



**Temporary logo*

The Legend

Emerald Coast Writers, Inc.

Member Newsletter

www.wff.org

May 2022 Edition

Please join us for Hybrid Open Mic on May 17 at 6:30 p.m.

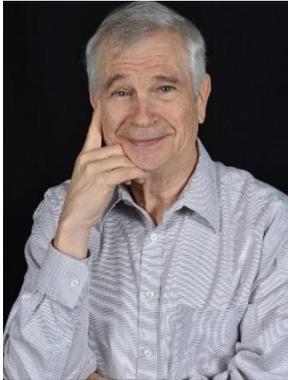
You may come in-person to our pre-pandemic location in the Boardroom of the Pensacola Little Theater, or you may join us online using Zoom. We hold Open Mic every third Tuesday of the month. All paid members and emeritus members will receive a Zoom invitation. Registration is required for Zoom. No registration is required for attending in person. (*Annual dues can be paid online*).

Emerald Coast Writers' Youth Writing Contest will be on May 15 at 2:00 p.m. at Books-A-Million

Young writers from across Escambia and Santa Rosa counties, representing K-12th grades, entered the Emerald Coast Writers' annual youth writing contest this year. These talented students wrote passionately about our theme of "a new world," submitting poetry, short stories, and non-fiction pieces. Our judges chose over 20 winners from different age groups and genre categories.

The winning writers will be celebrated at an awards ceremony on Sunday, May 15, at 2:00 p.m. at Books-A-Million (6235 N Davis Hwy, Pensacola, FL 32504). Attendees will have the opportunity to hear the winners read their pieces, which will soon be published by Emerald Coast Writers in a keepsake anthology. Please come out and help to support these talented young people! For more information, contact Charline Barger at charline.burga@gmail.com.

Message from the President



May 2022 marks our first hybrid meeting (in-person and virtual on Zoom) for our monthly Open Mic event. This is something new for Emerald Coast Writers (ECW) as we have been meeting on Zoom since April 2020. We are still working on the details of how it will all work. Check the May issue of *The Legend* and your email inbox for specifics. The date is May 17.

During April, we ran a Logo Design Contest on Submittable with the hope of engaging member and non-member graphic artists to help us pick the new public face of our organization under our new name. The Board will make a decision soon to determine if we have a winning contest design or if we need to reach out to a paid service provider.

Our April Open Mic was another successful Zoom event with approximately 25 members and guests attending. Members Victoria Dym and Deborah Bassett each read from their newly published poetry works. An additional six members read from their poems as well. I again appeal to all members to consider volunteering to help your Board in helping

our Northwest Florida (and beyond) writers to be the best they can be. ECW relies on volunteer members. We have no employees, and the Board can only do so much. Even if you don't know how you can help yet, reach out to me or any Board member and let us know you want to help. You can email me at tome129@hotmail.com or call me at 678-910-5658.

It looks like we have a new volunteer editor for *The Legend*. The May issue has an introduction to her, so be on the lookout.

The Board will be sending out a survey later this month on how we can better serve our members.

On May 15th at 2:00 p.m., ECW will present awards to the winners of the 2022 Youth Writing Contest. The event will be held at Books-A-Million. Join us if you can.

Writing is hard. There are many paths to failure, but the true path is the one you set for yourself. As always, ECW stands ready to be your source for writing support and inspiration.

–Tom Roberts

Meet Our Members: Brendan O’Gara



Brendan O’Gara joined Emerald Coast Writers along with his wife, Lori O’Gara, a year ago. In his own words, Brendan said, “My wife told me to join, and she always makes good decisions. Also, I’m a man who knows how to live a better life and the best way to do that is to do what your wife tells you to do.”

When he’s not being funny, Brendan and his wife co-write books together. They write in the fantasy, contemporary fiction, and nonfiction genres. They just completed their first book in the Necromancer’s Song series. Brendan hopes that they will be invited to Dragon Con, an annual multi-media and pop culture event held annually in Atlanta during Labor Day weekend. The O’Garas would love to attend local Pensacon as featured authors as well.

Brendan is retired Navy. The O’Garas reside just a few miles from where they grew up on Perdido Key, Florida. When not at the beach, writing, or reading, they can be found wandering the stacks in a library, perusing antique stores and thrift

shops, playing tabletop role playing games, or spending time with their family. They have a large, blended family that consists of six children, seven grandchildren, and one dog named Harley Quinn.

For Brendan, “writing is just what I do.” He enjoys writing, researching, and creating characters. He is a gamer and a natural storyteller. He has been an avid game player since a child and continues to play Dungeons and Dragons (D&D), Pathfinder, and other role-playing games. He and Lori have a standing Friday night tradition they call “O’ Gara Home for Wayward Gamers.” Brendan also has a passion for cooking and that love gave him inspiration to write a fantastical cookbook.

Brendan’s favorite authors are Neil Gaiman, Greige Beck, and of course his wife, Lori O’Gara. He enjoys reading anything in fantasy and science-fiction.

Brendan has published novels of dark fantasy and steampunk fantasy in collaboration with his wife. He’s particularly proud of his fantasy-themed cookbook called "Gadlin O'Hale's Fantastic Recipes: From the Seven Kingdoms taken from the greatest Pubs, Taverns, and Inns." After 100 of his readers commented, "The recipes are great, but what happened to the characters mentioned in the book?" he then asked his wife if she wanted to write a fantasy novel series with him. Thankfully, she said yes. That is where their fantasy books’ origin story began.

Brendan says, “I take life as it comes and believe that there is always something new to learn.” Thank you, Brendan, for sharing your writing journey and your wife, Lori, with us! We’re so glad to have you both as members!

Meet Our Members:

Katie Rankin



Katie Rankin joined Emerald Coast Writers early last year, after she moved to the area from Chicago. Originally from Daphne, Katie is excited to be closer to her hometown and family, and she's looking forward to deepening her involvement in Emerald Coast Writers by contributing as *The Legend* editor.

Katie first heard about Emerald Coast Writers after reading a call for submissions to the Emerald Coast Review in Bella Magazine. Her nonfiction essay, "A Christmas Miracle," was published in the ECR in fall 2021, and she's continued to write more nonfiction essays since then, mostly about her experiences as a new mother.

Katie and her husband, Max, have a 16-month-old son named Will, who keeps them very busy. In her free time, she

enjoys going on walks with her family, exploring new parks in her neighborhood, and reading. She is currently reading Amor Towles's most recent novel, "The Lincoln Highway."

Katie works remotely for Communities In Schools of Chicago, a nonprofit organization that supports students on their path to graduation. She serves as the organization's communications specialist and writes student success stories, manages the website and social media, and designs their brochures and annual report.

She has a bachelor's degree from the University of Florida in journalism and a master's degree from Florida State University in integrated marketing communications.

Katie looks forward to growing as a writer and learning from the talented members of ECW. "A lifelong goal of mine is to write a novel, but for now, I've found a lot of joy in writing short essays," Katie said. "I am constantly inspired by the success of writers in this group, and so far, just being associated with ECW has encouraged me to set writing goals, outside of work."



Volunteer Needed:

ECW 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.



Arriving on Our Website:

ECW Member Directory

One new perk of your ECW membership is about to be activated on our website—the Member Directory! Here is a place for you to highlight your writing life whether you are just starting out in your writing adventure, or you are a seasoned veteran of multiple published works. 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)
- Excerpt from your writing (up to 500 words)
- Titles, descriptions (up to 50 words), 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 will be receiving an email with full instructions. The data for your entry 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.

Important ECW Member Survey

In the next few days, current members of Emerald Coast Writers will receive a survey in their email. If your email has recently changed, please update us by emailing Charline Barger at charline.burqa@gmail.com.

The survey is being conducted by the ECW Board to help identify the writing interests and goals of our membership. The survey will enable the Board to develop new programs that better meet the writing needs of each member.



While you may complete the survey anonymously, we encourage you to provide us your name so we can provide the best programs, events, and articles that appeal to your interests. Of course, all ECW activities will be posted on our website and in our monthly newsletter, so you won't miss anything.

Also in the survey, you'll be able to indicate your preferred start time for our monthly Open Mic.

The survey will be executed via the email service provider MailerLite and will come from our regular Gmail account, westfloridaliteraryfederation@gmail.com. (Speaking of our Gmail account, that will be changing soon as well to reflect our new name. We'll keep you posted).

The Board urges all members to complete this important survey.

The Design a Logo Contest Has Ended

The ECW Design a Logo Contest ended on April 30. The judges and committee chair will give an update in next month's Legend.

Legend Submissions

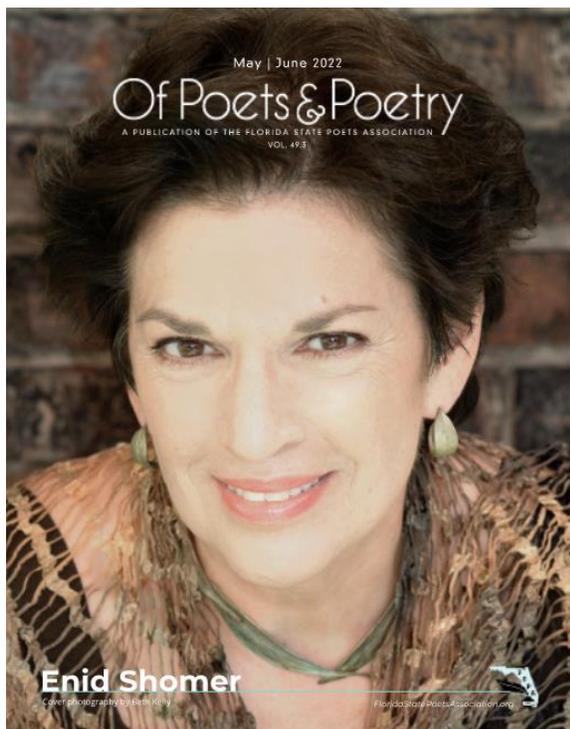
We'd like to celebrate your success and your work. Share your creative writing, literary news, writing achievements, or even writing advice to westfloridaliteraryfederation@gmail.com, and be included in *The Legend's* next issue!

Please include a headshot or other graphic with your news.

Publishing News

Lori Zavada and **Victoria Dym** answered a call from the Florida State Poets Association for poems on the war in Ukraine. Lori's poem, "Golden Hope," and Victoria's poem, "Mariupol," were selected for the May/June issue *Of Poets and Poetry*, a literary magazine published by the Florida State Poets Association.

Andrea Walker's poem, "Under the Same Moon," is also published in *Of Poets and Poetry's* May/June issue on page 39.



You can read it online at www.floridastatepoetsassociation.org.

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.

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.

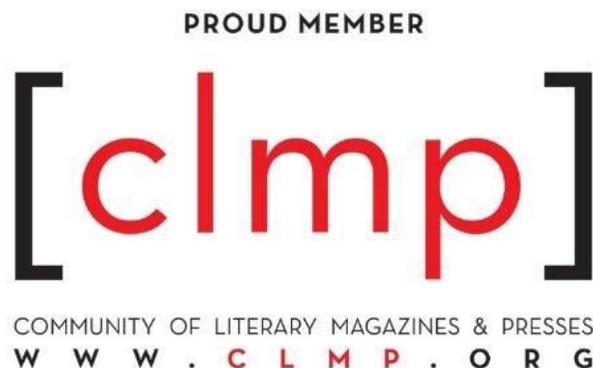
Please contact Diane regarding meetings during this time.

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

- 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: <https://www.facebook.com/West-Florida-Literary-Federation-WFLF-255101747857712>
- “Follow” us on Twitter @WSTFLLITFED

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



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 and then email this form to westfloridaliteraryfederation@gmail.com

or

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