fantasy, magical realism, and more: “We’re interested in all things wondrous, fantastic, curious, strange, otherworldly, and chilling.” They welcome all voices, and they are especially interested in showcasing emerging and underrepresented writers. Non-paying.

The Author’s **Resource Well**

**How I Turned My First Short Story Acceptance Into Four More Publications** By Dannye Chase

Three years ago, on a bright April day, I finally got up the courage to hit “send” on my first story submission, for Improbable Press’s Dark Cheer: Cryptids Emerging anthology. (Well, okay, technically, I made my spouse hit “send” for me.) When the reply came, it took a moment for the word “accepted” to sink in.
Pros & Cons of Book Giveaways: 27 Authors Weigh In

Pros & Cons of Book Giveaways: 27 Authors Weigh In. Book giveaways have long been a staple of many authors’ strategies for boosting exposure, engaging their fans, and growing an audience. To understand how authors use giveaway promotions in their marketing today, we asked our partners to share their experiences and the lessons they’ve learned.

Our CaféZoom! sessions continue. The Café is every Wednesday via Zoom. Details will be on the website on the previous Friday. You must register to read and/or attend. However, they fill up pretty fast, so pay attention to the event listings on our website and signup for the next one.

Here is the link for more information and to register for The Writers Café. There is a waitlist for those who can’t register in case someone doesn't show up. https://greaterlehighvalleywritersgroup.wildapricot.org

We are now allowing up to 20 participants to be readers. The Writers Café format has two parallel sessions (breakout rooms) with 10 readers in each. You can still join the meeting, but only the first 20 to register will be able to read their work. There will be a waitlist for readers, so have something available to read in case someone doesn't show up.

Total registration will be limited to 25 people, any more would be unmanageable. We will be using Zoom, and those who have registered will get an invitation via email and be notified again on the day of the Café. The meeting will start at 6:55 pm, with no particular end time. If you have signed up, be prompt!

Here is our Occasional Column
(This is a reprint from January 2021)

Crimes Against Grammar: Assonance and Dissonance
By Pattie Giordani

I don’t like to make New Year’s resolutions—I don’t keep them! Why set yourself up for failure?! However, I do have one principle I try to adhere to every day. Always keep learning.

However, resolutions can offer column topics. In an old list of resolutions for writers, I found this: “Resolve to make time to play with words. Assonance, dissonance, alliteration make writing sing. Metaphors and imagery create rich prose. Onomatopoeia adds joy and immediacy…”

To explore assonance and dissonance, I consulted Webster’s, which defines assonance as “1) likeness of sound, as in a series of words or syllables. 2) repetition of a vowel sound in stressed syllables in which the consonant sounds are unlike (ex: late, make).”

A much older definition sheds even more light on the term, showing that while the vowel sounds are the same or similar, the words themselves do not rhyme. “Assonance (or medial rime) is the agreement in the vowel sounds of two or more words, when the consonant sounds preceding and following those vowels do not agree. Thus, strike and grind, hat and man, ‘rime’ with each other according to the laws of assonance.” (J.W. Bright and R.D. Miller, The Elements of English Versification, Ginn and Company, 1910.)

Assonance is used in different forms of poetry, but fiction (and nonfiction) writers use this technique to give their work a more rhythmic sense. Rappers use assonance as a way to accent words that are not at the end of sentences, to move the rhythm forward.

Some examples of assonance: “Hear the mellow wedding bells,” by Edgar Allen Poe. And my personal favorite: “If I bleat when I speak it’s because I just got f***in’ fleeced,” said by Al Swearengen (Ian McShane) in Deadwood.

Dissonance, as you might think, is quite the opposite. Some define it as the deliberate avoidance of assonance. Webster’s says dissonance is “1) an inharmonious sound or combinations of sounds; discord. 2) any lack of harmony or agreement; incongruity.”

Another definition states: “The use of discordant sounds either to create an unpleasant effect or to create an interesting variation from what is rhythmically expected.

An example of dissonance is this passage from Walt Whitman’s poem, “The Dalliance of Eagles.”

*The clinching interlocking claws, a living, fierce, gyrating wheel,*
Four beating wings, two beaks, a swirling mass tight grappling,

In tumbling turning clustering loops, straight downward falling,

Again, this literary device is used a lot in poetry, but that doesn’t mean it can’t be used in fiction. And nonfiction. Fiction is rife with conflict, without conflict there isn’t much of a story. What better place for dissonance the use of disagreeable harsh language to create discord?!

Pattie Giordani is a writer and editor who was a staff editor for a national nonprofit association and for a daily newspaper. Her freelance articles have appeared in various newspapers and magazines. She copyedits and proofreads books and other publications, and she frequently presents at writers group meetings and conferences.

We hope to be helpful!