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The Window

Official Newsletter of Panhandle Professional Writers
d/b/a Texas High Plains Writers



HIGH PLAINS WRITERS

January 2016

A Bi-Monthly Newsletter

New Year, New Projects, New Attitude

By Kimberly Black, President

Something happens to me at New Years. I get this energy bubbling inside me that repeats this beautiful mantra, "This year will be different." And somehow it always is. Not always better, but different.

As my grandmother used to say, this year I'm bound and determined to get more done. Not for the sake of doing more – heaven knows I do plenty every day – but this year I want desperately to get some "me" goals checked off my list. Last year too many of my "me" goals were connected to and relied upon what other people were able to do. This year I plan to get some writing done that isn't dependent on anyone else's schedule.

That means I will write whether I have illustrations or not. I will revise even if I haven't heard back from my beta readers. I will work on making my stories better even when my editor isn't available for another month. I will write. I will keep writing. And then I will write some more.

With the projects I have now, I could query/publish three books by the end of 2016. I often believe that if I keep my focus, I can make this happen. But that isn't enough when success relies on others' schedules and abilities. All I can control is myself and my work. So that is what I will do.

I will make the goal of finishing two manuscript drafts. I will make the goal of sending out

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I want to encourage all of our membership to set goals for their projects this year. I hope that everyone will attend more meetings and become more involved in our organization. My wish is for all of our members to connect with each other and cheer successes as a group. I want to build our individuals up and make a strong foundation for our whole organization. Together we can make 2016 a remarkable year.

Chimp Robertson

January 16 Guest Speaker

Author Chimp Robertson is a former bull rider on the rodeo circuit and has just about seen and done it all. In addition to being a rodeo contestant, he's a rancher, private pilot, auctioneer, songwriter, Texas and Oklahoma real estate salesman and broker, skydiver, and U.S. Army Veteran. He's also had a long career in marketing and public relations for large retirement centers in Oklahoma. So, you can pretty much bet he knows a thing or two about life.

Chimp loves the written word and has authored seven books and recently added an eighth—his first western novel, *Billy Howard and The Buckskin*—to his list of publishing credits.

He's also had many stories, articles, and poems published by various magazines and newspapers, including the *Western Horseman*, *Cattlemen*, *Horse Lover's*, *Hoofs and Horns*, *Farm Journal*, *Yamaha World*, *Paint Horse*, and *Horseman* and has been featured locally in *Access West* magazine. But, despite all of his accomplishments, he's most proud of the songs he wrote that country singer Chris LeDoux recorded and made into hits. One was "Re-Ride" and the other was "Jody the Rodeo Clown."

In his program, Chimp will explain his odd nickname, tell a little of his writing process, and show the challenges (and differences) between writing memoirs, nonfiction, and fiction.

He really stresses writing what you know. Because he's adept in multiple genres, all members will benefit from his talk.

Although Chimp is retired and currently resides in Hooker, Oklahoma, he was born and raised right here in the panhandle in the town of Dalhart. The rodeo is never far from his thoughts, and he continues to compete in championship team roping. We hope everyone will come out and make him welcome. Let's show him some warm Texas hospitality, in case he's forgotten.

Chimp plans to have books to sell, so make sure you have a little jingle in your pockets.

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Youth Writing Contest Raffle

Help Us Raise Funds for Youth Writing Contest

We are holding a raffle for a very cool Samsung Galaxy Tab 4 Nook 10.1 Tablet to raise funds to support the youth writing contest. Raffle tickets are on sale NOW! The tickets are \$5 each or six for \$20. What a deal! If you would like to purchase some tickets or help us sell some tickets, contact Janet Taylor at janetcoopertaylor@gmail.com or [806-282-1227](tel:806-282-1227).

Tip for Writing a Hook

By Linda Broday, Programs Director

Okay, so you finish your book and it's all nice and polished, what's next? Getting it published.

Whether you choose a traditional publisher or go the self-pub route, you need a very solid one-line hook that will pique an editor's or a reader's interest right off. But how to condense a whole book into one sentence? Start with making a list of key, emotion-charged, words that describe your story. Vivid words like danger, suspense, passion, deceit, lies, stolen, death, hunger, secret, etc., trigger the response you want. Those are powerful and evoke an image right off.

Here's mine from REDEMPTION: "Two brothers ... one woman ... and a secret that could destroy them all."

The allure of something forbidden, something dangerous draws a reader in. The first thing you have to understand is that you don't need to tell the whole book. To begin this process, write two or three paragraphs (something like the back blurb) that hit the highlights then start whittling it down. I've found that more than three paragraphs complicates things too much and I get bogged down in too many details. Keep it simple and include powerful nouns, adjectives, and active verbs. You want just enough to tease and make a reader sit up and beg for more.

Travel Time with Janda

Janda Raker has published another travel article on Examiner.com. This one is titled "Best Beach in the U.S.: Langdon Beach, Gulf Islands National Seashore, FL," and she has

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share it with your friends.



Save Money – Pay 2016 Dues Now!

That's right. You can save money by paying your 2016 dues now. The Board increased the annual dues from \$30 to \$36. By paying your dues before the end of January, you can pay the old rate of \$30. If you wait and renew your membership after January 31, it will cost you \$36. That's still a great price by any standard.

Go to our [Membership Page](#) to download and print the Membership Registration – Renewal form. You can mail the form or bring it with you when you come to this or any bi-monthly program.

March Guest Speaker

Dusty Richards, a Western novel author, will speak at our March bi-monthly meeting.

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The subject matter of our next members' writing contest is "New Beginnings". Your entry can be a short story of any genre or poetry. Submissions for the January bi-monthly meeting's contest must be postmarked by March 1, 2016. Contest rules can be found [here](#).

If you are not a member and would like to submit an entry, please go to the [Membership Page](#) on our website, print the Membership Registration - Renewal Form 2016.pdf (link to the form is located at the bottom of the webpage), and mail it in with your submission.

Potluck Social

We gave it our best shot; but due to lack of interest, the socials have been discontinued.

Board Members Needed

Don't tell me. Let me concentrate and get in a meditative state. Aww. I can see it clearly now. One of your New Year's resolutions is to volunteer and serve as a Texas High Plains Writers' board member or serve on one of its committees. It's amazing how my psychic abilities never fail me.

Current board vacancies that need to be filled are President-Elect, Secretary, and Conferences and Workshops Director (a/k/a Events Director). Please contact any of the current board members if you are interested in one of these positions.

Current Board Members

President: Kimberly Black - pennie@steepledog.com

President-Elect: vacant

Secretary: vacant

Treasurer: Karen Gammage - kgamm@earthlink.net

Technical Support: Mike Akins - mike7166@gmail.com

Membership: Molly McKnight - mmc222@ymail.com

Hospitality: Carol Smith - carolsnowsmith@gmail.com

Publicity and Newsletter: Janet Taylor - janetcoopertaylor@gmail.com

Conferences and Workshops: vacant

Programs: Linda Broday - lindabroday@aol.com

Critique Session Guidelines

To participate in the critique session, you do not need to have a piece to be critiqued. The sessions begin at 1 p.m. and, depending on the number of those who have a story or a

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...or a story or poem. If possible, the facilitator will read a short synopsis of your story so those critiquing have some background. We ask that you format your manuscript as follows:

1. Use white 8.5 by 11-inch paper.
2. Double space using either Times New Roman 12 or similar font.
3. In the header, give your last name, a slash (/), and a short title on the left and the page number on the right (at the top of each page).
4. Use one-inch margins.
5. Use one side of the paper only.
6. If possible, use line numbering.
7. Note: Your synopsis may be single-spaced.

Each person, in turn, will read 1,000 words or less (15 to 20 minutes) or the author will read their own writing, based on preference; then, the group facilitator will ask for discussion from the group. While each person is reading, we urge all other participants to offer written comments on the manuscript. All copies will be returned to each author.

The goal of every critique is: "How can we make it better."

Meetings are held on the third Saturday in odd-numbered months: January, March, May, July, September, and November.

The public and Texas High Plains Writers members are invited to hear speakers on selected writing or related topics.

You may order a box lunch from our Hospitality Director between 9:30 and 10:15 or bring a sack lunch. Box lunches are \$10.

Unless otherwise specified, meeting location is at Amarillo Senior Citizens Center 1217 S. Tyler Amarillo, Texas (Note: We must occasionally switch our meeting location, or we may need to change the date to avoid conflicts. So, please check the address and date for each meeting.)

Our meetings/programs follow this schedule:

Check-In and Meet & Greet
9:30 - 10:00 a.m.

Business Meeting
10:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.

Program/Presentation
10:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Box Lunch
12:15 - 1 p.m.

Critique Session
1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Need to contact us?
You can write to us at:
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