



The Legend

West Florida Literary Federation, Inc.

www.wflf.org

June 2017

Open Mic Third Tuesday June 20, 2017



Barnacle photo by Andrea Walker

Jeannie Zokan rescheduled her reading and discussion for July 18.

Refreshments at 6:30 ~ Open mic at 7:00

Come and be part of the program. Bring a friend – bring a snack to share – bring a five-minute reading of prose or poetry.

Free - come to listen and/or to read.

Pensacola Cultural Center 400 S. Jefferson Street, room 201

Thanks again to student poetry judges: **Mike Beck, Marc and Maryann Livanos, Ryn Holmes, Anne James, Gina Cooke, Mary Gutierrez, and Joe Wesolowski**

Parking around the Cultural Center is quite a challenge. The lot many of us used is no longer available.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I hope you are all having a good summer and enjoying our nice early June weather. Thanks to board member John Baradell for writing a grant (and getting it approved) that will allow us to participate once again in the Foo Foo Festival which will be held this coming November.

The theme this year for our program will be Florida humorists and we are getting some of the best! We will be bringing in noted Florida humorist and Pensacola native Craig Pittman, who worked for the Pensacola News Journal and now resides in Tampa and is a reporter and columnist for the *Tampa Bay Times*, formerly known as the *St. Petersburg Times*, the state's largest newspaper. He has written a best-selling book, *Oh Florida! How America's Weirdest State Influences the Rest of The Country*. Look, we all know Florida is a very weird state full of weird crazy people, after all we live in Florida and many of us are weird. How many of us have said "only in Florida" in response to some strange news story? Well, this hilarious book documents all that weirdness. He affectionately refers to Florida as the "drain pipe of America." Read the book, I really enjoyed it and you won't stop laughing, yet his love of Florida comes through.

Erik Decker and other humorists will also be joining us. Erik is a blogger, author and newspaper humorist who co-authored *Branding Yourself: How to Use Social Media to Invent or Reinvent Yourself*. Erik writes a newspaper column called *The Laughing Stalk* and is an award-winning playwright.

Pittman and Decker's appearance is tentatively scheduled for Nov 9, 2017. There will be a workshop from 2-5 p.m. and a general presentation at 7 p.m. Cost will be \$10 per person for the workshop, no charge for the evening presentation. Stay tuned, even more is on the way!

Great news! The board renewed the term of poet laureate Jamey Jones for another three years. Keep up the good work, Jamey, as you carry on the proud tradition set by so many good local poets in the past.

Open mic is going strong; join us the 3rd Tuesday of the month in the board room at the Cultural Center, food wine and camaraderie at 6:30, program begins at 7. On June 20, Andrea Walker our Vice President and editor/publisher of our monthly newsletter *The Legend*, will read from her new book, *Bending the Arrow*. A couple of years ago I was in a writer's group with Andrea and we read weekly installments of her work in progress. I must say I looked forward every

week to reading a new chapter. The book shows the trials and tribulations of navigating the harsh and uncaring bureaucracy of the prison system, a system in desperate need of reform. The protagonist's experiences and letters are moving and have given me a new understanding of what families go through and even some empathy for those who are incarcerated. I don't think I have ever read anything that so powerfully shows the need to fix this broken system. Yet the book accomplishes this without being preachy or judgmental, just a moving story of one mom's experience.

Ed Stanford

Writers Weekly Workshops

MONDAY PURE POETRY LOUNGE is suspended for two months over the summer ~
susanlewisbooks@yahoo.com

TUESDAY WRITING FOR PUBLICATION 10 a.m. ~ noon. For seasoned writers and members of WFLF who are working on book-length manuscripts and seeking publication. Manuscripts and written critiques are emailed within members of the group and members discuss their comments. The group is limited to seven writers ~ Ron Tew,
tewsdays@bellsouth.net

WEDNESDAY PORTFOLIO & EXCHANGE SOCIETY
The Portfolio & Exchange Society Critique Group meets every Wednesday, 9:30-11:30, at the library of the First Presbyterian Church on Gregory Street in Pensacola. The group is limited to seven members, but currently has an opening since a member left for a writing retreat and book promotion. We're a lively group looking for writers who have a project for a year -- no matter the genre, memoir, poetry, fiction, nonfiction -- 12 months to complete a project. Since the conception of the group in January 2014, four members have published books and a fifth writer's manuscript is being finalized for press. The name has evolved from Portfolio Society (after Christina Rossetti's group) to Portfolio & Exchange Society since out-of-town members call in for critiques, plus the participants are notorious for exchanging writing

tips, novels, paintings, and garage sale items. For more information contact dianskelton@att.net

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

CREATIVE WRITING

Flor

The sun shines
warmly
on my
soft as silk
petals
as the breeze
dances
through my leaves.

The melodic
rhythms
of
buzzing,
humming,
illuminate
my surroundings

I am a provider.

I have a life,
short, but
valuable and
worthy.
I am here for a reason,
just as you are.
I provide much -
beauty,
food,
fragrance,
shelter.

I want to soak up the rain.
A chance to grow
and reach for the sky.
I want to live,

but you see my life
as less than yours.

I am alive.

You see me,
but you don't
actually SEE me.
I'm invisible to the
seeing blind.
You can walk around,
but you don't.
You won't.
So self important.

I am trampled.

You walk on
living your life,
unaware,
while I lay here crushed, dying.

The birds and bees begin to weep.

Mary Gutierrez

Pontifex

Pluck words out of the air like fireflies
In a violet woods catching them as they flash
In the instants between the dark,
Willing to lunge wherever they burst

Put them in a glass jar
Captured, let them throb
Then pattern them
By your clairvoyant mind, Poet,
By your lithe hand

Build a bridge of lights.

Karen McAferty Morris

"Pontifex" won 2nd place in the Alabama State Poetry Society's 2017 spring contest in the category of Extended Metaphor. Pontifex is the Latin word for "bridge builder."

A postscript

Growing old is like a postscript,
Saying "Amen" to a life well-lived.
No more dreams,

No more wars,
Only what is.
There was always blood,
 Always an ending,

Be kind now,
Be willing.
Hear the bird sing
 The dog bark,
Let the tiger roar
 And the infant laugh.
Be content.

Write your story,
Close the book,
Love more than before.
Leave a memory for your grandchild,
 And a legacy for the earth.
Peace will come,
 Later or sooner.

Charlotte Crane

Prodigal Child

Sleep now, cherished knight in full armour dressed,
But seek not thy bed in the pauper's grave,
Remember still thy kingdom while thee rest,
Discard thy spoils won from fallen knave.
Fear not thy haunted visions while thee sleep,
thy sword and shield prevails in darkest night,
thou fight the vilest demons where they creep,
thy bedside candle gives thee hop and light.
Comes the morning see thy victory made,
Set the captives free from pain and sorrow,
Remove the drops of blood let on thy blade,
Bring thy children justice on the morrow.
 Judge not with eyes alone or heart defiled,
 Recall thine own dark past, prodigal child.

DEAR STEPHANIE

I asked God for a pen pal, now I know he heard my plight.
He sent a friend from Texas, with you he sure did right!
In all your worldly travels, in all you say and do,
Thanks for sending letters that say, "I care for you."

Whenever I get mail from you it brightens up my day,
and proves I should not give up, it pays off when we pray!
I thank the Lord for sending you, an Angel from the west,
God is always good to me and yes, he sent the best!

Now this poem isn't good enough, it's only just a start,
to you my friend, I'd like to send, the contents of my heart.
For more than smirks, I hope this works each day to make you
smile,
don't have a stroke, it's not a joke, I'll send poems by the pile!

I pray that you're not frightened, scared off or think I jest,
but one last thing I've got to say to get it off my chest.
I love you Steph, keep writing, you're better than the rest.

Steven Umholtz

Life is a Tire Swing

This morning I accidentally bumped the Sirius radio button on the steering wheel and Jimmy Buffett flooded the car. It was a nice break from FOX News, and the particular song "It's Five O'clock Somewhere" harkened to me.

The words answered a question I've been pondering from poet Mary Oliver – "Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one *wild and precious life*?" Perhaps I should guide my future wild and precious life with another question -- one posed by country star Alan Jackson in a duet with Buffett: "What Would Jimmy Buffett Do?"

Nine months older, Jimmy Buffett turned 70 last year. I should know him. We went to the same college. We are from the same time and the same place – Pascagoula, Mississippi. It's a marsh land bordered by a dingy beach with pine trees and pitcher plants. Or to quote a line from Buffett, "The wind blows across the old bayou. Life was just a tire swing."

I'd like to swing from a life of serious sunsets and my realistic view of life and find the

lighter shade of carefree and Caribbean. When Buffett left Mississippi, he took the bayou with him, added the Caribbean and created a sound to showcase his roots. He created an industry, right down to bumper stickers. I can even buy a WWJBD bumper sticker to remind me of my changing lifestyle. He was freer, sooner.

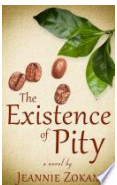
I differ from Jimmy in that I prefer coffee over beer. I don't want to go as far as being a Parrot Head and wearing a lighted coconut-shell bra but I would like to toss a beach ball around, bounce ideas off my friends, and embody some Jimmy Buffett lines in everyday life. I'd like to "find a little bit of fruitcake left in me." Maybe I could follow a Jimmy Buffett philosophy without riding too high on my tire swing.

Two backyard images keep flooding my memory when I think of being carefree. The afternoon my sons, ages 7, 9 and 11, set up a slip and slide in the backyard, I gave it a try. I woke up dizzy, wet, and on the couch. I still don't remember how I got there. The first time the boys tried out the tire I brought home for a tire swing, they complained of scratches on their legs. I never knew steel-belted radials don't make good tire swings. Those little metal barbs hurt.

So, as I glide into seventy, I'm on the lookout for wet sidewalks and dangers in dark places. There I go – swinging back to my old ways -- more realistic, less carefree.

Maybe Jimmy Buffett could write a new book, a twenty-year sequel to *A Pirate Looks at Fifty*. I need some tips on being a pirate at seventy.

Diane Skelton



Review of *The Existence of Pity* by Jeannie Zokan

ISBN 9781940215808

252 pages

Red Adept Publishing, LLC

The Existence of Pity by Jeannie Zokan opens near the end. Sixteen-year-old Josie Wales has just learned her older brother Aaron has been shot. Looking back, she realizes the clues leading to events of a summer gone wrong had been there all along.

Josie lives with her family on a Baptist missionary campus and leads an idyllic life: sheltered, comfortable, nurturing, secure. Her parents are dedicated and respected missionary leaders, and Josie enjoys wholesome friendships and activities. When the teenagers play Capture the Flag, the reader plays right along with them feeling the excitement of the game. "There was a fine line between reality and fantasy in the game, and that was why I loved to play." It's not her imagination, however, when she discovers her father driving in the wrong direction when he leaves the house for a revival and Aaron comes in smelling of cigarettes and alcohol after sneaking out late at night. In stark contrast is the city of Cali, laden with crime and poverty.

As Josie's mother becomes more distant and shows signs of stress, and Josie suffers recurrent nightmares, she turns to Blanca, the non-assuming family housekeeper and cook. She begins to question her strict religious upbringing and explore elsewhere, specifically the La Ermita Catholic Cathedral.

In one fast-moving summer, Josie discovers things, including her own family members, are not always as they seem. Situations evolve quickly as one revelation unfolds after another, shattering her world of security, and by the end of the novel, Josie makes a decision she never expected to face. The reader will sense the beauty and intrigue of Columbia through Zokan's prose and experience her young protagonist's emotions from beginning to surprising end.

Andrea Walker

My novel is out too, on Amazon or see me.

Bending the Arrow, Andrea Jones Walker

ISBN978-15424594 19

I'll read a bit at open mic this month.

SAVE THE DATES

July 18 - Jeannie Zokan reading from *The Existence of Pity* followed by open mic

Sometime in July – First City Shakespeare – *The Merchant of Venice* – details TBA

October 17 - Richard Hurt reading from *Forbidden Star*

November 21 - Patricia Edmisten reading from *A Longing for Wisdom*

West Florida Literary Federation ~ Join or Renew ~ 2017

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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

New _____ Renewal _____ Date _____

I would like to sponsor
(NAME)

To sponsor a new member in WFLF. Add \$20 to total payment & include member information on a separate form.

Circle the items you **do not** want published in the WFLF "members only" directory:

1) address 2) phone or 3) email. If no item is circled, we will include all your information in the next published directory.

Use PayPal at <http://wflf.org> and email this form to westfloridaliteraryfederation@gmail.com or mail your check and this form to

West Florida Literary Federation, 400 South Jefferson Street, Suite 212, Pensacola, FL 32502



West Florida Literary Federation, Inc.
Pensacola Cultural Center
400 South Jefferson Street Suite 212
Pensacola, FL 32502