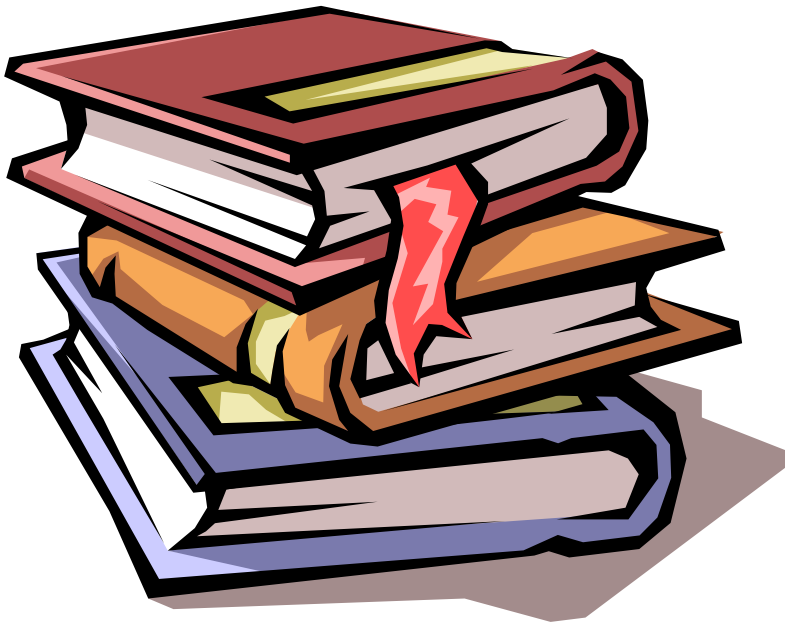


The Newsletter of West Texas Writers, Inc.

January 2012 www.westtexaswriters.org 432-634-0139

**LOCATION FOR MEETING:
MIDLAND COUNTY LIBRARY MEETING
ROOM – UPSTAIRS- ELEVATOR AVAILABLE
301 W. MISSOURI
MIDLAND, TEXAS**

**Our next meeting will be:
FEBRUARY 4, 2012
2:00 pm**



Member News:

FRANK CARDEN'S SHORT STORY, *BILLY BONNEY AKA THE KID*, WON HONORABLE MENTION IN THE ART AFFAIR (OK CITY) ANNUAL LITERARY CONTEST IN THE WESTERN STORY CATEGORY, 2011. THE STORY IS AN EXCERPT FROM HIS NOVEL, BILLY BONNEY AKA THE KID THAT IS AVAILABLE AS AN EBOOK FROM AMAZON.

**Minutes for the January meeting submitted by Shonda
Folsom:**

WEST TEXAS WRITERS

January 7, 2012

2-3:30 pm, Midland County Library

Midland, Texas

Regular Meeting

Debbie Pelham presided.

Welcome and Announcements:

Debbie welcomed members and we discussed what each of us were doing.

- Annette Presley, last month's speaker, talked about the free nutrition coaching that she is doing and the classes she is teaching.
- We had several visitors and returning new members present, bringing the group attending to 15.
- Natalie has had several articles published in the Midland newspaper.
- Debbie and Garland are making great strides in getting his books re-published.
- We also discussed the upcoming conference in Davis, previously discussed in the newsletters. Amarillo will have their conference in June.
- Don Bonifay introduced our guest speaker and gave his perspective as someone who has attended several of her classes at UTPB.

Guest Speaker – Lynda Curnyn

Lynda discussed the traditional publishing process as someone who worked in publishing for 11 years. Publishing houses are full of people dying to find the next rising star. Lynda's goal today is to teach us how to help the publishers get your books to the bookstore.

The first-line editor is usually the one screening new authors for the senior editor's review. That editor is usually highly-educated, overworked, and loves literature. She's the one who provides an art fact sheet about the book and the back cover and other sales material. She spends lots of time in meetings for art, marketing and strategies. She's also networking with agents during the day. Often she's spending her evenings reading and editing books.

Authors usually go to the publishers' websites for submission guidelines. Send exactly what the guidelines require -- i.e., just a query letter with a 2-page synopsis, if that's what's called for. The query letter is a one-page pitch letter with a "hook" (the high concept of the story as a one-liner), a mini-synopsis (a paragraph like the back cover summary on a book), and the writers' biography or platform (past published work, connection to the publishing process, degree in creative writing, membership in writing organizations like West Texas Writers, and experiences you have had that might give you an "insider's" view into the subject of your book). The process is very sales-driven. Often an author's "platform" (celebrity, blog readership, expertise, etc.) makes it easy for the editor to sell the book to her boss.

Lynda also recommends that writers look to the New York times bestseller list to see what has been selling recently to pitch new novels in an existing profitable niche. You want to help connect your new ideas with a recognizable form of entertainment with an existing readership waiting for it. The archetypal parts of the stories are the hook that will be your pitch.

There are few publishers now who will field work not represented by an agent. The exception to that rule is publishers who go to some conferences trying to find new talent who will let the authors send work for review. It can generally take anywhere from 2 months to over a year from the time of finding an agent to getting a response from a publisher. PublishersMarketplace.com can give you lots of information about agents out there. Much of that information is free, but a subscription for a few months may help you find additional information.

In general, writers need to find an agent who can negotiate on their behalf with contacts with the publishing agency, film industry, overseas rights, etc. Lynda's books have been published in 13 countries, which generated much of the income. The agent may be able to help you refine your pitch; however, the goal is to go to your agent with the same pitch you would want to give to an editor. (All the recommendations above apply for agents, too.)

If the editor or agent shows interest, don't wait a year to send the book. She's excited when she responds and may be trying to fill a specific publishing slot. You should have the book written before you send the query. Send the book between a month and three months later. You can use that time to polish, but the writing should already be finished. The most common new writer mistake is to blow the beginning of your book. Some publishers may jump ahead to see if the book gets better; however, they are very busy people often reading new books in their time off.

Ideally you want to get some distance from your writing to go back and edit your own work or swap with another writer you trust to help edit the book you've written. You can join a critique group who does that kind of work (Don has one locally and the Midland Barnes & Noble has one as well). You can also go to the Writers' League of Texas and the Writers Digest magazine online will send you links to online resources. You can also hire an outside editor to help you. That can cost from \$1,000 - \$5,000. Look for credentials like working in publishing, track record as a writer, track record as a "book doctor," etc.

Lynda also took questions from the audience to provide advice for our current projects.

January 19, at the UTPB library, Lynda is doing a one-night class about publishing, character and plot.

She is also teaching a writers' bootcamp over 10 weeks from **January 24 through March 27**. It provides lecture for 30-45 minutes about one aspect of writing each week and also a structured place every week for up to 10 people to submit work for review and provide editing feedback.

PLEASE CONTACT DEBBIE PELHAM FOR MORE INFORMATION: debbiepelham@hotmail.com 432-634-0139

2012 Breakthrough Novel Contest

Amazon.com, Inc. and Penguin Group have announced the fifth annual Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award contest, the international search for the next great voices in fiction. The competition will award two grand prizes: one for general fiction and one for young adult fiction. Each grand prize winner will be published by Penguin Group (USA), and the competition will be open to both unpublished and self-published novels. After a record-setting number of submissions for the 2011 competition, writers around the world are encouraged to begin preparing their manuscripts for entry into the 2012 competition, which will open on Jan. 23, 2012.

Eligible writers with an English-language novel can submit their manuscript between Jan. 23 and Feb. 5, 2012. Submission details can be found at www.amazon.com/abna. Up to 10,000 total eligible entries will be accepted, consisting of up to 5,000 each in the general fiction and young adult fiction categories. Amazon.com editors will select 1,000 entries from each category to advance to the second round. In the subsequent round, Amazon.com editors and at least one top reviewer on Amazon.com will read excerpts of the entries and narrow the pool to 500 quarter-finalists (250 in each category). Reviewers from Publishers Weekly will then read, review and rate the full manuscripts, and 50 semi-finalists for each category will be selected. Penguin editors will evaluate the manuscripts of the 50 general fiction and 50 young adult fiction semi-finalists, and choose three finalists for each award.

For the complete Official Rules for the 2012 Amazon Breakthrough Novel Award and more information about the contest, please visit www.amazon.com/abna.

**The Permian Basin Poetry Society's SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP PRICE for
JANUARY**

**2012 -- 1/2 price -- only \$7.50 for the
entire year --**

Teachers and Students FREE all year!

**See Marc McPeters on January 14th or send \$ and/or info to:
Treasurer, 4513 Anetta Drive, Midland, TX 79703-6906**

**The PERMIAN BASIN POETRY SOCIETY welcomes all at 2 P.M. on Saturday,
January**

14, 2012, Texas-ku (Haiku) Workshop at The Ground Floor Coffee Shop, 203 W
Wall Street #104, Midland, TX 79701-4515 (432) 683-4433,
Please help if you're well-versed in haiku.

At 7 P.M. til closing is JANUARY 2012 THE GROUND FLOOR COFFEE SHOP
OPEN MIC

NITE,
JANUARY 14, 2012 at 7 PM, all genres welcome!!! No admission to either
event.

Hope you had a great Christmas, Happy Holidays, and ya'll have fun in
JANUARY! Kat

Attached HAIKU info below (today's youth has elaborated on this more
traditional style):

TEXAS KU -OR- HAIKU -or- Senryu (about people instead of nature)
17 SYLLABLES OR LESS

THREE LINES:

Line 1: FIVE (5) syllables

Line 2: SEVEN (7) syllables

Line 3: FIVE (5) syllables

UNRHYMED POEM THAT REFLECTS

NATURE AND FEELINGS – often about nature or changing seasons –
MANAGE TO CONVEY EMOTION

No caps

PRESENT TENSE

TRY TO ELIMINATE: articles (like a, an, the)

TWO PARTS -Three lines:

SETTING - SUBJECT - ACTION

{CAESURA) ONE FRAGMENT (BREAK OR PAUSE) - THEN

PHRASE ON TWO LINES

WITH FEW WORDS CALL ATTENTION TO AN OBSERVATION AND IN
EFFECT SAY, “look at

this” or “think about this”.

SHOW, NOT TELL – LIKE A PHOTO THAT CAPTURES THE ESSENCE OF
THE MOMENT –

STATED SIMPLY

OFTEN CONNECTING SEEMINGLY UNRELATED THINGS.

FOCUS ON SPECIFIC MOMENT – write down phrases - WAY TO REMEMBER,
TO

APPRECIATE SMALL THINGS

MAKING ORDINARY MOMENTS EXTRAORDINARY

DESCRIBES NATURAL PHENOMENA IN THE FEWEST NUMBER OF
WORDS – MAKING AN

INDELIBLE IMPRESSION OF THE READER

When connected.

USE OBSERVATION SKILLS TO Go on nature hikes, nature photography, or art.

Write down what you see in nature.

Try to find two images that create a striking impression WRITE
SOME ASPECT OF NATURE OR
SEASON

SHOW, NOT TELL – FEELING: sad, lonely, love (in clever, witty way
{epigrammatic)

WHAT YOU SEE – LINKED TO HUMAN CONDITION - EXPRESSES
EMOTION,
MUSICAL

TEACHES POWER OF OBSERVATION THE IMPORTANCE OF EDITING (the
fewest words

make the strongest impression)

Lofty, uplifting, only images from nature.

Wide angle, medium range, zoom in, and end with noun. Specific moment.

Look - think - take picture.

Present tense, 5 = setting, 7 = subject, 5 = action.

ELIMINATE GERUNDS (ING ENDINGS),

ONE MODIFIER PER NOUN.

PERSONAL PRONOUNS - LOWER CASE.

SPECIFIC MOMENT - UNRELATED THINGS.

"The activities that most nourish the spirit (play, affection, generosity, contemplation, quiet, beauty, creativity, truth-telling, time in nature) are least valued in a consumer society. A morning with pen and notepad, traversing the landscape of memory and searching for the sacred, is a profoundly counter cultural activity. No wonder the impulse to probe the spiritual life with language presses against so many people's hearts. That neglected dimension of self is rebelling—insisting that its story come into the light.

Writing, then, becomes a way of attending to life's submerged currents".

(Elizabeth J. Andrews)

Haiku How-to compiled by Kat Copyright © 2007