



ABILENE WRITERS GUILD

JANUARY 2022 NEWSLETTER

KEEPING MEMBERS IN TOUCH

ABILENE WRITERS GUILD.ORG

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Resolve to Write

The brightly lit ball has fallen in Times Square ushering in 2022. A new year is underway. Setting goals and making resolutions are traditional in spite of the fact that most fall by the wayside within a matter of weeks. For writers the intention to improve their craft is almost certainly a goal, but the question may be how or where to start. Seeking advice from successful people can provide some insight. These “Six Things Alfred Hitchcock Can Teach You about Writing” (from a website called Writers Write) are most applicable to stories of mystery or suspense, but they contain food for thought for any genre.

1. *“Drama is life with the dull parts left out.”* Avoid pages of backstory and endless description. Don’t bore the readers; entertain them.
2. *“Always make the audience suffer as much as possible.”* Readers want happy endings but the characters need to earn them. Create empathetic characters through which the reader can share experiences.
3. *“I am a writer and therefore, automatically a suspicious character.”* Always look for the dark side of human nature. Become observers of the human condition and never take anything at face value. A complex character is a more interesting hero.
4. *“The more successful the villain, the more successful the story.”* Many authors contend that heroes are only as strong as the characters who oppose them. Create complex antagonists who are heroes in their own stories. They don’t have

To be villainous, but they do have to have a believable story goal that opposes the protagonist’s.

5. *“I can’t read fiction without visualizing every scene.”* The result is a series of pictures rather than a book. Setting is important and adds layers of mood or mystery to a story.
6. *“I am a typed director. If I made Cinderella, the audience would immediately be looking for a body in the coach.”* Stick with a genre that suits your writing style. Most writers enjoy writing what they enjoy reading.

If your New Year’s resolutions include improving your writing or increasing output, I hope your resolve stays strong throughout all of 2022. Abilene Writers Guild will provide numerous opportunities for you to hone your skills. Monthly meetings will offer presentations on a variety of topics and the opportunity for lively discussion and camaraderie. The AWG Members Only Contest opens in February and will run through August with monthly exercises designed to encourage our members to write. The 2022 Workshop will be held on March 26 and will feature journalist and award-winning novelist, Laura Conner Kestner. Our Annual Contest will open in October and has categories appropriate to any writing style.

Consider the words of Alex Morritt, writer and poet: “New Year – a new chapter, new verse, or just the same old story? Ultimately, we write it. The choice is ours.”

Mary Berry
AWG President



BRAGS

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SAGS

Marguerite Gray: BRAG: *Labor of Love*, Book One in my new Gardens in Time series, releases February 15, 2022. Setting--Florence, Italy 1560 in the Boboli Gardens.

Chuck Anderson: BRAG: Finished writing the three-part Silver Spoon Saga. Episode Two is at the printer's being turned into a Graphic Magazine. I will be setting up an author's table at Teen Bookfest By the Bay with seventy-five other authors on Feb 19th. But the biggest news... A great grand-child coming in late July early August! SAG: Sag: a question for the group. Is there any shop or store in Abilene that has an "Abilene Author's Shelve" for our books? I haven't found one.

Nancy Robinson Masters: BRAG: Here is a sincere brag on all my fellow scribes who shared their work at the November meeting. Good stuff, Ya'll! Each piece was unique, well-written and well-presented. Glad to be able to be there.

I will be presenting "Write What Sells and Sell What You Write" for the Monday, January 24, at the Abilene Public Library Main Branch 2nd Floor Conference Room (North east corner) from 5:15 to 7:15 p.m. The program is free and will focus on writing and selling to children's markets.

David Dodge: BRAG: I got another book printed and they are printing my first book in hard back.

Chuck Webber: BRAG: Got a Christmas gift of a book-writing schedule. Every month I get a prompt to write a chapter and post it to the gift corporation. At the end of the year, I get a book of my compiled writing for the year sent to me.

Mary Berry: BRAG: I have submitted an article to Doll Castle News - my first in many months. I'm back!!!

Ariana Rodriquez: BRAG: Getting close to finishing an outline I have for a current story I am writing. SAG: Getting distracted from said outline/story & how long it took me to get close to finishing before I could start writing.

Lou Mouglin: BRAGS: Still getting horror shorts pubbed by Warrant. Working on Frankenstein 3 and the next history book.



What AWG Reads

Marguerite Gray: READING: *Elinor* by Shannon McNear and *The Royal Rabbits of London* by Santa Montefiore.

Mary Berry: READING: Still plodding through Ron Chernow's 900+ page biography of Ulysses S. Grant. Reading about the governmental bickering, backstabbing, and graft during his administration puts today's Washington, D.C. in perspective. There really is nothing new under the sun.

My daughter sent me *The Last House on Needless Street* by Catriona Ward because she wanted someone with whom to discuss it. I'll give Grant a rest and oblige her.

Darla McCloud: READING: *The Real Antony Fauci* by Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

Carolyn Dycus: READING: *Aging Faithfully* by Alice Fryling - Christmas gift from a precious niece. A personal, encouraging and challenging little book.

The Dream of God by Verna Dozier, and, now, beginning *Mysteries of Faith*, our book club's next assignment.

Kay Talley: READING: *Dark Clouds, Deep Mercy: Discovering the Grace of Lament*, by Mark Vroegop. Explores how the Bible—through the psalms of lament and the book of Lamentations—gives voice to our pain, this book invites us to grieve, struggle, and tap into the rich reservoir of grace and mercy God offers in the darkest moments of our lives.

Lou Mougín: READING: Jess Nevins's *A Blazing World*.

Ariana Rodriquez: I am currently not reading anything, but once I finish this outline for the story, I'm going to go back to finish a book called *The Heir* from the series *The Selection*.

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: Darla McCloud	(2023)
Program VP: Sharon Ellison	(2022)
Secretary: Linda Gordon	(2023)
Treasurer: Gail McMillan	(2023)
Board Member: Chuck Weber	(2022)
Board Member: Mary Ann Smith	(2022)
Board Member: Kay Talley	(2022)
Alt. Board Member: Carolyn Dycus	(2023)
Monthly Contest Coordinator: Linda Gordon	



CHANGES
to
AWG BY-LAWS

(By-Laws are on our website)
Please submit any changes
for the AWG By-Laws by
February 1

**February Members
Only Contest**

*With the holidays behind us, let us
jot down those creative things that
have been running around in our
brains and enter them in the
February Contest*

The Theme

Winter, Nature, Milestones

Poetry – 50 lines or less
Non-Fiction – 1,000 words or less

Program for January 28

Seth Pace, creative writing
teacher/educator at Abilene High
School, will present a program
entitled

“The Writer as Visionary”
and will discuss the role creative
people need to fill in society.

His students have submitted entries
to AWG’s Annual Writing Contest
for several years and have won
various prizes. He knows what he is
doing. Come be inspired.

Biblia:

The Heavenly Rest Book Club

Meets each Monday evening
from 6:00 to 8:00 PM

Each gathering begins and ends
with a devotional, followed by a
time to discuss, examine and
reflect on words from various
authors. Every voice is
welcomed. For more information
call Nell Sims 325-665-7197
Or Mtr. Amanda 677-2091



2022 Members Only Contest

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. Judge's decisions are 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: Submissions may be sent any time after the 12th of the previous month, but no later than the 12th of the contest month.

Enter by Email Only: Send documents as attachments and 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).

**** You may send up to 3 entries and accompanying cover sheets in the same email, but all cover sheets and entries must be separate attachments.****

Cover Sheet Format: 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 entries or line count for poetry. (Do not count the title when determining line or word counts.) Title of entry should be centered midway down the page.

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. Number subsequent pages at the top center or top right.

2022

MONTH	THEME	CATEGORY
JANUARY	No contest this month	Extra writing time for February
FEBRUARY	Winter, Nature, Milestones	Poetry – 50 lines or less Non-Fiction – 1,000 words or less
MARCH	Mandatory prompt words: tear, color, wind, sort, drift	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	Home, Travel	Poetry – 50 lines or less Fiction – 1,000 words or less
AUGUST	Mandatory prompt words: project, double, shine, top, way	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.