



# Valley Byliners Newsletter

Harlingen, TX

February 6, 2011

## NOTES FROM THE January 8 Meeting

The January meeting was our first for the new year. We had a packed house, and I am sure we all enjoyed the meeting. Our first order of business for the meeting was to vote on the stories for Jack's contest. The stories were titled **A Passing Thought** (By Mary Jane Boggato), **An Odd Kind of Christmas** (by Hugh Barlow), **Day Star** (by Rudy H. Garcia), **Stormy Weather on Padre Island** (by Nellie Venselaar), **Had Jesus owned a Puppy** (by Patricia Collins), **Juanito the Cowboy Wins** (by Frank Cortazo), **Nature or Nature** (by Susan Holmes), **Squeaky the Littlest Angel** (by Don Clifford), **The Lawnmower** (by Grace Guido), **Who is this Old Lady** (by Bidgie Webber), and **Voodoo Tags** (by Judy Stevens). **Voodoo Tags** won the contest with 4 votes.

Our second order of business was to bring to a vote some issues discussed at the last board meeting. Don stated that one of the issues discussed was whether or not to publish a new book. The issue was decided against, but a call for longer stories was made. A motion was made to allow stories of up to 4,000 words once every third month (or quarterly). The motion was brought to the floor and passed. The first chance to submit a story with the longer word count will be in March, and will be available every three months after (the next opportunity will be in June, then in September, and the last opportunity will be in December before beginning again in the following March).

Brenda Riojas introduced our guest speaker, Kate Horan, who showed us the finer points that distinguish Between a memoir and an autobiography. I would like to thank Kate for a fun and informative lecture.

Our next speaker (for March) will be Dr. Diana Dominguez. She is a writing professor at UTB/TSC. The February meeting is being replaced by the Writer's Workshop. Registration will start at 8:30 AM, and the workshop will start at 9:00 AM and will last until 3:00 PM. Bring your own lunch or buy one at the event at \$5.00 per bag lunch. The workshop will be taught by Emmy Perez from UTPA.

Emmy Pérez, Assistant Professor, is the author of a poetry collection, *Solstice* (Swan Scythe Press, 2003). A graduate of Columbia University's M.F.A. program, she has received poetry fellowships from the New York Foundation for the Arts and the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown. Her work has appeared in *North American Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Notre Dame Review*, *New York Quarterly*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Indiana Review*, *The Laurel Review*, *Karavan* (translated into Swedish), and other publications. She is interested in service learning and has also taught creative writing in detention centers in New Mexico and Texas for incarcerated women and young adults.

Don Clifford asked me to include these notices in the newsletter:

Kamala Platt's book signing at Pararaphs on South Padre Island, January 28, drew a nice, attentive crowd. She read excerpts from her latest book of poetry, *On the Line*, which takes the reader from the steamy Mayan jungles of Central America to the Middle East, including the torn countries of Palestine and Iraq. A self-styled peace activist, Kamala displayed another book written by some of her colleagues with the jolting title *War is a God that Demands Human Sacrifice*. Both books are interesting and reveal what a talented and imaginative writer can create. She calls her work "...a testimonial of time, place and people I've chosen to embrace in words." Kamala was guest speaker during the January Byliners meeting.

For WRITINGS YOU MIGHT ENJOY

visit

<http://donclifford.webs.com>

Several Byliners participate in the Writers Forum held on the first Tuesday of the month in San Benito at the Narciso Martinez Cultural Center.

A call for Submissions

It is time to celebrate 10 years of writers sharing their stories in poetry, prose and song at the Narciso Martinez Cultural Arts Center Writers' Forum in San Benito. We mark this milestone in May. (Details are coming about the celebration.) We are also working on an anthology and documentary.

To start, we are accepting submissions for the 10th anniversary edition of an anthology of prose and poetry from writers who have shared their work at the Narciso Martinez Cultural Arts Center Writers' Forum in San Benito.

Guidelines

- o Submission deadline: February 11, 2011
- o Genres: prose (fiction and nonfiction), poetry or music (song lyrics)
- o Length: Prose submissions should be no longer than 1,500 words, and poetry submissions should be between three to five pages.
- o Each contributor may submit pieces in more than one genre (five pages maximum).
- o All pieces should have been read previously at the forum.
- o All pieces must be submitted electronically as a Word or RTF document.
- o Do NOT place your name or other identifying information on the poems themselves.
- o E-mail submissions to [nmcacwf@gmail.com](mailto:nmcacwf@gmail.com).
- o Include the following in your e-mail:
  1. The title of each piece (first line for an untitled poem);
  2. Your name, e-mail address and phone number;
  3. The approximate dates you actively participated in the forum (e.g., 2002-2004); and
  4. 75-word biography written in third-person point of view.

Submission Deadline: February 11, 2011

Please spread the word to other writers who have read at the NMCAC Writers' Forum.

Nelly Venselaar's book signing for her novel *Musical Voyage* drew a nice crowd, during a sunny Tuesday afternoon, January 25, at Paragraphs Book Store on South Padre Island. Joni and Grif Montover, the proprietors had to bring in extra chairs to accommodate the visitor overflow.

Nelly read a couple of short excerpts from the book and then responded to many questions from her audience. They learned that *Musical Voyage* is not her first novel but her third. "The other two are at home, on a shelf in the cupboard," she said.

"The story is about half fiction and half real life," Nelly said. As an example, she told how her family escaped from Holland during the WWII German advance of 1940. This real life event is transformed into the opening paragraphs of the story, which describes vividly that escape aboard a Dutch ship that German dive-bombers tried to sink.

Nelly is a long time member of the Valley Byliners. *Musical Voyage* retails for \$14.95 and is available at local book stores or the usual online outlets of Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble (B&N.com)

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**Events of interest forthcoming:**

February 12 -- Valley Byliners Annual Creative Writing Workshop, Poetry, conducted by Emma Perez, UTPANAM -- 8:30 am - 3:00 pm. Harlingen Public Library.

February 17 -- Poets Nite, open mike, poetry, short stories -- 7-9 pm, Savory Perks Coffee Shop, Weslaco.