

# PenChant

To increase awareness and appreciation of the Literary Arts

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 2005

## NAVIGATING THE MAZE

Does your child or grandchild write poetry? Is your friend's son or daughter a budding writer? Do you teach or have connections with teachers in your local school district? Introduce others to our publication, Navigating the Maze, and encourage submissions or just spread the word.

This is the seventh year that Poets and Writers Literary Forum will produce the chapbook of poetry from high school and junior high school students living in Springfield and the surrounding area.

Remember that each contributor to the Maze receives copies of the book and is invited to read their poetry during a Poets and

**Is your friend's son or daughter a budding writer?**

Writers Literary Forum featured reader night. In previous years the reading has taken place at Barnes and Noble Booksellers. This

*By: Anita Stienstra*

year's reading will be Thursday, April 21, 2005 at Barnes and Noble Booksellers or at UIS Studio Theater.

Submission deadline is Friday, March 4, 2005. Along with one to three poems, contributors need to provide name, age, grade, school and contact information (mail or phone).

Typed manuscripts are appreciated but not required.

Please send poems to: NTM, P.O. Box 202, Chatham, IL 62629 or submission@pwlf.com.

And last but not least, if  
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## NOMINATIONS SOUGHT

The spring of 2005 will see the sixth general election for the Board of Directors of Poets & Writers Literary Forum of Springfield. Per our by-laws, a Board of no less than five (5) and no more than seven (7) members must be maintained by a general vote of the entire membership.

Board seats are elective positions with terms of two years, being replenished each year by a general election. To help ensure continuity of service and administration, a split is maintained in the board membership.

Each year approximately half the board seats are open for election. This

year we have three (3) seats to fill at election time. We seek nominees to fill these positions with dedication,



team work and energy. All members willing to dedicate their time and effort in fulfilling the vision and administration of the forum are encouraged to nominate themselves for these openings.

The present Board of Directors consists of seven individuals, four of who have an additional year left

on their Board positions: Siobhan Pitchford, who is in her second two-year term as a Board member and our 'freshmen' Board members Vicki Bamman, Corrine Frisch, and Bill "Dad" Jar-rico.

The three Board members whose terms expire this year are: David Pitchford, Donna Ruyle, and Tim Sheehan.

To nominate yourself, submit a nomination in writing, stating your qualifications and what benefit you bring to the forum leadership. The nominations will be, either in part or whole, printed in the March

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## NOMINATIONS

(Continued from page 1)

2005 issue of PenChant. Include in your nomination letter, all information you believe necessary for the purpose of winning a position on the Board.

Deadline for submitting nominations is February 20, 2005. Send them via email to: Dad@pwl.com or snail mail to PWLF Election Committee, P.O. Box 5666, Springfield, IL 62705.

If you would like to nominate another member for a position on the board, you must first secure agreement from the nominee that he or she is willing and able to serve. Please include a statement in the nomination information you submit verifying that you have spoken with the nominee and they have agreed to serve, if elected.

This is an opportunity for members to make their voice heard in the future and destiny of our organization. We need leaders who can continue to guide our efforts to *increase support and appreciation of Literary Arts*.

## TRIVIA NIGHT

Get your team together for the joint-fundraiser of PWLF and Advocates for Academics! The event will be held on Saturday night, February 5th, at UIS in the PAC conference rooms C&D—easy to find from the circle drive. Doors open at 6:00 p.m. and the game begins at 7 p.m.

The cost is \$10 per person with teams/tables of 6 to 8 players each. Snacks and soft drinks will be available for purchase.

We promise—no James Joyce questions for actual points! Reserve your spot by emailing: prez@pwl.com

If you would like to help out, instead of playing on a team, email Siobhan at siobhan@pwl.com.

## VINTAGE VISIONS

*“Art compares to nature like wine to the grape.”*

*Franz Grillparzer (1791–1872)*

Since the earliest civilizations, wine has been linked with poetry and song. Vintage Visions, the Poets and Writers Literary Forum’s 2005 anthology, will explore the pleasures, perils, and inspirations of the fruit of the vine.

So pour yourself a glass, fill your pen, and send your vine lines to:

Liz Huck  
ATTN: Vintage Visions  
2 Verna Drive  
Springfield, 62702

or email them to:

ehuck@springnet1.com

And put “Vintage Visions” in the subject line.

We hope to bring out VV with the grape harvest in the fall, so get your visions in by the end of June, please. And watch for announcements of special events and readings to celebrate the release!



I challenge you all to write a poem—funny, sad, angry, passionate, whatever your fancy—to read on February 16th at our IMO’s open mic. Use the following words in the poem:

- |            |           |            |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| 1. Soft    | 5. Bound  | 9. Trickle |
| 2. Render  | 6. Grove  | 10. Last   |
| 3. Borrow  | 7. Squint |            |
| 4. Insight | 8. mimic  |            |

## NTM

(Continued from page 1)

you would like to help with reading, proofreading, advertising, public relations, or any other task please e-mail or phone me. Your work will be appreciated.

Anita Stienstra  
Publisher/Editor  
Navigating the Maze



## VINTAGE VISUAL

Calling all the artistically gifted—we want your designs for the cover of Vintage Visions.


For a \$5 entry fee, you have a chance for a cash prize of at least \$25 (exact amount depending on number of submissions) plus a free copy and your name on the year’s hottest poetry and prose anthology!

We’re planning full color this time, so let your imagination roam, and watch for further details in the March 2005 issue of PenChant.

# FEBRUARY 2005

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
			Open Mic at IMO's 7:p.m.			Trivia Night— 7 p.m. UIS- PAC Conf. Rooms C&D. Doors open at 6 p.m.
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
			Open Mic at IMO's 7:p.m.			
20—Deadline for Board Nominations	21	22	23	24	25—Deadline for March Issue of the PenChant	26
		Board meeting IMO's 7:p.m.				
27		28				

# March 2005

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 Open Mic at IMO's 7:p.m.	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16 Open Mic at IMO's 7:p.m.—Celebrate the Irish!	17 	18	19
20	21 PWLF Board Meeting at IMO's 7:p.m.	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30 Featured Reader— Bob Bartel—at IMO's 7:p.m.	31		

## THE CUTTING EDGE OF DECORUM

By: *Kit Stokes*

Even among experimental poets, some forms continue to resist innovation. Word separation, "correct" spelling, and left to right reading seem the most basic conventions in English. Mark Twain made few converts when he observed that it's a damned poor speller who knows but one way to spell Mississippi. And even e e cummings did not long persist in eliminating the spaces between words, though medieval monks did so when copying manuscripts.

Our practice of reading from left to right, admittedly an arbitrary cultural convention, seems inviolable, though Arabic script reads from right to left. Mix the two and you get boustrophedon, from the Greek word for ox.

After plowing a row, say, from left to right, the ox reverses direction and plows the next row from right to left-and so on down the field. Hence the following lines:

The Muse Tests the Envelope

Loosened early my syntax was,  
the better to show within my lines  
the press of simultaneity.

Punctuation proved a drag  
much too indebted to rational norms  
to snare the idiosyncratic flux

My ,muse fair lost me when he fled  
phrum stan dardformz ofprop perspelng  
then he went boustrophedon

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I-  
,yb delevart ssel eno eht koot I  
And that has made all the difference.  
sekotS tiK-

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## ASSIMILATING WHAT WOLFF SAYS

By: *David Pitchford*

Now in what should be the final semester of my Masters program, I'm finally taking my first class on writing fiction. As a requirement of the course, I've been reading literary journals (other than our beloved *Prism*). So it is that I read the Tobias Wolff interview in the Fall 2004 issue of *The Paris Review*. And what an interview!

Wolff has many insights into the dilemma many of us face: becoming writers who write. He touches on what inhibits writers early in a writing career: "the appetite for 'experience' is natural to young writers" (62). With all the "experiencing" we do in our twenties, how can any of us find the time to write of it? And then there's the whole "be a grown up" stage we go through for the next decade or two – especially if kids come into the equation.

Wolff tells us that working writers lead boring lives because, "it's very hard work and it absolutely requires all the conditions that make one a bore: you have to be alone a lot, you have to be rather sedentary, you have to be a creature of routine, you have to fetishize your solitude, and you have to

become very, very selfish about your time" (47-48). He talks a great deal of what hard work writing is and what discipline it takes to be a productive writer. He is dead-on right, too. Writing is the process of think, write, read critically, re-write, edit, read critically, re-write, edit. And then there is the whole get-it-published game – the most disheartening of games for many writers.

On the subject of poetry versus fiction Wolff says, "Precocity is more common among poets, perhaps for the simple reason that poems are shorter than stories and novels. Most poetry is built on the flash, the glimpse, the stab of insight, whereas fiction is a kind of beaverish gnawing away, and the greater length makes the youthful weaknesses of the writer more apparent" (68). I find this very true. Fiction takes more patience, and patience takes more time. But this is not to say that poetry is an instant art, merely one that tends to create a burst of energy conducive to sin-

gle-sitting drafts. Fiction often requires several sessions of writing to produce one draft, whereas each poem is often drafted in a single session. Of course, it sometimes takes as long to craft a poem as it does fiction, but as a rule not.

So the answer is clear; I need to be more selfish with my time and commit more of it to writing. Scheduling sessions in a way that produces a steady rhythm and habit of writing would also facilitate the cross-over from aspiring poet/novelist to productive writer. Meantime, I have work to do, a thesis to write, editing and publishing to do – like Wolff says, "Writing's hard. You'll take any out, if you can" (46).

As an editor, I find this quote from Wolff my new favorite: "I have my tastes, but I don't read with the eyes of God, I know that." Remember this next time you have a hard time swallowing a piece of criticism, and imagine the person who offered it as saying this.



Poets & Writers Literary Forum

P. O. Box 5666  
Springfield, IL 62705

Email: [submissions@pwlf.com](mailto:submissions@pwlf.com)

If you are interested in contributing to the PenChant, please contact any PWLF Board member.

It is through the contributions and energy of all that we are successful.

**PWLF**

*To increase awareness and appreciation of Literary Arts*



## Poets & Writers Literary Forum of Springfield Calendar of Events

Feb. 2nd—7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Open Mic at IMO's

**Feb. 5th—Trivia Night—**

**PWLF Fundraiser**

**in partnership with Advocates for Academics**

**UIS PAC—7:00 p.m.**

Feb. 16th—7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Open Mic at IMO's

Feb. 21st—7:00 p.m. PWLF Board Meeting at IMO's

Mar. 2nd—7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Open Mic at IMO's

Mar. 16th—7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Open Mic at IMO's

Mar. 21st—7:00 p.m. PWLF Board Meeting at IMO's

Mar. 30th—Featured Reader at IMO's—Robert Bartel

Every Thursday night at 7:00 p.m.—Open Mic at Sunsup Koffee Kafe  
hosted by Jill Manning



## A WORD OR TWO FROM VICKI

The first word this month is: response. I'd like a few words from readers about the second word of the month.

The second word is flamboyant. Before I go any further or, rather, before YOU go any further, please write down what the word suggests to you: any synonyms, any persons, any scenes or ideas, anything at all that you relate to the word flamboyant.

And send them to me at [Vicki@pwlf.com](mailto:Vicki@pwlf.com). While you're on-line, check out the [pwlf.com](http://pwlf.com) web site if you haven't already.

"Response" has several related meanings: an answer by word or act, or the reaction of body or mind to a stimulus, or the words said or sung by the congregation or choir in answer to the minister. What I am asking for is really three forms of response: the reaction of your mind to the word "flamboyant," the further reaction of writing it down. E-mailing it to me is the "answer by word or act" to my request.

What about the word flamboyant? It comes from the word "flame" and is used for flame-like ornamentation or forms, having wavy lines or flame-like curves, or characterized by lines that spiral and wave in flame-like patterns. That meaning has

been superseded, although not replaced by these uses: 1. adj. 1. flaming, gorgeous, or striking in a showy way, e.g. flamboyant colors, a flamboyant sunset. 2. very ornate; much decorated; florid, e.g. flamboyant architecture. 3. given to display; ostentatious; showy; swaggering, e.g. a flamboyant person, a flamboyant speech.

I like vigorous words that create pictures and moods. Some words are overused to the point that they have lost any real meaning. That has happened to "absolutely," which I hear being used in place of "uh-huh." Has it happened to "flamboyant"? The meanings of words evolve, and during that process, the associations people have with a word vary quite a bit, depending on their understanding of that word. (I wish I could think of a good example but I can't.) I suspect that may be the case with flamboyant and I'd like to check it out.

If my idea has any merit, I'll let you know. If not, I'll try to think of something creative to do with your responses. To finish, here is a gratuitous addition to the words from Vicki: flamdoodle. A noun, it means "nonsense." It wasn't in my spell-check dictionary. Maybe my idea is flamdoodle. We'll see.