Minutes for February 3, 2022 AGT meeting

The Authors Guild of Tennessee held their monthly meeting at Faith Lutheran Church in Farragut. The social time and library book exchange began at 10:30 a.m. The official business meeting began at 11:00.

The following members were present:

Dave Curran, Bobbi Chapman, Bill Barbour, Leoma Gilley, Cyn Taylor, Sonja DuBois, Russ Fine, Jerry Morton, Vicki Bennett, Danielle Asher-Haid, Randy Carpenter, Sam Bledsoe, Linda Fitzpatrick, Laura Derr, and Cheryl Peyton.

**Visitors**: Sherry Fine

Welcome – Cheryl.

Since we would have to guarantee $300 in food sales at Mimi’s restaurant for lunchtime meetings, we have decided to continue meeting at Faith Lutheran. We will give a token monetary gift to the church on occasion. We will continue to have dinner meetings at Mimi’s for July and December on other dates than the first Thursday of the month.

January minutes: Minutes of the January meeting have been approved online.

Treasurer’s report: – Russ Fine

Balance as of January 1 was $1953.03. Balance as of January 31 was $2072.90. Total amount of outstanding checks is $31.12. Expenses in January:\_\_$43.58\_\_\_\_\_. Available balance as of today is \_ $2139.54\_\_.

One expenditure Cheryl mentioned was a photographer’s backdrop setup we can use for indoor shows. It consists of two posts with bases and a 10’ bar going across at the top. We can hang a black cloth for a backdrop with our banner clipped at the top. This will separate us from other vendors and make us stand out. It should arrive this month, in time for the first show in late February.

Committee Heads reports:

 **Retail Stores**: Linda/Bill are getting organized and working on plans and will be in touch. Cheryl presented an idea. At Preferred Pharmacy, the books have been reorganized by genre and some of the books were signed.

 **Publicity**: Jerry/Sam gave an update on the writing contest for students. The project is on hold due to the schools’ schedules being disrupted due to the pandemic. Our primary contact at the school has recently resigned.

 **Directory:** Bobbi handed out new directories she had gotten printed.

**Vetting/Membership:** Bobbi We have another approved the book of a recent applicant. He will be advised of our vaccination requirement before we offer membership.

 **Fairs, Festivals, and signings:**

* Bobbi -- (STAR Mar 26 9-2 (one slot available) and Horsehaven) Indoor event. All Bobbi’s books sold well at Horsehaven. She observed a writer of Christian books sold about a dozen.
* Cheryl – Southern Charm & Sweet Tea, Feb 26 Leoma, Vicki and Cheryl will participate at The Venue. No more spaces are available.
* Ridgedale School Mar 5– Sonja, Cyn and Cheryl have signed up.
* Lavender Festival in Oak Ridge always has strong community support. June 17-18, 8:00 am to 4:00. Cost is $200 for the space – we work in shifts so we’re not crowded. We will have 3 sides open. Event is at Market Square in Oak Ridge.
* Lenoir City Arts and Crafts June 3-4 (Sat – Sun), There is usually a turnout of thousands. The cost is $125 for booth space.
* Author of the Month – Tellico Village Library. This is a free event held the 1st Friday of the month starting in April. Hours are 10:00 to noon. Cheryl passed around sign-up sheets for Lavender, Lenoir City and the Tellico Library events.

Critique Group: Bill Barbour spoke on setting up a critique group. Formerly, he met weekly with a group of 8-10 people in Atlanta who would read their latest pages to the others for critiquing that he found helpful. This new group could be an outreach for AGT as well. He is looking for a site to hold meetings, somewhere between Knoxville and Tellico Village. He thinks not more than 12 people should come at any one time. He said previously the group in Atlanta met 6-9 pm. Let him know if you have thoughts about this.

Cheryl – added that we now offer Associate Membership for people who have written a manuscript that they haven’t totally prepared for publishing.

Cyn is now working on promotion – She wrote an article about Bill Barbour joining that appeared in several local papers. She also puts an announcement for our monthly meetings in The Shopper section of the News Sentinel under Community news.

Just a reminder that it is really important to read one another’s books and write reviews.

Take books that have been returned and not checked out with you when you leave the meeting.

Program: Cheryl shared writing and publishing tips from editors, writing coaches, and best-selling authors.

Since Art Stewart has COVID, Cheryl filled in.

Recommendations: Stephen King’s [*On Writing*](https://www.amazon.com/On-Writing-Stephen-King-audiobook/dp/B0000547HM/ref%3Dsr_1_6?crid=NLLW5XZOE9ZO&keywords=stephen+king&qid=1643926209&sprefix=Stephen%2Caps%2C128&sr=8-6) (memoir), [*Elements of Style*](https://www.amazon.com/Elements-Style-William-Strunk-Jr/dp/1989862004/ref%3Dsr_1_1?crid=1D1YVOPRX17W4&keywords=elements+of+style&qid=1643926367&sprefix=Elements+o%2Caudible%2C119&sr=8-1) (grammar)

Everyone wants to write a novel until it becomes work. King insists when you sit down to write a book – write every day at the same time each day. That is your job. Write in a room with a door that you can shut. No distractions, because you are creating your own world.

When the1st draft is finished, don’t look at it for 6 weeks. When you bring it out, you are more objective and will see mistakes more easily.

Formatting: 1-2 blank pages, then the title only. On the back of that page is a list of other books by the author. On the next righthand page is the Title with the author’s name and publisher at the bottom. On the back of the title page should be the publication and copyright information. Then, a dedication (is used) on the next righthand page. The text starts on the next righthand page.

Grab reader from the beginning. Introduce protagonist and setting, then main conflict in the first chapter. About the middle of the book should be a Mirror moment when the main character realizes there needs to be a change in direction. At the end, make sure the reader is satisfied that the issue has been resolved and loose ends are tied up. The ending can be sad, but it needs to make sense.

Believable conflict – stems from who the characters are. Make the characters fight to reach their goals. Vary the conflicts; show rather than tell. Differentiate your characters so each has his own voice.

Create memorable characters – one idea is to give them a secret and don’t fully reveal to reader. Let your characters be impulsive. They should be active, making differences in their life or someone else’s. There must be a reason for actions, not random. What are the values and beliefs of the characters? Create empathy for characters.

Naming characters – have them sound different so readers don’t get confused. Use Google for lists of “girl’s names” or “boy’s names.”

Dialogue – Don’t have characters give information to the reader in conversations, ie. “As you know, Bill…” Less is more. Have a specific purpose for what is being said. Stay on topic. You can reveal backstory or motivation. Occasionally use “he said, she said.” Don’t use these tags more than necessary. Have the speaker doing something before speaking so you can avoid using a dialog tag. Don’t use fancy tags like “she declared.” Read aloud to see if dialogue is real, natural, but more interesting than everyday conversations. Use contractions for a natural sound.

Use strong verbs and few adverbs. Create word pictures.

How to find a good title: Use strong nouns and active verbs, alliteration, or be inspired by hymn lyrics. You might promise specific content (War and Peace). 5 goals of your title: unique, reflect genre, be memorable, emotion grabbing. Use a keyword search to see what words relate to your title to determine if it’s what you want.

Back page: Don’t summarize the book, but write a teaser – say a little about the story, but don’t tell it. Have a question that will peak the reader’s interest. The “About the Author” section should be on the back as well. Most put that section below the teaser.

### Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m. Next meeting scheduled for March 3 at 10:30 at Faith Lutheran Church.

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