



The Woodlands Writers Guild Newsletter



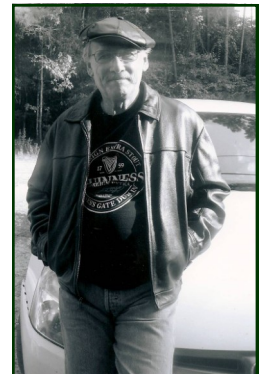
Vol. 2 Issue 4 July/Aug 2010

Have a SAFE 4th of July!!
 P. 8 Check out our **New Logo!!**
 P. 9 Back to **Borders** on Wed.
 P. 5 WWG August 21:
Social Media Seminar

From the desk of...

El Presidente

In this issue I wanted to talk about the pitfalls of promoting your novel. In order to increase your sales, a writer (with no name) has to court newspapers for book reviews, and store managers for book signings. The reviews will help you only if they are done by a publication whose readership is friendly towards your storyline or style. Case in point: Two conservative publications, The Conroe Courier, and The Abilene Star Reporter wrote reviews about Cut & Run, neither resulted in memorable sales. Why? Because both writers stated the book was not wholesome reading, was loaded with sex, and at best was "wickedly funny." Not food for conservatives. Had I landed a newspaper review from either Houston, or Austin, these phrases would have brought me a boatload of sales. Needless to say, when promoting your protagonist, if he's an immoral rascal like Alex Perez, a liberal venue is important. . . . (con't)



What's *Your* Excuse?

As creative writers, we tend to be masters at making excuses.

Some, arguably, are legitimate. Others are just exercises in procrastination.

For example, why aren't you attending the guild meetings? I hear the following:

- ◆ I work
- ◆ It's too far
- ◆ I have nothing to contribute
- ◆ Not child-friendly
- ◆ No motivation

Let me help you with counterpoints:

1. Be thankful you have employment— many don't
2. We are moving **back to Borders** for WEDNESDAY night meetings (1st Wed of the month)- Saturdays still at the library

Inside this issue:

What's Your Excuse?—continued	2
Interview— Jennifer Blanchard	4
Book-to-Market	5
About Us / Monthly Challenges	6
Book Review	7
WWG New Logo	9
WWE Smackdown!!	10

From the President (con't)

Next, when you do a book signing, the store manager will purchase somewhere between thirty and fifty books, increasing your sales totals. After the signings are over, these managers will keep a few for residual sales, and send the rest back to the publisher, killing your numbers. My sales plummeted from 757 to 505 - This business is not for the faint hearted. Although you will find some joy along the way...mostly you'll find the road to be long, uphill, and full of disappointments. Take care.

-Alberto Arcia

What's *Your* Excuse?– con't.

3. You can learn by listening and at least saying you liked or didn't like the piece
4. Readings will be **pre-screened** for those not interested in spicier contributions (G, PG, R, Mature)
5. Ah! Still searching for the Muse? Not to worry– we have many suggestions for you in this edition of the newsletter.

Excuses are real. And often, they are legitimate. Working past the surface reasons (and this is more for “no time / no motivation to write” excuses) is essential if you want to succeed.

Motivation is a bit more challenging. The procrastinator robs us of what could be done – should be done– and before you know it, time is gone. This holds true in life as well as writing.

Of course, I can always dig up an old cattle prod if necessary. Just ask my children.

-Rebecca Harkins, Editor

Motivation just for you from one of our own:

Jennifer Blanchard's blog- <http://procrastinatingwritersblog.com/>

Need a productivity guide? This is the next best thing to a cattle prod.

Her new e-book: *Butt-in-Chair* <http://procrastinatingwritersblog.com/butt-in-chair/>

(see review on p. 7)

Excuses are real.



Fractured Facts—

Rebecca Harkins

Say What??

You think you know what snot is. But it isn't. At least, not according to Susan Kelz Sperling who wrote several books. In her *Poplollies and Bellibones A Celebration of Lost Words* (still available online), she astounds us with the following:

“What is snot?”

Snot is the burned part of the candle wick. Snotty candles would nicely illuminate supper in a cosh.

What is a cosh?

A cosh is a small hut or cottage to retire to after doing your daily darg.

What is darg?

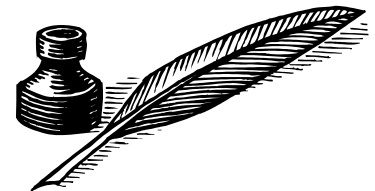
Darg means a day's work. Part of a farmer's darg would be spent preparing mung.

What is mung?

Mung is a combination of ingredients mixed together to make chicken feed.”

And so on. How words change over time is an interesting study. Words change meanings. For example, “man” used to mean “mankind” - both male and female- (generalization) but now, it means male (specialization) [feminists have discouraged its use as a generalization— the s/he thing]. Some words become worse (pejoration) or better (amelioration). Knave used to mean “boy” but now has a negative connotation (i.e. slave or low servant)- pejoration. Knight used to mean “servant” but now has ameliorated into a princely term— knight in shining armor.

In 1837, an interesting taboo was using the word “leg.” Captain Marryat asked a young lady who had taken a spill if she had hurt her leg. She was aghast. She later explained that the taboo word was never used in the presence of ladies. Limb was preferred. Euphemisms also have their place. We no longer have poor folk, we have underprivileged. And, of course, we heavily rely on the sanitation engineer to remove our trash. Whatever word you choose to use, remember that it may be the next century's taboo or vice versa. The next time you meet a word you don't know, don't feel bad. Even *it* may not know what it is supposed to mean.



How words change over time is an interesting study.

The Inside Track

Topics in Writing

Cutting Teeth

Forget chewing on teething biscuits— or pencil erasers—in despair. Beginning (and even older) writers can learn the basics from the following (not comprehensive nor conclusive— just suggestions):

The “Elements of Fiction Writing” series, each volume of which covers a specific topic on writing. Each volume is small – less than ½ inch thick -- and reasonably priced – less than \$15.

“Beginnings, Middles, and Ends” – Nancy Kress

“Conflict, Action & Suspense” – William Noble

“Scene & Structure” – Jack Bickham

“Plot” – Ansen Dibell

“Characters & Viewpoint” – Orson Scott Card

“Description” – Monica Wood

“Setting” – Jack Bickham

Other resources are available, and many of us at the guild have our “personal favorites.”

So ask...

Jennifer got the writing bug at age 13.

Interview– Jennifer Blanchard

Taking risks is what it’s all about. Jennifer got the writing bug at age 13 when she wrote a 120-page novella... in three days. Perhaps it is the stubbornness of a teenager that she hasn’t quite lost (only refined), but she’s been writing ever since. She’s not selfish about it either– her life goal is to mentor and motivate people in both writing (via her procrastinators blog) and health (she is a certified holistic health coach). Ultimately, she believes that everyone can achieve their dreams.

To succeed, Jennifer teaches people to use creativity tools– writing, journaling, cooking, and vision boards. By taking risks (in changing writing habits and health habits), she is able to help others reach goals. One of her current projects is the Procrastinating Writers blog (<http://procrastinatingwritersblog.com/>).

Other ways she hopes to affect change in the world is to become self-employed and mobile. This, says Jennifer, will help her spend her time traveling- staying a few months in other areas around the world- and still enjoy life.

Taking risks– sending out queries, making mistakes, entering contests– are the ways we grow. By taking on these challenges in bite-sized steps, we achieve our goals and have the confidence to reach the next step or create new goals.

Someday, Jennifer wants to write a full-length novel. Another goal is to donate money to charity. Millions. And I bet she will. Her energy is contagious. Her college degree in Journalism has given her some of the tools she uses as a coach, mentor, and motivator.

-R. Harkins, Ed.

Book-to-Market Editor's Pick of the Month

Favorite Social Media Website:

Social Media Examiner

<http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/>

Michael Stelzner is the white paper guru. Just about the time the world was discovering how to use social media more effectively, he started a website. Its purpose was mainly to educate his followers on how to capitalize on this new trend. This is not your chicken soup stuff. This is meat and potatoes. Short, sweet, and to the point—my favorite kind. I don't have a lot of time nor interest to wade through blather. Stelzner tells it like it is and shows you, as needed, what to do step-by-step with pictures. Yep, that's my kind of resource.

Example:

6/25/2010 guest blogger Nathan Hangen: "How To Manage Your Social Media Marketing In 10 Minutes Daily"

6/22/2010 guest blogger Christine Gallagher: "4 Facebook Marketing Myths And How to Overcome Them"

**In essence,
marketing your
book depends on
some form of Web
presence.**

According to C. Hope Clark, your marketing platform (basically how many people in your network) depends on social media applications to get your book out there. In essence, marketing your book depends on some form of Web presence. Any teenager can help you set up a simple account and if they are one of your own, you can cut a deal.

I am a provider on Elance and through that I get a discount with VistaPrint business cards plus a 3-page website for free (<http://www.wordsurgeon.vpweb.com>). Note: this was very simple to set up and took me about 15 minutes. I chose the color/theme, typed my words in the box, and voilà— a website. Now, I am the resident expert. Hooray for the power of advertising! I can add that website to whatever I want: business card, e-mail correspondence, letter...

The bottom line: Stelzner's Social Media Examiner gives you the information you need in a timely manner and in only a few short minutes. You can't find that too often.

-Rebecca Harkins



About Us

The Woodlands Writers Guild is a group of writers who gather together to motivate each other to write something— anything. The main unifying theme is that we write— some of us to the point of living and breathing words and all things lexical.

Board of Directors:

- President (Alberto Arcia), -Secretary Pro Tem (Rebecca Harkins),
- Vice President (Ali Nulla), -Treasurer (Ray Fitzgerald),
- Marketing Director (Jennifer Blanchard)

Informally, we have the Guild Elder (currently Frank Bayer; appointment made by the current President of any given term) and Newsletter Editor (Rebecca Harkins). The Guild Elder is chosen based on respect, accomplishment, and age (wisdom of the ages). Newsletter Editor is a volunteer position.

July & August Challenges

Monthly Writing Challenge

Back when I was quilting, we had monthly “challenges”- based on color themes, patterns, or a workshop. For the Woodlands Writers Guild, these challenges will be easier— like mini-contests; but simpler.

July

Try writing for a contest. There are many available. Fundsfor-writers.com has a list to start with. Free newsletter will give you lots of opportunities for prose or poetry.

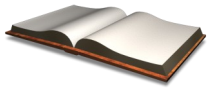
August

Attend the seminar on Aug 21 and learn something new— then apply it!

The idea is to take one page and write based on the challenge of the month.

*-Rebecca Harkins,
Editor*





Book Review

Bob Dailey

Livres des Cuisinière

Bob is on vacation this issue, so I'll amuse you with a gander at a few choice books in my collection. If you were to view my library, you would think I was very widely read. Most of my books, however, serve a purpose. For instance, cookbook collecting is *not* a hobby of mine. I have a few old friends rescued from my childhood. These contain favorite recipes. I have a collection of handwritten ones I took from my grandmother's vast collection. Although limited, my personal collection is unique.

In keeping with my interest in antiques, I have *The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book* by Fannie Merritt Farmer. It is dated 1920 and is on quality paper. You would think it was printed in 1950 or so. I like this one because I also collect antique kitchen gadgets and the old recipes call for old gadgets. So what if I never make 'oyster and macaroni croquettes'? If I ever need to, it's there. One unique part of this book is the old advertisements that follow the index.

Another 'old' book, many editions later (2008), is *Escoffier— The Complete Guide to the Art of Modern Cookery*. It will interest you to know 'modern' is defined as 1903 (1st ed.) -1921 (4th ed.). So why Escoffier? He set the ground rules of French cooking that Julia Child followed. Unique aspects of this book are the recipes, which, although separated by categories, are listed numerically from 1 to 5012, gives a glossary that also defines the French terms, and gives a fascinating history of Escoffier (son of a blacksmith who became a world-renown chef in his early 20's). Metric, Imperial, and U.S. measurements are given so that the average housewife, no matter where her domicile, could easily follow the directions. I noted that to make one recipe, it requires reading two or three others to complete the tasks. The most unique section lists the menus which are dated '10th June 1905' or 'Carlton Hotel and Restaurant- London.' There is also a wine list and historical occasion listed with some. These are, of course, in French, but then, this is a French cookbook translated into English.

The Early American Cookbook— Authentic Favorites for the Modern Kitchen was bought in Pennsylvania at a gift store. Usually, I avoid these. However, the recipes were absolutely fascinating. Example: 'Kit Carson's Pack Mule Indian Pudding'. Basically, it is cornmeal mush, but the title grabs you. This book goes along with my 1960's *Pennsylvania Dutch Cookbook* which has a Shoo-Fly Cake- which I had heard of in stories only. This one is a bit more serious and has great recipes.

Jacques Pépin, twenty three years after Child, wrote *Complete Techniques* which features 'more than 1,000 cooking methods and recipes, all demonstrated in thousands of step-by-step photographs.' Tricks of the trade— now that's what I call apprenticeship-from-a-distance. I got to see a famous chef in LaJitas once (who now is in Dallas, I think) and he told us you really only need a good cutting board and awesome knife. That seems to be true. I watched him clean out the fridge and make a meal that they would sell for \$15 per plate... but I digress. I like the photographs in Pépin's book because I can also see what utensils I need. The drawback is that I discovered what headcheese is and exactly what to do when you cook brains. To each, his own, they say. You can't beat a photograph, though, when you are unable to observe the masters in person.

-Rebecca Harkins, Editor

First came Escoffier,
then came Julia
Child, then came
Jacques Pépin.

W W G New Logo

At long last, the Woodlands Writers Guild now has an updated logo. How we got there is not as interesting as the fact that the new one exists. The concept is supposed to blend the old (quill) with the new (computer) without sacrificing either.



Sharon Johnson, of Phoenix Design Group, created our logo. Here is her business card for those interested in using her services.



This is more than
just another
motivational book

Butt-in-Chair by Jennifer Blanchard and Joe Williams

—A Review—

Blanchard's subtitle says it all- "a no-excuses writing productivity guide for writers who struggle to get started." Tools of the trade, for this exercise, is a notebook, pen, desire to write, and commitment. Sounds similar to what my personal exercise trainer tells me. This is more than just another motivational book- it is an e-book/workbook. Page 15 gives the link to a quiz to tell you what kind of procrastinator you are. Further on, around page 35, you learn what to do to overcome whatever is holding you back. On page 53, you learn how to un-schedule your life. Combining this with a writing schedule helps you see how much time you really have for writing. Her section, "17 Ways to Find 10 Minutes to Write," offers some inspiration as well. Even though you have a computer, you really do need a journal. Why? See page 86. There are so many cool ideas in this workbook, it's definitely worth the investment.

-Rebecca Harkins, Editor





Bulletin Board

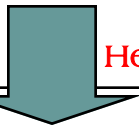
Guild Member Notes and Upcoming Events

Wanted:

Contributors! E-mail techno_pen@yahoo.com (Subject: ATTN Newsletter Editor) (WWG reserves the right to publish- and/or edit all material)

DEADLINE for September/October submissions: August 15, 2010

Note: in 2011, the newsletter will run quarterly



Heads up- WED at Borders, SAT at Mitchell Library

Meeting Dates: (1st Wed; 3rd Sat)

July	7	6:30 PM Wed @ Borders
July	17	10 AM Sat @ library
Aug	4	6:30 PM Wed @ Borders
Aug	21	10 AM Sat @ library

LOCATIONS:

Borders in The Woodlands (WED)

Mitchell Library, The Woodlands (SAT)

(George and Cynthia Woods Mitchell Library)

8125 Ashlane Way The Woodlands, TX77382

Houston Writers Guild

July 17 - workshop with Bev Vincent (wrote about Stephen King) at the Sugar Land Library, 550 Eldridge from 10:30 until 1 pm. This is **free** workshop if you have never attended a Houston Writers Guild event.

Aug. 28 - Christie Craig, a rising star on the local scene with 6 books published, 4 YA novels on contract, and 3 new romance novels on contract, and over 3000 magazine appearances.

Non-member: \$25 for both seminars

To be a member: \$40 for both seminars PLUS membership, 4 critique meetings (rest of 2010) and discount to OCT. 9 conference with Sam Havens and New York agents.

Checks made to (and mailing address):

Houston Writers Guild, 12523 Folkcrest Way Stafford TX 77477

- Roger at rpaulding@sbcglobal.net

EVENTS / SPEAKERS

- ◆ None scheduled for July.
- ◆ August 21- Social Media Seminar (at regular WWG meeting at the library)

NEWS OF NOTE

◆ Meeting Location

The Woodlands Writers Guild has decided to keep to Borders @ The Woodlands on Wednesdays and the Mitchell Library on Sat.

◆ Social Media Seminar

More details will follow... keep tuned to your email.

◆ **What are You working on?**

I'm currently in the middle of about 8 short stories for various contests. I am also going through all my old poems to see if they are inspirations for new short stories. I keep toying with the idea of publishing my teaching primer, but who knows. So, what are *you* working on?

-Editor



WWG Writing News and Notes

"The Jazz Girls and the Flyboy" by Alan B. Berkowitz and Allen K. Kinchen

This historic fictional novel by Alan B. Berkowitz and Allen K. Kinchen covers a period of 1937-1948. It takes the reader on a journey of the lives of two Jewish teen neighbors from their flight from the Nazi persecution of worn-torn Germany to the United States. It is a story of tragedy, revenge, love and redemption. Our heroes take you on their new lives adventures, she, as a jazz pianist and entertainer in the Jazz Capital, New Orleans; He, as a hot shot pilot with a vendetta against the Nazis who killed all of his family. At the end of the war, his mission changes as he devotes himself to helping the establishment of a Jewish State in Israel. This book is a page turner. (241 pages)

<http://www.thejazzgirlsandtheflyboy.com> link is there for amazon.com

I would like to thank all of the WWG members who were so kind to support me at my book signing (*Survival After Death*) at Borders in the Woodlands on Saturday afternoon June 5.

-- Jo Ann Schemerhorn [Jo Ann is also the author of *Travel With Me To...The Galapagos Islands*]

Memoir writers tips: <http://www.writing-world.com/creative/index.shtml>

-Rebecca Harkins, Editor

**Join
Now**

Dues \$20 annually.

The Woodlands Writers
Guild, P.O. Box 132221,
The Woodlands, TX
77393-2221

What's *Your* Motivation?

Ever watch wrestling? I used to watch a smidgen of old-school style WWF and, yeah, well, all that. Today, it's WWE (World Wrestling Entertainment). No, I don't watch it anymore except briefly when one of my sons has it on and I sneak up and pretend to headlock or body slam him- but that's just a mom and son thing. The point is, the rest of the more mature, grown-up world is past that and going about trying to make money or whatever on the Internet. But check this out- this 'far from mainstream' group has knocked EVERYONE out of the block in its social media application (**slamming** ABC.com, CBS.com, NBC.com, NASCAR.com, PerezHilton.com, NHL.com and UFC.com).

If they can do it, so can we. -Rebecca Harkins, Editor

<http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/social-media-smackdown-wwe-headlocks-social-media/>