

Looking Ahead:

Mon, Feb. 3 - Board Meeting

Mon, Feb. 10 - General Meeting at 6:30.

Dinner at 5:00 at Don Juan's - 1313 E. Erwin St. (Not on the Square due to construction.)

Mon, Feb. 17 - Nutz & Boltz at 6:30 at Braum's - 7101 S. Broadway

The Next Chapter

Progress by Tasha J. Gaines

As writers, it can be tough to constantly come up with surprising plot twists, original wording, or interesting people. Sometimes, we get to a point where we are mentally exhausted and probably forgot to switch the laundry to the dryer!

At this point, our creative well is empty. If you can imagine an old stone well in your brain that's full of plot ideas and undiscovered worlds. When you sit down to write, it's like dropping the bucket down and scooping up magic. But what happens when you drop in the bucket, and nothing comes up but some dust? Eventually, our wells will run dry, and we refill them by finding inspiration in other ways. Here are some proven suggestions:

- Take a walk - Being in nature has been proven to promote creative thinking by helping you relax, and clear your mind.
- Read a book - Reading can spark beneficial ideas.
- Watch a movie - Visually stimulating cinematography, complex narratives, and thought-provoking themes engage the brain and ignite creativity.
- Journal or doodle - There is a release that is found in the form of journaling that is therapeutic to the mind and soul. Doodling is freedom to create shapes and designs that can improve your memory and help you process emotions.
- Start a new hobby - Has your sister been trying to get you to try watercolors? Maybe you want to build a model airplane with your grandson. Or gardening is something you've always meant to do but never had the time. Hobbies can improve mental and physical health, build resilience, and improve social connections.

Other benefits of filling your creative well include reduced stress, an increase of positive emotions, as well as improvement with work. Let us know if you've seen success with any of these methods or have another way to refill your well.

From our President:

Fall in love with writing again this month! Have you been in a slump? I have. Mine started when my guests arrived for Christmas, then continued when life got in the way with meetings, presentations, appointments, and even some fun visits. But where was the writing? Like a lost love, gone but not completely forgotten.

How do you get that spark for writing back? Motivation follows action, so I've done these steps to get me back on track:

- 1) Set a weekly word count goal
- 2) Took a writing class (or you could read a book on writing)
- 3) Asked other writers what they're working on
- 4) Became accountable, reporting my little achievements (or failures)

ONE gave me something to work toward. TWO helped me grow, taking me even closer to THE END. THREE made me happy to know other writers. No matter what they said, it pushed me to keep going because we're writers—that's what we do! Which helped me with number FOUR. But even when I had to report my failures, it didn't matter, because I had support.

If you need motivation, support, or education, come to ETWG's meetings. You may believe either the speaker or the Nutz and Boltz theme that month will not have anything worthwhile for you, but I suspect you might be wrong. I have come to ETWG and heard actors, songwriters, detectives, poets, and a slew of writers that write outside my genre. I learned something from each one. And I've found something just as valuable—friends.

Come be motivated and supported! It's February—let's all fall in love with writing again.

Lydia Holley

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Fun Writing Practice:

Write a story or poem using these five random words. To make it more challenging, set a 20-minute timer.

- Hiccup
- Congress
- Fever
- Art
- Pursuit

About our February 10th Speaker:

Lisa Holcomb writes fantasy, non-fiction, poetry, and memoir. She fell in love with books on her mother's lap, under the Nebraska stars, as she read from "Lord of the Rings" or "A Wrinkle in Time." Lisa's stories and poems are all about families, both those we're born into and those we've found.

Over the years, she has written for numerous blogs, newsletters, and poetry journals about growing up adopted, while living and parenting with chronic illness, finally combining it all into one blog on her website.

She lives in East Texas with her engineer husband, three children, and two cats. When she's not writing, you can find her doing fiber arts, helping out with the Tyler Legacy PTA and BPA, attending meetings of the East Texas Writers Guild, teaching at the Open Door Writing Group at the Tyler Public Library or the UU Fellowship of Tyler, working with other authors as member of a critique group, or cheering on her kids in the bands at Tyler Legacy High School and Tyler Junior College.

Lisa's first indie published short story can be found in the **Next Chapters Unleashed: A Beachy Anthology**. Her first traditionally published essay can be found in **Boy Moms: Collective Tales of Mothers and Sons** by Finn-Phyllis Press. She also has poetry and essays in **The Order of Us**, the first Moms Who Write Anthology and **The History of Us**, also by Moms Who Write.

Helpful Information:

If you would like to submit an article to our newsletter, please email it to Tasha Gaines at Gainesfarms.tx@gmail.com

Submission guidelines:

- All submitted data must be received by the 25th of the month prior to the month of the next newsletter.
- Length: up to 500 words (please ask if your article is longer.)
- Format: single space, no indents
- Font: 12 point, Times New Roman
- Photos: jpeg with caption instructions

Thank you for your submissions!