

WRITE AWAY

Rockford Writers' Guild | Since 1947

No August Meeting

August is normally our month off — no meeting and no newsletter. But, I decided to send you an August newsletter, just to keep in touch during this abnormal year.

Please stay safe and healthy, everyone!



Credit: Jess Bailey Designs

Rockford Review Youth Poetry Award

An anonymous donor sent us funds to sponsor a youth poetry contest. The contest will be open to all kids up to age 18, so we hope all of you RWG members will encourage your children and/or grandchildren to submit poems they've written. We'll try to get the word out to the wider public, too.

We've set up two categories:

13-18

12 and under

Please send up to 3 poems, 50 lines or less, to sally@rockfordwritersguild.org. Your name, age, address, email address, and phone number should appear in the upper righthand corner.

Two RWG members have graciously volunteered to judge the contest entries. The deadline for entries is September 15, midnight Rockford time.

Winners will receive a \$20 check from RWG and winning poems will be published in the Winter-Spring edition of *The Rockford Review*.

PLEASE NOTE: AS USUAL, NO AUGUST MEETING HAS BEEN PLANNED. OUR NEW VENUE WHEN WE'RE ABLE TO MEET AGAIN WILL BE IN THE YMCA'S HARDING ROOM.

SUMMER-FALL ROCKFORD REVIEW

I mailed the Summer-Fall Members' Only issue of *The Rockford Review* to all members on July 13, and you should have received your books by now. If you haven't, please let me know. sally@rockfordwritersguild.org

FAREWELL TO D.N. SIMMERS

We're sorry to announce d.n. (Neil) Simmers passed away on July 9 of a massive heart attack. Neil was one of our Canadian members, from Vancouver, BC. He kept me continually informed regarding his progress on his books and new poetry — he had been working on his fourth book. Rest in peace, Neil.

COMMENTARY CORNER

Commentary Corner is open! Contact Tom Walsh, Membership Director, if you'd like to share your writing and critique other members' poetry and prose. See more info below. CRATER.RIM@GMAIL.COM

CC CONTEST DRAWING

Be reminded of our promotion for Commentary Corner. Remember, CC is a tool for you to get feedback on your work from a pool of Guild volunteers. Everyone submitting work to CC by the end of August will enter a drawing for a membership extension. Send your work (and any questions) to Tom Walsh at CRATER.RIM@GMAIL.COM. Thanks to Tom for starting and maintaining this new program!

GOOD NEWS about GUILD WRITERS

To have your literary good news published here and on our Facebook page every month, email sally@rockfordwritersguild.org.

The Iowa Telebooth Project is up and running, featuring **Mike Bayles'** poem. "Lone Farm." Visitors of the Pottawatomie Arts, Culture and Entertainment Center in Council Bluffs, IA, can visit one of three phone booths, dial a number and listen to the poem. Mike is excited to be part of such a unique project. "Dear Covid," his poem about COVID-19, is posted on the website for Writers on the Avenue, a Muscatine group.

Charlotte Digregorio, Winnetka, IL, received "highly, highly recommended" praise for her new book, *Ripples of Air: Poems of Healing*, from *Boston Literary Magazine*. In other news, her tanka sequence has been accepted for *Red Lights* journal, and her comments on the significance of writing tanka will be featured on the journal's back cover. She also received an acceptance for another tanka sequence from *Quill and Parchment*. Further, three of her free verse poems were selected for Highland Park Poetry's website.

Susan Goldberg's daughter Madeleine Jubilee Saito (née Witt), Rockford native, is a visual poet featured in an upcoming anthology of women's writing on climate change, *All We Can Save*, coming from One World and Penguin Randomhouse on September 22. Kirkus Reviews called the book "A welcome anthology, in prose and verse, of women's writings on climate change ... A well-curated collection with many ideas for ways large and small to save the planet."

Paula Morhardt's two books were published this summer: "Days of Daze" was out May 29 and "Night Maze" on June 5. Both are books of poetry, full of mystery and wonder, June bugs and wolves, monsters under the bed and marines taking children. "Widow's Walk: How My World Ended and What Happened After," Paula's story of loss after her husband died suddenly and her mother died the next day, currently available on Amazon, will be coming out with Fox Pointe Publishing in October, and its companion volume, "Widow's Tears of Sorrow," a book of poems about loss, will be out in November. Books are available at <https://www.foxpointepublishing.com/shop-now>.

Tom Lee is going for an MFA at Columbia (remotely from Rockford), and is now part of the writing staff at Voyage Media, Hollywood. They do many top titles in film. He works security in retail and as guide at Midway Village and Burpee soon again. Still a heavy satchel on his shoulder, he carried his new story to a growing market in New York and Chicago.

RM Yager's photography and poem were accepted in the April issue of the *Front Porch Review*, and her poetry was also accepted in *StepAway Magazine*, a journal in the UK, for their #31 edition as well as their recent "Lockdown" issue.

NEW MEMBERS

New Members for 2020: Please welcome **Kairo Brunson** of Rockford, IL; **Raymond Empereur** of Rockford, IL; **Phil Flott** of Omaha, NE; **Carol Fowler** of Elgin, IL; **Karen Guler**, Rockford, IL; **Fatima Alzahraa Hussein** of Rockford, IL; **Jeramie Joseph** of Rockford, IL; **Paula Morhardt** of Stockton, IL; **Kayla Osborn** of Rockford, IL; **Tricia and John Plescia**, Chana, IL; **Jennifer Anne Rea** of Rockford, IL; and **Jason Waddle** of Hamilton, Ontario.

And, thanks to those of you who have renewed and continue to support RWG!

Writing for the Coming Year — From Becky Wyant, VP

Back in January, when I was approached about being the VP, I was sure that “humorous writing” would be an enjoyable genre to explore. Lots of ideas popped into my head that I thought might interest the membership.

In March, as current events of a serious nature took hold, I began to doubt whether this is the time for silliness. Life and death (medically, socially, globally) are very much at stake. Time’s a’wasting for changing the course of humanity. Humor would only be an insulting distraction from action that needs to happen now.

Meanwhile, I’m watching my older grandkids giggle as they clip cartoons from *The New Yorker* for our scrapbook. I’m getting much needed relief from some of the satire on late-night TV. I’m smiling as I look through my Dad’s collection of books of humor by the likes of Twain, Will Rogers, Thurber, etc. And I’m reading poems aloud to the younger boys from Chicago’s own, Shel Silverstein. They clammer for their funny favorites.

So now, in August, I want to synthesize. Let’s validate the serious urgency facing humans in our times. But let’s *respectfully* lighten the mood ... now and then ... with humor being one of many survival skills we need to employ. The range is wide: childlike whimsy, drole, witty, belly laughs, satirical and self-deprecating. More details in September.

RWG THEME for 2020-2021: DON’T MAKE ME LAUGH!

September: Find a humorous poem, story or essay and read it aloud to yourself or someone else. Do this as often as you like.

October: Funnybones ... Are They Really Funny?

November: Laughter Is Sometimes a Pretty Good Medicine

December: The Gift of Good Humor

Meet Our Board Members:

Say Hello to Tom Walsh, Membership Director!

I live in Rockford with my wife Lori and our dog Leo. I’m a retired engineer. And if anybody ever tells you becoming/being an engineer doesn’t affect how you think and perceive the world—don’t believe him/her. In the last 27 years of my career—the time during which I worked for the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency—I spent most days composing technical reports (of dubious utility). So by hook/crook I developed some writing skills. Towards the end of that career (probably because, for better or worse, I’m a chronic navel-gazer), I felt I should attempt writing of a different sort. While the results to follow could at best be called uneven, their effects feel therapeutic.

Eventually I stumbled upon the Guild. And, before I really realized what was happening, I became the Membership Guy (just over a year ago). Ta-da. I hope I have been providing you good service. I trust your writing is rewarding and satisfying, and that you will stay with the Guild for a very long while. May you and everyone you care about stay healthy during these challenging times.



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