Dear Chattanooga Writers Guild Members, New and Old:

If you’re new, then welcome to the Chattanooga Writers Guild. If you’re old, thanks for sticking with us through these first three years. Forming the CWG with Jennifer Hoff and Helga Kidder has been an exciting and rewarding adventure. Since our first meeting back in August of 2001, we’ve grown from twenty members to over one hundred members, and we have worked to serve Chattanooga’s writing community by organizing and sponsoring many events and activities, including:

- Monthly meetings featuring local and out-of-town writers
- Workshops in editing, publishing, poetry writing, fiction writing, and creative nonfiction writing
- A special reading for local poet Earl Braggs at the Bluff View River Gallery in Chattanooga
- Independent writers’ groups in poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, and children’s writing
- Open mic readings for our members and the Chattanooga community
- A monthly newsletter that has featured columns and poems written by our members
- A writers’ contest that produced our first publication, an anthology of our contest winners which appeared in book and newsprint format in 2003
- A website, which we’ve recently updated

And we’ve had some relaxed, fun times together at our potluck Christmas parties and annual meetings. I think we’ve done great these past three years and the coming years promise to be even better.

Recently, thanks to our tireless treasurer and board member, Julian Goodrich, we applied for our 501(c)3 status—that’s the final step in establishing ourselves as a nonprofit organization. Once we are officially a nonprofit group, we will be eligible for grants that will enable us to further our original and ongoing mission to promote, encourage, and support writing and to create a supportive, caring environment for writers in the Chattanooga community.

We’ve had to bounce around a bit, from location to location, but it seems that we’ve found a home for our monthly meetings due to the generous support of the Chattanooga Theatre Centre.

I can’t say enough good things about how many of our members have grown, working to write and publish their work. Our August meeting is all about our
members and what they’ve accomplished during the last year; their accomplishments are a tribute to the CWG and we are proud of them all. And that’s what the CWG is all about—encouraging each other, working together, providing space and opportunities for writers to express themselves and to be heard.

I’d like to thank every CWG board member who has worked so hard this last year: Helga Kidder, Finn Bille, Joan Hetzler, Jane Lael, Jennifer Hoff, Julian Goodrich, and Lantz Powell. And thank you to everyone who has joined with us to make the CWG such a success.

Now, it’s time for some of us to say goodbye. At our annual meeting on Tuesday, September 14th, I will be stepping down so that Jennifer Hoff, our president-elect, can take over. I’ve enjoyed working with the CWG and look forward to remaining active in the guild during the coming years. We will lose our secretary, Jane Lael, our treasurer, Julian Goodrich, and board members Helga Kidder and Finn Billie. Now the CWG needs some of you to join the board of directors and help govern our growing organization. We need a new secretary, treasurer, president-elect, and four new board members. If you are interested in nominating yourself or someone else, then we are open for nominations and will be voting for board members and officers at the annual meeting in September. All you need to be a board member or officer is enthusiasm and access to the Internet. You don’t have to be a published writer or have any previous experience running a nonprofit organization. You may submit nominations via email or mail and we look forward to hearing from you.

So join us at our annual meeting, September 14 at the Tennessee River Park on Amnicola Hwy. Let’s have us a good old-fashioned cookout. If you would like to bring any of the fixins, just email me (godlikepoet@comcast.net) and we’ll plan us a menu. Burgers, hotdogs, chips and apple pie. Who’ll bring the pies?

~ Rebecca Cook
CWG President 2002-2004