

The Creative Writer

www.whitecountyc creativewriters.org

March's lesson on contest writing should boost WCCW members' chances of winning at 2018 AWC

Kim Vernon conducted a well-received session on how to write for contests during the March meeting.

Vernon is a prolific contest writer with a wide range in subject matter and different approaches to character study and how to thicken the plot.

The Creative Writer

is a monthly newsletter for the White County Creative Writers of Searcy, Ark.

If you have news stories or photos to share, send them to del.garrett.s0ke@gmail.com.

Deadline for reader submission is seven days prior to each month's meeting. WCCW reserves the right to edit all submissions.

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The timing for such a lesson was quite appropriate with the Arkansas Writers' Conference contests deadline approaching April 20.

Her lesson guide is printed as an attachment to this newsletter.

April's meeting will be a session by Amanda Partridge on "The Sound of Your Writing."

This workshop is taken from Ursula K. Le Guin's *Steering the Craft: A Twenty-First Century Guide to Sailing the Sea of Story*.

She will reference LeGuin's book on the fundamental components of narrative and prose for experienced writers who want to "clarify and intensify certain elements" of their writing.

The workshop will include an activity, so be sure to bring writing materials.

Filter out those 'filter' words

Filter words are unnecessary words that separate the reader from the story's action. They come between the reader's experience and the character's point of view.

Cutting them will tighten up your writing and move your character forward more quickly.

Say your character, Annie, is rushing to a bar to meet some friends. You might write: Annie wondered if she would get there on time. The traffic seemed heavier than usual and she hesitated before crossing the road.

A tighter edit might look like this: Will I make it in time? The traffic, heavier than usual, slowed her steps.

Here are a few filter words to avoid: felt, began, realized that, knew instinctively, and anything using the word "to" as in started to, in order to, and was going to.

Next meeting

April 16, 2018

6:30 p.m.,

at Simmons First Bank,

401 South Main Street in Searcy.

Del's Op

Court rules historical representation may now be altered

I'm not sure this is a good thing or bad thing for writers.

Concerning the movie, "Feud: Bette and Joan," Oscar-winning actress Olivia de Havilland sued the film company for using her name and likeness without her permission and for "damaging her reputation" by having the actress playing her, Catherine Zeta-Jones, use the word "bitch" to describe De Havilland's sister, the actress Joan Fontain, which she claims she never did.

Cut to the bottom line: The court ruled that the 1st Amendment does not guarantee individuals control over their own images and/or representation of them in movies.

"Producers of films and television programs may enter into agreements with individuals portrayed in those works for a variety of reasons, including access to the person's recollections or 'story' the producers would not otherwise have, or a desire to avoid litigation for a reasonable fee. But the 1st Amendment simply does not require such acquisition agreements."

That grants you the right to portray real people as part of your story-line without their permission and allows you to play loose with their characters, but do so at your own peril.

My take on this is that the best approach is to present them to the public as they are portrayed by the public. Bill Clinton is a manipulator and sexual predator, Donald Trump is a loose cannon with his finger on the nuclear button, and Dianne Feinstein is the "mouth that roared."

Source support material by Los Angeles Times.

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Using this photo as a story prompt, pick someone you know or heard about, maybe in real life or a movie, and write a fresh story about what you see here.



WRITING FOR CONTESTS

Follow the rules / guidelines

- Enter **ONLY** what the contest calls for. Don't enter a free verse poem in a sonnet contest, etc.
- Pay attention to word or page count. Don't go over the maximum.
- If the contest specifies a subject or theme, use it.
- Follow guidelines on whether you need a coversheet.
- Meet your deadline. Late entries are not read.

Format properly

- Use standard 8-1/2 X 11 inch white, unlined paper, 20-pound weight or higher.
- Use a common, readable 12-point font. If the contest doesn't specify, Times New Roman or Courier are generally recommended.
- Never submit handwritten entries.
- Print on only one side of paper.
- Use standard margins, double space, and justify left margin only for prose.
- Poetry may be single or double spaced, and margins and justification can be adjusted as needed for esthetics.

Content

- Make sure your submission is appropriate to the contest in theme or subject. An original take or position on the theme is a plus.
- Use a strong attention-grabbing title.
- Grab the reader (judge) in your first paragraph, or even your first sentence.
- Check your grammar and punctuation. Check it again. Don't rely on spell check.
- Edit your work carefully.
- "Find" and eliminate overused words, such as: and, maybe, only, really, that, etc.
- Watch for overuse of forms of "to be" verbs: is, are, was, were, etc.
- Be original. Avoid clichés.
- Eliminate excessive description. Trim and tighten to make your work stronger.
- Avoid offensive words and dialect. You don't want to insult or offend your judge.

Final Check

- Read through the rules again, and make sure your entry meets ALL guidelines.
- Proofread your entry, then read it again, preferably out loud. Correct any typos or mistakes, and reprint a clean copy.
- Review your cover sheet.
- Assemble your entry, cover sheet, and entry fee in an envelope.
- Double check the address for entries.
- Affix proper postage and mail by the deadline.