

# Vol 1 Issue 8

Oct. 1, 2021

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## Elk Grove Writers Guild

*Writers Helping Writers*

**Welcome to the EGWG newsletter.**



Elk Grove Writers Guild was established in 2018 as a critique group. Our main goal was and is to help writers be the best they could/can be.

To expand our efforts to reach our goal, we created this once monthly newsletter. In it we'll pass on information of coming events, membership news, and offer little bits of writing wisdom, poetry, memories, writing tips, and whatever news in the publishing world that comes along.

We offer you, our readers, a chance to write and be published in this newsletter which is also available on our website.

All submissions are most welcome. If you're interested in seeing your work here, see the back page for submission information.

Come. Join us on our adventure.

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## What's Happening?

**Conference Registration** will close on [October 2, 2021](#).

Don't miss these two major events happening on October 9th, same place – same time. The Elk Grove Writers Guild Conference and the Arts Commission's Book Faire. Check the **Conference Update/President's Corner** for information on both events.

Keep watching our President's Corner for information on other events we're planning. And, as our fearless leader says, "Stay tuned."

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"You should write because you love the shape of stories and sentences and the creation of different words on a page. Writing comes from reading, and reading is the finest teacher of how to write." Paulo Coelho

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The Guild currently meets on the first Friday of each month. Because of Covid-19 we meet in a virtual setting. We gather as a Writer's Circle to talk in the language of writers. We come together to share what and how we're doing, what's new in the publishing world, and ask questions about problems we might have with our works in progress.

Guild members post their WIP on Google Docs and share it with other members for critiques. The posted work is guaranteed to get a response. It is a wonderful way to have input from other writers who will give you valuable insight on your work.

If you're interested in joining the guild, go to the Join page on the website. Fill out the membership application and send us your dues. If you'd like to see what we're about first, and want to come to our next virtual meeting, contact Loy Holder at [loyholder77@gmail.com](mailto:loyholder77@gmail.com) and you'll be invited.

The next meetings are scheduled for Oct. 1, 2021, and Nov. 5, 2021, Meeting will begin at 12:30 and last one and a half hours.

With school year starting, the time for the meetings changed to allow the teachers and parents in the guild to fulfill their duties.

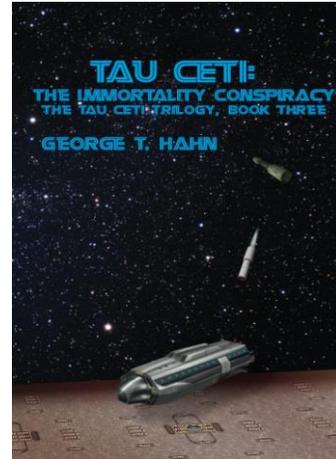
Read on for the good stuff.

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“Whenever I’m asked what advice I have for young writers, I always say that the first thing is to read, and to read a lot. The second thing is to write. And the third thing, which I think is absolutely vital, is to tell stories and listen closely to the stories you’re being told.”

John Green

“And what, you ask, does writing teach us? First and foremost, it reminds us that we are alive and that it is a gift and a privilege, not a right.” Ray Bradbury – *The Zen in the Art of Writing*



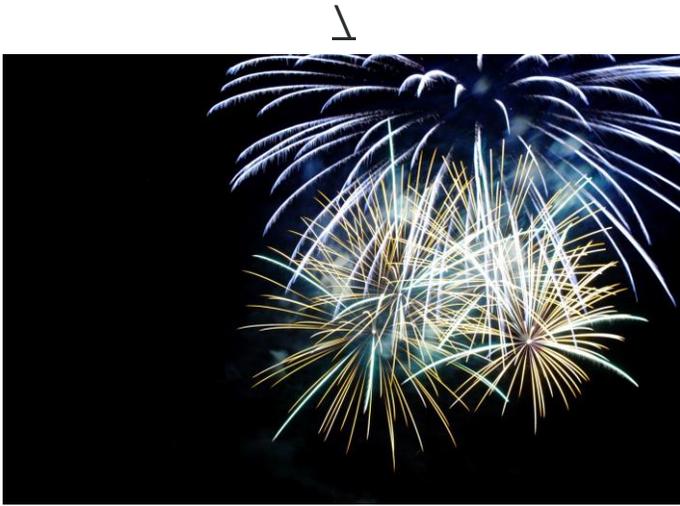
[Amazon.com: Tau Ceti: The Immortality Conspiracy \(Library Ship Saga\): 9781530254828: Hahn, Mr. George T: Books](#)

The Tau Ceti colony supplies Earth with critical medicine, supports scientists from Earth, and operates a library ship that gathers petabytes of valuable data. Somehow, it isn’t enough. For mysterious reasons, the Western Alliance tried to undermine the colony’s control over itself in pursuit of mysterious goals. The colonists resisted. Now, the Western Alliance has called a conference to discuss colonial policy, and the uninvited colonists are convinced that the conference is just a ploy to justify the use of force against them. Patrick Malley, Administrator of the colony, has few allies and little experience in dealing with the forces that the Western Alliance can muster against the tiny colony. Despite that, he is determined to attend the conference and fight for his world-battling intrigue and unfamiliar technology, the Tau Ceti colonists will face the overwhelming power of the Western Alliance, leading to a deadly confrontation in deep space

### **The Review**

#### **Great Science Fiction Book to Read!**

I have read all three books, and hope there will be another. Great reads for almost any age group and will recommend them to anyone interested in science fiction books.



### **The Final Month’s Uncle Fred Contest Winner Was**

**John Maliga**

**Congratulations John!!**

## Poetry Corner

### PERSEPHONE

Are you in love Persephone?  
Or just accept as fate  
Half a year without the sun; the  
Other without your mate.

Great Pluto's wife I beg to ask  
Where would you rather stay  
Deep in your Dark Lord's underworld  
Or in the light of day

Six months above and six below  
To soothe a mother's cry.  
And what of you, Persephone,  
Where does your heart lie?

Barbara Barrett

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### THIS TOO WILL GO ITS WAY

The streets are filled with bygone days  
And haunting memories.  
I miss the town that I once knew,  
The one my heart still sees.  
Ghosts of buildings long torn down  
I know where each one stood --  
The places where I shopped and ate  
In my old neighborhood.  
It's sad to know that what I loved  
Was cast aside with scorn.  
The fun filled places that I knew  
I now can only mourn.  
I see the ghosts of all my friends  
Strolling down each street  
That now are strolled by younger youths,  
This town is now their beat.  
I leave to them this legacy:  
Go fill each golden day  
Knowing that in years to come  
This too will go its way.

Barbara Barrett

### To a Writer and Friend

Forced on a perilous journey from professor at a  
prestigious school  
to flat on your back, your mind went fuzzy.  
With a hospital room and conservator rules.  
Your house was taken, along with your cat,  
and all your worldly possessions.

Alone in that room, you felt like a lab rat.  
Not even a chance for discussion.

Scans and MRI's, they took forever.  
Meanwhile you prayed it would all be over.  
Parkinson's is a daunting diagnosis.  
But not for a brilliant lady like you.  
You didn't focus on the prognosis,  
because you had a lot to do.

With grit and dazzling intellect  
you climbed a slippery slope  
to fight the red tape and reconnect  
with your life, your writing, and hope.

Loy Holder

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### THE SHATTERED CUP

The cup lies cracked and broken  
The love within has gone.  
Contemptuous words were spoken  
And cannot be withdrawn.

Sharpened shards lie on the floor  
All scattered here and there.  
Their flow'ring buds will bloom no more  
They're only broken ware.

The cup lies cracked, its nectar spilled.  
It couldn't stand the strain.  
The ghost arising now is filled  
With loss and searing pain.

Barbara Barrett



## From the Bookshelf

### THE HOUSE

By Penny Clark (A little tale for Halloween.)

The house sat at the end of the road, dark and silent, with an air of neglected emptiness. I parked in front. The idea of pulling into the driveway sent a spike of ice down my spine.

The 911 caller had reported shouting and multiple shots fired. I stared at the deserted house and my internal warning system was buzzing, so I called dispatch, requesting backup. No way was I going into that house alone.

After waiting in my patrol car for five minutes, I opened the car door. I couldn't be sitting in the car when backup arrived. I'd never hear the last of it. I could inspect the outside of the house. There was no need to go inside for that. The shotgun caught my eye and I wanted to grab it but got out of the car empty-handed.

The steps to the front door were littered with debris. No one had used them since the last rain and that had been two weeks ago. I moved toward the back of the house, checking the basement and first floor window. They were locked. When I came to the back, I stopped. The kitchen door was ajar.

Muttering a few choice words, I looked around the corner of the house toward the road checking on my backup, but I was still alone. Where were they? Just as I went around the back to check the rest of the windows there was a loud crash from inside, as if

something had hit the wall and broken. I huffed out a breath. Now I had to go inside.

I slid through the door and flashed my light around the empty kitchen. Three long steps got me into the living room, and I moved against the wall, holding my flashlight high and to the side. The beam swept around the room, the floor showed recent traffic, but the house smelled of old dust and mildew. There was an underlaying smell there too, the smell of death.

My light hit the wall across the room, and a dark splotch stood out. A tight group of five shots had punched into the wall at heart level. There was no blood, but the bullet holes looked fresh. My adrenaline was kicking up to high now. Fight or flight? Flight felt the sane choice. I admit I was spooked.

A floorboard creaked above me, and my head snapped up, as I stared. My heart pounded as I moved up the staircase, weapon in hand, using the inside edge of each step so they wouldn't squeak. I eased my head over the last riser, saw legs, and ducked down so fast I almost slid off the step. I couldn't breathe for a moment, then realized those legs were horizontal not vertical.

I moved onto the landing and inched my way toward the body, keeping watch for any other movement. The man was dead. I didn't need to check him to be sure. Five red blossoms centered on his chest said dead, loud and clear. How'd he get upstairs? What the hell was going on?

A loud thump came from a room down the hall, and I moved that way, my back against the wall. I stood beside the door and waited, getting a grip on what was to come. I stepped in and to the side and flashed my light, gun at the ready. Three bodies lay sprawled on the floor, two shot, and one with his neck angled sharply to the side, broken.

Sounds came from the attic. No way was I going up there. Fight or flight? I saw the glow of headlights flash across the wall. That answered my question, and I left for the kitchen. Invisible in the dark, I waited as my backup ghosted through the back door. I couldn't resist, and said, "At last, there's some life in this place." My backup's scream was pure pleasure.

PL Clark.

## EGWG Bulletin Board



**The Elk Grove Writers Guild** is planning now for events in 2021 and beyond. The guild is searching for speakers for upcoming events.

If you're interested in joining the guild's speaker roster, contact Loy Holder at [loyholder77@gmail.com](mailto:loyholder77@gmail.com).

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“A book is made from a tree. It is an assemblage of flat, flexible parts (still called *leaves*) imprinted with dark pigmented squiggles. One glance at it and you hear the voice of another person, perhaps someone dead for thousands of years. Across millennia, the author is speaking, clearly and silently inside your head, directly to you. Writing is perhaps the greatest of human inventions, binding together people, citizens of distant epochs, who never knew one another. Books break the shackles of time—proof that humans can work magic.”

Carl Sagan

## Coming Events

October 16, from 1 – 5pm

### **Witch Walk, and Harvest Festival**

In historical downtown Woodbridge, off I-5.

Free entry for numerous events, fortune telling, a costume contest, crafts for kids, trick or treat, vendors, a performance by the Witches of Wine Country, pumpkin painting, and an author signing.

Terry Wells-Brown will present her book “The Last Witch” the beginning of the series An Earth Magic Grimoire.

Editor: WITCHES! This sound like fun, I'm going with my daughter.

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### **Using They as a Singular Pronoun**

It was standard for many years to use he, she, or s/he to designate a person of unknown gender. Now the overwhelming trend is to use *they* in these cases.

Use with a hypothetical person: When someone waves at you, it's polite to wave back at *them*.

Someone with an unknown gender: When we catch the suspect, we'll treat *them* fairly.

The Associated Press Stylebook updated its guidance for the singular they in 2017, but many more publications were already using it.



Elk Grove Writers Guild  
*Writers Helping Writers*



## President's Corner

### Elk Grove Writers Conference October 9th, 2021

- **Program schedule: A copy of the class schedule is posted on the next page**
- **Appointments** with an editor and an agent will take place from 8am to 5:15,
- **Plan to visit** the Conference Book Store off the hallway in the Veterans Hall. Danita Moon will be there to sell books for the presenters while they're speaking.
- **Parking:** Go to [egweg.org/conference](http://egweg.org/conference) for a parking map.
- **Directions to the venue:** The Center at District 56, 8230 Civic Center Drive, Elk Grove. At the intersection of Elk Grove Blvd and Laguna Springs Drive, turn south onto Big Horn, then right onto Civic Center Drive. Watch for the "Parking" sign on your left just before the District 56 Campus, pull in and follow the crowd.
- **The final registration date for the Writers Conference is October 2, 2021.** Don't miss it.
- For more **information on the Conference**, go to [egweg.org/conference](http://egweg.org/conference) or email Loy Holder at [loyholder77@gmail.com](mailto:loyholder77@gmail.com).
- For more **information on the Book Faire**, email Nan Mahon, [nannosecond@comcast.net](mailto:nannosecond@comcast.net).
- **See next page for class schedule**

**Keep watching** this column for more activities this year and through 2022, once we catch our breaths after the conference.

Loy Holder, EGWG President

## The Book Faire

Brought to you by the Elk Grove Arts Commission, October 9, 2021

*A day when imagination soars as authors, readers, and beginning writers come together.*

The book Faire will be held at The Center at District 56, 8230 Civic Center Drive, Elk Grove, 95757.

The hours of the faire are from 10am to 4pm

## The Book Faire Contest

The Elk Grove Arts Commission is conducting a Short Story Contest during the combined Book Faire & Elk Grove Writers Guild Conference. The submission date for manuscripts was on August 1. The Short-Story Contest winners will be announced on Saturday, during the Book Faire.

For more information on the Book Faire go to Elk Grove Arts Commission Website at [Great Read Book Fair - City of Elk Grove \(elkgrovecity.org\)](http://GreatReadBookFair-CityofElkGrove(ElkGroveCity.org))



**Both the writers' conference and the book faire will be presented on October 9, at District 56 by the City of Elk Grove, the Elk Grove Arts Commission, in partnership with the Elk Grove Writers Guild.**

## Elk Grove Writers Conference - 2021 Schedule

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Laguna</u>	<u>Franklin</u>	<u>Sheldon</u>
7:30 - 8:15 AM			Check-In and Continental Breakfast	
8:15 - 9:00 AM			Keynote Speaker - 2020 Was a Plot Twist	
9:15 - 10:00 AM	Classes Start	Dorothy Rice - Truth in Memoir	Kathy Marshall - First Book? - Organize Your Manuscript for Publication	Margaret Duarte - Getting Started With ACX (Publishing an Audio Book)
10:15 - 11:00 AM	Classes	Amy Rogers - Writing a Thriller Novel - Craft Tips & Tricks	Cheryl Stapp - Business End of Writing & Selling Books	ML Hamilton - How to Become a Mystery Writer - Finding your Niche
11:15 - 12:00 PM	Classes	Jenifer Rowe - Point of View	Janet McHenry - Conflict	Michael Brandt - Interviewing Witnesses, Suspects, Patients
12:00 - 1:30 PM	Lunch			
1:30 - 2:15 PM	Classes	Dorothy Rice - Truth in Memoir	Kathy Marshall - First Book? - Organize Your Manuscript for Publication	Margaret Duarte - Getting Started With ACX (Publishing an Audio Book)
2:30 - 3:15 PM	Classes	Amy Rogers - Writing a Thriller Novel - Craft Tips & Tricks	Cheryl Stapp - Business End of Writing & Selling Books	ML Hamilton - How to Become a Mystery Writer - Finding your Niche
3:30 - 4:15 PM	Classes	Jenifer Rowe - Point of View	Janet McHenry - Conflict	Michael Brandt - Interviewing Witnesses, Suspects, Patients
4:30 - 5:15 PM			Questions and Answers	

## Writer's Corner

### The Sept. Meeting Topics Discussed

## How To: Beta Readers

Karen Trinkaus

### What are they?

People who read your polished manuscript (do not send them your shitty first draft) and give you feedback. Ideally, they should be readers, NOT other writers, though that can be harder to come by.

### How many do you need?

Depends on where you are in your writer journey. If you're a newbie, you're going to need more, and likely several different rounds. Make sure you're using critique partners first to get your errors under control.

### Don't Use People You Know

While it's tempting to use friends or family, these people are generally not your target audience. They may also be reluctant to give you critical feedback. **You want people who read in your genre.**

### Where to find them:

- [Beta readers and critique partners](#)
- [BetaReader Connect – Find Beta Readers & Critique Partners](#)
- [Beta Readers & Critiques](#)
- [Free beta readers, free critiques, and paid editors](#)

- [Beta Reader Writers Club](#)
- [Fantasy ARC and Beta Readers](#)
- [Goodreads](#)
- [Betareader.io](#) (free or paid)
- [Betabooks.co](#) (paid only)

**A call for betas should always include the genre, word count, and a hook/blurb.** Use this as an opportunity to work on your ad copy. You want betas? You better have an interesting hook and blurb, especially if they aren't writers. If you're using Betareader.io, a mock cover (which you can make free on [Canva](#)) will help draw the eye.

If you're looking in writer groups, it's easier to find people willing to swap. You read theirs and they'll read yours.

**Always do a test chapter.** This is to see if you're a good fit. Sometimes they'll never get back to you. Sometimes they're just not giving you the kind of feedback you need. You don't need to be sending your entire MS to every rando on the internet who asks. Test chapter first!

**Finding betas that will read through the entire manuscript is the hardest part.** Most will flake. Accept it. Also take it as a learning experience. If your story isn't gripping them, especially if everyone quits reading at a certain point, that's a red flag.

Also look for critique partners. Ideally you would do this prior to betas, but I've found that some critique partners, especially those who aren't good at prose or grammar, are

outstanding with emotion and story structure, making them great betas.

## Working with Betas

This really depends on your style. If you're not very good at self-organization, I recommend using a service like **BetaReader.io** or **BetaBook.co**. You absolutely don't need to use either of these, but they do help collate all the information you receive.

If you're working with other writers, **Google docs** is the way to go. You post your chapters, and they comment (this is also how I work with critique partners). This way even if they don't finish, you'll see what progress they've made until that point. If you're emailing them **Word docs**, you may never know where you lost them.

I try to keep my betas separate, because I don't want one reader's opinion to influence another's. This means separate document files for each beta. Is it more work? Hell yes, but that's how I roll.

If they're readers, not writers, they may balk at reading a google or word doc. For some, a PDF or ereader file may be preferable, though you probably won't get in-line comments back.

## Asking Beta Reader Questions

You can google a bunch of lists on what specifically to ask betas. Make sure you tailor them to your own needs, and keep in mind that

you're going to have diminishing returns if you ask too many questions. Keep it concise.

I like to check in with specific questions, like after a pivotal moment or after act 1, 2, or 3 because each of these will have a different feel. If you wait until the very end of the book to ask all your questions, people may not remember how they felt at the end of the first chapter, or the end of act 1.

Your questions at the beginning of the book can focus a lot on how the reader feels about the main character, setting, and if they're engaged enough to continue. Your questions at the end can focus on whether they felt satisfied with the ending, whether they felt hooked for the sequel (if there is one), and whether anything was left unresolved.

If you're new, I strongly recommend having multiple rounds of betas. Sometimes the issues in your book are so big that that's all people will see. Fixing stuff and then asking for new input will allow betas to focus on different things. For instance, in my first round of betas I wanted to know how people felt about my characters. In later drafts, I already knew how they felt, so I dropped the questions relating to character and focused on other issues.

## Evaluating the Feedback

- If one person says something, it may just be their opinion. If three people say it, you need to take a serious look.

- Look for places where people stopped reading or slowed down. They may have gotten busy, but they may have gotten bored. My earlier drafts of my first book lost a lot of people in the middle. Turns out my throughline sucked.
- Does this person read your genre? (Ideally, yes. If not, take their advice with a grain of salt.)
- If you get praise, screenshot that shit and save it somewhere in a file for when you need a pick-me-up.
- **It is NOT the job of betas to offer suggestions on how to fix something. That's your job.**
- If a beta doesn't give much feedback, feel free not to use them again, especially if you're doing a swap. Quality feedback matters. If someone does nothing but sing your praises, they're a shitty beta. You want someone who can point out the good and the bad. **The object is to improve your work, not get validation.**

## Coming Soon

### 20Books Vegas 2021

#### *A 20Booksto50k(R) Educational and Networking Event*

**Dates:** November 8-12, 2021

**Location:** Bally's Convention Center on the Strip, Las Vegas

**Cost:** \$299.99. This is for the conference only. You are responsible for your room, travel, and meals.

### **Register**

**here:** <https://craigmartelle.wufoo.com/forms/20books-vegas-2021-conference-registration/>

**What is 20Books Vegas all about?** Here's a short video to show the energy. <https://vimeo.com/254950940>

20Books Vegas 2021 is by far the biggest and best of the 20Books shows (we've had nine so far). That's why we had to move to the Strip in Las Vegas, to accommodate the more than doubling of our attendee numbers. We had to turn many away who wanted to come. No longer! It is the biggest show in the world focused on self-publishing although there is something for every author, traditional or indie.

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## Odds and Ends

### 5 Things in your writing to watch for

1. Unnecessary quotation marks around words you want to stress or that you don't usually use. Avoid words that don't fit naturally into day-to-day speech. Save quotation marks for actual dialogue.
2. Misusing Whom, I, and myself. Whom is used as the object, and who is the subject. I is the subject, me is the object. If you say, Jane and me are going, and wonder if its right, remove Jane and read it again. Me going? Jane and I are going is correct. Myself, is a reflexive pronoun in a sentence where

### 3. Elk Grove Writers Guild Newsletter – page 12

you're both the doers. I said to myself doesn't work because there is only one person.

4. All caps for emphasis are overused and reads as angry and shouting. Use italics for emphasis or choose better words.
5. Hedge words such as I think, it seems, you may want to, makes you or your character look as if they/you are unsure. Example, I think we shouldn't do this vs We shouldn't this. Which is stronger?
6. Words you wouldn't say aloud—no, not *those* words. Furthermore, therefore, and super formal words like them feel stodgy and old fashioned. Use words you'd use like *so* and *also*.

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### 4 Lazy word choices

1. **Currently** may feel necessary, but in most cases, you don't need it. A simple present-tense verb is all you need. Examples, I currently work at ABC versus I work at ABC.
2. **Certain, specific, or particular** are vague, and that makes them useless. Replace those words with a more precise modifier. Example, a certain amount of XYZ versus an unknown amount of XYZ.
3. **Used to**. Using fewer word to express an idea is a good idea. Example, he used to write this way versus he wrote this way. **Used to** can be replaced with a past tense verb – write becomes wrote.
4. **A lot** leads to the question of how much is a lot? 100 documents, 50% off the price, 1% of the population? A lot is meaningless unless there is context, if there is context, a lot isn't needed.

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**CWC** First Friday meeting, Oct 1, 2021, 10 -11am via zoom with Laura Jensen Walker, “From Memoir to Mystery Novels – My punster Writing Journey.”

The Sacramento Monthly Meeting, October 16, 2021, 1-2pm, via zoom open for chat ay 12:30, “Finding the Raw and Real Story within Nonfiction” with Scott Thomas Anderson. Veteran award-winning Journalist a& Producer.

TO access meetings or newsletters go to [www.cwcsacramentowriters.org](http://www.cwcsacramentowriters.org) and click on announcement

### Slacker Words and Phrases to Avoid

The following are words that inflate writing and are excess verbiage, or useless flab. Eliminate them for clearer and cleaner writing.

1. At all times
2. Each and every
3. As yet
4. In order
5. Pretty
6. Up, down
7. In the process of
8. As a matter of fact
9. All of
10. As being
11. Being that
12. During the course of
13. For all intents and purposes
14. Point in time
15. Basically, essentially
16. Totally, completely, actually
17. Simply

## Food for Thought

“The counterfeit innovator is wildly self-confident. The real one is scared to death.”

Steven Pressfield – *The War of Art*



So, it's too soon for Christmas Cookies.  
How about Halloween cookies?

## SUBMISSIONS

Do you have a poem, a special memory, a favorite author's quote, flash fiction, a **response to a writing prompt**, or a book coming out in 2021? If chosen, it will be printed in the next issue and will be available on the EGWG website.

**Do you or your group have an event coming up?** Send me info, at least a month in advance, and I'll publish it.

### Address for submissions

[turlockpenny@yahoo.com](mailto:turlockpenny@yahoo.com)

Please, use Garamond – 12 for submissions. Send in **word not** PDF. Thanks.

Do you know anyone who would enjoy this newsletter? Send their email address to

[loyholder77@gmail.com](mailto:loyholder77@gmail.com)

## OCTOBER

Oct. 9 EWEG Writers Conference/Book Faire.

Oct 16 is Boss's Day.

Oct 31 Halloween

## A Few More Writing Prompts

- A family ritual goes awry.
- Begin with “The stage was set for—”
- You meet a stranger while traveling, what happens next?
- Write a poem or story entitled “We don't know when it will be fixed.”
- Write a story using no adverbs or adjectives.

## PUMPKINS

Coming soon to your neighborhood.



Enjoy the month! Go trick or treating with a child and steal your favorite candy.

See y'all next month