

East Tennessee

Newsletter of the Knoxville Writers' Guild
Volume 12, Number 3, March 2004

Writer

Editors to Discuss Creative Process March 4



Sandra Ballard and Patricia Hudson, editors of *Listen Here: Women Writing in Appalachia*, will speak to the Knoxville Writers' Guild on Thursday, March 4, at 7 p.m., about the creative process involved in the birth of a book. *Listen Here* is a literary anthology of poetry, fiction, drama and creative nonfiction written by 105 women writers whose identities have been marked by life in Appalachia. The motivation for creating the collection came from the absence of Appalachian women's voices in national literary reference books and anthologies. "The editors hope this book will spread the word that Appalachia has many women writers worthy of recognition," notes a reviewer for the Lexington *Herald-Leader*. "Laboring for half a decade to assemble the collection, Ballard and Hudson have realized that hope and more."

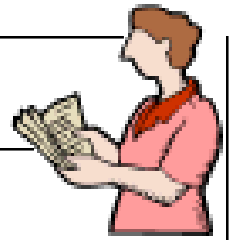
Publisher's Weekly writes: "The editors wisely incorporate a mix of both famous and unfamiliar authors to present an impressive and stirring display of (mostly) contemporary writings..." Says author Robert Morgan: "This is a collection to brag about and treasure, and most of all to read and re-read...."

Sandra L. Ballard is the editor of *Appalachian Journal* and professor of English at Appalachian State University. Patricia L. Hudson, a former reference librarian at the University of Tennessee, is a freelance writer whose work has appeared in *American Heritage*, *Appalachian Heritage*, *Americana*, and *Southern Living*. The two women also co-authored *The Carolinas & Appalachian States*, a volume in the Smithsonian Guide to Historic America series.

At the March meeting, the editors will discuss the six-year editorial odyssey that resulted in the publication of their book. Knoxville Writers' Guild meetings are held the first Thursday of each month at the Laurel Theater, 16th and Laurel in the University area. The meeting is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served. Donations of \$1.00 are appreciated.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE: TAX TIPS FROM MOIRA ALLEN, SULLIVAN ON ILLITERACY, AND MORE

The Writing News



Important Tax Information for Writers from Moira Allen's Writing World :

Misperception #1: You Can't Deduct Expenses Unless You've Earned Income: WRONG!

Let's say that you made a decision late in 2003 to quit your day job and become a writer. The first thing you did was buy a new computer and some peripherals and software, so that you wouldn't have to fight the kids for writing time on the "family" computer. Then you went a bit crazy at the office supply store (we ALL do), buying paper, envelopes, pens, pencils, maybe some fancy stationery for your letterhead, printer cartridges, etc. Perhaps you bought a postage scale so that you could weigh your manuscripts, then went to the post office for an assortment of stamps. You set up a new e-mail account for your business, or perhaps a high-speed connection. You bought some writing books, such as Moira Allen's invaluable "Starting Your Career as a Freelance Writer" and "The Writer's Guide to Queries, Pitches and Proposals." You bought some market guides, or took a writing class or two, online or at your community college. In short, you spent a BUNCH of money.

You also sent out a bunch of queries and articles, and netted some assignments and a sale or two. But by the end of 2003, you hadn't seen a DIME of income. Does that mean you're stuck with all those start-up expenses? Not at all. Now that you've made the decision to "write for money," you're entitled to file a Schedule C (for self-employment income and expenses) even if you haven't made apenny of income, let alone profit. Actually, you have two choices. One option is to deduct those expenses for 2003, and claim a business loss for the year. Chances are, this will result in a refund, particularly if you've been employed (or are still employed) and have had taxes deducted from your paycheck. As an "individual," your business LOSS will be deducted from your total tax debt, which could mean that you'd get a nice check this spring. A second option is to POSTPONE those expenses. If you expect to earn a significantly higher income as a writer in 2004, you could postpone your 2003 expenses and deduct them from your 2004 taxes, thus offsetting that higher income. This often makes sense when you have a number of start-up expenses that aren't likely to be repeated the next year. Note that you can do this even if adding your 2003 expenses to your 2004 expenses would result in a "loss" for 2004.



If you decide to claim your deductions in 2003, you should be able to claim the cost of your office supplies, postage, and classes as straight deductions. However, with no actual income for that year, you won't be able to "expense" your computer equipment (see below); you'll have to depreciate it. You also will have to "amortize" the cost of books and software, unless those items aren't retained (see below).

#2: Computer Equipment and Other Expensive Items Must Be Depreciated : WRONG! Many writers don't realize that computer equipment, office equipment (such as a new desk or chair), and other durable items don't have to be depreciated. They can be "expensed" (Form 179), which means that you can deduct the entire amount of their purchase in the year that you bought them. Items can be expensed only if doing so does not create a "loss" for your business. For example, if you earned

\$20,000 in income and bought \$25,000 in computer equipment, you could not deduct that \$25,000 (plus all expenses). To determine if you can expense your equipment, first add up all your regular deductions, and subtract them from your income. For example, if you have \$10,000 in standard deductions (office supplies, utilities, phone expenses, classes, etc.), you could then "expense" up to \$10,000 of your computer equipment; the rest would have to be depreciated. If you have \$25,000 in standard deductions, you can deduct it all for a \$5000 loss — but you won't be able to expense ANY of your computer equipment. Most writers, however, don't spend \$25,000 on computer equipment (or office furniture) in a year! Thus, rarely do we need to worry about having "too much" equipment to "expense." The problem of depreciation arises only when we don't have enough income to offset those purchases. Thus, if you bought your equipment in your "start-up" year (when you had little or no income), you won't be able to expense it that year — but you may be able to postpone the deduction and expense it the next year. (Check with an accountant.) The exception is books and software. Because these items are not "consumable" supplies (like paper), but are often retained for long periods (like equipment), they must generally be amortized over several years. Amortization is similar to depreciation. If, however, you purchase books or software that you do not retain, or expect to replace annually (such as annual market guides or tax software), you can usually deduct these as ordinary expenses. (See www.writing-world.com)

Ed Sullivan:

The President's Column

Writers are book people. Books are as important to us as air is to our fellow mortals. Reading constantly and widely is one of the essential things writers must do to be competent and, hopefully, excellent at what we do. We naturally associate with other book people, not necessarily all aspiring or practicing writers, but with people who are literate and who vigorously exercise their literacy.



It probably does not often occur to us that a lot of people among us cannot even read the directions on an over-the-counter drug package, much less a *New York Times* bestseller. In our own state of Tennessee, 35% of our fellow adult citizens are either completely or functionally illiterate—not literate enough to follow a simple recipe. You are probably as shocked as I

was at that statistic from the Tennessee State Library and Archives. I checked with the director of Clinch-Powell Regional Library system, which includes Anderson County, and she confirmed the figure is accurate. It's hard for me to believe those numbers when I live in a community like Oak Ridge, where more adults have graduate degrees than not, but there are plenty of other parts of Anderson County whose percentage of adult illiterates is even higher—for example, Morgan and Scott. Poverty and illiteracy always go hand in hand. Knox County is certainly not immune. Check with the Friends of Literacy (www.friendsofliteracy.org) to get the current figures.

What accounts for this appalling statistic? There is plenty of blame to go around—public education trivialized and dumbed down for standardized testing and the grossly inadequate funding of public libraries and schools are two places to start. Illiteracy will persist because it is a vicious cycle. Parents who cannot be reading role models and thus pass the legacy of illiteracy on to their children.

As writers, lovers of the written word, should we feel some obligation to be part of the solution to this problem? There are many things one person can do—volunteer to be a tutor in an adult literacy program; tutor a child in a school; read aloud to children in classrooms and libraries; call upon government leaders to adequately fund libraries and schools; and do all you can to share with everyone you meet your love for reading. Consider these words by Wendell Berry: "I am saying, then, that literacy—the mastery of language and the knowledge of books—is not an ornament, but a necessity. It is impractical only by the standards of quick profit and easy power. Longer perspective will show that it alone can preserve in us the possibility of an accurate judgment of ourselves, and possibilities of correction and renewal. Without it, we are adrift in the present, in the nightmare wreckage of yesterday, in the nightmare of tomorrow."



JOBS & FREELANCE MARKETS

ARTISTIC Talent Wanted: The Carpetbag Theatre, Inc., is seeking an Interim Managing Director. Salary: \$20,000 - \$25,000. Description: Reporting directly to the Carpetbag Theatre Board and serving as the interim managing director, the interim director will be responsible for managing all administrative function of the organization, coordinating and directing a local festival, managing and implementing financial commitments, and assisting in fundraising efforts. For questions call 524-6629 or send inquiries to : Carpetbag Theatre, Inc., 3018 E. Fifth Ave., Knoxville, TN 37914.

FREELANCE NEWS FROM WRITER'S MARKET: Home and garden magazines target a large audience of people who care about the appearance of their homes and like to know what trends are emerging with others. This market requires descriptive writing with an attention to detail, and may or may not require some accompanying photography of the subject matter.

Better Homes And Gardens is one of the top paying magazines in the home and garden market. As a result, it is also highly competitive with only 10-15% of its material coming from freelancers. The editors prefer queries over full manuscripts, but most manuscripts are still read. Articles cover different rooms of the house, do-it-yourself projects, and more.

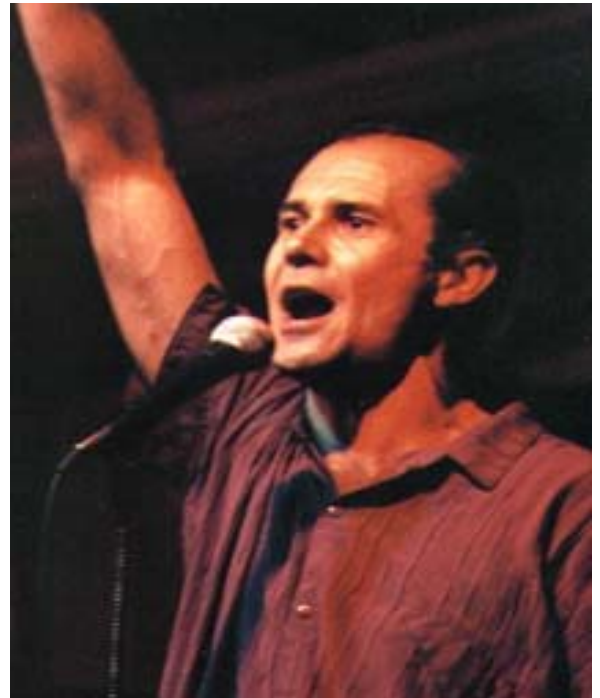
Early American Life is 60% freelance written and pays \$100-600 for nonfiction articles. The editors recommend breaking in "by offering highly descriptive, entertaining, yet informational articles on social culture, decorative arts, antiques, or well-restored and appropriately furnished homes that reflect middle-class American life prior to 1850."

Romantic Homes is 70% freelance written and pays \$500 for nonfiction articles. The editors say, "Romantic Homes is the magazine for women who want to create a warm, intimate, and casually elegant home—a haven that is both a gathering place for family and friends and a private refuge from the pressures of the outside world."

Roop's Poetry News Plus What's up With Local Writers

FEBRUARY 29 - LEAP DAY LITERARY EXTRAVAGANZA

2 to 4pm, Preservation Pub, Market Square, free and open to the public : Bob Cumming , owner of Iris Press, announces its latest imprint: Tellico Books. This new imprint has just published four books by outstanding authors in this area. The authors and their books are: -Connie Jordan Green - *The War at Home* (a youth novel); Mary Bozeman Hodges - *Plastic Santa and Other Stories*; David Hunter - *Trailer Trash from Tennessee* (a childhood memoir); and Jack Neely - *From the Shadow Side and Other Stories of Knoxville*. The event will feature a reception and book signing of the Tellico authors listed above. Food and drinks will be available from Preservation Pub with proceeds going to the pub. Local bluegrass group, Smiley and the Lovedawg, will provide music, and their latest CD will be available for sale and signing. Besides celebrating the fine writers in this region, Iris has selected the Preservation Pub to host the event because we support the ongoing revitalization of downtown Knoxville and Market Square. For additional info, email rcumming@irisbooks.com; or visit the website at www.irisbooks.com



MARCH 17: - Jack Gilbert, 7 p.m., University of Tennessee Hodges Library Auditorium, free to the public His first book of poems, *Views of Jeopardy*, was the 1962 winner of the Yale Series of Younger Poets Award, the most prestigious first book award in the U.S. In 1982, Knopf published his second book of poems, *Monolithos*. Both *Views of Jeopardy* and *Monolithos* were nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. The *Great Fires* (Knopf, 1992) is his most recent book of poems, a book also widely praised, now in its sixth printing. Gilbert has been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. His poetry has been featured in *The American Poetry Review*, *Poetry*, *Ironwood*, *The Kenyon Review*, *The New Yorker*, and other journals. Gilbert will be teaching the graduate Colloquium in Poetry (English 581) at UT, in addition to scheduling individual conferences.

MARCH 16: Jeanne McDonald reads from her novel, *Water Dreams*, at Pellissippi State Main Campus, noon, Goins Auditorium.

MARCH 18 - ROTHROCK CAFE ,6pm, Thursdays, Lawson-McGhee Library : Knoxville favorite and **Metropulse** writer, **Jack Neely will read from his new book, *From the Shadow Side*, published by Tellico Press.**
www.metropulse.com

MARCH 18 - 21 - WRITERS GETAWAY: With Randy Wayne White (\$575) Asheville . For more info, write to writrWkshp@aol.com

MARCH 22: Jeanne McDonald reads from her novel, *Water Dreams*, at UT's Hodges Library, 7 p.m.

MARCH 25 - ROTHROCK CAFE : 6 p.m., Thursdays, Lawson-McGhee Library .Nancy Brennan Strange & Friends. One of Knoxville's best-loved singers performing Appalachian and swing tunes.

POETRY WRITING WORKSHOP: at Barnes and Noble, third Thursday of each month, 7 p.m. Poetry workshop. Free and open to all. Writing technique and critical review. Third Thursday of each month (unless changed). Meet at Barnes&Noble 7PM. contact: knoxpoetwork@hotmail.com ; info: <http://www.knoxvillewritersguild.org/poetry.htm>

OPEN MIC POETRY at 11th St. Cafe, every Wednesday at 9pm, admission free. Contact poetanthol@hotmail.com for more info

OPEN MIC POETRY AND MUSIC: Laurel Gallery ,4th Floor Candy Factory, first Friday of the month, 6 p.m.

Tourism Alliance will Feature Local Writers in Showcase on March 4

Knoxvillians love their city and want visitors to love it, too. Presently the city is undergoing a renaissance of sorts, rebuilding, refining, and replanning. Artists and writers are integral to the culture of a city, and the Knoxville Tourism Alliance will recognize some of our writers in a showcase celebration on March 4.

The Tourism Alliance has invited a number of local writers to participate in their showcase event to celebrate the arts and opportunities in Knoxville on Thursday, March 4 at the Knoxville Expo Center from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event is free and open to the public.

Local writers who will be available in the Writer's Corner are Jack Neely, Fred Brown, Patsy Neal, David Hunter, Eddie Francisco, Carl Smith, J. Brian Long, and Christy Tillery French.

In addition, 50 booths featuring local attractions, suppliers, and vendors will showcase items of interest for both tourists and local people. A luncheon buffet at 11:30 a.m. will feature guest speaker Mayor Bill Haslam, talking about what tourism means to the city.

Tickets for the luncheon are \$20 per person, but all other venues celebrated at the showcase are free. Anyone planning to attend the luncheon should make reservations by Tuesday, March 2. For more information, e-mail alliance@esper.com



Knoxville Skyline



Read-Around Tennessee: A Celebration of the Written Word and the Writer's Voice

From the Delta border to the Smoky Mountains, the Tennessee Writers Alliance has high hopes of enriching the lives of Tennessee writers from one end of the state to the other. In an effort to offer opportunities for Tennessee writers to gather, share work, and get to know one another, TWA announces the first ever Read-Around Tennessee. On Sat., April 3, 2004, several sites across the state will host open-mic readings for Tennessee writers to share five minutes of their work with a public audience. The following events have already been confirmed. Please watch this place for more events, or contact us about planning one of your own.

Brentwood - 3:00 to 5:00 PM, Barnes & Noble, 1701 Mallory Lane, Cool Springs. For questions email Darnell Arnoult or call her at (615) 683-2817.

Lebanon - 4:00 to 6:00 PM, Jimmy Floyd Family Center, 511 Castle Heights Avenue North. Call (615) 453-4545. E-mail Darnell Arnoult or call her at (615) 683-2817.

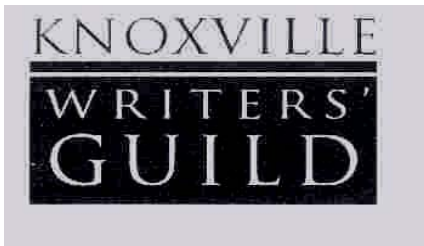
Blountville - 1:00 to 3:00 PM Sullivan County Public Library, 1655 Blountville Blvd. E-mail Jane Hicks or contact the library at (423) 279-2714.

Union City - 1:00 PM, Obion County Public Library, Reelfoot Avenue. E-mail Leslie LaChance or call her at (731) 587-7300 or go to www.ocpubliclibrary.org

Memphis - 4:00 to 6:00 PM, Midtown Books, 2027 Madison Avenue, phone (901) 726-0039. The Memphis

Knoxville Writers' Guild:

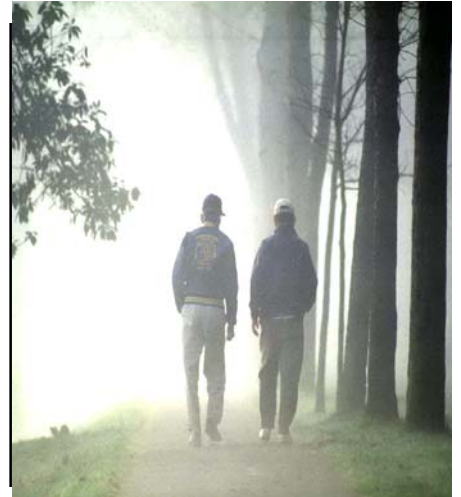
Organized in December 1992 in Knoxville, TN, to facilitate a broad, inclusive and egalitarian community among area writers; to provide a forum for information, support and sharing among writers; to help members improve and market their writing skills, and to promote writing and creativity in the wider community through education, publication, and sponsorship of writing-related public events. Meetings are held the first Thursday of each month at the Laurel Theater. **Officers:** President: Ed Sullivan; Vice President: Kay Newton; Secretary: Pamela Schoenewaldt; Treasurer: Laura Still; Hospitality: Kay Newton; Publicity: Marti Davis; Membership database: Rip Lydick; Program Chairman: David Joyner; President Emeritus: Jack Reese; VP Emeritus: Michael Gillespie; **Newsletter Editor:** Jeanne McDonald; **Webmistress:** Jo Ann Pantanizopoulos. **Board Members:** Robert Boyd, Marti Davis, Tony Day, Emily Dziuban, David Joyner, Jacqueline Kittrell, J. Brian Long, Robert Lydick, Dennis McCarthy, Kay Newton, Pamela Schoenewaldt, Marlene Taylor, and Inga Treitler. Alternates are Nicole Underwood and Patricia Waters. Dues are \$25, \$20 for students. The KWG does not discriminate against any person because of race, age, gender, handicap or country of national origin. Send e-mail messages to editor, jmd531k@msn.com, or to president Ed Sullivan, sully@kornet.org
web: www.knoxvillewritersguild.org



**P.O. Box 10326
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HOW TO JOIN

To join the Writers' Guild, complete the form below and mail to P.O. Box 10326, Knoxville, TN 37939, along with annual dues of \$25, or give the form and your check to any board member of the Guild. Dues are \$20 for students. Membership allows you to participate in study groups, receive discounts on books and Guild merchandise, and monthly issues of the newsletter.



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