



ABILENE WRITERS GUILD

KEEPING MEMBERS IN TOUCH

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Write Tight

Write tight. I first heard that admonition about two years ago in a discussion about flash writing. Writing tight is using a minimum number of words in a sentence to express an idea. Wordy sentences and flowery language can muddle what the writer is trying to convey and can frustrate and confuse the reader. Years ago, following a lengthy parental lecture my then-teenaged daughter remarked that her father was a “galloping elaborator.” Writing tight means that the author avoids galloping elaboration. The best writing is economical. It uses simple, efficient language to evoke vivid, specific images.

A writer’s first draft many times is messy, wordy, and convoluted. Developing ideas often flow faster from the mind than a pen can move across paper or fingers tap on a keyboard. A conscious effort to express those thoughts in a concise manner can interfere with creative flow. The process of fine-tuning ideas and polishing expression takes place during editing. Writing tight is actually *editing* tight.

To ensure that one’s writing is tight the first step is to eliminate unnecessary words. Rambling sentences filled with repetitious details should be hacked down to

concise statements. Strong verbs can replace the need for excessive reliance on adverbs. *It was obvious that he was very*

angry when he walked into the room becomes He stomped into the room. Words that have specific meanings result in tighter writing than the use of vague words. *He got whatever things he needed for school and put them in his backpack* is made tighter by stating *He put his homework, notebook, and pen into his backpack.* Tight writing is characterized by active verbs. Passive tense verbs can result in longer sentences that are often less precise. To eliminate the passive, make sure that the subject does the action rather than being acted upon. *The gift for the birthday was purchased by his sister* would become *His sister purchased the birthday gift.*

Writing can be tightened during editing by eliminating unnecessary words, by selecting strong verbs and precise nouns, and by using the active tense. It is a good practice to approach editing with a clear, objective mind that is best achieved by allowing some time to pass between writing and editing. A rule of thumb is to sleep on it. Another good habit is to read your writing out loud. When reading silently, your eyes can skip over words or insert words that are not there. Meeting the challenge of minimum word Flash Writing contests is another method of honing efficient writing techniques. With practice and perseverance you can write tighter and avoid the ignominious fate of becoming a galloping elaborator.

Mary Berry

AWG President

DUE TO COVID-19
THERE WILL BE
NO AWG MEETING IN
AUGUST
WE MOVE FORWARD IN
EXPECTATION OF SEEING
YOU ALL SOON



IMPORTANT NOTICE

ANNUAL WORKSHOP CANCELLED

Based on many questions, concerns and discussions, the Board feels it is in the best interest of everyone's health and well-being to cancel the Annual Workshop indefinitely. We all hate to take this action but agree it is for the best under the current circumstances.

However, the

2020-2021 Annual Contest

which is open to anyone age 15 and over, officially opens October 1.

So, check out the rules in this Newsletter and get your entries ready.

Congratulations!

GREAT ACCOMPLISHMENT

*Congratulations to David Dodge upon his induction into **AWG** Lifetime Membership as he reached the age of 90*

Our Life Members

*Stewart Caffey, Nancy Masters
Alice Greenwood, David Dodge*

Members gain the status by gift from the membership as a whole, by paying a one time fee of \$600, by receiving the honor as a gift from another, or by reaching the age of 90 while a member of AWG

Our Officers

President: Mary Berry	(2022)
Executive VP: David Dodge	(2021)
Program VP: Sharon Ellison	(2022)
Secretary: Carolyn Dycus	(2021)
Treasurer: Gail McMillan	(2021)
Board Member: Linda Gordon	(2021)
Board Member: Darla McCleod	(2021)
Board Member: Mary Ann Smith	(2022)
Board Member: Kay Talley	(2022)
Alt. Board Member: Chuck Weber	(2022)

Monthly Contest Coordinator: Linda Gordon



What AWG Reads

Lou Mouglin is reading *Complete Idiot's Guide to the Mafia, 523 Hard to Believe Facts*.

Suanna Davis is reading *Writing Picture Books* by Ann Whitford Paul.

Ann Swann is reading *When We Believed in Mermaids* by Barbara O'Neal Next up: *Cowboy for Keeps* by my buddy Laura Drake.

Sharon Ellison Sharon read *Dark Matter* in a couple of days. "Couldn't put it down!" She is currently reading *The 5th Wave* by Rick Yancey. The books were loaned to her and she has "Area 51" waiting to be next! Plus, she is editing a book proof for a friend, and may soon be editing another of his books!

Iris Williams is reading Douglas E. Richards *Time Frame* sequel to *Split Second*.. Language not good, concept and relationship development is very interesting. It's about time travel.

Judy Ware is reading *The Summer Kitchen* by Lisa Wingate.

Carolyn Dycus *Franklin and Washington, The Founding Fathers*, by Edward Larson, is a new biography, pairing the two as their friendship and leadership culminates in the amazing birth of our nation. A must-read for American History fans! *The Summer Kitchen* by Lisa Wingate: an endearing but painful story of family losses and overcoming. Both books this month in LARGE PRINT.

Mary Berry is reading Stephen King's *The Outsider* aloud to her invalid husband and has enjoyed Celeste Ng's *Everything I Never Told You*.

Daina Jurika Owen recently finished *An Embarrassment of Mangoes: A Caribbean Interlude* by Ann Vanderhoof and truly enjoyed it. It is a travelogue that takes us different Caribbean islands and explores local cultures and cuisines. Highly recommended.

Marguerite Gray is reading *Duel Power of Convenience* by Chautona Havig and *The Duke's Dilemma* by Elaine Manders.

BRAGS & SAGS

Suanna Davis: BRAG: Have gotten critiques and edited two stories.

Sags: Got a rejection for a story.

Lou Mougins: BRAG : 2 new stories in the next CREEPS, 2nd Frankenstein book coming out in November.

SAGS: Waiting to see if the publisher accepts the edits on the new history book.

Ann Swann: BRAG: My new novel, TELEPHONE ROAD, is getting good reviews on Amazon and Goodreads. It released on Aug. 4th. (Trigger warning - it's graphic).

SAG: Dad's health problems. I care for him at home with the help of Hospice. But it's getting more difficult by the day.

Daina Jurika Owen: BRAG: I am writing again! Have started back to write my memoir about living under the Soviet power.

SAG: Had to cancel my planned summer trip to visit my grandbabies in Massachusetts.

Marguerite Gray: BRAG I finished 50,000 plus new words during NaNoWriMo July camp. I'm a few short pages from writing the end to *Whispers of Wisdom*.

David Dodge: BRAG: I have six chapters on my fourth book this year, two are entered in Storyteller2020UK contest. I'm reading my last book looking for booboos. I also beat the virus and turned 90 on July 29. SAG: How long can I keep avoiding it.

Sharon Ellison: BRAG: I managed to send three entries in for the August Members only contest.

Members Contest Winners

PROSE

- 1st Place – Mary Berry – “The Race”
- 2nd Place – Sharon Ellison – “Mismatch”
- HM – Nancy Forbis-Stokes – “The Salon”

POETRY

- 1st Place – Mary Berry – “A Small Mystery”
- 2nd Place – Kay Talley
“Strong Working Hands”
- HM – Chuck Webber
“Re-reading Mom’s Old Letters”

OPPORTUNITY TO WIN

\$

Begin now writing to enter the annual contest and have your entries ready to send in October 1 - November 30.



A LITTLE GRACE

Because COVID-19 has thrown us all a bit off schedule you are receiving the August newsletter and the deadline has been extended to August 31, 2020

\$25.00 Single membership
\$35.00 family membership

Please mail your dues to
Gail McMillan
419 Meadow Ln
Abilene, TX 79602

If you joined AWG since March 2020 your dues come due next year

Don't let this be your last
NEWSLETTER

Pay your Dues and keep up
with what's happening.

Please mail a check today
to:

Gail McMillan
419 Meadow Ln
Abilene, TX 79602

HERE'S A CHALLENGE WITH NICE REWARD

Think you can write a winning story in 1,500 words or less? Enter the 21st Annual Writer's Digest Short Short Story Competition for your chance to win \$3,000 in cash, get published in *Writer's Digest* magazine, and a paid trip to our ever-popular Writer's Digest Conference.

<https://www.writersdigest.com/writers-digest-competitions/short-short-story-competition>

Deadline: November 16, 2020

A DREAM COME TRUE

Ever want to get away to a nice quiet place for a couple days to devote to writing?

Apply now to schedule a Writers' Colony at Dairy Hollow residency this summer at the reduced rate of \$75 per night. Also, we will waive the \$100 deposit, and we don't charge cancellation or change fees. We have implemented strict COVID protocols to keep you (and us) safe. This special rate applies to residency stays through September 7, 2020.

Apply online
at www.writerscolony.org/residencies.

The QueryLetter.com Writing Contest

Can you write a blurb for a hypothetical book?

This writing contest is all about book blurbs. The twist? We want blurbs about completely made-up, nonexistent books. Get creative!

Write a blurb for a back cover in 100 words or less that sets the stage for a novel, establishes the characters, and raises the stakes that makes readers want to find out more.

Let your imagination go wild—and who knows? You may be inspired to turn your blurb into a novel of your own one day.

<https://www.queryletter.com/contest>

Deadline: Noon September 15, 2020

ABILENE WRITER'S GUILD ANNUAL CONTEST 2020-2021

General Information:

AbileneWritersGuild.org

1. Open to any person age 15 or older.
2. Entries **must** be postmarked **between Oct. 1 and Nov. 30, 2020!** Entries posted earlier or later will NOT be accepted and will not be judged, nor will fees be refunded.
3. Categories with fewer than 5 entries are not eligible for prizes but may be critiqued, and, if possible, they may be added to another category for judging.
4. See categories, descriptions, maximum lengths and entry fees on page 3. Do **not count the title** of your entry in your final word count.
5. All entries must be your original work, unpublished as of October 1, 2020. Publication on the Internet **is** publication. The work must not have earned a cash award in any previous **AWG ANNUAL Contest**. However, Honorable Mentions from past annual contests may be re-entered and **any** AWG monthly members-only-contest entry is eligible if it fits the category. Use font size 12. No fancy fonts! Text should only be on one side of each page.
6. **Cover Sheet** (applies to ALL entries): **Each entry** must have a **separate** cover sheet. **Upper left corner:** your name, complete address, telephone number and email address. **Upper right corner:** list category and number of words or lines. *Space down to middle of page and center your title on the cover sheet.* **DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON ANY OTHER PAGE.**

First pages of entries of Poetry and Flash Fiction: **Upper right corner:** list category, (Rhy P, Unrhy P, FP or FF), and number of lines or words. **Center the title of your entry,** double space down and begin. Single space only! **NO AUTHOR'S NAME** on this page!

First pages of Prose Categories 5-9: **Must be typed and DOUBLE-SPACED,** with one-inch margins. **Upper right corner:** list category and number of words. **Do not count your title** in the number of words. **Center your title, double-space down and begin manuscript.** On any succeeding pages, type entry title and page number in upper right corner. **NO AUTHOR'S NAME on any page.**

To Mail Entries: **Staple your cover sheet to your entry.** **Attach payment with a paper clip to your entry.** **For multiple entries, be sure your check covers all entries.** If you want your entry/entries returned with judges' comments, please provide a large enough SASE with **adequate postage,** otherwise your entry will be discarded on or after **May 31, 2021.** (Rule of thumb: 1 stamp per 5 pages in a #10 letter-size envelope.) Our judges, professionals in their fields, are asked to critique each entry, but we cannot guarantee they will all comply.

Reminder: As in the majority of writing contests, entries not meeting the guidelines will be disqualified and fees will not be refunded. Please follow the rules carefully. **Decisions of the judges are final.** Winners will be announced at our Annual Awards Workshop to be held in March 2021, and will be published on our Website by April 15, 2021. Prizes will be sent to winners who cannot attend. Please check our website and/or newsletter for location, date and time of the March Workshop and other details. Entries will be available for pickup immediately following the Workshop.

Abilene Writers Guild Annual Contest 2020-2021 continued

Mail entries to the address below or bring them to AWGs October or November meeting if you are in our area. We would love to meet you!

Prizes:	Cat # 3-7	Cat # 1- 2, 8- 9
First Place	\$100	\$70
Second Place	\$ 65	\$45
Third Place	\$ 35	\$25

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here _____

ABILENE WRITERS GUILD 2020-2021 CONTEST ENTRY FORM

MAIL TO: S. Ellison, 862 Grand Ave, Abilene, TX 79605, 325-665-5195
Email inquiries to: Trliso3@hotmail.com

Your email address: _____

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

Town: _____ State _____ Zip Code: _____

Make check or money order payable to: Abilene Writers Guild

of entries in Categories 1-4, = _____ X \$7.00 each ----- \$ _____

of entries in Categories 5-9 = _____ X \$10.00 each ----- \$ _____

Grand Total \$ _____

Abilene Writers Guild Annual Contest 2020-2021

<u>Categories</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Maximum # words/lines</u>	<u>Fee Per Entry</u>
1. Poetry, Rhymed	any style	50 lines	\$7
2. Poetry, Unrhymed	any style	50 lines	\$7
3. Flash Poetry-- Must use these 5 words: <i>mighty, kind, forbearing, texture, cancel</i>		100 words	\$7
4. Flash Fiction-- Must use these 5 words: lucid, tidy, feature, immune, pander		100 words	\$7
5. Children's Stories	Preschool OR elementary age readers	750 words	\$10
6. Inspiration	Any form: prose/drama/religious	1200 words	\$10
7. Memoir/Nostalgia	Take reader back to a former time	1200 words	\$10
8. Fiction for Adults	Short story for adults/teens & older	1200 words	\$10
9. Articles of General Interest*	History, people, events, places	1200 words	\$10

*non-personal, general information for magazines/websites/newspapers

You may enter as many times as you wish in one or multiple categories!

