

“You can't start the next chapter of your life if you keep re-reading your last one.”

— Michael McMillian

LA PLUME

Official Newsletter of the Writers' Guild of Acadiana

April 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.



Next Meeting: April

April 25, 2023. 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. *For March and some months after, there will be road construction at this intersection, so plan ahead to figure out the detour depending on where you are coming from.*

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

April Guest Speaker: **Eric Harvey**

Our April guest speaker is new member Eric Harvey. But not new to authorship. Eric will share his experiences in book writing, publishing and promoting in the hope that this information will help you achieve success with your projects.

Eric has written 28 books in the past 25 years from complete marketplace duds to 4 books selling over 500, 000 copies each.

Eric also founded Walkthetalk.com a publishing company specializing in personal and professional development books which has published 138 books since its founding. When Eric retired in 2017 he turned the company over to his two daughters. Erika Westmoreland who lives in Youngsville, is the Walkthetalk.com company president

As we all know, writing, publishing and promoting a book is a VERY challenging exercise. So come to this meeting prepared to learn some new and relevant information about book writing and promotion from someone that has successfully “been there and done that”

Looking Ahead: **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.

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: Class of ‘69
Author: Chris Fontenot
To Be Published: 2023

Jeanie stood as one who had just lost a beloved friend. Sam stepped next to her and bumped her on the shoulder. Jeanie didn’t look right away, her hands were together in front of her mouth, her cheeks wet with tears, as she stared at the ruin that was her school. Gradually, she became aware of the light pressure on her shoulder and she looked up, recognizing the figure next to her.

“Oh, Sam!” Jeanie turned and buried her face in Sam’s chest, her arms rose to encircle his neck and she sobbed. “It’s all gone, Sam!”

Sam, who felt saddened at the sight of the old school, did not feel it as deeply as did Jeanie, but he did recognize the depth of her emotion as she began to sob. He stroked her hair and patted her back until the sobs subsided and she grew still in his arms. He could hear her, voice muffled under her upraised arms, “The newspaper, the speech club, God, Sam! The Carnival Ball was about to start rehearsals! The seniors were already practicing their dance!” She started to cry again, “We’ll never have another Carnival Ball! What will we do, Sam?”

He held her and rubbed her back and remained silent as he gazed at the devastation over her shoulder, the magnitude of the disaster growing in his mind. Sam had no answer; only dimly perceived what Jeanie had already come to understand, life would never be the same for the students of the old high school. He looked over at Joe who stood a step behind her gazing around, soaking up the atmosphere, feeling for the emotions flowing through the clumps of people gathered to watch the final stages of the fire as the smoke began to take on more of a gray tint, mixing steam with the smoke.

◆ Contest Announcements

Reedsy Short Story Competition

This is an ongoing competition. Each week there is a chance to win \$250. The cost to enter is \$5.00, but you can submit your story without the \$5.00 and it will be put on the website.

Full details are on the [Reedsy website](#).

◆ 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 #4 worth breaking: Show, don't tell

Craft books love to remind us of this one, but in some instances, detail can be irrelevant or redundant. For instance, telling is preferable to showing when an author needs to signify the passage of time. Take Isabel Allende's *A Long Petal of the Sea* for example: "They had a week's honeymoon in Buenos Aires, then traveled overland to Asuncion..." In this passage, the honeymoon itself isn't noteworthy, so much as the fact that the newlyweds traveled extensively during this time.

Another example is in Nita Prose's *The Maid*: "It's almost the end of my shift. Playing over our first date in my mind has made the day go by quickly and has amplified my anticipation for our date tonight." Here, the author doesn't re-hash anything in detail for the reader; we've already seen the date unfold, and to share detail here would be redundant. The author merely wants us to know that the character's workday has wrapped up, and what that character found herself dwelling on that day.

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

◆ Ask Google

I asked Google: “What is BARD?”

Bard is a large language model (LLM) chatbot developed by Google AI. It ... can generate text, translate languages, write different kinds of creative content, and answer your questions in an informative way.

[Editor’s note: BARD is like ChatGPT or other Artificial Intelligence models.]

◆ Helpful Websites

See “Publishing”

◆ Publishing

Editor’s note: The business of Publishing your work can be overwhelming. I don’t mean pushing the button on the site that says “Publish” but keeping up with current trends.

To that end, I find the website Publishers Weekly to be The platform to find out what is selling, what is being featured, and what is being promoted. Do you want a monthly news email? Subscribe to the monthly. Do you want to be inundated with gobs of statistics, items, numbers, offerings? How many books of each genre sold last month? Who is the best selling author of the year so far? There is even a daily newsletter. I get the weekly “Children’s Bookshelf” since that is my interest. There are eleven choices of newsletters, from Religion to School spotlight.

It is sometimes encouraging, and sometimes disheartening to find out what is selling in a particular week or month. But then I realize that my own work fits into a small section of a vast market. I need to keep writing and get my stories out. I plan on being the greatest writer since Mark Twain, but posthumously. It will take that long for my stuff to get recognized. (*humor*).

www.publishersweekly.com

◆ Word(s) of the month

torrid - adjective

Oppressively hot, parching, or burning, as climate, weather, or air

torpid - adjective

Sluggish, lethargic, or inactive.

Showing little interest; apathetic

tor - noun

A high rock or pile of rocks on the top of a hill.

A rocky peak or hill.

Tor, short for "The Onion Router," is software for enabling anonymous communication. It directs Internet traffic via an overlay network that consists of more than seven thousand relays. Originally developed by the Navy.

◆ Events

Festival of Words

The local bookstore in downtown Lafayette, Beausoleil Books, is hosting the Festival of Words on November 3-4, 2023. They are currently inviting authors to become Board Members. Contact Martha Garner for more information. fowmartha@gmail.com or 337-804-2482.

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.

NEW: 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. 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? _____
