



## February 2019 Newsletter

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### President's Column

We kicked off the January meeting with a stellar, award-winning author and a full room of members and guests. It was a joy seeing everyone again after the holidays! I'm excited that we'll be able to announce the speakers and some changes to our spring workshop at our February meeting. Also, we *already* have some member successes to share, which we'll be including in the new newsletter feature "Member Spotlight." Read on for more info.

### 2019 Board

President	Alex Elfenbein
Vice President	Leah Hinton
Secretary	David Douglas
Treasurer	Barbara Mathes
Membership Chair	OPEN (temp: Barbara Mathes)
Program Chair	Leah Hinton
Communications Chair	OPEN
Website Chair	David Douglas
Social Media Lead	OPEN
Critique Group Lead	Gary White

### Save the Date: May 4

Mark your calendars for Saturday, May 4. This year, instead of a three-hour spring workshop, we are expanding to a full-day conference with multiple speakers! We've selected a larger venue to accommodate the expanded offerings, the Collin College campus in McKinney. You can purchase tickets for just the morning or afternoon session, or all day. More details to follow!



# Writers Guild of Texas

## February 18 – “Social Media for Writers: How to Build an Online Brand” with Fred Campos

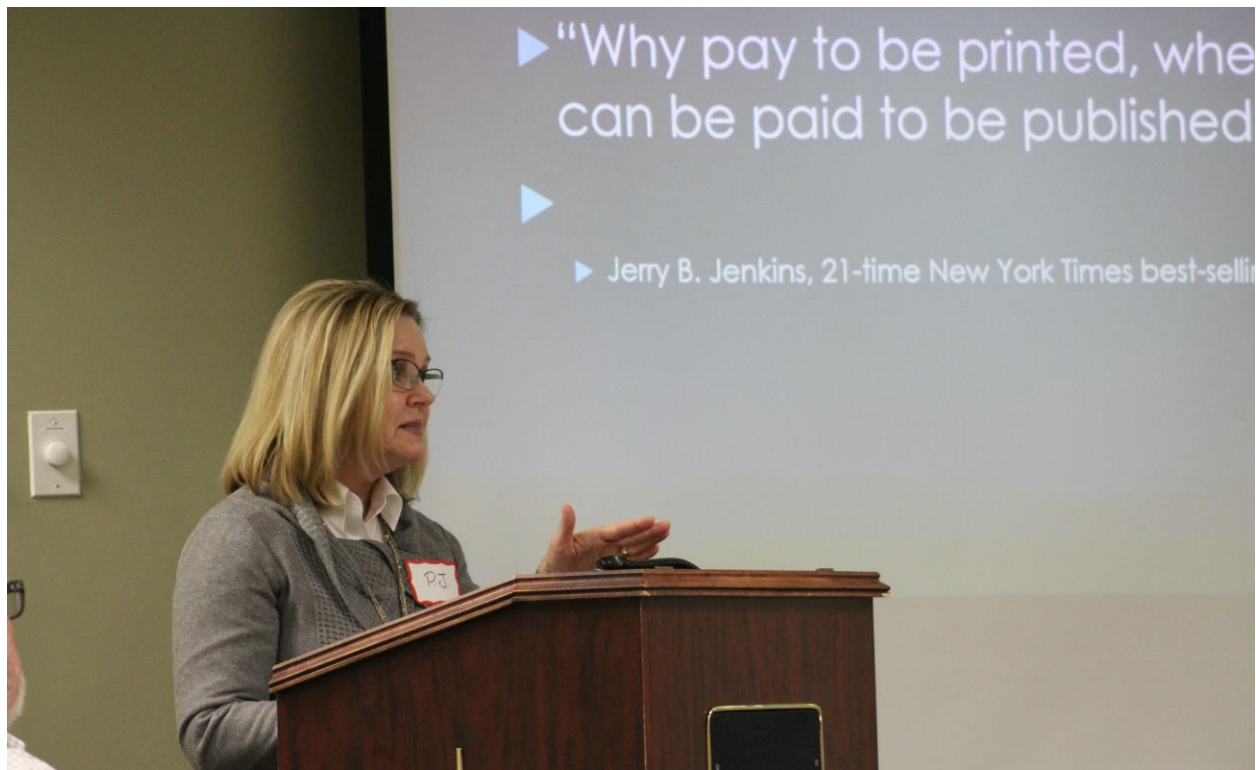
Join us on President’s Day at the library to hear from Fred Campos about how to:

- Leverage social media to sell books
- Build a strong fan base of the right followers
- Use social media without wasting hours

**About the speaker:** Fred Campos, previous owner of Fun City Social Media, now DFW Website Designers, has run social media campaigns for several hundred small businesses. For the past eight years, he has taught social media marketing classes throughout the country and even on both Royal Caribbean and Carnival Cruise Lines. Winner of Toastmasters “Humorous Public Speaking” contests at the regional and district levels, Fred is sure to both educate and entertain.



## January Meeting Recap of “Finding an Agent: 101” with PJ Gover





PJ Gover, author of the upcoming thriller *Time Of Long Shadows*, spoke at our January meeting about “Finding an Agent: 101.” She outlined the basics of pursuing and obtaining an agent in today’s saturated market.

Gover said the first step is to write a book that captures the reader’s mind. After you’ve accomplished that step, take advantage of the community of writers that surrounds you. Writers inhabit a unique community with agents, editors, and beta readers that have our own jargon (WIP, MC, POV) and a passion for compelling writing. Although finding an agent may seem intimidating, it’s helpful to remember that agents belong to our same community and want what you want—to see quality writing brought to readers.

The next step is to identify what publishing route you’d like to take. If you intend to self-publish, you probably won’t need an agent. However, to submit to a small press publisher, they may not accept your work unless you are represented by an agent. An agent who is familiar with the complex world of publishing can help you negotiate the best terms. Gover advised that many authors who are initially offered contracts while un-agented will hire an agent for the final contract negotiations to secure larger advances and better terms.

Before submitting your work to potential agents, do your homework first. Know which agencies represent your genre. Figure out which agents at that agency represent your kind of work. Gover recommended not to submit to more than one agent at the same company. Do not submit your work to multiple agencies so you can shop around for the person who will best represent you.

To help you stand out, make sure to let your potential agents know that you are serious about the business part of writing. You can do this by knowing your genre, subgenre, and book market. If you’re not sure, ask yourself which section you would find your book in at Barnes & Noble. Research, develop a marketing plan, build your social media platform, and find comparables. Always include your bio and credentials. The query is your foot in the door. You can’t wow an agent with your book if they never look past your query, so take the time to perfect it.

Agents are people too! Many people don’t like the impersonal method of sending a letter and hoping for a response. Check event calendars. If the agent you are interested in will be at a conference, consider going to that conference and getting on their schedule. Many authors find their agents at conferences where the face-to-face aspect beats out an email inbox. She cautioned that you will NEVER be required to pay a legitimate agent or publishing house to secure their services. Vet the people you do business with and if it sounds too good to be true, it likely is.

Gover closed out the evening reminding us that writing the book and getting an agent is an exciting and rewarding venture. If you don’t know where to start, she recommended checking out the most recent edition of the *Guide to Literary Agents*. For more information about PJ Gover, check out her [website](#).



## Member Spotlight: David Douglas' Play to Receive a Staged Reading

[Imprint Theatreworks](#) selected *Railbird*, a full-length stage play by WGT Secretary and Webmaster David Douglas, to receive a staged reading in the second annual First Impressions Festival for Local Playwrights! *Railbird* is a twist-filled thriller with a romantic heart that will close out the festival at 9:30 p.m. on Saturday, February 23, at the Stone Cottage Theater in Addison (behind WaterTower Theatre). Single night tickets are \$10 or the full (four-night) festival pass is \$35. For tickets and more information, see their [website](#).

## Community Events: WORDfest and Writers in the Field

On March 23-24, the third annual WORDfest is bringing together the best of writers and writers groups, workshops, and panels. For this year's event, WORDfest activities will take place on Saturday and Writers in the Field presenters will be on Sunday. Check [dfwordfest.org](http://dfwordfest.org) to see the schedule and updates about the event.

Writing Organizations 'Round Dallas (WORD) is the proud sponsor of these events. WORD is a 501(c), non-profit community arts organization created to connect writers to the resources they need to meet their goals, support local writing organizations, and cement Dallas/Fort Worth's reputation as a nationally recognized haven of the arts. WORD aims to cultivate a more diverse, successful, and united North Texas literary community.

## Flash Fiction 2nd Place Story: "The Bridge" by Sabrina Chapman

I turned on the drive of the assisted living center and parked, hoping it wouldn't be one of those befuddled visits with Grandma Olina. Recently, she repeated the same story over and over again. On those afternoons, I did my best to smile, nod, and stifle jaw-breaking yawns.

In the tradition of reciting sagas throughout the ages, I grew up listening to Grandma Olina's memories of the old country and Norse mythology. As a child, I assumed she came over with the Vikings and Leif Eriksson. I promised Mom I'd visit Grandma while she was away tending to my sister, Ragan, and her new baby for a few weeks.

After signing in at the front desk, the smell of disinfectant and old age permeated the air clinging to me as I navigated my way down the hall. At Grandma's doorway, I inhaled the fresh, balmy scent of her pine wreath. A small, tattered package wrapped with twine was stuck between the branches. I slipped it into the side pocket of my purse to ask Grandma about it later.

“Grandma Olina, your favorite granddaughter is here,” I said, giggling at my boldness.

Her tinkling laughter greeted me as I walked through the door. Seated by the window in her recliner, she set aside her croqueting and stood to hug me, her arms outstretched.

“Uff-da, Uff-da, Rikka! What have you brought me today?” She hugged me to her brittle frame, smelling of vanilla and fresh baked cookies. I stepped back, smiling down at her. She had an impish grin, her blue eyes sparkled full of delight and mischief, making me feel shallow for dreading the visit.

After lunch was cleared away, I glanced at my watch and stood to make an excuse to leave, when she began a story, a faraway look on her face.

“It was the day all five seasons happened in one day,” Grandma paused, narrowing her blue eyes in my direction with an admonishing glance. Chastised, I sat down abruptly.

“It was the blue hour during the dark time of first winter, and all the towns’ people were outside, hurrying about in the gloom of the blue light before the day turned dark as night.”

“Momma wrapped a woolen scarf around my head and neck against the arctic cold so that only my eyes peeked through. In the evenings she worked at her loom by firelight weaving the red and white charm of protection into the scarf. I was so proud she gave it to me.”

Intrigued, I sat on my hands like I did as a child when Grandma told Ragan and me stories.

“Momma held my hand as we walked to the town center when the blue hour suddenly turned bright white like second winter. The clouds disappeared, the sun now a blinding light in the sky.”

“I shielded my eyes against the brightness, my boots squished in puddles of melted snow. Then the rains came, drenching everything, sending people scurrying for cover.” Grandma shook her head smiling, “Such a sight.”

“The rain stopped and out came the people to see the curious changing weather. I got separated from momma in the crowds. By the time I pulled off my scarf, flowers and green shoots burst forth from the ground, birdsong overhead.”

“So beautiful,” she sighed. “It was a marvel to see such a thing happen all at once. So taken with the transformation before my eyes, I didn’t think to search for momma. It was magical, green foliage grew thick all around me. I thought the gods must be playing tricks. Loki and one of his cunning schemes,” Grandma nodded.

“Just as quickly as the world bloomed, it turned golden brown. Great gusts of wind blew all the leaves from the trees. The wind ripped my scarf from my hand. It flew up and got caught in the barren branches of a silver oak. I yanked the end, tearing it—leaving me with one small piece of wool between my fingers as it sailed away on the wind.”



"I chased after my scarf as the sky darkened again, my breath coming out in white puffs. I wondered if I was dreaming."

"I called out to momma, but my voice was lost in the wind. I had no choice but to walk in the same direction as the town's people, afraid of momma's disappointment in me for losing my beautiful scarf when all at once the world froze."

"Everyone stopped as a hush fell over the icy stillness," her voice, a whisper. "I could smell the tang of the sea nearby. I began to feel afraid, as the dark time of first winter returned, and everything went black and silent."

"Tremors rumbled under our feet. Great sounds bellowed, like the groaning wail of icebergs clashing. I feared the world was being torn apart," her voice, low and eerie.

I leaned forward; Grandma still had the power to captivate me with her storytelling.

"No one moved, afraid of what was out there. And then...."

I sucked in my breath.

"The blue hour returned. I thought my eyes deceived me." Grandma paused for several moments.

"Before me was a great long boat with a dragon masthead. In the haze of the blue gloom, the long boat became a bridge, stretching as far as the eye could see across the ocean. A man stood on the bridge. He held up his hand and said, 'Come.'"

"Who was the man?" I asked, exhaling.

She turned, looking directly at me and said, "Leif Eriksson."

I stifled a smirk.

In that evening's phone call, I told Mom, and Ragan Grandma may need to be moved to the memory care unit sooner than we expected. She now confused her life with myths.

Later, digging through my purse, I pulled out the forgotten package I had taken from Grandma Olina's wreath. Inside the frayed paper was a faded, yet exquisite, piece of red and white woven wool.