



# The Next Chapter

## *East Texas Writer's Guild Newsletter*

February 2024  
Volume 20, Issue 2

etwritersguild.org

## Getting Back on Track After Life's Disasters

Speaker: Lisa Holcomb  
Author and ETWG Member

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- 2 President's Message  
by *April Coker*
- 3 (a) Nutz & Boltz Update  
(b) Members...Mark Your Calendar  
(c) February *Kind.ness*
- 4 From the Editor's Desk  
by *Sharon James*
- 5 (a) *It's the Hard-Knock Life!*  
Lyrics from 1982 movie, *Annie*  
(b) Meet February's Guest  
Speaker, *Lisa Holcomb*
- 6 *And When In Rome (Part 1)*  
by *Laura Bentz*
- 7 *Vendor Opportunities* for March/April  
(list provided by *April Coker*)
- 8 Author's Page:  
*Maple Point*, by *Patricial Wells Taylor*
- 9 *Winter Sabbath*  
by *Carol Thompson*
- 10 *Volunteer Writing Help/Advice Wanted*  
Recently Received Email Requests from:  
(a) *Lindale High School*  
(b) *Stephen F. Austin High School*
- 11 *Contest! Cash Prizes!*  
*Letter Review*      **Deadline: Feb. 29, 2024**
- 12 *Contest! Cash Prizes! Deadline: Feb. 28, 2024*  
*Next Generation Short Story Awards*
- 13 (a) *TNC Submission Guidelines & Deadline*  
(b) *ETWG Offices & Board Members*

We've all stared disaster in the face at one time or another in our lives. It's just part of living: dealing with the good and the bad, the fair and the unfair, or the unexpected illness (our own or someone else's close to us). Some of us, like Little Orphan Annie from the musical "*Annie*," can probably sing every word of the orphans' song "*It's a Hard-Knock Life*." (see *Annie* lyrics, pg. 5)

Join other ETWG members at our February General Meeting to hear *Lisa Holcomb* share some things she's learned along her life's journey that might help us "get back on track" more easily after our next unexpected disaster.

**When:** Monday, February 12, 6:30pm

**Topic:** Getting Back on Track

After Life's Disasters

**Where:** 315 N. Broadway

Genecov Room, Chamber of Commerce

315 N. Broadway (entrance on Line Street)

Free Lighted Parking Lot (also on Line Street)

Refreshments provided by *Lorna Penland*

ETWG Hospitality Chairperson

### NEED TO EAT BEFORE THE MEETING?

You are cordially invited to join other Guild Members for food and fellowship at

**Don Juan's** on the Square

113 E. Erwin (across from Court House)

**Dinner @ 5pm    Meeting Starts @ 6:30 pm**

## President's Message

I'm having trouble coming up with a message for you Guild members this month. December flew by with its madness, and then January settled in with its illness, ice, and overcast skies. And now it's February. What do writers need to hear/read in these pre-spring days?

I'll go with *love*, because February is the month of love, with Valentine's Day smack dab in the middle. Are you a romance writer? Does February inspire you? Do the displays of candy and stuffed animals in stores make you want to write, write, write? (Or run, run, run?) Seems Christmas was barely over and Valentine merch appeared on the shelves.

Let's say you could harness that early celebration energy and funnel it into your writing. I remember a stage in my life when I anticipated Valentine's Day, wondering what surprise my boyfriend or husband would bring, or how I could make the day special for my loved ones and students. What could you do to bring that excitement into your writing?



I'm currently working on a mystery novel with a bit of romance in it. The story takes place in the summer, so I can't bring in Valentine's Day. But I can consider the romance in light of Valentine's. I can try to recreate the excitement of anticipation, the pain of disappointment, and the tension of chemistry between characters.

What will you do with your writing this February? *If nothing else, write a sweet note to a loved one.* If you're feeling adventurous, write a romantic poem, short story, flash fiction, or novel, because, as Victor Hugo wrote: "Life is the flower for which love is the honey."

*Happy Valentine's Day,  
and happy writing.*

**April Coker**

XOXO



## Nutz & Boltz Update:

After a one-month hiatus, **Nutz & Boltz** (N&B) resumes Monday, February 19, at 6:30pm. N&B is a popular Zoom meeting for ETWG members and occasional guests where technical (or other) aspects of writing are discussed in a casual setting with a designated discussion leader. ETWG President, *April Coker*, will host N&B on the 19th with a rousing discussion on “*Commas.*”

If you wish to participate in the N&B discussion next Monday, check your email for April’s link to join the discussion!

## Members...

### Mark Your Calendar:



- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
|                 | <b>February</b>                               |
| Monday, 2/12    | ETWG General Meeting<br>6:30pm (Genecov Room) |
| Wednesday, 2/14 | <b>VALENTINE’S DAY!!!</b>                     |
| Monday, 2/19    | Nutz & Boltz...6:30pm                         |
|                 | <b>MARCH</b>                                  |
| Monday, 3/04    | ETWG Board Meeting<br>6:30pm (Zoom)           |
| Monday, 3/11    | ETWG General Meeting<br>6:30pm (Genecov Room) |
| Monday, 3/18    | Nutz & Boltz<br>6:30pm (Zoom)                 |



## February kind.ness:

*goodwill*

*affection*

*warmth*

*concern*

*gentleness*

*understanding*

*compassion*

*hospitality*

*patience*

*courteousness*

**BE  
KIND**

## From the Editor's Desk:

*Oh, Lydia, wherefore art thou? Gardening I presume and watching things grow and thrive, whilst I, your humble successor linger over formatting and images and oh, such stale coffee! Do you need any grounds for your garden? Oh, never mind, I drink Keurig... not enough grounds in those pods for a good cup of coffee, much less for compost.*

Last month's huge learning curve (self-imposed; thank you, *Indesign*) tacked onto an already procrastination expert's desire for utter and complete *perfection* caused a longer than anticipated delay getting *The Next Chapter* posted on the ETWG website. I think it was actually posted on the Sunday before January's General Meeting. Thanks, **Laura Bentz**, for posting the newsletter each month. And thank you, **April Coker**, for being so patient and encouraging on last month's issue. And thank you, *everyone*, for giving me such good feed back and nice comments.

So, what's the delay this month, you ask? Well, if you really want to know, here's the scoop...

Early submissions from **Patricial Wells Taylor** and **Carol Thompson** got me all excited about the February issue. After receiving their articles, I thought things would be a breeze, so I settled in for a long winter's nap (*not really, but it sure sounds good right now*). No problems on the near horizon, and then... **Mr. Flu Bug** decided to spring a surprise visit on me and the hubby. He liked us *so much* he decided to stick around for the next 20 days!!!

I heard someone say the other day that the Tyler area has been the worst hit in the nation

## *Editor's Desk, continued...*

for flu A and B and that nasty stuff from 2020! (Remember, I have taken a vow not to use *that* word.) True or not, Mr. Flu and his buddies are nothing to sneeze at (*pun not intended*).

After finishing Tamiflu, a Zpak, and downing a bottle of Codeine cough syrup, I practically crawled back to the clinic this past week for a chest x-ray and breathing treatment. Came home with an Albuterol inhaler, Prednisone, Amoxicillin, and OTC Mucinex. Whee! Or should I just say "wheeze!"

Too much information? You're right, it is. I didn't want this stuff and I hope and pray that you don't get it. Our health can take a turn for the worst with little or no warning, mine sure did. Bottom line: Everything stops when you're not well.

I hope you enjoy the February newsletter when it finally gets posted (my fault entirely). I would love to hear from you! January's issue was chock-full of mistakes... pretty funny, actually. I wonder how many people besides me saw this *very confusing* email address:  
**etwgmembers@hotmail.com.org**

**Lisa Holcomb**, I especially look forward to your presentation tonight because February... for me... was definitely derailed by an unexpected health setback. I need some helpful tips for getting back on track fast!

'Til next time...  
Stay well and be kind!

Newsletter Comments & Suggestions Appreciated!  
**sharonjamesgt@gmail.com**



## It's The Hard-Knock Life

Songwriters: Charles Strouse / Martin Charnin

It's the hard-knock life for us!  
It's the hard-knock life for us!  
'Stead of treated, we get tricked,  
'Stead of kisses, we get kicked,  
It's the hard-knock life!

Don't it feel like the wind is always howl'n?  
Don't it seem like there's never any light?  
Once a day, don't you wanna throw the towel in?  
It's easier than puttin' up a fight.  
No one's there when your dreams at night get creepy,  
No one cares if you grow or if you shrink.  
Empty belly life...rotten smelly life,  
Full of sorrow life...no tomorrow life.

Santa Claus we never see,  
Santa Claus, what's that?...Who's he?  
No one cares for you a bit, when you're a foster kid,  
It's the hard-knock life!  
Make my bathroom shine,  
But don't touch my medicine cabinet,

It's the hard-knock life for us!  
It's the hard-knock life for us!  
'Stead of treated, we get tricked,  
'Stead of kisses, we get kicked,  
It's the hard-knock life for us!  
It's the hard-knock life for us!  
No one cares for you a bit, when you're a foster kid  
It's the hard-knock life!  
It's the hard-knock life!

Lyrics from *Annie*, the movie (1982)  
*It's the Hard-Knock Life* lyrics © Kobalt Music



## Meet Lisa Holcomb ETWG Guest Speaker for February

*Lisa Holcomb* writes fantasy, non-fiction, and poetry about families, both ones born into and those that are found. She fell in love with books on her mother's lap, under the Nebraska stars. When not writing, she enjoys fiber arts, serves on the board of both the East Texas Writers Guild and the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Tyler, teaches classes at the Tyler Public Library, and cheers for her three kids' band programs alongside her fantastic husband, Nick.

Lisa has spent twenty years blogging about adoption and reunion, and parenting while chronically ill. Her most recent publications are poems about motherhood in *"The History of Us: The Stories of The Women Who Made"*

Tuesday

Feb. 14

♥HAPPY  
Valentine's  
DAY♥

## And When in Rome

by *Laura Bentz*

### Part 1

Sunday, as I watched the rain pour down outside my window at the Excelsior Hotel in Rome, I yawned. My homework made my eyes tear and my mind numb. But when Grandma told me our plans, I closed my books and got ready to go, hopeful the situation would improve. And it did.

A few weeks ago, my Aunt Gloria and Uncle Joe, who owned a wholesale travel business to Europe, called and told us that they had three openings on a flight to Italy. So, she asked if my grandmother, my thirteen-year-old sister, and I, the fifteen-year-old, wanted to go and, of course, we said “yes!”. Not a typical touristy trip. We had many relatives in Rome we could meet and interact within the local culture. So, in April 1971, I went on a three-week adventure I would never forget.

That day, we planned to go to Maria Priete’s (my uncle’s sister) after church. And afterward, to Tivoli’s, a park with fountains on the outskirts of town. When we got there, we couldn’t find Maria. As we were about to leave, I spotted her and her daughter, Natalia, in the last pew. Glancing outside, we realized the clouds had opened up again. I had prayed during the service that God would make it sunny. I got no answer.

However, He must have had other plans. Natalie told me that they had scheduled a dance in their neighborhood and they had invited us to come. We went back to their apartment, ate dinner, and played cards. I assumed we would be going that night. Anticipation got the best of me.

**And When in Rome**, continued...

We took a lot of photos of everybody with my Polaroid camera. Natalie left us and went downstairs. She came back half an hour later.

“We’re leaving in a few minutes.”

I realized then it would be a daytime one not a night one.

“Il musica,e forte?” (Is the music fast?)

“Si.”

“Psychodelica?” (Psychodelic?)

“Si, un poco.”

Her answers both thrilled and alarmed me. I had almost no experience with boys and didn’t know what to expect. What will it be like? How will I feel? I’m too timid to ask anyone to dance. I guess I’ll just sit there.

Natalie prettied Linda, and me, with eyeliner, and we prepared to go. We went right across the street into a dark doorway. Down a hall, we came to a modest room that had one small window with shutters and a few couches and chairs scattered around. I sat with a pack of girls on the sofa. Nobody could speak English.

*(To Be continued in March TNC...)*

## VENDOR OPPORTUNITIES

(List compiled by *April Coker*)

Here are some events I saw on East Texas Vendors and East Texas Vendor Events on Facebook. Good luck!

### March

3/2: *Kilgore ArtWalk*, Kilgore email: [geekend.melissa@gmail.com](mailto:geekend.melissa@gmail.com)

3/2: *Loving Vendor Event*, Tyler call: Irene 903.235.5779 or Katrina 903.918.2608

3/16: *Trades at the Museum*, Gladewater

message: Scrubby Love on FB or call/text: 903.917.4326

3/16: *Block Party PopUp Market*, downtown Tyler see: [popuptyler.com](http://popuptyler.com)

3/30: *4th Annual Easter in the Park*, Tyler call/text: 903.921.8335 (Gordon Melva)

3/24: *2nd Annual Easter Market Pop Up Event*, Tyler message: Mike Grey on FB

**buy! sell! shop! look!**

### April

4/6-8: *Van Eclipsing the Ordinary*, Van

call: City Hall 903.963.7216 or Jane 903.292.2429

4/6: *Spring Market* (4 weekends April 6 – 28), Gladewater vendor application:

[https://www.eventeny.com/events/vendor/?id=15062&state=biz\\_pro](https://www.eventeny.com/events/vendor/?id=15062&state=biz_pro)

4/19-20: *Athens Old Fiddlers Reunion*, Athens

vendor application on Facebook under Traci Wilkes

4/20: *Grand Saline Main Street Festival*, Grand Saline

email [mainstretevents@yahoo.com](mailto:mainstretevents@yahoo.com)

4/27: *Wildflowers & Wine*, Avinger

<https://avingertxchamber.org/wildflowers-%26-wine-2024>

**Release Date:  
January 24, 2024**

On July 26, 1902, The Elmira Daily Advertiser described Maple Point this way: “The cottage itself is a marvel of beauty, and the boat landing is covered by a neat pavilion, which makes it the handsomest dock on the lake.”

This book combines the historical accounts of three generations of the Gleason, Bush, and Wells families who owned the property between 1895 and 2005. It also includes the author’s memoir of the 22 summers she spent at Maple Point cottage on Keuka Lake.

Within the pages of “Maple Point,” tales of historical figures and places come to life: Rachael Brooks Gleason, one of the first American women doctors, and her husband Silas O. Gleason owned and operated the Elmira Water Cure as an alternative to 1800s medicine. Racheal Gleason delivered the four children of Olivia Langdon Clemens and her husband, Mark Twain. The Gleasons, Langdons, and Clemens were close friends, as was Rev. Thomas K. Beecher of Park Church, who was also the brother of Harriett Beecher Stowe.

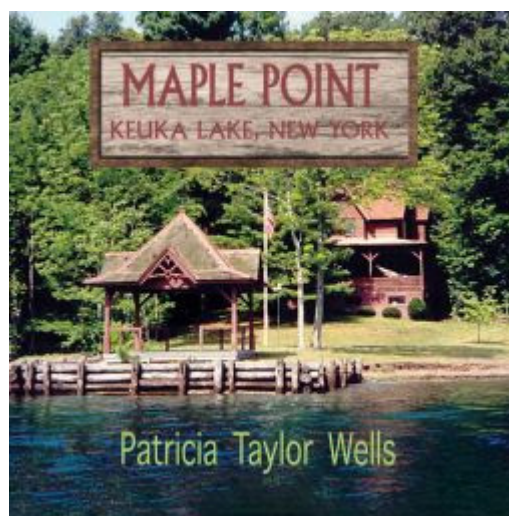
*Patricia Taylor Wells* takes you on a journey to Keuka Lake and the surrounding Finger Lakes area, one of the most scenic places in America. The author tells how the lakes were formed and provides a snapshot of the indigenous people who first roamed Keuka Lake and gave it her name. Daily life is recalled from the journals and guest books kept by those who were fortunate to sit on the front porch of the cottage overlooking the lake.

Available in Hardback, Paperback, and EBook  
Amazon and Barnes & Noble  
(ISBN 978-1-960373-34-2 Paperback)

Authors Page

[https://www.bedazzledink.com/  
maple-point.html](https://www.bedazzledink.com/maple-point.html)

 **WE  
LOVE  
AUTHORS!**







## Winter Sabbath

by *Carol Thompson*  
Tyler, Texas

I welcome winter, settle in  
like a dormant plant communing  
with earth beneath the straw-colored grass.  
I praise the shorter, darker months,  
hours crisscrossed with pale, sun-washed rays.

The world, visible in this season of naked trees,  
dresses in earth tones, sages and grey plaids  
woven within these sheltering days  
of ordained rest,  
a haven for my spirit.



Cold winds blow leaves the color of toast,  
brittle and crumbling, up against the front door  
to gather in crackling piles  
awaiting a clean sweep of the broom,  
the clean threshold revered by my German parents.

The iron bottle tree, a vibrant explosion  
of orange and blue glass, dazzles like a bellwether  
in the sun, as faded hydrangeas bow their heads  
in expectation of verdant green, the advent  
proclaiming earth's next season.

*Winter Sabbath* previously published  
in *WordFest Anthology 2022:*  
Waco Cultural Arts Fest



## Recently Received Email Request for Guest Speaker(s):

From: *Brandi Bridges, Lindale HS*

Dated: Mon, Jan 8, 2024

Good Morning,

I am the sponsor of Lindale High School's creative writing club, and I would love to have an author come in during one of our meetings to talk to the kids about what it takes to become a published author, their own writing process, how to create engaging stories and characters, the inner works of publishing, or really just anything that would continue to spur the students on in their endeavors.

Last year, *April Nunn-Coker* came in and the kids loved that. If there is anyone who is part of the guild, who is interested in speaking to this group of quirky, crazy kids, please have them reach out to me.

Thank you for your time.

*Mrs. Bridges*, English III/IV

Lindale High School

bridgesbd@lisdeagles.net



## Recently Received Email Request for Writing Advice and Encouragement:

From: *Founding Father's High-School*

*Non-Profit* Dated: Tue, Jan 9, 2024

Good evening,

My name is Ayesha Murtaza, a current junior at Stephen F. Austin High School, based in Houston, Texas. Unfortunately, within our school is a fundamental lack of linguistic culture. Nearly all of our competitive clubs are STEM, business, or athletics based, and give students zero incentive to continue the legacy of writing, though necessary for the practical world it is.

However, I have been fortunate enough to have the help of classmates to have created a non-profit organization centered around developing the writing skills of students through competition and through letter-writing! We wish to broaden our outreach by connecting with the East Texas Writer's Guild, as it has been well-established with 20 years of ongoing experience. It would thrill us if members from the East Texas Writer's Guild team would be able to attend virtual meetings to give general advice to our students, and support us from afar!

As we are a new non-profit, I would greatly appreciate your feedback on how to optimize our organization so we can optimize the greater education of our students. Sincerely,

Ayesha Murtaza, Class of 2025

Stephen F. Austin High School

ayeshshakhanmurtaza@gmail.com

## Letter Review Prize Contest

**DEADLINE:** February 29th, at 11:59 ET

**WHO MAY ENTER:** Anyone in the World!

To enter, go to:

<https://letterreview.com/information/>

For additional information, email:

**Dr. Ol James** [mail@letterreview.com](mailto:mail@letterreview.com)

In all categories, three announced winners will share in the \$1,000 total prize pool. Twenty writers will be Shortlisted. Feedback is also available. Additional category details listed below. Please see LR website for complete contest details.

### **Category: Short Fiction**

**Entry Fee:** \$20 per entry

All entries considered for publication and for submission to the Pushcart Prize and other anthologies. No genre or theme restrictions.

Word length: 0 to 5,000

### **Category: Nonfiction**

**Entry Fee:** FREE

All entries considered for publication and for submission to the Pushcart Prize and other anthologies. We welcome all forms of nonfiction including: Memoir, journalism, essay (including personal essay), fiction criticism, creative nonfiction, travel, nature, opinion, and many other permutations.

Word length: 0 to 5,000

### **Category: Poetry**

**Entry Fee:** \$15 per entry

All entries considered for publication and for submission to the Pushcart Prize and other anthologies. No style or subject restrictions.

Lines: 70 lines max per poem

### **Category: Unpublished Books**

**Entry Fee:** \$20 per entry

Winners may choose to have an extract published and receive a letter of recommendation from our judges. The entry must not have been traditionally published. We are seeking all varieties of novels, short story collections, non-fiction, and poetry collections. We will accept manuscripts which are unpublished, self published, and some which are indie published.

Submit the first 5,000 words of your prose manuscript, or 15 pages of poetry.

### **Feedback available.**

(Please see *Letter Review* website for complete *entry guidelines* and *category descriptions*.)



## Next Generation Short Story Awards Program for Authors of Short Stories

Not-for-Profit International Awards Program

### ENTER & PAY DEADLINE:

Feb. 28th, at 11:59 ET (2024 Program)

**ENTRY FEE:** (enter as often as you wish)

\$25 first submitted entry

\$20 each additional entry (same story)

For complete information, go to:

**[info@shortstoryawards.com](mailto:info@shortstoryawards.com)**

### PRIZE CATEGORIES:

**3 Grand Prize Winners Selected**

from ALL ENTRIES submitted!

**1 Winner and 3 Finalists**

in EACH of 25+ Categories!

### CASH & OTHER PRIZES:

In addition to having your story and author bio published in their Anthology, here are the cash prizes:

**First Place:** \$500

**Second Place:** \$300

**Third Place:** \$200

Also, winners of EACH of the 25+ categories will receive a **\$75** cash prize and get their story and author bio included in the Anthology.

### CONTEST SPONSORED BY:

**NGIBA** (Next Generation Indie Book Awards)

**IBBPG** (Independent Book Publishing Professional Group)

### 25+ Categories:

*African American*

*Animals / Pets*

*BIPOC* (Black, Indigenous, People of Color)

*Fairy Tale / Fantasy*

*Family / Parenting*

*General Fiction*

*General Non-Fiction*

*Health / Wellness*

*Historical*

*Humor*

*Inspirational*

*LGBTQ+*

*Mystery*

*Relationships*

*Romance*

*Scary Stories /*

*Paranormal*

*Social Change /*

*Covid-19 Pandemic*

*Spiritual / Religious*

*Sports*

*Survival / Overcoming*

*Adversity*

*Travel*

*WILD CARD* (if your story doesn't fit any of these categories)

### Additional Categories for Students and Seniors

#### ANY TOPIC:

*College / University Students*

*High School Students* (9th thru 12th)

*Middle School Students* (8th and under)

*Seniors* (60 and over)





## TNC Submission Guidelines & Deadline:

- Length:** 500 words
- Format:**
- a) single space
  - b) no first line indentations
  - b) dbl-space between paragraphs
  - c) formatted lists okay, but may be subject to format editing
- Font:** 12pt. Times New Roman (TNR)
- Photos:** jpeg with caption instructions; emailed photos from Word also okay, but subject to re-sizing
- Deadline:** Entries are accepted until the 20th of the month prior to publication. Space availability and/or urgency of information will be considered on late entries (after the 20th).

Send newsletter items to TNC Editor:  
[sharonjamesgt@gmail.com](mailto:sharonjamesgt@gmail.com)

**Thanks for  
reading  
this month's  
Newsletter!  
Now go write  
something!**



## *Guidelines*, continued...

Please note: Once *The Next Chapter* is published on the guild's website, article therein are for *public consumption*. Intended primarily for ETWG members, the website is available to the public as well as a marketing tool. Once it has been distributed for *public consumption* on a website, original digitized articles therein, fiction or non-fiction, are considered to be *published* material.

This means that an otherwise *unpublished* essay, story, book chapter, or poem, may be disqualified for printing by other printing venues, including Kindle or Amazon. Some anthology collections and/or contests also will not accept *previously published articles*. Articles included

## Officers & Board Members

President: *April Coker*

Vice President: *Ilenya Marrin*

Secretary: *Lisa Holcomb*

Treasurer: *Karen Petty*

Hospitality: *Lorna Penland*

Membership: *Debbie Ryer*

Publicity: *Lynn Pinkerton*

Historian/Webmaster: *Laura Bentz*

Newsletter: *Sharon James*

[etwgmembers.org/join-etwg/](http://etwgmembers.org/join-etwg/)

# The Next Chapter

East Texas Writer's Guild  
P.O. Box 10074  
Tyler, Texas 75711

