For the month of June, there is a general membership meeting and workshops in the morning and afternoon on Saturday, 22nd, starting at 10:00 am.

11:00 - 12:00 Morning Program: Donna Brennan

Openings, Hooks, Transitions, and Endings: What They Are, What They Do, and How to Make Them Better

In this two-part workshop, we'll talk about the goals of openings, hooks, transitions, and endings in our books and in our blurbs. We'll look at examples of what works and what doesn't, and discuss why they do or don't work. And then we'll find ways to improve existing openings, hooks, transitions, and endings (some real, some made up for this course).

Morning: Part 1 - Openings and Hooks
How you begin your story and each scene within that story should set up reader expectations and draw them into the tale. We'll talk about different types of openings and how to figure out what works best for your story and your readers. We'll also go over some tips to help your openings better serve your story goals. Then we'll discuss different types of hooks, as well as where, how, and when to use them.

Zoomlink to the regular meeting and morning program. No registration needed.

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87111838974?pwd=ZjZSSWpJbkpZMFVpTEZJL3dwd1Vzd09

Meeting ID: 871 1183 8974
Passcode: 984411
1:30 - 3:00 Afternoon Workshop: Donna Brennan:


Afternoon: Part 2 - Transitions and Endings (and bonus topic: Blurbs!)

Transitions are more than just getting from one scene to another; it's also about the changes that happen within your scenes and within your characters. Transitions can be jarring or seamless—it depends on what works best in your story (or in that part of your story). Endings should be satisfying. They don't have to be happy, but they shouldn't let the reader feel cheated or disappointed. We'll discuss what types of endings members in the class enjoy, and what they don't enjoy, to help us better understand how different reader expectations can be.

BONUS: We'll discuss what should be at the beginning of your book blurb, what kinds of hooks can draw your readers in, how to briefly summarize the main points of your story, and how most (if not all) book blurbs should end.

You must register to attend this afternoon workshop:


Register Here.

This month’s Member Spotlight : Jess Weixler-Landis

Jess has an MA in Human Rights and Development but has tried her hand at everything from social work to international development to starting a restaurant. Now, she's an artistic director for a brand marketing company she co-owns with her sister, which involves lots of creative brainstorming sessions and coffee. Jess has enjoyed filling journals with dark and dismal poetry since she was a kid obsessed with Edgar Allen Poe. For the past five years, Jess has given her childhood dream of writing some serious attention and is working on a historical fiction novel that, is of course, colored with darker elements.

Jess’s life has been a bit of a global tour, living in Canada, England, and Burkina Faso, gathering enough stories to last a lifetime. Her most recent adventure was a bucket-list trip to the Himalayas. She now lives among three acres of trees in Berks County with her husband and two children. Her fiction has been published in Lone Mountain Literary, Mag Pie, and Beloit Fiction. When she’s not writing, Jess loves spending time outdoors, reading, and inventing new cocktails with ridiculously complicated ingredient preparations.
Flash Literature Winners

Below are the winners of the Flash Fiction Contest held during the Write Stuff Conference. Congratulations to:

**Fiction**
- First: Travel Agency -- Ann Stolinsky
- Second: [no title] -- Karla Reidinger
- Third: A Little Goes A Long Way -- Robert Gelik

**NonFiction**
- First: Mystery of the Burning Bush -- George DeVault
- Second: [no title] -- Rosemary Detrolio
- Third: [no title] -- Susan Klin Monroe

**Poetry**
- First: Lint Trap -- Judy Speicher
- Second: A Word of Warning -- L.N. Passmore (Ginny Shepherd)
- Third: Grief -- Karla Reidinger

For the month of June, the nonfiction winner’s works can be read below. In July, we will present the poetry winner’s works. Again, congratulations!

**First: Mystery of the Burning Bush -- George DeVault**
“Awright, I confess. I started the fire,” the homeowner finally says. “There was this nest of ground bees by the front door. Didn’t want anyone to get hurt. So I poured gasoline down the hole, lit a match and ... KA-WHOOM!”

“Whyinhell didn’t you tell me that right away,” the fire chief says.

“Didn’t want my wife to be mad at me. You’re not gonna tell my wife, are you?”

“Oh, hell no,” says the chief. “That’s your job. I don’t want to be anywhere near ground zero when that fire bomb goes off.”

**Second: [no title] -- Rosemary Detrolio**
Angels leave feathers as signs for us.
Years ago, I attended an event in New York. I dashed in the lavatory and prayed, “God be with me. Angels guide me.”

Here I was, poised over the toilet with my pants hoisted against my knees, doing a balancing act, when a single white feather drifted down in front of me from the ceiling. I looked up.
Stunned, I grabbed my pants, then tenuously reached down to pluck the feather mid-flight. I saw no hole in the cemented ceiling, or any logical explanation for it, except one. Angels have a sense of humor.

**Third: [no title] -- Susan Kling Monroe**

“Mommy,” I said, “That man is holding the marshmallow wrong.”

Well, he was. Mother had taught the 8-year-old me how to feed horses. You hold the apple on your flat palm. That grown up held the marshmallow cupped in his palm, fingers curved around it, as he offered it to the grizzly bear.

Mother looked around, then said in a voice that meant there was to be no argument, “Into the car. Now!”

My siblings and I piled into the station wagon, and my mother drove us away from the garbage dump at Yellowstone National Park.

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**Our Notices of Contests**

GLVWG does not endorse any of these following events—they are supplied to our members solely for informational purposes.

**Last Call for the $10,000 North Street Book Prize**

It’s last call to enter your self-published or hybrid-published book into this year’s contest from Winning Writers. The grand prize winner will receive $10,000. Choose from eight categories:

Mainstream/Literary Fiction
Genre Fiction
Creative Nonfiction & Memoir
Poetry
Children’s Picture Book
Middle Grade
Graphic Novel & Memoir
Art Book

$20,400 in cash will be awarded in all, and the top nine winners will receive additional benefits to help market their books, including $500 credits at BookBaby. Books published on all self-publishing and hybrid-publishing platforms are eligible. Any year of publication is eligible. Entry fee: $79 per book, with free gifts for everyone who enters.

Top Prize: $10,000
Entry fee: $79
Deadline: July 1, 2024
Season Themes
HAVOK Publishing

HAVOK is a constant flash fiction contest, with rolling deadlines. Each season is split into monthly competitions with thematically connected prompts in a range of genres.

Genres: Fantasy, Flash Fiction, Mystery, Science Fiction, Short Story, and Thriller

Top Prize: $100
Additional prizes: Publication in an anthology. Potential for larger gift card wins.
Deadline: June 28, 2024 (for current monthly theme)

This month's **Featured Publishers**

**Joffe Books**

Joffe Books is one of the UK’s leading independent publishers of excellent commercial fiction, especially crime and mystery fiction. We are renowned for working closely with authors from across the world to create fantastic books and turning them into bestsellers.

We accept submissions from agents, previously published authors (including self-published authors) with long backlists, first-time writers with only one book under their belt, and anyone in between. We pride ourselves on the passion and dedication we pour into each and every book we publish.

**Arcadia**

Arcadia is Quercus’ imprint for science fiction, fantasy, and horror. Established in 2011 as Jo Fletcher Books, and helmed by the inimitable Jo herself, the imprint established a reputation as the home for a small and beautifully curated list of incredible authors and modern classics such as *This is How You Lose the Time War*, *Mexican Gothic*, *Rotherweird*, and *Traitor’s Blade*.

The Author’s **Resource Well**

**Showing vs. Telling in Your Writing**
Roseann Biederman
Show, don’t tell. Most writers have heard this maxim at some point, whether from a teacher, an editor, or an agent. But what does this writing advice mean, in practical terms?

**Writing Like the Dickens**
Dan Koboldt

I’ve recently been reading more work by (and articles about) Charles Dickens. He is, by most accounts, the foremost author of the Victorian era. His 1843 novella A Christmas Carol remains an incredibly influential work, one that I never tire of watching on stage in December. His novel A Tale of Two Cities is the bestselling novel of all time, with 200 million copies sold. David Copperfield is his favorite novel, and semi-autographical to boot.

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Our **CaféZoom!** sessions continue. The Café is every Wednesday via Zoom. Details will be on the website on the previous Friday. You must register to read and/or attend. However, they fill up pretty fast, so pay attention to the event listings on our website and signup for the next one.

Here is the link for more information and to register for The Writers Café. There is a waitlist for those who can't register in case someone doesn't show up. [https://greaterlehighvalleywritersgroup.wildapricot.org](https://greaterlehighvalleywritersgroup.wildapricot.org)

We are now allowing up to 20 participants to be readers. The Writers Café format has two parallel sessions (breakout rooms) with 10 readers in each. You can still join the meeting, but only the first 20 to register will be able to read their work. There will be a waitlist for readers, so have something available to read in case someone doesn't show up.

Total registration will be limited to 25 people, any more would be unmanageable. We will be using Zoom, and those who have registered will get an invitation via email and be notified again on the day of the Café. The meeting will start at 6:55 pm, with no particular end time. If you have signed up, be prompt!

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Here is our **Occasional Column**
(This is a reprint from March 2021)
Crimes Against Grammar: Banished Words 2021 (a bit of a look back.)

By Pattie Giordani

We all have a list of words and phrases we don’t want to use again. And, we don’t want anyone else to use them either.

In 1976, Lake Superior State University (LSSU) Public Relations Director Bill Rabe released the first “List of Words Banished from the Queen’s English for Misuse, Overuse, and General Uselessness.” Over the years, the list has included such entries as détente, user friendly, wrap my head around, and bromance.

Rabe began the list as a promotion for the little-known Michigan university, but it grew in popularity and now receives nominations from all over the world. The 2020 list included such gems as jelly (as in jealous); literally (cue Rob Lowe in Parks and Rec); OK, Boomer; and totes (as in totally).

Since everyone wants to banish covid-19 in all forms, it’s not surprising that seven of the 10 words and terms on the 2021 list relate to the virus.

I don’t see these terms leaving the lexicon anytime soon. However, as the LSSU committee wrote, “Coincidentally, this list arrives as does a vaccine—the committee hopes this proves a type of double whammy.”

2. Social distancing.
We know staying 6 feet apart can help prevent the spread of infection. But yes, most of us do wish we didn’t have to use that term.

3. We’re all in this together.
True, but countries, states, municipalities, and people are dealing with the virus in different ways. Maybe this phrase should be on the way out.

4. In an abundance of caution (various phrasings).
What exactly does that mean? As the committee asked, “What is the standard measurement for caution, metric or U.S. standard?”

5. In these uncertain times (various phrasings).
IMHO, all times are uncertain; we just don’t realize it. Or don’t want to realize it!

6. Pivot.
Yes, we must adapt to *these uncertain times*, but this makes me think of Ross moving the couch in Friends.

7. **Unprecedented.**
This word already hit the Banished Words List in 2002. Said the committee, “Given that it was nominated many times this year for misuse in describing events that do have precedent, inclusion again seems warranted.”

Now the three banished words and terms *not* about Covid-19:

8. **Karen.**
According to the committee, this term began as an anti-racist critique of white women in response to Black and Brown people, but it “has become a misogynist umbrella term for critiquing the perceived overemotional behavior of women.” Either way, it’s offensive to all “normal people named Karen.”

9. **Sus.**
This is a shortened version for “suspicious” in the video game *Among Us*. I had no idea where this originated and apparently, many committee members didn’t either. However, some members have children who play the game. They said that the multiplayer online social game is designed around identifying “sus” imposters so they can be “thrown into the lava.” As it happens, it has gained enough in use outside of the game to merit nomination by annoyed nonplayers.

10. **I know, right?**
I’m guilty of using this frequently, especially the abbreviation IKR? to which I usually add an exclamation point. Not sure if I can—or want to—banish it from my texts. LOL

**Note:** Do you have a grammar, usage, or style question? Send it to pattiegiordani@gmail.com and I’ll answer—or find the answer! I might even use it in a future column.

**Pattie Giordani** is a writer and editor who was a staff editor for a national nonprofit association and for a daily newspaper. Her freelance articles have appeared in various newspapers and magazines. She copyedits and proofreads books and other publications, and she frequently presents at writers group meetings and conferences.

We hope to be helpful!

**PS. The Write Stuff Conference has a new location!**
The Write Stuff Writers Conference 2025 will be on March 13-15, at [Homewood Suites](#) in Center Valley, across from the Promenades. Our previous location, Best Western, is slated to be torn down (enough said).
We think you will find the new accommodation an advantage over the old. Each unit has a full kitchenette. However, that is no reason to skip their free breakfast, of which they are quite proud.

Stay tuned.