



The Legend

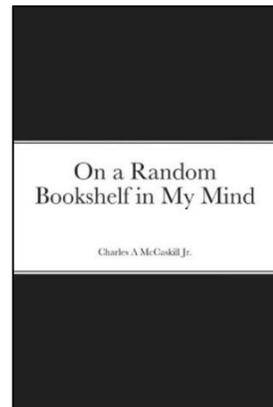
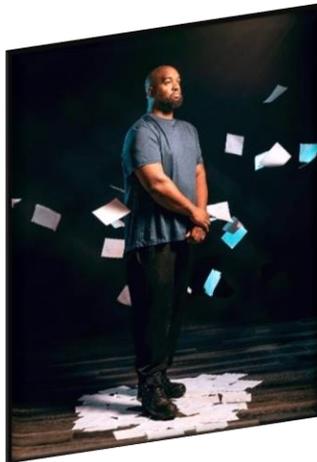
West Florida Literary Federation, Inc.

www.wflf.org

NOVEMBER 2020

Zoom into Open Mic on November 17, Third Tuesday
Join us at 6:30 for readings and discussion by guest speaker
Pushcart Prize nominee Charles McCaskill.

McCaskill is a poet born and raised in Pensacola, FL. He has been a co-host of one of the city's longest running poetry open mic events. He has self-published three books of poetry and has performed his work in various bars, cafes, museums, and art galleries in his hometown. He seeks to connect with people, question the status quo, and live authentically through the power of the written word. Official in person book release will be held on November 20th at 5pm at Open Books The book release event.



Followed immediately by open mic

If you would like to read or just attend Zoom Open Mic night in November, please email us at westfloraliteraryfederation@gmail.com to let us know. If you haven't used Zoom yet, below is a link for a short tutorial.

https://www.youtube.com/embed/hIkCmbvAHQQ?rel=0&autoplay=1&cc_load_policy=1

WFLF 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

TUESDAY WRITING FOR PUBLICATION

10:30 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. ronaldtew@yahoo.com

WEDNESDAY PORTFOLIO & EXCHANGE

SOCIETY ~ The Portfolio & Exchange Society Critique Group meets every Wednesday, 9:30-11:30 a.m., 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.

Please contact the appropriate facilitator mentioned above regarding meetings during this time.

MEMBER NEWS

Panoply Is Open for Submissions

We're open! Now through Nov. 22, 11:59 p.m. US Central time, we are accepting submissions of up to three pieces for Issue 17. We've added some new submission criteria, so please check the Guidelines. Thanks for

thinking of Panoply! We'd love to read your work. www.panoplyzine.com.

Congratulations!

Claire Massey participated in a virtual poetry reading to celebrate National Writing Day, sponsored by Flights, 2020 Magazine. Go to this link to view the videos: sites.google.com/view/sinclairndow/flights-reading.

Claire reads two poems, both excellent. The second "Choose Florida" is especially powerful.

Two of Claire's flash stories are forthcoming soon. "Maverick at Open Mic" will appear Nov.1 in *The Dead Mule Literary Journal*. "A Formula for Entropy" will be published in the winter issue of *Wilderness House Literary Journal*, available in January, 2021.

Update on Youth Writing Committee

WFLF's Youth Writing Committee has been hard at work developing procedures and materials that will promote our 2021 Youth Poetry Contest. Seven dedicated and talented members have joined our team! We are in the process of collaborating with school and library staff in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties and plan to release preliminary information on the contest November 10. Watch for postings on our website and help us spread the word!

Florida State Poets Association

You know it, you love it, you can't wait for another issue to publish! It's the November/December issue *Of Poets and Poetry*, the newsletter of the Florida State Poets Association. This month posts an interview with poet and Chancellor David Kirby and an introduction to the new Poet Laureate of Northwest Florida, Katherine Nelson-Born. And all the yummy holiday recipes from our talented poet-members will bring some cheer to the table. Enjoy!



THE WEST FLORIDA LITERARY FEDERATION AND
THE NEW POET LAUREATE OF NORTHWEST FLORIDA
INVITE YOU TO WRITE A POEM-A-DAY NOVEMBER 2020

Join us as we celebrate our new Poet Laureate and poetry!

HOST: POET LAUREATE OF NORTHWEST FLORIDA, KATHERINE NELSON-BORN

EVENT: POEM-A-DAY CHAPBOOK CONTEST

DATE: NOVEMBER 1-30, 2020

WHERE: WFLF FACEBOOK PAGE - [HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/WEST-FLORIDA-LITERARY-FEDERATION-WFLF-255101747857712](https://www.facebook.com/West-Florida-Literary-Federation-WFLF-255101747857712)

WFLF and the NEW Poet Laureate of Northwest Florida invite YOU to participate in the NOVEMBER 2020 POEM-A-DAY CHAPBOOK CHALLENGE.

Winning chapbook gets 2021 publication, with five free author copies and \$100 prize!

NOVEMBER 1-30, 2020, WFLF posts each morning on its Facebook page and Twitter a daily poetry prompt for your writing pleasure.

ANYONE ANYWHERE can participate in the PAD, no registration required, but original work only please!

STAY TUNED for submission guidelines at the end of November for how to submit your manuscript of 20-30 pages accompanied by a reading fee of \$15 for your chance to win!

Winner announced January 2021 at WFLF's 3rd Tuesday Open Mic celebrating 100 days of the new Poet Laureate of Northwest Florida and YOUR new chapbook!

Chapbook Final Judge is newly appointed Northwest Poet Laureate Katherine Nelson-Born. Contest is limited to first 50 submissions.

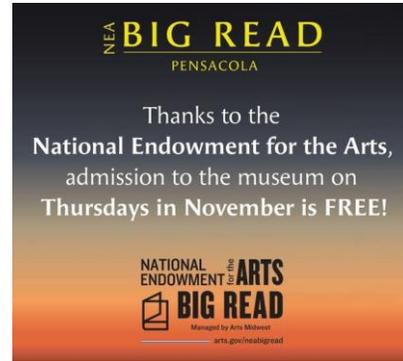


Big Read

Your new Poet Laureate of Northwest Florida is excited about the **2020 Big Read** the Pensacola Museum of Art is conducting, featuring Joy Harjo, the current United States Poet Laureate. Join Katherine Nelson-Born at the virtual Joy Harjo community reading, Nov. 19, 2020, 6 p.m. Central Time.

FYI, the WFLF submitted in October, 2020, its intent to apply for a 2021-2022 Big Read grant, hoping to partner in this future endeavor with some of the community partners featured in the current Big Read.

The 2021-2022 Big Read will continue broadening our understanding of our world, our communities, and ourselves through the joy of sharing a good book, this time exploring what it means to be a citizen, centered on Claudia Rankine's award-winning 2014 book, Citizen.



[Pensacola Museum of Art and West Florida Public Libraries Host 'NEA: Big Read'. Get a free copy of "An American Sunrise" and attend events.](#)

Starting Oct. 28, free copies of "[An American Sunrise](#)", a book of poems by Joy Harjo, will be available at the Pensacola Museum of Art (407 S. Jefferson St.), Pensacola Library (239 N Spring St.)

and all other [West Florida Public Libraries branches](#). Limited number of copies available.

From Oct. 28 to Nov. 28, the Pensacola Museum of Art, along with the West Florida Public Library and several other local organizations, invite the surrounding community to join together and read “An American Sunrise”, a book of poems by Joy Harjo, in participation of the NEA: Big Read event.

The National Endowment for the Arts Big Read event aims to inspire conversation and discovery through a shared experience in which communities read the same book at the same time. Along with reading the book together as a community, the PMA will host a series of virtual book discussions, workshops, and hands-on art activities inspired by Harjo’s poetry and the themes of her work. Joy Harjo will perform a reading and share her work with our community of readers on Thursday, November 19. NEA Big Read: Pensacola events are co-hosted by the West Florida Public Library and the following community partners: University of West Florida, UWF Office of Equity & Diversity, SH4RE and the Santa Rosa Creek Indian Tribe.

Joy Harjo is an internationally renowned performer and writer of the Muscogee Creek Nation and was named United States Poet Laureate in 2019. The author of eight books of poetry and a memoir, *Crazy Brave*, her many honors include the Jackson Poetry Prize, the Ruth Lilly Prize, a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Josephine Miles Poetry Award, the William Carlos Williams Award, and the American Indian Distinguished Achievement in the Arts Award. She lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where she is a Tulsa Artist Fellow.

In Harjo’s book, “An American Sunrise”, she returns to her family’s lands in Alabama, where her ancestors lived until they were forcibly removed by the Indian Removal Act of 1830. The author reflects on the blessings in the abundance of her homeland and confronts the site where her people, and other indigenous families, essentially disappeared. Harjo’s personal life intertwines with tribal histories to create a space for renewed beginnings.

Calendar of Events for NEA Big Read hosted by Pensacola Museum of Art:

For detailed information about the Big Read events or the Pensacola Museum of Art, head to PensacolaMuseum.org/BigRead. Located at 407 S. Jefferson St. in historic downtown Pensacola, the Pensacola Museum of Art is now open Tuesdays,

Thursdays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. Currently, the museum is only offering online \$8.00 timed tickets that must be purchased online.

Virtual Book Discussions

Thursday, November 12
Sunday, November 15
Tuesday, November 17
Friday, November 20
Monday, November 23

Virtual Poetry Workshop

Available online

Study under local Pensacola poet, Quincy Hull, as he guides you through an introduction to writing your own poetry. This series of pre-recorded video sessions will be available on the Pensacola Museum of Art website. Participants are encouraged to submit their own work to be featured on our blog series.

<https://mywfpl.com/news/news-article/2020/10/16/pensacola-museum-of-art-and-west-florida-public-libraries-host-nea->

Open Studio

Pensacola Museum of Art
Saturday, November 14
11:00 - 2:30

Participants of all ages and abilities are invited to step into the PMA Art Studio and create works of art using materials and methods inspired by Native American artists and traditions.

Keynote Address with Joy Harjo

Thursday, November 19
6:00-7:00

Join us for a virtual program with United States Poet Laureate Joy Harjo as she performs a reading from *An American Sunrise* and discusses her work.

Parent’s Night Out: Kids Poetry Workshop

Pensacola Museum of Art
Saturday, November 21
5:30 - 8:00

Give yourself some time off while your little ones explore their creative side! Parents can drop off their children ages 5-12 for an evening in the Pensacola Museum of Art studio. Students will experiment with various media to create 3D and 2D works to take home. \$20 per student.

Thank You, Jamey Jones!

October and November have been exciting months for poetry in Northwest Florida. After the induction of Katherine Nelson Born in October, WFLF wanted to give a final salute to Jamey Jones, who served as Poet Laureate for six years. Board member Jeannie Zokan interviewed Jamey to give us his view of those years and how he feels passing the title on. Here are his thoughts.

There are so many highlights from which to choose. In 2015 I gave a book talk called "My Path in Books" in the library of Pensacola State College, where I teach. Using PowerPoint, I showed pictures of some of the first books that changed my life and discussed how they directed my course as a poet. At least two or three of those books I found while skipping English in that same library as a disinterested student 30 years before. At the time I was failing school but was on fire for poetry, my new love, and the poets I was finding in that library were speaking to me loud and clear and would change my life forever. It sounds crazy, but it really is that dramatic. That library was a sanctuary for me, and here I was, back where it all began, telling my tale. The talk was well received, and I was invited back for part two the following year.

Another highlight was being a featured guest at the 2016 New Year's Eve Pelican Drop celebration in downtown Pensacola. It was at the start of the night before people got too wild and sloppy. I was on the stage with local officials and various clergy members from different religious denominations. First of all, I was amazed that the organizers valued poetry, and the role of Poet Laureate, enough to include me. I've always believed that's how it should be, so I was delighted that it was happening at all, and on my watch at that. I wrote a poem for the occasion called "Beyond the Second Sandbar." I wanted to make a Pensacola poem, one that honored the whole of Pensacola, not just the city, but Escambia County as well. There were roughly 5000 people in attendance, and the energy was high. I was nervous, of course, but I also felt perfectly placed on that stage before them, reciting my Pensacola ode to the city and geography of my ancestors and my fellow Pensacolians. The crowd was so attentive and responding to the poem with cheers throughout and a huge applause at the end. It was profound for me. I felt like I was floating for days afterwards.

There were many highlights like the two above, but what I came to value more and more was just the little positive acknowledgements of friends, family and strangers in my daily world. Overwhelmingly, so many people, whether or not they knew me well, or at all, were proud of me and genuinely happy to "know the poet laureate." I'm quite introverted in many ways, so this took some getting used to. First of all, I'm not one to ride on my laurels, honk my own horn, etc., and I don't put much stock in titles. So this new attention on a regular basis, though I was grateful for it, was really uncomfortable at first. But what I realized over time was that it was not about me. It was about them, the people, like my neighbors, family physician, dentist, mechanic, store clerks, bosses, coworkers, you name it, most of whom are not poets! For them, me being poet laureate was a big deal, made them happy, and therefore made poetry more real and meaningful in their lives. So I learned to embrace it and see it as gift. Last year an acquaintance I'd known for only a few years passed away. We'd had only a few conversations and they were always pleasant. We never discussed poetry though or the fact that I was poet laureate. It never came up. At her funeral, I was talking to her daughter-in-law, who said to me, "She loved telling people that she knew the Poet Laureate of Northwest Florida." I was so touched to know it meant something to her. For me, that's everything! It really doesn't get any better than that.

A question I would like to answer: "What advice do you have for Katherine Nelson Born and to all future Poet Laureates." My answer: Do what interests you the most in this position, have fun, don't slack off on making new poems, and don't take the title too seriously.

About his own ceremony, Jamey says, it's a bummer there can't be a face-to-face public event for Katherine Nelson-Born's induction ceremony, but I realize that can't happen right now. Mine, back in 2014, was absolutely amazing! Grand! Yes, I loved the attention, but I was more impressed by the fact that poetry and the role of poet laureate was getting that attention. Such an event spotlights and elevates the art for the whole community. Katherine deserves the same, and I hope somehow, some way, that can happen in the not-too-distant-future.

Jamey Jones lives in Pensacola, FL and is the author of several chapbooks, including *The Derby Earth* (Sub City 2003), *the notebook troubled the sleepdoor* (brown boke 2008), *Twelve Windows* (brown boke 2009), and the full-length *Blue Rain Morning* (Farfalla, McMillan and Parrish, 2011). His poem, "Radio Shenandoah" was nominated for a Pushcart Prize in 2015 and his work has been published in various journals such as *The Otter*, *Zen Monster*, *Mundane Egg*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, and *Brooklyn Paramount*. Most recently, *Fell Swoop: The All Bohemian Review* released a solo issue of Jones' work titled *In the Key of Clothespin* (2020). In the fall of 2020 the West Florida Literary Federation will publish his two full-length books, *brown boxes* and *I Used to be Dishonest Tonight*. He is the editor of Rachael Pongetti's *Uncovering The Layers: The Pensacola Graffiti Bridge Project* (crazy. silly. okay. 2016), and the faculty editor of *Hurricane Review*, the national literary journal of Pensacola State College, where he teaches English, Literature, and Poetry. He recently completed his second term as Poet Laureate of Northwest Florida, a position he's held since 2014.

CREATIVE WRITING

Sleepover

No memory of dream but the
smell of onion I cut
last night hitting me like
an offensive wall with
reinforcements. Hit me hard
as soon as I turned right,
coming down the stairs.

Nothing is so
overbearing
as onion bits
freshly cut
left in the
trash
overnight.

I say 'overnight' and see the
little bear wearing pajamas
with a nightcap on his head.
Maybe he's pulling the chain
to a light, as if to say, 'goodnight.'
Somewhere over the rainbow
I'll meet that little bear, who
seems quite human. Perhaps

we'll have some tea with honey
in it. I'll be made to feel safe in
his presence, and he'll be happy
to have my company. A sleepover
in another world.

Jamey Jones

Emergency Exit

placing
plywood scraps on thin ice
before Hot Wheel dirt pile tunnels
beside two pine trees
tied together
by a rusty wire
one slightly taller
than the other
by the vacant lot
yellow football goal
edging up and over
falling off
the earth
at the speed
of light
smiling

Jamey Jones

Right Now

bridges implode into rose bushes
into oiled beaches
into crystalline skies
blue, piercing, diamond-edged

bird mornings, monkey grass,
dew drops, electric heat, fog lifting,

sparrow palms

a late heart arriving
on time

the poem writing
itself

Jamey Jones

BOOK REVIEW
By Diane Skelton

Cat Tale: The Wild, Weird Battle to Save the Florida Panther
By Craig Pittman
Hanover Square Press (2020)
336 pages
ISBN-10:133593880X
ISBN-13:978-1335938800

Craig Pittman has garnered well-deserved praise for *Cat Tale*, which cemented his place as an official Florida Literary Legend and earned the book a spot on *Flamingo Magazine*'s list of 24 books every Floridian should have. Pittman, a Pensacola native and environmental journalist writing for the *Tampa Bay Times*, has covered the efforts to save the Florida panther for more than 20 years. These accounts along with additional research and interviews produce a tale worth reading.

The captivating narrative follows the exploits and foibles of scientists and wildlife officials trying to save the panther from extinction. *Cat Tale* reads like fiction, but no writer could invent such strange characters and weird collaborations. Real life characters, vividly described, include politicians, bureaucrats, wildlife officials, scientists, dreamers, developers, and conservationists. These heroes and villains' actions are woven into a suspenseful plot, a technique rarely found in nonfiction. The author's style is easy to read and offers enough biting wit and humor for comic relief. Pittman often uses analogies for humor, like comparing a scientific report to Swiss cheese.

The book's subject matter is a learning experience in malfunctioning government and debilitating scientific approaches at the expense of an animal on the brink of extinction. Yet, despite the politicians and scientists' bumbling efforts, the panther population has grown from 20 to around 200 in 30 years.

Suffering from inbreeding defects such as cowlicks, kinks in their tails and heart murmurs, the panther was almost lost until a bigger-than-life Texas cowboy suggested introducing Texas puma females to breed. As the panther's extinction clock ticked, puma opponents claimed the true blood line would be contaminated, while proponents argued there would be no bloodline left to contaminate without the puma female. The battle ensued as more of the few remaining panthers were runover crossing highways.

Pittman clearly explains the panther's place in Florida's ecosystem and the role politicians played in condensing, then relocating the panther's habitat. As a reader, I cheered when a panther finally crossed a river to a safer environment. The accounts of capturing and placing monitors on the big cats are interesting. The descriptions of the panther with its topaz eyes are beautiful and, at times, painful as the regal animal withers away from losing its favorite food source, freshly killed deer.

While the panther is clearly the hero of the book, the villain is the man who manipulates scientific data to satisfy the desires of builders and developers. Pittman, in old-school journalistic fashion, shows the pros and cons of each side as he addresses scientific and ethical concerns.

I highly recommend this book to all Floridians and any reader interested in protecting threatened or endangered species. I purchased my copy in Kindle format never expecting the book to be a “keeper.” Though the e-book includes photographs, much of the power of photography is lost in the minimized screen. But no matter the format, the book truly lives up to its subtitle: *The Wild, Weird Battle to Save the Florida Panther*

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<http://www.facebook.com/pages/WestFlorida-Literary-FederationWFLF/255101747857712?ref=hl>

West Florida Literary Federation ~ Join or Renew ~ 2020

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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