

Writing is hard work. A clear sentence is no accident.

William Zinsser

# LA PLUME

Official Newsletter of the Writers' Guild of Acadiana

May 2022



## Board Members:

President Sudie Landry, Vice President Christopher Fontenot, Treasurer Beth Davis, Publicist Ellen Threatts, Secretary Ed Gauthier, Webmaster & Newsletter John Comeaux, and all past WGA Presidents in good standing.

## Next Meeting: May

**May 31, 2022.** 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.

May is guest speaker month featuring **Taylor Overbey**.

**Taylor Overbey** was the managing editor for GLAD, the Christian Humor Magazine, where he wrote and drew comics for 17 issues. For six years he has been the Program Coordinator for Digital Media at SLCC, teaching digital art classes and traditional drawing.

His first published books were "The I-Wants and the Gimmies", and "The SNIT and George Franklin Whit" for Crimson Dragon Publishing. His third book, "The Little Blue Ewe" is a work in progress. You may find samples of his work at <https://www.facebook.com/TaylorOverbeyStudios>

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

## Next Month's Prompt: *June*

"The Lost Card"

Category: FICTION

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](mailto:jpcoman9@gmail.com).

### FIRST PUBLICATION

We are pleased to announce member Louis Broussard has published his book of Poetry, "Thoughtful Places". 22 years in the making, this represents his views and observations of people and nature. His website is [ThoughtfulPlacesBook.com](http://ThoughtfulPlacesBook.com) with more information on the book. Congratulations, Louis.

### ◆ Member Announcements

**Sales Opportunity!** WGA members have the opportunity to join us at Moncus Park Artisan Market on the 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.

If you are interested, the next dates are May 28 and June 25. You may contact our president, Sudie Landry, to submit your request. [praisemusicpro@cox.net](mailto:praisemusicpro@cox.net).

### ◆ Writing Tips - Resources

#### Reedsy

It is a platform for finding professionals. All service providers are vetted to ensure they have industry experience. Reedsy charges 10% to both author and freelancer. It also hosts learning videos and courses for free, which many people have found valuable.

#### Fiverr

The lowest denominator for services such as cover design and editing. Called "Fiverr" because many services start at \$5. You get what you pay for. Avoid.

#### Upwork

More professionals are here on Upwork than Fiverr, but it is still not well known. (*Ed. note: my artist advertises on Upwork, but has not gotten any bites.*)

## ◆ Humor

Why shouldn't you write with a broken pencil? Because it's pointless.

## ◆ Technical

**Fair Use**, from this website: <https://www.copyright.gov/fair-use/index.html>

What is it and how can it help or hurt my writing?

*(Editor's note: After reading articles and info about Fair Use and Copyright law, I'm no closer to a solid understanding of it than before. However, if you are concerned about using a portion or excerpt of someone else's work, consult this government page and any local savant you know.)*

Fair use is a legal doctrine that promotes freedom of expression by permitting the unlicensed use of copyright-protected works in certain circumstances. [Section 107 of the Copyright Act](#) provides the statutory framework for determining whether something is a fair use and identifies certain types of uses—such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, and research—as examples of activities that may qualify as fair use. Section 107 calls for consideration of four factors in evaluating a question of fair use.

1. **Purpose and character of the use, including whether the use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes:** Courts look at how the party claiming fair use is using the copyrighted work, and are more likely to find that nonprofit educational and noncommercial uses are fair.
2. **Nature of the copyrighted work:** This factor analyzes the degree to which the work that was used relates to copyright's purpose of encouraging creative expression. Thus, using a more creative or imaginative work (such as a novel, movie, or song) is less likely to support a claim of a fair use than using a factual work (such as a technical article or news item).
3. **Amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole:** Under this factor, courts look at both the quantity and quality of the copyrighted material that was used. If the use includes a large portion of the copyrighted work, fair use is less likely to be found; if the use employs only a small amount of copyrighted material, fair use is more likely.
4. **Effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work:** Here, courts review whether, and to what extent, the unlicensed use harms the existing or future market for the copyright owner's original work.

In addition to the above, other factors may also be considered by a court in weighing a fair use question, depending upon the circumstances. Courts evaluate fair use claims on a case-by-case basis, and the outcome of any given case depends on a fact-specific inquiry. This means that there is no formula to ensure that a predetermined percentage or amount of a work—or specific number of words, lines, pages, copies—may be used without permission.

## ◆ Publishing

### Tips about Query Letters

*(Editor's note: The May 2020 edition of La Plume had information about what goes into a query letter. Here are some more notes that seem useful, direct from Writer's Digest, excerpts.)*

"If you are serious about getting published, then don't even think about giving up until you've queried at least one hundred agents." —Kristi Belcamino

"Give us something with voice. Agent Dan Lazar once said it like this. 'Instead of saying "Jane Smith is tall, blonde, pretty and lives in New York," try "Manhattanite Jane Smith turns heads wherever she goes and hasn't paid for a drink since high school.'" Both sentences are essentially saying the same thing, but the second version 1) paints a picture, and 2) establishes voice in the query." —Jane Friedman

"The first thing to think about when you sit down to write a query letter is that, in a lot of ways, it's similar to writing a cover letter for a job application. You're addressing your letter to a person who's never met you before, and who sorts through hundreds of such letters a day. Your query letter is your chance to demonstrate that you're smart, professional, and interesting" —Mollie Glick

"One of the things I see a lot in queries is character soup (too many names) and too many events (rather than important plot points)." —Janet Reid

"Don't waste the opening paragraph of your query letter introducing yourself. Save that for later. Much like a book, you want to hook that agent with your first sentence. The best way to do that is to introduce the hook of your manuscript right away." —Brian A. Klems

"If a query is mottled with grammar issues, obvious plot holes, and/or doesn't reveal what the book is about (i.e., is almost entirely about a writer's personal life, doesn't introduce the protagonist, etc.), an agent is unlikely to read the manuscript pages." —Meg LaTorre-Snyder

"Queries are more effective when they're personalized. Part of that personalization is addressing a specific name (first and last). Another part of that personalization is following the specific rules that an agent or agency spell out in their guidelines." —Robert Lee Brewer

## ◆ Ask Google

**I asked Google, "Are there more women writers, or men?"**

According to figures obtained from the *Bookseller*, 629 of the 1,000 bestselling fiction titles from 2020 were written by women (27 were co-authored by men and women and three were by non-binary writers, leaving 341 by men). Within the "general and literary fiction" category, 75% were by female authors – 75% female-25% male appearing to be something of a golden ratio in contemporary publishing.

## ◆ Word of the month

**Bemuse** verb

**1:** to make confused: puzzle, bewilder

**2:** to occupy the attention of: distract, absorb "TikTok has *bemused* audiences around the world"

**3:** to cause to have feelings of wry or tolerant amusement "Smith seems truly *bemused* that people beyond his circle in Seattle would be interested in his ruminations."

## ◆ Events

### WORKSHOP

WGA will hold a self-publishing workshop on Saturday, June 4 at the South Regional Branch of the Lafayette Library. The full-day workshop starts at 10 a.m. and goes to 3 p.m. There will be a break for lunch (not provided here). The presenters, John Comeaux and Christopher Fontenot, have experience in self-publishing, and will share their knowledge with the attendees. There will be time for questions of a general nature. The workshop is free to the public. Seating is limited.

### DFW 2022 Writers Conference

The 2022 DFW Writers Conference is set. We're live and in person at the Hurst Conference Center October 8 & 9. Registration is open, and you can sign up here right now! Unlike everything else on the planet, we've held the line on prices, and there's an early bird discount if you register by May 31. There are even discounted hotel rooms for attendees if you hurry,

This year's conference will feature twin tracks – one on the craft of writing: editing, generating ideas, structure and more. Our business track will have sessions on developing your pitch and working with editors, lawyers and accountants on what comes after you sign that big contract.

Every registration includes **one free pitch session**, and you'll have the opportunity to **purchase additional pitches** if you'd like.

[Link to Register HERE.](#)

## ◆ Contests

No new contest announcements have been announced that I know of.

***Would you like to join?***

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. You will receive this monthly newsletter "La Plume", which will keep you informed of events and news of the Guild. WGA annual dues are due January 1st of each year, late after March 1st. 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](mailto:info@writersguildacadiana.org)  
Cash payments can be made at the monthly meeting – do not mail.

This form is also online: [writersguildacadiana.org](http://writersguildacadiana.org)

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**City, State, Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone/Email** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**How did you find out about us?** \_\_\_\_\_

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