

The Writers Studio
South Boston, VA

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Writers Studio
Journal

Editor/Designer
Scott M. Foran

Happy Birthday, Writers Studio!

It does seem a little difficult to believe, but it is true: the Writers Studio is officially one year old. We held our first meeting twelve months ago, September 2005.

In such a fast-paced world as ours, things understandably move quickly, and such has been the case with the Writers Studio. We began with a mere handful of people and the idea that we would like to get together as a community of writers, to offer each other support and to make available a more defined public venue in which local writers could offer their talents to a wider audience.

It is with a great deal of satisfaction that I can announce that we have accomplished these goals and continue to do so. The Writers Studio has sponsored public readings, created a quarterly newsletter that features the writings of members, launched a website, and is in the midst of preparing its first anthology.

These are momentous achievements for any group, and we certainly did not arrive here without help. That being said, allow me to thank a few of the individuals who have made this possible. I extend a hearty "Thank you!" to Christ Jones for allowing our group to meet

at the Prizery; to Willa Smith for helping to launch a public awareness of the Writers Studio through her work at the *Gazette-Virginian*; and to Curtis and Donna Brauda for their continued support, encouragement, and faithfulness, not to mention Curtis' work on the website and his tireless efforts in contacting local

newspapers with press releases concerning the upcoming anthology. Without the help of these individuals, this would have been a much more difficult road.

It is now time for us to be looking ahead to the next year of

loving labor. During 2007, I would like to see the Writers Studio expand in membership and take on more visible projects within the community. We will also investigate what will be necessary for becoming a non-profit organization. By January, our first anthology should be finished, and we will be able to prepare for the second annual publication. As we move ahead with these projects, I encourage you to be thinking about ways in which you can participate. ■



How to Make a Booklet

by *Gene Curtis*

A booklet can be created using a standard word processor by implementing non-standard techniques.



- First, set up the page layout for a landscape document. The reason for this is to get a standard 5 ½ x 8 ½ inch booklet. If the page setup were left in portrait mode, you would end up with a 4 ¼ x 11 inch booklet. (In most word processors this is done by clicking on “File” and then clicking on “Page Setup” and then selecting “Landscape.”)
- Next, set the columns to 2 per page, with at least 1 inch spacing between the columns. The space between the columns is where the paper will be folded. (In most word processors this is done by clicking on “Format”, then click on “Columns” and then select 2 columns as well as set the distance between columns to 1 inch or more.)
- Complete your document and get it to look exactly the way you want it to look in the booklet. Don’t use the automatic page numbering that most word processors have. These numbers will not transfer when you transfer the text in a later step. I find it helpful to number each column manually.
- Open a new blank document. (This is usually done by clicking on the icon in the upper left part of the tool bar that looks like a blank page.) Set up the new document just like the one before: landscape orientation, 2 columns with the same spacing.
- Number each column in the new document following the strategy in the diagram. This numbering sequence is the key to making a booklet. By numbering each column before hand, it makes it fairly easy to get the pages placed correctly in the booklet without making mistakes.
- Copy (Hold the mouse button down and drag the cursor over the text in the first document to highlight it, then click “edit” and click “copy.”) and paste (Click in the second document where you want the text to appear, click edit, click paste.). Copy and paste each page from the first document to the second document taking care to insure each page appears in the correct position.
- When you’ve transferred all the pages to the second document, you’re ready to print. Print the odd numbered pages in the second document first. (In most word processors click “File,” click “Print” and select whichever option that says print the odd pages. The odd pages refers to the odd

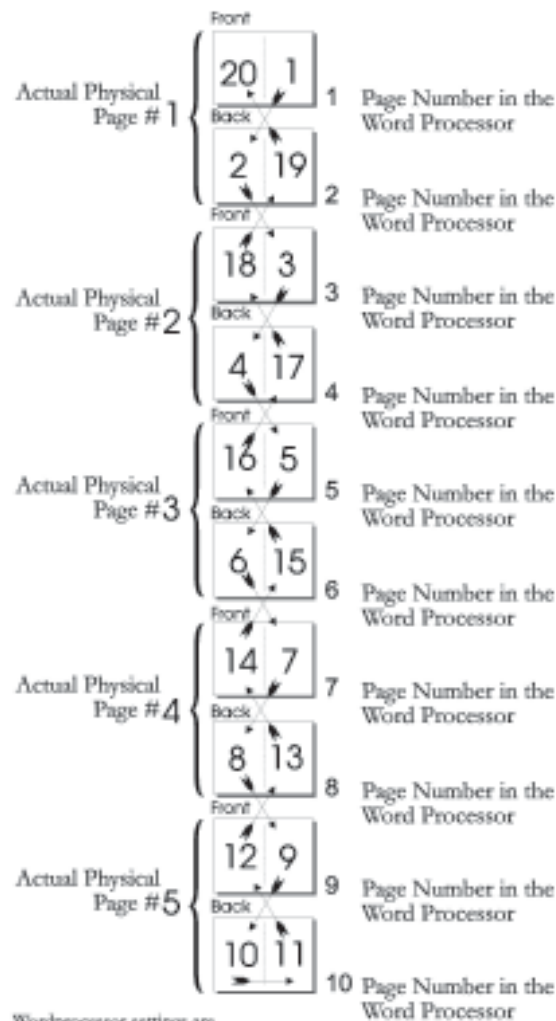
numbered pages in the word processor; not the odd numbered columns or the odd numbered physical pages.)

- To print on the backs of the physical pages, you may have to rearrange the physical pages so that the first physical page is on top of the stack when the physical pages are face down (reverse order). Reload the physical pages into the printer and print the even numbered word processor pages on the back of the already printed physical pages.
- Select a suitable cover stock and lay it on top of the first odd numbered physical page. Fold the physical pages in half, staple or sew the crease, and there you have it, a booklet.

You may not need a 20 page booklet, as pictured in the diagram. Any multiple of 4 pages can be used. (Two columns on both the front and back of the paper equals 4 pages. Any single sheet of paper will produce 4 pages.) In order to make a booklet with more or less than 20 pages, just follow the pattern of the arrows in the diagram. Start with the topmost right hand side (as you're looking at the pages) as number 1 and move down and to the left for number 2, down and to the right for number 3, and so forth. When you reach the bottom, move directly across for the next number and then continue zigzagging your way back to the top. A 12 page booklet would look like the diagram to the right.

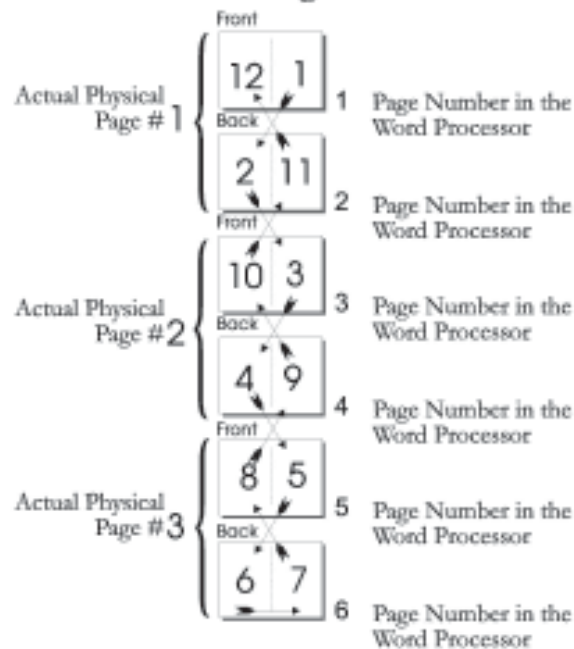
Any size booklet (within reason) can be made using this technique. To number the columns, start at the upper right-hand corner and zigzag down to the bottom, cross over and zigzag back to the top. ■

20 Page Booklet Layout



Wordprocessor settings are landscape orientation, 2 columns with 1 inch or more between the columns.

12 Page Booklet



Guest Speaker: Writing for Magazines

September's meeting of the Writers Studio was an exciting event for us. Columnist, Erica Derr, came and spoke to the group about magazine publishing.

This North Carolina-born food writer knows her way around the kitchen, the library, and the magazine publishing industry. Derr worked for a regional publisher (*Our State*) for six years before realizing her life's mission to become a librarian in June 2005. Working for *Our State* provided valuable insight into the world of editing and publishing magazines and ultimately provided a foot in the door to landing a cooking column. Derr has written the Carolina Kitchen column for *Our State* since September 2000 and began a restaurant review column for *Latitude* magazine in January 2006. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University

of North Carolina at Greensboro in Radio, TV and Film Production and a Master of Library and Information Studies degree from the same institution.

Erica did a magnificent job of explaining the inner workings of magazine publishing, providing inside information on how articles are selected, how editors like to work with columnists, as well as with writers who would like to break into magazine publishing by offering their work on speculation.

Erica's real-life experience in the industry and her illuminating anecdotes not only encouraged members to try their hand at this type of publishing, but they

also made the September meeting one to remember. We look forward to Erica returning in the near future to share her insights into book publishing. ■



The Triumphant Hand

by Shirley A. Mandel

A ridiculed man
 walked into a field one night
 to paint
 a meadow of wonderful stars.
 As evening's shadows deepened,
 and the sky became an endless silk,
 he lifted a brush
 in a steady hand
 to cast the moods of stellar light
 on a canvass.

the man's derision;
 the day flowers closed their eyes
 to ignore him,
 and the insects quipped abroad
 a noise about the futility
 of his plan.

Yet with a brush lit
 with the colors of many starry passions,
 and swirling, swirling
 with the pure wonderment of a girl,
 he painted them.

The grasses fluttered in the breeze
 as if to express in song

MOUNTAINS IN THE FALL

by Mabel Janet Wood

Like paint on a canvas moving left to right,
 The tapestry on the slopes is a brilliant sight.
 With hues that range from red to gold,
 Some colors are dull, while others are bold.
 The changing of the colors is quite unique,
 From mid-thru-late October, the beauty's at its peak.
 If you yell to the slopes, an echo will call,
 "I'll always want to visit the MOUNTAINS IN THE FALL."

Book Review: *The Writer's Way*

by *Scott M. Foran*

As both a writer and a teacher of writing, it is actually rare that I come across a book that I would recommend to both my students and to friends of mine who happen to be writers. However, I am about to do just that.

Jack Rawlins' *The Writer's Way* is a text that was first introduced to me during my own undergraduate days. My freshman English instructor assigned the book as required reading. At first, like many college students, I groaned at the burden of one more textbook to read, but I soon recognized the beneficial nature of this assignment.

Interestingly enough, my English instructor had once been a student of Jack Rawlins, a professor at California State University, Chico, the same program where I also earned a Master's degree in English (although Rawlins had already retired by that time).

The Writer's Way is a text that primarily focuses on college writing (personal, informative, and argumentative), but its insights are easily transferred to any form of writing. Rawlins addresses the major stumbling blocks to the writing process: finding ideas, defeating writer's block, and developing proper motivation.

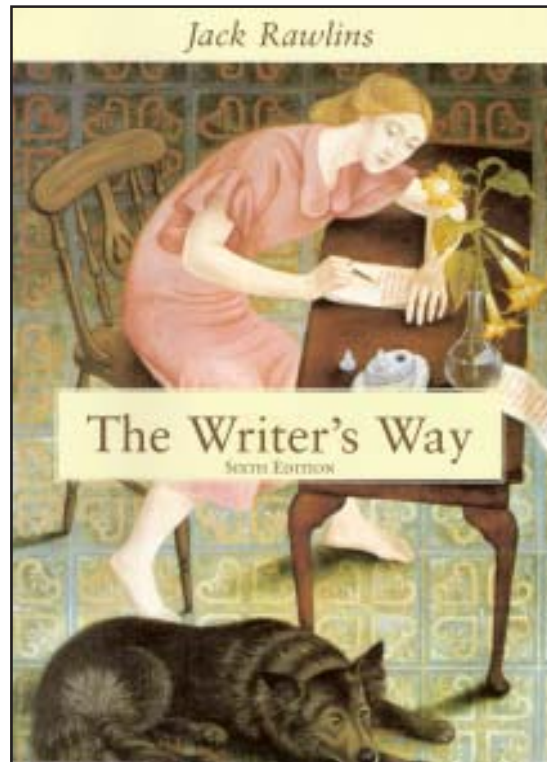
Rawlins then goes on to address our often faulty perceptions regarding the writing process and how to defeat them. According to Rawlins, many of us think (and this is often fostered in our education system) that good

writing must include a large vocabulary, complex sentences, an argument that is absolutely true, profound thinking, or extraordinary experiences. Not so, says Rawlins! The only thing that separates genuine writing from bad writing is a sense

of audience. As writers, especially in academic situations, we tend to write to the wrong audience (the instructor), or to no audience at all (the nebulous everyone). Rawlins encourages writers to keep a real audience in mind during the creation process--either the class in which you are working, or perhaps a small group of real-life readers (the Writers Studio, perhaps?).

Probably the most important thing I gleaned from Rawlins'

book, however, is that we need to completely revamp our approach to the writing process, to think of writing as a skill to be mastered, not as an innate gift of creative ability. He suggests that we take an infant learning language skills as a model. We must realize that it will take time to develop the skill, that we must practice constantly, that we must continually expose ourselves to models, and that it is essentially a self-taught activity (infants are encouraged to speak, but are not really taught how to do it). If we place these sorts of realistic expectations on ourselves as developing writers, we can not help but improve. Both new and used copies of *The Writer's Way* are available on Amazon. ■



Writer's Block: Into the Corner

by *Scott M. Foran*

In a discussion of the ultimate bane of any writer's existence--writer's block--two quotations immediately come to my mind. The first is by the American author, Donald Barthelme: "The writer is one who, embarking upon a task, does not know what to do." The second quotation is penned by the German writer, Thomas Mann: "A writer is someone for whom writing is more difficult than it is for other people."

These descriptions of a writer touch upon two distinct aspects of the sometimes inglorious process of putting words to paper: writing is tough work, and writers do not always know what they are doing. This is not to suggest that writers *never* know what they are doing, but it does recognize that the condition known as "writer's block" is a common one. We sometimes find ourselves paralyzed by the frozen blankness of a whitened sheet of paper, terrorized by the unforgiving babble of our own linguistic mal-constructions. The question, then, is what to do when you find yourself in this inevitable position?

The easy way out of this dilemma is to simply crumple up the paper, toss it in the trash can, and walk away. However, if you are anything like me, you simply cannot resign yourself to this sort of defeat. You must conquer the language and break through the

morass into which you have unwittingly stepped. The best guide I have come across for slowly easing yourself from the quagmire is a list suggested by Jack Rawlins in his text on writing, *The Writer's Way*. Rawlins offers the following advice for anyone who is stuck in writer's block:

1. Give yourself a lot of time.
2. To get stuff out, keep putting stuff in.
3. Don't "work" at thinking, and don't think by the rules.
4. Don't demand that you know where you're going.
5. Call yourself a writer.
6. Write as yourself.
7. Don't write; talk.
8. Use contractions.
9. Write to your favorite audience.
10. Take the ego out of the loop.
11. Purposefully do what frightens you.
12. Thumb your nose at failure.
13. Lower your standards.
14. Quit when you're hot, persist when you're not.
15. Write on a word processor.
16. Sidestep the thing that blocks you.
17. Write un-essays (or un-poems, or un-stories, etc.).

For more tips on writing, be sure to check out Jack Rawlins' *The Writer's Way*, available on Amazon. ■



WRITERS STUDIO SURVEY

In an effort to better serve the members of the Writers Studio, we would like you to take the time to answer a few questions. Please jot down your answers and return them to us--you may give them to us at one of the next meetings, or you may simply email them to: inkwrit@yahoo.com. Thank you in advance for your participation.

- 1) Do you regularly attend the monthly meetings?
- 2) Do you benefit from what is discussed at the meetings?
- 3) Is there anything in particular that you would like to discuss at the meetings?
- 4) Do you read the quarterly newsletter?
- 5) Do you find the newsletter helpful?
- 6) Is there anything in particular you would like to see addressed in the newsletter?
- 7) Do you visit the website on a regular basis?
- 8) Do you find the material on the website useful?
- 9) Is there anything in particular that you would like to see on the website?
- 10) Is there anything not addressed by this survey that you think important? If so, what is it?

Announcements & Events



Meetings

The Writers Studio meets on the second Sunday of each month in the CCI Conference Room at the Prizery, South Boston, VA, from 4-6 pm. This is open to all writers, regardless of experience or publishing history.

Recent Publications

Donna Brauda

"*Scarlet Street* Fully Restored and Digitally Re-Mastered"
Gazette-Virginian (Monday, July 10, 2006)

Melissa Elmes

"Waste Knot, Want Naught"
The Blotter Magazine (July Issue)
 Available: www.blotterrag.com

S.M. Foran

"Solipsis"
The Blotter Magazine (July Issue)
 Available: www.blotterrag.com

S.M. Foran

"Bite of the Bacchae"
Candor (July Issue)
 Available: www.piedmontwritersinstitute.com

Shirley Mandel

"Vital Organ"
Faith Notes (May Issue)

Donna Brauda

"My Garden Notebook"
Southside Garden Chatter (April Issue)

Andy Coe

"Gaugin's Bastard"
The Blotter Magazine (April Issue)
 Available: www.blotterrag.com