



The Legend

West Florida Literary Federation, Inc.

www.wflf.org

May 2014

MAY 20 THIRD TUESDAY

**Open Mic for Open Books
“When the Floods Came”
6:30 Pot Luck Refreshments
7:00 Readings Begin
Second Floor, Pensacola Cultural Center**

“The Flood: Parts I and II.” Popular Gulf Breeze writer Kerry Whiteley shares her personal experiences in the recent flood as she reads from her blog *The Winding Road*.

Read your own original works, especially those inspired by the recent floods, or come to listen.

And bring some books! Open Books lost a fourth of its inventory due to the recent flooding. You can help by checking your personal library for books to replenish their stock. Bring books from the following categories to Open Mic on May 20, or, if you prefer, bring your checkbook.

- Literature by authors with last names beginning with "C"; "K"; "M", "R", and "V-W"
- Poetry (poets with last names "S" thru "Z")
- Good poetry anthologies
- African American History
- African Studies, literature
- Science Fiction
- Political Science
- Gardening
- Education
- Literature
- Cookbooks
- Buddhism and other religious books
[excluding Islam, Judaism, and Christianity which survived the storm]
- Paperback dictionaries for the Prison Book Project

Special thanks to Susan Lewis for coordinating this project.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Healing With Poetry

The reading at Books-A-Million by WFLF's winning student poets so touched my heart that I bought a poetry book for my grandchildren. That's when I realized that the single best community service program WFLF offers is our Escambia County Student Poetry Contest.

We give voice to young writers. This year's theme "One More Day" evoked whimsical poems like "Another Day in Costa Rica" and poetic pleas for one more day of vacation or one more homework day. Those experiences are formative for students. But the topic also presented an important opportunity to express emotions not always spoken. The subject matter surprised even some of the parents of the poets. One ninth grader wrote about the death of his brother, a soldier in Afghanistan. When that poet read, my heart skipped a beat. There were others, too, that touched me – coping with the death of a sister, a mother, an aunt. And, yes, the loss of a dear childhood pet. I wiped away more than one tear at Books A Million.

This contest provides all students who enter -- or even pick up a pen to consider entering -- another avenue to deal with life. Perhaps we even provided a creative tool to help our kids deal with the recent flooding. There was little loss of life, but coping with the loss of "things" can be tough for young people.

From now on for National Poetry Month in April, I'm buying poetry for my grandkids. I began with Joan Bransfield Graham's delightful *The Poem That Will Not End: Fun With Poetic Forms and Voices* in the pop-up version for Kindle. In the fall, I'm buying copies of the Escambia County Student Poetry Contest Student poetry book edited by Susan Lewis and published by WFLF. I want poetry to become a part of their lives, and their school districts may not be fortunate enough to have a group like West Florida Literary Federation encouraging young poets.

Diane Skelton

WFLF will give away a \$25 Apple Market gift card at open mic in May. It's your chance to win a grocery shopping spree and support the student poetry contest. Donations are \$2 per ticket or 3 tickets for \$5. Drawing will be held at open mic. Special thanks to Apple Market for the donation of the gift cards and to Bevin Murphy for handling the contributions of area businesses to support the poetry contest.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Joshua Jones
Pamela Pfister
Stephanie D.H. Robinson

Writers Weekly Workshops Room 210 at the Cultural Center

MONDAY PURE POETRY LOUNGE 6 – 8 p.m. Suite 212 Pensacola Cultural Center. A poetry class focusing on both critique and assignments designed to break class participants out of "comfort zones" led by Susan Lewis and Katherine Nelson-Borne. New experiences, old lessons with a different twist and in the end, hopefully the ability to see poetry from a new perspective. All you have to do is show up with a great attitude and a willingness to work together.

TUESDAY WRITING FOR PUBLICATION 10 ~ 12. For seasoned writers and members of WFLF who are working on book-length manuscripts seeking publication. Manuscripts and written critiques are emailed within members of the group and then members discuss their comments each Thursday from 10 ~ 12 in the WFLF office. The group is limited to seven writers ~ Ron Tew tuesday@bellsouth.net (**temporarily rescheduled from** Thursdays 3 – 5)

TUESDAY WRITERS' GUILD 4 - 6. Each writer brings work, primarily prose, to read aloud and takes others' work home to critique. ~ Richard Hurt rchurt2@att.net

WEDNESDAY PORTFOLIO SOCIETY ~ This goal-oriented workshop, facilitated by Jeannie Zokan and assisted by Diane Skelton, runs from 9:30 -11:30 on Wednesday mornings. Each participant is working on one or more yearlong projects. Sessions involve timed discussions for each participant. WFLF membership is required; the group is limited to seven members. Work may include any genre. If

you are interested in the Portfolio Society, contact Jeannie Zokan by email 4zokans@att.net.

WEDNESDAY SUMMER WORKSHOP 4 – 6 May 21 – August 6. This twelve-week workshop will be offered as an extension of the Tuesday Writers' Guild which often filled beyond capacity. Participants should bring work and about a

NEWS:

The WFLF Board meets monthly at 6:15 on the first Tuesday of the month in the WFLF office.

KEY CALL

If you have a key to the WFLF office and no longer facilitate a workshop, are designated to open for a workshop, are on the Board, please return your keys. We have a shortage. You may return your extra keys to any Board member. Thank you.

WFLF's 500 Voices Project Grant goes to Governor for Approval

Florida Cultural Alliance has included a request from WFLF for \$14,020 for 500 Voices, a student poetry book, in the 2014 legislative budget. It is requested as a specific project in the program Culture Builds Florida. Though Governor Scott has not yet signed the budget, the outlook is good according to reports on a recent conference call with state cultural organizations. If approved, the 500 Voices student poetry project will be chaired by Katheryn Holmes. Other Escambia County groups on the proposed budget include Artel, Ballet Pensacola, Jazz Society of Pensacola, Pensacola Children's Chorus, Pensacola Little Theatre, Pensacola Museum of Art, Pensacola Opera, the Choral Society of Pensacola, and Greater Pensacola Symphony Orchestra. The total request for Escambia County is \$950,781.

President Diane Skelton represented WFLF on a conference call with the Florida Cultural Alliance, who submitted the budget request, on Monday, May 12. Leaders from arts and cultural groups from across Florida called in to hear

half dozen copies to read aloud to the group. We will send the work home for critique then discuss it the following week.

Andrea Walker ~ andrea48@aol.com

THURSDAY WILD WRITING POETRY WORKSHOP

9:30 ~ 11:30 a.m. Come write, play, and explore the world of poetry in this writing workshop ~ Julie DeMarko

Skip Martin, staff Director of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development (TED), speak about the legislative funding process. Martin presented the legislative timeline and pointed out that the 2014 budget submitted to the governor for his signature has the best level of arts funding since 2006. Martin also encouraged cultural groups to request recurring funds for ongoing projects; he recognized Senate leaders Don Gaetz and Joe Negrón as strong advocates of the arts.

Winning Students Read Poetry

This year's **Escambia County Student Poetry Contest** had more than 325 entries, according to contest director Susan Lewis. Five WFLF members judged the entries on Wednesday, April 9 with winners announced shortly thereafter. The twenty-four winners read their poems about "One More Day" to the public at Books A Million, 6235 North Davis, Pensacola, Saturday, April 26 at 2 p.m. First, second and third place winners received cash prizes. Honorable mention winners received gift cards. Winning poems will be published by West Florida Literary Federation, and student poets are later honored at the book's launch. Winners receive a complimentary copy of the book which includes their published poems.

FLOOD-THEMED CREATIVE WRITING

Deluge

Pensacola storm
So unrelenting in nature
Dogs and homeless cried.

John Baradell

A Night in White

Electric strikes in the sky illuminate my room,
the night roars in rage,
trees bend in ravaging nature.
I cower under covers.

Some awaken in mud,
others wait stranded in the streets.
The sky heaves blades,
sink holes swallow cars and displace houses.

Those without insurance
stand in silent sentences
with bleached eyes.
Homeless in one night.

My heart shrinks,
the destruction floods my soul.

Victoria E. Franks

The Storm

The rains came swirling through the night
Before the break of dawn.

Roads were washed from their beds
In minutes they were gone.

Cars were lifted in their place
Some were swept away.

Homes were flooded everywhere
In just a single day.

Through all the pain and suffering
Survivors have endured
They found a silver lining
As friendships were insured.

Richard Craig Hurt

Raging Planet

Raging planet,
the atmosphere in which you

rotate, upon which you rely to
bring forth all life,
has made you sick.
Fed up with acid rain
that withers your trees;
mercury that fouls your rivers,
killing your fish;
billion-year-old fossil fuel,
pumped from your bowels,
fracked from your foundation
with toxic enemas;
extracted after mountain-top mastectomies;
pesticides, herbicides-- all sort of *cides*--
bleeding into your rivers, lakes, and oceans
that gave life but now spit back
dead dolphins and ulcerated fish.
We wait for government to act
or we call climate change a hoax.
We point fingers, unwilling to admit to our
voracious, devouring appetites.

You warn us before our sins are visited
on future generations,
before unimaginable famine, death and
migrations of the innocent
from the poorer, southern hemisphere
get their hands on the lifeboat
that holds us, the greatest sinners.
But our boat is no longer sea-worthy:

Longer, colder winters
Longer, hotter summers
Crop failure
Food shortages
Blight
Drought
"Wild" fires
and unprecedented storms,
like the one in Pensacola, Florida
on April 28 and 29, 2014,
with blood-chilling lightning and bone-cracking
thunder,
where two feet of rain fell in twenty-four hours,
Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa.

Patricia Edmisten

As seen on TV: Poetry of Life

Breaking news: Water Rescue

She spoke to the camera with the rhythm of a poet describing her rescue from the red water, caved-in washed-out roadway sinkhole.

[CAMERA CLOSE UP]

Her melodious words

A sinkhole, it's no fun
Noticed there was no road
Stepped on the brake
Too late
Front wheels already off the edge
Into the water I went.

Fire vehicles showed up
Wrapped a rope around my waist
Walked from my vehicle to the jeep to the orange pipe to land.

I did not panic.
I put on my emergency brake
in the water!

[CAMERA WIDE SHOT - THREE CARS TOPPLED IN ASPHALT ABYSS]

Her sing song words followed by a lyrical laugh
Bring it on Mother Earth. This mama poet can take it.

Diane Skelton

Don't Mess With Charlaine Waters

Charlaine went blank. Her mind was as vacant as the vaulted ceiling of the Presbyterian church where she sat. It was one thing to hear that her husband was having an affair, but to hear it from her dearest confidant, her lifelong friend, the only person who knew about Charlaine's gift.

"Who?" Charlaine asked Barbara.

"Charlaine, listen to me, sweetie. It's worse than that." The lights flickered with a

rumble of clouds. Barbara looked Charlaine in the eyes. Her wrinkled brow cautioned Charlaine's temper.

"How can it be worse?" Her mascara dripped as if choreographed to the thunder and lightning. One-by-one, two plus two came together, and it was all so obvious. Charlaine said, "I'm a fool. I'm a GODAM--," Christ pitied her from the stained glass above them. She whispered, "--a fool. I'm a damn fool." The sky blazed white for several seconds, and the pews rattled. "Tell me who."

"Oh sweetie," Barbara petted Charlaine's shoulder. "Now, I'm gonna tell you, but you got to promise me you won't go and make this weather crazier like you did with Hurricane Ivan."

Charlaine slurped her tears into a chuckle. "Don't be ridiculous. We were high and drunk at Seville ten-years ago. Superstitious girls. I can't control the weather."

"Well we weren't drunk and high in ninety-five when Mark Bates broke off your engagement a day before Hurricane Erin arrived. Or Opal, just a few months later when he married Christy."

"Just tell me. I can handle it. I promise." She took a deep breath. "Who?"

Barbara blurted out, "David Bishop."

Lightning zapped so close-by that Charlaine thought she had had a stroke. She finally said, "I-I-I'm sorry. I'm confused. Did you just say a man's name? Did you just – a man!?"

"David Bishop," Barbara said. "Honey, Bill is *a gay*?" Charlaine stood up and paced around. Barbara followed her. "Honey, listen, it's not your fault. It's not your fault." She pulled Charlaine to their knees. "Let us pray. Dear Heaven—"

"How long have you known?" Charlaine thought back to the number of times over the last several months that Barbara had insisted they needed to talk but could never seem to find the time.

Barbara peeped open one eye, “Shh, we’re prayin’. Lord, we ask that—”

Charlaine grabbed Barbara’s face. “How long?”

“Six months since I’ve known.”

Charlaine jumped to her feet and grabbed her bag from the pew. The tote, full of sheet music and hymnals, bonked Barbara on the head. “Charlaine wait! Charlaine!” Charlaine kept walking. “I’ll be prayin’ for you! Charlaine! Well, don’t forget I just finished remodeling my house!”

Charlaine stepped into the heaviest rain she had ever seen in Pensacola. She carried herself through the deluge to her vehicle with purpose. The SUV almost rolled over as she peeled rubber out of the parking lot onto Peterson Avenue. She drove straight to the place where she knew Bill would be – David Bishop’s house.

The clues flashed before her with each swipe of the wipers. David was Bill’s best friend. A life-long bachelor. They had worked together years ago. They still played tennis together. Bill’s running path passed David’s house every evening.

Other cars pulled to the side of the road to wait out the waterfall of rain. Charlaine ran stop signs.

She chuckled and thought, “Those long runs. Five years, and he never entered one damn race.” She had unwittingly encouraged their friendship. There was the “fishing trip” to Key West in June; the “boys’ weekend” in New Orleans last Labor Day Weekend; and of course, the weekly “poker games” that so often ended with Bill crashing at David’s house because he was too drunk to drive. She wondered, “Was it so obvious to everyone else? Oh God, what will our Mardi Gras krewe say?”

She screeched into David’s driveway and barged inside. She followed the path of deception. Bill’s running shoes were at the door. His neon green tank top was in the hallway. The Nike shorts were on the floor in front of David’s bedroom door, the fancy boxer briefs she had

bought him for Christmas peeking out of the waistband. Thunder shook the house as if it were in a war zone.

She pushed her way into the bedroom. Bill said, “It’s not what you think!” A surge of electricity set the television on fire. David was relieved. Charlaine went home.

The next morning, she awoke in the fetal position, her pillow still damp from tears. It had rained all night and it seemed there was no end in sight. She turned on the news. Pensacola was devastated. Twenty-six inches of rain in twenty-four hours. David’s house had collapsed. Barbara’s street had washed away.

Charlaine laughed, “Oops.”

Joshua Jones

CREATIVE WRITING (from before the flood)

BLACK WALNUT

Nothing was the same

Now that it was cracked like a walnut.

Words polluted the air

Like an unrelenting fog.

The harshness they expressed

Had nowhere to escape.

Even saying “I’m sorry” could not erase the hurt.

The slate could never be cleared.

What had been tender and fresh

Was tough and stale.

A door had been closed

That would never open again.

Lynn McLargin

SLOW AND CAREFUL

(Ms. Gladys at the Multimillionaires’ Club)

Thank you for that introduction and good evening fellow club members. Please ignore my bandaged finger. It was subjected to a slight accident when I was closing my car door.

When I deliver a talk, people sometimes wonder why I speak so slooowly and with such de-liberate enunciation. I usually smile and pretend my attention is diverted, but now I will tell you why. This lady is desperately afraid of mispronouncing words. You see, I was endowed with magic words to counter spells cast by practitioners of voodoo. But it can work two ways: One slight slip of the tongue, and my listener may be changed into a pig, or worse, develop a passion for catching flies like a frog. It's truly disgusting to see a slimy, sticky organ roll out from the mouth and zap a bug in midflight.

How did I get my magic words? It's a long story and involves a brief trip through Haiti and an incident with a voodoo priestess when I was much younger. I was not looking for magic powers, but encountered dangers unintentionally and had to learn incantations for protection.

After that time I taught school, and a petulant student once acted in a disrespectful manner. I wanted to say, "Your behavior is repugnant, and if you continue you will be sent to detention." However, I was angry and my words spilled out too quickly. I accidentally mispronounced words and they came out as phrases of a magic incantation. Instantly he grew *huge*, long ears like a donkey and started screaming. He ran out of the classroom, and to this day, his exact whereabouts are unknown. It is rumored that he eventually got a job in pest control where he listens to walls for evidence of termites.

So now you know why I speak slowly and carefully. Even whispering or painful, angry muttering might accidentally send emanations to others within hearing that could cause them ill fortune, even change their past. The unintentional spell could also affect their memory so they would never know their luck had been had been better.

I am honored that, though I am not wealthy, you accepted me into the Multimillionaires' Club years ago... You don't

remember that being the name of this club?... You don't have millions?
Uh-oh. Was I overheard when I shut the car door on my finger?

James Lynn Smith

Competitions and Workshops:

Alabama Writer's Conclave 2014 Conference

www.alabamawritersconclave.org

Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet
July 11-13, 2014
University of South Alabama Campus
Fairhope, Alabama

See the Alabama Writers Conclave website for details about the conference and for information on the contest judges.

*Note:

Jeff Santosuosso, WFLF member and Board Director, won the \$75 award in 2013 for his poem, *Carnival*. You
Free Contests for Writers

Ladies' Home Journal

Personal Essay Contest
Prize: \$3000.00 and possible publication

Typical deadline: December 6
www.lhj.com/essaycontest

Chicago Tribune

Nelson Algren Literary Award
Given for a short story
Prize: \$3,500.00 and publication

Typical deadline: February 1
www.chicagotribune.com

Blue Mountain Center

Richard J. Margolis Award
Given for up to 30 pages of work dealing with themes of social justice.
Prize: \$5,000.00 and month long residency

Typical deadline: July 1
www.award.margolis.com

Real Simple

Life Lessons Essay Contest
Given for an essay
Prize: \$3,000, publication

Typical deadline: September 19
www.realsimple.com/lifelessonscontest

can find Jeff's poem in the Alabama Writer's Conclave publication at www.alalit.com.

Bitter Oleander Press
Library of Poetry Book Award
www.bitteroleander.com

4983 Tall Oaks Drive
Fayetteville, NY 13066

Paul B. Roth, Editor

The annual prize is given for a poetry collection.
Deadline: June 16, 2014
*Note:

Tom Holmes of Hattiesburg, Mississippi won the 2013 Library of Poetry Book Award for *The Cave*. He received \$1000 and his book will be published in the fall of 2014

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2014 Renew/Join with the West Florida Literary Federation

Dues:

For your first year, prorated for the month you join plus for the number of months remaining in the year:

Individual \$2.50/month ~ Couple \$4.25/month ~ Student \$1.25/month

Subsequent years, due annually January 1st:

Individual \$30 ~ Couple \$50 ~ Student \$15 ~ Two years ~ individual \$50 ~ couple \$85

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