

# BIG COUNTRY WRITERS

NEWSLETTER OF THE ABILENE WRITERS GUILD—JANUARY, 2017

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## Happy New Year!

Well, like it or not, 2017 is here and off to a running start! Here is a brief report on our 2016-2017 Annual Contest, which closed November 30, 2016. There were 104 entries, which is about 20 fewer than last year. Three categories did not have enough entries to be judged, BUT those writers will still get the benefit of receiving a critique of their writing, so they should get some valuable feedback that may help them when they enter future contests. While I love to be a winner in contests I enter, I am always grateful for feedback from judges even when I don't win. Because honestly, with feedback, even then I win! I hope you feel the same way.

Plans are under way for our **Annual Workshop in March!** Our speaker should provide plenty of fun and entertainment, so I hope you will ALL mark your calendars and plan to be with us. You will find more information about our speaker in this Newsletter.

There are a few things going on in AWG, such as: we are **changing meeting rooms** at Rose Park Senior Center to **Room C**. If usually you come in the side door, our room is now the first room on your right. If you are confused, just look for the room with the piano in the far corner. For those of you who generally enter via the main front doors, our new place is on the same side of the hallway but one room farther than our old meeting room. In other words, it will be the last room on your left. The new room is slightly smaller but still has plenty of seating AND there is a sound system. So, for those who may have issues hearing in the larger room, this should be just about perfect!

You may have noticed **our website** has not been updated recently. Please be patient. A new version is in progress and should be up soon!

I have a question: Which articles have you

enjoyed the most over the last few years, and why? Is there something you would like to see addressed specifically in my articles? If so, please make a note and give it to me at one of our meetings. I truly want my articles to be pertinent to each of you as writers and readers, and I certainly do not want them to be boring, so help me out, please!

Our thanks again to Linda Gordon for being our new members-only contest coordinator this year. Check all the rules (you knew I'd say that!), look at the categories and send in your entries! Even you long-distance members who are not able to attend our monthly meetings can and should enter. Who knows? You might just win first, second, or third prize!

Keep smiling, folks, and enjoy this New Year. It will likely be a fast one! Blessings to all and write on!

**Sharon Ellison**

AWG President

Dear Friends at Abilene Writers Guild,

We wanted to send a big thank you for all of the beautiful donations dropped off for our kids! It means so much to us that you believe in our mission and care about protecting the unprotected children in Abilene.

We hope these beautiful donations spark a new generation of young, passionate writers! Wishing you and yours a wonderful holiday season!

Please keep in touch with us!

With joy,

Taylor Co Child Welfare

## 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.

Recommendations to change by-laws must be submitted before February 1.

## BRAGS AND SAGS

**Stewart Caffey's** latest book, *Sidney Methodist Church*, is now in print. The 100-page book is a history of the small, rural church where he grew up in Comanche County, Texas.

**Marguerite Gray** is editing *Bring Me Near*, getting it ready for publication in June, 2017.

**Ann Swann** lost her dear sister just before Halloween. "It was a tough holiday season after that. A sincere thanks to all who sent heartfelt cards and messages. And of course my deepest prayers to Nancy for her complete recovery."

**Lou Moug** has a comic story coming up in THE CREEPS #9, with some of his best art yet. Another new pulp book is shaping up. However, he is having to do research for the next Frankenstein.

**Suanna Davis** revised two pages of a major manuscript that had been ignored because it needed so much revision.

## JANUARY PROGRAM

Did you ever get a submission ready and dash off a synopsis to meet the requirements? Come find out how to get the synopsis to work for you, to sell the work, or win the contest. from Robyn Conley.

Whether working with poets, novelists, or writers of web and magazine articles, Robyn shows folks how they can transform their prose into published pieces of perfection.

Over the past twenty years her clients have won contests and earned a good income with their writing. "Makes me feel like a proud grandma," she says.

Robyn's published titles are diverse, such as the biographies: *John Grisham*, *Cartoonists*, and *Alexander G. Bell*, as well as juvenile reference books: *Meerkats*; *Depression*; *Motion Pictures*; and *The Automobile*. She has sold to major magazines, such as *The Writer*, *Writer's Digest*, *ABA: Student Lawyer*, *Victory! The Fellowship of Christian Athletes* and many others.

## WHAT AWG READS

**Carolyn Dycus:** *All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr.

**Carla Kerr:** *The Fire Line* by Fernanda Santos. It is about the Granite Mountain Hotshots forest fire fighters and one of the of the deadliest days in American firefighting.

**Marguerite Gray:** *Bring up the Bodies* by Hilary Mantel, *She Walks in Power* by MaryLu Tyndall, and *Turbulence* by Alana Terry.

**Suanna Davis:** *Innkeeper Chronicles* by Ilona Andrews (a Texas husband-wife team), *Castle Federation* by Glynn Stewart, and the *Empire of Bones Saga* by Terry Mixon.

## 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. Pittman presents his stories, music and programs throughout the South. He has four music CD's.

### Our Life Members:

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

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

## 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](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).

**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!**

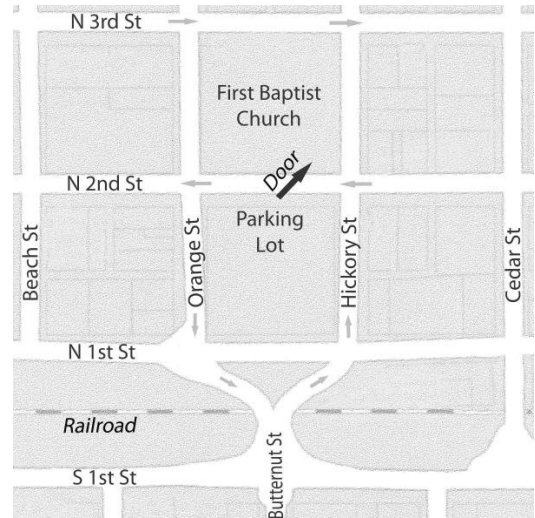
You may mail a check to either address below, or make your reservation by phone and pay at the door.

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.

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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

January 26 – 7:00 p.m.

Abilene Senior Citizens Center, Rose Park

(room change see first page)

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## Make Your Synopsis Work

Robyn Conley

### ABILENE WRITERS GUILD

P.O. Box 2562  
Abilene TX 79604