

LA PLUME

To err is human, to forgive divine, to discover a typo in the finished product is a writer's albatross.

Official Newsletter of the Writers' Guild of Acadiana

November 2021

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:

November 30, 2021. 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.

No Meeting in December. Happy Holidays!

November is members reading month. All WGA members are free 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.

Upcoming Prompts: *NOVEMBER*

My Broken Heart
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 I-phones or any other electronic devices.

Looking Ahead: *January Meeting*

Guest Speaker: Michael Wynne

Mr. Wynne is current president of Author Club, an organization that focuses on providing practical advice to writers in the Alexandria area. He is in much demand as a speaker.

Michael Wynne's most recent books :

- "**Strange Bedfellows; Huey P. Long, Earl K. Long, and Central Louisiana**"
- "**Charles Frederick Page and Paul Leo Ortego; Heroes in the Birth of Aviation in America**"

- "A Life Of Sunshine; Remembrances of the Extraordinary Life of Louisiana Governor James H. "Jimmie" Davis"
- "Letters From Uncle Jeff Paul; A Quirky History of Southern Rapides and Northern Avoyelles Parishes"
- "Who Killed The Kingfish; The Huey Long Murder Case" (a play)
- "The Best Of Central Louisiana; Our Preservationists, Historians, Authors and the Outstanding Museums of Central Louisiana" Volume I
- "The Best of Central Louisiana, Volume II; The Most Interesting People, Places and Subjects of Central Louisiana"
- "The Best of Central Louisiana; The Most Interesting People, Places and Subjects of Central Louisiana" Volume III
- . "The Great American Photograph Album" Book Series (30 volumes)

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 .

Several members of the Writers' Guild of Acadiana have been selected as **Featured Authors** for the "Christmas in the Park" event at Moncus Park in Lafayette. Authors have the opportunity to sell books, autograph and personalize books, and read excerpts. As of this writing, the names are:

- John & Phyllis Comeaux, aka J.P.Coman, author of "Winnie and the Mystery of the Missing Moonstones"
- Gayle Webre, author of "When I Was an Alligator"

Some past guest speakers are also on the dais: Alysson Bourque, author of the Alycat Series, and Denise Gallagher, author of "Moonsong".

[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.

◆ **Writing Tips**

Writing Multiple Timelines and Points of View

YA author Natalie Lund gives her top reasons why writers who might be afraid to play with multiple timelines and/or points of view should jump in feet first.

NATALIE LUND

(Excerpt from a Writer's Digest online article)

APR 21, 2021

Writing Multiple Timelines and Points of View

I love to write in multiple timelines and points of view. My second novel, *The Sky Above Us*, includes two timelines, six points of view, and several interstitial sections that are composed of a mixture of emails, discussion posts, and interviews. Here are the lessons I've learned from writing this way:

Track Your Timelines Visually

I need to see my timelines side-by-side so that I can keep track of what happens in each chapter but also so that I can plan intersections and discover resonances. I track my timelines using a Google spreadsheet because I'm often bouncing from computer to computer. In a given row, I record the chapter number, character point of view, the date and time of the scenes, and a brief summary. I've seen plenty of authors use color-coded notecards with the same effect. No matter what system you use—it's about creating a visual representation of what the readers are experiencing or learning in each timeline as they read the book in the chapter order you have designed.

Plan Intersections, Alignments, and Contradictions

I think part of the pleasure of reading a book written in multiple timelines is seeing how the author has crafted the timelines to intersect, align, or contradict. For *The Sky Above Us*, I knew I wanted to start the novel with a plane crash witnessed by my three female protagonists. They quickly learn that the three male protagonists were on board and set off to understand why the crash happened. This then jumpstarts the second timeline, which follows the boys in the month leading up to the crash. So, as the two timelines run side-by-side, the girls are trying to discover the truth behind the crash and the boys are living it. The book then ends where it began—with the plane crash, this time as experienced by the boys.

Read the entire article here: [Writing Multiple Timelines and Points of View](#)

◆ Technical

4 Advantages of Writing a Novel Using Multiple Narrative Forms

Journal entries, third person, written letters, oh my! There are a myriad of ways to tell your story, and choosing how to move forward can feel daunting. Author Liz Keller Whitehurst shares the 4 advantages of writing a novel using multiple narrative forms.

LIZ KELLER WHITEHURST

(Excerpt from a Writer's Digest online article)

NOV 9, 2021

There's always more than one way to tell a story. In my novel, *Messenger*, I use multiple narrative forms: conventional first- and third-person narrative, journal and composition book entries, posts, lists, interview transcripts, letters. You may be surprised to learn that using multiple narrative forms has been a technique of novel writing since the beginning of the genre.

Organic to the Particular Novel

My novel tells the story of *Messenger*, a mysterious older woman who delivers life-changing messages to seemingly random people all over New York City; and Alana, the young journalist who longs to tell *Messenger's* story.

Being a writer, it's natural that Alana would keep a journal and would ask Messenger to write down her own thoughts, to explain her process, and to reveal more about herself. The posts Alana receives from people whose lives were changed by Messenger's messages also works naturally, as do the interview transcripts. And the quick rhythm of switching back and forth between forms mirrors the fast-paced life of one of the other main characters of the novel—New York City.

Character Development

In my novel, the multitude of voices—from Alana, Messenger, the multiple posts, the interview transcripts—add to the development of New York City as a main character. Using multiple narrative forms offers advantages in individual character development, also. Through a character's journal, a reader can get inside each character's head, learn more of her thoughts, emotions, backstory, and understand the inner motivation behind her outer action—learning much more than the character will reveal to other characters. This, in turn, creates tension and moves the narrative arc along.

Variety

Using multiple forms with multiple characters and thus, dividing the novel into shorter sections or bites is a means of addressing readers' short attention span and the way we tend to read on our computer and phones these days. Just as short stories have seen a new resurgence, these shorter pieces encompass the clarity of that life-changing moment like flash fiction, and can be read in a short period of time and still satisfy.

Formatting

The editor, publisher, and I had fun choosing just the right fonts for each of the narrative forms, so that Alana's Journal, Messenger's Composition Book, the posts, and the traditional narrative chapters each had its own particular font to distinguish them from one another. Using different fonts makes the book more visually appealing and easier to follow as it shifts forms.

Dramatic Irony

I love it when I, the reader, know more than the characters I'm reading about. It's delicious, builds tension, and moves the dramatic arc along with verve. Creating dramatic irony is another plus of using multiple narrative forms.

Writer Beware

Of course, writing using alternate forms is quite different than writing a straightforward narrative and requires a different voice. For example, people usually don't write in complete sentences in their journals. Alana and Messenger include sentence fragments, single words, even lists. Each of the posts come from different characters and therefore each has a very different voice.

Try It

Try writing a journal entry or email from your main character. What is revealed? It's a great way to get into your characters' heads and to practice your writing versatility—even as a writing warm-up. If, in the end, you decide to write more conventionally, I bet experimenting with alternate forms will provide insights that may not have surfaced otherwise. Who knows?

Read the entire article here: [Writing a Novel Using Multiple Narrative Forms](#)

◆ Publishing

Do You Have What Publishers Really Want?

What publishers seek in an aspiring author doesn't only involve your book idea or even your writing. Writing coach Nina Amir explains how writers can be sure that they have what publishers really want.

NINA AMIR

(Excerpt from a Writer's Digest online article)

APR 8, 2014

Understanding the Makings of a Traditional Publishing Deal

To understand what a publisher seeks in an author, you first must understand the traditional publishing deal. At a basic level, it's a business deal. You might even call it a financial deal.

Look at it this way: You have a product you want to bring to market—a book. You want someone to finance the creation and production of that product. So, you go looking for an appropriate venture capital partner—a publisher.

The publisher, on the other hand, seeks someone with a viable, meaning marketable, product who will be a good business partner. A good business partner, in this case, is someone who can complete the creative end of the production process—write the book—but who can also help the product succeed—sell the book.

To land the deal, you give the potential venture capital partner a business plan, in this case, a book proposal, for your product. He evaluates it. If he finds it to be a sound investment, he offers you a contract. If you like the terms of the contract, you sign it, and the two of you go into business together.

The 7 Things a Publisher Considers

Given this rather simplistic view of how you become a traditionally published author, let's take a look at what a publisher, or rather the acquisitions editor and the whole pub board at a publishing house, consider when they examine your business plan.

1. **Your idea.** You must have a good idea or story, which means one that is unique and necessary in its category.
2. **Your book's market.** The market analysis must indicate the potential for great reader interest, therefore, large sales.
3. **Your book's competition:** Similar books in your category must show a proven track record of high sales.
4. **Your credentials and author platform:** Your bio and your pre-promotion of yourself and the book must show that you have the ability to help sell the book once it is released. In other words, you just have a proven ability to write or expert status plus a large, built-in readership, known as platform, for your book in its target market.

5. **Your promotion plan:** You must show a concrete plan to use your author platform to sell books in a variety of ways upon release, not only for a month but for 3-12 months and beyond. The more creative and extensive the plan, the better.
6. **Your plans to write more books:** Publishers seek multiple-book authors because the more books authors write, the more books they sell. Additionally, they prefer to invest in authors who will continue to produce products for the company or who have ideas for how to brand themselves by writing more books.
7. **The manuscript or sample chapters:** Your writing must prove you can produce a quality product with the potential to sell.

Read the entire article here: [Do You Have What Publishers Really Want?](#)

Editor's note: Do not let this list scare you from trying to find a publisher. These are the ideal steps. You can start looking for a publisher with just an idea and some sample chapters – it's been done many times.

Would you like to join?

WGA values your membership and we hope that you will give every consideration to renewing it. Membership fee is suspended for 2021. Regular dues of \$25. will resume in 2022. In addition, members receive a monthly newsletter along with first notice for workshops, seminars, and conferences put on by the Writers' Guild.

Write to Writers' Guild of Acadiana, Inc., P.O. Box 51532, Lafayette, LA, 70505-1532.

This form is also online: writersguildacadiana.org

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How did you find out about us? _____
