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# The Window

Official bi-Monthly eNews of the Texas High Plains Writers



## HIGH PLAINS WRITERS

March 2017

A Bi-Monthly Newsletter



**Next Meeting: March 18, 2017**

## Bethany Claire

[www.bethanyclaire.com](http://www.bethanyclaire.com)

### ***How to Perfect your Book Launch by Starting Early and Finishing Strong***

We're very excited to announce the return of the dynamic Bethany Claire as the March speaker. No one is more committed to helping authors achieve success in publishing, whether Indie or traditional. Her advice is priceless and you can trust what she says. Bethany has spent four years as an Indie author and she knows what works and what doesn't. She's been in the trenches and has climbed onto every bestselling list, including USA Today.

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- How to create a timeline for publication
- How to set up Pre-Orders & why they are so beneficial
- How to execute a fantastic ARC (Advance Reader's Copy) strategy to increase reviews
- Media idea to create a buzz
- How to create powerful social media posts for release day
- Teasers to get your readers eager and ready to buy
- Checklists and tips to keep you organized
- Resources to help you along the way

If you didn't know why you should attend the March meeting you do now. Anyone serious about publishing should be there. We guarantee that you'll find exactly what you need to help you become a successful author. Bring plenty of paper because you'll want to take lots of notes. This talk will benefit you at any stage of your writing.

### **More about Bethany**

In addition to writing, Bethany is also a much-sought after self-publishing instructor and advisor who has helped many writers develop a road map to achieve success in Indie publishing. She'll soon launch a comprehensive online course all about self-publishing. You can learn even more this summer and study with Bethany for the week-long course, "Mastering Self-Publishing: Everything You Need to Grow and Cultivate Your Own Publishing Empire," as part of the West Texas A&M Writers' Academy in Canyon, TX June 5-9, 2017 (see details below).

She's a USA Today Bestselling Author of the Scottish time travel romance novels in Morna's Legacy Series with seven novels, two novellas, two box sets, and five audio books published since the release of her first novel in 2013. Last May, she traveled to Scotland where she and her extraordinary assistant and mother explored the country that inspires Bethany's novels. This highly productive author is super organized, describing herself as an insane note taker, outliner and storyboard user. She is also a whiz at social media. You will not want to miss the March program featuring Bethany Claire.

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# WEST TEXAS WRITERS' ACADEMY



## JUNE 5-9, 2017

HOSTED BY

New York Times and  
USA Today Best Selling Author

WaterBrook/Random House Author

Jodi THOMAS & Timothy LEWIS



## From the President Kim's Chronicles

We've kicked off the year in a big way. We moved our meetings to a new location, and we had a great turn-out for a January gathering. Starting a new year and meeting in a new location means we probably should address a few things that we all probably know, but have forgotten over time. And even a few new things that could be helpful for our organization overall.

First, meeting at the Oasis is a little different than our former venue. The main room is smaller, which means we all need to check-in quickly in the hall and then come inside and sit close to the front. There will probably be other meetings in the building, so arriving early will allow us to shut the door to the hall and start our meetings on time, keeping the other chatter out of the room. Also, at our January meeting, we didn't use a microphone, but we will do that from now on. We had a few people who had trouble hearing, and we want everyone to get the most of every meeting. Thanks for being patient with us.

Next, our organization is about promoting our writing craft and products. Please remember that most of us have other jobs or businesses besides writing, but we don't

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attend our programs, and we don't want to risk losing our charitable organization status by promoting business that doesn't directly relate to writing.

Because our lunch orders have been so few this last year, we are going to discontinue our box lunch program beginning with the March meeting. Anyone wishing to bring a sack lunch and then stay for critique groups is welcome to do so, or even leave to grab lunch nearby and then return for critiques or networking. We have reserved the room for afternoon groups, so please stay if you wish.

Please make sure that you've all paid your annual dues, filled out a new membership application, and turn in a "What's the Buzz" sheet. All these things will help us keep our records straight, our membership updated with new contacts, new releases, and current events, and keep our bi-monthly programs strong and informative. This organization is all about making every member stronger. We need all of us working together to keep us growing. I heard a cute saying the other day—

**It takes teamwork to make the dream work!**



## The Old House

by Nandy Ekle

The old house sits on its own little acre of land. It's beautiful in its dilapidation, sunburned gray siding, broken windows, and roof falling in. You can't stop looking at it and wondering about its story.

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places full of history and drama. Do you notice shapes moving inside as they pass a cracked window? Do you imagine that if you listen closely you will hear whispers in the fading twilight? Eerie music? Phantom laughter?

Congratulations! You have received a postcard from your muse.

*For more inspiration, use hashtag no spaces (#) "oldmansions" on Instagram or search for "old mansions" or "abandoned houses" on Pinterest.*

Nandy Ekle is the pen name for THPW member Nancy Keel. Her award-winning short story, "Miss Bitsy," was selected for the eBook anthology, THE LEAST HE COULD DO, available on Amazon. She blogs every Friday at WordsmithSix.com and you can find out more on her website, [nandyekle.com](http://nandyekle.com)



## Upcoming Programs

May 20, 2017

Author **Karen Witemeyer** from Abilene will join us in May. Her books have consistently hit bestseller lists and have garnered awards such as the ACFW Carol Award, the Holt Medallion, and the Inspirational Reader's Choice Award. In addition, she is a multiple RITA and National Reader's Choice finalist. Find her on the web at <http://www.karenwitemeyer.com/>

July 15, 2017

TPHW Board member and author, **Ryan McSwain**, will enlighten us on all things with Amazon's CreateSpace.

## Margaret Firth England Scott

An early member of the predecessor of our organization, Panhandle Pen Women, recently passed away at the age of 93. Hugh and Margaret Scott lived in Amarillo since 1954, where they reared two children, a daughter and a son.

In addition to being an active member of the Panhandle Pen Women, first established in 1920, Margaret was past president of Hi-Plains Chapter of the Poetry Society of Texas and a lifetime member of Poetry Society of Texas. She attended advanced courses of study at Amarillo College and West Texas State University, as well as lessons in Hebrew and the Bible. Margaret co-authored the book "Eve's Version" in 1983. She wrote hundreds of biblical poems and other poetry in her lifetime.



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the Amarillo Globe News site.

# Call for Submissions!

The deadline for writers to submit to *39 Signs of Hope* has been extended to April 15, 2017.

*39 Signs of Hope*, to be published in the fall of 2017, is a collection of non-fiction stories from writers around the world. Whether facing personal challenges, trying to combat environmental threats or dealing with global unrest, people rely on hope to help them through difficult situations.

Each selected author will make a financial contribution of \$300 (Canadian funds) toward production costs in exchange for having their work professionally edited and designed. They will also receive 20 trade paperback copies with an option to buy additional books at a wholesale price.

Catch Our Drift Productions is accepting non-fiction story submissions (1,000 to 2,000 words) until April 15, 2017. There is no fee to submit a story. For more information, visit [www.catchourdrift.ca/39-signs-of-hope](http://www.catchourdrift.ca/39-signs-of-hope).

## **Catch Our Drift Productions Inc.**

Gibsons, BC  
CANADA

E-mail: [info@catchourdrift.ca](mailto:info@catchourdrift.ca)

Web: [www.catchourdrift.ca](http://www.catchourdrift.ca)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CatchOurDrift>

## **Inspirational Writers Alive! announces a contest. Entries must be postmarked March 20**

2017 IWA! Spring Mini-Conference Contests Postmark deadline: March 20  
Awards and prizes will be given at Mini-Conference April 22  
Pays 1st 2 nd & 3rd

### Contest Categories:

1. Rhymed Poetry, maximum 40 lines
2. Unrhymed Poetry, maximum 40 lines
3. Devotional, 300 words not including scripture and prayer—standard style
4. Nonfiction Article—suitable for Christian publication, maximum 1,200 words
5. Inspirational Article—about an important person in your spiritual life, maximum 1,200 words

\$6.00 per category for members of IWA! and/or conference attendee; \$8.00 per entry if not an IWA! member not attending Mini-Conference. One entry per category, please.

### Contest Rules and Requirements:

- Be suitable for Christian publication with inspirational appeal.

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Be typed on one side of white 8 1/2 x 11 paper, double spaced.

- Poetry may be single-spaced.
- Place category and word or line count in upper right corner of page. No name or identifying marks of any kind on the manuscript.
- Submit one cover sheet per entrant with the following: \* Your name, address, phone, e-mail \* Title and first line of each submission by entrant \* Submission category for each piece
- Include SASE for return of prizes or awards if not attending conference.
- You may include a SASP (postcard) to acknowledge receipt of entry.
- Include all entry fees.
- One entrant (person) per envelope; fees paid by one check is fine.
- Postmark deadline is March 20.
- Mail to: IWA! Contest Karl Smith, Contest Chair 5006 Navajo Trail Amarillo, Texas 79110 Karl Smith: Cell (806) 336-5164, call or text—if text, please include name in body of text. E-mail karlwk@suddenlink.net

## 2017 Board Members

*President: Kimberly Black*

*President-Elect: Mike Akins*

*Secretary: Audrey Massingill*

*Treasurer: Janet Taylor*

*Technology: volunteer needed to help with our website*

*Membership: Molly McKnight*

*Hospitality: Ryan McSwain*

*Publicity & Newsletter Editor: Natalie Bright*

*Conferences and Workshops: we need YOU!*

*Programs: Linda Broday*

*The Technology Chair is open: update the website and help with IT issues.*

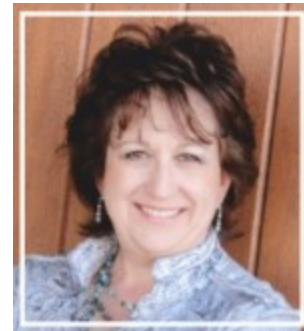
*We need someone to plan our next big writing workshop--is that you?*

## From the Editor's Desk:

At the January meeting, I remember Board member Mike Akins commenting, "If you want to launch your writing to the next level there's no better way to do that then participate in a writing critique group."

I had never thought about how my critique group propels me to the next level, but Mike is absolutely right. My WordsmithSix group makes me braver. I have submitted articles and entered contest because I knew the group would be reading it first. An honest, unbiased critique is invaluable. My WordsmithSix group has been meeting together since 2009, and we first knew of each other because of Texas High Plains Writers. The commonality that brought us together wasn't the genre we write, which is typical of most critique groups, but because of the area where we live which is South of Amarillo in the town of Canyon. We've lost a few members and gained a few new ones over the years, and more importantly, we've cranked out a lot of words.

Participating in groups like THPW helps you navigate, network and be the best that you can be in this crazy world of publishing. The need for quality content is at an all time high, and through networking with other writers you CAN reach new levels with your



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served us well for the past eight years.

Writing onward...

Natalie Bright, Newsletter Editor/Publicity Chair

www.nataliebright.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 poem needing to be critiqued, can last up to a couple of hours. We suggest that your material not exceed approximately 750 to 1,000 words. Please bring at about five copies of your story or poem. If possible, it is helpful if you bring 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.*

*Meetings are open to the public and everyone is welcome.*

*There is no fee for THPW members to attend our regular bi-monthly meetings. A \$10 fee may apply to nonmembers.*

*Lunch is on your own or bring a sack lunch.*

*Unless otherwise specified, 2017 meeting location is:  
Oasis Church  
8201 Canyon Drive  
Amarillo, Texas*

*(Note: We occasionally switch our*

### *Bi-monthly Meeting Schedule:*

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

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

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

*Lunch Break  
12:15 - 1 p.m.*

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

*Need to contact us?  
Mailing Address:  
Texas High Plains Writers  
P. O. Box 19303  
Amarillo, TX 79114*



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connects. Check the address and date for each meeting.)

**The Window** is the official bi-monthly newsletter of Texas High Plains Writers (formerly known as Panhandle Professional Writers, established in 1920 as Panhandle Pen Women). Byline and credited articles represent the views of the authors. Publication neither implies approval of the opinion or the accuracy of the facts stated. We welcome submission, news, member announcements, and any information that might be of interest to the writing community. We will happily promote event details for THPW members only.

Natalie Bright, Newsletter Editor/Publicity Chair  
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