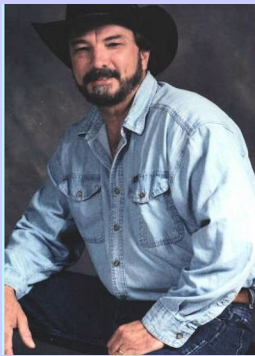


## From the Desk of Ralph Gordon

### MWG President

### Thanks Frankie and Carla



Hats off to new Newton-

Neshoba Chapter Head Carla

Westbrook and a big thanks to Frankie Germany.

Carla assumed the position after Frankie Germany had to give it up due to other obligations.

Frankie formed the chapter three years ago. She was generous and gracious enough to use her home as the meeting place for the chapter as well hosting the annual Christmas party for three years. Frankie has served the Guild since its inception in 2005. She was one the original members of the Board of Directors. Frankie never failed to answer when the Guild called on her. Thanks Frankie.

Carla did her homework before she called her first meeting at the First United Methodist Church in Decatur

on May 7. She created and distributed fliers advertising her event and contacted anyone who she thought might be interested in the Guild.

The Newton County Appeal published a copy of her flier on the front its front page and people came. There were 20 people at the meeting. Members of Carla's family were there to support her along with a dozen or so writers including four members of the MWG Board.

Any writers group meeting in this part of the woods would be incomplete without the ever colorful Ovid Vickers. Mr. Vickers disappointed nobody at the meeting as he read one of his lighted hearted poems. The former ECCC English professor also discussed the subject at hand. He talked about his passion for writing and his love for Mississippi and her people.

Thanks Carla for the great meeting, the delightful refreshments and your dedication to the Guild. We look forward to your leadership and the continuing success of the Newton-Neshoba Chapter of the Mississippi Writers Guild.

**Ralph Gordon**



**Spotlight on  
The  
Newton Neshoba  
Chapter**



Carla Westbrook

As the new Chapter Head of the Newton/Neshoba district, it is my privilege to invite you to join us for a time of fun and fellowship. Our chapter will meet regularly to network with other writers, share writing experiences, tips, ideas, readings, open mic sessions, and critique groups. We will also discuss and plan special programs and workshops for our area

Our first meeting will be Saturday, May 7th at 10:00 A.M. at Decatur United Methodist Church, located across the street from East Central Community College. Questions? E-mail: [CarlaWestbrook@gmail.com](mailto:CarlaWestbrook@gmail.com)

**Hello to all you talented writers!**

Our 1st meeting was very successful, thanks to you. I look forward to seeing you again Saturday, June 4th, 10:00 a.m. in the Decatur United Methodist Church's youth room, same as before.

We heard from a couple of wonderful published authors last time, so this time bring your unpublished work. Let's let anyone who is willing read for a few minutes, and we'll also critique each for a few minutes. Also, those of you

experienced in this area, I would greatly appreciate your help and insight.

We'll also discuss what you would like to see in a meeting for July. August 5-6 we'll go to the conference in Jackson, so we won't meet here. Check out the website when you get a chance [www.mississippiwritersguild.com](http://www.mississippiwritersguild.com) and also the conference website at [www.mississippiwritersguild.com/2011\\_conference.html](http://www.mississippiwritersguild.com/2011_conference.html).

**Meridian Chapter News**

This year, the Meridian chapter has focused on creative writing. We've had the honor of having three distinguished guest speakers, Dr. Alan Brown, Richelle Putnam and Kathryn Horn at our monthly meetings. The topics discussed were the five senses. In the second half of the year, we will discuss hooks, settings and plots.

In March of this year, our chapter hosted a Randy Young Self-publishing Workshop at Meridian Community College. Mr. Young's workshop was well received by those in attendance.

We would like to invite you to join our mini workshops held at 1 p.m. each fourth Saturday in the month at Angel Theater on 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue in Meridian.

## Playful Beginnings

with Lydia Dell



Lydia Dell

I went to an art supply store early this summer and was reminded how much I love the smell of art, of creation, from paints and paint thinner, to canvass and wood. The sensory experience alone drew me back to a time when art was a large focus in my life. I enrolled in an art class shortly after that experience. I wanted to play with art again, to create my own fabulous smells. Along the way, I have been reminded of the value of using a language besides words to express myself. I don't know about you, but at times, my mind becomes so crowded with words I have to think in another language, like numbers, or drawing, or music, or sewing, to make room for the important words, the most satisfying words to surface.

My friend and I were questioning the art instructor about how he came to be an artist, a gallery owner, and a teacher. He told us a story of how long it took for him to be able to use the word, to call himself an artist, to say it out loud when someone asked the dreaded question,

"what do you do?" He told us how each painting is like a new relationship. A new beginning where asking questions or getting to know more may begin as clumsy and awkward, could also, with attention and patience, become something you never forget, something to cherish, like a friendship, or a romance, or an amazing work of art. When he began talking about teaching he said he can teach most anyone the basics of drawing.

What he cannot teach is passion. I don't mean to put words in his mouth, but in a sense, the only way to really be good at anything, he said, was to love what you are doing enough to want to devote all your spare time to the practice and art of growing and improving.

I'm still soaking that in, questioning the depth of my own passion and desire, yet knowing I am on the right path, knowing I am gaining an ease and comfort with the written word that cannot be replaced or taken away. I entered this class to play with art, with no expectations of myself beyond having fun. I came away with playful applications to apply not only to art, but to writing as well. What about you? What kind of relationship do you have with your work? Where is your true passion? Do you write even when you are not composing? Is writing always on your mind? Do you play with your writing? With words? With the craft of writing? Do you make room for mistakes, even failure? How passionate are you about the practice and art of writing and in turn the art of growing and improving.



## Writing Prompts

Painting a picture with words

Describe popcorn using three of the five senses

1. The sense of taste

With taste, consider texture too.

2. The sense of smell
3. The sense of sound (hearing) .
4. The sense of touch
5. The sense of sight

Sometimes we have difficulty describing a scene.

If I wrote, "It's thundering and lightening," I am cheating the reader of a visual experience.

But, if the author wrote, "A loud boom rattled Darla's bedroom window. A flash of light streaked across her darkened bedroom.

"Momma," She cried out, burying her head beneath the blanket.

From this scene, the reader knows the following:

A thunderstorm is occurring.

It's night

Darla is in bed

She is frightened.

She hid beneath a blanket.

Allow the reader to experience the senses.

## Dreamonics Poetry Slam



Robert Ray

The Mississippi Writers Guild recently partnered with Dreamonics, a poetry organization founded by Grayson Givens. He is a recent graduate of Piney woods Country School in Mississippi. In honor of Grayson's high school graduation, his mother, Mrs. Reid sponsored a poetry slam at the Smith Robertson Museum and Cultural Center in Jackson, Mississippi.

On the evening of Thursday May 19, participants and guests of the event enjoyed entertainment by DJ: Dion Decibels, and the Master of Ceremonies, Brandon Santiago's lively banter. This group was flown in from San Francisco Bay Area especially for this event.

The poetry activities got off to a rousing start with a hyper, history lesson in poetry from a senior poet, John Sanders. He recited four poems from his two forty-year volumes of poetry.

The spoken word from several poets entertained the crowd. The evening activities ended with Grayson's free

styling four of his poems, and a tribute to his mother for her loving support and enthusiasm.

Recognition was given to guests who flew in from California, and other attendees. Also, recognition was given to the Mississippi Writers Guild for our financial support and energy in spreading the word about Dreamonics poetry slam.

I was asked to say a few words from the Mississippi Writers Guild. I shared our mission statement: “Advancing and Preserving Literary Arts”, and our motto, “No Writer Without a Voice”. I read my own work, ”The Divine Design.”

The Mississippi Writers Guild’s first involvement in a poetry slam was a tremendous success.

### **Uh huh, we all do it**

We miss some of the most obvious mistakes when we edit our work. Our eyes tend to skim right over text without catching misspelled words, punctuation or grammar errors.

The solution can be a fresh pair of eyes, either from a critique partner or a friend who excelled in English.

## **TRANSITIONS**

Avoiding the bumps

Transitions are the cues that keeps the reader connected by unifying each sentence. They are the building blocks that provide unity and clarity of each sentence.

You can read more about transitions at:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/574/02/>

## **The Interview**

What do I need to ask?

This article on Purdue offers excellent advise on interviewing for the purpose of research.

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/708/01/>

## **Writing Terms**

What do they mean?

Puzzled by a term writers use? Here is a link that explains writing terms.

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/755/1/>



Richelle Putnam

## THE ART OF READING

By Richelle Putnam

Sometimes writers get so focused on the craft of writing that we forget the art of reading. The truth be told, the best writers evolve from avid, dedicated readers, readers who relish carefully chosen words that season each savory sentence.

Professor of English Literature Timothy Spurgin of Lawrence University, in his course The Art of Reading, gives readers these pointers:

1. When you think about reading as an art, you begin to take it a little more seriously.
2. The idea of artful reading may suggest that there is a difference between reading and reading well.
3. The idea of artful reading suggests that you are doing something for its own sake. This sort of reading is its own reward.

Artful readers stop and take note of graceful, memorable phrases. They read out loud to hear the

author's poetic devices, such as alliteration, repetition, assonance and even meter. It is amazing the number of best-selling authors who use the mechanics of poetry to flavor their stories.

Artful readers take note of the story's narrator and consider why this narrator was chosen. The narrator(s) reveals whose point(s)-of-view (POV) the story is in. Nick Carroway, an outsider, is the narrator of *The Great Gatsby*. Why does the story unfold through Nick's eyes and not Jay Gatsby or Daisy Buchanan?

Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* stories, save one, are narrated by Dr. Watson clearly because Watson is as surprised as the reader when Holmes unfolds each case. If the story had been told in Holmes' POV, the suspense and surprise would vanish as we would know everything Holmes was thinking and what he was about to do.

Some questions artful readers ask and answer:

1. Who is the narrator and why?
2. The first scene of the story/book is....? Why did the author begin there? Was it a good beginning?
3. Why did the author choose this (ie: humorous; gloomy; bitter; confused, etc.) tone for the story? Does it change by the end of the story? And why?
4. Who are the main characters and how do they

connect? How do they conflict? Where to these conflicts lead?

5. What is the ending? Why did it end that way?

Before artful readers begin, they thumb through the book, noticing how chapters are divided. They scan several first paragraphs of several chapters to note POVs and tone. (Of course, this is after they've scanned the first page and read the blurb on the back cover.)

One suggestion in becoming an artful reader is to read the book for enjoyment first without taking notes. Then begin a list of questions and answers before you read again to analyze the characters, setting, tone and voice. If this book is a favorite, write in it, highlight sections and store it as one of your best writing tools to refer back to.

What if you don't like the book? As an artful reader, try to at least make it to page 50. Give the author a chance. Some books are slow to start, but there might be, and probably is, a method to the author's delay. If after page 50, you still can't read it, jot down questions and answers of why you can't. This will help you as a writer in determining what not to do in your works.

Why go through all this trouble just to read a book? Because as a writer, you are an artist—a literary artist. As artists, we study how lines and curves form objects. We draw our perceptions on how objects closer to us appear larger and those far away become tiny dots in the

distance. But we also recognize and examine the negative spaces around and between those lines and curves, realizing that every landscape includes both the obvious and the amorphous.

Artists create masterpieces from a block of wood or stone, a clump of clay, an empty canvas, a piece of metal or stone, and blank paper. But each artist should and must understand and train themselves about the medium with which they working.

## *Scribbler Notes*

The 2011 Mississippi Writers Guild annual conference information is listed on the guild's website at:

**[www.mississippiwritersguild.com](http://www.mississippiwritersguild.com)**

Make your plans to attend the August conference held in Jackson this year.

**Share your chapter news with the Scribbler at:**

**[ScribblerNews@gmail.com](mailto:ScribblerNews@gmail.com)**