



Valley ByLiners

Volume 2, Issue 2

February 2007

Valley ByLiners

Valley Byliner's Annual Workshop—Feb. 17th

2007

MEETING

Dates

Jan 13

Feb 17

March 10

April 14

May 12

June 9

July 14

August 11

Sept 8

October 13

November 10

2nd Saturday
of the Month

1:30 pm

Harlingen
Public Library

Join Us!

Annual Spring Writers' Workshop. **"Tell it like it really was: Writing Your Memoir."**

From 9 a.m. until 4 p.m.

in the auditorium at the Harlingen Public Library.

Cost for this all day event is just \$40, payable at the door.

Registration starts at 8:30 a.m.

Through hands-on exercises and the technique of using snippets of your life history, author and publisher Joan Neubauer will

help you get started writing a memoir.

To create a memoir requires using the same creative building blocks found in any good story.

Joan and her husband Steve own and operate WordWright.biz, Inc., a publishing house in Alpine, Texas. "We're an author incubator," Joan says. "We want to nurture authors and help them develop into the fine writers and promoters



they can become."

Joan takes her own advice and is making a name for herself, her publishing house, and her authors.

WordWright has acquired a reputation as one of the finest publishing houses to showcase new authors. Since 2000, WordWright has published over one hundred fifty titles for new authors.

Bring a new friend to see what Byliners has to offer!

Byliner Focus LeRoy Overstreet, a Self-Described "Adventurer"

Eighty-one years old and still feisty, LeRoy writes about his life.

These are his words. Look for more from LeRoy next month.

"My stories are the same kind that the old men told in the bunkhouse when I was a teenager. They emphasize how different things were then than they are now. There were teenagers working everywhere. You either worked or you starved to death. There were no lawsuits. If you made a mistake or had an accident, you suffered the consequences.

"I was deeply impressed by their stories. Unless the ox was in the ditch we would be allowed to rest on Sunday and on Saturday night the moonshine jug would be set out on the shelf in the cook shack next to the water bucket and the stories would continue until long after midnight. "I would give almost anything for a copy of those stories today, But like the men who told them those stories are gone forever. I have thought about them all my life and they have inspired me to write mine.

(Cont. page 2)

Leroy Overstreet cont'.

Realizing how much things had changed during my lifetime, I had been wanting to write about my experiences for a long time, but just never seemed to have time. I had an accident and had to have my right arm strapped to my side for 6 weeks to immobilize my shoulder. The doctor said I should exercise my hand and fingers. I spent the whole time writing on a scratch pad on my lap.

“My first story was about my experiences alligator hunting that Martha Strawn used in her book. Martha A. Strawn, teaches art and photography at the University of North Carolina in Charlotte. She

published *Alligators, Prehistoric Presence in the American Landscape*, in a beautiful, coffee-table style, hardcover book. She paid me \$300 for a one-time use. That is the only one of my stories that anyone has read.”

“My stories are about people and events in my life, like Cliff Gatewood, the rodeo producer, who, as a publicity stunt, drove 3000 head of wild horses, just shipped in from Montana, from the railroad yard on one side of town to the ice arena on the other, right through the business district of Sherbrooke Canada, a city of some 100,000 people.

“Then there was Homer Harris, whose favorite pastime was catch-

ing pickpockets with fish hooks at the county fairs where we performed. And Chief Durant, my big Indian friend, who got shot 5 times with a 25-caliber pistol, right in the chest, while standing by my side to protect me, and never even went to the doctor. Then there was Sweet Mary, my unfaithful, fiancée. I'll tell you those were exciting times! And I get a thrill every time I read these stories myself.”

Meeting Highlights

by Marge Johnston

Tales Told at Midnight Along the Rio Grande is now a reality! The books are here! And they're beautiful . . . filled with 34 fascinating stories related in some ghostly or supernatural way to the Rio Grande Valley. Verne pointed out that, though it will be great to make a profit to add to the Byliners bank account, the greatest benefit of the project is to give members an understanding of doing a book from beginning to end.

Special thanks to Mona Sizer for her encouragement, great editing, and for her determination to make it happen.

THANKS TO JEFF HARRIS FOR ALL OF HIS WORK WITH THE

PUBLISHER, iUniverse, and to his good wife Ruth for her support . . . especially for receiving the 14 boxes of books from the publisher and getting them inside before Jeff got home.

Also, thanks to Jeff, the new Byliners web site is up and running. He will update it periodically as time permits. Check it out at: <http://www.rgvbyliners.org/>

Program by **Brenda Riojas** In addition to the excitement about the book, Brenda Riojas, who has done the PR for the Valley's Catholic Diocese for nine years, told about her experience with publishing her beautiful hard-cover book about the

History of the Catholic Church in the Valley about three years ago. It has many color photos, including all Catholic churches in the area.

She was also very excited about a new quarterly magazine to be published by the Basilica at San Juan, El Peregrino, of which she will be editor. The first edition is almost ready and will be available in a few months. She will be going to Rome to interview the author of a recent book on Pope John Paul II, a very special assignment. We'll hear more from Brenda on this new project as it takes shape Shrine in San Juan. Her email is bnet-tles@cdob.org.

Student Thank You

Letter from Annie Jones

As a young writer, I would like to thank you and Valley Byliners for everything you've done to encourage me- without you, I would have given up taking myself seriously as a writer long ago. After each of your Valley Byliners awards programs, you were so complimentary and kind to me that I came away thinking, "I've got to try this again!" Although I haven't been the most active member, I think you run a wonderful writer's group and I thank you for all the work I know you put into it.

I wanted to inform you that this year I won a first place award in the eleventh and twelfth grades division of the Texas UIL fiction writing contest, and was presented with my award in the Texas House of Representatives in Austin during the beginning ceremony of the Texas Book Festival – an award I probably would have had the courage to try for, had I not had your support. I also wanted to inform you that I plan to matriculate as an English major at Dartmouth College this coming fall (where hopefully I may take their creative writing course offerings)

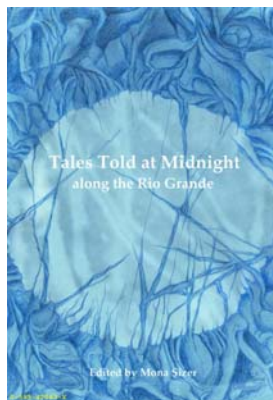
Thank you so much for your and other Byliner members' encouragement to keep writing. Without it, I might never have tried so hard to reach so far.

Sincerely,
Annie Jones

How to do a reading and sell more books

Eileen, Marianna, and Nelly Vensalar sold 19 books at a Rotary meeting at the first direct sales event. Pretty good since they didn't have more than 25 in attendance.

These marketing "pros" are fast learners and wanted to share what they learned from the experience.



• Hold up the book so everyone can see the cover, smile, and say the title out loud

slowly and clearly.

- Remember the reading isn't about you; it's about the audience...what will interest them.
- Mention briefly that the Valley Byliners wrote 3 books 20 years ago and it was time for another. "We believed there were stories to tell, tales suitable for those darkest hours of the night here in a region of myths and superstitions and legends of several cultures. (Borrow freely from the back of the book.)....

- Be sure to bookmark your page before the reading so there's no page shuffling.
- Do 2-3 short readings, no more than a page each or a single poem. Dramatize your reading if you're comfortable doing so. Otherwise, make sure you keep your head up so they can hear.
- Don't finish a story, leave the audience wanting more. Smile again.

People have had ghostly experiences of their own and that prompts them to buy the book.

People ask where can they buy it if not at the reading.

Market Day on Jackson St.; Amazon.com, Barnes and Nobles.com, or they can mail a check and have it sent to them.

Jeff has figured out the total cost of mailing books. Price will be \$18.00 which includes sales tax and \$1.99 for shipping and handling.

Send requests for mailed copies to : **Jeff Harris**

**15859 Perkins Road
Harlingen, TX 78552**

Writers do it with punctuation!

LOVE IS . . .

Love is, sometimes,

Too loud, too quiet, too boring,
and, surely, doesn't send
my heart soaring.

Too short, too tall, too ugly,
and, not at all funny.

Too fat, too thin, too hairy,
to marry.

But, I love you anyway.

Mario J. Munoz

Love is an expensive lottery
ticket, a costly investment that
affords the only real shot at joy
and fulfillment.

Jack King

Love—the divine glue that
holds the universe together.

-Judy Stevens

Love is a smile, a nuzzle, and
the assurance of forever.

Cindy Sadler

Love is looking after someone
else's needs before your own.

Gene Black

Love, in its maturity, is the
trust that holds the secrets of
the past and inspires unblem-
ished hope for the future.

Ann Greenfield

Love is not fair, but it's still good.

Glorene Luth

Love is knowing Edgar Allan Poe
is with his beloved cousin in that
Great House of Usher in the Sky,
or somewhere...

C. Dean Anderson

Love is . . . when you know
absolutely

that he's all you want and all
you'll ever want.

Mona Sizer

love is.....when you see or hear
something that is so beautiful or
great you can't keep it to your-
self.....you have a friend, lover or a
husband next to you and

you can turn to him (her) and say
"wasn't that beautiful!!"

Bidgie Weber

Book Promotion—It's our turn to get out there an "Sell the Book!"

The next phase of our book project
is promotion, promotion, promo-
tion. Not very many people, espe-
cially writers, feel comfortable
with the idea of self-promotion.
But doing it as a group makes the
task easier and maybe even fun.

The books may be sold in several
ways. Byliner President Verne
Wheelwright had several market-
ing suggestions, including: From
our own prepaid stash (the list
price is \$14.95 plus tax, which
brings it to \$15.88. I'm selling
mine for \$15.00); direct sales from
presentations and readings for
clubs and organizations; at book
signings; local book stores. (If
you want to take some books on
consignment, contact Jeff at jhar-

ris@ispwest.com Also, books
may be ordered through Ama-
zon.com or Barnes and No-
ble.com.

Here are some resources for you to
learn more about book promotion.

*The Frugal Book Promoter: How
To Do What Your Publisher Won't*
(Paperback)

by Carolyn Howard-Johnson

*The Savvy Author's Guide to Book
Publicity* by Lissa Warren

*Publicize Your Book: An Insider's
Guide to Getting Your Book the
Attention It Deserves*

by Jacqueline Deval

Book Marketing from A to Z

by Francine Silverman

*Over 75 Good Ideas for Promot-
ing Your Book* by Patricia L. Fry

*Guerrilla Marketing for Writers
: 100 Weapons to Help You Sell
Your Work*

by Jay Conrad Levinson

The iUniverse website also has a
free downloadable manual on how
to promote your book.

WANTED

**Seeking 2007
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mommymanager@yahoo.com

Did you know . . .

The Writers' League of Texas offers its members a professional critiquing service for fiction, non-fiction and children's writing. Submit 20 pages of your work, and you will be matched with a published author, in your genre, who will provide written critique within 3 weeks. Manuscripts are critiqued anonymously. Submit 20 pages of your manuscript, a cover letter with your name and contact information, as SASE for return of the manuscript and critique, along with \$60 to the Writer's League Office. For more info about becoming a member, check out their website .

Copyright Companion for Writers debunks myths like the Poor Man's Copyright, & examines fair use & public domain, protecting copyright on the Web, & getting consent to use song lyrics, pictures, and quotes. Includes special sections for freelancers & songwriters!
<http://www.LiteraryLawGuide.com>

For those who would like to write for money, check out Common Ties, an online blog that PAYS for unpublished personal experiences, about 1000 words long. Pays between \$100-\$200. You keep your rights and can republish, except in a book.

For more information, visit
<http://www.commonities.com/blog/submit-a-story/>

(submitted by Marianna Nelson)

Writing Contests

The 2007 Erma Bombeck Writing Competition is open for entries.

Entries must be submitted using the online entry form, and will be accepted until 11:59 PM, EST, on February 18, 2007.

There is no entry fee and no age restriction. For complete writing competition guidelines, online entry form, or more

information, visit <http://www.wcpl.lib.oh.us/adults/erma.html>

CoffeeHouseFiction

Enter Now! Contest ends January 31, 2007. Short Stories compete for cash prizes (\$500, \$125, \$75, \$50). Critiques available.

Go to www.coffeehousefiction.com or email info@coffeehousefiction.com for details. Fee.

2007 MANUSCRIPT CONTEST

You are invited to submit a one-page synopsis and the first 10 pages of your unpublished novel to the League's 9th annual Novel Manuscript Contest. Fiction categories include Mainstream Fiction, Thriller/Action-Adventure, Romance, Science-Fiction/Fantasy/Horror, Historical/Western, and Mystery. There are also categories for Narrative Nonfiction, Children/Middle Grade (Long Works only), and Young Adult (Long Works only).

Each entrant receives a detailed critique of the manuscript, and the winner in each category will meet individually with an agent at the Writers' League of Texas Agents & Editors Conference, June 15-17, 2007. Deadline for entries is March 2, 2007. For more information and entry forms

www.writersleague.org

**But when a young lady is to be a heroine,
the perverseness of forty surrounding
families cannot prevent her.**

**Something must and will happen to throw
a hero in her way.**

- Jane Austen



Shameless Plugs (Send us yours!)

Verne Wheelwright shares :

As a result of four articles that I wrote for the Copenhagen Institute of Future Studies, I've been invited to speak at their annual meeting April 25 in Copenhagen.

As a result of an article I wrote for The Futurist, I've been in-

vited to speak to a forum of investors in Reno in May.

I've completed my Personal Futures Workshop a workbook with a narrated CD and PowerPoint and will be offering it on my website in February. This is self publish

Congratulations, Verne!

NEXT MEETING

Saturday, March 10th
at 1:30 pm
Harlingen Public Library

Writer's Wanted

The newsletter, like any other publication needs writers to fill white space. Currently, we are looking for short and long feature articles. Share your ideas for future features. If you can't think about what to write, I have LOTS of ideas. . If you want to Volunteer for an assignment—Call me!

Sandra Vela at mommymanager@yahoo.com or telephone (956)638-7203.

Official Objectives of the Valley ByLiners

- to enhance and encourage writers in their professions of writing
- to provide technical aspects and information on writing and marketing
- to provide fellowship opportunities to the membership. - from the files of R.Harris

Submit your writer's fairy thought.



Valley ByLiners

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Writing is like breathing, you don't have to do it well, but you do have to do it.

Don't Forget
to Write!



ByLiners

TO: