



# BIG COUNTRY WRITERS

NEWSLETTER OF THE ABILENE WRITERS GUILD—DECEMBER 2019

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## Christmas Time

The Christmas season brings strong feelings for most of us. Some are wonderful. Some are sorrowful. Some are new. Some are very different from ever before. Join me in searching out the best things this Christmas season, whether it is a special gift from a special person, a visit from an old friend, an encouraging word to or from someone else, a sweet memory from your past, or an idea about what you can do for someone else. Enjoy your time with friends and family and treasure each moment. Moments, as most of us know, can be short, like the blink of an eye.

Once all the hustle and bustle of the season is over, get ready for a new year and new opportunities. We have monthly members-only contests, which could be a little tricky this year if we don't enlist a new Newsletter editor soon!

I would SO hate for us to do without a monthly Newsletter we have had one for longer than I have been in the Guild, and that's a long time now! There is a lot to think about along that line, so I am hoping some of you folks who "think outside the box" are mulling this issue over and over in your minds. PERHAPS we could have quarterly Newsletters. That would require REALLY thinking ahead and planning. Or perhaps we could do one every other month, still that would require some serious planning and preparation. These are just some of the thoughts running through my head as we approach the end of the year. I would sure love to hear from you if you have any ideas or suggestions, and I know Jo would, too!

We have barely begun our Flash Spotlight

**NO DECEMBER MEETING**

each month, oh my! What shall we do???

Perhaps the answer is YOU!

The annual contest closed Nov. 30, and I will soon send the entries to the judges. Please mark your calendars now for Saturday, March 21, 2020, for our Annual Workshop and Awards! Nancy Robinson Masters will be our guest speaker and she promises to give us a real "hands-on" writing workshop. Registration will begin at 8:30 with the program beginning at 9. We will issue the contest awards around 11 and try to be finished by 11:30, so you can enjoy a nice lunch in downtown Abilene. Why not get a group together and go discuss what you did and what you learned in the workshop? Perhaps you will have even won a prize in one of our categories. Wouldn't THAT be fun!

Otherwise, I encourage you to keep attending our programs and to keep on writing. Our November meeting was SO interesting with the writing examples read by so many members. What an eclectic group we have!

Thank you, Jo, for your great work! It is and has been appreciated.

I pray each of you have a blessed, Merry Christmas, and that 2020 will be the best year you've ever had! Write on, people, write on!

**Sharon Ellison**

AWG President

## Gifts for Noah Project

A huge **Thank You** to all the generous AWG members that contributed to the Noah Project this holiday season. Much appreciation was expressed for the six large canvas bags of notebooks, journals, pens, and books that were gifted to the families they serve.

## BRAGS AND SAGS

**Stewart Caffey** and his wife Dona have put together a cookbook of favorite family recipes. They will be Christmas presents.

**Marguerite Gray** joined the NaNoWriMo in November and wrote 50,261 words on a new novel. Also, *Draw Me to Your Side* will be released in February. This is book four of Revolutionary Faith Series.

**Lou Mougín** as a comic story in *House of Spades. Crom the Barbarian* may be done by January. He is indexing *Secondary Superheroes of the Golden Age of Comics*, which should be published in January.

**Suanna Davis** wrote 50,000 words during NaNoWriMo on a middle grade novel. She submitted two stories to an editor and "completed" six stories in the last six months. Another story did not get a response from an editor. She edited nine chapters of **Jo Cox's** book, *Creation's Parables*, since the beginning of November.

**Chuck Webber's** book, *Spiritual Puzzles*, is on Amazon. He is working with a marketing guy who has got him on PayPal, and will be sending out FB posts regularly. "Next step is to make a specialized background page for FB."

## WHAT AWG READS

**Stewart Caffey:** *Explosive Reunion* by Karen Kirst. It is a mystery novel.

**Lou Mougín:** *The Lost Peace* by Robert Dallek, *Unladylike* by Cristen Conger and Carolline Ervin, *Midlife Cabernet* by Elaine Ambrose.

**Penny Klostermann:** *The Toll* by Neal Shusterman (the third book in a series) "Strange series!"

**Carolyn Dycus:** *Life in Christ, Practicing Christian Spirituality* by Julia Gatta. "Beautiful job of covering the traditional Christian Church's liturgical practices, and benefits." *Cottage by the Sea* by Debbie Macomber "A great read for drama and romance."

## DEATH NOTICE

Longtime member, Laura Thaxton, died Thursday Nov 5th. She was a very active member of AWG and a very sweet person. She will be missed.

## NEW MEMBER

Heidi Martin from Abilene

*Happy Holidays*

## WRITING CONTESTS

### 30 WORD SHORT STORY

By Reading Works, a literacy nonprofit

**Deadline:** January 29, 2020

For more information see

<https://www.reading-works.org/short-short-story-writing-contest.html>

### COLLAB CONFERENCE

April 22-24, 2020

For more information and early registration through Jan 31 see [www.collab-conference.com](http://www.collab-conference.com)

### Our Life Members:

*Stewart Caffey, Nancy Masters,  
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	(2020)
Executive VP:	David Dodge	(2021)
Program VP:	Kay Talley	(2020)
Secretary:	Carolyn Dycus	(2021)
Treasurer:	Gail McMillan	(2021)
Board member:	Linda Gordon	(2021)
Board member:		(2020)
Board member:	Mary Ann Smith	(2020)
Board member:	Mary Berry	(2021)
Alt. Board member:	Darla McLeod	(2020)
Newsletter editor:	Jo Cox	
Monthly Contest Coordinator:	Linda Gordon	

## Members Only Monthly Contest - 2020

**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:** Submissions received at any time after the 12th of the previous month, 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 count 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.

MONTH	THEME	CATEGORY
JANUARY	"Rock" the New Year (any definition of "rock")	Poetry – 50 lines or less Fiction – 1,000 words or less
FEBRUARY	Hearts on "Fire" (any definition of "fire")	Poetry – 50 lines or less Non-Fiction – 1,000 words or less
MARCH	Mandatory prompt words: Mix, Jam, Twine, Ring, Ticket	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	Make a Splash (anything to do with "water")	Poetry – 50 lines or less Fiction – 1,000 words or less
AUGUST	Mandatory prompt words: Slip, Match, Trace, Key, Pretend	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.

No Meeting  
In December

*Happy Holidays!*

**ABILENE WRITERS GUILD**

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