

## 2016 WGT Spring Workshop Hits the Mark

Dr. Katherine “Kat” Smith, author and broadcast professional, was the featured speaker at the WGT’s Spring Writers Workshop on Saturday, March 19. The workshop, titled “Interview Authority,” focused on helping authors understand the importance of media interviewing skills, as well as ways to polish and perfect their delivery and appearance.

Using humor, high energy and personal insights, Dr. Kat addressed topics that included little truths about the media, the necessity of having a platform, generating a brand, preparing for a guest appearance, sharpening listening skills and body language, ways to control the interview, and how to maintain focus on you and on your book. Dr. Kat stressed the importance of practicing your delivery, both to build confidence and to help your brain remember all the things you want to say.

One way to prepare is to write a list of 20 questions that coincide with the content of the book and provide personal information. Formulate questions that intrigue and that sound “like a really good book.” This can be used not only as a FAQ handout (Frequently Asked Questions) you can present prior to an interview, in a media kit, etc., but can also encourage reader groups to have a discussion about your book.

More information and helpful tips can be found in her book, *The Naked Author – Exposing the Myths of Publishing*, available on Amazon.com



Above: Dr. Kat Smith

Photos by Gary Bowers

Below: Rainer Bantau, WGT Board Member and Dr. Smith



## Sailor's Tale

By Andi King

3rd Place, WGT Flash Fiction Contest

My Pop was an avid story teller. He'd keep us young'uns tied to his every word. This winter night was no exception. Outside the wind blew frightful. Snow fell so hard it was difficult to see the street out front. A blazing fire made the parlor nice and toasty. Mom made hot Spiced Apple Cider for everyone as we settled down for story night.

Pop began as usual, "Well let's see, do you want the Sailor's Tail..."

Yes, yes, please we all chimed in. A smile came on Pop's face.

He rubbed his winter beard in reflection. "Let's see now... It was about the third year of World War II. We were on some unnamed island in the Pacific, but we called it Hell Island. It got that name because we were open to Jap fly-overs quite frequently. This night it was quiet, no planes in the air. We were all sweating in the 110 degree summer heat. We had settled in the NCO club..."

Joey asked Pop the same question again, "What's a NCO?"

Pop would gently reply, rolling his eyes, pretending to be miffed when he wasn't. Then he'd say, "Joey, it is short for non-commissioned officer."

Then he would pick up the story again. "Now where was I? Oh yeah, now I remember. When you entered a wall faced the front door. In the middle of that same wall was an open window. It had a flap made from a tarp to keep out the wind and rain. We could drop the flap and tie it to the wall if it rained. In good weather it stayed open with a fly-swatter close by. Across the room was a bar where we could get refreshments."

"In the NCO Club we had settled down for a game of Penny Poker. Lets' see, there was Larry, an Army corporal, Mark, a Marine private, Hank, a Navy Seabee sergeant, and me, my rank was Chief Petty Officer Third Class also Navy."

"That night we'd had beans and cornbread for the third day in a row. It seemed like that was all they knew how to fix. Yet we knew better. The rations were late arriving by sub. Anyway, we had been playing for about three hours. Larry was always cutting gas and then putting his lighter behind him and laughing while we all leaned away. We had all heard stories about men igniting themselves on fire doing this stunt. True or false, we all took it with some degree of truth.

"About the fourth time Larry had done this, Hank said, "Damn boy, you stupid? One of these days you'll blow yourself up and us too."

Then Hank would laugh. Nobody took the stories seriously. Larry just laughed, and we continued playing. Winning hands were going around the table. We had played for about five hours when Larry did it again. Only this time the seat of his pants had air. We all backed away, but not far enough. Larry put that lighter back there..."

Pop held his breath until we were all close. Then he would say, "Boom!" We all jumped, and he would smile.

Pop continued, "The bamboo walls exploded with smoke and fire." He sat quiet for a moment then continued. "In the edge of the compound we found a boot that's about five hundred feet away. Inside the ruins of our NCO Club we found his dog-tags. We never did find all the winnings. Several guys were treated for minor burns at the medical tent."

He hung his head, a smile slowly crept onto his face, "But we never found a bit of Larry himself."

We all sighed as if we knew Larry. The small ones were beginning to cry when Mom gave Pop a look that would freeze the blood in your veins. When we got that look we were in deep do -do.

Laughing, Pop would nod, "Well to finish the story. After four days of searching the jungle, we were prepared to hold a service in his memory. Before we could get started, native drums caught our attention. Low and behold who came out of the jungle on a native stretcher lying face down with his butt in the air, but Larry? Seems he landed in a pond and the natives nursed him and were bringing him back to camp.

"We all stood there laughing so hard we couldn't speak. Want to know something funny?" He waited in silence then continued. "After he got out of the base hospital, Larry never put a flame to his back-side. Anyone that looked like it, and he ran liked a scared rabbit."

Mom broke up the evening, "Alright children bedtime. Say night to Pop."

The kids all in bed, Pop and Mom stood by the window watching the snow fall. Mom turned to ask Pop, "Was that story for real?"

He kissed her head, smiled. "You'll never know."

Together they stood watching the snow fall. Slipping her arm around his, she noticed a tear trailing down his cheek. *I know.* (843 words)

## February WGT Meeting

Focused on support opportunities at WGT's 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday critique group meetings and WGT's e-critique on Scribophile.



Photos by Gary Bowers



**Critique Group Participants pictured above: Prakash Dighe, Pat Haddock, Diana Sollars, and Monalisa Foster. Members mingling. Scott Bell instructing members on how to use Scribophile (lower right)**

### The Board of the Writers Guild of Texas 2016-2017

<b>President:</b>	Jerry Weiss
<b>Vice President:</b>	Julie Mendel
<b>Secretary:</b>	Marsha Hubbell
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Rainer Bantau
<b>Membership Chairman:</b>	Julie Mendel *
<b>Program Coordinator:</b>	Rainer Bantau *
<b>Communications Chairman:</b>	Gary Bowers
<b>Newsletter Editor:</b>	Marsha Hubbell (Asst, needed)
<b>Website Chairman:</b>	David Douglas
<b>Cartoonist:</b>	Jerry Weiss
<b>Photographers:</b>	Gary Bowers; Rainer Bantau
<b>Critique Group Coordinators:</b>	Rainer Bantau (Co-Chair needed)
<b>E-Critique Coordinator:</b>	Kathryn McClatchy

*\* Those currently holding these positions will remain in place until replacements are confirmed.*

## "Weiss-Cracking"

by Jerry Weiss



**"Yeah, I kind of overdid the research for my crime novel."**

## UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE WRITERS GUILD OF TEXAS



**Monday – April 17**

**“Syntax, Style and Making Meaning with Prosodic Elements”  
Writer, Editor, Educator and Designer Joe Milazzo**

Word choice matters, but so too does word order. In this interactive program, Joe Milazzo will lead participants through an overview of what prosody is and share techniques on how writer sin all genres can add suppleness and variety to their sentences.



**Monday – May 16**

**“Idea Organization and ways to Collaborate”  
with Author, Consultant/Speaker James Gaskin**

Technology for Writers: Learn better ways to write your book and get it noticed, including how to leverage Google Search, three different ways to power your Instagrams and Tweets, and use other social media tools to stand out from the crowd. A handout and links to all products and tools discussed will be provided.



**Monday – June 20 at 7 pm  
WGT Annual Read-In**

Always fun, this event is an opportunity for Writers’ Guild of Texas members to present a portion of their original work to their peers and receive constructive feedback, inspiration and motivation to keep moving forward. More information will be forthcoming in the next few weeks, but as in previous read-ins, members have one minute to set up their audience and five minutes to read their original work.