



## March 2019 Newsletter

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### President's Column

We're almost done with the first quarter this year and already we've heard from two stellar speakers with more on the way. Our Spring Workshop is just around the corner, so it's time to start getting your work-in-progress or idea in gestation ready for a workout. My draft could certainly use more reflection and our speaker this month should have some helpful advice to kindle the light to make those words shine. I'm ready to get out my red pen at our March meeting while Blake Atwood fills us in on how to self-edit. I look forward to seeing you all next week!

### 2019 Board

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If you're interested in one of the open positions or volunteering, please email us at [writersguildtx@gmail.com](mailto:writersguildtx@gmail.com), or ask at the next general meeting!



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## Spring Workshop on May 4 – Flyer Coming Soon!

On Saturday, May 4, we are offering half day or full day tickets to our Spring Workshop. We'll have three speakers and some networking opportunities in between the sessions. One of our speakers is none other than the amazing **Tex Thompson** who will be giving a special, never-before-seen workshop just for our event!

The workshop will be hosted in a larger venue at the Collin College campus at 2400 Community Avenue in McKinney. You can purchase tickets for just the morning or afternoon session, or all day. If you purchase an all-day ticket, lunch is provided.

## March 18 – “Self-Editing Essentials: Proven Methods for Enhancing Every Manuscript” with Blake Atwood



Join us this Monday to learn from Blake Atwood. In *The Elements of Style*, Strunk and White wrote, “Vigorous writing is concise... This requires not that the writer make all his sentences short, or that he avoid all detail and treat his subjects only in outline, but that every word tell.” Editing yourself requires careful attention to those last three words. Does your every word tell?

This presentation will cover:

- proven copyediting methods for eradicating minute mistakes;
- tools of the trade to make you a better self-editor;

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- questions to ask yourself to ensure your reader understands you;
- crutch words, hedging words, redundant words, and common grammatical abuses;
- and, because even self-editing writers should have editors, how to find, vet, and work with a freelance editor.

**About the Speaker:** [Blake Atwood](#) is an editor, author, and ghostwriter who helps writers tell better stories, choose the right path to publication, and how to best market their words. He is the author of *Don't Fear the Reaper: Why Every Author Needs an Editor*, which is currently [free to download](#). He also wrote *The Gospel According to Breaking Bad* and has co-written, ghostwritten, or edited 40 books, including *The Father Effect*.

## February Meeting Recap of “Social Media for Writers: How to Build an Online Brand” with Fred Campos



In February, WGT members had a chance to hear the effervescent Fred Campos of [DFWWebsiteDesigners.com](#) speak about how to effectively use social media in a writing career.



Fred emphasized there are three primary purposes of social media:

1. To be social (sometimes we forget that one)
2. To learn from a particular demographic
3. To market with a repeatable, respectable opt-in process

His primary focus was on the third purpose. The successful use of social media is the ability to market, promote, draw attention to, and educate a target audience. It is the world, seen through the marketing lens of efficiency while ultimately selling your work.

Fred believes social media marketing is best when you: create a consistent brand (with a similar name, URL, and terms across all your platforms), use at least three different platforms of social media (such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, blogs, vlogs, or podcasts), follow people who matter to your target audience without following the competition, and add social media search-engine optimization (SEO) to all pages of your website and all images on your website to point consumers to your site. He stressed the need to reference all your social media platforms on your business cards and marketing literature.

Once you have these platforms and the proper procedures in place, what in the world do you post? Fred suggested using a 90/10 rule. Ninety percent of your social media posts should be about something other than selling your work. Use these posts to educate or entertain your fanbase. Limit yourself to 10 percent of your posts about the actual sale of your work. Conversely, don't post too infrequently about your work. Ten percent allows for a healthy balance. And when someone chooses to engage with you in a post, always comment and be sure to say thank you.

Yet even with these tips in mind, many people fail at social media marketing. The number one reason people find themselves failing in social media marketing is their lack of consistency. Consistency, consistency, consistency is to social media marketing what location, location, location is to real estate. Choose a frequency to post content, then be realistic and cut that in half. Even the most well-meaning writer can get caught up in deadlines and life outside of writing, which can cause consistency to dwindle. Do not over promise. By cutting your in-a-perfect-world frequency in half, you can ensure a greater chance of success.

Social media platforms can be particularly overwhelming to the beginner and can consume a great deal of time. Don't let it. What good will it do you if you don't write because all your writing time is spent managing the potential business end of writing?

Even if you have absolutely no web presence today, Fred estimated that you can be fully up and running with 10 hours of work on your social media. That 10 hours includes setting everything up, buying a webpage, figuring out your purpose, and creating your brand. This small investment will pay off in the end. Fred suggested to maintain your social media presence once a week, anywhere from 30 minutes to 2 hours, depending on how much time you can afford to put into it. You can use an automated



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scheduler like Hootsuite, Social Jukebox, Later, or Oomph to set up your posts ahead of time, or when you are truly strapped for time, hire out the work to local college students, tech personnel in other countries, or a firm like Fred's.

All in all, make it a priority, be consistent, and don't disregard the benefits you can glean from social media marketing. The evidence shows that a well thought out social media campaign can give a writer a significant boost in sales.

## Member Spotlight: Brian Condiike Placed in *Writer's Digest* Competition

Brian Condiike recently placed in the top 1 percent of entries to the *Writer's Digest* national short story competition. He currently attends the Writers Path program at Southwestern University and has completed the first draft of his mystery novel, *Wrongful Death*. Congrats, Brian!

## Community Events: Granbury Writers Bloc – 2019 Bloc Buster Challenge



**2019 Bloc Buster Challenge**

**More Cash Prizes!**

**1<sup>st</sup> Place \$50; 2<sup>nd</sup> Place \$35; 3<sup>rd</sup> Place \$20**

**A new contest each month – new winners every month.**

**Write a 1500-word story about ANYTHING—  
any topic in any genre.**

**Every month a Wild Card – no prompts!**

**Invaluable feedback from professional judges.**

**Rotating Judges – a different one each month.**

**Winning stories appear on our website.**

**Entry fee: \$20. Deadline: 15<sup>th</sup> of each month**

**[www.GranburyWritersBloc.com/current-months-challenge](http://www.GranburyWritersBloc.com/current-months-challenge)**



## Flash Fiction 3rd Place Story: “A Purple Lizard” by Mary Lou Condike

“Sloan, you can’t wear that outfit to school! Go find something that matches.” My foster mother, Mrs. Jenkins shook her head. This was my fifth home in two years. I was almost eight, but still in the second grade. They said I had serious behavior issues.

“If I change my clothes, I won’t get to eat.” I bit into a piece of toast. It’s always, ‘Don’t argue, Sloan. Change your clothes, Sloan. Nothing matches, Sloan.’

I gobbled down breakfast, dashed out and caught the bus.

The bus driver grinned. “Good morning, Miss Twiggy. You’re fashionable.”

“Thanks.” I wondered about Miss Twiggy.

I’d barely found a seat when a boy my size began teasing me.

“Hey, clown. What’s up with the clothes?”

“Better than yours.” I stuck out my tongue.

He threw back his head and laughed. He looked like a donkey.

A lump formed in my throat as I sat alone in the back seat. When the bus pulled up to the school, I trudged to the front.

The bus driver stopped me. “Have a good day. Never mind Tommy. He doesn’t know a thing about fashion.”

“Thanks, sir.” A tear leaked down my cheek. His cheery words didn’t help. I never fit in. I was going to a new school, and I’d picked the wrong clothes, again!

I found a seat in the classroom just as Mrs. Bates announced, “I hope everyone remembered today is picture day.”

“I did, but the new girl didn’t.” Tommy pointed at me and laughed.

Talk about bad luck. The donkey was in my class. I ignored him and looked out the window. I watched as a black and violet bird flew into a tree. What did Tommy know? I’d worn my best clothes.

“Welcome, Sloan.” Mrs. Bates smiled. “You couldn’t have known it was picture day.”

Startled, I turned and shook my head. “I didn’t.”

“Well, you’re certainly colorful.”



"Thanks," I said, not quite sure what she meant.

"Turn to lesson six in your spelling books. We'll practice vocabulary while we wait for the photographer. Sloan, you read the first word and tell us what it means."

I nearly swallowed my tongue. I could barely read. My hands shook as I found the page. I breathed a sigh of relief and smiled. I knew the word. "Lizard!"

Maybe my luck was changing. My clothing problem was a spelling word! My cheeks burned as I thought about the purple lizard that waddled out every morning and chose my outfits. His long pointed tail swished as he pranced between the shirts and pants. Then he'd halt and do pushups, signaling his decision. If I didn't wear his choice, the lizard turned into a Tyrannosaurus Rex.

"Very good," Mrs. Bates said. "Tell us about lizards."

I closed my eyes for a minute. "They're purple and look like a snake with four legs."

My classmates giggled.

"And they eat bugs." I shivered at the thought.

"Good. Lizards are reptiles," Mrs. Bates said. "But I'm not sure about purple. Maybe..."

A knock on the door interrupted her and a lady poked in her head. "Time for your photo session."

"Line up along the whiteboard," Mrs. Bates directed.

Last in line, I trailed the students to the gym. If I'd known it was picture day, I'd have asked Mrs. Jenkins to choose my clothes instead of taking advice from the stupid purple lizard.

"First, a group shot," the photographer instructed.

"Sloan. Stand up there." Mrs. Bates pointed to the back row beside Tommy.

"Crouch so your clothes don't show." Tommy giggled and hunkered down.

"Eat a bag of gopher guts!" I'd had enough of him.

After the group shot, I stood alone under the basketball hoop, waiting my turn.

"Last, but not least. And a psychedelic outfit, too." The photographer smiled as he checked his camera. "Ready?"

"Almost." I slouched in front of the fake sky and gave him my biggest smile.

He looked up. "Relax a minute, then say 'cheese.'"

“Cheese...” I couldn’t smile. I hated cheese. It smelled like the gym.

“Hmmm... Try again, but this time say ‘sissy.’”

I drew in a deep breath. “Sissy.”

He frowned. “What words make you happy?”

I chewed my lip, and then it hit me. “Candy, bicycle, ice cream—lizard.”

“That’s it! Say lizard when I raise my hand.”

He raised his hand.

“Lizard!” My body relaxed as the camera clicked.

“Got it!”

I returned to class as the kids headed for recess.

“Sloan, you and I will stay inside and cover what you missed.”

Staying inside turned out to be fun. Mrs. Bates shared stories about lizards.

“Lizards take advantage of their five senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. They adapt to their habitat. Whatever sense they need to survive becomes highly developed.”

My lizard’s sight must be highly developed. How else could he choose my outfits?

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At the end of the day, the buses lined the driveway.

“How was your day, Miss Twiggy?” the driver asked.

“Fine. Why are you calling me Miss Twiggy?”

“Because she’s a famous model who made a fashion statement, just like you.”

“I didn’t ‘say’ anything. I’m wearing what the purple lizard picked. If I don’t, he turns into a Tyrannosaurus Rex.”

“Really?” The bus driver frowned.

“He gets furious, stomps his feet and grows enormous.”

“How big is this lizard?”



I touched my head.

The driver scowled. “Maybe your lizard’s a tritanope.”

“What’s that?”

“Someone who can’t tell colors. Blue and green look the same. And they see violet when others see yellow.”

“Like this purple bus everyone claims is yellow?”

He nodded and smiled. “Maybe your lizard needs his eyes examined.”

“Maybe. Should I tell Mrs. Jenkins about Tri...?”

“I bet she’d like to know. Ask her to get your eyes examined.”

“I won’t tell her about the purple lizard.”

“Good idea. Keep the lizard our secret.”

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“Mrs. Jenkins, the bus driver liked my outfit and he thinks I’m a Triceratops because I can’t tell colors.”