

PRESS RELEASE
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Joanna Brady Schmida Wins Writing Prize

The Florida Keys Council of the Arts, in conjunction with the Key West Writers Guild, congratulates Joanna Brady Schmida as the winner of the 2009 Key West Writers Guild Award. The announcement was made at the May 9th meeting of the Key West Writers Guild.

Ms. Schmida, a Key West writer known locally for her popular weekly food column in the Key West Citizen, submitted an excerpt from her historical fiction novel entitled *A Woman of Interest: Forbidden Passion in Old Key West*. She will receive an award of \$2,000. This is the sixth annual award to be made. The cash prize is supported by an endowment under the administration of the Florida Keys Council of the Arts. Last year's winner, Richard deGrasse of Marathon received the award for his novel in progress, *Road to Havana*.

The manuscript, identified only by number, was reviewed in a competitive field of submittals and selected by three distinguished judges. Susanne Woods, a resident of Sugarloaf, is Professor of English and Provost Emerita of Wheaton College in Massachusetts and Visiting Distinguished Scholar in English at the University of Miami. A graduate of UCLA with a doctorate from Columbia University, she spent twenty years at Brown University where she was Professor of English and Associate Dean of the Faculty. She has published several books on literary history and criticism. Irving Weinman was founder-director of the Key West Writers' Workshop and Vice-President of the Key West Literary Seminar. He is the author of six critically acclaimed novels, the latest, *Wolf Tones*, published this spring, 2009. He currently teaches writing fiction on the MA level at the University of Sussex, in England. Mark Howell has a masters degree in literature from Cambridge University and spent the first half of his career in London, New York and LA in tabloid journalism and paperback publishing. In 1999 he began "Sightings" a weekly feature in the Key West Citizen's *Paradise*, and in 2001 developed "Soundings" for the *Solares Hill* newspaper. He has won 14 awards from the Florida Press Club and the Society of Professional Journalists.

Local scribes with works in progress may be encouraged to know that funds for aspiring writers are available annually. The complete application and instructions are posted on www.keysarts.com. The next deadline will be March 2010.

To qualify for the award, one must be a resident of Monroe County, a member of the Key West Writers Guild, and working on either a novel or a work of non-fiction. Applicants must read from their work at two meetings of the Writers Guild. Membership in the Key West Writers Guild is \$10 annually, and meetings are held at 10:00 a.m. on the second and fourth Saturday of the month on the second floor of Kelly's Caribbean Grill, 303 Whitehead Street, in Key West. All are welcome to attend.

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