

*Temporary logo

The Legend

Emerald Coast Writers, Inc.

Member Newsletter

www.wflf.org

February 2023 Edition

Save the Date for the February Open Mic!

Writers, join us for our annual meeting on Tuesday, February 21, at 6:30 p.m. We'll review our board nominees and hold elections for the upcoming year. Our president, Tom Roberts, will share updates and the vision for 2023-2024.

We have wonderful programming planned for this year and are preparing to return in-person for March's Open Mic meeting and special guests program. Read more about that in this *Legend* and mark your calendar for March and April's events. We hope to see you there.

Pre-register your attendance here:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZltdemvgDlpGN0XIOxc7sVKbaHFz m EgkZ.

Message from the President



Welcome to the important month of February for Emerald Coast Writers. On Tuesday the 21st, we hold our membership Annual Meeting, where we review the past year, lay plans for the coming year, and elect new folks to the ECW Board of Directors. Like last year, this year's event will be held on Zoom. And there is still time to submit board nominations, but be sure the person being nominated has agreed to serve. An important item on the meeting agenda is to approve changes to the ECW Bylaws. A list of the proposed changes appears later in this month's newsletter.

In December, I appointed an Events Committee with members Diane Skelton. Pat Black-Gould, Tonya Dalhaus, and myself. The committee has proposed a number of events and activities including regular ones such as publication of the twenty-second edition of the *Emerald* Coast Review and a booth at the Greater Gulfcoast Arts Festival; potential partnerships with local organizations such as local bookstores, the Wide Angle Photo Club, Pensacon, and the library systems of Escambia and Santa Rosa; and a series of quarterly seminars led by national and international guest speakers. Next month, the new Board will review and select

candidate events for us to pursue. With advanced planning, we hope to make 2023 a memorable year for Emerald Coast Writers.

I know I sound like a broken record, but now is the time to send in your membership dues. Only active members may attend and vote at our meetings, including the annual meeting. Once you read about our 2021-2022 accomplishments, I believe you'll agree that membership is worth the low dues amount.

If you know any teachers or students in the Escambia or Santa Rosa systems (public, private, and home-schooled), pass the word on about our 2023 Youth Writing Contest being run by Board member Charline Barger (by the way, she can use some volunteer help). We have opened it to artwork this year. Visit our website for more details at https://wflf.org/news-details/post_detail/2023-youth-writing-contest.

Speaking of our website, we have ongoing plans to redesign it and move to a new hosting platform. If you have thoughts or would like to volunteer on the redesign, let me know at tome129@hotmail.com.

Our Poet Laureate, Katherine Nelson-Born, is holding a Haiku Challenge in February with the Theme "What Inspires You." There will be gift cards! For details, check the Emerald Coast Writers Facebook private and public Facebook pages.

Enjoy the rest of *The Legend*, and I'll see you at the annual meeting, 6:30 pm, Feb. 21.

-Tom Roberts

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Meet Our Members

Tonya Dalhaus



Tonya Dalhaus reflects on her life remembering that she's been writing for most it, starting in fourth grade with a poem she submitted for a school district competition. She joined Emerald Coast Writers in 2022. She was already in the process of starting a book and thought the accountability with other writers would help her reach goals faster.

Tonya is second in command at her farm: Enid's Flock Farm. First is the head hen, Enid. Tonya has always been passionate about writing and communications and when she started the farm, chickens became her muse.

"They are wildly entertaining and keep me laughing," Tonya said. "I started writing a book to capture some of the stories and it turned into a guide of what to do and what

not to do when raising chickens. As a past stand-up comedian and current adjunct faculty member of the University of Denver Communication Management program, I'm hoping my book will educate people on these intelligent and affectionate birds through humor and storytelling. My goal is to finish my book in 2023 and have it published."

Tonya is originally from New Hampshire. Before moving to Pensacola, she and her husband lived in Lafayette, Colorado. "My mummified cells craved humidity after the high, dry climate, and my husband loves the beaches," Tonya shared.

In 2020, just before the pandemic brought everything to a screeching halt, Tonya and her husband started a small chicken farm (it was supposed to be small anyway). She now has 40 chickens and seven king quail. Two of her chickens, Botl and Hattie, live indoors in diapers and have even gotten acquainted with the weekly ECW portfolio critique group.

"I'm passionate about photographing my flock and sell chicken-themed prints and carved chicken eggs at local craft shows and online," Tonya said. "Last spring one of my chicken digital prints titled 'Book Chooks' won an honorable mention at the Pensacola Museum of Art Member Exhibit."

Botl the chicken has writing goals, too. She is starting her own blog and has an Instagram following. She is highly motivated for a chicken and a surprisingly good writer. However, she needs to work on her foot writing though because it still looks like chicken scratch!

Tonya is currently serving on the ECW events committee. She is also involved in

other local groups – Pensacola Woman's Alliance and a steampunk Mardi Gras Krewe. She also loves creating realistic, historically accurate costuming and SFX make-up.

"I like gardening too, but my husband says I'm where plants go to die," Tonya jokes. "Admittedly, I've not had much success with growing things here in the south, but I keep trying!"

Tonya is a fan of murder mysteries, in particular English authors such as Elizabeth George, Martha Grimes, and

Ellis Peters. She hopes to do more reading for pleasure.

She loves being part of the Portfolio group because "I get to read for fun and improve my writing at the same time. I feel so lucky to be in a group with such phenomenal and interesting writers!"

Tonya, we feel lucky to have you as a member of our group! Thank you for sharing your writing journey and chicken adventures with us! We can't wait to see and read more of it.

News and Announcements

Mark Your Calendar for March and April ECW Events!

March Meeting and Open Mic

Coauthoring can be challenging and rewarding. Brendan and Lori O'Gara write in fantasy, contemporary fiction, and nonfiction genres. They have published four books together and are currently working on the next.

Join them to discuss how to co-write with a partner successfully, from organizing your work, sharing research tasks, and more. Learn how to use your differing strengths and writing styles to produce a cohesive story.



April Meeting and Open Mic

Celebrate National Poetry Month with our Poet Laureate Katherine Nelson-Born. Katherine is already planning to make April 18 a special evening for our members and any guests. Mark your calendar now and be ready to be inspired and uplifted through connection of words. More details will be coming in a future *Legend*.

ECW Board and Member Accomplishments

From 2021 and 2022

Alone we can do little but together we can do so much! Look at all the ECW board and members have accomplished in the last two years. Pause and reflect on the amazing past two years.

- We changed the name of our organization in 2021 (from West Florida Literary Federation to Emerald Coast Writers) and have a rebrand in progress.
- The Poet Laureate of Northwest Florida held two poetry chapbook challenges and published both chapbooks.
- We held two successful youth writing contests in 2021 and 2022. In 2022 we published an anthology for the winners. One is underway for 2023.
- We held awards ceremonies for the 2021 and 2022 winners of those student writing contests.
- The Poet Laureate of Northwest Florida held a poetry slam contest and has another one planned for 2023.
- ECW members held a flash fiction contest and awarded first, second, and third prize winners in 2022.



- We participated in two successful Greater Gulfcoast Arts Festivals with a booth in 2021 and 2022.
- Emerald Coast Review 2021 saw its book's highest participation in entries. The planning for 2023 is underway.
- We established a member directory on the ECW website in 2022 to showcase our authors.
- We held two webinars on selfpublishing in 2021.
- We created a private Facebook group for members only to share news, writing, and special events (This is in addition to the publicfacing Facebook page for ECW).
- We secured a space at the Sunday Palafox Market for our members' use in 2021.
- We established a generic contract for ECW's use when publishing the work of our members.

- We published the poetry book of Jamey Jones, our past Poet Laureate.
- We joined the Community of Literary Magazines and Presses in 2021.
- We held our first virtual conference in November 2022.
- We held virtual Open Mics nearly every month with outstanding programs and featured writers.

- We continued the publication of our Legend newsletter.
- We continued to offer weekly critique groups – Monday Word Weavers and Wednesday portfolio groups.

We have no plans for slowing down either. We have an events committee in place and are already planning new programs and events where you can enhance your writing skills and goals and connect with fellow writers. Stay tuned!

Get to Know the Nominees for ECW Board Members

The following Emerald Coast Writers members have expressed interest or have been nominated to serve on the board for the 2023 and 2024 years. Learn more about them:

Charline Barger

Position of Interest: Vice President

Charline Barger has taught middle and high school English for more than ten years and began teaching creative writing two years ago. She is a National Writing Project consultant and has been writing poetry, short stories, and picture books for as long as she can remember. Her poetry and parenting articles have been published in various newspapers, magazines, and anthologies, including the Emerald Coast Review and Greater Pensacola Parents.



She lives in Pace with her three children, boyfriend, and a host of animals. When she is not teaching, Charline spends her time watching movies with her kids, reading the latest young adult novels and chipping away at piles of manuscript drafts. She has served as the Emerald Coast Writers board secretary and youth writing director for the past two years and hopes to continue serving as vice president.

Katie Rankin

Position of Interest: Board Secretary

Katie Rankin has been a member of Emerald Coast Writers since 2021, and most recently, she has served as the editor of ECW's *The Legend*. Her personal writing endeavors have focused on her experiences as a mother, but she also writes in her professional career. Katie works for an education-based nonprofit as their communications specialist, and she writes short stories about the nonprofit's work supporting students on their path to graduation.

Katie enjoys experimenting with graphic design, video, and photography and learning new skills from talented writers. In her free time, Katie spends time with family and friends – she is a wife and mother of two young children – and she enjoys exploring the beautiful Gulf Coast region.

Jennifer Aicher Powell

Position of Interest: Board Member

Jennifer Aicher Powell joined ECW in 2021. She participated in a weekly international writers' group and wanted something more local. The support received from other authors makes a huge difference. Jennifer has degrees in marine chemistry and biology and was an oceanographer and limnologist for decades, including nearly 2 years at sea. Now she is a stay-at-home mom and hobby farmer.



She has found her writing at odds with her background, preferring fiction to nonfiction and wordsmithing to academia. She began writing children's books after her daughter was born. She has written several books and says writing them was the easy part but marketing them is a challenge. Her bestseller is the ABC's of the Gulf Coast Beaches. She has several available on Amazon under her name as well as under the pen names J. Louise Powell and Fern LaCoeur. These days, Jennifer raises farm animals, reads constantly, makes soaps, and ponders life with a scientific and rhyming mind.

Carolyn Joyce Tokson

Position of Interest: Board Member

Carolyn Joyce Tokson is a retired educator who specialized in teaching college prep students dealing with dyslexia how to write academic essays. Her first love has always been poetry which she has written since her teens. She has been published in magazines and various other publications, including the Emerald Coast Review. She was the second-place winner in the Emerald Coast Writers' Flash Memoir contest recently.

February 2023 Legend – 7 She writes and edits the monthly newsletter for Jazz Pensacola. Her book of poetry is in the final stages of editing; she is member of the ECW weekly group, Word Weavers.

Pat Black-Gould

Position of Interest: Board Member

Pat Black-Gould is a clinical psychologist and an award-winning children's book and fiction author as well as a playwright. Her most recent book, *The Crystal Beads, Lalka's Journey*, recently won two children's book awards, and she has been doing presentations both locally and nationally for school, libraries, and various organizations.

Pat, along with a group of Pen Women, are currently working on turning the children's book into a live performance incorporating a reading, art, music, and dance. Pat and co-writer Steve Hardiman are in the process of editing their first novel, Limbo of the Moon, a coming-of-age story during the Vietnam War Era.



Board elections will be held at the February 21st ECW annual meeting. We hope you make plans to attend and learn about the vision for the upcoming year.

Membership Dues:

If You Haven't Paid Your 2023 Membership Dues, They are Now Overdue!

Please pay either by credit card online at https://wflf.org/Membership or by mailing your membership dues check and completed membership form (found at the end of this newsletter) to the ECW office at 400 S Jefferson St., Suite 212, Pensacola, FL 32502.

Dues must be paid in order to vote for Board of Directors and Bylaw changes at the February 21st annual meeting. You must be a member to attend Open Mic and to receive *The Legend* and other membership benefits.



Contest and Submission Opportunities

Join the Emerald Coast Writers' "What Inspires You?" Haiku Challenge in February 2023 – Celebrating National Haiku Month

Celebrate the shortest month of the year with the shortest poetry form during National Haiku Month February 2023. Fill your writing journal with 28 Haikus over February's 28 days and qualify to participate in a local Haiku Slam and win a prize. This event is open to the public, so everyone is welcome to participate!

Sponsored by the Emerald Coast Writers (ECW), the Haiku Challenge is a prelude to Pensacola's very own Haiku Slam, a returning event for local poetry lovers and performance artists. The slam originated in February 2021 as a brainchild of the Poets Roundtable, a collaborative group of local poets organized by Northwest Florida Poet Laureate Katherine Nelson-Born and local poets Charles McCaskill and Asia Samson.

During February, participants are challenged to look for inspiration wherever they find it, whether in nature or in a news article or video, a poem or essay or work of art, even the ingredients of a cereal box, and write a daily haiku, a short three-line poem. The poem can be the traditional Japanese style with a syllable count of five-seven-five or the American model championed by Jack Kerouac.

The month-long event is free. Participants are invited to share their Haikus on the ECW Facebook page, present their work at a local Haiku Slam, and maybe become a prizewinner! Use hashtag #HaikuECW whenever you post it on social media.

Stay tuned for Haiku Slam details on the ECW Facebook page or Twitter. Visit wflf.org to learn more about the ECW and becoming a member.

Contact Katherine Nelson-Born, current Northwest Florida Poet Laureate, at bcs.editor@gmail.com.



Submit Your Work to the Gulf Breeze Senior Center's Environmental Anthology

ECW Member Diane Skelton, who teaches the Memories to Memoir class at the Gulf Breeze Senior Center, is encouraging area writers to submit to an environment-themed anthology. The senior center, which has received a grant from the United Thank Offering of the Episcopal Church, is spending a year focusing on Seniors and the Environment by sponsoring special programs about the environment, nature, wildlife, and gardening along with clean-up activities.

Submissions to the anthology are free. The only criteria is living in the following zip codes: 32561, 32562, or 32563, and being over the age of 55. Those living

outside those zip codes may become a member of the Gulf Breeze Senior Center, which is \$40 yearly and cheaper than some submission or entry fees.

Poetry, prose, nonfiction, and short fiction, as well as art and photography are welcome. Memoir topics encouraged include visits to national parks, personal environmental and gardening projects, camping and fishing, adventures in nature, nature walks, wildflowers, wildlife encounters, and local nostalgic pieces about the beach, the sound, or the bay.

The anthology will be published in Spring 2023. Those with work accepted will receive a free copy and be invited to read. **Deadline is February 28, 2023**.



Submission Opportunities Through CLMP

Emerald Coast Writers is a proud member of the Community of Literary Magazines & Presses (CLMP), and as such, our members have access to their submission opportunities, including:

- Humana Obscura Deadline:
 February 26
 https://www.humanaobscura.com/s
 ubmit
- Consquence Forum Deadline:
 April 15
 https://www.consequenceforum.org/faqs
- Sh0 Poetry Deadline: April 30 https://shopoetryjournal.com/
- The Georgia Review Deadline: May 15 https://thegeorgiareview.com/
- Folly Journal Annual Short Story Competition – Deadline: May 30 https://www.follyjournal.com/competitions-submissions
- Literary Mama Deadline: July 31 https://literarymama.com/



Spread the Word About Our Annual Youth Writers and Art Contest

We are holding the annual Youth Writing Contest and have added art to the mix! This year's theme is "When Darkness Falls."

What do you do when you experience dark times in your life? Is there a dark time you have been through that you want to share? Do you have an idea about a fictional piece that takes place somewhere with no light, a story about someone with a fear of the dark, or do you want to write a poem about nighttime creatures or something that goes bump in the night? Are you inspired to draw or paint a scene that portrays the darkness in the world or a way out of it? The (dark) sky is the limit!

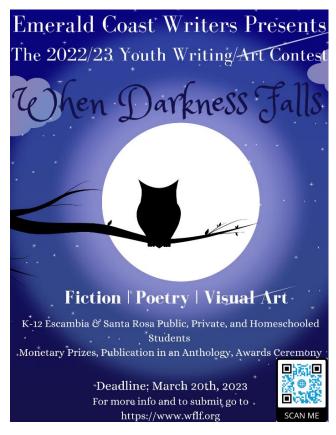
We can't wait to read your poetry and short stories and see your drawings, paintings, and photography!

The contest is open to all public, private, and home-schooled Escambia and Santa Rosa County students in grades K-12. An awards ceremony for winning students and their families will be held in the spring.

Monetary prizes will be given out and winners will receive a copy of an anthology with their work later in the year. The deadline for entries is March 20th.

See https://wflf.org/news-details/post_detail/2023-youth-writing-contest for guidelines and how to submit your work.

Email charline.burga@gmail.com with any questions.



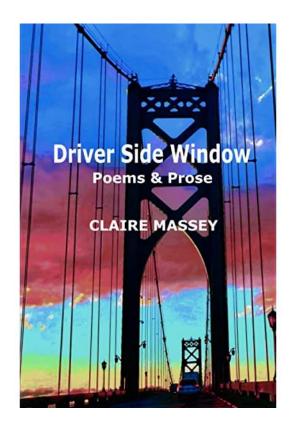


Review of *Driver Side*Window: Poems and Prose by Claire Massey

Reviewed by Patricia Taylor Edmisten

Although Claire Massey's poetry and prose can be lyrical, she isn't always a feel-good poet; she can be visceral and fast on her metaphorical feet. You do not want to fall into her verbal crosshairs. And that's precisely why her work resonates with me. Even heaven is not spared in "Subtext of a Prayer."

Who wants an eternity of retrospection in some white infinity unmercifully distant from this blue planet?



In "Tantrum on the Beach," a little girl refuses to leave the beach in exchange for barbeque and red Jell-O. "She was... utterly defenseless against such pull, so pitifully overpowered, already irredeemably, irretrievably in love."

"Why Can't I Meditate?" Well, I can now, but it took a long time to learn the art of surrender. Claire asks the same question in her poem with the same title:

Why so hard to uncross arms, rotate wrists to open palms?
Must be something in the posture that offers the chest, exposes ribs, unfists fingers to stretch and spread.
Why so awkward, so foreign an act, to unfurl hands, relinquish the urge to grasp, succumb to the lightness of air?

"In a Wayward Garden," the author confesses her frustration with her husband when he reminisces about a now deceased former love: "The two of them worked part-time crap jobs for the sake of their *art*. They greeted mornings with green tea and tai chi, howled at blood moons from the mountaintop, scrounged gas money for whatever journey of enlightenment brightened their twin gypsy auras...."

February 2023 Legend – 12 Claire also reminisces about a passionate suitor from her past in "Post to an Old Lover:"

Friends who followed you on Facebook reported that you lived your life exactly as you said you would.
You fished halibut in Norway, crewed a catamaran to Galapagos, guided hikers in Tivoli, cleaned museum artifacts in Mykonos. Last week, you left a brown-skinned poetess your widow in a house you hand-built on a hill in Ecuador.

In "Anniversary Presents," the writer describes a couple marking their fortieth anniversary at a nursing home during COVID restrictions. The wife presses her greeting card against a smudged, double-pane, glass window for her husband to see, "but this glass is dense, its composition nothing like that of crystal. Never purposed for reunions, it mutes their voices, distorts their faces, blocks every attempt at embrace."

Have you ever crossed a Florida bridge and glanced at what seems a drowsy river with Spanish moss-draped trees shading its depths and wondered what our state must have looked like when it was inhabited by its First People?

Now we come to my favorite section: Included in "Florida Fading, is an allegory in which "a remnant band" of existing and endangered animals, trying to survive near the banks of the Rainbow River, speak to each other about their imperiled habitats. Their banter awakens the Rainbow River who joins in: "My life has been the stuff of legends, you know.... My waters were so gin-clear, reflected rainbows arched in my depths, my aqualungs so robust, sapphire streams gushed from my vents. I was liquid light, a fathomless prism...." The allegory could stand alone, especially with illustrations, a picture book for thinking adults, or a jeremiad for legislators. Consider this review an appetizer. There is so much more to enjoy.

Claire would like to remind potential readers that author royalties are being donated to the Florida Wildlife Federation. The Federation's mission is to conserve Florida's wildlife, habitat, and natural resources through education, advocacy and science-based stewardship.

Driver Side Window is available from Amazon and Barnes & Noble, as well as available for check-out from the West Florida Library – Spring Street, Pensacola.

Patricia Taylor Edmisten is the author of nine books and a screenplay that was a finalist in the Alaska International Film Festival. She has written numerous reviews for *Peace Corps Writers*.

Proposed Bylaw Changes for Emerald Coast Writers, Inc.

- Article I. Name Shall be amended as follows:
 The name of this organization shall be the WEST FLORIDA LITERARY FEDERATION EMERALD COAST WRITERS (hereafter referred to as the Organization).
- 2) Articles I-IX. The root word "Federation" throughout the Bylaws shall be replaced with the root word "Organization."
- 3) Article III Members and Dues Section 3 Shall be amended to read as follows: Gratis membership shall be accorded to the twelve (12) sponsoring organizations that are listed in Article X who supported the beginnings of the Federation. Gratis membership shall be granted to individuals or other organizations under terms to be specified by the Board of Directors.
- 4) Article IV: Organization Section 1 Shall be amended to read as follows: The membership year shall be January 1st to December 31st with the annual meeting held in February January each year.
- 5) Article IV. Organization Section 2 Shall be amended to read as follows:
 Governance of the Federation Organization shall be vested with the Board of
 Directors with periodic meetings of the Federation Organization's membership to be
 established at a frequency, place, time, and date to be set by the Board. For the
 purpose of the Bylaws, periodic general membership meetings shall take place at
 least three (3) two (2) times a year.
- 6) Article V: Officers Section 2 Shall be amended as follows:

 All officers must be Directors of the Federation Upon election, an officer becomes a Director of the Federation Organization.
- 7) Article X. Charter Sponsors Shall be deleted from the ECW Bylaws.



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Ongoing Workshops

MONDAY'S WORD WEAVERS (POETRY, PROSE, MICRO-WRITING FORMS) -

The goal of this workshop is to assist you to further develop writing skills, learn to critique, and grow in confidence as you polish your authentic voice and achieve the next level of your personal writing goals. Join us virtually on the first Monday of the month from 6 to 8 p.m. For more information, please contact Debra Stogner at debrastogner@gmail.com.

WEDNESDAY PORTFOLIO and EXCHANGE SOCIETY -

A lively critique group meets every Wednesday, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., on Zoom. The group is looking for writers of any genre — memoir, poetry, fiction, nonfiction — who want to work on completing a project in 12 months. Since the group formed, several members have published books. Participants exchange writing tips, websites, and general trivia. For more information, please reach out to Diane Skelton at dianeskelton@att.net.

Please contact Diane regarding meetings during this time.

Emerald Coast Writers Board of Directors

President: Tom Roberts

Vice President: Mandy Fernandez

Secretary: Charline Barger Treasurer: Scott Finelli Director: Lori O'Gara

Director/Poet Laureate: Katherine Nelson-Born

Legend Editor: Katie Rankin

Check out our website at: www.wflf.org.

ECW is a proud member of the Community of Literary Magazines & Presses.



- "Like" us on Facebook, (under) <u>West Florida Literary Federation</u>, at: https://www.facebook.com/West-Florida-Literary-Federation-WFLF-255101747857712.
- "Follow" us on Twitter @WSTFLLITFED

Join ECW or Renew Your Membership

Memberships are good for one calendar year beginning January 1 and ending December 31. Individual membership is \$35/year, two-year \$60. Couple one-year \$60, two-year \$115. New members joining after July 15 pay \$20 or may pay \$45 which also pays for the following year. Subsequent years are due annually by January 1. Student membership is \$15.

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