

Looking Ahead:

Mon, May 5 - Board Meeting

Mon, May 12 - 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, May 19 - Nutz & Boltz at 6:30 at Braum's - 7101 S. Broadway

The Next Chapter

Summer "Travel" by Tasha Gaines

As we head into the summer months, you may find that your agenda is opening up from the commitment of school attendance and activities. Or you may be at a stage of life when the schedule of academics doesn't affect you at all. Summer is traditionally a time of travel, vacations, and some well-deserved R&R. Have you considered a vacation for your writing? Now, I know, not all of us have the time, funds, or energy to attend an amazing event where we have hours to devote to scribing imaginative words and even more hours to listen to interesting speakers on the craft of writing. But how about a personal retreat?

A personal writing retreat is a powerful way to nurture your craft without the usual distractions of everyday life. It offers a space for focused work, self-reflection, and deep connection to your writing process. A focused, intentional time can be beneficial if you are brainstorming a new project, in the trenches of writing, or pushing to meet a deadline. Some of the rewards of a personal writing retreat are an increase of productivity, enhanced creativity, renewed passion for writing, and a tremendous sense of accomplishment.

Goals of a Personal Writing Retreat:

1. A retreat gives you the time and space to dive into your writing without the usual distractions. The goal is to *immerse* yourself deeply in your craft with uninterrupted time for deeper engagement.
2. Taking time away from the world gives you a chance to reflect on where your writing is going. What themes are emerging? What stories or essays need to be told? This space of introspection helps you clarify your goals, whether you're working toward finishing a manuscript, exploring new projects, or rediscovering what excites you about writing.
3. A retreat is a chance to step back from the grind and reconnect with your creative flow. Through quiet observation, nature walks, reading, or freewriting, you can inspire new ideas, so your creativity feels fresh and abundant again.
4. It's a chance to rediscover your unique writing voice, free from distractions or the need to conform to external expectations. A retreat offers time to simply *write*, without self-doubt or outside influence.

Whether you're able to "get away" for a single day or an entire weekend, the benefits of a writing retreat are far-reaching – offering a gentle space for growth, exploration, and renewed joy in your writing journey. With a little intention, you can create a space and time that feels productive and restful – below I've listed a possible schedule for a one-day retreat or a whole weekend if you've got the time.

One-Day Writing Retreat: A Day Just for You

1. **Set the Stage:** Choose a cozy, uncluttered spot in your home – by a sunny window, in the garden, or at a quiet desk. Light a candle, put on soft instrumental music, or bring a fresh pot of tea nearby. Make it feel a little special.

2. **Create a Gentle Schedule:** Think of the day in *three parts*:

- **Morning:** Ease in with journaling, freewriting, or setting intentions.
- **Midday:** Dive deeper into a project – essay, chapter, or brainstorming new ideas.
- **Afternoon:** Lighten up with playful prompts, a walk for inspiration, or reading something that fuels you.

Allow time for generous breaks and time of reflection - stretching, taking a walk, reading or meditation are all parts of the creative process. Don't forget your favorite snacks and drinks!

3. **Protect Your Space:** Let family or housemates know you're "away" for the day. Silence notifications on your phone and treat the day with the same reverence as if you were at a faraway retreat.

4. **End with Reflection:** Close the day by journaling: What did you notice? What surprised you? What small wins will you carry forward?

For a weekend writing retreat, make a gentle plan based on the one day above by dividing the weekend into blocks of creative time, balanced with true rest.

Whether you step away for a day or a weekend, an at-home writing retreat reminds us that we allowed to pause, create, wander, and wonder - right where we are. I can't wait to start planning mine!

From our President:

Proof ETWG is Good for You! by Lydia Holley

I recently heard about a man who got shingles in his eyes and it was so painful, he quit going outside. He locked himself inside, drew the curtains, and lost touch with many of his friends. After a year of this, he developed signs of dementia. It is uncertain whether or not his inactivity and lack of social activity was directly related to his hermit-type lifestyle. However, it made me stop and think. After all, writing is a solitary activity. We spend many hours at the computer, typewriter, or notepad, many of us lost in an imaginary world. ETWG allows us a way to meet people and develop friendships with others who share the same interest.

According to an article published on Forbes.com, volunteering has some surprising outcomes. One of these is that people who volunteer perceive they have more time. They state, “. . . giving time selflessly actually changed people’s perception of time. They felt they had more time and felt less time pressure.” In today’s busy, busy, busy world, just thinking you have more time is reason enough to volunteer! Other reasons to volunteer include a sense of purpose, engagement with others, and increased sense of satisfaction.

Since I joined ETWG, I have tried to make almost every meeting. I have missed a few, but only a handful. Even the speakers or topics I thought would be of no benefit to me, I have found something useful and have never felt my time was wasted. Just coming to ETWG’s regular speaker meetings and Nutz and Boltz meetings may be enough for you to acquire the benefits listed in the Forbes article. But if you are interested in getting more out of ETWG, consider volunteering to help with our fundraiser or consider taking a chairperson or officer position. According to Forbes, you’ll be happy you did!

Fun Writing Practice:

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

- rung
- gravity
- spin
- bundle
- petty

About our May 19th Speaker:

We are excited to discuss children's books with Patty Wiseman at our general meeting. Since childhood, Patty dreamed of becoming a writer. She knows that pursuing your dream can be challenging. But she also knows that dreams do come true. Since achieving her dreams, Patty's goal has been to empower and motivate others—especially other women—through her books, her speaking, and her relationships.

As a young woman, she found herself as a single mom, working full-time and raising two sons. Life was full of difficulties and left little time to write. But Patty never gave up on her dream. And the struggles of those early years nurtured the success she enjoys now.

Patty understands the unique obstacles women face: challenges to individuality, identity, and equality. Patty reaches deep into her own experience to write clean fiction about the challenges women have faced in the past and continue to face today. Her stories of romance, suspense, and intrigue will keep you turning the pages as your journey alongside characters who discover their strengths as they embrace life's difficulties and realize their dreams.

Patty grew up near Seattle, Washington, but she now makes her home in East Texas with her husband Ron and Labrador Cutter. She has 2 children, 12 grandchildren, and 4 great-grandchildren. Seven years after retiring at 62, she has 8 award-winning books to her credit—with more on the way. She is also an avid bowler and loves the fact that bowling league sometimes becomes an instant book signing event.

Patty has been involved with the [East Texas Writers Association](#) for over a decade. For the last two years, she has served as the group's President.

Patty's inspirational story makes her a sought-after [speaker](#) for groups and workshops.

Important Info about June meeting:

Due to a scheduling conflict with the Genecov room, our general meeting for June will be at a different location - it will be at 416 S. Broadway at Flourish. There is ample parking in the back if the street is full.

Instead of a speaker, we will be playing a trivia game all based on writing so people can have fun and learn. AND at the same time, we are inviting a photographer to come take headshots for those that want or need one. This is purely optional - the member would pay \$40 for 3-5 headshots and the copyright, so you can put it on your book jacket, a website, in a media package, etc.

We've asked the photographer for more details, and we will let you know when we hear back from her.

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, Trebuchet MS
- Photos: jpeg with caption instructions

Thank you for your submissions!