

July 2020 Newsletter

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President's Column

By Leah Hinton

Everyone,

Have you ever been lost in the effort of a thing?

That's where I find myself today as I ponder what message I could possibly write to you all. So pardon me as I stroll through my thoughts for a bit.

The world is in a weird place. Perhaps even more so than when I last checked in. We continue to fight Covid, many of us are even now sheltering in place. We are facing times which feel surreal and in many ways we are still isolated from the life

we used to live. And I can't seem to go anywhere without my mask making my glasses fog up. But the sun keeps shining in a vast blue sky and if you haven't seen them lately, the sunsets have been remarkable. Ice cream is still delightful, trains still sound like freedom on a summer breeze and lightning bugs still flicker at dusk by the pond at the end of my street. Even in the craziness there are good things you can count on.

I was traveling in central Texas last week listening to the radio in my car. I don't often do that as I typically listen to music on my phone because, well, I REALLY hate commercials and DJ chatter. You see, I love music but am no big fan of noise — but I had forgotten my phone charger and my phone was dead. I was miles from anywhere I could buy a phone charger, so to combat the lonely, sleep-inducing hum of the highway I tuned in to a local FM channel.

The radio station there had “station identification” breaks every so often paired with commercials for new car sales and services offering protection from identity thieves and promises of big payouts from tough personal injury attorneys. Then they did something I hadn't encountered before. Perhaps you've heard something similar. They played recordings of plain and simple conversations about mundane things from life pre-covid and marketed these vignettes as memories of life “the way it was and never will be again.”

I rather hope you take umbrage at this means of marketing, as I did, as I'm not in the business of spreading hopelessness and frankly feel they shouldn't be either. As a matter of fact, I feel like there is within each of us a true responsibility to hold our neighbors up, and in doing so be held up as well — through all of this. Through every last stinking bit. Call it what you will, grit, endurance, perseverance, but I call it being human.

On this road trip I saw yard signs that read “we are in this together” which far better suits my frame of mind and I hope it does yours too. This helped renew my faith a bit and put my mind more at ease as I covered more miles of this beautiful state.

We ARE in this together. Most assuredly. And I urge you to reach out to your

faithful WGT board should you need anything. We are happy to help or find where you might get the help you need. Promise me you will. I mean it.

Now, on to the business of writing since I know strolling through the meandering thoughts in my brain isn't why you open your digital newsletter each month.

The year is both creeping by and zooming by in a flash... and speaking of flashes it's about that time of year where the WGT focus is on flash fiction. We are fortunate in that we are a group of talented individuals and I am constantly impressed with the work our group produces. With that being said, I challenge each of you talented writers to submit a piece to our flash fiction contest this year. (Details forthcoming.) It's a great way to show Covid who's boss. And years from now when people ask you how you spent your time in the quarantine days of 2020 you can honestly say you spent your time honing your craft, building your art, being productive and being your authentic artist self. That alone will be a coup and those who don't "Shall think themselves accurs'd." * (Okay, so that wasn't as rousing as King Henry V's St. Crispin Day speech, but you know me, I have to give a nod to the Bard where I can.)

For our purposes, your entry cannot have more than 1000 words so choose them wisely. Your story must have a beginning, middle, and end. And when I say that I mean don't just send in the first 1000 words of your 8,000,000 LOL word fantasy epic (masterpiece) —which yes we all want to read but not as part of this contest. We want to know what happens to your protagonist within those 1000 words. It's not as easy as it sounds so buckle up and start thinking about your story ideas now.

We have exciting speakers coming soon too. We are still hosting our meetings online for the foreseeable future. This is kind of cool because it means you can go back and see the meetings again and again so you don't miss a thing. These video archives will end up being a valuable resource for you as you continue to learn more about your craft.

If you've been missing the meetings because Facebook just isn't your thing, please

reach out and let one of the board members know. We will try to figure out a way to accommodate your needs. We don't want you to miss a thing.

And while I'm on the subject of digital meetings, I really want to say thank you to our incredible board. I know most of you have met them but for those of you who haven't, there are folks behind the scenes constantly working hard to bring you quality programming (I sound like I'm about to start a pledge drive) in a format that is new to us all. So please take a moment and reach out to say thank you to Courtney Larsen, Gary White, Amelia Mueller, JoAnn Turner, Tamara Warner and Barbara Mathes (who is still a huge help to the board.) They are why this group still has a pulse and I am grateful for each of them.

Till next time. I miss your faces. I miss your voices. You deserve your art. Don't forget it.

Leah

* Henry V, Act 4 Scene 3

WGT Board Members

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

Online Meeting Reminder



Join us Monday, July 27, 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm, on the WGT Facebook Page for a watch party featuring Lori Freeland. She will discuss *Subtext in Fiction*.

Lori will teach us how to read between the lines and use subtext in fiction to our advantage in our next project.

Please respond to the event announcement if you think you can make it. See you then!

June Meeting Recap

The monthly meeting held online June 29 featured Daniel Wells' presentation, *Hands-On Development*.

Daniel, the Creative Director of the DFW Writers Room, focused on the screenplay and feature film development process.

He presented a logline exercise which attendees used to work out the who (protagonist), what (what's the conflict?), why (what's at risk?), and how (what obstacle must be overcome?), as well as what makes their story unique or sets it apart. A great thought exercise! If you can pitch the essence of your film in the form of a logline, you can better crystallize the story in your own mind and can

more effectively communicate it to others, including agents, producers, and others in a position to help you bring your creative work to life. The great thing about it is that you can apply the logline exercise to any fictional form or genre.

Daniel spoke at length about the Producer's Mindset, reinforcing the concept with a second useful handout. He talked about the different types and levels of producers who work to get a film made.

If you've ever thought about writing a screenplay, or if you've done so but want to learn more about the form and up your screenwriting game, seek out Daniel at the DFW Writers Room.

Thanks to Daniel Wells for an invigorating, informative presentation.

Notes From the Editor

The WGT Critique Group, online version, met again on Wednesday, July 15. It was a great session with lots of good back and forth, insightful commentary, helpful, practical suggestions, and just plain old personal interaction.

Let us know if you plan to attend next month by responding to the Facebook event when it's posted, or by emailing us at writersguildtx@gmail.com.

Till next time, happy storytelling.

—Gary
