



# The Inkwell



## A Writers Guild Christmas

Madison County Writers Guild members gathered in the Wesley Hall of the First United Methodist Church in Madisonville, on December 21, 2010 for the Annual Christmas Social. Following the established tradition of a meal of Louisiana gumbo prepared by Writers Guild Founder Burke Landry, members offered readings of original Christmas stories and joined in a Christmas sing-a-long.

### The President's Message

Seasons of holidays are growing dim in memory. Abiding companions, thanksgiving and hope, remain. So much to be grateful for. How does one communicate that gratitude to those who have brought comfort, joy, encouragement or laughter?

Language may be expressed in multiple forms and translations. Writers capture words to line up into precise form and function to relay communication.

I like to consider myself a “*word wrangler*,” looping my lasso overhead until I get just the right thought in my sights. My rope drops securely over the neck of the phrase; I jerk the slack and tie it down before it escapes. Other times the *wrangler* circles the “*word horses*” in a broad pattern until one with the right conformation stands out. Then, I gently tighten the ring until I have it under control, lest I spook it completely out of range.

It a privilege and a work of art when words are woven together to create a visual tapestry.

In 2011, set new goals for your writing. Get out of your comfort zone. Attend a poetry reading in a nearby city. Connect with other writer’s groups to discover what their focus encompasses. Write two thousand words a day for one week. Journal any dreams or ideas for a future story.

My wish for you all this year is a renewal of hope, anticipation and prosperity in multitude areas of your lives and writing skills.

With gratitude and encouragement,

*Joan A. Escamilla*





**WRITERS GUILD FOUNDER RECEIVES HONORARY LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP**

Above: An Honorary Lifetime Membership in the Madison County Writers Guild was awarded to founder and first President **Burke Landry**. President Emeritus M. Elizabeth Gage (right) presented Landry (center) with a framed certificate beautifully inscribed by Guild member Rita Fannin Spencer. Landry and Gage are joined by current President Joan A. Escamilla (left).

**Brazos Valley Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators**

**2011 Monthly Schmooze Schedule**

- Jan. 26 Who am I Writing For?
- Feb. 23 Dream On
- Mar. 30 Creative Approaches to Finding Your Story’s Heart
- April 27 Do I Have a Plot?

Schmoozes are held in the College Station Barnes & Noble in the art corner at 10 a.m. Open critique time follows each meeting.

Spring SWCBI Brazos Valley Saturday, March 26, 2011. *Create Your Own Cannon* with Bethany Hegedus. For more informational contact the BV-SCBWI.

**WRITERS WEBSITES**

Addendum from Kim Davis

In the interest of furthering the discussion about writers websites and how to get one going, here is a free online course to help writers get started blogging. <http://courses.sitepoint.com/gettingstartedblogging>

**NEW THIS YEAR**

The Guild published *Christmas 2010*, an original collection of holiday memories, poetry and short stories. Contributing writers included: Rosa Allphin, Pat Cole, Jim Daspit, Sandra Woodruff, Frieda Michael, Kim Davis, Burke Landry, Betty Storie Strawther, Margie Stewart, Louis Popowskyj, Joan Escamilla and Lloyd Perry.

*Christmas 2010* cover artwork, “Believe 2” by Brenda Starr.



**MADISON COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL**

The Madison County Arts Council is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization serving the residents, artists and visitors of Madison County since 2002. Governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, it is the purpose of the Madison County Arts Council to cultivate an appreciation of the cultural arts and to encourage participation in the performing, graphic, and visual arts in the Madison County area.

## 2011 Texas Writers Workshops, Conferences and Retreats

**The Writers' Festival** From website: The Writers' Festival is hosted by the literary journal Windhover at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor in Belton, Texas. Traditionally, about 75 writers gather at this annual conference. February 17-19, 2011.

**DFW Writers' Conference** From website: The DFW Writers' Workshop is proud to present a special conference for writers. Meet other writers, learn the tricks of the trade from experts, and pitch your work to literary agents -- it's going to be a fantastic two days! February 26-27, 2011.

**Austin International Poetry Festival** The Austin International Poetry Festival (AIPF) is the world's largest non-juried poetry festival. All events are free and open to the public unless noted. Come enjoy poetry's biggest party! April 7-11, 2011.

**Boldface: A Conference for Emerging Writers** From website: **Boldface** emphasizes the work of young, new, and aspiring writers. We invite you to apply, whether or not you are published, and whether or not you have an undergraduate degree in creative writing. May 23-28, 2011.

**Annual Writers' League of Texas Agents & Editors Conference** From website: The Writers' League of Texas promotes

literacy and elevates the art of writing. June 10-12, 2011.

**SMU Continuing Studies Creative Writing Program** From website: WRITING IS A DREAM. Writing is also work. It fulfills and frustrates and fascinates. Year-Round

**Patchwork Farm Retreat near Austin** From website: Four-day writing and yoga retreat in the Bluebonnet Heart of Texas. 2011 dates TBA

**WLT Summer Writing Retreat** From website: Students sign up for one workshop in fiction, nonfiction, or poetry taught by one of four top authors. Small class sizes and personalized instruction will help you develop as a writer and hone your craft. 2011 dates TBA

*Editor's note:* Information above is published at <http://www.newpages.com/writing-conferences/#TX>. To register or for more information, search the host's webpage.

**North Texas Christian Writers Writing for Excellence Seminar** with Jon Nappa. Topics include: Why Christian fiction is important

- How to research history for fiction
- How to write action scenes that grip the reader
- Introduction to Screenwriting.

March 5, 2011.

**Writers' League of Texas Agents Conference**, Hyatt Regency, Austin, Texas; June 10-12, 2011 – <http://www.writersleague.org/>

**Northeast Texas Writers' Organization (NETWO)** An agent from New York, an editor from Avalon Books, two publishers, plus four diverse and talented authors, covering both fiction and non-fiction. Two dynamic workshops on Friday, April 29. The first, Deep POV Demystified, will be given by award winning author Jo Davis. The second will be presented by David Haynes, director of the S.M.U. creative writing program, April 29 and 30, 2011.

**WT Writers' Academy:** Texas A&M University and the Office of Continuing Education host the annual (WTWA) on campus, featuring award-winning, Writer in Residence, Jodi Thomas. Join us for daily classes, afternoon critiques and seminars. New this year, screenwriting course. In addition, students will have the option of an in depth manuscript critique by author, DeWanna Pace. Class size will be limited to 15. June 20-24, 2011. Course Information: Class 1: I've Completed My Manuscript - Now What?, Jodi Thomas; Class 2: Tools of the Fiction Writer's Trade, Tim Lewis; Class 3: Putting Soul in Your Fiction, Dr. Angela Hunt; Class 4: Screenwriting Structure for Novelists, Alexandra Sokoloff; Class 5: ABCs of Writing for Young Readers, Dian Curtis Regan. <http://www.wtamu.edu/academics/continuing-education-writing-academy.aspx>



*Guidelines and Deadlines for Submissions to the 2011 anthology*

Theme: *Autumn*.  
Maximum word length: 2500  
Restrictions: no obscenity, vulgarity or erotica

Standard manuscript preparation with submission to Kim Davis by January 16, 2011. Submission via email is preferred.

An Anthology Submission Author's Agreement must be completed. Contracts are available on the bookshelf.

SHUBERT FENDRICH  
MEMORIAL  
PLAYWRITING  
CONTEST

An ongoing contest of Pioneer Drama Service with one winner selected for each calendar year. All entries accepted for publication will be considered contest finalists. The winner will receive a \$1,000 royalty advance in addition to publication. See [www.pioneerdrama.com](http://www.pioneerdrama.com) for a listing/synopsis of the plays published by Pioneer Drama Service. Entries should be sent to: Playwriting Contest, Pioneer Drama Service, Inc., PO Box 4267, Englewood, CO 80155-4267

*2010-2011 Calendar*

**Membership Meeting**

January 18, 2011  
STC Chapter 9 - optional  
Anthology Submissions due

**Membership Meeting**

February 15, 2011  
STC Chapter 10 - optional

**Annual Texas Authors Booksale & Signing**

February 26, 2011  
Kimbo Center

**Membership Meeting**

March 15, 2011

**Annual Writers Workshop**

Focus on Screenwriting  
April 16, 2011  
Kimbrow Center

**Membership Meeting**

April 19, 2011  
Annual Report to Membership  
Nomination of Officers

**Annual Meeting**

May 17, 2011  
Election of Officers  
Spring Social with guest author  
Presentation of Guild Choice Awards



*Writers Guild Meetings*

*The Writers Guild meets on the 3rd Tuesday of each month from September through May at 6:30 PM in the small annex building behind the Madison County Library. Annual dues are individuals \$20, families \$30, and students \$10.*

*The Writers Guild is supported by its members and by the Madison County Arts Council.*

**SouthWest Writers Contest**

Prizes offered in in 16 categories. See website for specific guidelines. Optional critique available with an additional fee.

1st place winners \$150  
2nd place winners \$100  
3rd palce winners \$50

[www.southwestwriters.org](http://www.southwestwriters.org)

Deadline: May 1

*2010-2011 Officers*

President	Joan A. Stutts Escamilla
Vice President	Lou Popowskyj
Treasurer	Kimberly Davis
Secretary	Frieda Michael
Newsletter Editor	M. Elizabeth Gage
President Emeritus	M. Elizabeth Gage