



The Legend

West Florida Literary Federation, Inc.
Member Newsletter

www.wflf.org

August 2021 Edition

August Open Mic Canceled

Please join us for
Open Mic
In-Person this September

The August 17 meeting is canceled to give President Lisa Rawson time to plan a kick-off meeting to resume in-person gatherings in September. Mark your calendar now, and make plans to attend on Sept. 21 at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Pensacola Cultural Center, 400 South Jefferson Street, Room 201, in Pensacola. More details about this special meeting will be in next month's newsletter so stay tuned!

NOTE: In-person meetings are subject to change based on safety and CDC guidelines and the newest happenings with COVID-19 cases locally and broadly.

We hold Open Mic every third Tuesday of the month. All paid members and emeritus members will receive an invitation. Registration is required. (*Annual dues can be paid online.*)

Emerald Coast Review Selects Writers, Artists for 21st Publication

More than 50 contributing regional writers and artists will be included in the 21st volume of *The Emerald Coast Review (ECR)*, scheduled for an October 2021 launch. The publication will feature poetry, fiction, nonfiction, visual art and a special section of poetry from students who placed in the 2021 youth poetry contest named “Unmuted Voices.”

Managing editor Diane Skelton describes the diverse, creative writing and art in the upcoming volume with a nod to Charles Dickens as “the best of work in the worst of times.” Skelton goes on to say that this special ECR “is like no other in scope” in how it portrays “life, love, death and disaster, nature and beauty, justice and inequality. From tales of the homeless and the haunted, to poignant pieces reflecting life in the time of a pandemic, readers will travel with the writers and artists to imaginary and real places with a flourishing spirit.”

The volume will publish work by new and established writers and artists including: Bruce Ballister, Charline Barger, Deborah Bassett, Sara Beeber, Margaret Biggs, Allyson Bitely, Lowenna Clarke, Sue Davis, Julie DeMarko, Autry Dye, Patricia Edmisten, Brooke England, Susan Feathers, Mandy Fernandez, Scott Finelli, Della Frazier-Osetek, Destiny Herbert, Margret Hildreth, Ryn Holmes, Dottie King,

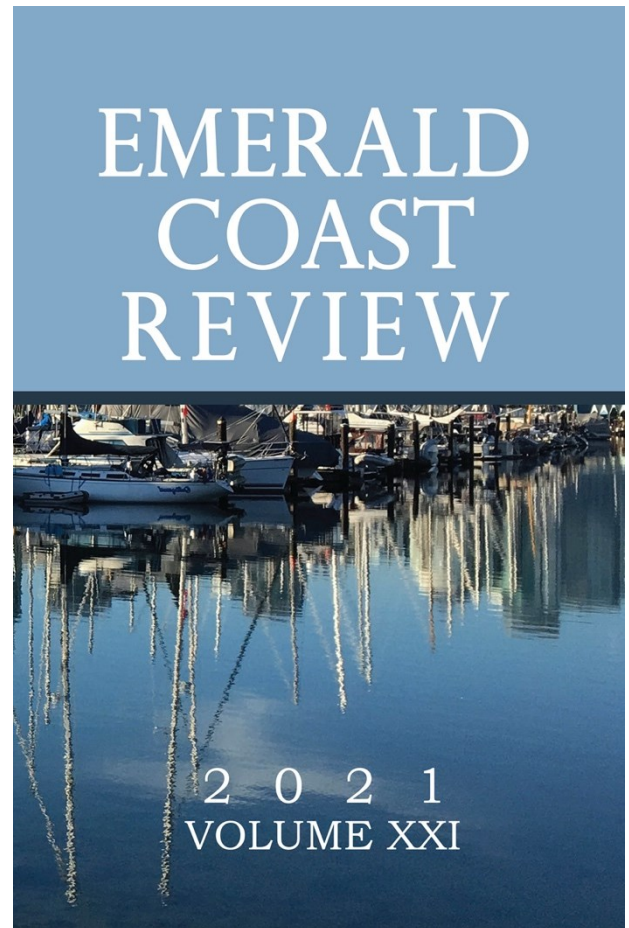


Photo credit: Debra Stogner

Henry Langhorne, M.M. LeBlanc, Pamela M. Levitt, Claire Massey, Ethan McGuire, Heather Mitchell, Kay Mitchell, Karen McAferty Morris, Randy Morris, Katherine Nelson-Born, Lori O’Gara, Dakota Parks, Katie Rankin, Rachel Reese, Mike Roberts, Tom Roberts, Mladen Rudman, Wendy Rudman, Linda Safford, Jeff Schroeder, Andrea Scurto, Rebecca Shealy, Diane Skelton, Eric St. Pierre, Debra Stogner, Brenda Thornton, Carolyn Tokson, Andrea Walker, Dan Wallace, Kathryn Willis and Lori Zavada. Brief biographies of each artist, photographer, poet and writer will be included. A special section will be

dedicated to West Florida Literary Federation longtime member, volunteer and contributor Elizabeth Holmes who passed away in 2021.

Special thanks go out to the dedicated editorial committee of the ECR who spent countless hours reviewing, compiling and formatting this publication: Diane Skelton, Claire Massey, Karen McAferty Morris, Debra Stogner, Mandy Fernandez and Andrea Walker.

The selected works represent submissions from the Florida counties of Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Bay, and the Alabama counties of Escambia, Mobile, and Baldwin, plus work from a few members of West Florida Literary Federation who no longer live in the area. We are especially proud of this 21st volume for having one of the largest number of submissions in the history of the ECR and the impressive quality of work reviewed and selected for publication this fall.

“Writing has so much to give, so much to teach, so many surprises. That thing you had to force yourself to do – the actual act of writing – turns out to be the best part. It’s like discovering that while you thought you needed the tea ceremony for the caffeine, what you really needed was the tea ceremony. The act of writing turns out to be its own reward.”

— **Anne Lamott**

Meet Our Members



Jennifer Brinkley recently joined WFLF to connect with other writers. She relocated from Kentucky in May of 2019 to take a position as assistant professor of legal studies at the University of West Florida. Shortly after, the pandemic hit. Her husband still lives and works in Kentucky while managing the PBS television station and NPR radio station at Western Kentucky University. She has one son, an eighth-grader, two stepchildren—Braden, a high school senior, and Madison, a soon-to-be UWF graduate this fall. The family has two retired racing greyhounds and two tuxedo cats.

Her research interests include women and the law (topics such as Ruth Bader Ginsburg), and gender and the judiciary in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Jennifer has traveled to Bosnia-Herzegovina twice and cannot wait to return. She also looks forward to resuming the Reading Writing Group (RWG) at the Santa Rosa Correctional Institution this fall, a group she started in January 2020, but paused during COVID-

19. RWG has four sessions in the fall and in the spring, wherein Jennifer distributes nonfiction books and creative writing exercises each month. Each group has up to 10 participants who meet at the end of each month to discuss the books and share writing projects.

Jennifer's favorite writing genre is poetry, and she hopes to publish a chapbook someday. Several of her poems have been published, as well as some short stories. She wrote a newspaper column in Bowling Green, Kentucky about being an adoptive parent and stepparent and self-published a compilation of her columns on Amazon, in a book titled "[Clinging Tightly: The Life of a Second Wife, Stepmom, Adoptive Mom, and Lawyer.](#)"

Jennifer has drafts of a novel in-the-making and is slowly working on a master's degree in English/creative writing at UWF, which she hopes will help propel the novel. She also writes academic law review journals and shorter pieces in service to the legal academy. She's an avid reader, and Lisa Scottoline is one of her favorite authors. Read Jennifer's Work: "Tendrils" at:

bonfireslit.com/2018/05/01/jennifer-brinkley-tendrils/

"Unraveling" at: r7review.com/post/revisiting-unraveling-by-jennifer-brinkley

"Dripping" at:

hofd.files.wordpress.com/2010/06/hodissue10final.pdf

"Threads" at

[:issuu.com/spokenword_paris/docs/issuezero](https://issuu.com/spokenword_paris/docs/issuezero)

Academic writing:

ir.uwf.edu/islandora/object/uwf:jbrinkley



Charline Barger has been a WFLF member for two years and currently serves as board secretary. Charline has been familiar with our organization for many years since her son, Jude, entered and placed in the youth poetry contest several years ago. Since then, as a teacher, Charline has encouraged her students to enter the annual youth writing contests.

Besides Jude (“Hey Jude”), Charline has two daughters, Ruby (“Ruby Tuesday”) and Caroline (“Sweet Caroline”). She and her boyfriend, Matt, also a writer, live in Pace with two dogs, two cats and one guinea pig. Charline has been teaching language arts at the middle school level for 10 years and now teaches 9th grade English for a virtual school. She is a National Writing Project consultant.

Charline’s passions are children, reading and writing. Therefore, she feels that WFLF is a perfect fit for her to grow as a

writer and inspire young people to express themselves in writing as well. She hopes to connect with more teachers and students in her role as board member and in her profession. Charline would love to see writing groups or camps offered for local youth. She enjoys planning writing events for teachers and students.

Charline’s love for writing goes back to her 7th-grade year when she won a district competition for a short story. Later, she began receiving recognition for her poetry in high school. She has been published in various newspapers, magazines and online media. She has worked as a writer for a swim school and wrote a parenting blog when she lived in Philadelphia. Her events coverage was also published in the local Philly newspaper.

When she is not teaching, Charline enjoys watching movies with her children, reading the latest young adult novels to recommend to students and chipping away at her piles of manuscript drafts. She is working on several writing projects and personal goals, such as picture books and a young adult novel.



Jeannie Zokan and her husband live in Gulf Breeze with their cat, Salem and a rescued puppy, Piper (a half beagle, half Labrador). Jeannie has been a member of WFLF since 2008 and has served on the board for the past two years.

She credits her membership in WFLF for helping her achieve her lifelong goal of being published. After much querying, Jeannie found a home for her two novels at Red Adept, an independent publisher. She now wants to help other writers in WFLF find their publishing homes.

Her two novels are *The Existence of Pity* and *Courage Without Grace*. Their [full descriptions and reviews can be found on Amazon](#).

Jeannie hopes that WFLF can develop more writing critique groups since she believes her ongoing involvement in a weekly critique group is the reason she

stayed on track with deadlines and remained motivated to keep writing.

She says, “I love stories, whether they are written, painted, sung, or acted out. All forms of art enrich my life every day. Writing is my way of clearing my head, making sense of my thoughts, and challenging myself to create a cohesive piece of work.”

When not writing, Jeannie enjoys playing tennis, running, taking bike rides and doing yoga. These activities balance the time she spends reading and writing. Lately she has been exploring Reiki, a form of energy healing and hearing about mental health from one of her adult daughters studying it through a nursing program.

Jeannie hopes to finish another book and have it published. Her current idea includes using her main character Josie Wales from previous novels, but making her a secondary character to explore other adventures.

Women’s fiction is Jeannie’s favorite genre because it allows her to “think, have some romance and keep the action clicking along!”

Jeannie’s talent, energy and passion for writing are contagious and helpful to WFLF members.

BOOK REVIEW

The Treasures of Pensacola Beach II

Written by Patricia Edmisten

Review by Andrea Walker

The Treasures of Pensacola Beach, II by Patricia Edmisten contains 34 selections of poetry and short prose along with vivid photos and art. Readers are quickly pulled into the pages with “Barrier Island,” the opening poem which leaves “steel and concrete” behind to “anoint(s) with a taste of eternity.”

A sense of place prevails as readers travel the long arduous journey with “squeaky clean quartz crystals” from the Appalachians and beyond “grain by grateful grain to meet the opalescent Gulf.” Then a few pages further, the poet playfully discusses how to build a sand dune. It’s easy to imagine the grains of sand being carried joyfully on the wind, leaping and bouncing, then pushing each other along in “creep.”

An astute observer of people, Edmisten comments on “The Metal Detector,” and the reader wonders about the treasures the character is missing like “the jade beauty of the water and the sudden slashes of sunshine.” His obsession with his search as he ignores the sea and waves seems nightmarish. She makes a whimsical comparison of people to birds in “Snowbirds” “as they meander hand in hand . . . and bend to examine tiny rainbow-hued coquinas . . .” then “return to

northern nests.” People are a good source of subtle humor as the poet muses about “Speedos” and “Perfect Bodies.” The “Wild Woman,” who stands naked on the shore with outstretched arms and digs her feet into the sand finds healing “as she awaits the sun.”

“Aluminum Beach” is another humorous comment on the not-so-humorous topic of littering. A fierce protector of the environment, Edmisten writes “About Tarballs” and about beach mice in “Live and Let Live.”

The spirituality one finds at the beach is expressed perfectly in the prose piece “Ghost Crab.” The speaker remembers her feelings as she is “Floating . . . flying upside-down, face to face with a cloudless sky . . . silence . . . the existence of God . . . Then the morning takes an amusing turn when she spots her misplaced watch being mistaken for a tasty meal. She hastily retrieves it and advises readers to “leave your watch at home.”

Her poetry reminds us that beneath the serenity of the waters lurk natural dangers like stingrays, “Portuguese Man-of-Wars,” and rip tides. In this collection, the reader will meet a left-handed whelk, a feisty protective least tern, and the graceful treasures of the “Great Blue Heron” and “Dolphins.” Readers find especially good advice from the “Brown Pelican.”

“Use your mind like he uses his pouch . . . Store what is nourishing and spit out the rest.”

Edmisten's words often take the metaphorical leap from concrete imagery to abstract idea. In "The Color of the Gulf on a Cloudy Day," she describes the mysterious water as dark, deep "like a lover you never fully knew." In "Emerald," the sea represents Baptism and the speaker is "reborn, . . . pushed out of the womb into the light." Her reverence for the sea continues in the conclusion of "Floating," contrasting the "congestion we fled" to "no land that separates sea from soul."

Each poem and prose piece in *The Treasures of Pensacola Beach, II* is as thoughtful and meaningful as the next, and although the writing speaks for itself, painting vivid pictures, the art and photography selections are the icing on the cake. Edmisten's latest collection of work is indeed a gem.

Free Virtual Writing Workshops and More

Our board vice president, Mandy Fernandez, shares two proven writers' resources with you. The first one is by Orlando writer and librarian Sarah Nicolas, a member of the Florida Writers Association. Sarah shares weekly writing events, workshops, author readings, and more. To never miss these events, subscribe to Sarah's weekly newsletter, <https://sarahnicolas.substack.com/about>. The second one is a site called Author's Learning Center that regularly posts and advertises free writing workshops on various topics. Visit the site

and browse its offerings at <https://www.authorlearningcenter.com/webinars/>. Several of our WFLF members have attended incredible free seminars from Sarah's weekly listing and from Author's Learning Center. Notable recent ones include a workshop on writing short memoirs and personal essays and a seminar on publishing tips for literary journals.

Share Your Resources

Are you following a writer that helpful resources? Do you receive a list of call to submissions that you want to share with WFLF members? Please share these helpful tips and resources and we'll publish them here in The Legend. Email your news: westfloridaliteraryfederation@gmail.com.

Join the WFLF Private Facebook Page

West Florida Literary Federation has a public Facebook page that you may have seen, but we also have a private page especially designated for members. The purpose of this Facebook group is to share resources that are timelier than this monthly newsletter. Often contests, calls for submissions and writing tips are shared within this private group. If you're on Facebook, join our group and stay more connected with our members. You'll see and hear news first there! Send an email to westfloridaliteraryfederation@gmail.com if you want to join the private Facebook group.

IN OUR WRITE MINDS

A column by Claire Massey

Your eyes are burning. Your mind is rebelling. The third draft of your story has sprung a new crop of circled words, passages highlighted in yellow, the color of caution and phrases underlined in red, the color of stop (!). You are floundering, stuck, mired, considering how good it would feel to ball up paper or click and drag to the trash. Take it to your fellow writers! The right critique group can help you weed the overgrowth, pass the impasse and hit the refresh button.

The fundamental mission of most critique groups is to share work, exchange feedback, improve writing and editing skills and celebrate final drafts/completed work. Some groups have specific goals that may or may not dovetail with your motivations as a writer. Some are genre focused, some are all about publishing, some are broadly diversified and welcome beginners. A little investigation can help you find the right fit.

Do you work best with structure and “rules,” or do you prefer a loosey-goosey, less focused ambience? You may want to “sit in” as an observer during your first meeting or two. Here are some questions to ask of members of established groups—the answers may help you decide to commit or continue your efforts to find the group that will prove to be the most fruitful investment of your time.



Is there a short mission statement or written expression of a few agreed-upon objectives?

Is there a facilitator who keeps the group organized, informed of schedule changes and “on track” towards accomplishing goals? (I once left a group because the sidebar conversations about weekend activities or job crises became so time-consuming that little in the way of critique exchange was happening. I was a full-time working professional and my time for creative writing was precious and limited.) An experienced facilitator can often circumvent such distractions by gently returning the group to their *raison d’etre*.

Do the group preview selections need to be critiqued ahead of the meeting?

Is there a deadline for submitting work to be critiqued during an upcoming meeting?

Are there procedures to ensure fair “turn-taking?” Do members adhere to a system of quid pro quo--giving critiques as well as receiving them?

Is written feedback provided, as well as verbal?

Is there a limit on group size? Too many members could mean long rotations through everyone’s work.

Are there frequent cancellations and changes of date and time? Although some flexibility can be helpful, consistent meetings and a reliable schedule contribute much to the health and longevity of a group.

Perhaps most importantly, does the group operate within a positive framework of respect and support?

Whether you are new to critiquing or would like to hone your skills, the recommended reading below will inspire thoughtful and truly helpful exchanges with your fellow writers.

“How to Give and Receive Constructive Feedback as a Writer” by Kimberly Coyle at

<https://thewritelife.com/tips-for-writing-critique>

“How to Critique other Writers’ Work” by Melissa Donovan at

<https://www.writingforward.com/writing-tips/how-to-critique>

“Do’s and Don’ts of Critiquing” by Sarah Carriger at

<https://internationalwriterscollective.com/dos-and-donts-of-critiquing/>



PUBLISHING NEWS

Claire Massey's flash creative memoir, "Island of Lost Boyfriends" was published in *Bright Flash Literary Review* on July 6. This journal specializes in flash fiction and accepts some short memoir. You can read Claire's work at:

<https://brightflash1000.com/page/2/>

Karen McAferty Morris' poem "Pandora" was published on July 5 in *The Ekphrastic Review*. See her poem and accompanying painting "Pandora" by John William Waterhouse at:

<https://www.ekphrastic.net/ekphrastic-journal/pandora-by-karen-mcaferty-morris>.

Ekphrastic poetry is inspired by works of art. In ancient Greece, the term "ekphrasis" was the skill of describing a thing in vivid detail. In "The Iliad," for instance, Homer devotes nearly 150 lines to describing the shield of Achilles. The *Ekphrastic Review* posts a poem or short prose piece daily, along with the associated art.

LEGEND SUBMISSIONS

Please share with us! Our goal is to publish on the first of each month. Send news any time, but please understand the cut-off date is mid-month (15th of preceding month), to give time for layout and design. Please share your headshot and a graphic of the publication in jpeg format when you submit creative writing, literary news, advice and writing achievements to:
WestFloridaLiteraryFederation@gmail.com.

ONGOING WORKSHOPS

MONDAY POETRY – Join an informal group of poets with varying levels of experience who enjoy getting together to share work, discuss writing or just listen. We welcome respectful critiques and feedback. Join us virtually on the first Monday of the month from 6 to 8 p.m. For more information, please contact Debra Stogner at debrastogner@gmail.com.

WEDNESDAY PORTFOLIO and EXCHANGE SOCIETY – A lively critique group meets every Wednesday, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., on Zoom. The group is looking for writers of any genre — memoir, poetry, fiction, nonfiction — who want to work on completing a project in 12 months. Since the group formed, several members have published books. Participants exchange writing tips, websites, and general trivia. For more information, please reach out to Diane Skelton at dianeskelton@att.net.

Please contact Diane regarding meetings during this time.

WFLF 2021 Board of Directors

President: Lisa Rawson

Vice President: Mandy Fernandez

Secretary: Charline Barger

Treasurer: Tom Roberts

Director: Claire Massey

Director: Jeannie Zokan

Director/Poet Laureate: Katherine Nelson-Born

Directors can be contacted at: WestFloridaLiteraryFederation@gmail.com

Check out our website at: www.wflf.org

“Like” us on Facebook, (under) West Florida Literary Federation at:

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

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WFLF Member of Community of Literary Magazines and Presses

PROUD MEMBER



COMMUNITY OF LITERARY MAGAZINES & PRESSES
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West Florida Literary Federation ~ Join or Renew

Memberships are good for one calendar year beginning January 1 and ending December 31. Individual membership is \$35/year, two-year \$60. Couple one-year \$60, two-year \$115. New members joining after July 15, pay \$20 or may pay \$45 which also pays for the following year. Subsequent years are due annually by January 1. Student membership is \$15.

I would like to sponsor: _____

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