



# BIG COUNTRY WRITERS

NEWSLETTER OF THE ABILENE WRITERS GUILD—JULY 2017

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## Hello, July!

In June, I went on a mission trip to Poland with 10 other fun, hardworking folks. We were in Krakow, Poland, which is full of so much history it can be a bit daunting to take it all in. Along with working each day with a group of senior citizens who were inspiring in their activity level (to say the least!), our group was able to tour the historic downtown area of Krakow where we visited one of the oldest synagogues in Europe. It is now a beautiful museum. You may recall from your history lessons that Poland was occupied first by the Nazis, then by Russia once the allies won the war.

We were able to tour Shindler's Factory Museum in Krakow, which is an amazing place to visit and learn more about the how Oscar Shindler, a German, literally saved hundreds of Poles and Jews lives by putting them to work in his factory. Another day, after riding a bus for about 90 minutes, we reached Auschwitz concentration camp and Birchenau death camp. To say these tours were sobering is an understatement. And to think some folks do not believe the holocaust ever happened... well, just go there for yourself. It is difficult not to be overcome with emotion seeing what some humans have done to other humans.

While in Poland, we enjoyed weather in the high 70s and lower 80s during the day and very cool evenings, although the humidity was quite high. Riding trams (which remind me of the old streetcars I saw in Dallas when I was a kid) is an interesting way to get around the outside of the main city center. Once you reach your stop, you begin walking, walking, walking. You might be surprised to learn that one day we walked over eight miles! Yes, really! That's just the way to get around in Krakow.

Then we came back home to the heat of Texas! Now we have celebrated the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and I hope you spent time with friends and family enjoying the freedom we all share in this country. Our country may not be perfect, but we have SO very much for which to be thankful!

Your Board has now met for its annual planning meeting, mainly so we all know what to expect during the coming year. Please plan to participate as much as possible during the coming year!

If you missed our June meeting at H. V. Chapman and Sons Bookbinders, you missed a delightful tour given by Tim De La Vega, current owner of the company. We were also very happy to meet several members of the Cisco Writers Guild who drove in for the field trip!

By way of reminder, you have one more month (August) of the members-only contest for this year, so get those flash entries ready to send in!

Hope you are already planning to attend July's meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup>. Blessings and happy writing!

**Sharon Ellison**

AWG President

### This Month's Paid Members

- Katie Boren
- Ginny Greene
- Alice King Greenwood
- Joy Shin
- Kay Talley
- Betty Thomason

### Time for Dues at AWG

Mail checks to : Abilene Writers Guild  
P.O. Box 2562, Abilene, TX 79604  
\$25.00 single, \$35.00 family

## REMEMBERING AWG BOARD MEMBER JOHN MATTHEWS

By Nancy Robinson Masters

Good stories often come from bad experiences. Thirty-something years ago at a car wash on North 10<sup>th</sup> Street I met Pam Estes, author of *King of the Wheeler Dealers*, her book telling what it was like to be the daughter of convicted wheeler dealer Billie Sol Estes. The book hit several international best-seller lists, and I was delighted Pam agreed to do a program for the AWG to share the challenges she encountered writing a difficult story. She said John R. Matthews, a former editor with Doubleday in New York, was the reason for her self-publishing success. John grew up in Haskell County and had moved back to West Texas to work with Texas authors whose writings were often overlooked by the New York publishing industry.

Pam introduced me to John a few days later. It was the beginning of a professional partnership and friendship that I, too, credit as a major reason for any successes I have had as a writer. John's intelligence, experience, counsel, and patience—especially patience--guided me through a half-dozen self-published projects, each resulting in solid sales that continue today. When other assignments from major publishers demanded more of me than I thought I had, John knew how to keep me forging forward. He could take a mangled chaos of words and with a few deft flicks of the keyboard turn it into meaningful composition to get me back on track.

Though shy and somewhat of a recluse, John enjoyed helping writers. For example, he completed a Masters in History to be better prepared as an editorial consultant for history-related publications. He was a designer and editorial board member of *Mesquite*, published by the Abilene Committee for the Humanities. He was glad to serve on the AWG Board because he believed Abilene was very fortunate to have such an organization that many larger communities did not have.

John bravely battled Parkinson's disease for years. A few days before his death on July 6, I visited with him and though barely able to speak he laughed when I reminded him we might never have met if it hadn't been for Billie Sol Estes' wheeling and dealing.

"Good stories come from bad experiences," he whispered.

I asked him if I could quote him on that. He nodded yes.

Thank you, John. For using your last breath to give a writer the words she needed.

(Friends of John R. Matthews are invited to come by McKay's Bakery on Cypress Street between 9 and 10 a.m. on Tuesday, July 25, for coffee and conversation to honor his memory hosted by Nancy Masters and LaWayne Harris.)

## BRAGS AND SAGS

**David Dodge** enters his 87<sup>th</sup> year on July 29, 2017! Happy Birthday!

**Carla Kerr** is writing a play, "The Disgusting Mystery Fantasy" for the Theatre Guild's Fall Fund Raiser at NMSU-A.

**Iris Williams** is copywriting for online marketing every day now. Her sag, she fell and banged up a couple ribs.

**Carolyn Dycus** volunteered to work with Bhutanese Refugees. These Nepalese women crochet using plastic bags as yarn, which is called "planning." Her group made 32 sleeping mats for the homeless and gave them to Love and Care Ministries and Salvation Army.

**Lou Mouglin** got in pages for a new comic story. He is halfway done (probably) with *Frank 2*, but needs to do the rest. He is waiting for so much to get published.

**Ann Swann** has a new romantic suspense coming from 5 Prince Books. *The Remains in the Pond* will be released on November 13, 2017.

**Suanna Davis** is editing *Creation's Parables* for Jo Cox and a book for Diana Hartman. Sag, she haven't done anything for publication recently.

**Penny Klostermann** received another review for *A Cooked-Up Fairy Tale*. Blurb from *School Library Journal*: "a fine recipe for a fractured fairy tale—blend familiar storybook characters with lots of dialogue, add a pinch of disharmony, and stir in a happy-ever-after ending."

**Marguerite Gray** moved to Louisiana. Her book *Labor of Love* is ready for the publisher to edit. She is writing *Draw Me to Your Side*, which is the fourth book of the Revolutionary Faith Series.

**Loretta Walker** won 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> place, and two 1<sup>st</sup> Honorable Mentions in the National Federation of State Poetry Societies contests. She also received a Best of the Net nomination. Her poem "Motherhood" was accepted for inclusion in *Switchgrass Review* for the Fall 2017 issue and five poems in *Ginsoko Literary Journal* #19. "I am truly humbled and thankful."

## WHAT AWG READS

**Sharon Ellison:** *Seven Skirts for Seven Sisters* by Donna Coppersmith. This is the chronicle of her first mission trip to Africa where she carried skirts to share with women she met. Each skirt became a God story. Donna is a childhood friend of Sharon. You can find it on Amazon.

**Carla Kerr:** *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan* by Lisa See. It is well written and kept me enthralled. I recommend it as escape reading.

**David Dodge:** is reading a book he published some time ago to see how many mistakes got by. Some short stories too.

**Iris Williams:** *Crimes Against a Book Club* by Kathy Cooperman. *The 4 Hour Workweek* by Timothy Ferriss.

**Lou Mouglin:** an early Star Trek novel, which isn't too good.

**Suanna Davis:** the vampire series by Karen Chance

**Judy Ware:** *The Woman on the Orient Express* by Lindsay Jayne Ashford. *The Letter* by Kathryn Hughes. *Facing Your Giants* by Max Lucado.

**Penny Klostermann:** *The Girl Who Drank the Moon* by Kelly Barnhill, winner of the 2017 Newbery Medal.

**Carolyn Dycus:** *Reviving Old Scratch: Demons and the Devil for Doubters and the Disenchanted* by Richard Beck. The book to engage us "moderns" in what spiritual warfare looks like in our own dark places.

**Marguerite Gray:** *Lisette's List* by Susan Vreeland.

### June Monthly Contest Winners

Theme: Summer Ice cream Swimming  
Non-Fiction – 1,000 words or less

1st: **Coy Roper**

"The Coming of Summer and the Making of Ice Cream"

2nd: **Barbara Loyd**

"Summer Playmates"

# JULY PROGRAM

## EVERY BOOK TELLS AT LEAST TWO STORIES

Glenn Dromgoole has told scores of stories. He will talk about the stories outside the covers of his books as well as the stories inside the covers. His books cover a wide range of topics and styles, mixing whimsy with a generous dose of optimism.

Glenn now has 30 books published, the latest being *Abilene A to Z*, *101 Essential Texas Books*, and *West Texas Stories*.

Most of his books are still in print, including *What Dogs Teach Us*, which was a New York Times Bestseller Plus selection for eight weeks, reaching Number 24 in Hardcover Nonfiction in 1999. He followed up with *What Cats Teach Us* and *What Horses Teach Us*, as well as *What Dogs Teach Us II* and *What Grandchildren Do*.

Many of Glenn's books are more regional in focus – *Abilene Stories*; *West Texas Christmas Stories*; *Coleman Springs USA*; and *Good Night Little Texan*, a companion volume to his popular children's books *Good Night Cowboy* and *Good Night Cowgirl*.

Glenn and his wife Carol own Texas Star Trading Company – the National Store of Texas – in downtown Abilene, featuring Texas books, gourmet and gifts.

Learn more at [GlennDromgoole.com](http://GlennDromgoole.com) and [TexasStarTrading.com](http://TexasStarTrading.com).

### New Member

**Tim DeLaVega**  
HV Chapman & Sons Bookbinders  
Abilene, TX

### Permian Basin Writers Workshop

September 13-17, 2017  
Midland, TX  
[www.permianbasinwritersworkshop.com](http://www.permianbasinwritersworkshop.com)

### New Website

San Angelo Writers Club has a new website. Check it out!  
<https://sanangelowritersclub.org>

### The Writer—Multiple Contests

Entry Deadline August 31, 2017  
<https://www.writermag.com/writing-resources/contests/>

### Futurescapes Writing Contest

Entry Deadline October 13, 2017  
[http://www.futurescapescontest.com/?utm\\_source=AlmondPress&utm\\_medium=WritingCompetitionList&utm\\_campaign=WritingCompetitions](http://www.futurescapescontest.com/?utm_source=AlmondPress&utm_medium=WritingCompetitionList&utm_campaign=WritingCompetitions)

### Writers Digest Competitions

Entry Deadline various  
<http://www.writersdigest.com/writers-digest-competitions>

### Chanticleer Writing Contests

Entry Deadline various  
<https://www.chantireviews.com/contests/>

### 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 - 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.

Fourth Thursday Together

July 27 – 7:00 p.m.

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Every Book Tells  
At Least Two Stories  
Glenn Dromgoole

**ABILENE WRITERS GUILD**

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