

If it sounds like writing, I rewrite it.
Or, if proper usage gets in the way,
it may have to go.

Elmore Leonard

LA PLUME

Official Newsletter of the Writers' Guild of Acadiana

April 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: April

ROOM CHANGE: April 26, 2022. The South Regional Branch of the Lafayette Library, Small Meeting Room. 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 auditorium is not available to us in April.

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.

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

This Month's Prompt: *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: *May Meeting*

TBA

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

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 April 28 and May 28. You may contact our president, Sudie Landry, to submit your request. praisemusicpro@cox.net.

◆ Writing Tips

Writing: Past or Present Tense?

Writing Advice

November 6, 2014 Debbie Young

Most fiction writers will at some point ask themselves in which tense they should be framing their stories. Part of the joy of being an indie author is that the choice is yours. But which to choose? Here are some pros and cons for each approach to help you decide.

Why Use Present Tense?

- If you want to make your readers feel that the events of the story are happening right now, as they read them.
- If you love reading books written in the present tense yourself, and find them energizing and engaging. Chances are, those qualities will rub off on your own writing too.
- If you're writing a very short piece, such as a flash fiction story, where wordcount is strictly rationed, and you want to add punch.

When to Avoid Present Tense

- If you suspect your readers will find it tiring or irritating to read. Know your readers and listen to their views. You need to either please your readers – or find different readers who will be happier with what you want to write! If you use beta readers or writing buddies, ask them to comment specifically on your chosen tense.

- If you find it too hard to write or it doesn't come naturally to you. Your discomfort will make for a less compelling read and your text may read awkwardly.
- If when you read your story, it sounds as if you're writing in the present tense for the sake of it – if the tense is more conspicuous than the story itself, your writing will sound affected and self-conscious.

Why Use Past Tense?

- It's a more traditional way of writing, more common, and so likely to please more readers.
- It can make you feel more in control of situations as they are already resolved.
- If you need to show hindsight, flashbacks, or timeslip, taking the reader back and forth between different timeframes.

When to Avoid Past Tense

- If your story is a fast-action, and putting it in the past slows it down too much.
- If you feel it constrains you too much.
- If you simply find writing in the present tense more enjoyable and fulfilling.
- Which Tense Is Right for You?

There are no absolute truths here – and if you're an indie author, there's no third party publisher dictating what you must do.

◆ Humor

More ways to fix writer's block:

- Try turning the author off and on again
- Let them talk, they might talk themselves out of their own mess
- If they're crying, put them in a bag of rice
- Say "Give up, then," in a comforting way and watch them get back to work out of sheer spite.

◆ Technical

6 Elements of Successful Fiction Writing

Excerpts from an online article in "MasterClass" website.

In order to write fiction successfully, it's imperative that you understand the elements of fiction. The main elements of fiction are:

1. **Character:** Novels are driven by fictional characters. Depending on the scope of a novel, you may follow one central character or several major characters. Most novels follow fully-formed round characters who resemble real human beings and undergo significant change over the course of the story. Additionally, a genre novel will likely also have minor characters who are flat characters who don't undergo significant change. Good character development means understanding the backstory and background information that informs your character's point of view. When developing realistic characters with clear points of view, it can be useful to think about your own point of view and how it has evolved as you lived through events in the real world.

2. **Plot:** Plot is simply a series of events that makes up the narrative action of a story. Plot as an element of fiction generally revolves around rising action, followed by a turning point, followed by falling action and a denouement at the end of the story.
3. **Setting:** Setting is one of the primary story elements found in fiction. Setting dictates the location and time period of a story. You might maintain a single setting for an entire story, or you might move between multiple. A fiction writer might choose to set their novel entirely on the same New York City block but jump time periods through flashbacks.
4. **Point of view:** Point of view in prose has to do with the perspective from which you choose to write. The three main POVs in writing are first-person, second-person, and third-person. Most stories are written in third-person point of view or first-person point of view, though second-person is occasionally employed. The point of view from which you choose to write affects how a reader processes your story. A third-person narrator can bring a more objective, aloof tone to a narrative, whereas a first person narrator can make the story feel more subjective and intimate.
5. **Theme:** Theme is one of the characteristics of fiction that authors can really sink their teeth into when writing a full-length novel. Theme is a larger message or motif that an author explores to make a larger point about everyday life or the world around us. All other elements can work together to convey themes in a work of fiction.
6. **Style:** Style in creative writing starts with word choice. When we talk about fiction stories, we talk about the diction (or choice of words) that an author chooses to employ and the structure of their work. There are no style guides or rules for fiction stories. and novels are an exciting place for writers to play around with bold stylistic choices.

◆ Publishing

I have recommended Writers' Digest before, because there are tons of articles and helpful ideas there. Publisher's Weekly is another great resource to know what's coming out, what's coming up, and what's selling. Follow this link to see the kinds of emails you can get, and what help Publisher's Weekly can offer.

<https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/email-subscriptions/>

◆ Ask Google

I asked Google: "How do I become rich as a writer?"

The trick is to take the time to figure out how to both enjoy your writing and make it a profitable career.

1. Think of writing as a business. ...
2. Understand the publishing industry. ...
3. Be prepared to write what people want to read. ...
4. Be prepared to work long and hard. ...
5. Be patient.

◆ **Word of the month**

Dénouement **noun**

1. The final resolution or clarification of a dramatic or narrative plot.
2. The events following the climax of a drama or novel in which such a resolution or clarification takes place.
3. The outcome of a sequence of events; the end result.

◆ **Events**

WGA will hold a self-publishing workshop on Saturday, June 4. Full details will be available on the website, in this newsletter, and in sky-writing by Cessna airplane (*humor*).

◆ **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
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? _____
