

*\*Temporary logo*

## *The Legend*

**Emerald Coast Writers, Inc.**  
Member Newsletter

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

**June 2022 Edition**

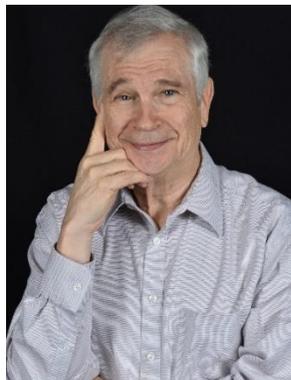
Please join us for a **Virtual Open Mic**  
on June 21 at 6:30 p.m.

Let's kick off summer 2022 with YOU and the Emerald Coast Writers community on Zoom! Let's celebrate each other by showing up to greet old friends and new members alike. Who is it that you haven't seen since we started Zooming during the pandemic? Reach out and tell them you would like to see them.

Come as you are, and bring your dinner, snacks, and beverage of choice! Feel free to read something you've written, are working on, or a piece from a favorite author. If you have a book, blog site, or website, we want you to drop it in the chat to share with your fellow members. We will have Zoom door prizes as well, so don't miss out on freebies and FRIENDS June 21<sup>st</sup>. **An invitation to join will be coming your way soon!**

Debra Stogner will be the host for June and July. If you are interested in having an in-person Open Mic in July before we pause for summer in August, reach out to her via email ([debrastogner@gmail.com](mailto:debrastogner@gmail.com)) with the subject line: "Open Mic – In Person."

# Message from the President



Welcome to the June issue of *The Legend* published by Emerald Coast Writers. I'd also like to welcome (and thank) Katie Rankin as our new editor.

Our May Open Mic was an experiment to see if our members were ready for in-person meetings again. It seems we are not, and with the recent uptick in COVID cases (4 members of my close family are currently infected), it is probably a good decision to hold off on our in-person plans for a while longer.

At our May meeting, the ECW Board decided that none of the four entries in our Logo Contest met the criteria we set to be a winning design. We are back to the drawing board (literally) on our new logo.

Also in May, we sent out a survey of members to gauge your writing needs and interests so that we can tailor our future events and programs to our membership. If you haven't completed your survey, please do so as soon as possible. We'll then begin processing your input and starting our planning. If you want to be part

of this planning, or any of our other endeavors, please let us know by email.

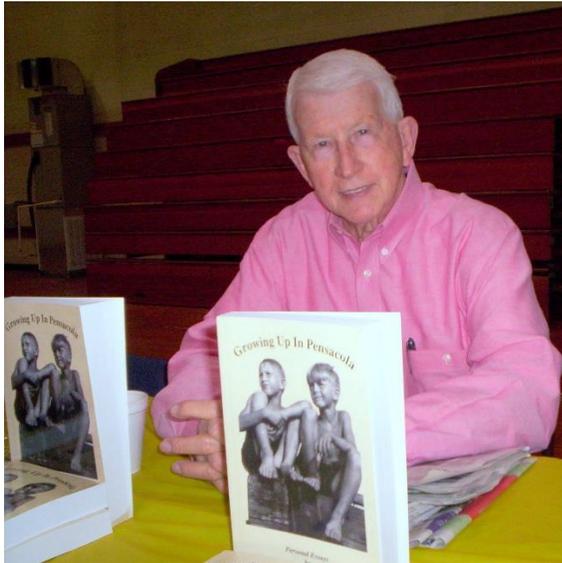
The May 15<sup>th</sup> Youth Writing Contest Awards Ceremony took place at Books-A-Million. Over 50 students, parents, teachers, and friends joined us for the celebration of student writing. And there were cookies, too!

Finally, enjoy the summer and keep writing. We're here to help.

–Tom Roberts

# Meet Our Members:

## Charlie Davis



**Charlie Davis** joined Emerald Coast Writers sometime around 2006, about two years before he and his wife, Sandra, retired. He grew up in Pensacola, attended Pensacola State College and Florida State University and served in the U. S. Navy during the Korean War. He has two sons, two daughters, nine grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren. His wife, Dr. Sandra Lockney Davis, is his guiding light and delight. She is also a member of ECW, and a published author. Her memoir is entitled, "So, What's a Nice Girl Like You Doing in a Place Like This? Seoul to Saigon."

He joined ECW because he wanted help with his writing and his career. He struggled with a monthly article in Docksider magazine called "Growing Up In Pensacola." He said, "joining ECW was the No. 1 best decision regarding my

writing aspirations." Since he first became a member, he participated in two critique groups. He also enjoyed his one year as a member of the board of directors.

Charlie's published works are: Growing Up In Pensacola, Growing Up In Pensacola II and They Also Serve, a Korean War-era novel. He is currently working on his fourth manuscript, Hyer's Point, a WWII era novel about a German American family from Pensacola who live in Germany before WWII detailing the dangers, horrors, and tragedies they experience in their efforts to return home to American during the war.

"I'm almost finished with the rewrite of Hyer's Point and plan to self-publish it," Charlie said. "With Sandra's help, my next goal is to self-publish a story about the antebellum South, written by my grandfather over one hundred years ago. Since I'll turn 90 this summer, I can't plan too far ahead, but I have some writing projects in mind. First, I want to write Growing Up In Pensacola III. There are so many more local individuals I want to write about. I enjoyed writing the first two books about people in Pensacola. Another project I have in mind is to outline a novel based on my grandfather's experiences as a Special Agent with the Justice Department in Pensacola's office. I have other projects in mind, but I won't ask the Lord for too much at a time."

Charlie's love for writing is both his hobby and his passion. Previously, he and wife Sandra built a home on East Bay, where they enjoyed all the benefits of waterfront living for years. Now in retirement, they live on a golf course so they can write peacefully and passionately, nearly every day if possible. They don't even play golf.

Charlie's favorite writers are historical novelists like Grisham and Clancy. He also enjoys conservative writers like Mark Levin, Gordon Chang, and Michael Pillsbury. In his research for the soon-to-be-published Hyer's Point, he went through a library of great WWII authors like William Shirer and Lowell Thomas. However, his favorite writers are "my friends at ECW's critique groups who generously share their writings and critiques with me each week."

Charlie hopes to focus more on structure and outlining as his writing goals this year. "I'll never start another novel without outlining the entire story before ever writing the first word and having a better understanding of the structure of a novel."

Thank you, Charlie, for sharing your writing journey and your wife, Sandra, with us! We're so glad to have you both as members! We look forward to reading Hyer's Point and Growing Up In Pensacola III.

---

## Announcements:

### Design A Logo Contest Ends with No Winner

The Emerald Coast Writers Design a Logo contest held in April to spark creativity among members and non-members had limited participation and some submissions that did not meet the criteria. While the design entries that did qualify had merit, the judging committee agreed that none captured the essence of Emerald Coast Writers or reflected the organization's mission in today's market. Therefore, the contest has ended with no declared winner.

Each qualified submitter was notified of the results and non-members who paid a fee were offered the opportunity to receive a refund. The Emerald Coast Writers board will move forward with a different plan to fit the rebrand. Plans for a logo and look will be determined and shared at a later time.

### Volunteer Needed for Calendar of Events

Here is an opportunity to help ECW by maintaining our Google event calendar. You would take input from the Board for curated local, regional, and national writing events. You would then add them to ECW's Google Calendar. Our website will link our members to the calendar (you will not need to do any website work).

Google Calendar is an easy-to-use web-based app for setting up a shared calendar. The events will be writing and literary happenings of interest to our members. If this sounds like something you would be interested in, please contact Tom Roberts at [tome129@hotmail.com](mailto:tome129@hotmail.com).

## ECW Member Directory is Ready for You!

The ECW Member Directory is active now on our website! Not only does the directory highlight your writing life, it lets your fellow members know about what you're writing or want to write. We each have a story—please share it with us.

In the directory, each member may include the following:

- Your writing bio (up to 200 words)
- Author photo (JPEG or PNG file format, professional headshot photo preferred but not required)
- Excerpt from your writing (up to 500 words)
- Titles, descriptions (up to 150 words for one book), and links to 1-3 books or other published works in which you are the primary author
- Link to your author website
- Image of your featured book cover (a purchase or review link may also be included)

You should have received an email recently with full instructions. Your directory information will be entered on a form on our website. Have all your information ready to copy and paste or type as it's not possible to save a partial entry.

The member directory is entirely voluntary on your part, but we hope you will take advantage of this opportunity to share your writing journey with other members.

## A Contest Opportunity for Self-Published Book Authors

If you have a self-published book, you might want to check out the North Street Book Prize sponsored on the Winning Writers website. It is open to all self-published books (regardless of year published) in the following categories:

- Literary fiction
- Genre fiction
- Creative nonfiction and memoir
- Poetry
- Children's picture book
- Art book
- Graphic novel

Check it out here:

<https://winningwriters.com/our-contests/north-street-book-prize>.



## Legend Submissions

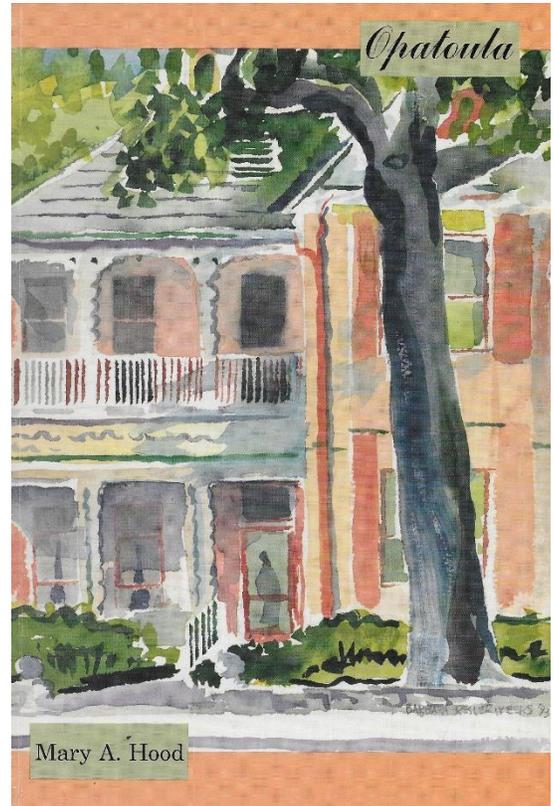
We'd like to celebrate your success and your work. Share your creative writing, literary news, writing achievements, or even writing advice to [westfloraliteraryfederation@gmail.com](mailto:westfloraliteraryfederation@gmail.com), and be included in *The Legend's* next issue! Please include a headshot or other graphic with your news.

# Book Review:

## Opatoula, Published by WFLF, 1993

*A Review "A Legacy of Publishing Regional Voices – WFLF" by Diane Jones Skelton*

For years the lovely book *Opatoula* sat on my bookshelf. I had picked it up at a WFLF poet laureate celebration. The book written by Dr. Mary A. Hood, Poet Laureate of Northwest Florida, is a woman's book decades ahead of its time. The collection of seventy-nine poems is presented through the voices of women who live in the fictional town of Opatoula, which has "a daily newspaper, a hospital, an Air Force base, a college, an historical district, low-income housing projects, a Coca Cola bottling plant and a papermill on the outskirts. Opatoula also has 42 Baptist churches and 57 bars."



If you are a Southerner, you've lived in Opatoula or perhaps you live there now. You know these women.

Each poem is titled with the name of the female speaker, followed by the name of her poem. The poems are arranged thematically in eight sections: Nature, Loss, Change, Fathers-Husband-Sons, Work, Dark, Pleasures, and Grandmothers-Mothers-Daughters. Each section is usually opened and closed with poems by Miss Johnson, who readers learn is a spinster with a fine collection of crystal who loves to garden and wishes she had grandchildren to tell her family stories to. Her poem recalling her Quaker great-grandmother rescuing an enslaved mother and infant is titled "Dust" and dramatically ends the 98-page collection. Other women of *Opatoula* tell poems of passion, incest, cruelty, abuse, hardship, youth, and joy. Many poems unfold in conversations in the laundromat or while shelling peas on the porch.

The poet, as a professor of microbiology, often uses items found in nature to relay a complex truth. For example, Miss Johnson in "Pine Cone" realizes at age seventy she is now her mother:

"A cone of scales as it ages becomes  
a bristle heart of tiny horns.  
So many lovely things have thorns."

Though all the poems are narrative, not all take the same form. Dr. Hood has experimented with rhyme, meter, and even shape as two poems, Mrs. Jane Edwards “Sneakers” and Kitty Tyler “Kite,” take the shape of the respective title. In “Betrayed,” Deidre and Shelly narrate a poem of contrast, starting off in the same stanza, then betrayed, they separate, one going black to the left of the page, the other going white to the right of the page. In the final stanza they rejoin wishing to be free,

“forgiven of the sin of being  
born girl with the hole of crime.”

In “Figs,” the poet uses imagery as the speaker Mary Bordelon opens a jar of preserved figs on a cold winter morning and steps back in time to remember

“I feel the scratch of the leaves  
big as paper church fans”

and describes the fruit as

“Like Chocolate drops they hang  
ripe, waiting to fall in my bucket.”

Finding a copy of *Opatoula* is worth the search. It is available for checkout at the Pace Library at the University of West Florida, where Dr. Hood was a professor. None are available on Amazon or in Santa Rosa or Escambia County public libraries. However, a copy may be checked out from our Dr. Francis Patrick Cassidy Resource Library, the WFLF (Emerald Coast Writers) reference library in the Cultural Center. There, you can also view the Barbara Resler Weeks’ original watercolor that graced the cover. If you have a rare copy of *Opatoula*, treasure it.

---

## For Your Reading Pleasure:

### Gray Matters

The round dabbled stone  
plucked from a Welsh mountainside  
nestles among its rock-buddies  
in our luggage.

We collect bits of Brecon Beacons  
pebbles of Snowden,  
chips near Big Pit,  
so many mementos.

Tourists, oblivious of weight,

ignorant of ecosystems,  
we haul home leaden beauties,  
plant them in our Florida garden,  
then complain about people  
carrying away our seashells, destroying our  
beaches.

*By Diane Skelton*

# For Your Reading Pleasure:

## Mexico Beach

Hurricane Michael flattened Mexico Beach  
in Florida's eastern Panhandle on October 10, 2018.  
Was it a fluke in the temperature of the Gulf?  
A nudge from a high pressure system from the north?  
God's unleashed breath, punishment for a covey of sinners  
living in recreational vehicles back from the beach?

Until the hurricane, most people in the United States  
had never heard of Mexico Beach.  
"Which side of Florida is that on?" they asked each other.  
Hell, most Floridians didn't know where Mexico Beach was.  
I say "most" because I knew Mexico Beach...and Sopchoppy,  
Wewahitchka, Panacea and Apalachicola, all part of "The Other Florida."

The first time my small son and I emerged from the piney woods  
around the Big Bend and wandered into Mexico Beach, with its  
pretty houses on a grassy knoll overlooking the Gulf,  
I imagined living there. I would teach, write, and listen to classical music.  
My son would become a sea urchin and later learn to surf. Since then  
Mexico Beach, like so many Gulf Coast gems, learned to sprawl.

Now there are only ruins, not like those left by U.S. Marines when  
they stormed Mexico's Chapultepec Castle in 1847 and were awed  
by the Halls of Montezuma, but the twisted, tangible, and emotional  
detritus of those who saw Mexico Beach, fell under her spell, and stayed.

The thermometer on our porch registers 54 degrees this morning.  
I pull a sweater over my shoulders and look at the sky,  
purified by churning winds. I can't see the particulates  
that warm the earth and increase greenhouse gases.  
Is this rush I feel happiness? A hawk lands on the topmost branch  
of a longleaf pine, and then I remember Mexico Beach.

*By Patricia Taylor Edmisten  
October 12, 2018*

# Publishing and Member News

**Lori Zavada** was recently published in the Oprelle poetry collection titled "Bigger than Me." The overarching theme encouraged writers to dig deep and write poems that attribute happenings to some force greater than ourselves as a reminder of the amazing power within our souls.

The submission period ended in September 2021 for the nationwide contest in which 60 submissions were accepted. Lori's poem "And Yet" is on page 63. The publication is available for sale on Amazon.

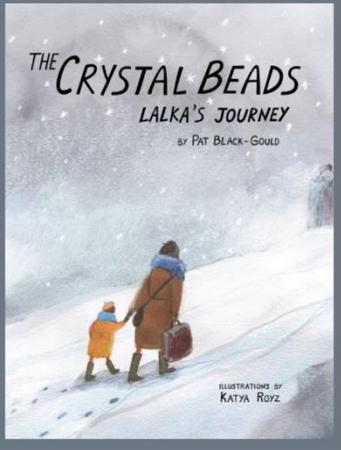
**Claire Massey's** flash fiction story, "In a Wayward Garden" is forthcoming in the spring issue of *Barely South Review*, the literary journal of Old Dominion University of Norfolk, VA. You can read past issues at [barelysouthreview.com/](http://barelysouthreview.com/).

Claire recently joined the editorial team of *The Pen Woman* as Poetry Page Editor. This publication is the nationally circulated, quarterly magazine of the National League of American Pen Women.

**Andrea Walker** is pleased to announce oddball magazine published her poem "The Doll" May 24. Check it out at [oddballmagazine.com](http://oddballmagazine.com).

**Karen McAferty Morris** has accepted the position of National Letters Chair 2022-24 for the NLAPW (National League of American Pen Women). The National Letters Chair oversees the Vinnie Ream Medal Competition, the Letters Competition, and the Shirley Holden Helberg Grants for the Mature Women, all biannual events. Karen held the position of *Pen Woman* magazine Poetry Editor October 2018-May 2022, and recently attended the National Biennial Conference in Washington, D.C. at the end of April.

**Pat Gould-Black's** children's book, "The Crystal Beads: Lalka's Journey" launches on June 14! A review describes the book as a "poignant story of bravery, sacrifice, and love."



A poignant story of bravery, sacrifice, and love. *The Crystal Beads, Lalka's Journey*, teaches the history of the hidden children of the Holocaust, evokes compassion through beautiful language and illustration, and leads readers to consider what connects rather than divides us from one another.

--Jennifer Rosner  
Author of *The Yellow Bird Sings*  
A National Jewish Book Award Finalist

Pat Black-Gould's book will be published on June 14th

# Ongoing Workshops

## MONDAY'S WORD WEAVERS (POETRY, PROSE, MICRO-WRITING FORMS) –

The goal of this workshop is to assist you to further develop writing skills, learn to critique, and grow in confidence as you polish your authentic voice and achieve the next level of your personal writing goals. 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](mailto: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](mailto:dianeskelton@att.net).

*Please contact Diane regarding meetings during this time.*

---

## Emerald Coast Writers Board of Directors

President: Tom Roberts  
Vice President: Mandy Fernandez  
Secretary: Charline Barger  
Treasurer: Scott Finelli  
Director: Debra Stogner  
Director: Lori O’Gara  
Director/Poet Laureate: Katherine Nelson-Born  
Legend Editor: Katie Rankin

ECW is a proud member of the  
Community of Literary  
Magazines & Presses.

PROUD MEMBER



COMMUNITY OF LITERARY MAGAZINES & PRESSES  
W W W . C L M P . O R G

- Directors can be contacted at: [westfloridaliteraryfederation@gmail.com](mailto:westfloridaliteraryfederation@gmail.com)
- Check out our website at: [www.wflf.org](http://www.wflf.org)
- “Like” us on Facebook, (under) West Florida Literary Federation, at: <https://www.facebook.com/West-Florida-Literary-Federation-WFLF-255101747857712>
- “Follow” us on Twitter @WSTFLLITFED

# Join ECW or Renew Your Membership

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: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Check one please:      New \_\_\_\_\_      Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle the items you **do not** want published in the Emerald Coast Writers members only directory:

Address

Phone

Email

If no item is circled, we will include all your information in the next published directory.

## How to join or renew your membership:

Pay your membership dues online with a credit card at [www.wflf.org](http://www.wflf.org) and then email this form to [westfloridaliteraryfederation@gmail.com](mailto:westfloridaliteraryfederation@gmail.com)

or

Mail your check and this form to:  
Emerald Coast Writers  
400 South Jefferson Street, Suite 212  
Pensacola, FL 32502