



# *The Legend*

**West Florida Literary Federation, Inc.**

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

**August 2018**

## **THIRD TUESDAY OPEN MIC August 21**

- Bring your creative writing – both prose and poetry –
  - Bring a friend
  - Bring a snack to share

Refreshments and camaraderie at 6:30

Program at 7 followed by open mic at 7:30 (remember our 5-minute time length)

Pensacola Cultural Center room 201  
400 South Jefferson Street  
Pensacola, FL 32502

FREE – Open to public



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the dog days of summer, hot and humid with lots of rain. I hope all your writing endeavors are working out and you are motivated and inspired to write, whether it is the great American novel, poetry, short stories or memoirs. Remember, the perfect is the enemy of the good, so get it started.

A good time was had by all at July's Open Mic, with Charlotte Crane starting us off by reading from her new book *The Tales of Aunt Maddy*. After a lengthy absence, Jack (Beach) Brookings returned, and we helped him celebrate his 91<sup>st</sup> birthday. He read a couple of old favorites and sang a good rendition of "When You and I were Young, Maggie." We had a good turnout that night with many talented readers, which included new faces. We even had to bring in extra chairs! I can't recall when that has happened. I have the entire Open Mic on video which I plan to make available on our webpage or Facebook page. Come join us for the next Open Mic on Aug 21<sup>st</sup>. Food, wine and comradery at 6:30, readings begin at 7.

The board recently participated in an excellent training session, led by former WFLF president Diane Skelton and assisted by former vice president Andrea Walker. We all got to know each other better and worked on goals, budgeting and planning. Diane is an excellent and talented resource for us.

Dr. Mary Hood, former WFLF poet laureate during the 1990s, has donated an original water color by Barbara Weeks. (See page 1.) I will have it on display at our next open Mic.

WFLF's theme for the Foo Foo Festival is *You: The Writer*. We will offer workshops in memoir writing, writing for social media and song writing followed by a general program at Artel's Gallery. Katherine Clark will lead the memoir writing workshop, Erik Deckers will lead the writing for social media workshop and the duo, Sugar Cane Jane, will teach the song writing workshop. Remember, Nov 8. Save the date.

Well, that's the news from the West Florida Literary Federation, where all the members are talented, intelligent and good looking. Tell me what you think: [estanford@cox.net](mailto:estanford@cox.net) or 8570-449-6771.

*Ed Stanford, President.*

## Writers Weekly Workshops

**MONDAY POETRY** led by Julie DeMarko meets from 6 ~ 8 p.m., Mondays at the Cultural Center. Like the "wild writing" workshop she led for two years, the goal is to practice writing and, in the end, find the path to authentic poetry.

[JulieDemarko@hotmail.com](mailto:JulieDemarko@hotmail.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](mailto: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. 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. Plus, the participants are notorious for exchanging writing tips, novels, paintings, and garage sale items. For more information contact [dianeskelton@att.net](mailto:dianeskelton@att.net)

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

**Debra Stogner**

**Carolyn Tokson**

## MEMBER NEWS

Member Susan Marie Molloy, author and photographer, has two newly-published books on Amazon: "**The Stars Do Not Judge**" is a novelette about a high school reunion. This novelette is different, but it's not the topic that makes it different, but rather, the structures in which the stories are presented that explores human nature and character. There are many

personalities here, and what better way to convey this story than to hear the individual tales from different viewpoints. These vignettes, when they are read in order of appearance, become chapters of the larger novelette. <http://a.co/1t1hHkt>

“**Twenty-Five Cents and Other Holiday Short Stories**” is Susan’s book of 7 short stories with Holiday themes. Each story is set around the mid- to late twentieth century, and tells stories of love, hope, and redemption, and some have a little humor sprinkled in to add sparkle and laughter. <http://a.co/aa1YOH2>

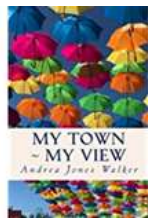
Both books are available on Kindle, and “The Stars Do Not Judge” is available in paperback, too. “Twenty-Five Cents...” will have the paperback version ready sometime in August.

**Congratulations to Jeff Santosuosso** for being accepted in *South Florida Poetry Journal*, a prestigious e-zine, with some names of high acclaim. The editor, Lenny DeLarocca, has put South Florida on the poetic map, so to speak. Read and listen to “Hearts” and “Target” at [Poems Aug-2018](#)

*A note from the editor:* Kudos to Charlotte Crane and Janet Thomas who have been proofreading the *Legend* for me for three years. They make your *Legend* better. Thank you Charlotte and Janet for your continued help!

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8**  
**You the Writer**  
**Workshops, presentations, live music!**  
**Stay tuned for more info.**

My new book is out!



## POETRY

Brazen buttercups  
flow like molten gold through grass.  
Just one makes me grin.

Queen Anne’s lace stands tall  
dominates the flowered fields,  
virtue of blue crown.

Indian paint brush dropped  
where long ago a young brave  
painted the sunset.

*Juliet DeMarko*  
From *Blue Ridge Childhood*

## The Poets’ Poet

To Donald Hall  
1928—2018

He knew the sense of things  
that move and then stand still.  
He witnessed the lambent color  
of leaves fallen from trees,  
kicking the leaves of maples  
and listening to their stories.  
He watched the moon rising  
over a backyard birch tree,  
white over white.

We have not seen  
his great blue mountain  
or heard flowers speak to bees.  
While we choose to linger  
in the innocence of games  
he watched the moon clock  
and knew when to savor  
the sense of last things.  
He opened doors to emptiness  
and rekindled a sacred light  
in our dark rooms.

Donald Hall, well-known poet of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was poet laureate of the United States in 2006.

*Henry Langhorne*

## CREATIVE WRITING

*PeaceCorpsWorldwide* is first and foremost a literary magazine that reviews books published by returned Peace Corps Volunteers who have served in far-flung regions throughout the world, many of them under harsh conditions. Since President Kennedy began the Peace Corps in 1961, some 200,000 men and women have volunteered two years of their lives (and, more recently, one year) in new and challenging settings. They learned new languages and new ways of being in the world. They learned to see through new eyes and their experiences have been used as grist for award-winning novels, non-fiction, and poetry. Ambassador Vicki Huddleston served in Peru shortly after our own Patricia Edmisten who has written the review excerpted below.



### [Our Woman in Havana](#)

#### [A Diplomat's Chronicle of America's Long Struggle With Castro's Cuba](#)

Ambassador Vicki Huddleston (Peru 1964–66)

The Overlook Press, 304pages, \$29.95

*Reviewed by Patricia Taylor Edmisten  
(Peru, 1962–64)*

The title of Ambassador Vicki Huddleston's memoir, *Our Woman in Havana*, is a riff on Graham Greene's novel, *Our Man in Havana*, published in 1958. In the novel, Graham sardonically takes on British intelligence, especially M16 and its use of Cuban informants.

Ambassador Huddleston, by contrast, has written a forthright memoir covering the years 1999-2002 when she worked as Chief of the US Interests

Section in Havana. As backstory to those years, she provides an interesting narrative of the historical events leading to early US attempts to dominate Cuba and shape its future. In a brief epilogue, she brings us up to the year 2017 when hopes for a continuing Cuban Spring were jeopardized with Donald Trump's election.

Huddleston, who, after leaving Cuba, went on to become ambassador to Madagascar, and later, Mali, writes honestly, unafraid to acknowledge her mistakes. If, at times, there's a little too much attention to her Afghan hound, "Havana," or to her referring to the short-wave radios her office distributed to dissidents and ordinary Cubans as "my little radios," she can be forgiven. These little indulgences add a homey quality to an otherwise hard-hitting self-assessment of her three-year stint as, essentially, the US Ambassador to Cuba, a role she admirably filled.

The memoir is full of notable details regarding Fidel Castro's affronts to her dignity, as, for example, when he asks, "Who are you? Someone's spouse?" She provides sweeping evidence of Castro's vise over all aspects of Cuban life; one chapter is entitled, "Fidel is Cuba," for example, a reference to playwright Arthur Miller's quote after he and writer William Styron dined with Castro when invited by Nobel winner, Gabriel García Márquez. . .

. . . Read the book, especially any of you who have visited Cuba or hope to visit. If you're in the Foreign Service and want to serve in Latin America, it's a must. If you're a woman working in a *macho* environment, you will find inspiration. If you're interested in the ways in which well organized, well-financed groups with shared goals can direct a nation's policies (in this case, toppling the Castros, calling the shots, and revamping a nation), you will not be disappointed. It would also be a useful text for students specializing in Latin America.

Read The rest of the review at  
<http://peacecorpsworldwide.org/review-our-woman-in-havana-by-vicki-huddleston-peru/>

*Patricia Edmisten is retired from the University of West Florida where she directed the Office of International Education and Programs. Her article, "[Impressions of Cuba: a Thirty Year Retrospective](#)," was published on this site on May 21, 2016. Her books are available at [www.patriciaedmistenbooks.com](http://www.patriciaedmistenbooks.com).*

### **Echoes in Wells of Silence**

The interstate to Florida played a steady hum of road noise on David's exhausted Civic. His best friend, Mike, floated in the sharp, chilled air, the only comfort about the car. Their friends, Brad and Sam, were in the back seat, glued to smart phones that their parents had earlier that evening given them as graduation gifts. A beach trip would be the perfect beginning to an unforgettable summer. Mike put his head against the vibrating passenger window and wandered through the passing stars.

The other boys' raucous laughter brought Mike back to the present and a smell of Doritos and lingering marijuana. David punched Mike's shoulder and gave him a thumbs-up. Mike nodded and smiled. He turned up the radio even louder. Pulsing bass traveled from the floor through their feet and met a vibration in their seats. The penetrating rumble gave Mike butterflies. He wondered how the boys' ears could tolerate the fun.

Suddenly, the car jolted left with a fast-repeating thud-thud-thud. David gripped ten-and-two, while Mike, Brad, and Sam clicked their seat belts. David managed the car to the shoulder, and when it was safe, everyone gasped for air.

David said, "Shit. That was scary."

"Flat," Brad said. Brad and David began to laugh.

Sam clicked at his phone.

Mike rolled his eyes.

They swam out of the car into a wall of humidity. Crickets fiddled an accompaniment to David's curses as he inspected the tire and

unloaded the trunk. Mike, a few feet away, observed the clanking of tire tool against jack. Unsympathetic traffic occasioned by with hot and polluted swooshes of air. Mike signaled to Sam that he needed to take a leak and descended the slope to the tree line. Wet grass whipped his legs. A frog chorus stirred the air in counterpoint to the insects' songs.

As Mike zipped his pants, the symphony of rural summer collapsed under the boom of colliding metal, chrome, and fiberglass. The exploding atmosphere and a smell of steaming antifreeze and hot rubber hoses spun Mike around. He saw David's last breath pour onto the hood of the pickup truck that pinned him, Brad, and Sam to what was left of the car's back end. On his knees, the uninjured truck driver wailed drunken apologies.

At the hospital, Mike stared at the elevator from a waiting room chair. He lost count of the bleeping lights. From their tidy station, nurses whispered sighs of sympathy. A few of them came over and placed a hand on his shoulder and shook their heads. He saw some of them sob as their sneakers squeaked marks into the clean floor. The sanitized smell made Mike nauseous.

Finally, Mike's parents rushed out of the elevator. The three of them held each other, and relieved and tearful shudders vibrated their chests against Mike's. He stood still, already drained of emotion.

Mike's mother stepped back, looked at him, and embraced him again. His father faced both of them, and with the American Sign Language he had learned when Mike was a baby, he said, "We're so glad you're ok, son."

Mike moaned out, "I'm sorry."

His mother signed, "Shhhh. No. No, honey." She rocked him back and forth.

The cacophony of vibrations, colors, and smells would echo through his body for the rest of his life.

*Joshua Aaron Jones*



## Review of *The Almost Sisters*

Joshilyn Jackson

William Morrow an imprint of Harper Collins  
ISBN 978-0-06-210571-4 - 342 pages

Set in a small fictitious Alabama town, Joshilyn Jackson's *The Almost Sisters* is a great study in comparisons. First, are the stepsisters, raised together from early childhood, with a pair of almost-sisters names, Leia and Rachel. That first parallel becomes one of several that readers may discover throughout the novel.

Jackson opens the book with Leia's humorous realization she is pregnant. Complications abound. Not obstetrical complications, social ones. A successful, single, thirty-something comic book artist, she narrates her dire situation with a laugh-out-loud humor that real life probably would not warrant. Soon we meet the perfect almost sister Rachel, quite the foil to Leia. Rachel has her own crisis unfolding, aka the cheating husband. Then there's thirteen-year-old niece Lavender.

Leia also discovers Birchie, the grandmother she loves dearly, is seriously ill with an unusual form of dementia. Leia must go to her – drive the seven hundred miles from her home in Virginia to Birchfield, Alabama. Pouty niece Lavender goes with her. And so the background is laid for serious, funny, and seriously funny progression of plot. We meet another pair of women in Birchfield who are close enough to be sisters, although unlikely since Birchie is white and Wattie is black.

Jackson fully develops her cast of characters so we love them or hate them within minutes of meeting them. Relationships of loyalty and prejudice emerge. Old family secrets and betrayal sneak in. The story is filled with action, and yes, a skull is discovered in the attic. Amidst all the craziness, Leia decides she will raise the child alone, an easy decision since she has no way to contact the father whose name she does not even know. All the while, she tries to formulate the back story to her wildly popular comic hit *Violence in Violet*.

The embedded theme that gains strength as the plot thickens is the overarching theme of Southern racism. Always lurking in the undercurrent, racism becomes more and more apparent as Birchie's

dementia gets her into trouble with the law and her best friend Wattie tries to help her conceal her secret.

But as the action unloads, Leia comes to terms with what she calls the Second South. Leia begins to understand this issue, so relevant to today's climate, more clearly. She sees the impasse that society has reached and realizes she can impact this social problem significantly. She has a voice through her writing that will reach a huge population.

Within Jackson's well-written entertaining novel lie twists and turns and clever examples of parallelism that will make it hard to close the pages. The author presents a social problem of hefty merit in an accessible way. I highly recommend it because she acknowledges the issue and instead of letting it go, takes positive action to confront it.

*Andrea Walker*

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

## Literary Things to Do

**August 21** – Third Tuesday Open Mic 6:30 social followed by open mic.

**Second Tuesdays** – open mic poetry and music jam, 6 p.m. – 7:30, Crestview Public Library, 1445 Commerce Dr, Crestview, 32539. Contact Esther @ 682-4432.

**First and third Saturdays – In our write minds** - at eleven in the conference room of the fellowship hall, St. Augustine Episcopal Church on Highway 98, Navarre. If you have friends or colleagues who are interested in creative (or non-fiction) writing, bring them. Contact Claire Massey.

**First Wednesday of each month** – Say the Word open mic in Niceville. Check it out on FB.

**October 16** – Third Tuesday Open Mic –  
reading and presentation by Judy Fawley from  
her new book *I Am From: An American  
Narrative*

**November 8, Thursday** – You the Writer  
workshops and presentations – Foo Foo Festival

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