

LA PLUME

Official Newsletter of the Writers' Guild of Acadiana

January 2024 – **Happy New Year!**

Board Members:

President John Comeaux, Vice President Christopher Fontenot, Treasurer Beth Davis, Publicist Ellen Threatts, Secretary Ed Gauthier, Webmaster Guy Kilchrist, Historian Pamela Harrington, Newsletter (open) temp: John Comeaux, and all past WGA Presidents in good standing.



Next Meeting: January 30

All meetings are open to the public. The South Regional Branch of the Lafayette Library, Auditorium. Address is 6101 Johnston St, Lafayette. Start time is **6:00 p.m.** We usually go to 7:15, but we must end by 7:30.

We will have a Door Prize from the books that were donated by authors.

January Guest Speaker: Ed Gauthier

The honorable Mr. Edward Gauthier is our Guild secretary, and has published two novels. On January 30, he will speak on artist colonies. Ever wanted to get away and take time to just finish the last chapters of that unpublished novel? To complete those four poems? To finish your family's memoirs? This lecture will go over methods to get acceptance into a writer's colony and amaze you with how many writer's colonies are available for us writers. Dairy Hollow Writer's Colony in Eureka Springs, Arkansas will be featured, and will include pictures.

LOOKING AHEAD: February: Prompt "Unexpected Treasures in the attic"

Category: Memoirs

This is a fun competition for members. The prompt **MUST APPEAR** somewhere within the work, and entries must be no longer than 500 words. The author must be present, but may allow another to read the piece aloud. When the prompt category is poetry, both traditional and free verse poems are acceptable. All entries must be typed and double-spaced. The story or poem must have the word count, title, author's name, and date of the competition written at the top of the first page, and a paper copy of the winner and runner-up is to be handed in to the vice-president after the judging. Contest participants are not allowed to enter the contest with works that are typed on iPhones or any other electronic devices.

Opportunities to market your books

Beginning in January 2024, Writer's Guild members vending at Moncus Park will be asked to pay \$10.00 per sales day. That is a \$5.00 increase from what was charged in 2023. This is to defray the cost that the Writer's Guild has to pay for the vending booth location. (\$35.00 per Saturday)

The Lafayette City Art Walk always occurs on the second Saturday of the month, every month. If you, as an individual, wish to vend your books at Art Walk, free space is available. This occurs on Jefferson Street. (From the underpass to the corner of Lee street and Jefferson.) It begins around 4:00 pm and goes to 8:30 or 9:00 pm. (Or until you are tired) Ed Gauthier recommends setting up on the sidewalk in front of a store that is out of business, or that doesn't charge a fee for being in front of their store. There is plenty of walking traffic, lots of customers. Basically, no one will oversee your location. You can take part in this event whether you are a member of our guild or not. Ed tends to set up around 520 Jefferson Street. Come by. Text Ed and he'll give more explanation. (337-945-5718)

Critique Group

WGA has formed its own critique group. We are officially WGAcadiana Critique. This will meet online using Google groups and Google Meet. If interested, contact our secretary by **text** (337-945-5718) or email at eggchess@gmail.com. Joining this group will require that you have an active Google account.

Winners of the competition will be published in a booklet

Every other month, our guild sponsors a writing competition. Members read their submissions. (The author must attend the meeting and read their submission in 5 minutes or less. Must mention the writing prompt. 500 words or less. Must bring a printed copy which the guild keeps.) Members that are present vote to decide the winner. A Creative Writing Competition Winners booklet will be printed containing all the winners of the bi-monthly writing competition.

WGA tote bags are for sale (\$10.00) at our meetings or at our vending table.

Any member who has experience writing grant proposals is encouraged to contact one of our Board members. We hope to obtain some grant funds to defray increased membership costs.

Writing Tips, Hints, and How-to's. Mistakes that New Writers Make

- 1) The use of exclamation points. Try to never use one. It is the sign of a beginner writer and editors spot it immediately. To them using an exclamation point is lazy. It is telling not showing. The general rule is one exclamation point for every 10K words. Find a better way to 'show' the emotion that you are using the exclamation point for. It will make your writing richer.
- 2) Words ending in 'ing'. Go through your ms (manuscript) and eliminate as many of these words as possible. She was singing. They were swimming. All telling. Of course there are lots of ing words that are acceptable: wedding, boating, etc. You can't wipe ing out totally. You have to use your head.

- 3) Same with words ending in 'ly'. She said quietly. He walked quickly. Change it up. Show us. Better: She said, her voice so soft he had to lean in to hear.
- 4) Limit the use of 'was' and 'were'. They are shameful telling verbs. He was mad. Better: He slammed his fist on the table so hard the glasses rattled. Both sentences let us know he's mad; which sentence is more interesting?
- 5) Limit the use of 'very' and 'just'. It was very cold. He just wanted to get in the warm cabin. Better: The cold air left frost on his mustache and cracked his lips. The smell of the wood fire at the cabin spurred him on through the snow.
- 6) Be suspicious of the word 'it'. It rained. It was unpleasant. You can almost always find a better way. Use a deeper POV for example. Better: Although I had buried snips of my hair in an old mason jar out in the backyard like my grandma told me, rain still showed up on my wedding day.
- 7) He and She. Try to eliminate as many as you can. He sang. Better: Charlie sang. Best: Not knowing if it would get a laugh or a boo, Charlie lifted his face into the spotlight and began to sing.
- 8) Clichéd work. Don't ever write it was 'as quiet as a mouse', or 'a tomb', or 'so quiet you could hear a pin drop'. We've all read that too many times. Be unique. It was as quiet as a nun's prayer. So much more interesting to read.
- 9) Watch those misplaced antecedents. When she spoke to Mrs. Smith she smiled. Who is smiling here?
- 10) Changing POVs in the middle of a scene.

"The way the girl's long hair shone in the sunlight got John's immediate attention. Fascinated, he moved closer with the intent to feel the softness without her being aware. She wondered if he was going to get the nerve."

Whose head are we in? John's. So the last sentence has to be changed. He can't know what she might be wondering.

Taken from: : **Write Better Right Now: Creative Writing** \$1.99 ebook.

Self Publishing is not new, by Karl Drinkwater.

Editor's note: An interesting article on self-publishing. Here are some of the names he mentions: Virginia Woolf, Jane Austen, Mark Twain, Beatrix Potter, Margaret Atwood.

Full article: <https://karldrinkwater.substack.com/p/weekly-writers-self-publishing-is>

NEW!

John Comeaux is willing to co-author and co-produce the La Plume newsletter after December 2023 for WGA. Send contributions for the newsletter to info@writersguildacadiana.org John is willing to share the responsibility and the accolades, honors, and laurels with you.

WEB Page and Facebook

Our NEW and Improved website is here: <https://www.writersguildacadiana.org/>

Like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/writersguildacadiana.org/>

Would you like to join or renew?

Thank you for your interest in the Guild. Submit the form below to register to become a new or renew a membership with Writers’ Guild of Acadiana. Annual membership fee is \$25.00. Your dues are good for one year of remittance. Thus, if you join in mid-year, you are a paid member through the following mid-year. You will receive this monthly newsletter “La Plume”, which will keep you informed of events and news of the Guild. Be sure to check your email junk folder if you are not getting the newsletter from jpcoman9@gmail.com When submitting the form, please mail your check or money order to:

Writers’ Guild of Acadiana

P O Box 51532

Lafayette, LA 70505

Email questions to: info@writersguildacadiana.org

Cash payments can be made at the monthly meeting – do not mail.

This form is also online: writersguildacadiana.org

Name _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone/Email _____

Date _____

How did you find out about us? _____
