

Current News & Views

Attend the next open WCWF board meeting - **Thursday, Feb. 13, at 3:30pm, 740 Gunnison, GJ.**

Upcoming Events

The next Write Out Loud performance is scheduled for April at KAFM. See your original short play, poetry or reading performed on stage, submissions will begin soon. More info here.

Slamming Bricks, an invitational slam organized by Caleb Fergan-chick, is scheduled for June 27. Already 10 performers are signed up. CO Poet Laureate Bobby LeFebre will be a judge. More info to come.

A veterans writing group is starting up soon and the Alzheimer program is still running for those interested.

UNKNOWN WRITERS CONTEST sponsored by Denver Woman's Club deadline Feb 15, 2020. Contact and info: PowerfulTools.barb@gmail.com

WCWF survives on dues and grants. Pay your dues, make a donation or find out what you can sponsor at www.westerncoloradowriters.org.

Send email, news and contributions to virg@leafmedia.com

Writing Beginnings:

wild and exciting first sentences

With thirty years of science fiction, fantasy and horror short story publishing behind him, James Van Pelt shows how to open up your beginning into a first draft, then how revision will make it work.

James Van Pelt is a full-time writer in western Colorado. His work has appeared in many science fiction and fantasy magazines and anthologies. He's been a finalist for a Nebula Award and been reprinted in several year's best collections.



His first Young Adult novel, *Pandora's Gun* was released from Fairwood Press in August 2015. His collection, *The Experience Arcade and Other Stories* was released at the World Fantasy Convention in 2017.

James blogs at <http://www.jamesvanpelt.com> and he can be found on Facebook.

Writers Night at the Art Center Tues., Feb. 4, 6-8pm

7th and Orchard, Grand Junction, CO
Registrations appreciated at wcwritersforum@gmail.com
or westerncoloradowriters.org

Prompt & Circumstance

Exciting opportunity! WCWF begins a series of prompted free-writing/reading sessions at the newly created Confluence Studios in downtown Grand Junction. The events will be held on the last Thursdays of the month, from 6:30-8pm.

Prompters will be chosen from WCWF friends and collaborators, but attendees will not be locked into the formatted prompt if they wish to do their own thing. Reading your writing is optional but encouraged.

Confluence Studios is the brainchild of Carrie Kellerby, whose intent is to bring Grand Valley arts together in a hospitable and inspiring space. The Studio offers art classes in theater, writing, visual arts and crafts. Community space rental is available in their studio and the larger classroom which seats about 20. Contact Carrie at 970-314-2584.

For more information contact WCWF at: wcwritersforum@gmail.com

Feb. 27, 2020 - 6:30-8pm
Confluence Studios
634 Main, Suite 6,
off the downstairs garden area.

THE PERILS OF PORTRAYING WOMEN IN FICTION

I asked a well-known local author to read the first few chapters of my novel and within his useful notes was a suggestion: You have failed to pass the Bechdel test. “What is that!” I wondered. I went to Wikipedia.

The Bechdel test is a measure of the representation of women in fiction. It asks whether a work features at least two women who talk to each other about something other than a man. The requirement that the two women must be named is sometimes added.

“Aha!” I had indeed failed. This suggestion led me to rewrite, and to research further.

In her 1929 essay *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf observed about the literature of her time what the Bechdel test would later highlight in more recent fiction:

“All these relationships between women, I

thought, rapidly recalling the splendid gallery of fictitious women, are too simple. ... They are now and then mothers and daughters. But almost without exception they are shown in their relation to men.... all the great women of fiction were, until Jane Austen's day, not only seen by the other sex, but seen only in relation to the other sex. And how small a part of a woman's life is that”

We have come a long way from Jane, but still not far enough according to some. Today's atmosphere, rife with feminist ideologies and the “me too” movement, make us much more aware of how we portray this gender. Author Kate Elliot offers three basic pieces of advice:

- 1) Have enough women in the story that they can talk to each other. (About something other than men.)
- 2) Filling in tertiary characters with women, even if they have little dialogue or no major impact on plot, changes the background dynamic in unexpected ways.
- 3) Set women characters into the plot as energetic participants.... Have your female characters exist for themselves, not merely as passive adjuncts whose sole function is to serve in relationship to the male.

Some characterization to avoid:

- The damsel-in-distress trope usually involves beautiful, innocent, or helpless young female leads, placed in a dire predicament who requires a male to achieve her rescue.
- Tokenism is the practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to be inclusive to members of minority groups in order to deflect accusations of discrimination.
- The good old boy or buddy female is so much like a man that you can't tell the difference, except for the curvacious body.

It's good to make a study of how to write characters, especially those who are on the fringes of current culture. But the best advice comes from Kate Elliot. “Write all characters as human beings in all their glorious complexity and contradiction.”

– by Virginia Jensen

For more, see my online sources:

*https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bechdel_test

*<https://www.tor.com/2015/03/04/writing-women-characters-as-human-beings/>

*<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/jan/27/us-study-finds-publishing-is-overwhelmingly-white-and-female>



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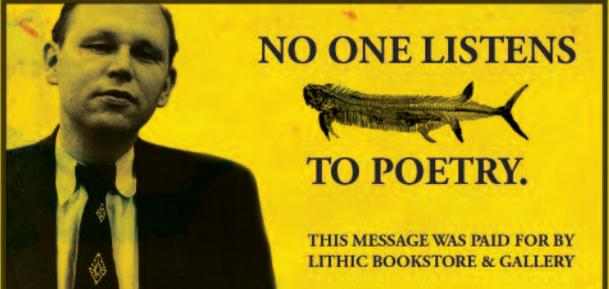




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AROUND THE REGION

Grand Junction Mesa County Library

Poetry Night - Wed., Feb. 12, 6pm. With Lisa Connors. *In January, we took a look at Craig Raine and explored his poem "A Martian Sends a Postcard Home." The challenge is to write a poem from the point of view of an outsider - you don't have to be a Martian (you can, if you want) but definitely an outsider looking in to an unfamiliar situation. Find other events at mesacountylibraries.org.*

Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers



Feb. 29, 9-12, "How to Become an Effective Critique Partner." at the Business Incubator Center, 2592 Legacy Way, Grand Junction. Coffee and snacks available.

RMFW's new GJ contact person is Pam Chiaro and you can reach her for more information at rmfw.westslope@gmail.com

Keep up with RMFW's latest activities at <http://rmfw.org/events/free-programs/ws/>

Ridgway

Ridgway's Open Bard Series, February 11, 6:30, at the Sherbino Theater featuring Youth Night. More info here. <https://www.facebook.com/RidgwayPoetrySeries/>

The logo for Aero Hair Studio features a stylized green leaf and branch design on the left side, with the text 'aero hair studio' in a lowercase, sans-serif font below it.

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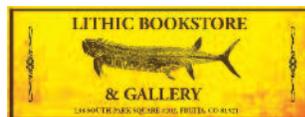
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#202, Fruita, CO - Th-Sat, 12-8.

<https://lithicbookstore.com/>



Talking Gourds Tour

Feb. 11 at the Telluride Arts HQ, 135 W. Pacific Ave. Reading by Santa Fe poet Kyce Bello. She is winner of the inaugural Interim 2018 Test Site Poetry Series Prize for *Refugia* (Univ. of Nevada Press, 2019) and is a bright and hopeful voice in the current conversation about climate change. Kyce earned her MFA in poetry at The Institute of American Indian Arts in 2017.

Contact Art Goodtimes, shroompa@gmail.com
More about Talking Gourds at www.telluride-institute.org/talking-gourds/

Aspen

Aspen Poets Society reading, last Sunday of the month. For more information Contact Lisa Zimet at (970)379-2136 or lisamaxz@aol.com

Friday, Feb 14, 6:30. 7th Annual Youth Poetry Slam, presented by Aspen Words, Third Street Center, Carbondale.

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Accomplishments

Poet Rosemerry Wahtola-Trommer is a regular presenter, reader, teacher and guest at WCWF events, especially Write Now and Wings. We are all familiar with her charm and intelligence and great poetry. No one should be surprised that she has another accomplishment under her belt.



She writes: "I am thrilled to be selected as the winner of this year's Halcyon Poetry Prize, which means that my new collection, *Hush*, will be published by the wonderful Middle Creek Press, perhaps as early as this spring.

"It's a quiet book—a book deeply steeped in nature. And Craig Childs, adventurer and writer, is writing the introduction."

"The contest advertised for "literature of human ecology, eco-poetry, nature-poetry, spiritual rather than religious, works based in our humanity, conscious, mindful, deep. We look for works which show connection between people and nature, people and people, people and their stories, dreams, and sacred moments, whether wild or domestic."

Find out more about Rosemerry on line, including her life in southern Colorado, her daily poems and her wonderful blog with cohort and sci fi writer Christie Aschwanden. They discuss quitting, getting started, collaboration and existential despair.

<https://www.wordwoman.com/>

WCWF Wrap-Up

Report from the Board

The board met on Jan. 9 with Virginia Jensen, Linda Skinner, Jane Miller, Sunny Ramsey and Caleb Ferganchick and guest Annette Ferriole.

Linda went over our 2019 expenditures and spoke about the costs being presented to the GJ Arts commission application for support for 2020, which Linda will submit on Feb 3.

Plans for upcoming Writers Nights were discussed, along with Write Out Loud and our annual major Slam event.

We welcome new board member Erika Kitzman as treasurer.

The February 13 meeting is open. Feel free to attend.

Board Members get FREE membership and admission to events the years they serve.

WCWF Board Members

Linda Skinner • Jane Miller
Virginia Jensen • Erika Kitzman
Sunny Ramsey • Carly Smith
Caleb Ferganchick

To contact a board member email to:
wcwritersforum@gmail.com

General Information

Pay your dues or make a donation at www.westerncoloradowriters.org, or send a check to WCWF, 740 Gunnison Ave., Suite 205, GJ, CO 81501. Check out and like our Facebook page so that you'll be even more up to date. Volunteers who can help with PR, set up events, and liaison with community groups are welcome. You *are* WCWF.

Western Slope Writers' Calendar - February 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><i>"I hope that people will finally come to realize that there is only one 'race' - the human race - and that we are all members of it.</i> – Margaret Atwood</p>						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		<p>Writers Night at the Art Center, 6-8pm, p.1</p>		<p>Prose Critique, 1:30-3:30</p>		
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	<p>Poetry Critique, CFI Atrium 10:30</p>	<p>Open Bard Poetry Reading, Ridgway, p.3 Talking Gourds Poetry Reading, Telluride, p.3</p>	<p>Poetry Night, GJ Library, 6pm, p.3</p>	<p>Board Meeting 3:30pm, CFI, p.1</p>	<p>Youth Poetry Slam, Carbon-dale, p.3</p>	<p>Write a poem for the woman in your life. It's much better than candy!</p>
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
				<p>Prose Critique, 1:30-3:30</p>		
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
<p>Poets Read, 6:30pm, Aspen, p.3</p>				<p>Prompt & Circumstance, Confluence, 6:30-8pm, p.1</p>		<p>RMFW Workshop Incubator, 9-noon, p.3</p>
<p><i>"Anybody who writes a book is an optimist. First of all, they think they're going to finish it. Second, they think somebody's going to publish it. Third, they think somebody's going to read it. Fourth, they think somebody's going to like it. How optimistic is that?"</i> –Margaret Atwood</p>						