



The Legend

West Florida Literary Federation, Inc.

www.wflf.org

MAY 2021

Celebrate Spring with Us

Open Mic on Zoom, Third Tuesday, May 18 at 6:30 p.m.



Peony Bouquet photo by Andrea Walker

Bring your creative writing to read, or join us to listen, discuss, encourage, and learn.

All paid members and emeritus members will receive a Zoom invitation. Registration will be required. (Annual dues can be paid online.) Below is a link for a short Zoom tutorial.

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

WFLF Writers Weekly Workshops

MONDAY POETRY ~ We are an informal group of poets with varying levels of experience who enjoy getting together to share our work with each other. Sometimes it's just to share, other times it's for critique and feedback. We are looking for others to join us virtually on the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month from 6 pm - 8 pm. Interested in learning more or joining the group? Contact Debra Stogner at debrastogner@gmail.com.

WEDNESDAY PORTFOLIO & EXCHANGE SOCIETY ~ Critique Group meets every Wednesday, 9:30-11:30 a.m., on ZOOM. 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 participants are notorious for exchanging writing tips, websites, and general trivia. For more information, contact dianeskelton@att.net.

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

Student Poetry Awards Ceremony Held on April 25

It might have been just a Zoom meeting, but on April 25 WFLF's Student Poetry Award Ceremony stirred a lot of hearts and made real connections as students, parents, teachers and WFLF members heard the students' poetry and listened to a sincere, inspirational guest speaker to culminate the 2021 "Unmuted Voices" contest. Dr. Susan James mesmerized the audience with her words to the student writers, extolling their ideas, their aspirations, and their

abilities. She had reached out to well-known poets like Amanda Gorman, Jason Reynolds, Ann Burg, and Ellen Hopkins, who had responded with their own encouraging messages to the students. Dr. James, UWF Associate Professor and director of its Emerald Coast National Writing Project, is known for her work with literacy and young adult literature. After the students read their winning poems, the chat box filled up with praise and encouragement, and all comments were read aloud. MC Lisa Rawson read the poems of students unable to attend. The 12 poems explored themes of self-image, contemplation of what's real and true in the world, the need for understanding and unity, hope, change, introspection, and frustration. One student commented that the awards ceremony meant a great deal to him because he had just lost his father. Another student typed "relatable" in the chat box after hearing one of the poems. Andrea Walker commented, "I've always been impressed at the depth some students write, and this year didn't disappoint me. I was glad to attend, not only to give them support and a well-deserved audience, but to learn from them as well." Calling the ceremony "intimate and beautiful," Mandy Fernandez commented, "Words connect us and cross all generations indeed." Without hesitation, I believe that every single student in attendance felt valued and appreciated, and every single adult was moved by their words. The poems can be read on WFLF's website and on its Facebook page.

Karen McAferty Morris

Emerald Coast Review XXI Update

Submissions have closed for *Emerald Coast Review (ECR)*, and the editorial team reports a total of 61 artists and writers submitted 176 pieces of work for consideration.

Contributions came from new and established voices, college and university students, WFLF members living out of the region and locally, and regional writers and artists from as far as Lillian, Alabama, to Panama City, Florida. Pieces for consideration include new and experimental works, fiction, nonfiction, poetry and visual art.

A panel of four readers will score the submissions "blind," not knowing the identity of the contributors. Those submitting work will know if their work is accepted by summer. The publication will also print the winning poems from the 2021 student poetry contest "Unmuted Voices" that was offered in Escambia and Santa Rosa counties. Copies of the ECR book will be available in the fall. It is the 21st volume of the anthology, which began publication in 1989. The ECR is a member of Community of Literary Magazines and Presses (CLMP); the book will be published by KDP Publishing and available for purchase on Amazon. Contributors with work accepted receive a complimentary copy.

Thanks to Mandy Fernandez, Claire Massey, Karen Morris, Diane Skelton, Debra Stogner and Andrea Walker for their work on this project. A huge thank you to all contributors who sent in their talented words and art and to all WFLF members who helped spread the word about this submission opportunity.

Diane Skelton



Meet Your WFLF Treasurer: Tom Roberts

Tom Roberts has been a member of WFLF for four years. Tom joined the board in 2019 because he had an interest in increasing the

benefits of membership. As a board member, Tom would like to focus on many different things such as providing workshops for members; increasing outreach to other likeminded organizations in the area; improving WFLF's website; obtaining grants and helping other members wherever he can. As a normal member of WFLF, he'd like to see workshops on the writing craft and market his books. Tom hopes to see WFLF hold member mixers/social events in the future to help engage members and learn about others' goals and needs.

Tom is married with two grown children and two granddaughters. Tom has a Bachelor of Science in Math and a Master of Science in Systems Engineering. Tom is an Air Force veteran and has lived in a dozen different places, including Japan and Greenland. Before COVID19, Tom traveled several times to Europe. Tom loves dogs, but he's between pets right now. He enjoys reading all genres except romance, horror and poetry. Tom likes all the performing arts such as theater, symphony, opera, and ballet. He's a board member and webmaster for the Pensacola Symphony Guild. Tom loves writing fiction, especially historical, fantasy and mystery/suspense. Like many interests of his, Tom is self-taught, but he enjoys workshops and conferences on writing. Though Tom has dabbled in writing in the past, he took it up profusely in 2016 after retirement from his software developer career. Other hobbies and interests of Tom are computer and board games, reading, chess, college sports, and following the Dallas Cowboys.

Tom has self-published two books. His first, *Moving Pieces*, is a collection of mystery/suspense short stories. His recent book, *Lost Scrolls of Archimedes*, is a historical fiction set in Cleopatra's Egypt in the first century B.C. Tom has also published one short story, *The Ledge*, at Page and Spine, an online journal.

<https://pagespineficshowcase.com/tomroberts.html>). Tom's favorite writing genre is historical fiction.

Tom is an active, dedicated board member for WFLF and we thank him for all he does for our group. He's taken the lead on technology efforts since the pandemic, and we would not have been able to meet and see each other virtually without Tom's gracious help. Thank you, Tom, for all you do!

Mandy Fernandez



**WFLF New Member Feature
Donna Essner**

Donna moved to Florida two years ago with her oldest daughter. She has five grown children with her late husband and 13 grandchildren who are spread across the U.S. Donna has a master's in English/creative writing. She taught college freshman English until 2017. She was a partner in a St Louis Publishing group with two other women, but she sold her interest in the group and began editing manuscripts on a freelance basis. Donna served on the Missouri Writers' Guild, the Southeast Missouri Writers' Guild, and the Heartland Writers' Guild. Donna spearheaded the local writers' conference, the All Write Now! Conference and headed that organization until she moved to Florida. Donna has written two novels (still seeking publication), has been published in *Journey*, a literary journal; *Big Muddy*, newpages.com, and wrote a gardening column for the local newspaper in Missouri. Donna fell in love with editing manuscripts

while she was in graduate school and worked at the university press. Many of the books she's edited while an owner/acquisitions editor at Amphora Publishing Group won awards. Writing has been a part of Donna's life for as long as she can remember. Donna Essner recently joined WFLF because she wants to become involved with other area writers, help critique work and share the knowledge she's gained as an acquisitions editor of a small press. Donna's favorite writing genre is middle grade, YA, and murder mysteries/thrillers.

Besides writing, Donna also enjoys going to plays and other live performances when she can. Her first degree was in horticulture. She owned a greenhouse business/garden shop for nine years before closing so she could spend more time with her mother who was ill. Growing bedding plants, herbs, and perennials was her passion. Donna also loves to fish, read, read, read, write, garden, as well as soak up the sun on the beach and by the pool, and she can't wait to take her new pontoon out this spring. Grilling and trying new recipes are at the top of her list recently, and she reads cookbooks like a regular novel. Even if she doesn't make the recipe, she still loves imagining herself doing it. Donna also loves baking. When her niece opened her bakery, Donna helped to bake cupcakes, donuts, pastries, and more.

Donna Essner recently joined WFLF because she wants to become involved with other area writers, help critique work and share the knowledge she's gained as an acquisitions editor of a small press. She is interested in attending writing conferences, gaining feedback on her two novels and involving herself with the writing industry and trends of today. Welcome, Donna! We're so glad to have you join WFLF!

Mandy Fernandez

WFLF Thanks Longtime *Legend* Editor and Member Andrea Walker

Andrea Walker has been a member of the West Florida Literary Federation (WFLF) for 16 years. She received the first college scholarship WFLF granted in 1988 but moved to Atlanta in 1989. When she returned to live in Northwest Florida, she was thrilled to find WFLF again and joined. As a longtime member of WFLF, she enjoys knowing members of Pensacola's writing community. She has been the editor of this *Legend* publication for ten years. She loves WFLF's open mics, writing festivals and social events.

Andrea has been married to Bob Walker for 42 years. They have three children and three grandsons. She has a bachelors in English and she taught high school in Atlanta before they moved back to Pensacola. She's been an adjunct at Pensacola State College since 2004. She loves to take walks in the neighborhood or on the beach and spend as much time outside as possible. When she's not writing, she likes to spend time practicing yoga and tai chi, reading, and puttering around at home. Her grandsons live in Atlanta and North Georgia, so she takes several trips to visit them each year.

Andrea enjoys all the arts immensely and is proud of Pensacola's arts community. She's always liked writing, but grew into it gradually and never pursued it seriously until the last 20 years. She has self-published four books, all on Amazon: *Bending the Arrow*, a novel based on a true event; *My Town-My View*, 15 years of essays about local issues in Pensacola; *Turning Leaves: Essays About Books and Reading*; *29 Houses: A Moving Journey*. Andrea's favorite writing genre is creative nonfiction.

Andrea's future plans include working on poetry, studying it, polishing up old stuff, writing new pieces, and possibly self-publishing again. She has been active in WFLF so long that she's ready to let others take the reins.

This will be Andrea's last *Legend* as editor. We thank her for ten wonderful years of communicating to all of our members and sharing our news and featured member writing. If you are interested in taking over the publication, please contact a WFLF board member or Andrea.

Mandy Fernandez

Congratulations Claire Massey

Claire Massey has been notified that her poem "Choose Florida" has been accepted for publication in the Lucky Jefferson 365 Collection, a digital anthology that you can follow on the web at <https://luckyjefferson.com> and on Facebook @luckyjeffersonlit. This poem was written in hopes of inspiring others to environmental activism and Claire is grateful it will now have a wider audience.

***Panoply* Issue 18**

This issue is themed "Feast" and is a contest issue. We feel certain you'll want to read the winning poems. We share the best in contemporary poetry and short prose, to enlighten and entertain, and to touch our readers' hearts and minds. Our Poet Laureate Katherine Nelson-Born is also included in this issue with her poem "My Blue Heaven." Check it out at panoplyzine.com.

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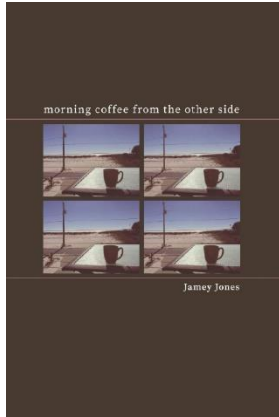
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CREATIVE WRITING

Review of *morning coffee from the other side* by Jamey Jones



West Florida Literary Federation is pleased to announce the publication of the seventh in a series of Poet Laureate books. Jamey Jones' book of poetry, *morning coffee from the other side*, is now available on Amazon or from Jamey. The editorial team of Jeannie Zokan and Diane Skelton worked with Jones to prepare his manuscript for publication. Bara'ah Jairaseh, a former student of Jones now living in Seattle, designed the cover using photographs taken by Rachael Pongetti. Acclaimed poets Barbara Henning and Uche Nduka previewed the book, writing reviews for the back cover. Diane Skelton prepared the interior of the book.

The paperback includes more than fifty poems, varied in style and theme, each reflecting Jones' unique voice and form. Often taking abstract shape, the poems offer personal reflections and observations that reveal Jones' world of color, light, nature, sounds, friendship, and passion. Many are narrative or prose poems in which the poet shares wisdom learned from random encounters with strangers or simple experiences like observing a dragonfly in flight or seeing white flowers illuminating a night walk.

The book, divided into three sections, offers poems with varying levels of meaning for readers. Seemingly casual poems, on a second read, present deeper themes. The poet speaks clearly to the

reader, "like an opened door – there is a poem at the start of each day – right there – in that clearing," as he paints beautiful pictures of nature, while at other times sharing poignant personal experiences. Jamey Jones transports the reader into his world of words with lines like "I remember having coffee and feeling in love with the sunlight and writing all of this down, everything, in the form of a poem . . ." Though the format, tone, and rhythm of some poems are reminiscent of the Beat Generation, Jones' use of juxtaposition, word play, and analogies brings a fresh poetic approach.

Jones doesn't shy away from the truth, either, with two poems claiming he "used to be dishonest tonight." In one selection, he honestly addresses a buried, shameful truth of the area's history, while still professing his love for the region.

Music, coffee, porch swings, party conversations, alligator statues, windows, skateboards, dreams, and ghosts all find their way into his poetry. These images and their poetic symbols will linger long with all who love the beauty of words.

The book was published by WFLF via KDP Publishing (Amazon) and is priced at \$14.99.

Diane Skelton

Review of *First Flight* by Lori Zavada ISBN 9798716316539



Lori Zavada's debut chapbook *First Flight* is taking off. Inspired by a Poem-a-Day challenge issued by the West Florida Literary Federation, Zavada rose to the occasion. Her collection won first place and was published by WFLF.

This 35-page book contains 21 poems that are sure to lift the spirits. Readers will be hooked by the charming cover photo of two bluebirds, one in flight and one intently watching. The poems are written to prompts, and themes in individual poems vary. Nature, memories, and reflection often give the work a brooding tone.

Her collection opens with the pensive observation of a quiet evening around the campfire and the delightful details of its “fiery glow,” “sizzled secrets,” and “hush of nightfall” as “a flame licked at the stars.” That reflective mood continues in “Camper Key,” but transitions into embodiment of physical energy as well in “What to Wear,” “Writing Like Spider-man” and “After Three Miles.”

Zavada introduces people she loves and people she admires like the “Veteran,” “Dad,” Poet Mary Oliver and others. Readers get to know the speaker’s grandad quite well in the concise lines of “Farmers Were Hard to Read.” “Grimy fingernails,” “his cold stare,” and “two-word replies” are a few details that paint a clear picture of a man who was difficult to know and love. The woman in “Brave” who “hailed from the highlands” and “liked cloudy days and a biting wind,” is a colorful character worth getting to know.

In “Swing,” she develops three definitions of the title word chronologically over time. From the liberation of “swooshing through the air” as a child, through the Urban Dictionary invitation at a teen party, to the political innuendos of “swing states” and the trials of 2020, the speaker observes “the back and forth of life

ticking like a pendulum.” The poet doesn’t shy away from politics as in “Red to Blue,” but makes good use of color as metaphor to make her statement.

Experiencing or reflecting, taking off or observing, speakers and characters come alive within the pages. Expect to find compassion, gratitude, peace, awareness, and encouragement. *First Flight* by Lori Zavada is available on Amazon.

Andrea Walker

WFLF 2021 Board of Directors

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Directors can be contacted at

WestFloridaLiteraryFederation@gmail.com

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West Florida Literary Federation ~ Join or Renew ~ 2021

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 \$15.

Name _____

Address _____

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