



# BIG COUNTRY WRITERS

NEWSLETTER OF THE ABILENE WRITERS GUILD—JUNE 2019

abilenewritersguild.org    jocox1awg@catnapin.com

## Whet Your Writing Skills

“Whet?” you may say. Yes, whet. The word simply means “to sharpen.” What an appropriate word for a writing group!

I recall watching my grandpa sit on a bench or chair on the porch or under the shade of a tree using a whetstone to sharpen his pocket knife, plus a few of my mother’s kitchen knives, too. The thing that really bothered me was that he would spit on the whetstone before he began sharpening the knife. Yeuck! I thought that was pretty gross.

When I asked him why he did it, he would simply say, “Makes the knife sharpen easier.” When I asked why—I always asked “why” about a LOT of things—he smiled and responded, “It just does.”

I’m quite sure I rolled my eyes, because that was not really an answer at all. I know now that he used his spit as lubrication which aided the cutting action and helped get rid of the swarf. You know what swarf is, right? It’s the fine bits of metal from the knife and grit from the whet stone that occur during the sharpening process. Now you know, if you didn’t already.

They are NOT “wet” stones, although I have heard some people call them that. Some folks even call them water stones, but neither water nor oil is required when using a whetstone. There are larger stones generally found clamped to work benches in metal shops or carpenter shops, in which case they are called “bench stones.” Makes sense to me. Whetstones can be used for sharpening many items, such as scythes, drills or even things with serrated edges.

Sadly, whet stones have dropped out of style. I don’t recall seeing anyone sharpening a knife with one in the last, oh 60 years or so. Now we have fancy, electronic sharpening instruments, but it’s a trip down memory lane for me to think about my grandpa sharpening

the knives. I really miss watching him. I just don’t miss the spitting.

There are only two months of member-only contests left, so I hope I have whetted your desire to write and submit something. When using a whetstone, one should only sharpen in one direction. Rubbing a knife back and forth across the whetstone will damage the blade. I’m sure there is a fairly good spiritual application which could be made here, too, but I will save that for another article.

Take this and run with it. Start now and go forward. Put on your thinking cap and submit something to the last two members-only contests. Whet your ideas! And while you are at it, get something ready to read to the group at this month’s meeting. We have SUCH a varied group with such varied interests in writing. It is fun to hear from each other!

And, yes, in case you were wondering, all those knives my grandpa sharpened were washed and disinfected thoroughly before use! I’m sure you are relieved.

Blessings,

**Sharon Ellison**

AWG President

## DUES ARE DUE!

\$25.00 single membership  
\$35.00 family membership

Give cash or check to Gail McMillan  
at the next meeting or mail to:

Abilene Writers Guild  
P.O. Box 2562  
Abilene, TX 79604

If you joined the AWG since March 2019,  
then your dues come due next year.

## WHAT AWG READS

**Lou Mougins:** One of Jack Dillon's Dublin books

**Suanna Davis:** *Always Remember* by Cece Meng.

**David Dodge:** *The Colemans* a trilogy by Glenn Rogers.

**Marguerite Gray:** *This Healing Journey* by Misty Beller.

**Jo Cox:** the biblical books of *Revelation*, *Zechariah*, and *Daniel* with a few other prophets too. Plus all the commentaries that go with them.

**Carolyn Dycus:** *The Witch's Daughter* by Paula Brackston. "Well written historical fiction/romance."

## BRAGS AND SAGS

**Lou Mougins** has stories in *The Creeps*. He is trying to get Frank 3 in gear again.

**Carla Kerr's** goal is to finish the writing and review of her latest book by the end of August, publish in September and have book signing in October.

**Suanna Davis** is writing again. Writing everyday! Having fun with writing! She sent her first children's picture book manuscript to an associate editor at Roaring Brook Press. *Who is Persephone?* You'll have to ask if you want to find out.

**David Dodge** has two new books on Amazon, available as paperbacks and e-books too: *The Parson* from the Settling the West Series and *Preston Reardon, Private Eye* a detective in the fifties.

**Marguerite Gray** sent book four: *Draw Me to Your Side* to the publisher on June 1. She is preparing *Labor of Love* (first book of Gardens in Time Series) to the publisher on July 1. "Busy editing."

**Jo Cox** is rewriting the style of *Creation's Parables* and working on *Messiah's Parables*. "It took me a full chapter to figure out two verses. These passages are cool."

### May Members Contest Winners National Short Story month

- 1<sup>st</sup>: Chuck Webber  
"The Great Clyde Prairie Fire"
- 2<sup>nd</sup>: Chuck Webber  
"The Epiphany of Charles Nova"
- HM: Philip Jorgensen "Drawing Trolls"
- HM: Coy Roper "Reunion Postponed"
- HM: Brandon Stanley "Gracchus Story"

### NEW MEMBERS

Sherrinda Ketchersid from Irving TX

## JUNE PROGRAM

### Open Mic Night!

AWG members! Come and present a reading of your writing for the July meeting.

Prepare for one 4 minute presentation, two if there is time.

What better way to inspire and encourage fellow members! Be a part of this fun and motivational night.

### Our Life Members:

*Stewart Caffey, Nancy Masters,  
Laura Thaxton, 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 (2020)
- Treasurer: Gail McMillan (2021)
- Board member: Linda Gordon (2021)
- Board member: Coy Roper (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

## CALF REPORT

The CALF's Write and Illustrate Your Own Storybook 2019 was a successful workshop and lots of fun, thanks to AWG volunteers Mary Berry, Suanna Davis, Gail McMillan, Carolyn Dycus, and Mary Ann Smith plus a few other good friends.

We engaged 62 children in the work of writing and art as they illustrated their own personal storybook.

The Friday and Saturday one-hour workshops have been a favorite project for AWG volunteers for six years.

The Children's Art and Literature Festival draws thousands from all over Texas and out of state as well. Abilene proudly calls itself home for The National Center of Childrens Illustrated Literature, which sponsors the annual festival.

## DUE!\$ PAID

For questions or corrections, contact Gail McMillan at gmcmil5382@taylortel.net

- Mary Berry
- Katie Boren
- Jo Cox
- Janet Decuir
- Linda Gordon
- Carla Kerr
- Gail McMillan
- Sheryl Pennington
- Barbara Rollins
- Coy Roper
- Betty Thomason
- Chuck Weber

## WRITING CONTESTS

### UNO PUBLISHING LAB PRIZE

**Submit:** full-length fiction manuscripts  
**Deadline:** August 31, 2019  
<http://www.unopress.org/lab.aspx>

### POPULAR FICTION AWARDS

**Deadline:** September 6:2019  
<https://www.writersdigest.com/writers-digest-competitions/popular-fiction-awards>

### JUNIPER LITERARY PRIZES

**Deadline:** September 30, 2019  
<http://www.umass.edu/umpress/content/juniper-literary-prize-series>

### SHORT FICTION AWARD

**Deadline:** September 30, 2019  
<https://www.uiowa.edu/authors/iowa-short-fiction.htm>

### POETRY AWARDS

**Deadline:** October 1, 2019  
<https://www.writersdigest.com/writers-digest-competitions/poetry-awards>

### SHORT STORY AWARD

**Deadline:** November 29, 2019  
<https://www.servicescape.com/short-story-award>

### AMERICAN HISTORICAL FICTION

**Deadline:** December 1:2019  
<https://langumfoundation.org/about-prizes/american-historical-fiction/>

### FRIENDS OF AMERICAN WRITERS

**Deadline:** December 10, 2019  
<http://www.fawchicago.org/awards.php>

### CABELL FIRST NOVELIST AWARD

**Deadline:** December 31, 2019  
<https://firstnovelist.vcu.edu/>

## 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.

# Fourth Thursday Together

June 27 – 7:00 p.m.

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## Open Mic Night!

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P.O. Box 2562  
Abilene TX 79604