



# The Legend

West Florida Literary Federation, Inc.

[www.wflf.org](http://www.wflf.org)

May 2015

**MAY 19 THIRD TUESDAY**

**RYN HOLMES** will read four poems from her new book  
*Gulf Streaming* at 7 p.m. Open mic to follow at 7:15.

A dazed and confused California transplant, Ryn has adjusted to life in the Deep South as told by “y’all” creeping into her speech and the adoption of “big hair.” She has 5 books in print along with having been published in the *Emerald Coast Review* and *Four & Twenty* online poetry journal.

RYN HOLMES



*Gulf Streaming*

**SNACKS AND CAMARADERIE at 6:30**  
**Program at 7 followed immediately by open mic.**  
**Please bring a snack to share along with your writing.**

Come to listen or also to read.

Second Floor Board Room, Pensacola Cultural Center, 400 S. Jefferson Street  
Pensacola, FL 32502 **For more information visit [www.wflf.org](http://www.wflf.org)**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

If you missed the Children's Poetry Contest winners reading their poetry at Books-a-Million on Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, you missed a wonderful event. There were about 130 family and friends present to listen to the winners read their poetry. I was so impressed with the poetry, event, and Susan Lewis' professionalism in putting on this vital event for us.

This month on the 28<sup>th</sup>, is the first meeting of our new Youth Creative Writing Group for ages 14 to 16. I will plan on attending. The meeting begins at 5:30 p.m. All are welcome to attend. I hope this will become an increasingly popular monthly event for the Federation and community.

We have a new Treasurer. Dianna Kight was appointed at the Board Meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup>. She has great experience and is a welcome addition. Ryn Holmes is acting as Secretary pro tem until a permanent replacement is found.

The new Children's Writer's Group meeting is the third Thursday of each month from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The first meeting is on the 21<sup>st</sup>. All writers interested in writing children's books are invited to attend.

Our Open Mic for May will feature a short reading by Ryn Holmes from her new book beginning at 7 p.m. followed by Open Mic at about 7:15. We are having large crowds of readers and listeners, having a great time. If we have not seen you for a while, come out and see what you have been missing.

I sincerely hope all of you had a wonderful Mother's Day either in celebration or in remembrance. Remember Mom daily as the loving woman who gave life to you, as your first love elevated above all others, and as your marvelous, sweet Mother. Happy Mother's Day to all.

*Mac McGovern  
WFLF President*

## Writers Weekly Workshops Room 210 at the Cultural Center

### **MONDAY WILD WRITING POETRY WORKSHOP**

2 – 4 p.m. Come write, play, and explore the world of poetry in this writing workshop ~ Ora Wills  
[owills@bellsouth.net](mailto:owills@bellsouth.net)

### **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. 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. The group is limited to seven writers ~ Ron Tew  
[tuesday@bellsouth.net](mailto:tuesday@bellsouth.net)

### **TUESDAY WRITERS' GUILD** 4 – 6.

Each writer brings work, primarily prose, to read aloud and takes others' work home to critique. WFLF membership is required. ~ Richard Hurt  
[rchurt2@att.net](mailto: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 Wednesdays. 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](mailto:4zokans@att.net).

### **THIRD THURSDAY WRITING FOR CHILDREN**

meets from 3:30 - 5. [patmitchell@auntielitter.org](mailto:patmitchell@auntielitter.org)

**Thank you** to every teacher, parent, grandparent and friend who accompanied our talented winners to Books-a-Million to receive their awards and share their work. We had the largest gathering to date. Thanks to Susan Haas and all the other amazing employees, we were able to accommodate a crowd that swelled to over 100. Thank you to our poet laureate Jamey Jones for attending, speaking and staying for photos. Thank you to Mac McGovern for help setting up and breaking down. I am beyond excited for the future of poetry, my art. It is in capable hands. Current poets will soon be overshadowed by sheer brilliance and I cannot wait.

*Susan Lewis*  
*Student Poetry Director*

WFLF member, **Susan Lewis**, has had her first book, *Goodbye, Mama*, make it to #2 on Amazon's Best Sellers List for Family Poetry.

The **500 Voices** book project is urgently seeking an artist to illustrate the book. Acceptance as illustrator to be determined by the project chair, Ryn Holmes, and based upon appropriateness of artistic style to written content. Contact her at [klholmes41@yahoo.com](mailto:klholmes41@yahoo.com) or 850.748.7123.

## CREATIVE WRITING

### Haiku

Sparkles of light dance  
on the surface of the lake  
like daytime fireflies.

Blue kimono sky  
gold satin leaves, branches of  
black calligraphy.

Hawks swoop, wings outstretched  
making lazy, crazy eights  
playing in the air.

### Haiku for Young Poets

Starlings fly in the sky  
forming perfect letters  
leaving words behind.

Perfecting silence  
near earth's warmest grasses  
deer unfurl their antlers.

*Anne Howard*

### FIRST SWIM

I gasp!  
First splash  
(a lash of cold)  
Numbs legs, chest  
And all/of the rest of me,  
Rusty and tetchy-old,  
Joining one more cycle 'round the Wheel.

I float  
Where failed leaves  
Weave russet leis of May  
To link the seasons –  
Leaving reason to the Sun  
Who, hanging hot in space  
Thaws out remains of winter.

I spin  
To spot ahead  
The redwood lair  
Where, at its warmest center  
I survived harsh winter's siege  
By quartered live-oak troops  
Blockading sunshine's entry  
To my pool.

I plunge  
Then break surface  
(gasping for breath)  
To confront the house again  
Whose sun-struck eyes confirm,  
“We've cheated Death  
Another year, old friend”—  
As the Wheel begins its cycle  
once again.

*Jack Beach*

I will write my way into another life.

ANN PATCHETT, *Truth and Beauty*

## THE STARS THAT JEWELLED THE SATIN

The stars that jeweled the satin night are gone:  
Andromeda, by boastful mother bruised,  
Orion's studded belt, and Ursa's son  
Embedded with the beacon sailors used.

All these and thousands more in crystallized glaze  
Eroded now by morning's bright ascent;  
Though still at distances they pulse and blaze,  
The golden sun prevails, their force misspent.

Thus all alone the sun brings warmth and light,  
Reveals the world: the tireless sea, the shade  
Of muscled oak, the cardinal's flash and flight,  
The umber hills, the mountains mankind made.

No less, sun-like, your potent radiance flared,  
Extinguished all, not even the brightest spared.

*Karen McAferty Morris*

*From Brainy and Notable Quotes*

[Writing is agony for me. I work at it eight hours every day, hoping to get six pages, but I am satisfied with three.](#)

[Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings](#)

[Folks don't like to have somebody around knowing more than they do.](#)

[Harper Lee](#)

Real courage is when you know you're licked before you begin, but you begin anyway and see it through no matter what.

Harper Lee

Writing is a job, a talent, but it's also the place to go in your head. It is the imaginary friend you drink your tea with in the afternoon.

ANN PATCHETT, *Truth and Beauty*

WFLF thanks Bingo Paradise  
4469 Mobile Hwy, Pensacola, FL 32506  
(850) 457-0067  
for its continued financial support!

## NEWS FROM THE POET LAUREATE Ferry Pass Middle School Dream Flag Project

This very special event took place on April 7, 2015. While teaching there, I started the project in 2006 and oversaw it for three years. It has continued each year since I left, and this was the ten year anniversary. It's nice to have a legacy there that spreads the love of poetry!

Basically it is an annual event that takes place every April at numerous partner schools around the world (see the dream flag website for more info.). After studying the dream poems of Langston Hughes, students write their own dream poems, then transfer them onto a cloth and paint it to their liking----thus, creating their own poem flag, or dream flag. The flags are then hung around the courtyard, and on the day of the ceremony students read their poems to the school, and the chorus sings Langston Hughes poems, as well as other dream-related songs.

I'm very proud of this project for many reasons. First of all, it promotes poetry for everybody involved, students, teachers, and audience members. Secondly, I see it as an antidote to the bombardment of standardized testing----you can see this in the demeanor of the students when making and or describing their flags----they are proud, energized and inspired (they happily own it), which is what school (and poetry) should do. Lastly, this project just makes everyone involved smile, truly.

*Jamey Jones*

close it behind. One is now inside the orange grove again and in the mysterious heart of another. And after long years of spiritual homelessness, or nostalgia, here is that mystic loveliness of childhood. Here is home.” ~*Cross Creek*, 1942

Our guide was clearly inspired by Rawlings, her life and work. At her command she shared numerous anecdotes that brought Rawlings, the real person, alive: the day she shot her neighbor’s pig after it devoured her prized flower garden, and for which she instructed her butcher to prepare it for a bar-b-que to which she invited all her neighbors - including the owner of the pig; the famed flush toilet— first in the area—and claw foot tub which she filled with roses and served champagne to neighbors to celebrate the arrival of civilization.

The house at Cross Creek is largely as it was when she lived there. Designed for maximum air circulation, the windows are tall and low to the floor; she opened up the living room to an enclosed porch for cool air to flow. The guide noted that the average temperatures in that region of Central Florida range from 112°F to 22°F. The home is decorated with beautiful 1930s-40s décor. \*Her second husband, upon her death, wisely removed all the furniture and objects from the home when the University of Florida took it over. When later the university ceded it to the National Park Service, he arranged the furniture, china, photos, etc. to their original placement for visitors to experience just as Marjorie decorated it.

Marjorie Rawlings wrote most of her books at the Cross Creek home including *The Yearling*, which earned her enough income to live comfortably to the end of her life. Neighbors walking or riding by the house knew not to bother her when she was writing on the porch for fear it would ignite her volatile temper. She drank hard liquor, smoked like a steam engine, and prepared gourmet meals all of which the guide named as the “three vices” that led to her death at age 57.

On display in every room are not only the books she wrote, but the books she was reading: *Gone With the Wind* (she was friends with Margaret Mitchell), Robert Frost poetry, and *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. The latter by Zora Neale Hurston, is important. Hurston and Rawlings became good



**WRITING PROMPT FOR SUMMER LEGENDS: Tell us about your travel adventures.** [Andrea48@aol.com](mailto:Andrea48@aol.com)

**LITERARY TRAVEL with Susan, Diane, Judy, Victoria and Andrea**



On a hot afternoon last month, I arrived in Cross Creek, Florida to visit the Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings home. At the entrance are her prophetic words: “It is necessary to leave the impersonal highway, to step inside the rusty gate and

friends at a time when racial discrimination prevented whites from mixing with blacks. Whenever Hurston visited Marjorie she stayed in the maid's quarters behind the main house.

Because Rawling's editor, Max Eastman, represented Ernest Hemingway, Thomas Wolfe, and F. Scott Fitzgerald, he encouraged their association. All spent time at the Rawlins home. Her large cache of whiskey and gourmet cooking attracted Fitzgerald to make frequent visits.

Photos of the house and grounds can be found at: [walkearth.org](http://walkearth.org)

*Susan Feathers*



### **Day Trip to Alabama's Literary Capital**

Standing in front of the old courthouse and surveying downtown Monroeville, Alabama, it's hard to comprehend how this sleepy county seat can claim the title of Literary Capital of Alabama. That is until you witness the hamlet abuzz with scholars, bibliophiles and tourists flooding in to learn more about its most famous residents, authors Nelle Harper Lee and Truman Capote.

Each Spring Monroeville residents perform Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* on the town square lawn and in the courtroom. This year, all fourteen performances sold out the first day. But, the play's not the only thing helping Monroeville acquire its title as Literary Capital of Alabama.

Judy Fawley, Victoria and Kyle Franks, and I recently visited Monroeville to attend a reader's theatre presentation of Truman Capote's *House of Flowers* performed by students and faculty of Alabama Southern Community College and readers from the Alabama Writers' Symposium. Explanatory remarks in a booming melodic voice by Don Noble, PhD, of Tuscaloosa, impressed us as

we sat in the front row of the 1903 Monroe County Courtroom. The reading was the culmination of a two-day workshop sponsored by AWS. Dozens of well-known Alabama writers and scholars presented sessions at the 18<sup>th</sup> annual symposium.

Visitors can also tour the courthouse museum, which features elaborate displays of the lives of Harper Lee and Truman Capote in Monroeville. Movie lovers as well as fans of Lee's book enjoy sitting in the jury seats in the courtroom, which was recreated in detail for the film.

There's also a walking tour of sites including a marker to fictitious character Atticus Finch and places Lee and Capote would have known as children in the 1930s. A driving tour follows a path to more than 20 large, painted birdhouses – an artsy spinoff of “mockingbird.”

While there we participated in Where's Truman? a lively Chamber of Commerce photo scavenger hunt. Searching for portraits of Capote, we visited eight businesses, including Ol' Curiosities Book Shoppe. There hundreds of old and new books fill the rooms of the 1930s West Claiborne residence on the edge of downtown. We talked with the owner, whose shop is so personal that she wallpapered the wall behind the cash register with pages cut from old books. She's invited Victoria for a poetry reading of her book, *The Aroma of Coffee*.

A part of the Southern Literary Trail which celebrates writers in Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi, Monroeville works hard to keep its title of Literary Capital of Alabama. It's well worth the 92-mile drive from Pensacola, to spend a leisurely day in Monroeville, especially at Mockingbird time.

*Diane Skelton*





### **Ann Patchett and Word of South**

Word of South Festival, a sort of marriage of literature and music, took place in Tallahassee April 11 and 12 at Cascades Park. Mother Nature did not cooperate, decanting abundant April showers and thunderstorms throughout the day, but the beauty of Cascades Park was not diminished. Events were postponed or moved indoors, and many of us were glad we were not frightened away by the weather. The highlight for me was attending a presentation by Ann Patchett, author of nine books, her latest *This Is the Story of a Happy Marriage*. In 2012 I became an Ann Patchett fan when I read her novel *State of Wonder* which I promptly reviewed for my book club.

An hour past the scheduled time, damp from dodging showers and puddles, we were corralled into a slightly stuffy room eagerly awaiting the arrival of the speaker. As a prelude, the 2015 Florida Voices Writing Contest winners read their poetry and prose: Ashley Turner “Debris,” Abigail Smith “The Well,” and Tyler Vittorio “Moccasin Island.” Melanie Rosler, who drove from Tampa and arrived late, read her poem “A Kiss Is Just a Kiss” after the presentation. The fresh talent of these college students reminded the audience the written word will continue long after we are gone and we must encourage and nurture our youth.

Ann Patchett describes herself as an indoor person leading a nice quiet life. Her topic was altruism. The question about altruism she raises is why do we do good deeds? What is a truly good deed? Is it really an act of kindness, or is it to make ourselves feel good? Three years ago Nashville’s two big book stores closed. The community, with the support of the public library, approached the dilemma in a truly community way. The people wanted another independent bookstore and searched for solutions. Pondering the situation, Patchett was asking herself whose responsibility is it when she remembered a seminal moment. Here she digresses briefly recounting a story of Harvard University which has the worst cockroach problem in the world. One night she and her two roommates had called the security guard, an elderly gentleman, who upon his arrival told them, “Ladies, you are on your own.” Back to the question: whose responsibility is it? If you can identify the problem, it is your responsibility.

With this realization in mind, Patchett, along with two other women, opened Parnassus Books: An Independent Bookstore for Independent People. She considers it the most

altruistic thing she’s ever done. She said, “Imagine you love God so much you would be willing to stand in O’Hare Airport and tell others.” As she spoke, her love for what she’s doing was reflected in every word. With her great sense of humor and quiet demeanor, she discussed books, recommended books and commented on matching readers up with the book that’s right for them. She engaged her audience by asking us about what we’ve read and commenting on titles. There was little she was not familiar with. “I want you to buy the book I love so much,” she said, and we in the audience knew she means it.

Patchett said little about her own writing except that she is incapable of reading her own work. This fact was slightly disappointing as many attending were also writers and would have enjoyed some of her comments on her own writing life. She did tell us, however, how her latest *This Is the Story of a Happy Marriage* evolved from a collection of magazine articles she wrote early in her career. Her good friend (another great story) Niki Castle gathered the articles together and decided they should be a book. With a great deal of encouragement from Castle, Patchett expanded and revised the works into a book.

Among other awards, Patchett won the Orange Prize for Fiction and the PEN/Faulkner for her novel *Bel Canto*. Her novel *State of Wonder* is set in the Amazon. Presently, I’m reading *This Is the Story of a Happy Marriage* which I will review upon completion. Now that I’ve met her, her other books are on my reading list as well as the long list of books she recommended at her presentation. For more Patchett recommendations, visit [www.parnassusbooks.net/ann-recommends](http://www.parnassusbooks.net/ann-recommends).

*Andrea Walker*

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## West Florida Literary Federation ~ Join or Renew ~ 2015

Memberships are good for one calendar year beginning January 1 and ending December 31. Individual membership is \$30/year. New members joining after July 15, pay \$15 or may pay \$45 which also pays for the following year. Subsequent years are due annually by January 1.  
**One Year ~ Individual \$30 ~ Couple \$50 ~ Student \$15 ~ Two years ~ Individual \$50 ~ Couple \$85**

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