



## January 2020 Newsletter

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## President's Column

By: Leah Hinton

**Happy New Year!**

The New Year often means resolutions for many. And while I'm skeptical, cynical

and overly sarcastic in many areas of my life, I can't help but jump on board the resolution-band-wagon every year with renewed hope and vigor.

I used to go all in. I would make resolutions regarding health and wellness, money, corporate ladders, maintaining gratitude as a life tenant and above all, resolving to do all things with kindness. Over the years many of these have fallen off the New Year's Resolution list. Perhaps it was repeat failures or ugh, even thinking about hitting the gym at 4 AM to get in that pre-work-workout that had me re-evaluate my resolution process. But one thing is certain, when I took the stress off and seriously limited the areas in which I made resolutions, I actually started meeting my goals. And that's a darn good feeling.

I will forever leave gratitude and kindness on my list, even though they tend to be more mantras for my life as opposed to resolutions, as I don't want to lose sight of those. In the end, I'm only worth my word, and integrity. And if nothing else ends up on my tombstone, it will at least say "She was kind." I'm pretty sure they won't put on there that I failed at hundreds of resolutions and never stuck with that 4 AM workout longer than a month.

After great consideration, I decided my resolutions each year would have to deal with issues that spark my passions, or achievements which mean a great deal to me. It is like I flipped a switch, or a light went on, or like fireworks exploded overhead. (Can you tell working on similes is on my list this year?)

Narrowing my scope made way for success. Since this realization, every resolution I've made has to do with writing. Outside of those few things most humans collectively hold dear over everything else, my writing was top of my list. I never want to think I've got it all down pat or that I'm beyond learning and I never want to stop writing -- so it made sense that I would encourage myself to focus on something writing-related each year.

If writing is close to your heart, which I can't help but think it must be with your continued support of Writers Guild Texas, then why don't you resolve to narrow your scope and make small, achievable writing goals.

How about you resolve to:

- Read a book on the craft of writing; or
- Take a class on story structure; or
- Learn about a new form of writing -- poetry, stage writing, screenplays, non-fiction, children's stories etc.; or
- Write 500 words a month, or a thousand, or more; or
- Socialize with other writers as creativity loves partners in crime; or
- If you are a pantsier, try an outline; or
- If you outline, try to write from your head and heart with no outline.

But above all else, know that writing is a balm for your weary, creative, sometimes forgotten artistic side and you **DESERVE** to write.

I hope this gives you something to think about and I hope you do resolve to put the focus on some area of your writing life. As this year plays out, know that the WGT members and board are here to encourage and assist you where able. Never be afraid to ask questions. Never be too shy to join in.

Till next time, may all the pretty words be yours,

**Leah Hinton**

President

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If you're interested in volunteering, please email us at [writersguildtx@gmail.com](mailto:writersguildtx@gmail.com) or ask at the next general meeting!

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## Meeting Reminder: January 27 – "Show What? Tell Who?" with Lori Freeland



[Lori Freeland](#)—author, editor, writing coach—holds a degree in psychology from the University of Wisconsin. An encourager and teacher at heart, she's presented multiple workshops at North Texas Christian Writers, Orange County Christian Writers, SoCal Christian Writers, Mount Hermon, Permian Basin, Romance Writers

of America National, and the West Texas Writers' Academy. An acquisitions editor for Armonia Publishing, former editor for *The Christian Pulse*, and a regular contributor to *Crosswalk.com*, she writes nonfiction, articles, blogs, short stories, and novels from YA to adult. When she's not hanging with her husband, drinking too much coffee, or worrying about her kids, she loves to mess with the lives of the imaginary people living in her head.

## December Meeting Recap of the Holiday Party



Thank you members for making 2019 such a memorable year! As we cruise into 2020, let's focus on our accomplishments and strive for an even better year this year. Our holiday party really seemed to hone in on the theme of the writing community. Be sure to talk to other members, discuss your likes and dislikes, and find your tribe. Let's share our stories and our memories and make some new friends this year!





Happy Holidays and we hope you had a fantastic new year!

## Flash Fiction Contest - Honorable Mention

### ***My Summer Job*** **By: Brenda Guyton**

I typed letters. No, actually it was the same letter lots of times. As a 17-year-old freshman at a junior college in west Texas in the late 1960's, I spent the time between classes as a work-study student sitting in Mrs. Betty Friesinger's office typing letters for her. (The job was boring, but at least she had an IBM Executive typewriter.) She was the head of the school's Business Administration Department, and she must have belonged to every business organization in Texas. Almost every day, she made up a letter that needed to be sent to everyone. A copy would not suffice. Each one had to be an original.

Since I was allowed to leave early if I finished the stack before quitting time, I tended to be faster than I was accurate. I would give her the stack of letters hot off the press and tell her I had finished them all. She would reply, "We'll see." Then she would inspect each letter, and if she found the slightest error, she would simply hand it back to me. I often had to work past quitting time (with no extra pay) to re-do them. No telling how many gallons of white-out I used that semester.

When Mrs. Friesinger left for the summer break, I needed to find a job to tide me over through summer school. As a teenager, I had never actually applied for a job. The ads in the newspaper were sparse, but then I saw one possibility. It was an ad for a pay clerk for oil field workers. No experience necessary. I tried to sound confident on the phone, but I was so nervous my voice shook. They hired me right then, on the spot, no questions asked.

The hours were very short. Every Tuesday and Friday from 6:00 to 8:00. The pay was ridiculously good for working only four hours a week.

I had a hard time finding the place. Almost all the commercial buildings in town were gray cinderblock, sometimes painted sandy beige. This one was no exception, but it didn't even have a sign on it – just the address. It looked abandoned, as did its neighbors.

The thick metal door with two locks looked somewhat beaten up, but I knocked on it. (My nerves were a mess. I tried to relax the death grip I had on my purse.)

A sturdy gray-haired matron in a flower-print dress unlocked and opened the door for me. She said she was expecting me, introduced herself as Mildred, and guided me inside. Since it was almost time for the men to pick up their checks, she left the outside door unlocked. However, she locked the door between the hall and the little office we entered.

The small room held two more women, and everyone introduced themselves. They explained that the roughnecks and roustabouts would be arriving soon to get their



paychecks. The checks were already sealed in envelopes, so we just had to hand them out when the men came. There was a heavy sliding glass window built into the wall between the office and the entryway.

It dawned on me that I was getting paid VERY well to just hand out envelopes.

The ladies unlocked the window and slid it open. Then they showed me the baseball bat under the counter and told me to use it if necessary.

What???

The first group of men burst through the door, and it slammed against the concrete wall with a loud bang. The huge thick-necked muscle-bound men were covered with mud, sweat and oil. I was not surprised at their appearance since my high-school boyfriend had looked (and smelled) like that when he worked as a roustabout during the summers.

What did surprise me were the bottles of beer and whiskey, the popping of handfuls of (probably illegal) pills, the loud and inventive cursing, and the feral rage in their eyes. They were furious!!

“That \*\*\*\*\* toolpusher better not have docked me again this week. I’ll have his \*\*\*\*\* for lunch!!!”

And much more.

More men pushed through the door after them, and suddenly the hallway was crammed with large roaring beasts.

We were trapped. There was only one door, and it led to that hallway. It was pandemonium and the noise was so loud, we couldn’t hear each other. Thank goodness the envelopes were in alphabetical order by last name, so the four of us scrambled to put envelopes into extended grubby hands as fast as they shouted their name.

Envelopes were ripped open. Curses increased. One enraged man started climbing through the window and put a hand on our counter to lever himself over the window sill.

Mildred grabbed the baseball bat and yelled, "Axel if you don't back up NOW, I'm gonna brain you!!! And you know I'll do it!!"

He stopped midway through the window and his loud yelling turned into loud whining, "G\*\*\*\*\* Mildred, this isn't right!! How can you keep working for those bastards?"

She kept talking to him and he slowly backed up.

After that, the men kept coming, and it took over an hour to hand out all the checks. When they were gone, my ears were ringing.

I slumped down into a hard chair, expecting the ladies to assure me that this must have been the worst uproar ever.

Instead, Mildred smiled and said that day was really mild and it went remarkably well. The other two ladies agreed with her.

When they started reminiscing about the times they had to crack skulls, I grabbed my purse and waved goodbye to them. I practically ran to my car.

I got a job as a model for the summer art classes at the college. Fortunately, we did not live in a "sophisticated" town, so the college didn't allow nude models. I got to wear my leotards and keep my dignity.

And I didn't have to carry a baseball bat.

Boy, was I glad to see Mrs. Freisinger that fall.



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