

IFWA MEETING
Thursday, May 6, 2021, 7:00 PM
Sentry Box
MINUTES

Information Items: none

New Members: Fatiha (writes fantasy and science fiction – writing a YA novel – is an engineer, voice artist)

Attendance: 29

| Time | Topic | Person |
|-------------|--|---|
| 7:00 PM | <p><u>Crits for May</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crit 1: Jay Weber – horror short story (3500 words) Crit by Sulya Fenichel and Swati Chavda (<i>Jay could not make it because of a Family Emergency – deferred his critique until next month</i>) • Crit 2: Ryan L – first draft fantasy Crit by J. Paul Cooper & Cassandra Arnold | <p>Selene O'Rourke Sulva / Swati</p> <p>J. Paul / Cassandra</p> |
| | <p><u>Crits for June, 2021</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crit 1: Jay Weber – horror short story (3500 words) Crit by Sulya Fenichel and Swati Chavda • Crit 2: J. Paul Cooper – short story – alien race that wants to do a closer study of humans – transfers consciousness to a cat Crit by Rob Easton & Randall Thomas | <p>Selene O'Rourke</p> |
| 8:00 PM | <p><u>Skills Session</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ron Friedman – Game Theory to Help Your Writing See presentation attached | <p>Ron Friedman</p> |
| 8:30 PM | <p><u>Call for Agenda Items</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Randall and Ed – about getting our audit done. | <p>Michael</p> |
| 8:35 PM | <p><u>Braggs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calvin Jim – we're moving • Susan F – 2-3 weeks – will be editor and GoH at Keycon. 2) Life Beyond Us – anthology by European Astrobiological Institute – will fund and will be editing this anthology • Liz G. – Launching book on May 20, 2021 • Rob – sold short story to Tyche – home for the Howlidays anthology • Chris Carolan – novel is a finalist in the Crime Writers of Canada – short list – May 27 is award presentation • Ed 1) Analog gave response 2) email from editor – finishing Three Highland Lads revision 5 – looking for beta readers. | <p>Michael</p> |

| Time | Topic | Person |
|---------|---|---------|
| 8:40 PM | <p><u>Discuss / Decide</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit – Got it all and sent it to Government of Alberta • WWC – IFWA Improv Panel – Zoom Panel – is there more to discuss – we have enough people – it went very well. Used breakouts and it kinda works but it might be easier to use Chat. Might be better. Test webinars to see if that works. Have another dry run. Q&A works differently. Send participants list to Randy. IFWA runs its own improve in June or July. Do an actual improv. We will do a dry run. Will get participants together and then if anyone else can make it, they can be audience. • Candas Jane Dorsey Workshop – Susan gave report – it is at the end of the minutes. • Bedtime Stories Theme – discussed – decided on “Anniversary of the End of the World.” • Aurora Award Announcements: Thank you to all who took part in the nominations for the Aurora’s this year. We are in the final stages of getting the ballot together and will announce the finalists early next week. Stay tuned to your favourite social media platform to for all the wonderful news. • WWC – if you want to participate in the panels, go to the link to see what is available. See this link: https://www.whenwordscollide.org/Become_Involved/Call_for_Presenters.php • Presenter instead of Skills - Discussion – if we want to bring in presenters for free, perhaps contact them and bring person’s name to Michael (President) – give them whatever time they need. Plan it enough in advance – give them an hour and then have only one critique. | Michael |
| 8:55 PM | <p><u>Announcements</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writers in YOUR House - Special Pandemic Edition 4 – June 25 – June 27, 2021, Location: Your Place, Time: June 25, 2021 @ 8:00 AM to June 27, 2021 @ 10:00 PM. Join other writers for an online writing experience. Check in and out on this Facebook Event any time Friday-Saturday-Sunday. Work on your writing projects knowing others are as well. Occasionally note your progress in the discussion comments. See what other writers are doing knowing they support you in your efforts. <i>The next best thing to being there!</i> Link: https://www.facebook.com/events/1443183949372270 • Elizabeth Grotkowski (writing as Elizabeth Whitton) will be launching her YA novel entitled <i>The Gold Flame of Seneca</i>, the second book in her series that began with the Aurora winning YA novel, <i>Houses of the Old Blood</i>. The book launch will be on Thursday, May 20, 2021 at 7:00 PM MDT over Zoom. Go to the Facebook page, say you’re going, and you will get Zoom details just before the book launch. Go to the Facebook page to sign up Link: https://www.facebook.com/events/297614815155635/ | Michael |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TOR Nightfire Horror Imprint – Unagented Submissions – will be open for novel and novella submissions between June 15-June 22, 2021 – Guidelines: https://tonightfire.com/nightfire-slush-submission-guidelines/ | |

Next Meeting: June 3, 2021

Skills Session: Michael Gillett – Reading Aloud Skills

If you have a Presentation you would like to give at an IFWA Meeting, please contact our Skills Session guru, Glen Brown: glenezbrown@gmail.com

Lecture and Workshop Evaluation

Presenter: Candas Jane Dorsey

Cost: \$1400, of which Members paid \$1165 and IFWA paid \$235

Lecture (4 out of 13 responded = 31%)

Highlights

- Did I learn anything? Yes I did. Overall, it felt like an excellent pep talk that wandered all over the map, visiting some very interesting places along the way. Candas is a very insightful, opinionated, experienced writer who I'm delighted to have had a chance to get some time with. She's an excellent example of the type of author we'll want to line up if IFWA does this again.
- I found the lecture informative; I also enjoyed the small group: it allowed for a more relaxed conversational interaction.
- Difficult but important topic, covered with great depth and breadth; Ranged from grammar to theme/passion to completely address the topic; well-paced and allowed for Q&A at the end; positive and inspiring. Candas is extremely knowledgeable and experienced and could answer any question thoughtfully.

Changes

- I would have liked to have a PowerPoint or other handout to follow along and keep for reference.
- I expected to see more people in attendance, and I don't think anyone was there that is not a member of IFWA. Perhaps wider advertising is required.
- In the future, if we have a speaker that doesn't have a tried and true talk they can deliver on a specific topic, it might be worth asking them if they'd be okay with one of us IFWITs doing an author interview with them. That would allow us to hone in on topics we're particularly interested in getting their take on and also get them off the hook for having to prepare something in advance.
- Perhaps some visuals or handouts would have been helpful. I wouldn't want it to have been any longer.
- None.
- We chose the right presenter!

Tech

- The audio failures were a challenge for me to catch all she said. PPT or handouts would have helped.
- I was quite frustrated with the inability to hear a lot of the points she was making, because the ones I could hear were so valuable. Perhaps I'd have a different view of her talk if I'd actually heard it all.
- Audio quality was a problem.

- Worked

Value

- What can you buy for \$5? Cost was not a significant consideration. However, getting an entire weekend of sessions like this at WWC is far better value, not to mention the terrific presentations we see during monthly IFWA meetings already included in our low annual fee.
- I understand that the IFWA bank account is growing. Perhaps an annual budget can be set aside to pay the speaker fee for these types of events
- Sure thing.
- Was it worth an hour of my time? With the tech problems, not so sure.
- The low cost worked for me.
- Yes

Repeat

- The concept is wonderful. Perhaps outside speakers could be invited to present in place of members at Skill Sessions at monthly meetings.
- Yes

Workshop (6 out of 11 responded = 55%)

Issues

- I am still waiting for one crit to come in

Highlights

- Candás' critiques. She found issues where most did not find any. She had lots of great insights in each and every story and kept things very positive and concentrated on the work itself.
- I can't wait to start editing my novel and add all the excellent suggestions. The workshop was amazing. I would do it again in a heartbeat!
- Lunch; also I was pleasantly surprised by how well-spoken everyone was. Everything people said was clear and easy to understand. When people articulated they liked or they didn't like something I could follow their thoughts, having read the stories myself. I did not feel like an outsider. I find the IFWA meeting crits are hard to follow as I have only heard the story

read out loud and I cannot absorb things very well orally as my mind wonders ... mmm.... chips. I did not have this issue on this course.

- Every moment was pretty special; felt very excited to see the quality of the feedback from the team and especially Candice.
- Hard work with rich reward. Highlight was the revelation of Candice sharing her screen. I thought I drilled down pretty well on everyone's works, but my jaw dropped at the markup.
- Pitched for everyone's growth; positive tone; provided me with concrete direction for improvement; new ways to view old concepts, as well as new concepts

Changes

- Online: no change. It might be interesting to do something like it in a retreat setting when we are able to meet in person again.
- I cannot come up with practical changes. There is a time limit in the day and the we packed a lot into it.
- No idea – it went really well. Obviously, in-person is a different beast, but both formats seem to have their advantages. Loved the deep dives Candice took for a few things. If there was time, a round table Q&A option after each manuscript might be interesting. If we chose to read and critique the other group, it might be nice to have the option to sit in on it (but in retrospect, I really had enough by end of Sunday) – but I liked the opportunity to read the other group for sure, no matter.
- Let workshop attendees attend the lecture for free (ie, the workshop cost includes the lecture)
- None.
- No change

Tech

- Worked (4x)
- I had problems with Candice cutting out, but not as bad as on Thursday. When she brought the documents up on the screen I could not read them. A two-page format was impossible for me to see. I have a lap top with 17" screen, so not a small machine. If I was in a business meeting & someone presented me data in this format I would have shut them down. I didn't say anything as this is my first course with IFWA & I assumed I was not supposed to read the data. I assumed Candice was familiar with the software, but that appears to not be the case. I enjoyed using Zoom. I think it is a good medium for this course. I am not sure what we would have gained by doing it in person, other than having lunch together. There was not any downtime in the schedule to socialize.
- It's up to each attendee to have their own tech that works. Candice's tech was slightly below standards for someone getting paid to do this, but on Sunday, it went quite well.

Value

- Yes (5x)
- I didn't think it was great value: ok, but not great. Without paying this amount I doubt the instructors would be interested, so this is the price you have to pay. I was expecting more examples where Candás would point out what needed to be changed and how the author would go about fixing it. I found comments that said 'fix POV' 'Flagging a POV issue to look at later' and text crossed out but no reason why or how to rephrase it to correctly fix the issue. A lot of issues Candás supplied are opinions, 'dated world' 'Very Golden age' 'I see the machine working' 'The POV wavers'. This is the same data I receive back from online crits and from the 'students' participating in the class. The difference is, I have paid for a critique that, while better than most students', is not up to the level of critiques I've received online in its explanation. I expected her role to be more teaching, rather than just another crit. Don't tell me I have an issue, show me how to fix it. I could have asked more pointed questions, but I did not perceive what the issues are with my story and when it was my turn to speak I was overwhelmed by what everyone had said, turning into a turtle to protect my story. Candás' critique did have the most comments and commentary in it, so as I go through the crits I found hers to be the most useful. I did not pick up a lot of pointers from Candás on other people's stories. When she showed how much text was covered by certain topics, I found that interesting. I was expecting to come to this course and have my story shredded and be prepared to vow I would never write another word. Instead I walked away confused, not sure what I need to do to fix things. I'll just keep plugging
- Super good value

Repeat

- Yes – do it every year in Feb/March, in person if possible; otherwise online
- IFWA should do something like this again. I would participate if I was available—despite the value for money issue. I would vote for virtual and we do need someone to act in Candás' role to lead the critiques.
- Yes – or even twice a year (second one a free – or donation - Poor Man's Workshop maybe)
- Yes (4x)

Other

- I enjoyed the social as well.
- Would like to know more from IFWA what they want out of a social – see if something needs changing for more attendees (if we want more attendees)
- Fernando did not show up. He told Shannon that he had a severe Migrane and would try to make the afternoon session, but never showed up at all. Given the circumstances, I would not hold it against him. I got my critique to him and I think others also did so as well.