

The Next Chapter

May 2023 Volume 19 Issue 5

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Carolyn Dean to speak May 8

Carolyn Dean will present "The Most Common Author Boo-Boos (and how to fix/avoid them)" at ETWG's regular meeting on Monday, May 8, 6:30 p.m., Genecov Room, Tyler Area Chamber of Commerce Building, 315 N. Broadway, Tyler. (Parking and entrance on Line Street)

Carolyn spoke in March on Productivity and Presenting. Due to rave reviews, she's been asked to speak again. This time, Carolyn will speak on the craft of writing. How many of these boo-boos do you make? Do you know how to easily fix them? It promises to be a fun and informative talk, one for every writer in every genre and stage of writing.

Carolyn writes books under various pen names. Now living in East Texas, she grew up in Oregon, and loves to travel. She enjoys creating worlds and peoples that inspire, challenge, and entertain readers.

Come find out what the most common boo-boos are in writing. If you've been writing any amount of time, you've probably made at least one. Come learn how to fix them.

Before the meeting, ETWG members will meet at 5:00 at Don Juan's on the Square to share a meal and talk with fellow authors.<>

Nutz and Boltz (ETWG'S Open Discussion Meeting)

On Monday, May 15, 6:30 p.m., click the Zoom link on ETWG's website.



On the 3rd Monday of every month, ETWG hosts Nutz and Boltz. It's an open forum for those attending to discuss any matter about writing, problem solving and hangups with their work, or bring to the group any successful writing tool you have found useful.

Hosted through Zoom, you can join from anywhere in the world! <>

Marketing Opportunity:

Author Fest July 22, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at W. Walworth Harrison Public Library, Greenville, TX. Any author who may wish to attend and share their books and stories with the Greenville community and surrounding areas should contact Library Director John Hayden by emailing <u>jhayden@ci.Greenville.tx.us.</u><>

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

It looks like we've made it to May. I trust you have busied yourself with spring activities like gardening, baseball, camping, cleaning, and maybe even a writing event. Several of our ETWG authors joined many others for the East Texas Book Fest held at Tyler Junior College on April 1. It was fun to see the many different genres represented by East Texas



authors. Hosted by Smith County Area Libraries Together (SALT), the event was well-attended by authors and visitors alike. Food trucks were even available, and those are always a hit. I am pleased to say that I even found some new readers for my *The Keeper* book series. (In other words, they bought my books!) I think everyone had a good time, thanks to the efforts of SALT.

Speaking of author events, we are elbows-deep into planning our summer writing conference, which will be held Saturday, July 15 at TJC West Campus. The conference committee has lined up four speakers: Maya Golden Bethany, Renee LaViness, Brad Maule, and Jodi Thompson. You'll be hearing more about them in the coming weeks. I hope you will make plans to attend. Registration has just opened, so be sure and get your ticket for this annual event. You're sure to come away with something you can use. Click on this link to register: <u>18th Annual Conference of the East Texas Writers Guild Tickets</u>, Sat, Jul 15, 2023 at 8:30 AM | Eventbrite

In the meantime, be sure and join us for our May general meeting on Monday, May 8. I learn something new every time we meet. In fact, the knowledge I have gained from speakers and other members has proven invaluable to my writing, not to mention the support and encouragement I feel from just being in the same room with other writers. I hope you'll join us!

Have a mahvelous May, dahlink!

XOXO

April Coker

2023 ETWG President





Journey Windrow's debut urban fantasy novel, *The Reluctant Mage: Mage of Boston Series Book One* was recently reviewed by N.N. Light Book Heaven's editorial staff. The book received **5++** stars and comments such as:

"Wow, this book is a thrilling urban fantasy I simply couldn't put down. The worldbuilding is original and brilliant. The characters are vibrant and leap off the page. The plot is written with precision and moves at a face pace. The dialogue and action compete for top billing. The author has built a world, brick by brick, and it's a feast for the reader's imagination. The best urban fantasy I've ever read."

Read the entire review at: https://www.nnlightsbookheaven.com/post/the-reluctant-mage-br

Watch the book trailer here: <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QVp3VhjS97k</u>

Or get your own copy: (e-copy on sale for 99 cents or free to read on Kindle Unlimited): <u>https://www.amazon.com/Reluctant-Mage-Boston-Book-One-ebook/dp/B0BT7L9T97</u>



5++ stars for The Reluctant Mage: Mage of Boston... www.nnlightsbookheaven.com

You Never Know

W. D. Edmiston

You never know.

In the 1948 John Wayne/John Ford movie "Fort Apache" the Indians are upset and are about to attack. It is a tense moment. In period costume, the leader slowly raises his rifle to the sky, fires a shot and commands them to attack. In the lower right corner of the screen just before he fires, a Ford <u>pickup</u> putts along a dirt path from behind the last Indian pony.

That unidentified pickup creates the most wellknown blooper in American movies.

"Peace. Count the clock." Brutus says in Julius Ceasar. Decades before tolling bells were added to clocks.

Robinson Crusoe, swims to his shipwreck after removing his clothes. He fills his pockets with biscuits and swims ashore. Hm.

Mistakes are how you learn. But, when you are out of your field of expertise, there are sources.



We owe it to the readers to get it right, small easy to look up details will drive your readers away. I try never to describe a female's clothing without running it past a knowledgeable, well dressed female writer.

This week, while working on a novel, murders are taking place in a spot where underground caverns are frequent. It includes an underground home built with a cavern opening to it's rear. It was rustic but well loved until the owner passed away and the home was abandoned. Of course, the murderers are hiding there.

That opened a lot of opportunities for mistakes. How do my cops serve a warrant if the property does not have an address. How do you obtain permission to search if the owner is dead. If the cave has water running in the bottom, does it connect to the aquifer, will that involve environmental police in the investigation. Who controls access to caves, what may be done in caves, what endangered or dangerous wildlife might be disturbed there?

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TICKETS AVAILABLE! CLICK TO GET YOURS NOW!

ETWG's 18th annual summer writers conference is set for **Saturday**, July 15, 2023 at the **Tyler Junior College West Campus** in Tyler from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm. Guest speakers include Maya Golden Bethany, Renee La Viness, Brad Maule (former star of TV's General Hospital), and Jodi Thompson.

Click the link to purchase your ticket, and don't forget your lunch choices at the bottom of the registration page:

18th Annual Conference of the East Texas Writers Guild Tickets, Sat, Jul 15, 2023 at 8:30 AM Eventbrite

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Meet the Members: Patricia Taylor Wells



I began writing my first story hoping to put my life back together from the effects of losing my brother at a young age. I struggled for several years, not realizing that "every tragedy has tentacles that reach far beyond its obvious victims." After experimenting with different points of view, I finally surrendered to the fact that the story wasn't mine alone and needed to be told from multiple points of view. This shift made all the difference, allowing me to capture what Kirkus Reviews described as "a story that effectively anatomizes the selfishness of grief."

As a previous member and facilitator of critique groups at the Atlanta Writers Club and the Knoxville Writers Group, I appreciate the benefits of belonging to a writers' group. In 2016, I attended the ETWG annual conference, where I had a one-on-one consultation with one of the speakers, Roger Leslie. After telling him I was reluctant to publish my novel since it was based on family issues, Roger quoted author Pat Conroy, "Anyone afraid of what their family will think of their writing shouldn't be a writer." I took Roger's advice to query small or regional publishers looking for the type of book I had to offer, and within a short time, I signed a contract with Bedazzled Ink Publishers.

For me, nothing is more rewarding than having readers who enjoy my stories or poems and can identify with the sentiment with which they were written. Recently, someone described one of my poems as "achingly beautiful." That truly touched my heart.

The most challenging part of being a writer is to write. It's not always easy to stare at a blank page or computer screen, to avoid doubting your ability to finish your work in progress, or to feel confident about

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your writing style. Don't compare yourself to others; if your writing is not as good as you want, try different ways to improve it. While inspiration and imagination are essential in writing, devotion and discipline get you to the finish line.

I have a BA degree in English and French, and besides facilitating critique groups, I was also the Newsletter Editor for the Knoxville Writers Group. I write in several genres: fiction, poetry, short stories, memoir, and non-fiction, and I published my first book in 2016 for the benefit of Camp Tyler, the oldest outdoor education school in the country.

Since then, I have published two novels, one novella, and two collections of poetry. My upcoming book, a historical memoir, will be released in January 2024. My first novel and both my poetry collections received first-place awards. I have also received ten awards for short stories, despite never giving much thought to that particular genre. However, I have come to enjoy taking vignettes from my life and turning them into stories. All of my published books have been featured in Tyler Today Magazine's column, "Authors Among Us," which grew from my conversation with its editor Jennifer Moore Gaston. The column is open to all published authors in the East Texas area. As to what I will write next, I have no idea.

You can find me on my website: www.patricia-taylor-wells.com



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I asked the internet those questions. Not much detail. But there was some luck if not God's grace involved. But that led me to Jim "Crash" Kennedy. He is a caver; he may be a *caver's caver* having earned the name *Crash* by falling while taking a bat survey in Pennsylvania. But I sent him an email, telling him what I was writing.

Jim called me less than an hour later. Not what I expected. He was driving to South Carolina to do some work in caves. I apologized and he would have none of it. "I'm driving down the road with nothing to do and you want to talk about caves. I like to talk about caves." In a few minutes he answered all my questions, expanded on them, and offered to read the draft so no Ford pickups drove through my cave.

The conversation was the high point of an afternoon of writing. Try it when you are worried about where your character is taking you. It's just my experience, hope it helps. <>

Quote of the Month:

We read five words on the first page of a really good novel and we begin to forget we are reading printed words on a page. We begin to see images.

~John Champlin Gardner

A Visit to Firehouse Place

Part 1: I-4

Laura Bentz

Living near Tampa, Florida, I traveled to see my aging mother in Orlando about once a month. Journeying on the worse interstate in the country. I-4 sometimes scared me, but the winter months stood out as the worse.

Though this January morning, I left in a good mood. The traffic flowed well, but slowed many times along that perilous stretch. And, as I passed billboard after billboard, I viewed the enormous souvenir shops, golf courses and attractions along the way. The first one, "Dinosaur World" with its cheesy, fake-looking but massive lizards, loomed over the on-ramp as I got on the interstate and left my hometown of Plant City.

As I drove, I recalled the changes I-4 experienced over the years. For example, I remembered the orange groves and cattle ranches dotting the countryside along the way. These are gone now and replaced by congestion that now crowds both sides of the eight-lane road, leaving precious little countryside left. Of course, I remembered when the first "anchor" attraction, Disney World, opened and the excitement when it did in the early 70s.



One of my favorite memories of that time is visiting there to see my sister, the monorail operator. I came to see her doing her job and got to sit in the front with her right inside the train's nose.

Sadder times happened as well. Like the more recent event when my son totaled my car when he rammed it into the back of our pickup truck. Right under the electrical high wires shaped like mouse ears before International Drive. We lurched to a stop in heavy traffic on our way to Mom's as everyone saw a police car flashing its lights and put on the brakes. Needless-to-say, we didn't make it that day. No injuries suffered, for which I am grateful. And the truck only got a scratch. But I mourned for the loss of my black PT Cruiser, though I replaced it for a bright red one.

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Next, the "Be Extraordinary" sign catches my eye and gets me thinking. I hope somehow, some way to live up to those words.

Am I being more that average? Am I doing my very best?

Reaching the downtown area, more familiar places show up. The empty shell of the old Merita factory where the smell of fresh bread hovered in the air as you drove by, stood, forsaken many years ago. Another building had an orange carton painted on it: faded, abandoned and forlorn. A reminder of the once-thriving orange juice industry. And new skyscrapers ready for commerce rose a few blocks down, though with construction cranes marring the landscape and threatening Orlando with more growth and more traffic.

The Amelia Street sign meant my exit point. Going down Colonial Drive, I viewed Vietnamese restaurants lining the road, and the giant Buddha in front of the Chinese market. When stopping at the light, there to my right, the old hobby store, where you could go buy stamps, coins and model kits before cell phones, computers, and video games, perched on the corner. My husband and I both went there, but we never crossed paths.

Zipping by the aging mall and turning down a couple of streets, I arrived at Barclay Park. A military base converted to luxury condos and apartments. I recognized my mom's condo on Firehouse Place, by the worn rattan furniture and half-dead plants that cluttered her front porch.



I breathed a sigh of relief. I've arrived. Parking across the street, I made it to the front door. Safe and without incident.

I made it. Yeah! Thank you, Lord! I survived I-4 once again.

But the journey had only begun...

To be continued... <>

Making a Memoir

Lydia Holley

Writing a memoir is a lot like writing a novel, only different. It's the different part of it that makes memoir writing unique. Memoirs are classified as creative non-fiction. Nonfiction, so you can't make things up. But also creative, so you need to make certain it's compelling.

So, how about that truth-telling part? How do you handle what you write about others? That can become sticky. An article in The Guardian states, "In Elizabeth Strout's *My Name is Lucy Barton*, the writing tutor Sara says: "If you find yourself protecting anyone as you write ... remember this: you're not doing it right."

On the other hand, just a few paragraphs later, the same article also warns, "The potential impact on others is an increasing consideration. All universities now have ethics committees, and life writing is treated much as sociology or anthropology would be, with consent a major issue: have the "participants" (ie any living person who appears in the memoir) given their permission to be written about? It's not just universities that want to be ethically clean and legally invulnerable. Publishers do too, and memoirs can be a minefield."



But if you have a story to tell, part of what makes memoirs interesting is the fact that they are true. So, how do you go about writing a memorable memoir? First, as with any novel, hook the reader right from the start. Use the same structure and craft techniques you would if you were writing fiction such as sensory language, strong verbs, compelling characters, and a strong plot. Even if you are not a plotter, consider first what you are wanting to say and make certain your story has a strong beginning, an exciting climax, and a satisfying ending. You don't have to (and probably shouldn't) write about your entire life. Snippets can be strung together to make a story come alive, or you may only need to write about a small period of time in your life. To make your story more powerful, you may need to tell the story out of sequence instead of chronologically.

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Try to include some bouts of humor, action, and dialogue. Of course, you will most likely not know exactly what was said between people. Even if you were there, you may have forgotten most of the dialogue. That's okay. Just make certain the exchange is truthful to what really transpired.

In The New York Writers Workshop's *The Portable MFA in Creative Writing*, Peter Bricklebank states that, though an author may "push a little beyond the boundary of what can reasonably be re-created from memory," it's okay. "Even if the conversations in real life didn't go exactly that way, were they in essence—in tone and timbre and sweep and sentiment—somewhat close to what's on the page? If so, then the writer's been as faithful as one can reasonably expect" because "he's represented reality as he remembers it." That doesn't give one license to exaggerate, or to "intentionally misrepresent significant, essence-changing facts in order to make the story more dramatic".

Just as in writing a fictional story, make certain every character you include is needed. And you will probably need to do some research, if only to make certain you have details correct in the time period you're writing about.

In *The Business of Being a Writer*, in addition to not trying to tell your entire life story, Jane Friedman gives this advice: "The writer must have something new to say that sets her book apart from many similar stories. Also, it's best to avoid the book idea that combines elements of narrative or memoir with elements of advice or self-help."



Or, as Bricklebank states, "We must avoid playing the hard-done-by victim, the innocent on whom all wrong is heaped and thus for whom all manner of revenge is fair." He advises to "strive for compassion and empathy" but to "take the risk of hurting and being hurt." Why? Because "I'd rather feel enough to cry rather than never feel anything. That's why we write. That's why we read."

Whether or not you take these pieces of advice, if you've got something to say and are not afraid to tell it, you may have a masterful memoir inside just waiting to be set free. <>

Sources:

| https://authorspublish.com/8-tips-for-making-your-true-story-come-alive | | |
|---|--|--|
| https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/dec/14/the-naked-truth-how-to-write-a-memoir | | |
| https://www.masterclass.com/articles/6-tips-for-writing-a-memoir | | |
| https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-write-vour-memoir | | |
| * | | |

More Opportunities!

The following opportunities came to ETWG's email address. One might be just right for you!

The **13th annual Nonfiction Writers Conference** returns May 10-12, 2023. This one-of-a-kind event has been held entirely online since 2010. Our opening speaker is Cheryl Strayed, author of *Wild: Lost and Found on the Pacific Crest Trail* and *Tiny Beautiful Things* (now a series on Hulu).

Depending on registration level, attendees can access the following benefits:

- * Educational sessions delivered by Zoom webinar, including Q&A with most speakers.
- * Pitch the Agents LIVE! an interactive double session where several literary agents listen to author pitches and give constructive feedback. If agents like what they hear, they will request proposals from participants. (Must apply to participate; 20 participants will be selected.)
- * Attendee Networking and Mastermind Event, which features small group discussions held with Zoom breakout rooms. Each participant can share a two-minute introduction, then gets 8 minutes to share a question or challenge and get feedback from other group members. You will love this unique event!
- * Ask-a-Pro sessions, delivered as one-on-one phone and video consultations with industry pros. Many attendees feel these are worth the price of admission alone.
- * Private Facebook group.
- * Recordings and transcripts available.

The Nonfiction Writers Conference has a long history of delivering content-rich learning sessions and helping accelerate the careers of attendees. If you're ready to take your author business to the next level, don't miss this powerful event.

Save 30% off with code: PARTNER30 https://NonfictionWritersConference.com

30th Annual Austin Film Festival, October 26-November 2, 2023.

Deadline is May 25th to submit a script, <u>click here</u> to read about Nick Gambino's experience after winning the Drama Feature Category in 2022. Also a reminder to take advantage of this Writer's Group discount code: AFFWG23

Go to www.austinfilmfestival.com to submit!

They are also currently accepting reader applications! If you or any fellow writers are interested in gaining more script reading experience, and earning a free badge to the 30th Annual Austin Film Festival in October, please email <u>scriptmanager@austinfilmfestival.com</u>.

Thinking of You vs. Thinking AS You

Lydia Holley

As authors, we write about characters. Many times, our characters have a snippet of us in them—part of their personality or background. To write about a different person than ourselves, we base our characters upon people we've known in the past or present. Our biases, and theirs, are weaved throughout our stories.

So, what about people we don't know? People who have a race/disability/gender/culture or other experience that makes them so different from our personal point of view that we need help with their reactions, or their thoughts and feelings about the things impacting them in our stories?

For instance, I wrote a story about a mother with a severely autistic child. Do I truly know how this mother feels? I know how a mother feels, but since I've never been in that particular situation, if I ever decide to publish that story, I will employ a sensitivity reader (now also know as authenticity reader or diversity reader). Why? Because I want to be accurate.

Sensitivity readers are sometimes ridiculed because "all people think alike." But do they? Perhaps I can imagine myself in a person's place, but can I really understand their thoughts and actions? At times, I've been told by critique partners my male characters are not always accurately portrayed. I appreciate the advice because, as a woman, I can see what males do but I can't think like them. Just as I can't think as someone whose race, disability, or culture is different from my own.

That's exactly what sensitivity readers do. They



point out the flaws in the way your characters act or think. It should not be looked at as censorship, but as something that will make your story stronger, just as research into history will make your story more authentic if you are writing about the past. (Thus, the shift away from using the term sensitivity reader to authenticity or diversity reader.)

According to Crystal Shelley, "If a writer publishes a story that's inaccurate or harmful, readers will notice —and they're not afraid to speak up. This can result in poor publicity or reviews." And none of us want bad reviews!

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What about the past, when people used words considered inappropriate today? Shelley states, "One thing I hear writers say is that they're being 'historically accurate' by using slurs or problematic language because people in that setting or time period would've used them. While this may be true, readers are reading it in today's context, knowing that the writer wrote it while being aware of today's context. Readers may not be able to (or want to) separate their own emotional reactions to a slur, so writers risk doing harm to readers for the sake of so-called accuracy, regardless of intent."

Not sure how to even approach a certain time period/ gender/disability/culture, etc. without insulting someone?

To start, there are numerous books written by people with diverse backgrounds. Look at how they portray their characters, how they describe them, and the words they use. Then look at your own work as a comparison. There are numerous websites which gives the best language to use now and expressions to avoid.

This is one such website which may help: https://consciousstyleguide.com

And while this one is specific to disabilities: <u>https://ncdj.org/style-guide/</u>, there are style guides for almost anything you would like to write about.

You can also find readers who are a part of other cultures for consultation and accuracy.

As writers, we write for a specific audience, but we also want as many people to read our book(s) as possible. That won't happen if you get bad reviews because of something you could easily have changed if someone had pointed it out. What is the number one reason you may wish to take the time (and invest the money) to employ a sensitivity reader? Just as with any other editing service, it just might propel your writing to a higher level so it can be enjoyed by a wider audience. <>

As writers, we write for a specific audience, but we also want as many people to read our books(s) as possible...

Source:

https://www.rabbitwitharedpen.com/blog/sensitivity-reading-101

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BOOK SELLING/SIGNING OPPORTUNITIES

Compiled by April Coker

MAY

- May 6: Palestine Art Walk, <u>http://www.visitpalestine.com/</u>
- May 6: Founders Day Festival and Concert, Emory, TX, <u>http://www.cityofemory.com/</u>
- May 6: Winnsboro Festival of Books Literary Celebration, <u>http://www.winnsborocenterforthearts.com/</u>
- May 5-7, 19-21: 80-Acre Market, Gilmer, TX https://80acremarket.com/pages/80acremarketinfo
- May 12-13: Piney Woods Wine Festival, Lindale, TX https://www.visitlindale.com/events
- May 13-14: Cinco de Mayo Festival, Henderson, TX. <u>www.hendersontradedays.com</u>
- May 27-28: Weekend Bloom, Tyler, TX. Search Mar Hernandez on East Texas Vendors Facebook page.
- May 26-29: Tyler Celtic Festival (Chapel Hill/Arp). Jericho_co_productions@yahoo.com.

JUNE

- June 2-4, 16-18: 80-Acre Market, Gilmer, TX (link shown above)
- June 3: Palestine Art Walk (link shown above)
- June 24: Network N Chill, Marshall Convention Center, <u>www.connecttheculture.com</u>
- June 17: Fun in the Park Crafts and Trades Show, Bergfeld Park, Tyler, TX. Search Gordon Melva on East Texas Vendors Facebook page.

*This is by no means a complete list as many small-town festivals and events don't make it onto the Facebook pages or online magazines that I check.

The Next Chapter

TNC Newsletter and ETWG Information

2022 ETWG Officers & Leadership Positions

| Founder: | "K" Sellers |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| President: | April Coker |
| Vice President: | Woody Edmiston |
| Secretary: | Patricia La Vigne |
| Treasurer: | Janice Conlee |
| Historian: | Laura Bentz |
| TNC Editor: | Lydia Holley |
| Membership: | Ilenya Marrin |
| Publicity: | Lynn Pinkerton |
| Website: | Nikki Brown Lisa Holcomb Laura Bentz |
| Technical: | Mike Wigington |
| Conference Chair: Parliamentarian: | April Coker Lisa Holcomb |



TNC Submission Guidelines and Deadlines

All submitted data must be received by the 30th of the month prior to the month in which art/ad/etc. will appear.

Length —up to 500 words (ask if more)

Format-single space, no indent

Fonts—12 pt. Times New Roman

Photos—jpeg with caption instructions

Send to:

LydiaHolley@aol.com

East Texas Writers' Guild P.O. Box 10074 Tyler, TX 75711

Website: https://etwritersguild.org

Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/etwritersguild/

Email: etwritersguild@gmail.com