

Welcome to a new year of our little Newsletter

Monthly Conversation is a place of encouragement and exploration of the art and craftsmanship of writing.

This year we will explore the basic principles of great writing. Join us and help us form a message of encouragement and possibilities.



The Author's Choice

*My mind's eye gently forms the words that
bring you to life.*

*I see you and know you. You are a part of
me.*

*You will tell the tale that seeks release from
deep within my soul.*

*You will bring my precious story to the
world.*

Is this what the Creator feels ...

r.e.joyce

<http://vismgt.com/vmpublishing/>

Artwork by Lea Faske - <http://www.leafaske.com/>

Do you know someone who would be interested in reading our little newsletter?

Please have them simply send us an email so they can get every issue of *Monthly Conversation*. Send us an email to [Newsletter Editor](#) and we will be happy to include you on our mailing list!

Writer's Top Ten New Year's Resolutions

If you're looking for some realistic writing goals for 2016, here's a guide to get you started.

#1. Resolve to think of yourself as a writer.

One of the hardest parts of becoming a writer is that when you're still trying to break into the field, you don't feel like a bona fide writer until you've been published. But that's not true. Being a writer isn't defined by having an agent or publisher. It's defined when you commit to a professional approach to your writing.



#2 Resolve to write on a regular basis, daily if possible.

Writers write. Books don't happen overnight. It takes days, weeks, sometimes months slogging out the words to get a finished manuscript. The key is to not get paralyzed with fear as to whether the writing is good enough, or if anyone will like it when it's finished. You must keep moving forward and develop as a writer through a lot of trial and error. This only happens when you show up on a regular basis and write.

#3 Resolve to finish a major work this year.

So often I hear of writers who spend years working on the same book. No doubt there are great works of literature that demand that, but if you're hoping for a more commercial book then consider what's stopping you from finishing it. Set a deadline. Force yourself to show up at the computer. Put out words even when it's hard, when it feels like you have no inspiration. Sometimes that's when the greatest inspiration strikes. Rather than let another year go by that is piled up with excuses why you didn't finish that story, get 'er done.

Continued on Page 4

Advertisement by Editor of Newsletter:

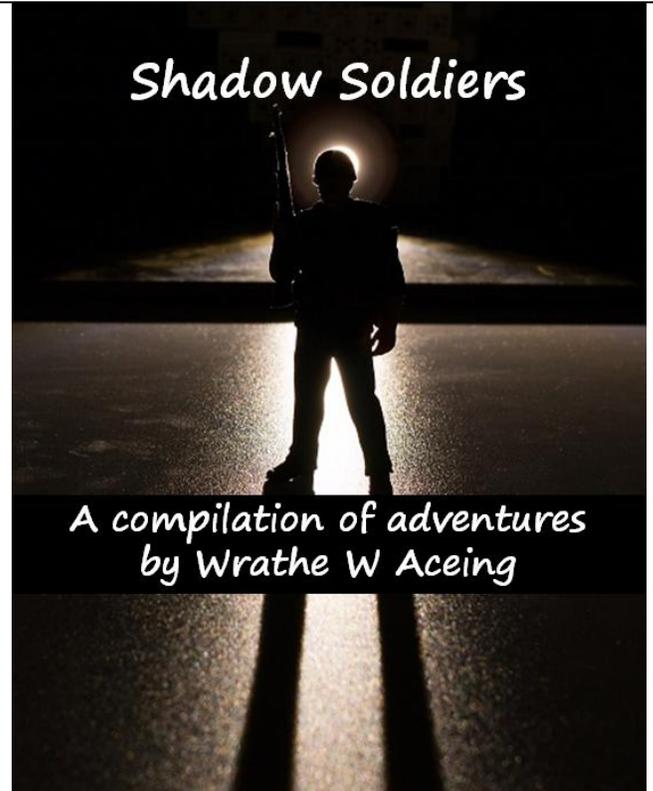
We are launching our first thriller and would love for you to join us in fostering its publication

It is a simple and easy process that will open you to many new authors and some really good books to read.

- ✍ You will only be voting on the publishing of the book. You do not have to decide to buy until the book is approved.
- ✍ We only have 27 days to get enough followers to like our book to help advance us to publishing.
- ✍ You simply follow the link, view the excerpt and vote.

I want to thank you in advance and hope you enjoy the peek at our first military thriller compendium.

*Respectfully,
Wrathe W. Aceing*



Shadow Soldiers Launches on Kindle Scout. Help us get published.

<https://kindlescout.amazon.com/p/34O0UFG7UE473>

Notice to all readers of this Newsletter

If you have a book you would like to introduce, especially new books looking for an audience please send us an email to [Newsletter Editor](#) and we will be happy to include work with you on getting it in the next issue.

DreamWriter Press Submission Guidelines We are current looking for the following:

- ✍ FICTION: thrillers, suspense, mysteries, mainstream, action/adventure, Christian, romance, children and teen.
- ✍ NON-FICTION: how-to, self-help, true crime, current affairs, women's issues, biography, history, travel, sports, spiritual, inspirational and cooking.
- ✍ *Please no sexually explicit material, we embarrass easily!*

Resolutions continued

#4 Resolve to learn more about your craft.

Writing is an evolving process. Like any sport or profession, you cannot get better at it unless you both practice at it and get great coaching. Practice comes in many forms. Writing. Studying other writers. Reading books in your genre. Coaching can be found in the form of the many great editors who work on a fee-for-service basis, or by joining a writing group that can offer feedback by peers. Attend conferences in your specific genre so you can meet other aspiring writers and learn from the pros how the business really works.

#5 Resolve to submit your work.

As scary as it is to face rejection, having a manuscript gathering dust in your drawer won't advance your dream of being a writer. Better to be rejected and take the lumps and be part of the group of rejected writers than the group that never tried.

#6 Resolve not to listen to the voice in your head.

If you're a writer, you know what voice I'm speaking of. The voice that whispers *it's too hard. It's not good enough. Why bother?* It is so easy to shoot ourselves down. There are plenty of people out in the world who will do that when you do get published, so resolve to be more supportive of your dream. Think positively when you're writing. Remember writers have the greatest job in the world. They get to create magic. Transcend reality. Suspend belief. Create anything they can imagine without limits. So be nicer to yourself. You can be a good writer if you work at it. If you're lucky and have both the talent and the craft, you can be great.

#7 Resolve to try something different.

As writers develop their voice, they can sometimes get stuck in a rut. Their voice grows stale, repetitive, an echo of every other voice they have heard. A compendium of sameness. Resolve to break out of your rut this year. Write in a fresh voice. Expand your idea of what is possible. Inject some new life into your characters. Challenge them to rise to new heights and they will take you with them.

Continued on Page 7

Monthly Conversation's Resolutions

This is a new and exciting year for our little newsletter and we want you to be a part of it. We need your encouragement and your words of wisdom. To help you get involved, please review the monthly topic outline of 2016 on the next page. Find the topic dearest to your heart and commit to send us your article for inclusion in the newsletter.

Each and every day we have two choices. Either complain or find the positive in life.

https://www.facebook.com/powerofpositivity/photos_stream

This year add one new positive website per month to your quickie list of goodies. A place you can go to be revitalized. There is none better than the Facebook page of PoP by Kristen Butler and Christopher Butler

We create original images and content on an array of topics like: Positivity, Inspiration, Relationships, Quotes, Health, Wellness, Law of Attraction, Good News, Spirituality, Yoga, Mindfulness, Gratitude, Happiness, Peace, Love, Healthy Living and more. Remember: Everyday is a day to shine. Shine On!

Love & Light,
Kristen & Chris

This January, why not start the year with an empty jar and fill it with notes about good things that happen. Then, on New Years Eve, empty it and see what awesome stuff happened that year.



All original posters, photos, text is the original work of Power of Positivity. Kristen Butler and Christopher Butler © 2009-2015. All rights Reserved.

Join us by writing!

On the next page we have a calendar of ideas for the coming year. Take a look and get your pens writing about topics you see and feel encouraged to write about. We would love your input!

Have another topic close to your heart – Send it along there is always room for more!

2016 Calendar of Topics for Monthly Conversation

<i>Month</i>	<i>Main Topic</i>	<i>Principle</i>
<i>January</i>	Resolutions—I am author, hear me roar!	<i>Choice</i>
<i>February</i>	The story of you—building your author profile for the world to see.	<i>Vision</i>
<i>March</i>	Maintain the urge—allowing your passion to fill the pages.	<i>Passion</i>
<i>April</i>	Sharpen your craft—it is in the continuing process of learning that the art form takes shape.	<i>Education</i>
<i>May</i>	Writing process—now is the best time for picking up the pen. Missed it—don't worry—now is here again!	<i>Perseverance</i>
<i>June</i>	Critiques—pesky and sometimes painful allow for growth.	<i>Acceptance</i>
<i>July</i>	Open to the journey—allow others to join your writing quest—your next great mentor may be ready to meet you.	<i>Sharing</i>
<i>August</i>	The gift of giving—a thimbleful of love shared brings oceans of happiness in return.	<i>Support</i>
<i>September</i>	We, the place of togetherness—it is in community that we find the encouragement we need.	<i>Community</i>
<i>October</i>	Sharing without plagiarism—once the dictionary was printed all books existed. Now we just reform the words into new experiences for others to embrace.	<i>Nurture</i>
<i>November</i>	Transformation from craft to art—it is not in the grammar but the heart of the message where art exists.	<i>Excellence</i>
<i>December</i>	Read more—It was in reading that we found the gift of our writing.	<i>Beginnings</i>
<p><i>Have another idea or article for the newsletter ...</i> Be sure to email the editor and we will do our best to get you published ... It is all about sharing the word ...</p>		

As we progress as writers, we maintain the right to be the writer we choose.

The first principle is CHOICE. Look within and choose to be what you are meant to be.

In this way, your writing will always come from the center of your being, a place where truth resides.



Resolutions continued

8 Resolve to expand your network of writer friends.

Some of my best friends are fictional. Writers tend to be loners. This year, resolve to build your network of writer friends. Make time to have coffee with them and talk shop. Find friends to go to conferences with. Your resolve as a writer will grow and your connection to writing will be strengthened by your friendships with kindred spirits.

9 Resolve to read.

The surest path to being a great writer is to read books by great writers. Read every book you can get your hands on. Don't be afraid to scribble on them, circle metaphors you like, underline moving passages; highlight a turn of phrase that made you choke up. As you dig into other writer's secrets, you develop a knowledge that will help you in your own writing.

10 Resolve to never give up. Ever.

About Alane Adams

[Alane Adams](#), [Legends of Orkney](#), [The Red Sun Book](#), [Writing Life](#)

Having been an avid reader my entire life, books based on mythology have always fascinated me the most. I think it's the idea of magic and the unlimited potential behind the surreal. Building an entirely new world like the fantastical realm of Orkney in my series has been a wonderful challenge. To learn more about my foundation visit: www.riseupfoundation.org.





Right and wrong is based upon your inner truth. Find it and you will never lose your way.

What is Good Writing?

At the Writing Center, we're often asked "What makes good writing?" or "What makes someone a good writer?" Instructors wonder whether anyone can really be taught to write and why their students don't know how to write by now. To begin to understand what makes writing, and writers, "good," we need to ask the larger question "What is writing?"



It's easy to agree on the definition of writing if we limit it to something like "putting pen to paper" or "typing ideas into a computer." But if we look more closely at the elements of the act of writing, the definition comes to life. The following paragraphs might prompt your thinking about how writing happens for your students and for you.

Writing is a response.

We write because we are reacting to someone or something. While writing can feel like an isolating, individual act—just you and the computer or pad of paper—it is really a social act, a way in which we respond to the people and world around us. Writing happens in specific, often prescribed contexts. We are not just writing—we are always writing to an audience(s) for some particular purpose. When we write, we do so because we want, need, or have been required to create a fixed space for someone to receive and react to our ideas. Understanding this social or rhetorical context—who our readers may be, why they want to read our ideas, when and where they will be reading, how they might view us as writers—governs some of the choices we make. The writing context requires writers to have a sense of the reader's expectations and an awareness of conventions for a particular piece of writing. The context of the piece further determines the appropriate tone, level of vocabulary, kind and placement of evidence, genre, and sometimes even punctuation.

Continued

Writing is linear.

In order to communicate effectively, we need to order our words and ideas on the page in ways that make sense to a reader. We name this requirement in various ways: “grammar,” “logic,” or “flow.” While we would all agree that organization is important, the process of lining up ideas is far from simple and is not always recognized as “writing.” We assume that if a person has ideas, putting them on the page is a simple matter of recording them, when in fact the process is usually more complicated. As we’ve all experienced, our ideas do not necessarily arise in a linear form. We may have a scattering of related ideas, a hunch that something feels true, or some other sense that an idea is “right” before we have worked out the details. It is often through the act of writing that we begin to create the logical relationships that develop the idea into something that someone else may receive and perhaps find interesting. The process of putting ideas into words and arranging them for a reader helps us to see, create, and explore new connections. So not only does a writer need to “have” ideas, but the writer also has to put them in linear form, to “write” them for a reader, in order for those ideas to be meaningful. As a result, when we are writing, we often try to immediately fit our choices into linear structures (which may or may not suit our habits of mind).

Writing is recursive.

As we write, we constantly rewrite. Sometimes we do this unconsciously, as we juggle words, then choose, delete, and choose again. Sometimes we do this rewriting very consciously and conscientiously as we reread a paragraph or page for clarity, coherence, or simply to see what we’ve just said and decide whether we like it. Having read, we rewrite the same phrases or ideas to make a closer match to our intentions or to refine our discoveries through language. The process of writing and then reviewing, changing, and rewriting is a natural and important part of shaping expression for an anticipated audience. So while we are trying to put our words and ideas into a logical line, we are also circling round and back and over again.

Continued

Make your own pathway in life but find a measure so you can know your success or failure.

By measuring ourselves, we present the best of us to the world.





When you choose to write you choose to open up a part of yourself to the world. Know that you are truly valuable and your writing is possible.

Writing is both subject and object.

We value writing because it reveals the personal choices a writer has made and thereby reveals something of her habits of mind, her ability to connect and shape ideas, and her ability to transform or change us as readers. We take writing as evidence of a subject or subjective position. Especially in an academic environment, we read written language as individual expression (whether or not multiple voices have informed the one voice we privilege on the page), as a volley from one individual mind to another. That said, writing also serves as an object for us, a “piece” or a “paper” whose shape, size, and function are determined by genre and conventions. While we don’t think of writing as technology, it is also that; it allows us to remove a person’s ideas from the confines of her head and fix those ideas in another place, a place where they will be evaluated according to standards, objectively. Here is where our sense of what counts as “good” writing develops. We have created objective (although highly contextualized) ideals for writing that include measures of appropriate voice, vocabulary, evidence, and arrangement. So while writing is very personal, or subjective, it creates an objective space, a place apart from the individual, and we measure it against objective standards derived from the context. It creates space both for the individual (the subject) and the idea (the object) to coexist so that we can both judge the merits of the individual voicing the idea and contend with the idea on the page.

Writing is decision making.

It may seem obvious, but in order to get something on the page, a writer chooses the words, the order of the words in the sentence, the grouping of sentences into paragraphs, and the order of the paragraphs within a piece. While there is an ordinariness about this—we make choices or decisions almost unconsciously about many things all day long—with writing, as we have all experienced, such decision-making can be a complex process, full of discovery, despair, determination, and deadlines. Making decisions about words and ideas can be a messy, fascinating, perplexing experience that often results in something mysterious, something the writer may not be sure “works” until she has auditioned it for a real reader.

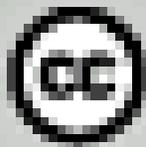
Continued

Writing is a process.

Contending with the decision-making, linearity, social context, subjectivity, and objectivity that constitute writing is a process that takes place over time and through language. When producing a piece of writing for an audience, experienced writers use systems they have developed. Each writer has an idiosyncratic combination of thinking, planning, drafting, and revising that, for him, means “writing” something. No matter how an individual describes his process (e.g., “First I think about my idea then dump thoughts onto the computer,” or “I make an outline then work out topic sentences”), each person (usually unconsciously) negotiates the series of choices required in his individual context and produces a draft that begins to capture a representation of his ideas. For most people, this negotiation includes trial and error (this word or that?), false starts (beginning with an example that later proves misleading), contradictions (I can’t say X because it may throw Y into question), sorting (how much do I need to say about this?), doubt about how the idea will be received, and satisfaction when they think they have cleared these hurdles successfully. For most people, this process happens through language. In other words, we use words to discover what, how, and why we believe. Research supports the adage “I don’t know what I think until I read what I’ve said.”

Altogether these elements make writing both an interesting and challenging act—one that is rich, complex, and valuable. What else is writing for you? Think about what the definitions discussed here miss and how you might complete the sentence “Writing is like...” From your experience as a writer, what else about writing seems essential? How is that connected to what you value about the process of writing and the final pieces that you produce?

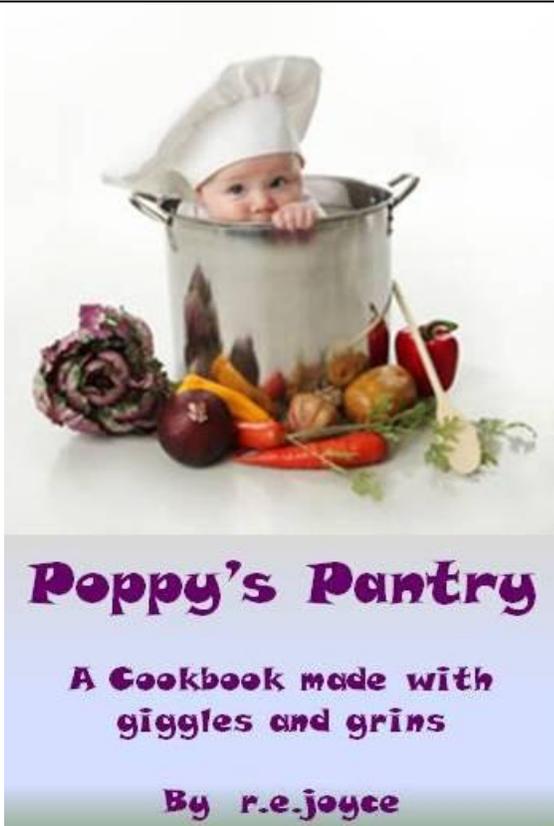
For more information about student writing or to talk with someone about your writing assignments, contact Kimberly Abels kabels@email.unc.edu at the Writing Center.



SOME RIGHTS RESERVED

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 2.5 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/).

You may reproduce it for non-commercial use if you attribute the source: The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



Monthly Recipe Adventure

We have begun a yearlong cooking adventure to create a cookbook that is - fun.

We would love to have you participate in this adventure.

Each month we are going to include a new recipe being developed in our test kitchen. (Location of the test kitchen is kept secret - even from Poppy... We believe it is somewhere under the pile of dishes he forgot to do...)

Your task, if you wish to participate is to:

Try the recipe and comment - help us make it better and add a family story or two to the adventure.

Take a picture of your completed dish and send it in as a jpg file...

Or add a recipe of your own and become part of the cookbook!

All proceeds of Poppy's Pantry and Grandma's Cupboard will be donated to North Texas Children's Hospitals.

Poppy's Pantry Recipe Listings

#	Recipe	Main Ingredient	Meal Course	Occasion / Holiday	Season
1	PP's Apple Apple Pie	Apples	Dessert	Thanksgiving	Fall
2	PP's Cranberry Flan	Cranberries	Dessert	Thanksgiving	Fall
3	PP's Mac & Cheese	Macaroni	Main		
4	PP's Irish Soda Bread	Flour	Bread		
5	PP's Eggs in the Pot	Eggs	Main		
6	PP's Chicken and the Piggie	Chicken	Main		
7	PP's Pork and Beans	Pork	Main		
8	PP's Spicy Stuffed Peppers	Peppers	Main		
9	PP's Potato Brunch	Potatoes	Breakfast		
10	PP's Biscuits and Gravy	Flour	Main		
11	PP's Sweet and Savory Beef Stew	Beef	Main		
12	PP's Applesauce	Apples	Dessert		
13	PP's Thanksgiving Turkey	Turkey	Main	Thanksgiving	Fall
14	PP's Thanksgiving Egg	Eggs	Main	Thanksgiving	Fall
15	PP's Thanksgiving Dinner	Various	Main	Thanksgiving	Fall
16	PP's Thanksgiving Dessert	Dessert	Dessert	Thanksgiving	Fall
17	PP's Thanksgiving Appetizer	Appetizer	Appetizer	Thanksgiving	Fall
18	PP's Thanksgiving Drink	Drink	Drink	Thanksgiving	Fall
19	PP's Thanksgiving Salad	Salad	Salad	Thanksgiving	Fall
20	PP's Thanksgiving Souffle	Souffle	Dessert	Thanksgiving	Fall
21	PP's Thanksgiving Bread	Bread	Bread	Thanksgiving	Fall
22	PP's Thanksgiving Casserole	Casserole	Main	Thanksgiving	Fall
23	PP's Thanksgiving Pie	Pie	Dessert	Thanksgiving	Fall
24	PP's Thanksgiving Drink	Drink	Drink	Thanksgiving	Fall
25	PP's Thanksgiving Dessert	Dessert	Dessert	Thanksgiving	Fall
26	PP's Thanksgiving Appetizer	Appetizer	Appetizer	Thanksgiving	Fall
27	PP's Thanksgiving Bread	Bread	Bread	Thanksgiving	Fall

Have a recipe to add...

We would love to include your favorite receipt in our Cookbook. The tradition of gathering around the table to enjoy good food and good friends is at the center of living a good life.

Feel free to contact us at bill.joyce@vismgt.com and submit your recipe. Let's work together to expand the fun of this wonderful tradition.

Poppy's Pantry



What's in the pot is Love!

Poppy's Italian Song Sauce

Being from the only Irish family on Nanny Goat Hill in Yonkers my ancestors grew up flavored with the greatness of Italian cooking. Poppy learned at the ladle of his grandmother and mother and his "Italian" meat sauce has stood up well to any Italian chef's offering.

Ingredients

- ☞ 3 lbs ground beef 85/15 mix - if it is too lean the flavor suffers and you will remove the fat during the process.
- ☞ 2 - 1lb packages of Italian sausage (usually 5 sausages per package). I enjoy one HOT and one Mild. Cut the Hot in four and the Mild in three so the diner can know what's coming... I leave the sweet to the faint of heart.
- ☞ 2 large onions chopped coarsely
- ☞ 2-3 large Peppers (color is interesting so choose Red and Greens and Yellows) chopped coarsely
- ☞ 1 package (8 oz) fresh button mushrooms - I like them whole but they can be quartered or sliced
- ☞ Garlic Powder
- ☞ Onion Salt
- ☞ Oregano
- ☞ 3 Bay Leaves
- ☞ 2 tablespoons of Virgin Olive Oil
- ☞ 1 large can (29oz) of Tomato Sauce
- ☞ 1 large can (29oz) of Crushed or Diced Tomato
- ☞ 1 can (12oz) of Tomato Paste



Directions

- ☞ Using large skillet, heat oil and once ready add sausage, browning on all sides and sprinkling with oregano, garlic powder and onion powder. Good tunes are [Arrivederci, Roma](#), and [Bella Bella Bambina](#). I am an avid Dino fan.

Continued on the next page

Poppy's Pantry



What's in the pot is Love!

- 👉 As the sausage is cooking put Tomato Paste and one can each of Tomato Sauce and Crushed/Diced Tomato into your Crockpot and turn on high. (
- 👉 Add Bay Leaves to the Crockpot so you don't forget.
- 👉 Coarsely chop the onions and Peppers setting them aside in a big bowl.
- 👉 Once the sausage is done move the sausage into the Crockpot allowing a little of the grease to follow the sausage. The rest of the grease is disposed of.
- 👉 In the same pan add the ground beef and brown, once again seasoning with Garlic Powder, Onion Salt and Oregano. Signing *Ave Maria* is always an option about now ...
- 👉 Drain the fat near the end and then place contents in the Crockpot.
- 👉 Using your now well seasoned pan, add the onions and peppers to give them a little time to absorb the seasoning in the pan and begin to soften. You are now in charge of seasoning. If you ever watch Poppy you will see him reach for Oregano once again ... Yes - Yes it seems a little overboard but I have yet to hear a complaint when the sauce is served.
- 👉 The veggies are added and the Crockpot given a stir. Based upon the size of your pot another can of tomatoes can be added to bring it to the top. Then the sauce is left alone to come to a good bubbling boil as only a Crockpot can. Maybe an hour or so.
- 👉 At the hour mark turn the Crockpot to low and add the mushrooms. Let it simmer for 4-6 hours.

This is one of those Poppy recipes where you make for today and for the tomorrows to come. Sauce keeps well in the freezer and can be reheated easily in the Microwave. Of course if anyone hears the signing you may have more guest than you expected so have plenty of pasta at hand!

Great sides:

- 👉 Grandma's Italian Backed Garlic Bread
- 👉 Garden salad - Rabbit Food!



Interesting meetings and other important happenings for authors

<i>Meeting with Link</i>	<i>Key Topic</i>	<i>Date & Time</i>
South Arlington Creative Writing Social Club	Check Meetup link for topics	Every Monday starting at 6:00pm
Eules Library Writer's Support Group	Author Critique Group	Every Third Tuesday starting at 7:00pm
Dallas Mystery Writers	Helping mystery writers author, publish and promote their own mystery books.	1st Saturday of the month starting at 9:30AM
Dallas-Fort Worth Actors Round Table (DFWART)	Check out Stage 32 Meetup https://www.stage32.com/meetup-groups/21 . The meeting is mid month and dates change. Not a bad group to be part of if you would like to see your book on the silver screen!	

Have a meeting you want to advertise that will help our members and advance their writing dreams? Please contact our [Newsletter Editor](#) and we will review and post as appropriate. Remember Monthly Conversation belongs to you.

Don't forget to check out our sponsors!

<p>DreamWriter Press</p> <p>A unique publishing service created with the sole intent to help new authors achieve their writing dreams.</p>		<p>CrowdFund Roundup</p> <p>A co-operative network of industry, entrepreneurs and community dedicated to build a transparent CrowdFunding process that will make CR the place to come for startup capital.</p>	
--	---	--	---

Don't miss an issue!

Make sure you get every issue of Monthly Conversation. Send us an email to [Newsletter Editor](#) and we will be happy to include you on our mailing list!

Have an idea or article for the newsletter...

Be sure to email the [editor](#) and we will do our best to get you published... It is all about sharing the word...

