



# BIG COUNTRY WRITERS

NEWSLETTER OF THE ABILENE WRITERS GUILD—DECEMBER 2018

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## Joy to the World, It's Christmas Time!

Nothing like the first Christmas in a new home, even if the home isn't really new. Mine is at least new to me. It was fun setting up my tree and decorating things. The problem is, there is SO much stuff stored in my outbuilding, I don't have room in my cozy, little place for all my decorations! I think that means I will have to rotate them year after year. How does that idea sound to you? It sounds to me as if I better prepare to get much more organized at labeling boxes and tubs when I am UNdecorating after Christmas!

As you know, the Annual Contest is closed, but a few entries were delivered in December which were actually postmarked "ON or BEFORE November 30," as stipulated in the rules. There were even a few entries hand-delivered to my mailbox the evening of November 30. One person actually admitted to procrastinating! HA HA 'tis the season!

I would like to share a holiday poem with you. It is from *A Little Ol' Book from San Antonio, Texas*, copyright 1977 by Coronof Publishing Company.

### A Texan's Twelve Days of Christmas

On the first day of Christmas, my true love gave to me a 'possum in a pine tree.

On the second day of Christmas, my true love gave to me two walkin' boots...

On the third day of Christmas, my true love gave to me three prize bulls...

On the fourth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me four mockingbirds...

On the fifth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me five ma-jor-ettes...

On the sixth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me six armadillos...

On the seventh day of Christmas, my true love gave to me seven margaritas...

On the eighth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me eight hands a-roping

On the ninth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me nine hares a-hopping...

On the tenth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me ten couples dancin'...

On the eleventh day of Christmas, my true love gave to me eleven wells a-pumping...

On the twelfth day of Christmas my true love gave to me twelve colts a-jumpin, eleven wells-pumping, ten couples dancin', nine hares a-hopping, eight hands a-roping, seven margaritas, six armadillos, five ma-jor-ettes, four mockingbirds, three prize bulls, two walking boots and a possum in a pine tree.

I bet you couldn't do that without singing the melody, could you? Neither could I. And I will be singing Christmas carols all month and enjoying myself immensely. I hope you will, too. I also hope you are surrounded by family and/or friends and that your home, apartment or condo is filled with laughter and love. I look forward to seeing all of you next year at our January meeting! Until then, keep singing, keep smiling, and keep writing! Joy to the World and Merry Christmas from me to each of you.

Sharon Ellison

AWG President

NO  
DECEMBER MEETING  
SEE YOU IN JANUARY

## BRAGS AND SAGS

**David Dodge** is doing something everyone ought to try, writing two different books at the same time. He has a western about a Parson, and one from the files of a private detective in the 1950s in New York City. "A sag might be getting the name of one in the wrong story."

**Marguerite Gray:** has exciting news! The second edition of *Hold Me Close*, Book One of Revolutionary Faith, has been released by a new publisher. She loves the new cover, the new editor, and the new publisher. Book Two, *Surround Me*, will release in January, and Book Three, *Bring Me Near*, will release in February! All can be found on Amazon. <http://www.margueritemartingray.blog>

**Phyllis Allen** has not had time to write lately. Good news! A local actor will perform her story during the Dallas Museum of Art, Arts and Letters Live "Texas Bound" series, "The Red Swing," on March 9, 2019. She wrote this over ten years ago! "I am extremely excited! This is my second inclusion in the Arts and Letters Live series. My prayer and plan is that it will spur to start writing again."

**Daina Jurika-Owen** is going through a rough patch with her health right now and still has quite long ways to go. But so far, so good. She is looking forward to her daughter's family coming for Christmas. Fun with grandkids! Big BRAG: people are buying *Ten Cultures*, *Twenty Lives*, Kindle book on Amazon.

**Jo Cox** has 4 people reading her book *Creation's Parables*. She is also working on *Creator's Parables* again.

## MEMBERS ONLY MONTHLY CONTEST

**JANUARY THEMES**  
New Year's Eve, Winter

Find somewhere cozy and warm and  
**WRITE! WRITE! WRITE!**

## WHAT AWG READS

**Carla Kerr:** *The Tiger* by John Vaillant. Also, *Primrose Past* by Caroline Rose Hunt, an 1848 journal of young Lady Primrose. "I got interested in this book because the author was from Dallas. She was one of the well-known Hunts, but definitely the smart one in the family. The book is a wonderful fictional day by day tale of this young woman's life. It is a fast read and so refreshing."

**Judy Ware:** *David Balfour* by Robert Louis Stevenson.

**Daina Jurika-Owen** *The Master and Margarita* by Mikhail Bulgakov, which is a magic realism (and satire) classic from the Soviet times. This novel was forbidden under Soviet rule and got fully published only later. Definitely worth reading if interested in this genre and in Soviet issues.

**Darla Mcleod:** *Killing England* by Bill O'Reilly. *The Dream of You* by Jo Saxton. *The Muse* by Jessie Burton.

**Carolyn Dycus:** *We Didn't Ask for Wings* and *The Language of Flowers*, both by Vanessa Diffenbaugh. *The Christmas Cat* by Melody Carlson. "A December must-read for cat lovers!"

### 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	(2020)
Executive VP: David Dodge	(2019)
Program VP: Kay Talley	(2020)
Secretary: Carolyn Dycus	(2020)
Treasurer: Gail McMillan	(2019)
Board member: Suanna Davis	(2019)
Board member: Linda Gordon	(2019)
Board member: Coy Roper	(2020)
Board member: Mary Ann Smith	(2020)
Alt. Board member: Mary Berry	(2020)

Newsletter editor: Jo Cox

Monthly Contest Coordinator: Linda Gordon

## Members Only Monthly Contest - 2019

**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 due by the 12th of the contest month.

**Enter by Email Only:** Send document as attachments 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](mailto: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 coversheets 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 or line count for poetry (*do not include title in 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.

MONTH	THEME	CATEGORY
JANUARY	New Year's Eve, Winter	Poetry – 50 lines or less Fiction – 1,000 words or less
FEBRUARY	Games, Candy, Friendship	Poetry – 50 lines or less Non-Fiction – 1,000 words or less
MARCH	Mandatory prompt words: Gift, Revelation, Break, Jewel, Blue	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	Independence, Beaches, Weddings	Poetry – 50 lines or less Fiction – 1,000 words or less
AUGUST	Mandatory prompt words: Rain, Letter, Skip, Clear, Disguise	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 2019

## For ages 9-10 and 11-12

### 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 between January 1, 2019, and February 15, 2019.** Entries received before or after these dates will not be judged.

### CATEGORIES, MAXIMUM LENGTHS

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

### SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS – Do not count titles in the line or word count.

1. **Poems:** may be rhymed **OR** unrhymed in any style. **Limit: Two poems per student.**
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). **Limit: Two short stories per student.**

### 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 to the center of the page and put the title of your poem or story.

**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 judges can read your writing!

**POETRY:** Poems may be typed or handwritten. If you hand-write your poem, please make sure judges 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



**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 2019 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, 2019.

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

**MAIL TO:** Abilene Writers Guild  
c/o M. Berry  
PO Box 1681  
Abilene, Texas 79604

**Email QUESTIONS To:**  
[maberry@hughes.net](mailto:maberry@hughes.net)

\* =Required Information

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_

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.)



# 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  
In December



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Happy Holidays!



ABILENE WRITERS GUILD

P.O. Box 2562  
Abilene TX 79604