

I read to live in other people's lives

Stephen Sondheim

# LA PLUME

## Official Newsletter of the Writers' Guild of Acadiana

March 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: March

**March 29, 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. The Library currently is limiting us to 25 attendees.

Our guest speaker for March is member Carrie Simon. Bob Bienvenu will also be a featured speaker.

Carrie's production company, Ardent Flame, produced the movie trailer for member Bob Bienvenu's novel "*The Time Traveler*" which he hopes will be made into a motion picture. We will be watching the movie trailer and Bob will discuss how his novel came to be.

WGA member Carrie Simon is the author of two acclaimed Christian fiction thrillers, *Save Them All, A Novel*, and *Just Find Me*. Her third novel, *Maker of Difference* was released in the spring of 2020. She is a member of Ardent Flame Media Group, LLC, where she devotes additional time for filming projects, and is also the founder of Save Them All, Inc. a 501c(3) non-profit organization dedicated to addressing serious issues affecting future generations, raising awareness and promoting hope and recovery for children/youth who have been abused and neglected. As such, she remains a strong advocate for their rights and is dedicated to encouraging others to speak out and stand up for such a passionate cause. She is involved in national book signings, in mentoring teenagers, is active in her church, and enjoys spending time with her children above all else.

She resides in both Louisiana and South Carolina with her family. Her website is found by [clicking here](#).

Robert "Bobby" Bienvenu was born in a small southern town in the winter of 1948. He grew up facing many challenges, unaware many were due to suffering from mental illness. He attended the University of Southwestern Louisiana, (USL) where he majored in Psychology. In 1970 Bob the army drafted Bob when shortly after admission, he was medically discharged with paranoid schizophrenia. Since his diagnosis, Bob has won numerous awards and medals for powerlifting/weightlifting competitions since he started competing at the age of 57. Bob has won 52 AAU world power-lifting championships, with, 44 official and unofficial State records in different organizations, and 3 world records, with the Cajun Hardcore powerlifting organization. Amazingly, Bob competed until he was 70 years old.

In 2005, Bob started a live public access television show, "Insight into Mental Health," on AOC (Acadiana Open Channel) in Lafayette, Louisiana with former cohost, Jamie Bellew. After Jamie's passing, Richard Phelps became Bob's sidekick and cohost where they convene to discuss various mental illnesses affecting millions around the world. With the help of technology, his show reaches a wider audience with regular followers receiving positive reviews for his support within the mental health community.

Bob is also a devout Christian, professing how God has led him away from darkness in his life, and a prolific writer, having written a total of 17 novels. His latest work is entitled "Klowie's other adventures," and will be available in 2022. His dream is to witness one of his books fruition on the big screen. Bob remains dedicated to his writing and to inspiring and guiding others who suffer from mental illness.

Every month, we have a Door Prize from the books that were donated by authors. Would you like to donate one for our winners?

## **Upcoming Prompts: *April***

"The Worst Vacation"

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. 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.

## **Looking Ahead: *April Meeting***

April is members reading month. WGA members may to bring written material to share with the group, and 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.

## **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) .

## 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 March 26 and April 28. You may contact our president, Sudie Landry, to submit your request. [praisemusicpro@cox.net](mailto:praisemusicpro@cox.net).

The Lafayette Speculative Fiction Writing Group (Not associated with WGA):

This group does deep critique. We attempt to indicate to fellow writers what is not working within the piece they've written and what might be done to correct it. We are tactful but truthful. We now meet online on Thursday nights at 7:00 pm.

We're looking for new members and hope you're interested.

Contacts: Derek James     [djames@gmail.com](mailto:djames@gmail.com)  
Edward Gauthier     [eggchess@gmail.com](mailto:eggchess@gmail.com)

### Request for Donations:

The WGA Board accepts donations of books written by our published authors to offer as door prizes at our monthly meetings. Tickets will be given to all members who arrive before 6:00 PM, and one lucky winner will receive a copy of whichever work has been donated for that month. If you are a published author and would like to contribute an extra copy of one or more of your books, please contact Sudie Landry at [praisemusicpro@cox.net](mailto:praisemusicpro@cox.net).

## ◆ Writing Tips

Ten possible Reasons Your Scene Feels Flat

1. Excessive focus on one character
2. Lacking in descriptions of pointers about setting and time
3. Too much dialogue
4. Too much exposition
5. Bad word choice
6. Lacking atmosphere
7. Lacking motivation/goals
8. Lacking Tension
9. An abnormally slow pacing
10. One active character and the rest being passive

## ◆ Humor

HOW DO I JUST START WRITING?

1. Write any old drivel. ... (I have this part down)
2. Start with a word-count goal first, then progress to project goals. (Wait, what?)
3. Track your progress. ... (You lost me in step 2)
4. Make specific appointments with your writing. ... (Oh, like at a coffee house)

5. Get the conditions as right as possible, but work with what you've got. ... (What do you mean? Check the weather channel?)
6. Get an audience for your writing. (Um, I think I'll see what's on Netflix.)

## ◆ Technical

Do you do technical writing? This editor did technical writing for most of his 40-year career with a major oil company. At first, he used the existing manuals and documents as examples to go by, and copied the style. Then the company hired a “Technical Writer” whose job was to write the manuals and teach the employees how to write. My own growth was tremendous, and now I’m just about at the level of a professional tech writer. This is a blessing and a curse, since every incorrect usage jumps off the page and into my brain.

There is a huge need for good tech writers. You can look over this web page on “How to Become a Technical Writers” if you are interested. Link is [here](#).

## ◆ Publishing

### Some Awful Truths about Book Publishing

Steven Piersanti, Senior Editor, Berrett-Koehler Publishers

*(Editor’s note: I included a large excerpt of this article, but don’t be discouraged. We are writing our books, novels, memoirs, and poems because we have stories to tell. Have faith in yourself!)*

1. The number of books being published every year has exploded.  
According to the latest ProQuest Bowker Report (October 15, 2019), nearly 1.7 million books were *self-published* in the U.S. in 2018, which is an incredible 264% increase in just five years. By 2019, the total number of books published in the U.S. exceeded 4 million in that year alone—including both self-published books and commercially published books of all types—according to data provided to me by ProQuest. This is 10 times more titles being published annually in the U.S. than Bowker figures show were published in 2007, when book sales peaked. At the same time, more than 20 million previously published books are still available through many sources. Unfortunately, the marketplace is not able to absorb all these books and is hugely oversaturated.
2. Book sales are stagnant, despite the explosion of books published.  
U.S. publishing industry sales peaked in 2007 and have either fallen or been flat in subsequent years, according to reports of the Book Industry Study Group and Association of American Publishers.
3. Despite the addition of e-book sales and downloadable audio sales, overall book sales have shrunk.  
After skyrocketing from 2008 to 2012, e-book sales leveled off in 2013 and have fallen since then. Downloadable audio sales have been the fastest-growing area of publishing over the past four years but still represent only 10% of publishing revenues (*Publishers Weekly*, March 16, 2020).
4. Average book sales are shockingly small—and falling fast.  
Combine the explosion of books published with the declining total sales and you get shrinking sales of each new title. According to BookScan—which tracks most bookstore, online, and other retail print sales of books (including Amazon.com)—only 690 million print

books were sold in 2019 in the U.S. in all publishing categories combined, both fiction and nonfiction (*Publishers Weekly*, January 13, 2020). The average U.S. book is now selling less than 200 copies per year and less than 1,000 copies over its lifetime.

5. A book has far less than a 1% chance of being stocked in an average bookstore. For every available bookstore shelf space, there are 100 to 1,000 or more titles competing for that shelf space.
6. It is getting harder and harder every year to sell new titles. Many book categories have become entirely saturated, with a surplus of books on every topic. It is increasingly difficult to make any book stand out. Each title is competing with millions of other titles available for sale, while other media are claiming more and more of people's time. In a crowded marketplace, brand name authors and books stand out, and an increasing portion of the limited sales are going to mega-bestsellers (*Publishers Weekly*, November 4, 2019).
7. Most books today are selling only to the authors' and publishers' communities. Everyone in the potential audiences for a book already knows of hundreds of interesting and useful books to read but has little time to read any.
8. Most book marketing today is done by authors, not by publishers. Publishers have managed to stay afloat in this worsening marketplace only by shifting more and more marketing responsibility to authors—to cut costs and prop up sales.

### ◆ Ask Google

**I asked Google:** How do I write a Memoir?  
Here is what it told me...

#### 10 Tips for Starting a Memoir

1. Engage the reader from the first word. A great memoir draws the reader in from the start. ...
2. Build trust with the reader. ...
3. Bring emotions out of the reader. ...
4. Lead with a laugh. ...
5. Think like a fiction writer. ...
6. Keep it relevant. ...
7. Write for the reader as well as yourself. ...
8. Be honest.

### ◆ Word of the month

**Drabble:** A 100-word story. Part of the category called 'micro-fiction'.

## ◆ Events

Reminder: The Sixth Annual [Books Along the Teche Literary Festival](#): *Celebrating New Iberia, Dave Robicheaux's Hometown and Great Southern Writers* April 1-3, 2022.

## ◆ Contests

Trenton Henk of the Austin Film Festival writes:

I wanted to reach out to see if members of your group would be interested in submitting to our Screenplay and Teleplay Competition. It's a great opportunity to catapult your screenwriting career to the next level.

There are multiple categories available for submissions, including: Drama Feature, Comedy Feature, Horror, Sci-Fi, Short, Drama Teleplay, Comedy Teleplay, Scripted Digital Series, Playwriting and Fiction Podcast.

The process to submit your screenplay or teleplay is quick and easy. More details can be found [here](#). Below are some deadlines to be aware of:

### FEATURE SCREENPLAY

Early Bird Deadline: March 25 (\$50)

Regular Deadline: April 18 (\$65)

### SHORT SCREENPLAY & TELEPLAY

Early Bird Deadline: March 25 (\$40)

Regular Deadline: April 18 (\$55)

### SCRIPTED DIGITAL SERIES

Early Bird Deadline: March 25 (\$40)

Regular Deadline: April 18 (\$55)

### SCRIPTED FICTION PODCAST

Early Deadline: April 18 (\$40)

Regular Deadline: May 16th (\$45)

***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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