



Valley ByLiners

# Valley ByLiners

Volume 1, Issue 11

December 2006

## Annual Byliner's Christmas Get Together Dec.2nd



*Bring  
your Holiday Spirit  
Bring a Sweet or  
Savory Treat to Share  
Bring your ideas on  
places to sell our books  
Get an update on the  
status of our book  
Get signed up to pro-  
mote Tales Told at Mid-  
night  
Get coaching on the  
selling side of writing*

All this and more at the Valley Byliner's Annual Christmas Party to be held at Eileen Mattei's house at 4902 Garrett Road on December 2nd at 1:30 in lieu of a December meeting.

**Directions:** From Expressway 83 East or West: Exit at Stuart Place Rd and turn south on Stuart Place, Cross over Business 83 and Stuart Place deadends at Garrett. Go right almost a block on Garrett. Just

after the Wrenn Place gate on the left, turn left into the circular driveway (even though the mailbox says Johnson).

### Coming from

**Harlingen** on Business 83, turn left on Dilworth, then right at the stop sign on Garrett and right into the first driveway on your right.

Eileen's phone number is 421-3936  
call if you get lost!

2007

### MEETING

#### Dates

Jan 13  
Feb 17  
March 10  
April 14  
May 12  
June 9  
July 14  
August 11  
Sept 9  
October 13  
November 10

2nd Saturday  
of the Month

1:30 pm  
Harlingen  
Public Library

**Join Us!**

## Valley Byliner's Annual Workshop—Feb. 17th

Mark your calendar for February 17, the date of the annual Valley Byliners Workshop. This year author and publisher **Joan Neubauer** will teach and motivate writers in two half-day workshops. Joan will guide us to tell it like it was in *Writing the Snippets Memoir*.

If you think a beginning to end memoir is more than you want to tackle, Joan offers techniques to encourage and inspire you to get writing.

For fiction and non-fiction the elements of a story are the same. Joan, who has published biographies, fiction, anthologies, essays and investigative non-fiction, will also lead a humorous and engaging workshop using Goldilocks and the 3 Bears as a model for constructing any piece of writing. **Cost:** \$40 for whole day, \$25 per half (subject to change) At the Harlingen Public Library 9-4 pm.. More details as the event approaches!

**Mark  
Your  
Calendars**

## Focus on Byliner Eunice Greenhaus by Marianna Nelson

Eunice Greenhaus likes to read anything with writing on it (including the Yellow Pages) and likes to write about almost anything, too--from poems, limericks and family stories, to long letters written in green or red ink. Back in college, she would write these colorful letters to make time go faster during dull lectures. "My classmates would peek over my shoulder to see what kind of notes I could be taking. Unfortunately, no one answered with equally long letters."

"[My first stories] were sad books plagiarized from soap operas. My school friends loved them and encouraged me," she says. Later as an employee of the IRS, Eunice wrote limericks during the off-season about her fellow workers. "They were always a big hit and brightened up our day. [They] also kept me looking busy," she says.

Eunice says that on tedious days (of which there were many) in addition to limericks, her tales of daily disasters

raised the morale of fellow workers. One continuing story was the renovation of her kitchen, a job that was supposed to take a week. However, as complication after complication arose, it kept co-workers rolling on the floor with laughter each morning for six months.

Not all the IRS workers, however, were eager to read what Eunice wrote. Assigned to write descriptions of errors made in the Service Center's work flow, she sent weekly reports to administrative and supervisory personnel. "Needless to say, I was not the most popular employee to many supervisors who shuddered at my approach."

As a retiree, Eunice has lived at Fun N Sun in San Benito since 1990. "I arrived in a 29' trailer after traveling all around the country looking for the best place to retire," she says. "It's certainly different from New York City and its suburbs where I spent most of my life. It's exactly what I was looking for!" Eunice

says, "I hope to survive the next five years with my mind intact so that I can continue to write. I'm working on stories about my life and my parents' lives so that my children and their children will know us."



When she writes her stories and poems, Eunice follows her own advice: "Write about something you're familiar with and research the details thoroughly. Let the words flow smoothly."

She believes good writers understand people and the things that motivate them. "They have a sense of humor about life and a tolerance of other's beliefs," she says.

## November Meeting Highlights

by Marge Johnston

We were pleased to have several first-time visitors at our November meeting: Jack King, Harlingen; Pat Tesch, Brownsville; Dee Kristian, Mission, and Leroy Overstreet, Rio Hondo. We welcome all to Byliners meetings – pass the word to others who might enjoy visiting and/or becoming members.

Excitement about our forthcoming book, **Tales Told at Midnight Along the Rio Grande** continued in November. President Verne Wheelwright distributed an estimated timeline for the book, which shows publication by January. "Writing the book is only the first step," he said. "Once you have written it, you have to get it into publication. We have chosen to go on line to an Internet publisher, iUniverse. Then we have to sell the books. The first marketing step is to sell the books to ourselves. All members will

**200**  
*advanced copies*  
**Sold!**

be eligible to receive a 20 percent discount from the retail price of \$20.00."

Members present responded - and ordered around 140 books, with a \$10 deposit each. The balance will be paid when the books are in hand. The initial press run will be 500 copies. Additional copies may be ordered as needed.

In his timeline, Verne suggests scheduling bookstore signings and programs for organizations in January and February, with books to be available in Valley bookstores and for direct sales in March and thereafter.

More book buzz at our December

meeting, which will be on December 2 (first Saturday, not the usual 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday) at the home of Eileen Mattei at 16933 Garrett Road between Stuart Place and Dilworth Road just west of Harlingen. More on the party elsewhere in this newsletter – be sure and mark your calendar for **1:30 p.m. Dec. 2** and bring your favorite Holiday treat to share.

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*Our heartfelt sympathy goes to **Jeff and Ruth Harris** on the death of Jeff's brother. They were out of town to attend his funeral and were unable to attend our November meeting.*

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*Members **Adrienne Ostman** and **Glorene Leuth** continue to have health problems. We miss them so much and hope they will be better soon.*

## New Christmas Book

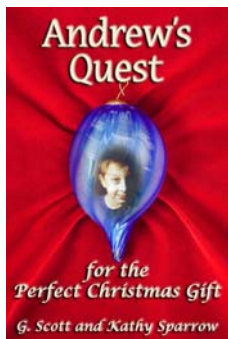
Byliner Kathy Sparrow, along with her husband Dr. G. Scott Sparrow, have published a new Christmas Story titled *Andrew's Quest for the Perfect Christmas Gift*.

The book has received acco-

lades from various reviewers, including the author of the Newbery honor book, *Belle Prater's Boy*, Ruth White. "In this touching Christmas story of values and priorities, Andrew MacClearn is a contemporary nine-year-old boy trying to adjust to the divorce of his parents, merged families and grief. *Andrew's Quest for the Perfect Christmas Gift* is a magical, mystical visit into the dreamy world of a sensitive child, and also a reminder of what is truly important. By story's end the reader, whether child or adult, will feel that he/she has also learned some valuable lessons of the heart."

You can read an excerpt of *Andrew's Quest* on Dr. Sparrow's website, [www.spiritualmentoring.com](http://www.spiritualmentoring.com). For more information contact, Kathy Sparrow at 956-748-4350 or email her at [kathy@kathysparrow.com](mailto:kathy@kathysparrow.com)

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## My Letter to Santa submitted by Sandra Vela

**Dear Santa,**

*I have been a very good girl to my inner writer this year. I fulfilled my commitment to editing our Byliners Newsletter for twelve months, and never missed a deadline. I shared the fun of putting the newsletter together with lots of my friends at Byliners, and they enjoyed themselves, too.*

*I faithfully attended my monthly Byliner's meetings to gather support and encouragement from my fellow writers and offered a word or two of encouragement to them, too. I wrote almost every day this year, Santa, except when I had the flu, and even submitted a story to the Byliner's book project *Tales Told at Midnight Along the Rio Grande*. And guess what, Santa? I'm in the book!*

*I even stayed friends with Ruth Harris after she talked me in to doing NANOWRIMO with her this year. It was a long November. I know you saw me struggling with my story, Santa, but*

*I'm proud of myself for at least giving it all I had. Writing 1700 words a day was quite an accomplishment, especially for me!*

*I read my Writer's Digest every month for ideas and inspiration, but didn't let reading get in the way of my writing every day.*

*I even went to a weekly writing group in McAllen!*

*I hope you remember to include a special something for me on your list this year.*

*I'd like a new story idea every once in a while. No need to give them all to Stephen King and JK Rowling. They've had more than their fair share, I think. I've been doing my best to ignore my inner critic's negative comments, but she's a little loud sometimes. I'm going to leave her in a sack tied up under the tree for you to take her far, far away, but don't let her stay too close to you, Santa or she'll have you thinking that you don't exist!*

Love,

Sandra



# Just Write!

## STC's Interstice Now Accepting Submissions for 2007 Issue

South Texas College's Interstice, one of the Rio Grande Valley's most recent literary journals, is now accepting submissions for the 2007 issue.

The journal continues to serve as a forum for creative visual and written expression. All artists, whether part of the STC community, the Rio Grande Valley community, or the larger national and international communities are encouraged to submit materials for consideration.

### Deadline is December 8, 2006.

"We are issuing a wide invitation for anyone looking to participate because we are looking for talented writers and artists from all backgrounds and all ages," said Joseph Haske, English instructor for STC and managing editor of Interstice.

"This is an outlet for creative expression and our goal is to be a voice and evoke thought and discussion.

Last year we had more than 136 submissions, which gave us the opportunity to expand the journal.

We hope that the number of submissions increases as more people realize the creative and expressive value and opportunity offered by Interstice."

For those interested in submitting, editors of Interstice are accepting a variety of materials for consideration, including poetry, artwork, photography, prose and dramatic pieces, one-act plays and other materials.

All submissions must be original. Additional information about submission requirements and guidelines can be found at

<http://www.southtexascollege.edu/interstice/> or by contacting Joseph Haske at [jhaske@southtexascollege.edu](mailto:jhaske@southtexascollege.edu) or 872-8352.

If you have any questions contact:

Helen Escobar

Coordinator of Public Relations  
South Texas College

P: 956-872-8359

C: 956-369-3254

[www.southtexascollege.edu](http://www.southtexascollege.edu)



## More on New Christmas Book . . Andrew's Quest for the Perfect Gift

Several years ago, just before Christmas, Scott, an assistant professor in the Counselor Education program at the University of Texas Pan American—received the inspiration for the story through a remarkable experience.

"I had awakened around 5:00, and I was sitting on the side of my bed, trying to decide whether to begin my hour of prayer and medi-

tation early, or to go back to bed and begin around 7:00, as usual.

Suddenly, an idea for a Christmas story came to me out of nowhere, as though it was someone else's thought. I clearly heard the words, *'The perfect gift.'*

That night, I began writing," says Sparrow.

"For the next few days, the story filled my thoughts and made me feel happier than I'd felt in a long time.

And then, on Christmas Eve, I began reading the first chapter to my son. The excitement and understanding that I saw in his eyes that night was the greatest reward imaginable."

# WANTED

## Continued Christmas Book

The Christmas story evolved through several drafts— which included a self-published version—until the manuscript became a collaborative effort in its final stages.

“While the initial idea for the story came to Scott, it became a joint project, much like the blending of our respective children into a new family,” says Kathy Sparrow, who has also written a screenplay based on the story. “At times it was difficult but just as Andre discovered in the story, love has prevailed in our lives.”

## Andrew's Quest

### Book Signings Scheduled

Saturday, December 9 at 4:00 pm  
Barnes and Noble 10<sup>th</sup> street  
McAllen

Sunday, December 10 at 2:00 pm  
Brownsville Heritage Complex  
1325 E. Washington Street,  
Brownsville.

Other books by Scott *Healing the Fisher King: A Fly Fisher's Quest*, *Sacred Encounters with Jesus and Sacred Encounters with Mary* both published by Ava Maria Press.

Kathy, who is currently pursuing her masters in literature and cultural studies at UTPA, is an award-winning magazine writer and author of *On the Mother Lagoon: Fly Fishing and the Spiritual Journey*

## Seeking 2007 Newsletter Editor

*Are you Creative?*

Training Included

Knowledgeable and experienced writers on staff.

Lay Out and Organization already in place.

Qualified Candidates are reading this ad.

Yes, You!

Isn't it time you tried something new, something challenging, something different?

**Apply Today!**

## Writing Contests

### Northeast Texas Writers' Organization (NETWO)

2007 Short Story Contest

- Between 1,000 and 2,500 words
- Entry fee is \$8 for each adult submission
- Entries must be postmarked between January 1 and February 20, 2007
- Mail entries to: NETWO, P.O. Box 411, Winfield, TX 75493
- First Place Award is \$100
- First Place winner will be published (with author's permission) in *The Story Teller*, a magazine dedicated to helping writers.
- For more information  
<http://www.netwo.org>

Thanks for sharing, Eileen!

**“We are told that talent creates its own opportunities. But it sometimes seems that intense desire creates not only its own opportunities, but its own talents.”**

**-Eric Hoffer**



## Shameless Plugs (Send us yours!)

Our own **Marge Johnson** received the Volunteer of the Year Award from the Weslaco Chamber of commerce. Not only does Marge contribute her time and expertise to the Byliners, she is a beloved and essential part of several other organizations including the Hidalgo

Historical Society and the Weslaco Museum. *Congratulations, Marge!*

**Bertha Campos'** story "Margarita's Journey," which will come out in TALES TOLD AT MIDNIGHT, was entered in a Writer's Digest contest and won an Honorable Mention. 19,000 entries. *Isn't that great?*

# NEXT MEETING

Saturday, January 13th  
at 1:30 pm

Harlingen Public Library

## Writer's Wanted

The newsletter, like any other publication needs writers to fill white space. Currently, we are looking for short and long feature articles. Share your ideas for future features. If you can't think about what to write, I have LOTS of ideas. . If you want to Volunteer for an assignment—Call me!

Sandra Vela at [mommymanager@yahoo.com](mailto:mommymanager@yahoo.com) or telephone (956)638-7203.

## Official Objectives of the Valley ByLiners

- to enhance and encourage writers in their professions of writing
- to provide technical aspects and information on writing and marketing
- to provide fellowship opportunities to the membership. - from the files of R.Harris

Submit your writer's fairy thought.



## Valley ByLiners

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Writing is like breathing, you don't have to do it well, but you do have to do it.

Don't Forget  
to Write!



# ByLiners

# TO: