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The Window

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



HIGH PLAINS WRITERS

May 2021

Newsletter



From The President

Friends and neighbors,

I've noticed a trend here on the High Plains. And, with absolutely no data to prove it, I'm prepared to make a claim based on my observations.

Per capita, the Texas Panhandle is the literary capital of the United States.

I know, I know. There's that city on the Hudson. And that state at the tippy-top of New England. And no, I haven't done the math. If I had, it would probably be wrong anyway. (I am a writer, after all.)

But hear me out.

Last month, former Amarilloan Lauren Hough hit the *New York Times* nonfiction paperback list with her debut essay collection, "Leaving Isn't the Hardest Thing." This month, the latest short mystery by Linda Castillo — who lives north of Bushland —

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And, with apologies for those who believe in jinxes, I believe wholeheartedly that Amarillo resident Taylor Moore will find himself on the *Times* hardcover fiction list come August for his debut, “Down Range.”

But that’s just what’s fresh on my mind. We are currently home to perennial bestsellers Jodi Thomas, Linda Broday, Phyllis Miranda, A.G. Howard, Bethany Claire, and several I’m forgetting because they’ve been that good for that long.

Need more than bestseller status to be impressed? Okay, try this on for size: Ochiltree County legend John R. Erickson’s beloved children’s series character, Hank the Cowdog, is being voiced by none other than Oscar-winner Matthew McConaughey.

I suppose that’s alright, alright, alright.

But what about awards, you say. Give me someone recognized alongside the likes of Hemingway and Faulkner.

To you, I submit “Lincoln in the Bardo,” the debut novel by George Saunders, who was born in Amarillo and spent many a summer here when he was young—including at least one playing Hank Williams covers on Historic Sixth Avenue. His experimental novel won the uber-prestigious Booker Prize a few years back, though Saunders was already one of the best American writers alive.

Then add to the mix “Kingdomtide,” the literary debut by Texas Panhandle-raised Rye Curtis, which was shortlisted for the 2021 International Dylan Thomas Prize, given annually to the best published or produced literary work in the English language written by an author aged 39 or under. A Pulitzer winner also blurbed the novel. Impressive, in my humble opinion.

We also have PEN Southwest Book Award winner — and the region’s unofficial Poet Laureate — Chera Hammons living amongst us. She and husband Daniel Miller were both recognized by the Texas Institute of Letters last year for their outstanding contributions to the Lone Star literary scene — Hammons for Best Book of Poetry (“Maps of Injury”), and Miller as a finalist in the short story category for “Fall Cutting.”

And all of those mentioned above are only some of the most famous writers who call, or have called, the Texas High Plains home. Many of us have also been published or independently release fantastic works of fiction and nonfiction that entertain and

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This is the portion of my speech where I must put a standard disclaimer: I know I have left off a ton of writers who deserve mentioning (poet Seth Wieck, for instance), and for that, you have my deepest and sincerest apologies. I am, Heaven help me, a millennial, and my memory only goes back so far. I blame the recent omissions on 2020-related brain fog. And this beautiful spring afternoon.

I also realize that not everyone mentioned above is a member of our organization.

So, why did I spend more than a single-spaced page discussing them?

Because it is my firm belief that the overall literary culture here impacted many of the writers and accomplishments listed above. And that culture is, in my unscientific and entirely non-expert opinion, a direct result of the 100-plus-year tradition that we carry on today.

This group breeds writers like Hereford breeds, well, Herefords.

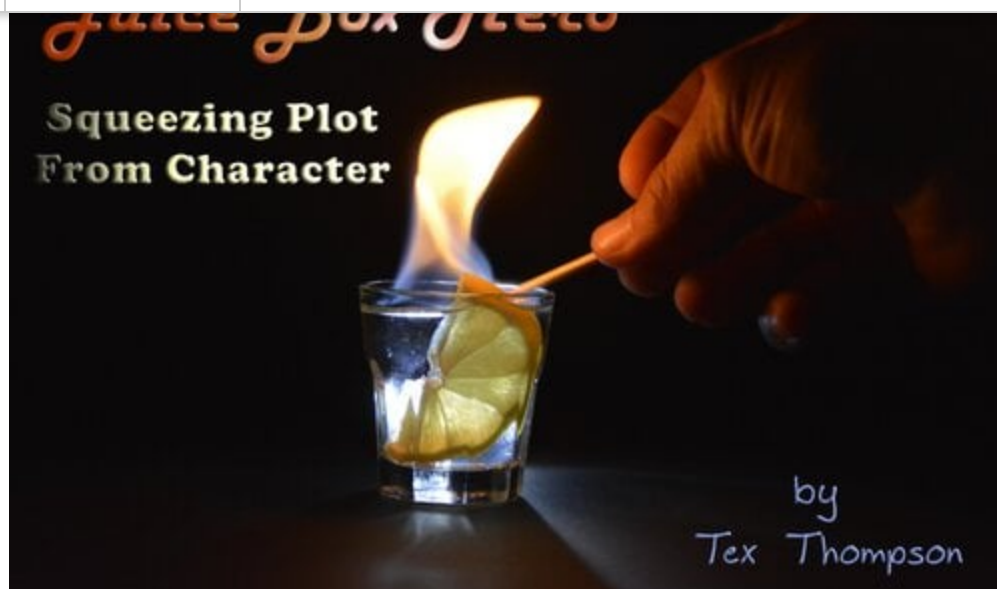
And for that, we should all feel proud.

Rick Treon

President, Texas High Plains Writers



Tex Thompson

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Topic: THPW May Program with Tex Thompson

Time: May 15, 2021 10:00 AM Central Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88685333649...>

Meeting ID: 886 8533 3649

Passcode: 022523

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Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/knjTh2o17>

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JUNE 23-26, 2021



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and Workshops Director and Historian for the 2021-2022 term.

Volunteering is a fulfilling way to serve this writing community and build working relationships with our fellow authors.

THPW 2021 Calendar

- **July 17** - Kenja Purkey, marketing guru - Location to be announced
- **September 18** - Taylor Moore, "Overnight" Success
- **November 20** - to be determined

Your Board is working diligently to bring great programs that meet the needs and desires of our members. We are as ready as you to safely resume in-person meetings. Please let us know if you have any program ideas or requests. We always welcome input from our members.

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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 members of Texas High Plains Writers to attend our regular bi-monthly meetings. A \$10 fee may apply to nonmembers.

(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.

Lunch On Your Own

12:15 - 1 p.m.

Critique Session, if Announced

1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Need to contact us?

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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 new releases and book signing events for

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