

Mother Wilson's Wise Words for The Writers Guild of Texas

Barbara Wilson, professionally known as Mother Wilson, spoke at our March membership meeting flooding the audience with information on a plethora of topics. In case you missed it, her practical advice included taking breaks, reading in your genre, learning your craft, practicing your writing and participating in critique groups. She went on to speak to the importance of editing, including your layout and art work, ensuring your covers are not too busy, the importance of reviews and the "blurb" on the back of the book to draw in your potential readers.

In speaking on elevator pitches Mother Wilson emphasized including the answer to the questions:

Who is your character? *What* do they want? And *What* are they willing to sacrifice to get it?

Prior to marketing your book Mother Wilson advised writers to set a budget, create a plan that fits that budget, be flexible with your plan and be prepared to self-promote at all levels. Including "always having a copy of your book with you, at all times, she said. "It is not always necessary or appropriate to talk about your book but there is no harm in making it visible!" The presentation wrapped up with a brief discussion on the importance of having a blog, blogging regularly, guest blogging and always promoting!

For additional information about Barbara Wilson, visit her website at <https://motherwilsonswisewords.com/>.



Barbara Wilson speaking at the March WGT meeting

KATHRYN MCCLATCHY FLASH FICTION CONTEST



The honorable mention winner of the 2017 Kathryn McClatchy Flash Fiction Contest, "Tiny Steps" by Steve McCluer is in issue. You may download this April issue as well as recent issues of the Mentor on our website, <https://www.wgtonline.org/news/>.

UPCOMING WGT EVENTS

- April 18 Critique Group** 3rd Wednesday of each month
- April 28 Spring Workshop** – [Register now](#) to learn from author Annie Neugebauer, how to "Troubleshoot Your Novel, Simplified: The Pitch as a Tool". She will walk you through how to use your own query pitch and troubleshoot problems in your novel. Saturday, April 28, 9am–noon, at the Richardson Civic Center, 411 West Arapaho Rd
- May 16 Critique Group** 3rd Wednesday of each month
- May 21 Carmen Goldthwaite** will present "[Point of View + Voice](#)". The award-winning author, teacher, and storyteller will cover how the point of view you choose impacts your storytelling. She'll also tackle how to weave in your writer voice to make your story resonate using literary examples from fiction and non-fiction to illustrate these concepts.

Tiny Steps by Steve McCluer

Friday, July 3, 1964.

I'm working the day shift at McDonald's because I have night duty at the base. President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Bill yesterday. We're about to open the place and Marty calls us all together. Marty is a lifer from Mainside. He's been a cook in the Navy for 20 years but he's only a second-class petty officer. 'Not real bright, but he can cook four dozen hamburgers in under two minutes. So, he's the number two guy at this McDonald's.

(continued at www.wgtonline.org)

(Continued from page 1, *Tiny Steps*)

"Look," he says. Y'all know that Johnson passed the bill that allows coloreds to eat at white restaurants. It's the law, so we have to obey it. We expect there'll be a whole bunch of darkies wanting to try out McDonald's for the first time. We can't refuse to serve 'em, but we don't have to be nice. I don't want to see any of you smiling, calling anybody sir or ma'am. And they can only get what's on the menu. No 'hold the pickles' or 'hamburger with no mustard'. Just standard fare. You got it?" We all nod our heads. As luck would have it, I am manning register number one today.

Sure enough, Marty is right. My second customer is a black man with his family. His kids are all looking up at me with big eyes like it's time to open Christmas presents. I flash 'em my biggest smile. "Hi, welcome to McDonald's. How can I help you?" He gives me his order for a bunch of burgers, fries and drinks, all standard stuff. As I'm handing him the change I smile again. "Thank for your coming to McDonald's, please come again." I see Marty looking at me like he wants to strangle me, but lines are forming and he has to start turning burgers real fast. We're too busy for him to pull me off the window.

Eventually a black lady comes to my widow asks if she can get a cheese burger with no onions. "Sure," I say, and I holler the order back to Marty. "One cheese burger, no onions." Marty looks like he could chew nails, but he knows he can't make a scene, so he scrapes the onions off of a burger and throws it to me. It's a really busy day. We serve about twenty five percent more customers than we usually would. I see some of the white customers giving dirty looks, but nobody causes any trouble.

When it's time to check out, I hand my cash drawer to Marty, who's now sitting at the desk in the office. "Here ya go. I'm sorry I messed up. I tried

to keep all the black dollars, separate from the white dollars, but the drawer wasn't set up for it. I'm sure you'll be able to tell the difference."

He turns red and is about to bellow at me, but then he says, "Ah screw it. Just punch out, and don't let me see you acting like that again." I hear later that the owner is happy as a pig in slop that we made a bundle of money that day. After that we don't get any more lectures about how to treat dark skinned customers.

Saturday, July 4, 1964

It's a holiday. A bunch of us head for the beach. We're all white. We think, what the heck, all beaches are open now, so we decide to see what it's like to visit a black beach. "Turns out the sand and the water and the seaweed look exactly the same. There are surprisingly few people on this beach, especially for a holiday. I don't see any other white people. The black people stare at us, but they keep their distance, not sure what to make of us.

After a couple hours we decide to get something to eat. There are no concession stands at this beach so we head to a sit-down restaurant about a mile down the road at a white beach. The place is fairly crowded, but we get a table. We're about half way through our lunch when all of a sudden, the waitress and some other guy – I guess he's the manager – start running around and closing all the window shades. She flips the 'open' sign on the door to "closed." The light is dim in the place now. It gets real quiet. All the babble from the other tables has stopped, and everybody is looking toward the door.

The venetian blinds are closed, but I still can see through the slots that a car has pulled into the parking lot, and a black family is pouring out of the doors. It looks like a mom, a dad, maybe a grandma, and three little kids, all under ten years old. They get to the door and it's locked. The man rattles the door. The waitress points to the sign and hollers, "We're closed."

(Continued from page 2, *Tiny Steps*)

The parking lot is full of cars. The man looks through the door window. "I see it's full of people," he says. "Private party," she says.

I'm torn about what to do. This is just wrong. My stomach is turning into a knot. I know somebody should challenge this, but I look around the room full of white people who are all grinning at each other. My buddy Dane gives me a stare, like he knows what's going on in my head. He shakes his head ever so slightly, warning me, "Don't you go doing what you're thinking."

The black family looks real disappointed. They finally turn around and go back to their car, all of them looking at the ground. They drive away. Inside the restaurant the blinds open back up, the sign goes back to open, and the noise returns. There's a lot of laughter. They know. The black family, these white folks, they all know. I know. The law can change overnight. But a culture? That takes generations.

Writers Guild of Texas 2018 Board

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*We encourage you to serve the WGT in one of these positions. Learn more by talking to any one of the Board members. *Without a Board, the Writers Guild of Texas cannot exist.*

2018 SPRING WORKSHOP

This workshop is ideal to fix your manuscript or discover book-level problems from your draft outline.

[Register Now](#) to reserve your seat for this three-hour writer's workshop with author Annie Neugebauer. She will walk you through how to use your own query pitch to troubleshoot problems in your novel.

This workshop includes hands-on application and handouts to help you get to the heart of many issues. Annie doesn't promise a secret sauce, but it'll come pretty darn close.

Online Tickets: \$35 / \$25 WGT Members

Tickets at the Door: \$40 / \$30 WGT Members

Saturday, April 28, 2018 9:00 AM-12:00 PM

Richardson Civic Center, 411 West Arapaho Road Richardson

Annie Neugebauer is a novelist, short story author, and award-winning poet. She has work appearing in over 70 publications, including magazines such as *Black Static*, *Apex*, and *Cemetery Dance*, as well as anthologies such as *Bram Stoker Award®* finalist *The Beauty of Death* and #1 Amazon bestseller *Killing It Softly*. She's an active member of the Horror Writers Association, webmaster for the Poetry Society of Texas, and a columnist for *LitReactor* and *Writer Unboxed*. Visit her website for blogs, creative works, free organizational tools for writers, and more. (@AnnieNeugebauer)



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Texas Book Festival Submissions Open Now Until June 1, 2018

The Texas Book Festival presents approximately 250 authors, from Texas and beyond. All authors who are invited to participate will be featured in a panel or solo session, although the Festival does not feature authors for book signings. The 2018 Texas Book Festival takes place October 27-28 in Austin, Texas.

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If you have book published this year make sure to read all of the following information before submitting a book for the 2018 Festival. How is a book considered? To be considered for this year's Festival, please send or have your publicist send us the following:

- Two copies of a finished book / galley / ARC / manuscript. Electronic submissions will not be considered.
- A press kit with clippings, reviews, author bio, marketing plan for the submitted book, and list of previously published titles. A press kit may be submitted electronically, however, the submission is not complete and the book will not be considered unless two copies of the book are physically mailed to the Texas Book Festival office.
- Topics which you are available to discuss.
- Information about your or your publisher's ability to fund your own travel to Austin.
- Please mail these items to: Julie Wernersbach, Texas Book Festival, 610 Brazos, Suite 200, Austin, Texas 78701
- *Please note: We can no longer accept hand-delivered packages. Any packages dropped off or left outside our office will remain unopened and discarded. Please submit all packages through the US Postal Service, UPS, or FedEx.*

When should a book be submitted?

We accept submissions of books January 11 through June 1 in the same year as the Festival. While we will consider books published up to 18 months prior to the start of the Festival, priority is given to books published within the Festival year.

Who decides which authors are invited? An Author Selection Committee comprised of publishing and book professionals considers the

submissions and chooses who will be invited. The bulk of invitations go out between the beginning of May and the end of August.

What types of books are considered?

While we review all books that are submitted, our main goal is to provide an excellent and diverse mix of literature

for all visitors and participating authors featuring books from the following genres:

- Fiction- including all genres, thrillers to Westerns
- Narrative nonfiction — history, biography, memoir, and essays. Nonfiction books are considered from a variety of perspectives that encourage and engage in fair, respectful discussions of history, figures and ideas.
- Graphic novels
- Cookbooks and food-related titles
- Poetry
- Children's and YA literature
- Art and architecture titles
- Titles with a Texas focus and titles written by Texas authors

What types of books are not considered?

The Texas Book Festival focuses on the promotion of literature and Texas literary culture; books on the topics of self-improvement, how-to, or books strictly of academic or religious interest will not be considered.

Should a self-published/printed author submit?

Self-published titles will only be considered if they meet the following criteria:

- The title is bound
- Printed copies can be available for our book seller to sell
- A professional has edited the work
- An established marketing plan has been made and is submitted with the title
- A functional author website exists

The consideration for self-published titles that meet the above criteria will be the same as traditionally published books, outlined above. For additional information go to <http://www.texasbookfestival.org/submit-book/>