



WRITING CURRENTS

Peace River Center for Writers

Our Mission

To help people develop skill in using the written word in any form. To provide effective and timely support for writers. To provide educational, literary and informational services and events. To encourage dialogue and communication among the public at large. To help promote a strong sense of community in Charlotte County and in Southwest Florida.

The Peace River Center for Writers at Edison State College is an independent, non-profit public organization that offers assistance in all kinds of writing, and to writers of all backgrounds.

**Celebrating our Tenth
Anniversary 2002-2012!**



When I moved back to Florida in 1998 after living 15 years in North Carolina, I was fortunate to find Edison. At the time, I decided to leave a full time position as an English Instructor in Jamestown, NC to be closer to my family and friends. However, I was back to a part time position. This turned out to be a good thing for many reasons. The main reason is Carol Mahler. Carol was also an adjunct teaching English and she gave me some tips about the students. I also learned her degree was an MFA like mine, and from North Carolina as well. After a few semesters Carol decided to spend more time writing and she left Edison but we kept in touch. Not long after I received a call and an interesting question. Did I think Charlotte County needed a writer's group? For years, I found out, Carol taught classes at "All Books", participated in YRI (You Wrote It; You Read It), and inspired a growing number of writers—mostly retired folks from all over the U. S.—and they held workshops and readings. I was also interested in writing groups and recently started teaching the first creative writing class on the Charlotte campus. I am sure she made many calls in those days and the "Peace River Center for Writers" emerged with a new board and president. After "All Books" there was history park until Charley came in 2004 when we estimated a membership of over 300. There was a strong board; some great people helping out. Carol, as Executive Director, made the calendar every month and did almost everything else. She ran workshops, went to elementary schools, arranged for readings and served as MC to Open Mic. The Hurricane, like my move to Florida, changed things. I still remember the picture of Michael Haymans repairing the roof of the Trabue House. But we didn't have enough material for the bigger changes to come. Because I worked as an adjunct for many years waiting for the college to afford another English professor, I had time to join the board in 2003. Years later, Edison Community College became Edison State College. This made a difference because the college mission was now more aligned with PRCW. Dr. Douglas Houck, currently adjunct professor at ESC and retired educator of many years, helped save the Center by working with other board members and president Jack Reith to bring PRCW to Edison when we were beginning to grow again. Of course there are many others—board members, members, and the historical society and staff at ESC — that have helped keep the Center going. I hope we can do this another ten years. Let's work together and see. Thanks for your support, John Pelot



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New & Renewing Members

New: Thomas Williams , Mary Beth Vaughan

Renewed: Sharon Shatney, Frank Desquins, Terry Falsani, Camille Amy, Carl Parrott, and Mac Martin.

Thank you!

Happy Mother's Day

The Peace River Writer's Tea

The May Writers Tea will be at the Port Charlotte Library near the Cultural Center on Tuesday, May 15. The day after Open Mic at Fishermen's Village.

We will continue to meet the third Tuesday of each month from 1 to 3 pm. Poets and story writers are invited to come and share some of their written material with us in a relaxed atmosphere.

Please bring snacks of some type to share. Tea will be provided. We hope to see you there!
Have a great day!

If you have any questions, you can call Arlene Kincaid, 625-7312 or Mary Grace Patterson, 575-0739.



Kid's Stuff Program

Second Saturday of each month

10:00 A.M.—12ish Please contact PRCW by e-mail or phone during the summer for time and place.

The Peace River Center for Writers has just the thing for both aspiring and established writers of children's books. Kids Stuff! It's a critique group for authors who are writing or wish to write children's books. They are held in Room 116 at Edison State College.

There is no charge for PRCW members. Nonmembers may attend while deciding if they wish to become members.

Poetry Contest

We had over seventy entries to our Spring Poetry Contest. The winners will be announced on May 14 at Open Mic in Punta Gorda. Join us at Fishermen's Village, Center Stage at 6:30 PM

Many thanks to our judges: Leonard "Dobie" Pasco and final judge, Carol Mahler

Peace River Press

As this newsletter goes to press, we are producing Carol Mahler's first full length book of poetry: *How Do I Follow*. The first fifty signed copies will only be available after a reading at Edison State College in September. More in the August/September issue of *Writing Currents*

Monthly Writer's Breakfast

First Saturday of the Month at Morales Café in Downtown Punta Gorda

9:00A.M.

Members and guests are invited to participate in the Monthly Writer's Breakfast. Come and enjoy a delicious breakfast while reading and discussing your literary endeavors. No charge except the cost of your breakfast.

Critique Circle

The circle is back, although small. We will have a great, air conditioned room at Edison for Critique Circle. We are interested in helping the circle grow. Join us at a new time on Saturdays (first of the month after the Monthly Writer's Breakfast) with more details coming via e-mail from Madelon Becker.



Open Mic!

We have had some great readers and listeners at **Hava Java Grill Open Mic.** Dobie Pasco did a superlative job as MC while Shirley's been away, but the lady with the microphone is back!

Newspaper columnist, teacher, poet, MC of the best Open Mic in Port Charlotte, Shirley George is in New Mexico visiting family in the photograph. That's not where she's been lately. She missed a few Open Mics and, no doubt, her writing, but she is back.

Off the stern
of *Good
Times Two*



We had a great time on the Boat Cruise!

Over forty people participated in our full moon fund raiser. Many thanks to all of you. We do not have a large operating budget, so this event helps us to make it, financially, through the summer. The moon was incredible as viewed from our calm basin in the middle of Edgewater Lake. We enjoyed cheese and wine, BBQ Sliders and Waldorf Chicken Salad. This summer we are planning new events and most of our monthly programs will be provided. I especially want to thank our talented musicians: Emery and Peggy Williams, Michael Haymans and Gordon Mac Martin!

Web Site

Our Web Site is still waiting on a talented member to help refurbish our current site. Please check our Facebook web site. It is open to the public.



Upcoming Events

Recurring Events:

On the second Monday of each month, Open Mic is happening at Fishermen's Village at 6:30. Meet at the center stage by the Oyster Bar. PRCW monthly event.

On the third Friday of each month, Open Mic Jams at the Hava Java Grill at 6:30. The grill is located off of U.S. 41 in Port Charlotte near Tarpon. PRCW monthly event. Arrive early for culinary delights.



Upcoming Events:

The Florida Literary Arts Coalition brought us Gerry LaFemina from New York City last fall and John Blair from west Texas this spring. Both are incredible poets and teachers. Next year, in February, we have another great writer. This time, from Oregon. Cherl Strayed writes essays and newspaper columns, and a bit more. This is the kind of programming the PRCW is able to bring to Charlotte County thanks to FLAC and Edison.



Strayed's essays have been published in *The Washington Post Magazine*, *The New York Times Magazine* and other journals. Her work has been selected twice for inclusion in *The Best American Essays* ("Heroin/e" in the 2000 edition, and "The Love of My Life" in the 2003 edition). *Torch*, a story based on Strayed's mother's death from cancer at age 45, was a finalist for the Great Lakes Book Award and was selected by *The Oregonian* as one of the top ten books of 2006 by writers living in the Pacific Northwest.

Her memoir about hiking the Pacific Crest Trail, *Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail*, published in 2012 by Alfred A. Knopf, has been optioned by actress Reese Witherspoon. *Wild* was also excerpted in *Vogue*.

Advice column

On February 14, 2012, Strayed came forward as the formerly anonymous author of the "Dear Sugar" advice column at The Rumpus online literary magazine. Strayed took over the column from originator Steve Almond.

Awards

Strayed's essay "Munro County", about a letter from Alice Munro, was published in *The Missouri Review* and won a Pushcart Prize in 2010.

"Spring has many American faces. There are cities where it will come and go in a day and counties where it hangs around and never quite gets there. Summer is drawn blinds in Louisiana, long winds in Wyoming, shade of elms and maples in New England."

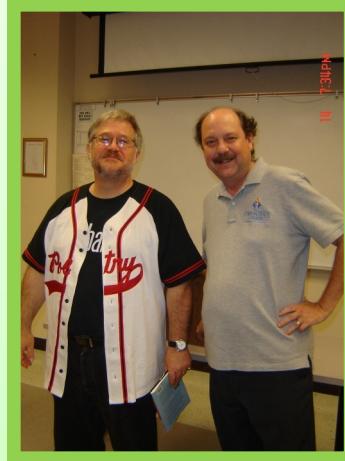
Archibald McLeish

Scenes from Events held this year: John Blair after his workshop in April. Below there are some happy boaters. Doug Houck, Nancy Houck and Carol Mahler wait while poet Gianna Russo signs one of her award winning books. Professor Raymond Eberling talks about Florida history to students and other PRCW members. ESC History Professor Truman Bass opens up the first of our "Old Florida" *in Film, Fact, and Fiction* series with a presentation about the building of the Tamiami Trail.

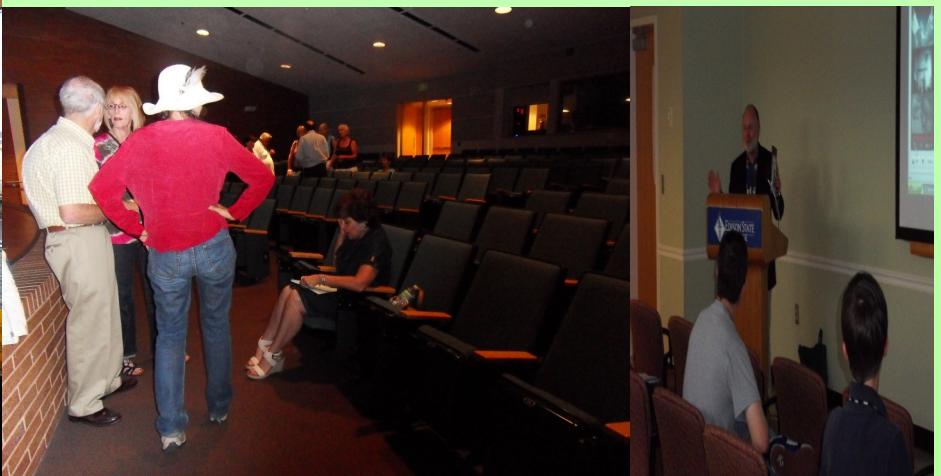


We look forward to having our members living out of state returning next year for many new events like our Florida history program provided by a grant from the Florida Humanities Council and Edison State College, a FLAC sponsor. Thanks also to our Board of Directors.

Thanks as always to Dr. Pat Land, ESC Charlotte Campus President.



What a year it was! Please join us on Facebook for another view of 2011-2012. You do not have to join Facebook to view our web page.



A Man With No Plan

by Jennifer McGuire

What would you do if your life was completely turned around in 10 seconds? Bobby Petrocelli is a man who thought that he had it all, but he had to lose "it all" to realize that even the worst circumstances happen when they are least expected. He was happily married and settled into a new home with his wife, Ava. All was well for the couple until one night.

"I woke up in the kitchen and didn't remember how I got there," said Petrocelli. He peered through clouds of smoke and dust in his home with confusion. It was then that he saw two bright lights in front of him, the headlights of a pickup truck. "I spent so much time wondering why a truck was in my house before it hit me," Petrocelli said before pausing, "Where is my wife?" He continued to explain what he saw next; the pickup truck was on his bed, his wife trapped underneath the vehicle and the sheets. He did not want to believe that she was dead, even when it was proven to him. This tragic event in his life lead to him writing his book, *10 Seconds Will Change Your Life Forever*.

Petrocelli has written many other books as well since his loss. He is currently a motivational speaker that shares with youth the power of their decisions and how to form a strong foundation for their lives. His main message for young people is that forgiveness is important, and that it only takes a short period of time to change someone's life forever; he speaks against alcoholism as well as other bad habits that youth should not be involved with.

He was a high school educator, counselor and coach for 11 years; this is what inspired him to send his message to young people throughout the world. He has a Master's degree in counseling, and he is the author and co-author of eight motivational books. He uses his programs to reach out to the youth; some have even been featured on "The Family Channel" and "Chicken Soup for the Soul."

Even though he lost his wife, that doesn't mean that he is not happy today. He is currently married to a woman that he holds just as dear to his heart as his first wife was.

During his presentation to college students in St. Petersburg on April 4th, he told the students about the tragic accident, but, as he began to close his speech, there was hope as he talked about his new wife. However, the students were on the edge of their seats when he said, "Everything was great; then, my wife had to go to the hospital." Just when the students let out a groan of pity, Petrocelli simply smiled, "Don't worry. She gave birth to our first bouncing baby boy," he said. He now lives in Madeira Beach, Florida with his wife and two sons, and he continues to travel throughout the world to spread his message to young people everywhere. "No matter how many bad decisions you make, it only takes 10 seconds to turn your life around" is what Petrocelli hopes that everyone that witnesses his message remembers.



I am the most famous imposter in the world. I was known well when I first started forging checks and conning my way to millions of dollars. I held various high paying jobs as a lawyer, doctor, and even a pilot. The best part about it was I never went to college. I barely even went to high school for that matter. I didn't need the degree for what I was doing. The pilot gig was fun. I have been to over 26 countries over a span of about three years, making the airlines pay for my hotel and food. I was conning my way to a wealthy lifestyle living it up like a yuppie. The ideas



that ran through my brain gave me freedom and lots of green paper. On two occasions I had escaped the police, not with my strength in muscle, but my strength in brain power. One was even a special unit detective who held a conversation with me before I slithered my way free. Once I was caught the detective gave me a slip of paper through the bars. It was a poem.

I've been searching for a fraud

One whom I've seen

This fraud is blonde

With cigarette stained teeth

An actor as good

As James Dean

A smile unreveals

His true trickery

Blood full of ice

Stones for hands

Ill catch you one day

That is if I can

I am? _____

You and I
By Breana Ferroro

**A special world for you
and me
A special bond one can-
not see
My heart lights up
when I awake
To find your head shar-
ing my pillow case.**

**I put your hand up
against mine
I clench it tight with all
my pride
I say my prayers to
keep you safe
I say my prayers for
goodness sake.**

**And though at times my head gets hot
I think about all the good you've brought
You rise me up when I feel weak
I've never been happier
My soul is complete.**



Why Take Creative Writing?

By Justine Raffone

As students move forward with their college careers they have choices that need to be made that could affect them for the rest of their lives. Some of these choices are tough decisions and include doing something that the student may not want to do. Choosing an elective, however, does not hold the same amount of decision making as choosing a major does. Elective classes should be a class that the student is interested in, or wants to learn more about the subject. This is the reason that I chose to take the creative writing class at Edison for the spring semester.

I chose to take the creative writing class this semester because writing is something that I have always had a great interest in. Recently I have been writing more and wanted to take the creative writing course at Edison to help me write, well, more creatively. I like to write stories, songs, and journalistic type pieces. I decided to take the course because I wanted to learn more about writing so I could take my writing to the next level. I plan to be a writer of some sort after college, whether it is a sports journalist or food critic. Even if I do not become a writer after college I still plan on writing the stories and songs that I write now. If my interest in writing continues to grow I would love to attempt to publish a novel, and taking this creative writing course is something I feel could help me to write a better novel.

As I move on in my college career I am going to have to make tough choices that are going to have a big impact on my life. I am going to have to decide if I want to be a journalist, accountant, teacher, cook, or possibly something else even. For this semester, however, I have chosen to use one of my electives on a creative writing course. I would recommend that any writer take some sort of writing course to help them grow as a writer, whether it is at college or a local workshop.

Two Haiku by Mary Grace Patterson

Georgie, The Blue Heron

Majestically stands
Against blue clad sky
Looking for infinity

Seaside Heron

Stands in Stately Splendor
As evening tide draws near
In peaceful ocean scene



Student Essay: Literary Analysis

Nicholas P. Mazzarella

Welcome

The goat moaned and kicked as the blood spilled from its neck. After staining the soil of the jagged mountain top with a river of bright red sanguine fluid, the animal's heart fell silent. The Afghan Sergeant explained, in broken English, that they commonly purchase goats from the local shepherds and eat them on this mountaintop. He invited me and my fellow Americans into their stone fortified hut to sit around the fire and take part in the good things before us. In Homer's Epic Poem, *Odyssey*, Eumaeus treats Odysseus in the same fashion that is common to Afghan Culture. But during this fireside discussion, Odysseus cannot be entirely forthright in describing who he is and what he has been doing. And despite his dishonesty and tricks, Eumaeus still assisted Odysseus in his struggles with the suitors, much like my encounters with the Taliban opposition.

Eumaeus felt immediately obligated to throw stones at his four beloved hounds while they nearly tore Odysseus apart because of his inherent welcoming nature. He saw a decrepit old man and assumed he was a beggar, but still made conscious effort and sacrifice in order to provide for this man's safety. "The swineherd led Odysseus into the hut, bade him sit down on a thick bed of rushes and a shaggy chamois skin--the one he used to sleep by night." Every time I was led into the huts of Afghani soldiers or villagers, I was offered the very best place to sit as per their custom towards guests. Even the village elder would offer his seat to the highest ranking guest, and sit on the floor himself if need be. Eumaeus offers Odysseus the best cut from the best boar he has, and prepares it himself. These are the more strictly obeyed customs in the Afghan culture because at times there were villagers who despised American forces, but still welcomed us into their homes and offered us chai and cookies. We respectfully declined on the suspicion of foul play.

Back on the mountaintop, where the river of blood ran red, I would commonly have discussions with the Afghan soldiers about what was going on down in the valley. I would simply ask them

one question, "Where are the Taliban?" To which they would always reply, "we don't know mista."

Sometimes they here, sometimes they over there, sometimes they everywhere all around mista." I would nod and crack a sideways smile, knowing that they were playing dumb and that some of them were Taliban supporters. But the lies that I needed to tell them were much more complex, much like the entertaining story that Odysseus told Eumaeus about his travels as a Cretan. The Afghan soldiers would ask me about very sensitive information that, if I answered truthfully, would put American Soldiers' lives in jeopardy. So instead, I spun them many lies and they enjoyed them just as Eumaeus did. I told them, in my way of speaking to

them, "We helicoptered to that mountain there, day before today, and we shoot many Taliban in the face, bang bang (hand gesture), seven mursh (dead) Taliban." And they would erupt with applause, some more than others. These false stories did not have a grand purpose at the time. Perhaps I was simply trying to gauge



their reaction to the story and try to weed out the potential Taliban supporters among them, just as Odysseus was merely trying to gauge Eumaeus' character and moral compass.

Some of these Afghani soldiers on the mountaintop may have been corrupt, but I trusted them for the most part. At 3a.m. on a moonless night, two RPG's struck our outpost, piercing my eardrums and rocking the building. Less than a second later, our small one room building was blanketed in rapid machine gun fire from four different directions. All we could do was drop to the floor and return fire in every direction it was coming from. After we had suppressed the targets, the Afghan soldiers moved to us and assisted in the fight, similar to the way Eumaeus assisted Odysseus in his struggles with the suitors.

Eumaeus may be a fictional character from an epic poem, but the type of person that he metaphorically represents is someone that can be found all over the world in all walks of life: Someone who welcomes and sacrifices for outsiders, someone who values productive dialogue over a good meal, and most importantly, someone who will back you up in a fight.

Ah, Key West

By Justine Raffone

The sights, the sounds, the sun
AH, Key West

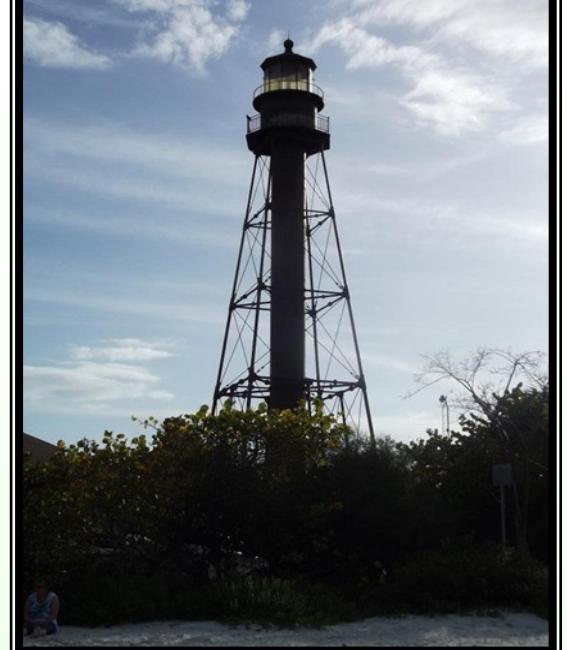
The sea, the surf, the sun
AH, Key West

The sand, the shells, the sun
AH, Key West

The sky, the stars, the sun
AH, Key West

The shops, the spirits, the sun
AH, How I Love Key West

CANCUN MEXICO



Fiction

Breana Ferroro

“CANNON BALL!!!!!!” Screeching into my ear loud as hell was the first thing I heard walking through the pool gate. Just in a first impression, Cancun was already quite the party. Watching five-hundred plus wet bathing suits walk by, I had not a clue what to do first.

All the air smelt of was beer, pina-coladas and tanning lotion. Nonetheless, I look over to my right and there beside the Tiki-bar stood fifteen people doing keg stands at the same time...I couldn't help but to smile. This is what heaven looks like after all. The sun was beating down so hard that in the matter of just consuming the numbers of hang overs Cancun would give to me, a farmer's tan was beginning to form. Just from being here for 2 days, 6 hours, 7 minutes and 24 seconds I could tell you exactly the sounds I've heard in the meantime, EASILY.

“12, 13, 14, 15, 16 seconds, COME ON!”

“CHUG, CHUG, CHUG, CHUG”

“MY MOM COULD DO BETTER THAN THAT”

“Girl, take that poka-dot bikni off!!!”



No one knows any other English terms here but I suppose I like it. I knew every morning waking up was going to be hell, but I figure this kind of hell doesn't come every day; only in Cancun and I can live with that! I had come with a big group of friends of mine but I decided this time a

around, I was going to get my own room. At least, I could then sleep peacefully for the TWO HOURS I got every night. Only my camera could tell you in a million words of how insane my trip here has become. My memory card became full after 28 hours. I knew if I hadn't bought

a new one, I would regret it. So I did. Best investment in my life. Four days and an hour left to spare, we were all about to board back onto the ship. You could tell a lot of people were dreading it, yet others were already falling asleep while waiting in line. You know I took a picture of that. When all things were coming to an end... this was the final straw that made this the best trip ever. My close friend Steph had met some guy the first day we got to Cancun and hit it off with him, then who knows what happened they both disappeared for most of the trip. We all had a feeling she was in love sixteen keg stands, twelve margaritas, seven mud slides later, I WOULD BE IN LOVE TOO. At least, that is what I've seen her consume the time she actually did spend around everyone, the other time...who knows really. All of a sudden I'm looking through my camera with some of my other girls reminiscing on what actually did go down these past couple of days and then it happened.....

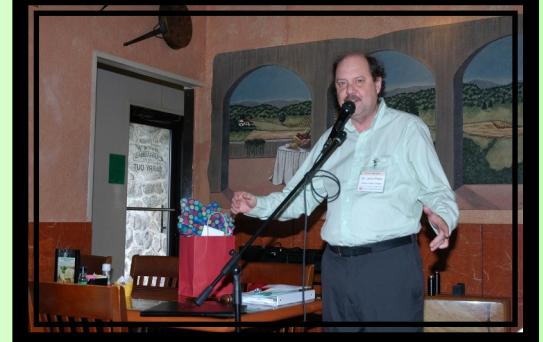
This guy that Steph so happened to be head over heels for just threw up ALL OVER HER! Talk about the most romantic thing ever. Her face was completely price-less, she screamed in disgust and slapped the guy right in his face. I got that on camera too, thank you! Now that is what the rest of my memory card on my camera was meant to be for. What a great ending to my vacation, that just puts the icing on the cake. Sweet, sweet, Cancun, I can admit it. I love you.

Fishermen's Village: Our Corporate Sponsor and Friend

Interview with John Pelot

By Heather Horens

Thanks for interviewing with me about the relationship between PRCW and Fishermen's Village. Our networking began when the Center began, and we are currently celebrating our tenth year as a non-profit writers group in Charlotte County. I think that our main connection came when we started Open Mic at Center Stage at the village. From 2002-2004 and even before with Carol Mahler's writing group, we read at the *Summer Mood* but *Hurricane Charley* took out the building and the owners decided not to rebuild. At the time, Kathy Burnham was a director at the Center and we decided to start our Open Mic again at a fresh venue.



We've had many readers, listeners, and MC's during the past eight years. Michael Haymans was the longest lasting MC. From about 2004 to present, Michael, a former director and president, led us through poetry, music, rants, and some listener's raving about the talent we have in Charlotte County. Later, our secretary and director for several years, Linda Mahshie led the readings with her youth and enthusiasm. Story Boyle also played MC for over a year and I have stepped in from time to time along with Doug Houck and a few others. The current "main" MC, Leonard Pascoe, is keeping the tradition going.

While some members have expressed a few reservations about our location at the village in the past, I think this is an excellent place to hold an Open Mic. Sure it can be noisy with the shoppers and the restaurants with outdoor seating on either side, but we are improving on equipment and have learned to be creative when we find a challenging situation. Last month the microphone died and Mike Haymans and I decided to push the chairs right up to the stage with some right on the stage and we and the others read loudly and effectively to our small but great audience. Lately the "Voices of Venice" have been traveling all the way from their area to Fishermen's Village for our Open Mic. They love the place and who wouldn't? The noise is a factor but this also brings new listeners, something that didn't happen in a closed area. We also have the great outdoors all around us. There is beautiful Charlotte Harbor, the sunset, and the lighting at night – all bring a great atmosphere to the place.

Fishermen's Village is also our corporate sponsor. They contribute every year to help us pay the bills, to retain our Office Manager and book keeper. Kathy Burnham stepped down from our board several years ago but she never stopped supporting the Center. In fact, we work together helping each other. Every year we have at least one or two large events at Fishermen's: last year we held the "Author's Market" and nearly filled the village with writers, readers, and books! We work together on advertising each other's events through Facebook and Twitter as well.

As far as your questions about plans to change our venue, I'd say unequivocally "no." We very much enjoy the setting, the help we receive from Kathy and the rest of the staff at the village, the variety of listeners at our Open Mic, but mostly the spirit this historical place on the water instills: Fishermen's Village at sunset is a poem of a place.

The March, April, May Newsletter Staff:

Co-Editors: Dominic Januzzi and John Pelot

Layout: John Pelot and Dominic Januzzi

Matt Michala: Fiction and Poetry

Heather Horens: Interview and photography

Jennifer McGuire: Interview

Victoria Mardis: Photography

Justine Raffone: Essay and poem

Nick Mazzarella: Essay

Ahidee Villalobes: Photography

Breana Ferroro: Poem and fiction piece

Mary Grace Patterson: Poetry

Thanks also to the students from the Spring Creative Writing Course at Edison State College 2012

*Fishermen's Village
is a Corporate Member of PRCW@ESC
Visit their web site at <http://www.fishville.com>*

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Happy Mother's Day



**True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learn'd to dance.
'T is not enough no harshness gives offence,—
The sound must seem an echo to the sense.**

Alexander Pope



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