

"And by the way, everything in life is writable about if you have the outgoing guts to do it, and the imagination to improvise. The worst enemy to creativity is self-doubt." — Sylvia Plath

LA PLUME

Official Newsletter of the Writers' Guild of Acadiana

May 2023

Board Members:

President John Comeaux, Vice President Christopher Fontenot, Treasurer Beth Davis, Publicist Ellen Threatts, Secretary Ed Gauthier, Webmaster Rhonda Lejeune, Historian Pamela Harrington, Newsletter John Comeaux, and all past WGA Presidents in good standing.



Announcement: Newsletter Editor position will be open

Starting September 2023 the position of the editor of La Plume will be available. If you have a desire to be our next board member and newsletter editor, please apply in person at the May/June/July meeting, or by email to JPComan9@gmail.com. The responsibilities are to inform members of upcoming events and meetings, and to comb the vast amount of information available and distill it for our members.

Next Meeting: May

May 30, 2023. 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.

Our May meeting is "Members read" month. Members may bring work that they have created and share with the attendees. It may be a work in progress or a completed work. Five minutes will be allotted for each reader. Singers and songwriters within the organization are invited to share their work as a cappella or acoustic numbers; however, there is a limit of one song per performer and the song must also be no longer than five minutes.

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

May Prompt

"Black despair, shining hope!"

Category: Poetry

This is a fun competition for members. The prompt **MUST APPEAR** somewhere within the work, and entries must be no longer than 500 words. 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 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.

Note: As a clarification, the two phrases above do not have to be next to each other, and the punctuation is not required.

Looking Ahead: June Guest Speaker Michelle Kreamer

Dr. H. Michelle Kreamer is an Assistant Professor of Educational Curriculum and Instruction at UL Lafayette. Prior to this, she was a high school English Language Arts teacher. Dr. Kreamer serves as Site Director for the National Writing Project of Acadiana (NWP-A) and enjoys engaging with students and teachers to support writing and writing instruction. In this role, she works with students, teachers, and community members through various writing events and initiatives. Though most of her writing is currently academic in nature, she is continually inspired by the written word and believes everyone is a writer!

WEB Page and Facebook

Our web page is here: <https://www.writersguildacadiana.org/>

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

The Writers' Guild is always willing to share the success stories of its members. Be sure to let us know about your writing. We will put your blurb on our website, on our Facebook page, and on this newsletter. Let's highlight and showcase our writers! Send us a synopsis or your own paragraph about the work you are working on or have published, and how to get it. Send to John at jpcoman9@gmail.com.

◆ Member Announcements

New Feature! La Plume will allow our authors to submit a teaser or extended passage from their upcoming or existing work, one page or less. Send your submission to JPComan9@gmail.com

Book: *Recalling My Beginnings: The Kentucky Years*

Author: Vana J. Plaisance

Published: Xulon Press, 2014

For most of my life, I have lived in the Cajun heartland of Southwest Louisiana. My love for a tall, dark, handsome man – who could speak French – transported me more than 900 miles from the bluegrass area of Central Kentucky to the Gulf Coast. I often tell people that I would have followed my husband, Francis James Plaisance, to the ends of the Earth, just to be with him.

As we dated, I realized that Francis and I shared the same Christian values, and his admirable character assured me that I could build a future with this man. When I asked Francis what he wanted to do with his life, he said, “I want to spend my life helping others.”

While living in Abbeville, Louisiana for these many years, I often reflect on my memories of growing up in Kentucky, the land of my birth. Particularly, when the long sultry days of a Louisiana summer fade into cooler days of fall, as the first north wind blows down onto southern flatlands, I long for rolling hills adorned with autumn leaves in hues of yellow, orange, and red. My beautiful Kentucky calls to me once more, and I remember.

◆ Writing Inspiration

A Writer’s Guide to Breaking the Rules

by Sarah Penner from Writer Unboxed

All writing advice, I ultimately decided, should be taken with a grain of salt. Writing is art, and art doesn’t mix with rules. Take what works for you as the creator, and leave the rest behind. Below are six conventional writing “rules” I’d encourage writers to think twice about.

Rule #5 worth breaking: Formulaic narrative structures

Now, don’t get me wrong here. I’m all about the tried-and-true three-act story structure. In fact, I plot, write and revise my books in thirds.

That said, there exists a slew of guidance indicating exactly where specific story beats should happen. For instance, some writing guides suggest that the inciting incident needs to be in the first fifty pages, or that the transition from act I to act II needs to occur at the 20% mark of the book. I think it’s important for writers—especially those new to writing fiction—to focus not on such technicalities, but instead to ask themselves: have I captured the reader’s attention early in the book? Is there enough conflict to propel the reader into the middle of the story?

Forget page numbers and percentages. What matters is that the story engages the reader, who—trust me on this—won’t even notice when you’ve transitioned into the second act of your story.

[ed. note: Future newsletters will continue this theme. Reprinted with permission.]

Author Bio (Some hints from BookBaby)

As a writer, you know how crucial it is to grab readers’ attention and keep them engaged with your work. But have you thought about how your author bio can help you achieve this goal? Your author bio is often the first introduction readers have to you and your writing, so it’s essential to make it stand out. Here are five tips for crafting a compelling author bio:

- Start with a hook. Your opening sentence should pull the reader in and make them want to learn more. Consider starting with a surprising fact or a bold statement that makes an impression.

- Highlight your accomplishments. Your bio is a chance to showcase your credentials, so don't be shy about highlighting your achievements. Include any awards, publications, or accolades that demonstrate your expertise and credibility.
- Showcase your personality. Your bio should reflect your unique voice and style. Consider adding personal anecdotes or quirks that give readers a glimpse into who you are as a person and writer.
- Keep it concise. Your bio should be brief, around 100-150 words, and focused on the most essential aspects of your career and life. Avoid rambling or including irrelevant information that may distract readers from your main message.
- Edit and proofread carefully. Before publishing your bio, make sure to edit and proofread it thoroughly. Typos, grammatical errors, or awkward phrasing can detract from your credibility.

◆ Ask Google

I asked Google: "How many genres of books are there?"
[Ed. note: The answers varied wildly. From 5, to 7 to 8 to 35 to 70 to 1300]
Here are 5: Fiction, Nonfiction, Drama, Poetry, Folktale.
I would add Memoirs because it is extremely popular from writers, even though it is not a big seller. Romance novels, Mystery, and Fantasy are still the largest sellers

◆ Helpful Websites

<https://goodstorycompany.com>

This website has much free information, inspiration, and education for writers. The quote below is an excerpt of a resource called "Plotting Using the Present and Past."

"But a well-written flashback at the appropriate time in a manuscript can tactfully weave in backstory to flesh out the present moment without bogging you down in an info-dump and stalling action. They're also one of the only ways we can meet dead (or otherwise unavailable) characters in action instead of the dreaded telling. Remember, most fiction is a balance of action and exposition in writing."

◆ Publishing

News from IngramSpark. They are no longer charging book setup fees, revisions on new books, and they are providing new print options.

<https://www.ingramspark.com>

◆ **Word of the month**

portend - verb

1. To serve as an omen or a warning of; presage.
2. To indicate by prediction; forecast.
3. To indicate (events, misfortunes, etc.) as in future; to foreshow; to foretoken; to bode; -- now used esp. of unpropitious signs.

◆ **Events**

BOOK Sales at Moncus Park

Sales Opportunity! WGA members have the opportunity to join us at Moncus Park Farmers and Artisan Market on the **second and last Saturday** of the month. We display our books and meet with people to discuss writing and publishing. Usually hundreds of people go by the booth, and our huge WGA banner attracts many to see and meet the authors.

Writer's Guild of Acadiana vending table regulations:

The following applies to Moncus Park WGA vending table, *or any other WGA vending event*.

You must be a *paid member* of Writers Guild of Acadiana

You'll need to confer with the Secretary of the board (Ed Gauthier) and arrange a date to sell **a month in advance**. You do that by calling or texting Ed (337-945-5718) or emailing him at eggchess@gmail.com to make arrangements.

You are *not scheduled unless* you receive a confirmation from him, via text, email or phone call. Ed sends out updates to the entire membership list each month. Full details are on that email.

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? _____
