

The Tennessee Writer

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Summer/Fall 2011



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writers and literature*

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Cover Illustration

Ever since the 2007 movie, *The Bucket List*, many have created a list of things they would like to see, do or experience before they “kick the bucket.” In this issue, TWA President Debbie Flatt Whitaker tells *and* shows us about marking one item off her personal bucket list (page 3). Also on page 3, learn how you can read your own work at the Southern Festival of Books. You’ll find ways to improve your writing via workshops on page 4, read about another member’s safe bucket list and one that includes blessings on page 5 and meet a brand new board member (perhaps being of service is on *your* list!) on page 6. We hope this issue inspires you to write during the autumn months. Let us know how it goes.

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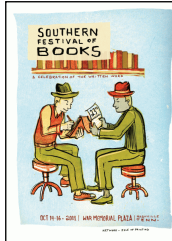
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READ OUT LOUD AT THE SOUTHERN FESTIVAL OF BOOKS

If sharing your writing with the public is on your bucket list, here's a chance to check that one off! Members of TWA have been invited by the Southern Festival of Books to fill the *Chapter 16* stage with the written word on Friday, Oct. 14, from 1:00–2:30 p.m.



“This is a great opportunity to read your original work in front of an appreciative audience of word lovers,” according to TWA President Debbie Whitaker. “Members who are interested in reading during this open mic session are invited to contact me at dfw1971@comcast.net.”

Debbie also extended an open welcome to all members who are willing to serve TWA by sitting in the booth and passing out information about the non-profit networking organization for writers across the state.

“Many members make the TWA booth an annual stop on their visit to the Southern Festival of Books,” Whitaker explained. “Working the booth is a great way to cross paths with some of the states most talented writers.” Those who can help with the booth are also asked to contact the TWA president at dfw1971@comcast.net.

For more information about the Southern Festival of Books, go to the website at <http://www.humanities.tennessee.org/programs/southern-festival-books>.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

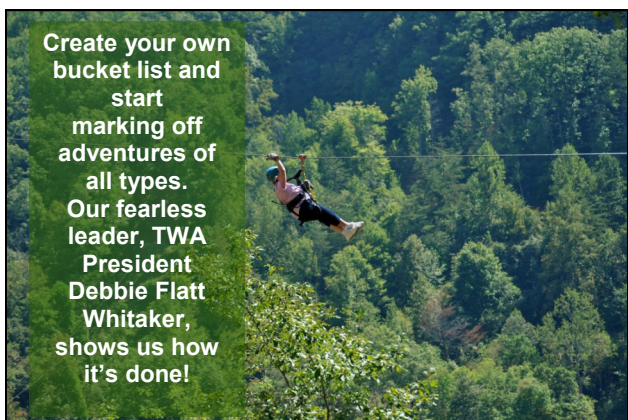
By Debbie Flatt Whitaker



Last week I marked something off my bucket list. It was a recent entry because I hadn't even heard of it until this summer, when a friend at work shared her ziplining video, inspiring me to want to try it. So in September, my husband and I joined six other first-timers at Smoky Mountain Ziplining in Pigeon Forge for a fun-filled day with our comedian/guides Moose and Pork Chop.

Not being a risk-taker or an adventuresome person, this was out of character for me. My family and friends were amazed that I tried it. But try it I did, and I loved it—can't wait to go again.

I still have a long bucket list, and several of the things on it involve writing. For some reason, I'm finding those things a lot harder to mark off than ziplining. I seem to be lacking inspiration lately, but fortunately Southern Festival of Books is just around the corner and what could be more inspiring than being around such an amazing slate of writers? I hope to see many of you there—be sure to stop by our booth and say hello!



TWA MEMBERS: Do you **host writing workshops** in your area of Tennessee? Members are encouraged to send information about your workshops so TWA members (and more!) know about opportunities in their area for learning, sharing, and networking! Send information about your workshops to tnwritereditor@gmail.com. Also, if you are a TWA member interested in holding a TWA-sponsored workshop, or would like to partner with the TWA to sponsor one with your group or organization, email Debbie Whitaker at dfw1971@comcast.net.

WRITING YOUR LIFE STORIES WORKSHOP

Sat. Oct. 29, 2011 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.

Quality Inn, Providence Marketplace, Mount Juliet (behind Cracker Barrel)

Craft the stories of your life into publishable essays, articles, and memoir.

- Learn to adapt fiction techniques such as character, dialogue, setting, theme, and plot to your life stories.
- Learn to research periodicals, write query letters, and submit your work for publication.

The workshop fee includes a copy of Bill Roorbach's book *Writing Life Stories* and the grammar handbook, *Woe is I* (a combined \$27 value) as well as all workshop handouts and a continental breakfast.

The workshop is limited to 20 students because of space limitations, so reserve your spot today. Register and get more info at www.randvrudder.com.

Randy Rudder has an MFA in creative writing and 20 years of professional writing and teaching experience. He is a longtime freelance writer, television producer, and author of the Chicken Soup for the Soul: Country Music edition.

CROSSROADS WRITERS CONFERENCE & LITERARY FESTIVAL

Friday, Sept. 30–Sunday, Oct. 2 Macon, GA

The conference is a full day of great presenters and a lot of fun to boot because it has a community feel. As our posters say, writing can be lonely but writers don't have to be. (We're also crazy affordable.) Check us out online at www.CrossroadsWriters.org.

Presenters include:

Adam Mansbach (*Go the F--- to Sleep, Angry Black White Boy*)

Rick Moody (*The Ice Storm, Four Fingers of Death*)

Def Jam poet and playwright **Idris Goodwin** (*These Are the Breaks*)

Jay Parini (*The Last Station, The Passages of H.M.*)

Terry Kay (*To Dance With the White Dog, Bogmeadow's Wish*)

Tina McElroy Ansa (*Ugly Ways, Taking After Mudear*)

Rising star **Adam Davies** (*Mine All Mine, The Frog King*)

Comic book scribes **Gail Simone** (*Wonder Woman, Batgirl*) and **Robert Venditti** (*The Surrogates, Homeland Directive*)

Sarah Domet (*90 Days to Your Novel*)

Returning favorites like screenwriter turned novelist **Jeffrey Stepakoff** (*Fireworks Over Toccoa*), novelist **Ad Hudler** (*Man of the House*), poet **Alice Friman** (*Book of the Rotten Daughter*),

Nebula Award-winner **Jack McDevitt** (*Seeker*), pulp fiction writer **Barry Reese**, memoirist

Lauretta Hannon and Steampunk guru **Emilie Bush**

...and so many more.

On Friday, the event will be kicked off with a book launch/reading with **David Bottoms, Judson Mitchem** and other poets in the anthology *Writing on Napkins at the Sunshine Club*. The literary festival on Sunday will feature many of our writers from the conference as well as special guests **Joshilyn Jackson** and **Melissa Fay Greene**. It will be great for grabbing some autographs and catching some great readings.

For more information, go to www.CrossroadsWriters.org.

BOARD ELECTIONS

There is only one person up for board member in this election. To place your vote of confidence for Teresa Lockhart (see bio on page 6), just come by the TWA booth at the Southern Festival of Books, October 14-16, in Nashville, or mail it to be received by October 14.

If you are willing to serve on the TWA Board of Directors, please email your biography to dfw1971@comcast.net. Board elections are held in the fall of each year, with new members starting in January.

Following is a list of current officers (elected by the board in January) and board members, along with their terms of service (you can only serve three consecutive three-year terms) and the year the term ends.

Tamara Baxter	2nd Term/2012
Barbara Hearn Corresponding Secretary	2nd Term/2012
June McCash Recording Secretary	1st Term/2012
Kathy Rhodes	2nd Term/2012
Diana Rose Treasurer	1st Term/2012
Terry Thompson	3rd Term/2013
Debbie Flatt Whitaker President	2nd Term/2012

Due to a rash of personal events, TWA is currently seeking a few good board members to serve out terms left unfilled by former directors. If “serving others” is on your bucket list, please consider giving of your time to the only statewide networking group for Tennessee writers—the Tennessee Writers Alliance. For more information, please contact TWA President Debbie Flatt Whitaker at dfw1971@comcast.net. Whatever your gifts and talents, they are needed to help make our non-profit organization strong during these tumultuous times for charitable groups.

LOUISE COLLN’S NON-THREATENING BUCKET TRAVEL LIST

I have never created an official Bucket List, but I’m sure that since I’m small, afraid of heights, have claustrophobia and don’t like to be near snakes or alligators, if I did have a list, no wild adventure would be on it. I have often thought it would be nice to spend one year—a full round of seasons—in each of the following places: Copper Harbor on Lake Superior in Upper Michigan, a small canyon in Arkansas, the Outer Banks of North Carolina, the Shepherd Country of Spain, any Scottish Island, somewhere in Southern France and few other places. I would go in the fall so as to be acclimated by winter, thoroughly enjoy spring and maybe be ready to leave after the summer, or not, depending on how hot it gets there.

If I ever do this I invite everyone to come visit me – wherever I am.

Louise Colln is a long-time, ever-active member of the Tennessee Writers Alliance.

SOUTHERN FESTIVAL OF BOOKS OCTOBER 14-16 NASHVILLE

We’ll need members to work in our booth and would love to have your help! Interested? Contact dfw1971@comcast.net for more information.

OF BUCKET LISTS & BLESSINGS by Barbara Lauderdale Hearn

Life is full of lists, but one I have been challenged to ponder recently includes counting our blessings. I have joined a new church, and at a group meeting, the leader asked us to think of as many blessings as we could. Let’s see. I will start with a vast majority of us are fortunate to be able to live in the United States of America, have food to eat and clothes on our backs. The other blessings are amazingly plentiful. What blessings do you have? What’s your list? Put counting your blessings on your to do list today.

Barbara Lauderdale Hearn is the Corresponding Secretary for TWA.

SPOTLIGHT ON TWA BOARD MEMBER TERESA LOCKHART

Sometimes when we least expect it, we stumble upon the desires of our heart. Some call it a coincidence, but I call it a God-thing. I believe when we walk closely with Him we'll see more of the wonderful hidden blessings He has for us.

I've been a freelance writer for several years, interviewing celebrities about the way God is working in their lives. My work has appeared in several *Lifeway* and *Vox* publications in addition to many others. I am a frequent writer for the *Living Light News* out of Edmonton (Canada).



When I'm not writing, I spend my time teaching high school journalism. My students are my greatest source of inspiration and laughter. I've had the pleasure of being named an Outstanding Teacher of the Humanities, a Tennessee Regional Teacher of the Year, a Middle Tennessee Scholastic Press Association Media Adviser of the Year and a Tennessee High School Press Association Media Adviser of the Year. I have just recently been named a Certified Journalism Instructor by the Journalism Education Association.

Having been inspired at WordFest 2009, I have since finished my first young adult novel, and I'm on the trail to finding a literary agent and publisher. I also attended last year's WordFest and took home great information that will take me on the next leg of my writing journey. Even though I've written numerous nonfiction articles, I can't describe the joy and excitement I've received from writing young adult fiction. I want to do this the rest of my life!

I am also the wife of Kenny, a youth minister and middle school football coach; the mother of Josh, an MTSU journalism student with his own passion for writing and film; and the mother of Michael, a fifth grader who isn't content unless he's catching a baseball, bouncing a basketball or kicking a soccer ball.

You can discover more about me through my blog at <http://serendipiteeblog.wordpress.com/>. I always look forward to learning more about the craft of writing from my fellow writers.

KICKING THE WRITING BUCKET

As I assembled this issue of the TWA newsletter, I made my own writing bucket list—writing goals I'd like to accomplish before I leave this world. Here's what I've come up with so far:

- Complete revisions on the play I'm co-writing (*The Scent of Peppermint*), have it published and see it produced
- Complete enough nightly devotionals to cover a year and see *Night Lights* published and read by parents to their pre-schoolers
- See my *Seasons* books for pre-schoolers published and in the hands of little ones
- Complete my novel *Reserving Judgment* and see it published
- See my website back up and running, changing content on a regular basis and enjoying the guests who stop by for a visit
- Get my blog started, contribute to it weekly and host comments by old friends and those just met
- Submit my book of poetry about motherhood and see it published in memory of Mama
- Write a series of columns about the women in my life, record my reading of them and submit them to NPR

Once I got started, it was hard to stop! Why don't you give it a whirl? It's just another way of looking at goals, but maybe it's a way that will break through the fog and get your hand moving across the page.