



# BIG COUNTRY WRITERS

NEWSLETTER OF THE ABILENE WRITERS GUILD—DECEMBER 2017

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## I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas

It has happened in Abilene, you know: a white Christmas. Really! Just not too often.

However, it is always fun to dream and hope. Maybe even a prayer or two would be good. Remember, we don't want ice, just snow, so be careful how you pray.

**Where the treetops glisten, and children listen...** okay, once I get a song in my head, it's hard to get rid of it! Know what I mean?

The Annual Contest is closed, although a few entries are still being delivered in the mail which were actually postmarked BEFORE November 30. It's that Christmas mail rush, I think.

So, we should have about as many entries this year as we received last year. I will be sending them to the judges around the end of December and will anxiously await their responses. You, on the other hand, must wait until our March Gala Meeting to find out who won, and I'm not gonna tell!

**To hear sleigh bells in the snow...** see what I mean! I know several of you musical folks completely understand this predicament.

**With every Christmas card I write...** oh, but that's not entirely true this year, because I haven't done ANY yet! Too many other things seem to have gotten in my way, and at this point I have no idea if I will send any out. Why do I feel so guilty about not doing that? Who's in that boat with me?

## Student Writing Contest

Invite kids (and their parents) to join in the fun. For guidelines, see pages 4-5 of this newsletter or the AWG website [abilenewritersguild.org](http://abilenewritersguild.org)

However, if I WERE writing cards, they should probably be thank you notes to those of you who have helped make 2017 so successful. So, my thanks to Barbara Rollins for lining up some fun, interesting and entertaining programs this year. My thanks, also, to our Newsletter editor extraordinaire, Jo Cox. Thank you, Gail McMillan, for handling our money, paying our bills and keeping us straight with the Texas Comptroller's Office. Thank you, Nancy Forbis-Stokes, for filing our IRS report for us (yes, even as a non-profit organization, we must file each year). Thanks also to Board members David Dodge, Carolyn Dycus, Kay Talley, Linda Gordon, Coy Roper, Suanna Davis and Mary Ann Smith for your faithful support and encouragement. I'm looking forward to seeing what 2018 brings for AWG. And special thanks to our webmaster, Jessica, who was at our last meeting!

**May your days be merry and bright...** that is what I would hope for each of you every day. Naturally, I would be remiss if I didn't mention writing! The things read or sung at our last meeting were as varied as our membership! Look at the Members-Only Contest rules and get busy writing! My thanks, also, to you guild members who sent entries to the annual contest. Woo Hoo for you!

**Have yourself a merry, little Christmas,** everyone. (Oh wait! That's another song; sorry.) Stay well, safe and warm---especially if it ever really gets cold.

**And may all your Christmases be white!** From me to you, Merry Christmas!

Sharon Ellison

AWG President

## Next Meeting

FOURTH Thursday, January 25th, 2018.

## BRAGS AND SAGS

**Lou Moug**in was published in *The Creeps* #12 with one of his stories featuring the best art yet. He is working on *Frankenstein 2* and a funny comic story.

**Barbara Rollins** did a poem-a-day challenge, averaging about three. Those interested in being part of our email group are welcome. We do it April and November.

**Suanna Davis** has completed six months of bi-monthly newsletter creation. She wrote two abstracts that were accepted for conferences in the spring.

**David Dodge** is "chomping at the bits" to get writing another book. He does have one completed, but no money to publish it! "Would anyone like to buy my small car/motorcycle camper?"

**Carolyn Dycus** earned a trip to the ER and surgery after misjudging a leap over a doggie fence. She is now single-footed until the ankle heals. "Look before you leap" is not only trite but true!

**From the AWG Board**  
Tell us your ideas for programs!

## Online Faith Forum

Loretta Fulton is asking for submissions to her website, [www.spiritofabilene.com](http://www.spiritofabilene.com). These can be meditations, reflections, poems, short stories, human interest stories, or pieces about upcoming events with a spiritual angle.

Send submission, plus a photo and short description of yourself to  
[editor@spiritofabilene.com](mailto:editor@spiritofabilene.com)

## New Members

Barbara Loyd and Debbie Gordon,  
both from Abilene

## WHAT AWG READS

**Lou Moug**in: *The Man Who Wrote Dirty Books* by Hal Dresner. "Hilarious and non-pornographic."

**Carla Kerr**: *The Honest Spy* by Andreas Kollender. This is a fictional account of an actual person who left the safety of the United States to become one of the most essential spies of WWII."

**Suanna Davis**: *Tribe of Mentors* by Tim Ferris, where he asks well-known folks some interesting questions and many of them reply.

**Jill Henderson**: *City of Light - City of Poison* by Holly Tucker.

**Jo Cox**: *Deliver Us From Evolution* by Aaron R. Yilmaz. He is a Christian and a biologist. He presents the reality of nature and the evidence of evolution in a very God centered way.

## Members Only Contest

Send in your entries to win prizes and really good critiques by judges. For guidelines, see page 3 of this newsletter or the AWG website [abilenewritersguild.org](http://abilenewritersguild.org)

## 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	(2019)
Program VP: Barbara Rollins	(2018)
Secretary: Carolyn Dycus	(2018)
Treasurer: Gail McMillan	(2019)
Board member: Suanna Davis	(2019)
Board member: Linda Gordon	(2019)
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	

## Members Only Monthly Contest - 2018

**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:** [avg.entry@yahoo.com](mailto:avg.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	Ice, Fresh Starts, Power Outages	Poetry – 50 lines or less Fiction – 1,000 words or less
FEBRUARY	Hearts, First Love, Cards	Poetry – 50 lines or less Non-Fiction – 1,000 words or less
MARCH	Mandatory prompt words: Left, Bark, Fly, Seal, Cover	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	AWG Non-Fiction Month NO THEME	Non-Fiction – 1,000 words or less
JULY	Summer Nights, Reunions, Flowers	Poetry – 50 lines or less Fiction – 1,000 words or less
AUGUST	Mandatory prompt words: Light, Refrain, Stoop, Lash, Gold	Flash entry: Fiction or Poetry 100 max using 5 prompt words

Flash Fiction/Poetry use 5 mandatory prompt words, or close form and meaning, like: Oil = oiled, oils, oiling, oiler, oily **not spoil or foil**; boat = lifeboat; speak = unspeakable, **not spoken**; place = placement; defect = defection or defective.



# ABILENE WRITERS GUILD'S STUDENT WRITING CONTEST 2018

## For ages 9-11 and 12-14

### RULES and ENTRY FORM

You do NOT have to be a member of Abilene Writers Guild to enter or win the contest, nor do you have to attend the April 2018 meeting. However, if you enter our contest, we encourage you to come to the meeting to help support and cheer your fellow students in their writing efforts.

Enter as many times as you wish between January 1, 2018, and February 15, 2018.

Entries mailed or emailed before January 1, 2018, or after February 15, 2018, will NOT be accepted. Mailing address and email address are on page two.

### CATEGORIES, MAXIMUM LENGTHS

1. **Poetry**, rhymed or unrhymed.....maximum 50 lines
2. **Short story**.....maximum 600 words

### SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS – Titles are not counted in the line or word count.

1. **Poems**: may be rhymed **OR** unrhymed in any style.
2. **Short Story**: If you like to make up fun stories, now is your chance! Give us a beginning, interesting characters, a middle and a good ending with a maximum of 600 words (which equals about two and one-half typed pages or four and one-half hand-written pages).

### COVER SHEET: Each entry must have a separate cover sheet with the following:

Your name and age

Category (poetry or short story)

Your school's name

Your teacher's name (If home-schooled, put parent & school name)

Then, go down to the center of the page and  
put the title of your poem or story on the cover sheet.

**SHORT STORY**: Entries may be typed on computer or handwritten. **Center the title of your story at the top of the first page, leave a space after the title** and begin your story. For second, third, fourth pages, put the story title and page number at the top— **DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON ANY OF THESE PAGES!** If your entry is handwritten, please make sure anyone can read your writing!

**POETRY**: Poems may be typed or handwritten. If you hand-write your poem, please make sure anyone can read your writing. **Center the title** of your poem at the top of the page, leave a blank line and write your poem. **Do NOT put your name on this page!**

**PROCEDURES**: Staple a cover sheet to each entry. Send us a SASE (self-addressed, stamped return envelop) if you don't plan to attend the awards meeting but want your entry back. SASE must include **adequate postage**. Remember, even emailed entries must have a cover sheet for each entry.

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

**NOTE TO PARENTS & TEACHERS:** The entries will be judged on content, presentation and creativity, not necessarily on spelling and punctuation. We want this to be a fun project for the children. The judges, professionals in their fields, are asked to critique each poem or story, and they may make suggestions about spelling and punctuation. It is our aim to help the children succeed! **Decisions of the judges are final.** Awards will be announced at the April 2018 meeting of Abilene Writers Guild, held at Rose Park Senior Center at 7 pm the fourth Thursday in April.

**Awards: First place, Second, Third, and Honorable Mention**

Please visit our website, [AbileneWritersGuild.org](http://AbileneWritersGuild.org), for more details about Abilene Writers Guild. Entries may be picked up after our April meeting, or we will use the self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) to return the entries as long as there is sufficient postage to do so.

Winners will also be listed on our website: [AbileneWritersGuild.org](http://AbileneWritersGuild.org) by May 15, 2018.

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**ABILENE WRITERS GUILD 2018 STUDENT WRITING CONTEST ENTRY FORM**

**MAIL TO:** Abilene Writers Guild  
c/o S. Ellison  
1025 Grand Ave.  
Abilene, Texas 79605  
(325) 672-1868

**Email Inquiries to:** [TrLiSo3@hotmail.com](mailto:TrLiSo3@hotmail.com)

\*Your Name \_\_\_\_\_ \*Age: \_\_\_\_\_

\*School and Teacher's Name or Parent's Name:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\*=required information

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

(Parents/Teachers: We only ask for address, phone and/or email address in case we need to contact you for some reason. If you prefer not to include this information, feel free to omit it.)

**NO ENTRY FEES!**

# of Poetry Entries \_\_\_\_\_

# of Short Stories \_\_\_\_\_

**We invite you to join AWG individually for \$25 a year, or two members of a family may join for \$35; however, you do not have to be a member to enter or win in this contest!**

No Meeting

Enjoy the Holidays!  
See You Next Year!

ABILENE WRITERS GUILD

P.O. Box 2562  
Abilene TX 79604