

# WRITE AWAY

Rockford Writers' Guild | Since 1947

## RWG Zoom Meeting JULY 19

Join our Zoom Meeting: Sunday, JULY 19 from 1-3 p.m. Central Time. Author R.E. Bunch will be our featured artist. See more on page 3.



Image by Pixabay

## “Optimism” Poetry Contest Winners

**John Davis** for “Open Window, Collioure”

**Blanche Kabengele** for “*not today*”

**Mary Lamphere** for “The Journey”

**Wilda Morris** for “Growing”

**Paul Smith** for “Make Sure I’m Dead”

Congratulations to the winners of both contests — our judge said she had a difficult time choosing among such exceptional poems and stories.

## “Procrastination” Prose Contest Winners

**Mike Bayles** for “Many Somedays”

**Susan Goldberg** for “The Picture Box”

**Frances Jaeger** for “The 1 PM Train”

**Pam Pettigrew-Shields** for “In the Library ...”

## Happy Fourth of July!

Happy July 4th to our American members and Happy Canada Day to our Canadian members!

## Writing Opportunities

### “Courage” Poetry Contest (Members Only)

Submit up to three new, previously unpublished poems (50 lines or less). Theme is *Courage*. The deadline is October 15, 2026. Winning entries published in *The Rockford Review*, Winter-Spring edition, 2027. Winners announced in the December 2026 newsletter.

### “Persistence” Prose Contest (Members Only)

Submit up to three previously unpublished prose pieces, each 1,300 words or less. Theme is *Persistence*. The deadline is October 15, 2026. Winning entries published in *The Rockford Review*, Winter-Spring edition, 2027. Winners announced in the December 2026 newsletter.

### 2026 Summer-Fall Edition (Members Only)

Submit up to three new, previously unpublished poems (50 lines or less) or three new prose pieces (1,300 words or less) or a combination of up to three poems and prose pieces to be considered for publication in *The Rockford Review*. No theme. Simultaneous submissions are fine, as long as you notify us. Please include your bio, 50 words or less. Deadline: October 15, 2026. Notification by December 15, 2026.

### Submission Guidelines:

**Poetry:** 3 poems per submission, each poem 50 lines or less (including blank line spaces), no more than 65 letters/spaces per line)

**Prose:** 3 prose pieces, each 1,300 words or less

**Bio:** send a short bio of 50 words or less

**Word document** (.docx), Times New Roman, 12-point font

**Simultaneous submissions:** yes, if you inform us.

**Submit online at** [www.rockfordwritersguild.org](http://www.rockfordwritersguild.org) or send to: [sally@rockfordwritersguild.org](mailto:sally@rockfordwritersguild.org).

**No post office mail submissions:** please, we won't open them

## GOOD NEWS about GUILD WRITERS

To have your literary good news published here and on our Facebook page every month, email  
[sally@rockfordwritersguild.org](mailto:sally@rockfordwritersguild.org).

**Carol Alfus'** first chapbook, "I Would Swim in Such a Sky" was recently released by Kelsay Books. It is available on Amazon, Kelsay Books' website [kelsaybooks.com](http://kelsaybooks.com), and at Read Between the Lynes bookstore on the Woodstock, IL, Square.

**Marie Asner** and husband, Harold Asner, known as The Poetry Couple, will participate in an Open Mic Poetry Reading on February 27 in Overland Park, Kansas. On March 2, they will do a poetry reading at Asbury Hall, Overland Park, as part of a recital to raise money for music scholarships. Marie Asner's poetry will be highlighted at the 2026 Convention of the Missouri Federation of Music Clubs in May 2026 in St. Louis, Missouri. The theme of the Conference is "Music Can Change The World."

An author interview of **Mike Bayles** for The Midwest Writing Center's Write More Light was aired online in May. It can be found on Youtube. On May 23, one of his poems was posted on The Weekly Avocet. The Avocet accepted another of his poems for the Summer print issue of The Avocet. On May 26, he did a painting for a Paint Night class.

**Olivia Diamond's** my new novel "Andalusia" has been published on Amazon and it is now available at <https://a.co/d/hovIEUV>.

**Laurie Didesch** recently had her poem "If Only" accepted for publication in the 22nd issue of *WayWords Literary Journal*.

**Charlotte Digregorio** runs an informative series of interviews for The Haiku Foundation with poets and educators, helping those interested in learning or improving their haiku. Her latest interviewee is longtime, award-winning haikuist Bob Lucky, <https://thehaikufoundation.org/charlotte-digregorio-interviews-bob-lucky/>. In other news, she judges four library poetry contests a year.

**Peggy Heitmann** has been named as a finalist in the Ron Rash Poetry Contest 2026, for her poem, "Planting Fear." Her poem, "Sunflower Awakening," has garnered an acceptance in Main Street Rag Magazine. And, Peggy is pleased to announce she has a poetry book titled "Some Call It a Journey" that will be released Fall 2026 by Kelsey books.

*The Prose Poem* published **Dr. Blanche Saffron Kabengele's** poem "Poetry Is" and *The Prairie Review* published all four poems she submitted: "At the Cusp of Envy," "For All I Know," "El Diablo and the Tempest," and "more of what."

**Wilda Morris's** most recent poetry acceptances have been from Asahi Haikuist Network, *Wee Sparrow Haiku Nook*, *Daily Haiku*, *Blithe Spirit*, *Presence*, *Wales Haiku Journal*, *Enchanted Garden*, and *Haiku Girl Summer*. She participated in an online reading of poems from from the new anthology, *Poets Respond to the American Revolution: The US250 Persona Poem Project* by reading her poem "Some Call Me a Founding Mother." The book was a joint project of Highland Park Poetry and the Illinois State Poetry Project. The monthly readings for which she has been MC for 20 years, has moved to the Westmont Public Library, due to the closing of Brewed Awakening.

In April, **Paula Morhardt's** first mystery will be published. "Domesticated Ferals: The Mystery" will haunt everyone who reads it! Sometime in the fall of 2026, the fourth in the Gray Valley series, "Flutterbys Come to Gray Valley," will be published. We are in the illustration phase right now.

## NEW MEMBERS 2026

**New Members for 2026:** Please welcome **Paula Coulahan** of Rockford, IL; **Kyla Cunningham** of Rockford, IL; **Anna Jollymore** of Rockford, IL; **Gary Lawrence** of Rockford, IL; **Ethan Quirk** of Rockton, IL; **Dawn Sopron** of Crystal Lake, IL; **Jeanne Spraetz** of Savanna, IL; **Adelaide (Addy) Whitehouse** of Waukesha, WI; **Winnebago Public Library** of Winnebago, IL; and **Fred Zuroske** of Loves Park, IL.

**NEW ZOOM MEETING LINK — THE OLD ONE DOESN'T WORK**

RWG Zoom link: <https://us05web.zoom.us/j/5534438062?pwd=1UGf4Ecnqy3dGZelb9TR9ci-faOGx8V.1>

**RWG Zoom Meeting: July 19**

Our July featured artist will be **Rhianna Bunch (R.E. Bunch)**. RE Bunch is a writer and linoleum printmaker whose most recent novel, “Red Horn,” won first prize in Gothic Horror in The BookFest Spring 2025. Her debut folk horror novella, “The By-Blow Promise Land,” was awarded third prize in Supernatural Creatures in The BookFest Spring 2023. Her work is informed by her lived experience of growing up goth in a small Midwestern town, and her extensive travels throughout the US. She blends elements of horror with magical realism, the supernatural and occult, and literary fiction to create tales that enchant and terrify readers.

**Next RWG Zoom Meeting: August 16**

Our featured artist in August will be **Jack Maconaghy**, author of “Too Soon a Spy” and “The Power to Corrupt.”



**WHY DON'T YOU JOIN US?**

Think about gifting a friend a membership to RWG — with the promise they'll be published in our Summer-Fall Rockford Review.

**Rockford Writers' Guild Board of Directors**

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Complete form and send (snail mail) check or money order to:  
 Rockford Writers' Guild  
 P.O. Box 493  
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Or, Join/Renew online at [www.rockfordwritersguild.org](http://www.rockfordwritersguild.org).