

 Chattanooga
Writers' Guild

News & Updates

Greetings, fellow writers! One of my dear friends is moving away next month, and as she was Marie Kondo-ing her house, she came across a few books that she thought I would enjoy. The first, a non-fiction account of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition which was marred by the H.H. Holmes murders, looked promising. The second, an award-winning science fiction novel about ill-fated Jesuits visiting an alien planet, also looked interesting. I raised an eyebrow at the third, a top-of-the-toilet-tank book that my friend passed on to me only because the title is a four-letter word and she knew I'd be amused. I placed that one in its appropriate place at home and took the other two to the beach last week.

After three days of really, truly trying to care, I gave up and downloaded some crossword puzzles. Both books committed the sin of giving too much backstory upfront. The non-fiction book thought I should learn about America's first skyscrapers before I could learn about America's first serial killer. And the fiction story began in 2059, backtracked to 2019, leapt forward, jumped back, leapt forward, jumped back, and then went back even further to some undisclosed time, perhaps 2009. Both authors wanted to provide context for the events which provided the meat of the story. But I didn't want to know about the meat's life on the farm! I just wanted its ribs on my plate!

And yet, I feel I'm in the minority in this opinion. Both books were written by successful authors. The fiction story even has a sequel. My friend liked them enough to share them with me. There's surely thousands of other readers out there who feel similarly. There's at least two agents and two editors, anyway.

So this makes me wonder: Is it possible, or even acceptable, or better yet *desirable* to commit literary "sins" such as beginning with backstory or flashback? Have the rules changed? Do publishers now *want* you to do all the things you've been told not to? Are we breaking the rules now, is that what we're doing??

Well, those two authors did it and got away with it. And who cares what one sunburned lady on a crowded beach thinks, anyway?

I'm Kate Landers and I write myself in and out of word tornados. I also answer the emails sent to newsletter@chattanoogawritersguild.org.

Our Monthly Program for May will feature **Deborah Levine**

THE LIBERATOR SERIES:

ART OF THE HISTORICAL MEMOIR

Deborah Levine will explore the new genre of historical memoir through a discussion of her

book, *The Liberator's Daughter*, and its sequel, *The*

Magic Marble Tree. She shares her father's letters

written during World War II when he was a US military intelligence

officer assigned to interrogate Nazi prisoners of war. She also shares her

mother's wartime case studies pioneering Special Education and how both

parents inspired her own life's work. Deborah describes the challenges of

weaving these documents into a memoir and making history engaging and



personal with a 'Show - Not Tell' writing style.

Deborah Levine is an award-winning author of 13 books including, *Going Southern*, which was featured on CSPAN BOOK TV. *Teaching Curious Christians about Judaism* was taken to the Vatican as a gift for Pope Francis and won a National Catholic Press Association award. *The Liberator's Daughter* was named a Finalist in the 2017 National Indie Book competition. Her articles are featured in The Chicago Tribune, Online Wall Street Journal, The Huffington Post, and The Chattanooga Times Free Press where she is an opinion columnist. Deborah served as the Research Coordinator at UTC's College of Engineering & Computer Science and is published in several academic journals: Harvard Divinity School Bulletin, The Journal of Ecumenical Studies, and Journal of Public Management & Social Policy. Deborah founded the American Diversity Report e-zine (ADR) in 2006 and as Editor-in-Chief, she coordinates dozens of contributing writers from around the world.

The program will be held May 14 from 6 - 8 PM at the Downtown Library, 1001 Broad Street, in the Auditorium. Street parking is free after 6.



Thank you, Susan O'Dell Underwood, for a fantastic April program celebrating National Poetry Month!

Member News & Accolades

~Rachel Crumble was a finalist in Porter House for her poem "In Praise of Detours."

~Cynthia Young was nominated for the Georgia Authors Award.

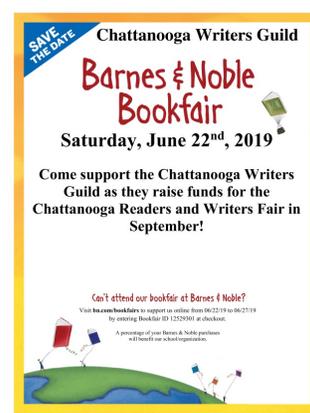
~Wesley Sims has a new book of poems, "Taste of Change," published by Iris Press.

Congratulations to you all on your hard work and achievements!

Fundraiser for the Chattanooga Readers and Writers Fair

Announcing the Chattanooga Writers' Guild, Barnes and Noble Book Fair. On June 22 when customers refer to CWG, a portion of sales will be donated to our organization to support the Chattanooga Readers and Writers Fair. We will have CWG member authors read from and sell their books between 2 and 4 p.m. We will also read in the children's area at 11 a.m.

Members may come as volunteer participants or as shoppers.



Our SPRING WRITING CONTEST is open! Send us your fiction, non-fiction, and poetry! Prizes include cash and publication in our anthology. Contest ends May 15. Details at chattanoogawritersguild.org. We have three award-winning judges this year:



POETRY

William Woolfitt is the author of three poetry collections: *Beauty Strip* (Texas Review Press, 2014), *Charles of the Desert* (Paraclete Press, 2016), and *Spring Up Everlasting* (Mercer University Press, forthcoming). His fiction chapbook *The Boy with Fire in His Mouth* (2014) won the Epiphany Editions contest judged by Darin Strauss. He edits *Speaking of Marvels*, a blog that features interviews with authors of chapbooks.



NON-FICTION

Thomas Alan Holmes, a member of the East Tennessee State University English faculty, lives in Johnson City. His creative and scholarly work has appeared in *Appalachian Journal*, *The South Atlantic Review*, *The North American Review*, and *Still: The Journal*. *The Fire That Breaks: Gerard Manley Hopkins's Poetic Legacies*, co-edited with Daniel Westover, will be published in late 2019 by Clemson U P.



FICTION

Darnell Amoult is the prize-winning author of *Galaxie Wagon: Poems and What Travels With Us: Poems*, and the novel *Sufficient Grace*. She has received the Weatherford Award for Appalachian Literature, SIBA Poetry Book of the Year Award, Mary Frances Hobson Medal for Arts and Letters, and in 2007 was named Tennessee Writer of the Year by the Tennessee Writers Alliance.

Mad Blab

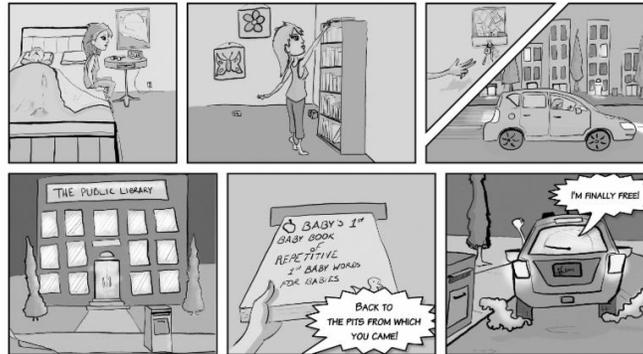
How to play: Say the following nonsensical sentences aloud and try to guess the name of the famous literary work you're saying. Answers at the bottom.

**Hen turf few width eave ham pyre
Hat lass sure hugged
Ass ear he's oven four tune Nate he fence**

Word to Know: **Perfunctory**, adj.

Hasty and without attention to detail; as a formality only

He checked the guest list with a perfunctory courtesy before turning her away.



Job Opportunity

A local group is seeking a writer to write one blog/essay a month on a family that has been in Chattanooga for four generations and has flourished. The employer will work with the writer to identify good subjects. Interested parties should contact **Douglas Daugherty**:

(work) 423-541-1717

(cell) 423-488-0435

doug@hamiltonflourishing.org

Member Spotlight with **Janie Dempsey Watts**

What was the best concert you've ever been to? I fell in love for the first time when I was 13--with George Harrison of the Beatles. So when I heard a contest on a Chattanooga radio station to win tickets to a concert, I filled out 50 or so entry slips every night and mailed them in, about 500 total. Not surprisingly, I won two tickets to an upcoming concert in Jacksonville, FL. I found another Beatlemaniac, and she convinced her father to drive us there, despite Hurricane Dora which had just passed through Florida. We arrived to find the hotel windows taped up, but we settled into our hotel rooms. A few hours before the concert, we heard screaming coming from somewhere near the hotel. Following the sound of the fans, we found a group swarming around a limo parked in a driveway next to the hotel. Soon the four Beatles came out, walking towards the limo. We went wild! I was closest to John, and I jumped across the limo's front hood and stretched out my arm as far as I could to touch his sleeve as he passed. Then someone pulled me back. The Beatles climbed into the limo and slowly drove away through the throng of fans. Later, at the concert we cried and screamed through every song. George, my first love, was actually in person although he looked smaller than I had imagined. From my spot in the audience, far from the stage, I sent him all my loving.



What does your writing area look like? My writing area is filled with stacks of

relevant research materials such as newspaper clippings, photographs, notebooks, and yellow legal pads where I've scribbled notes. Always I keep several black fine-tip ballpoint pens and yellow pencils. Sometimes I have an object that reminds me of what I'm working on at the moment. And two framed photos of my late mother are on my desktop to cheer me on. She was the most creative person I've ever known, and always encouraging.

Where is your favorite place to spend a beautiful spring day? Certainly not behind a desk. On sunny days, and even on chilly days, I find peace walking back to visit my horse in the pasture. I enjoy listening to the birds and looking for rabbits. I am inspired by nature, and the land where Native Americans once roamed and hunted.

Where is your favorite place in Chattanooga? The Bluff View Art District. The feel of it reminds me of Paris--the sculpture garden, shops, and restaurants. I like to walk through the passageways and pretend I'm somewhere else. I find the area so intriguing, I included it in my second novel, *Return to Taylor's Crossing*, which spans from 1959 to the present. One of the main characters, Abednego, stays there at a B & B as he seeks to find his first love, who he was torn apart from during a racially motivated attack when they were a young couple. There's even a fictional Bluff View art shop featured.

Which award are you proudest of? There are two honors that stand out. My second novel, mentioned above, won third place in the Yerby Award for Fiction. Frank Yerby was a successful African-American author of 33 novels. At the Augusta Literary Festival, I lined up with other finalists to await the results. My heart raced as we waited. When my name was announced, I could not believe it! They gave me a fancy wood and brass plaque which now graces my office. The other honor that I will always cherish is from the Catoosa Citizens for Literacy. They chose my first novel, *Moon Over Taylor's Ridge*, as their community-wide read in 2013. I was especially happy that this novel was used to encourage literacy in our community. And they also gave me a lovely crystal book weight inscribed with their logo, a shooting star. I feel reading can help everyone rise above their circumstances and aim high.

Who do you nominate for next time? Carol White

Mad Blab answers: Interview with the Vampire; Atlas Shrugged; A Series of Unfortunate Events

STAY CONNECTED

