

# San Antonio Writing project Writing Project

Volume 1, Issue 1

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## Morning Activities

- Carla shared a collection of analogies and metaphors found in high school essays
- Journal Writing Time—During sharing time we heard about Carla's husband and his adventures with a toad, Michelle's miserable experience with her bra, Tracy's moving tribute to our soldiers, and Mary Ellen's excellent complimentary description of all the members of the San Antonio Writing Project.
- Log review by Honor
- Trinidad Sanchez, Jr. read at Barnes & Noble on Wednesday night. Nora described it as being "high energy." Several members of SAWP attended and all agreed that Trinidad once again had the audience totally engaged. Someone from the audience asked about his cap with the words "Stop the Madness" and he explained it was referring to "violence."
- Lennie announced that Bill Shute will be at the Viva Café on Friday.
- Break
- Author's Chair: Lily—Thank You, Karla—Mom and Coin, Rosie—Bike poem, Therese—A Baseball story, Kathy—Historical story of how her aunt, as child, was taken by Indians  
Melissa—The Dance, Honor—Review of The Red Wheel Barrow, Mary Ellen—Big Fish poem, Nora—Ita, Letter to grandchildren, Pete—Division within ethnic groups, Rene—remembrance of friend, Richard, Aurelia—Learning to love spiders, Michelle—La Chola, and Sara—Multi-sensory love poem.

## Diane Gonzales Bertrand Shares Writing Experiences



Author Diane Gonzales Bertrand, UTSA graduate, was guest speaker at the San Antonio Writing Project (SAWP) Luncheon on Thursday.

Ms. Bertrand began by passing out a list of her published books asking the SAWP members to name the last book they had read just for the pleasure of reading. She emphasized, "If you want to be a good writer, you need to read." She then read from one of her books.

Ms. Bertrand began writing her first novel in fifth grade. She recalled a book report she had to write for her teacher, a nun at her catholic school. She had not read a book, so she made up a report on a story that she

made up. She said the sister did not accept her made up book report and her punishment was to read a published book and make a report on it.

Ms. Bertrand has been inspired to write by her family, both the Gonzales family, and now her own Bertrand children. She questioned the lack of Latino characters in the books she read. Where were the stories with kids like herself? Where were the stories about piñatas and buñuelos? She felt that someone needed to write about Latinos as she knew them; fun, humorous, goal oriented, romantic, and positive.

She has a large collection of notebooks, relating the different writings throughout her life. She

said she likes to look at the changes that occurred as she grew. She strongly recommends writing story ideas, observations, and experiences in the composition notebook, not a spiral notebook. Then she suggests that you revisit your ideas and add to them.

Ms. Bertrand recalled that weekly trips to the library were the least expensive forms of entertainment for a family of seven children. She added that she was always checking out books, especially series books such as Nancy Drew. She stressed that her love of reading provided her with the tools needed to write.

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## Therese Fleming Presents Power Point on Visiting Author Diane Gonzales Bertrand

Therese Fleming presented a lively and informative power point presentation about Diane Gonzales Bertrand Thursday morning.

Ms. Fleming related her surprised in finding out that Ms. Bertrand

was working at St. Mary's University, about half a block from her campus. She has hosted Ms. Bertrand several times at her campus, Truman Middle School in the Edgewood Independent School District.

The power point presentation provided background information about the author, book awards received, book titles, and website addresses for further investigations. Her personal comments provided wonderful insights.

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## Writing Experiences

Ms. Bertrand recommended asking children how they think a character from a story would react to a certain situation. She continued that their suggestions can give a writer better insights into what they are thinking and feeling. She added that there is a need for books for boys also. Their voice needs to be heard.

She was raised in an English speaking home. She said the publishing companies have people that translate the stories. Not everyone agrees with the translations. She emphasized that these stories were not only for the local Spanish speakers, but also Spanish speakers from

Mexico, Spanish, and other countries throughout the world.

Her stories are written to reflect real life situations. In Trino's Choice, the scene in which the kids were taking a bite of raw cabbage and passing it around actually happened in her family. She chuckled as she related how her father came home from work and found the kids doing exactly that. The only difference was that they were not doing it because of lack of food. She said there was plenty of food in the house.

Ms. Bertrand was asked to speak at the San Antonio Military Acad-

emy about Trino's Choice. She wondered how 30 thirteen year old 8th grade boys, mostly from affluent backgrounds, would relate to the character. They expressed their empathy of hating how things are and their feeling helpless.

She ended her session with a "Thank you" to the teachers for working with the kids and encouraged everyone to "keep up the good work." Because of your work I have a job," she stated.

Many SAWP members were able to speak with her while she autographed her books.

## Books by Diane Gonzales Bertrand

### Family Reading

Sweet Fifteen

Lesson of the Game

Close to the Heart

### Children's Fiction

Alicia's Treasure

Upside Down and Backwards/De Cabeza y al Revés

Sip, Slurp, Soup, Soup/Caldo, caldo, caldo

The Last Doll

Family, familia

Uncle Chente's Picnic/El Picnic de Tío Chente

The Empanadas that Abuela Made

The Ruiz Street Kids/Los Muchacos de la calle Ruiz

Ricardo's Race/La carrera de Ricardo

My Pal Victor

### Middle School

Trino's Choice

Trino's Time

## Books Recommended by Gonzales Bertrand

**My Thirteenth Winter : A Memoir** by Samantha Abeel

**Zorro**, by Isabel Allende

**100 years of Solitude**, by Gabriel Garcia Marquez

**Esperanza Rising** by Pam Munoz Ryan

**Becoming Naomi Leon** by Pam Munoz Ryan

