



BIG COUNTRY WRITERS

NEWSLETTER OF THE ABILENE WRITERS GUILD—FEBRUARY, 2017

abilenewritersguild.org jcox1awg@catnapin.com

Phil and February

By now you know that the famous Punxatawny Phil (the groundhog) predicted our weather again. I hardly see how it would be possible for him to predict our weather here in Texas when it is difficult, at best, for our own trustworthy weather men and women to do so. If you are much like me, you will ride the waves of warm one day and cold the next and not complain too much. After all, it could be worse, right?

On the bright side, I am very happy to announce the newest addition to our AWG Life Members, Mr. Keith Thomason. Congratulations, Keith, and welcome to a special group!

His wife, Betty, sent an email to let us know he would be celebrating his 90th birthday on February 7, thus qualifying for this special designation. Betty joined the Guild in 1974, and Keith soon followed.

Betty says, "I always considered myself the writer. Keith mostly was my best support, critic and my driver. He always made me rewrite my final draft if it did not meet his standards. We somehow came to an agreement on the final draft after hashing out our disagreements." (That's what any good editor does, Betty!) She also stated they had fun going to many different libraries, state and city, to do research.

Keith has led an interesting life. He has two BA degrees and a Masters from Texas A&I University in Kingsville. He worked for Celanese Corporation in Bishop, Texas, for twenty years, initially doing shift work while getting his college education. He then taught in various Texas schools for ten years. Betty says, "After a chance to teach in the Indian Boarding School in Mt. Edgecumbe, Alaska, he then moved into the Federal system." Later he worked for the Department of

Defense in Germany, North Carolina and Goodfellow AFB in San Angelo as an educational counselor to help enlisted men and women further their education. Upon retiring at Goodfellow, they made their home in Winters, Texas, commuting to Guild meetings and work-shops until they moved to Baton Rouge "temporarily to be near our daughter after Keith's stroke." Betty reports Keith is receiving physical therapy, feeling better and enjoys watching history movies on his computer via Netflix.

As I have so often said, even if you have never written anything and never intend to write anything, you are still welcome in AWG. Who knows? Maybe your spouse is a writer and you can edit for him (or her), as Keith has done for Betty. It was always fun to see them at our meetings, so please join me in congratulating Keith on this milestone! Happy 90th, Keith!

Email him at
bettythomason49@gmail.com

I'm looking forward to seeing you at our meeting this month. Bring a friend, no matter what the weather brings---unless it's ice. If so, we'll all stay home! We're having a field trip, so come participate and learn something new about a local publishing company. It does much more than publish books!

Sharon Ellison AWG President

FIELD TRIP
Southwest Direct
50 Tannehill Drive
Do not go to the Park!

FEBRUARY PROGRAM

IT'S A FIELD TRIP

In 2011 we met at Southwest Direct and those who went remember it fondly. Those who were not present rue the day. We have a chance to make or renew our acquaintance at our February 23rd meeting. Come directly to 50 Tannehill Drive, Abilene, TX 79602 at 7:00 PM. Southwest Direct is the largest printing and direct mail company in the big country. Locally owned and operated, they know what it takes to be competitive. Southwest Direct started its operation in May 2002. The company began with 15 full-time and 5 part-time employees, all with prior direct mail skills. Phil Gage has been in the mailing industry for 38 years. Phil's previously owned company, MAC Direct, was sold to Knight Ridder in 1999 where they employed 75 workers. After a short retirement, he opened Southwest Direct. SWD specializes in personalized direct mail pieces with intricate knowledge of data processing, data manipulation and data analysis.

We will see the process of taking a writers words and creating a work of art including the equipment, Direct Digital Printers, Full Color Digital Presses, High Speed Black Digital Docu-printers, High Speed Xerox Lasers, High Speed Inkjet Addressing Machine Insertion, Smart/Intelligent Inserting, and Off Set Printers.

We promise you'll remember this program for years!

Directions

From Sayles Blvd, go south to South 27th, turn left and continue 1.4 miles then right on Maple. After 1.2 miles turn left on Tannehill. There is plenty of parking at Southwest Direct. See you there!

FIELD TRIP

Do not go to the Park!

WHAT AWG READS

Sharon Ellison: *The Circle Maker* by Mark Batterson. He begins with a legend about a first-century Jewish sage, Honi the circle maker, who prayed a bold prayer that ended a drought and saved a generation. It will challenge you in your prayer life!

Lou Mougin: The new Doc Savage / *Shadow* by Will Murray, a Bolivar biography, and whatever else I can get my hands on.

Carla Kerr: *Hidden Figures* by Margot Lee Shetterly. I have seen the movie and wanted to see how closely it followed the book. The book is well written and a fast read.

Mary Ann Smith: *No Child of Mine*, by Susan Lewis. It is a well written book with excellent research on the daily life of a child protection worker.

Barbara Loyd: *A Moveable Feast* by Ernest Hemingway. It is his recollection of life in Paris in the 1920's. I like his description of Gertrude Stein and other writers he met. This edition was compiled by his kin after a steamer trunk stored in the hotel in Paris since 1926 was located, a story in itself written in the foreword.

Our Life Members:

*Stewart Caffey, Nancy Masters, Laura Thaxton,
Dr. Clyde Morgan, Alice Greenwood,
Keith Thomason*

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: Sharon Ellison	(2018)
Executive VP: David Dodge	(2017)
Program VP: Barbara Rollins	(2018)
Secretary: Carolyn Dycus	(2018)
Treasurer: Gail McMillan	(2017)
Board member: Jill Henderson	(2017)
Board member: Iris Williams	(2017)
Board member: Kay Talley	(2018)
Board member: Coy Roper	(2018)
Alt. Board member: Mary Ann Smith	(2018)
Newsletter editor: Jo Cox	
Monthly Contest Coordinator: Linda Gordon	

BRAGS AND SAGS

Jo Cox sent the first 10 pages of *Creation's Parables* to Robyn Conley, the Book Doctor. She remembered it from its early form about a decade ago, not so good. Now it got a Woohoo! Then... Jo got the virus going around. No work done at all!

Sharon Ellison is editing a book for Chris Clayman, the young missionary for whom she did research several years ago regarding all the ethnic groups in New York City.

Keith Thomason turned 90 years old on Feb 7. He is now one of AWG's Life Members.

Lou Mouglin is writing dialogue for a new comic story, working on a World War II comic for another publisher, and getting into *Frankenstein II*. However, he is realizing how much he will have to pay in taxes for last year's added income.

AWG Officer Volunteers Needed

Are you willing to serve our Guild for the next two years?

Carolyn Dycus and Kay Talley are the nominating committee for AWG officers. We will be voting in May, so if you don't contact them first, they just may be contacting you!

Nominees must be active AWG members for one year or more, attend monthly meetings and participate in AWG projects. Board members must attend Board meetings on the first Thursday of each month, except in December, to discuss the direction of the Guild.

The positions to be filled are Executive Vice President, Treasurer, and two Board members.

For more information please contact:
Carolyn Dycus, dycus62@msn.com
Kay Talley, ktalley1963@gmail.com

WORKSHOP SPEAKER

Rickey E. Pittman, the Bard of the South, is a storyteller, author, and folksinger. He was the Grand Prize Winner of the 1998 Ernest Hemingway Short Story Competition. Originally from Dallas, Texas, Pittman presents his stories, music and programs at schools, libraries, organizations, museums, historical reenactments, restaurants, banquets, and Celtic festivals throughout the South. He has four music CD's: *Bard of the South* (2011), *The Minstrel Boy* (2012), *A Lover's Ghost* (2012), and *Osceola & Foster* (2013).

Luncheon Fare

The yummy reason to attend the AWG Workshop and Luncheon is the meal! AM Dycus' smoked pulled pork is well-known in Abilene. The traditional meal includes home cooked beans, potato salad, and his crunchy super-slaw. Brownies will be offered for dessert.

This lunch to remember will be served as a savory, delicious exclamation mark to the annual workshop!

Workshop Donations

AWG's Annual Workshop needs sponsors.

Please contact Gail McMillan
325-529-3885 or 325-338-0348.

Donations to the Guild are tax deductible.



New Member

Barbara Loyd
Fredericksburg, TX

Members Only Monthly Contest - 2017

Exclusive: For current members of AWG only. All entries eligible for Annual Contest. **No fees!**

Judging: Judges are professionals who may or may not choose to critique entries. Choice of winners is final. If there are fewer than four entries per category in double category months, categories will be combined. Six entries per month are required for judging.

Prizes: \$20 first prize and \$15 second prize. You are encouraged to attend the meetings to pick up your check. Otherwise they will be mailed to the physical address provided.

Pay careful attention to all guidelines

Deadline: Early submissions received at any time, but by the 12th of the contest month.

Enter by Email Only: Send document in Word format only. Subject Line should state: **AWG Contest and "Month"** (e.g. January). Entries will be returned to the email on coversheet. Warning: some devices may not transmit document correctly, thus disqualifying entry. AWG will respond within five days. It is entrant's responsibility to verify and resend.

Send to: awg.entry@yahoo.com

Mix & Match: Submit up to 3 entries per month. Enter poetry, prose, or both. Blended themes are acceptable. Must be original work unpublished at deadline (includes Internet posts).

Cover Sheet Format: Each entry must include a **separate** cover sheet. Center entry title on page. **Top left:** author's name, physical address (to mail prize check), telephone number, and email. **Top right:** Chosen month of entry, word count for Prose and Flash or line count for poetry (*do not include title in line or word counts*).

Entry Format: *Do not include author name on any page.* Minimum one-inch margins; prose double spaced; poetry single or double spaced. **First page:** center title at top, double space then start text. **Other pages:** entry title at top right with page number.

MONTH	THEME	CATEGORY
JANUARY	Snow, Celebrations, Peace	Poetry – 50 lines or less Fiction – 1,000 words or less
FEBRUARY	Pets, Love, Mail	Poetry – 50 lines or less Non-Fiction – 1,000 words or less
MARCH	Mandatory prompt words: Star, Clear, Channel, Spare, Harbor	Flash entry: Fiction or Poetry 100 max using 5 prompt words
APRIL	National Poetry Month NO THEME	Rhymed or Unrhymed Poetry 50 lines or less
MAY	National Short Story Month NO THEME	Fiction – 1,000 words or less
JUNE	Summer, Ice cream, Swimming	Non-Fiction – 1,000 words or less
JULY	Off and On, In and Out	Poetry – 50 lines or less Fiction – 1,000 words or less
AUGUST	Mandatory prompt words: Handle, Snap, Column, Green, Turn	Flash entry: Fiction or Poetry 100 max using 5 prompt words

Flash Fiction/Poetry use 5 mandatory prompt words, or close form and meaning.

Examples: Oil = oiled, oils, oiling, oiler, oily not spoil or foil; boat = lifeboat;
speak = unspeakable, not spoken; place = placement; defect = defection or defective.

****Registration Information****

Abilene Writers Guild 2017 Workshop and Luncheon

Saturday, March 25, 2017

Location: First Baptist Church, 1333 North 3rd St., Abilene Texas
Enter the Dining Room door nearest North 2nd and Hickory

Workshop Speaker 9:00-12:00 AM: Rickey Pittman
"Bard of the South"

Workshop Registration opens at 8:30 AM on **March 25**. Workshop begins at **9:00 AM**.
Lunch starts about noon followed by the contest awards ceremony

The AWG annual workshop and luncheon is open to all who are interested, regardless of whether or not that person entered the annual contest, is a member of the Guild, or is even a writer. All our monthly meetings and workshop speakers are professionals in their fields from around the country, and their information is fresh and informative.

Come join us! We would love to meet you!

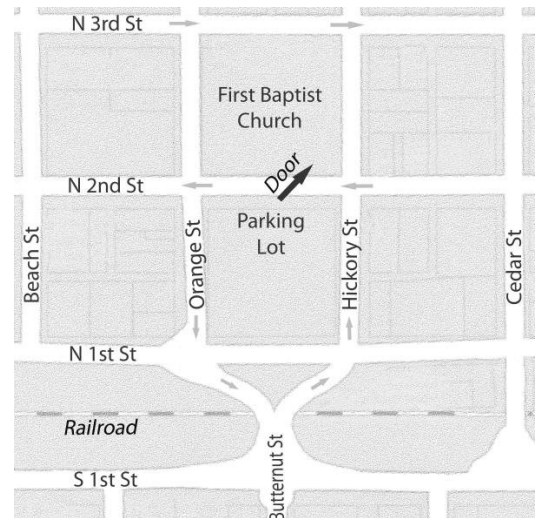
You may mail a check to either address below, or make your reservation by phone and pay at the door.

Call Gail McMillan at 325-529-3885 or 325-338-0348
(leave a message if necessary)

Make Check or Money Order payable to
Abilene Writers Guild

Gail McMillan
419 Meadow Lane
Abilene TX 79602

Abilene Writers Guild
P.O. Box 2562
Abilene, TX 79604



This Project is supported by a grant from the Abilene Cultural Affairs Council, HeARTS for the ARTS, the Abilene Arts Alliance, the City of Abilene, and the Texas Commission on the Arts.

Cut and mail form to above address

AWG Workshop / Luncheon Registration Form

Your Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Number of WORKSHOP AND LUNCHEON reservations

Number of WORKSHOP ONLY reservations

Number of LUNCHEON ONLY reservations

(Luncheon reservations accepted until **March 23, 2017**)

_____ x \$ 40 each = \$ _____

_____ x \$ 30 each = \$ _____

_____ x \$ 12 each = \$ _____

TOTAL enclosed = \$ _____

Fourth Thursday Together

February 23 – 7:00 p.m.

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Southwest Direct

50 Tannehill Drive

ABILENE WRITERS GUILD

P.O. Box 2562

Abilene TX 79604