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PWC Monthly Meetings

Phoenix Writers Club meets every 3rd Saturday of the month.

NEXT MEETING: Saturday, February 19 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m. via Zoom.

Members: No fee. Guests: Two meetings free, then membership required for further attendance.

RSVP to Navissa Kaiser at navissak@hotmail.com, call or text (480) 200-5191.

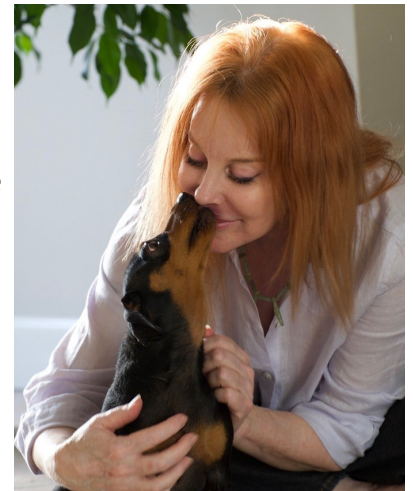
February Speaker

In February, we welcome Melissa Pritchard !

Author of eight published works of fiction as well as a biography and volume of essays, my first story collection, *Spirit Seizures*, received the 1987 Flannery O'Connor Award, the Carl Sandburg Award, an O. Henry Prize, and the James D. Phelan Award from the San Francisco Foundation. A PEN/Nelson Algren finalist, *Spirit Seizures* was named both a *New York Times* Editor's Choice and Notable Book of the Year.

A second collection, *The Instinct for Bliss*, also a *New York Times* Editor's Choice, was awarded the Janet Heidinger Kafka Prize from the University of Rochester and the Claudia Ortese Prize in North American Literature from the University of Florence, Florence, Italy. Stories from that collection won *Pushcart* and *Best of the West* prizes.

My first historical novel, *Selene of the Spirits*, (edited and published by Joyce Carol Oates,) was compared in a *New York Times* book review to John Fowles' *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, and received a Barnes and Noble Discover Great New Writers Prize. Stories from a third collection, *Disappearing Ingénue: The Misadventures of Eleanor Stoddard*, won both *Pushcart* and *O. Henry Prizes*. My satiric novel, *Late Bloomer*, received a starred review from *Publishers Weekly* and was named a *Chicago Tribune* "Best Book of the Year."



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Continued from February Speaker

A fourth collection, *The Odditorium*, was named a *San Francisco Chronicle* “Best Book of the Year,” as well as an *O, The Oprah Magazine’s* Book of the Week. A second historical novel, *Palmerino*, was a Lambda Literary “New and Noteworthy Book,” a *Publisher’s Weekly* “Big Indie Book,” a “Top Title” in *O, The Oprah Magazine*. Inspired by the nineteenth century British feminist writer Vernon Lee, *Palmerino* was named a “Top Title” by The American Library Association’s “Over the Rainbow” LGBT list.

A Solemn Pleasure, the inaugural title in Bellevue Literary Press’s essay series, was named a “Best Books for Writers” by *Poets and Writers*, and a *Publishers Weekly* “Top Ten in Essays, Literary Biography and Criticism.” Praised in *Lit Hub* as a “Best Book about Books,” *A Solemn Pleasure* received a starred review from *Library Journal*, and was praised by *Kirkus* as “heartfelt...bear(s) powerful witness to suffering, compassion and transcendence.”

A five-time winner of *Pushcart* and *O. Henry Prizes* and consistently cited in *Best American Short Stories*, my fiction and non-fiction pieces appear in literary journals, anthologies, college textbooks, magazines and online sites like *Byliner*, *Longform*, *Ulyces* and *Longreads*. Awarded fellowships and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Howard Foundation, the Ledig-Rowohlt Foundation, the Hawthornden and Bogliasco Foundations, I have published in over eighty journals, including *The Paris Review* (3x), *Ploughshares*, *A Public Space*, *Conjunctions*, *Agni*, *Ecotone* and *The Gettysburg Review*, as well as in *O, The Oprah Magazine*, the Wilson Center’s *Wilson Quarterly*, *Amtrak’s Arrive Magazine*, *The Nation*, the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*. A Katherine Schneider Journalism Award finalist, my feature piece in *The Wilson Quarterly* on a former Sudanese child slave, was recognized in the *Atlantic Monthly’s* 2013 Best of Journalism Awards.

As the 2016 Carson McCullers Fellow, I lived in Carson McCullers’ childhood home in Columbus, Georgia, while working on an historical novel, *TEMPEST*. I have completed a novel about the founder of modern day nursing, Florence Nightingale, *BURNING BRIGHT*, along with a fifth story collection, *HOTEL_MAJESTIC*. Guest editors James Wood and Claire Messud published “Hotel Majestic,” in *Ploughshares Summer 2016 Issue*; the story received a *2018 Pushcart Prize XLII* Special Mention. “The Carnation Milk Palace,” published in *Ecotone*, was awarded a *2017 Pushcart Prize XLI*, and in 2020 was included in the *Short Story Advent Calendar* along with other writers including Anthony Doerr, Maggie Shipstead, Lauen Groff and Rachel Kushner. “Mrs. Wisdom,” published in the *Southwest Review* received the journal’s McGinnis-Ritchie Fiction Prize as well as a 2016 *Best American Short Stories* “Distinguished Story” citation. “Mrs. Wisdom” appears in the New York Public Library’s *Subway Stories*, (www.subwaylibrary.org) a literary collaboration with the New York City Transit System. “Palace of Vicissitude” and “Rose Ivoire” appeared respectively in *The Gettysburg Review* and *Agni*. Three recently completed stories in the collection are under submission.

A Note from the PWC President

Happy Valentines Day!

What a pleasure it is this time of year in the Valley. We can write outside with birds singing in the sunlight and pollution warnings. But being a warm-weather person, I'll take it.

Thank you to everyone who gave input about meeting in person. The majority of respondents chose to remain on Zoom for the time being. We all miss the social aspect of the club, especially since PWC was founded as a social club, but we are grateful to have the technology to continue meeting. We would like to plan a lunch or get-together in the spring for anyone who wants to come and will let you know if and when that happens. We will also continue to revisit in-person meetings as the COVID climate changes.

In this era of Zoom, it can be a challenge to get to know more about each other and what each of us writes. I invite you all to take part in sharing a story, poem, blog post, or whatever piece of writing that you would like with the group. Send a piece that you have already written or write a new story about an experience you've had or that a character has had. This is an opportunity to give your writing peers a peek into your writing life. This will go on throughout the year, and I will send each one out in a timely fashion.

I encourage everyone to read the pieces and reach out to your fellow writers to connect as if we were at lunch kibbitzing over a comforting cup of tea.

*"I know nothing in the world that has as much power as a word.
Sometimes I write one, and look at it, until it shines." - Emily Dickinson*

Write on,
Cindi Reiss



Miss Out? January 2022 Meeting Minutes

By Bernadette Inclin

Meeting

President Cindi Reiss called the Zoom meeting to order at 12:38 pm. Twenty-two participants attended.

- Three new members were introduced; Lindsay Oliver, Nathan Slater, and Mary Cornelius. Welcome!
- Cindi requested that when introduced each person describe what they want to do offering an idea or a challenge to write something, and send it in to be distributed with the newsletter. Everyone has a year to write a little something or a story.
- Attendees presented many interesting writing topics that included mantras, a Hollywood clown audition for Bozo the clown, a day in the life of an animal given from the animal's perspective, news of the day, memoirs, euthanizing one's pet, murder mystery, playing in a rock band, a nursery school in New Orleans, and, for one, the desperate love for a neighbor's dog. Other member topics were family history, nontraditional people, i.e., neurotic individuals, excellence in living, academia, exploring what one's dad was like as a child, Bigfoot, continued work on a novel, fantasy writing, memoirs, poetry, memories of early life in California, and child safety.

Member News

Mark Walker is the author of *Different Latitudes*. The board members of the Arizona Authors Association asked him to write a literary journal regarding his travels through Guatemala published in Review Magazine <https://www.review-mag.com>. Another of Mark's articles, *The Saddest Pleasure*, is a journey of two writers released next month by Writer's Press/London. Mark will perform a reading of his recently published article at The Carefree Pavilion on March 27th at 3 pm at this in-person event.

Brad Graber: Tune in on February 22 to Brad Graber's Facebook Live event showcasing his book *Boca by Moonlight*. Let's all help Brad through this process. Check the PWC Facebook page for updates.

Ilsa Manning reminded members to submit an author's picture and a short bio for our website.
ilsamanningwrites@gmail.com

Susanne Brent informed the group that she will speaking immediately after our general meeting with The Arizona Historical Society offering an interactive Zoom education opportunity, *Adding Sensory Details to your Writing*, which will have prompts, a session about the senses, and how to incorporate them into one's writing.

Guest Speaker

“It is not a rejection. It’s narrowing the field to a great relationship with team players.”

~Chantelle Aimée Osmon

Susanne introduced our speaker, [Chantelle Aimée Osmon](#) (click on the link for a full bio) who provided the group an excellent presentation on *Career Building*. Aimée spoke about writing as a career. Is your first book ready? Did you decide to take the self-publishing route? She asks the same questions of a self-published author as a potentially traditionally published author. Did beta readers review the book? Have you thought through all of the things that could make that book potentially better before you decide to put it out there?

She told the group that you don’t have to have a degree to be a writer. There's no requirement but she recommends that writers invest in their continuing education, something that professionals in all areas must do to maintain expertise. She advised that we “keep a jar on your desk and throw loose change in there and that way you can...pay for potentially a conference, or a workshop.” If pursuing self-publishing, invest in a good cover designer and a good editor. If choosing the publisher route, the first thing an agent and editor will read are the first fifty pages.

People who go into a bookstore honestly judge a book by its cover and read the first page which helps them decide if they’re going to buy your book. Agents decide if they’re going to buy the book from the query letter, synopsis, and the first few pages of the manuscript. If that doesn’t grab them, you don’t get that agent. Hook them in the first fifty pages and the agent can’t wait to read more. Have those pages as clean and polished as possible. She also suggests that the end is where you need to capture your reader.

Aimée said to treat your character as a new friend. You don’t know everything about this friend on your first meeting, but as each chapter progresses, the reader gets to know a little bit more. What do you want to know the first time you meet this character?

To make sure everything is balanced and to self-diagnose, Aimée recommends you print out your book. Take highlighters and use, for example, blue to highlight dialogue; another color for descriptions, still another for adverbs, and finally, one for prose.

On a query letter, Aimée found a format that is as concise as possible. Limit your query letter and the synopsis to one page. You can cheat on the synopsis by single spacing, with a break between paragraphs. For your query letter, your first paragraph must have the following; start with, Hello, my name is ...; your book title and genre; word count; is this book in a series or stand-alone; and one sentence that’s going to intrigue and give an idea about what the book is about.

Continued from February Speaker

Aimée emphasized that doing your homework, attending workshops and conferences, learning more about buying books, may get you a freelance edit at conferences, where editors are more open to accepting pitches. Remember, you're investing in your career, and you want to do your research, your homework to find the people who are right for you.

The presentation ended at 2:12 pm.

Board Meeting

The Board Meeting immediately followed and was attended by Cindi, Bernadette, Jenny, Ilsa, D'Anne, Chris, and Navissa. A discussion on in-person meetings indicated that the majority still want to attend Zoom meetings with quarterly in-person socials.

PWC Critique Writing Group

Our critique workshop meets via Zoom every other Friday. The February workshops will be on February 11, 6-8 p.m. and February 25, 6-8 p.m. Email Bernadette Inclan at bsbincoin@aol.com for more information.

Write On Writers (WOW) News

You are always welcome to join us at our Write on Writers (WOW) group after the general meeting. This is a fun general meeting to ask questions about printing, finding an agent, and other questions that often arise with writers. Email Cindi Reiss at writeoncindi@gmail.com for more info.

Call for new Board Officer

We have a need for a new Vice President board officer. Jenny Bilskie-Smith has found that her personal and professional lives leave little time to perform the tasks for her office.

If you know of anyone who might want to take on this role, please contact Cindi.

We thank Jenny for her service.



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Historian	TBD	

Local Writing Activities

Let's make Zines, Sun Feb 6, 12:00—4:00. Come and make your own mini-magazine (aka zine)! During this two-hour workshop, you'll write, design, and publish your own 8-page zine.
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/lets-make-zines-tickets-238444482867?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

Blogging for Business, Feb 8, 10:30—12:00 pm. Using a blog to create social media content and value
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/blogging-for-business-tickets-204910612157?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

Tucson Festival of Books, March 12-13, 2022. 9:30—5:30, University of AZ campus.
<https://tucsonfestivalofbooks.org/>

If you want to get out and experience other activities that might spark the writing creativity bug in you, check out these activities:

<https://www.phoenixmag.com/2022/01/01/February-festivals-events-and-things-to-do/>