

FALL 2017
POINTS OF
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A Welcome Letter from the Chair of The Two-Year College Association—Southwest

Dear Friends & Colleagues,

As the Chairperson of TYCA Southwest Executive Board, it is my pleasure to welcome all of you to our 2017 TYCA South West Conference in Loveland, Colorado. Convergence!! What a fascinating as well as an intriguing theme for a conference that attracts so many consummate professionals from six different states to converge and share what they are passionate about: their love of teaching and shaping the minds of their students to inspire and transform them into enlightened global citizens in these turbulent times of uncertainty! Racial tensions, guns on campus, budget cuts, focus on STEM programs diminishing the value of liberal arts, and many other issues cause anxiety and uncertainty; yet we have one thing in common, our love learning and teaching.

As our students navigate through these uncertain times, as facilitators learning, let us converge and learn from each other. Our conference Chairs Rebecca Sailor and Erin Beaver are working diligently to make this weekend into an intellectually stimulating as well as a rewarding one. On behalf of EC Board, I would especially like to extend a warm welcome to all new comers to this regional conference and encourage them to join TYCA South West as members, future presenters, and officers.

Also, as my biennium as TYCA-SW Chair comes to an end, I would like to express my deep sense of gratitude and appreciation to all of you for entrusting me with this awesome task of serving in this leadership role. I learned a lot both professionally and personally and made lasting friendships with some amazing people. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to serve. Looking forward to seeing you in Loveland!



Warmest Wishes,

Rajkumari Chekuri
Chair, TYCA Southwest



A Welcome Letter from the Chairs of the Southwest Region Fall Conference 2017 Loveland, Colorado

As conference chairs, we would like to welcome you to this year's conference. This year's conference theme is *Convergence*. We wanted a conference theme that would explore the interesting results that can happen when unique combinations occur. We're hoping to see proposals that address meeting and merging between subjects such as English and other disciplines, composition and technology, psychology and language, scholarship and practice, developmental and college-level, high school and college, reading and writing, transfer and vocational, and more.

We're especially excited about the amazing speakers we've lined up for the event. Our planned keynote speaker will be Dr. Doug Hesse, past NCTE President, prolific author, and founding Executive Director of the Writing Program at Denver University. Additionally, 2007 Winner of the American Book Awards and author of *The Distance Between Us* and other highly praised works, Reyna Grande will speak. Finally, we plan to have a big finish to the conference with speaker Dr. Terry Doyle, author of *Learner-Centered Teaching* and co-author of *The New Science of Learning*.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Sailor, AIMS

Erin Beaver, Colorado Mountain College

**Turn your teaching presentation into a publication!
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Enjoy the Fresh Air: Explore the "Gateway to the Rockies"

by Erin Beaver and Rebecca Sailor

other outstanding scenery. You may want to come to the conference early (and stay late!). Colorado is a family-friendly place, accessible to kids and adults alike.

We chose the conference theme “convergence” this year in part because it represents our unique geography; Colorado’s front range is a place where the high prairie meets the tall mountains. This means that we have a beautiful view of the Rockies from the prairie, but we can also enjoy climbing them within a relatively short time. There are many opportunities for hiking and sightseeing in the foothills of Loveland, Fort Collins, and Boulder. Stephen King fans might want to save extra time to visit the Stanley Hotel (the inspiration for *The Shining*) in Estes Park, which is also home to stunning Rocky Mountain National Park. Of course, Denver offers a bit more night life; since Denver International Airport (DIA) is the best airport option for those flying in to Loveland, you might want to plan to spend time there at the beginning or end of your trip.

If you don’t have time to travel beyond the confines of the conference hotel or prefer less altitude on your trip, you’ll find lots of local restaurants and shopping at Loveland’s Promenade Shops at Centerra. The Embassy Suites provides a free shuttle to Centerra (reserve a time at the front desk), and there are dozens of places to shop and eat. One worthwhile activity at Centerra is Chapungu Park, which features 82 large stone sculptures from Zimbabwe. There are also abundant opportunities for side trips to Colorado’s famous craft breweries including well-known companies like New Belgium and Odells in nearby Fort Collins. (If you prefer root beer, many places supply this option as well.)

Our state is especially beautiful in October, which is a popular tourist season. This is probably because we have more sunshine than almost any other state. Regardless of whether you save time for extra travel in the mountains or stay in the high plains, remember that we are at a high altitude. Make sure to pack layers of clothing, drink lots of water, and wear sun protection no matter where you go. Check out our [conference page](#) for more ideas on what to do and see on your trip or go directly to the Visit Loveland website: <http://www.visitlovelandco.org/>.

Note: If you've never visited the state of Colorado, here are a few travel tips: [Colorado Travel Tips](#).

We are happy to host TYCA-SW 2017 in Loveland, Colorado. Loveland is known as the "Gateway to the Rockies" and the "Sweetheart City." It is nestled in the eastern foothills of the Rocky Mountains with views of Longs Peak, Mount Meeker, and

The Texas Campus Carry Law

by Michael W. Gos

As you may have heard, Texas has become the eighth state to legalize the carrying of concealed handguns on college campuses. The law took effect in August 2016 at universities and August 2017 at community colleges. To carry a weapon on campus, persons must possess a concealed carry license. To obtain a license in Texas, persons must be 21 years of age and pass a certified training course.

The campus carry law allows institution presidents to establish reasonable gun-free zones based on specific safety considerations, and the uniqueness of the campus environment. Colleges may not, however, establish provisions that generally prohibit or have the effect of generally prohibiting license holders from carrying concealed handguns on the campus. Prior state laws already prohibit firearms in places such as collegiate sporting events, daycare and health care facilities, religious service areas and polling places. Private universities are allowed to opt out of campus carry altogether and declare their entire campuses gun-free zones if they so chose. Public colleges and universities do not have that option.

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton issued an opinion that the law does not allow either universities or individual professors to ban guns in classrooms or residential buildings.

The Texas law is considerably less encompassing than laws in other states however. In Utah, for example, presidents have no discretion to limit the places handguns can be carried. And in Texas, open carry will not be allowed on campuses.

Supporters of the law say it will make campuses safer because it will no longer bar licensed gun holders from protecting themselves and others when attacked, thus saving lives in mass shootings. They point to the fact that in every campus shooting event, when the gunman faced another weapon, the shooting ended, most cases in suicide.

Opponents say the presence of weapons on campus will have a chilling effect.

Some professors say they fear disgruntled students, and administrations express concern over rising security costs and the reduction in their ability to recruit both students and faculty once the law goes into effect.

Colleges and universities have adopted a range of policies in response to the law. For example, the University of Texas and the University of Houston announced similar plans in terms of where concealed handguns can be carried by licensed owners. Both ban carry in places set aside by state or federal law as gun-free zones. They also ban weapons in labs containing animals or dangerous materials and areas where grievance or disciplinary hearings take place. Both universities allow guns in classrooms and other areas not specifically designated as gun-free zones. They differ somewhat regarding student housing however. The University of Houston bans guns in most student housing whereas Texas bans them in residence halls but allows them in university-owned apartments. U of H also forbids them in university-owned cars.

In a written statement, the state attorney general, Ken Paxton has pointed out that faculty who refuse to follow campus policy on this issue could face disciplinary actions. His agency says the law is clear. It gives campus presidents the ability to designate each school's limited "gun-free zones," and if classrooms are not expressly included in campus policy as off-limits to firearms, then guns must be allowed there.



Dylan Thomas, Hamlet, and The Metaphysic of Flies

by Brian Anderson

I'm hoping they'll remember the line from *Dangerous Minds*, the high-school-under-siege movie starring Michelle Pfeiffer.

"Rage, rage against the dying of the light."

Blank stares. They remember the movie, but not the Dylan Thomas poem in the movie. I make a mental note of a possible goal for my progress with this freshman literature class: If I can't teach them to enjoy poetry, maybe I can teach them to hear poetry, to recognize poets when they speak to us from unexpected places.

During the break, one of my students whose father has just died approaches me. She wants permission to turn in her major research paper a week late. Maybe she expects me to say no, as some kind of mechanical response to a zero-tolerance policy. But a few years of adjunct teaching have relaxed my thinking in that area; deadlines are not always rigid, lives are complicated. Most of all, I've realized my personality doesn't lend itself well to inflexibility.

I wonder if my student feels a special connection to Dylan Thomas's famous poem, in which he urges his own dying father to "not go gentle into that good night." But it is another poem she mentions, as she smokes a cigarette in the dim light of the parking lot, a poem by Emily Dickinson titled, "I Heard a Fly Buzz – When I Died."

"I thought about what you said about flies symbolizing death when I was in the hospital room with my dad," she says. "A fly came into the room and landed on my dad's forehead. I started crying because I knew he was going to die."

Her father died a few hours later, she tells me. I am taken aback, as any teacher is when he realizes a student has absorbed something he has said. I ask her about her relationship with her father, who like many men was less than perfect in his relationships with women. It's a character overrepresented in literature — the man who leaves his wife for another woman in a moment of weakness, only to find himself disappointed and regretful.

"He was suffering in the end," she says. "I think he was ready to go."

It would be cliché if she were talking about his physical suffering, but she's talking about something else, something more resonant.

I can tell she learned to love and respect her father again over the years. She tells me, somewhat apologetically, that she's writing her paper on *Hamlet* because her father had an extensive collection of books about the play and its themes.

"He loved *Hamlet*," she says quietly as she stares off into the parking lot.

Anyone who loved *Hamlet* can't be half-bad, I reason. Perhaps her father identified with the tragic hero, whose main downfall was his perpetual indecision. Perhaps my student herself identifies with Hamlet, whose father has recently died, leaving him alone to battle the demons of jealousy and anger.

Continued on the next page.

"Well, you can never have enough papers on *Hamlet*," I tell her.

Somebody once said that if you're going to punish yourself for the bad things you've done, you have to give yourself credit for the good things. Maybe this student's father, although not a perfect father or husband, deserves some credit for building a loving collection of *Hamlet* books.

Maybe Dylan Thomas, a sullen drinker who died only a year after his father, deserves credit for continuing to speak to readers who know him only as a name in a book. Maybe the fly deserves credit for simply being, for knowing that it must go on in the face of an uncertain and uneasy future.

In another class in another time, although the semesters sometimes seem to be differentiated only by a collective will to make it so, a skeptical young man asks me about the flies in Joyce Carol Oates's "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?"

The flies exist as a pestering presence in Oates's tale of adolescence lost, as the protagonist, a young girl of 15, faces the impending doom of a violent sexual encounter and her own unraveling childhood.

"Is this story about death?" the student, more known for disbelieving smirks than for probing questions, asks me.

"All stories are about death, aren't they?" I respond, a little too glibly.

"Art deals with the inevitability of death and the inevitability of loss," I continue. "Even stories of love are shadowed by the eventuality that all love must come to an end."

Flies live for just a few weeks, yet scientists theorize that the size of their bodies makes time seem to go by much more slowly. To humans, they exist as a reminder of death and the shortness of life, an annoying nuisance and a pestering sign of decay.

I wonder what kind of perspectives Emily Dickinson and Dylan Thomas had on the length of life. I wonder if the hearts of poets beat more rapidly, making them all too aware of the vast expanses of time and the limits of human imagination. I wonder if my students think about any of this when they leave the classroom of the community college classroom every Thursday night.

Dylan Thomas urged his readers to "rage against the dying of the light," yet he's also known for his alleged final words, which seem more attuned to an alcohol-induced sense of desperation and futility: "I've had eighteen straight whiskies; I think that's the record."

If we read to know we are not alone, maybe college English classes help us to experience that knowledge collectively. Long after their solitary deaths, Dylan Thomas and Emily Dickinson bring us together in English classes to share thoughts and experiences.

But, like flies, they also pester us and annoy us with their poetic insights, reminding us that the end will come and we must allow our hearts to beat quickly and strongly in the meantime.

An earlier version of this essay appeared in Bayousphere, 2004. The heart of the essay was written by a younger, adjunct version of the author, back when smoking was allowed on campus.

About TYCA-SW

In 1966, the founding members of the Southwest Regional Conference on English in the Two-Year College (SRCE), the original name of TYCA-SW, met in San Antonio, Texas.

Since then, the Conference has met yearly in each one of the six states making up the Southwest Region: in Denver, Little Rock, Bossier City, Hobbs, Oklahoma City, and in various cities in Texas, including Amarillo, Austin, Corpus Christi, Dallas, Fort Worth, Laredo, and Waco.

Members enjoy not only the professional growth of attending the annual conferences but also the personal interaction with old and new friends that sparks enthusiasm, confidence, and solidarity.

Programs feature speakers of regional and national reputation. Host colleges traditionally schedule recreational activities that showcase their cities, such as a walk around the San Antonio Riverwalk or a hiking trail through the mountains and scenic routes of Colorado.

Visit TYCASW.ORG for more information.

SHOW APPRECIATION

NOMINATE A COLLEAGUE FOR TYCA-SW AWARDS 2017

Susan Faulkner Excellence in Teaching Award

The Susan Faulkner Excellence in Teaching Award is presented at the annual TYCA-SW conference. It honors the memory of Susan Faulkner, professor and coordinator of the English Department at Cedar Valley College in the Dallas County Community College District in Texas. Susan loved teaching, learning, the English language, TYCA-SW, and her grandchildren most of all. We urge you to nominate a friend or colleague who merits special recognition for his or her hard work and inspired teaching. Send your nominee's name and a brief description of his or her outstanding work. In addition, you may include brief comments from this individual's students and peers, if possible.

Nominees must be paid members of TYCA-SW.

Robert W. Wylie Service Award

Each year TYCA-SW honors one person for outstanding contributions made to the profession through long-term service. The Wylie Award is our highest distinction. To nominate a colleague for this award, send the nominee's name and a description of his or her contributions to the profession. You may include comments from others in your nomination as well. Include the information listed below on this form along with any supporting documents.

Go to tycasw.org to nominate a colleague for the Robert W. Wylie Service Award and Susan Faulkner Excellence in Teaching Award.

On the (Job) Hunt: Researching the Terrain to Find Your Fit

by Dr. Sarah Fish, Collin College

The Job Market, as a looming test of value and a kind of unfamiliar pressure deserving capitalization, was part of conversations in my first semester of doctoral study and continued for the next five years. In my first semester, we had to write about the MLA job listing that drops in September. In other semesters, we had workshops about CVs, philosophies, and preparing conference proposals—all moving us toward the job market. One of the faculty even provided narratives from recent graduates who had earned full-time employment.



I am thankful that I was part of a department that got us writing and revising job market materials so early. I am thankful for the interest that helped me navigate the job market, its promise of possibilities and its pitfalls of labyrinthine paths. But I am most grateful for one piece of advice that was my job market game changer: Research the school before, during, and after completing materials.

The idea may seem obvious, but friends and mentors on hiring committees across several locations kept bringing it up. They told stories about the first-round culling of 100+ applications based on cover letters that hadn't proved an applicant knew the college or the department. They appreciated how this made their task easier but also expressed their shock at finding it over and over again.

"Research the school" is a massive task and can easily swallow hours as we fall into the Job Market rabbit hole. When we're finishing graduate school, teaching part-time, taking care of families, and/or working outside the Academy, we may not have the time to devote to researching everything about a school. I offer two ways I researched schools so that my job hunt was easier to navigate.

Review the Institution's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)

Want to know what kind of atmosphere administration, faculty, and staff are building at the school? Read the QEP (thankfully, many schools have a webpage for this). The plan outlines major initiatives happening across the campus and for which departments take on certain roles. The plan also provides a peek into what priorities the school has for learning and student engagement, which impact the roles we take on as faculty.

Reading through QEPs gave me a sense of the schools I was applying to—or if I wanted to apply at all. I knew I wanted to work at a student-focused place, so the document gave me information about what place students had so I could decide if that was an initiative I could support. I also used the

QEP initiatives to supplement my phone and in-person interviews. A friend mentioned that part of the hiring process involves the interviewers seeing us as part of the faculty, so having a working knowledge of the QEP allowed me to answer questions within a framework familiar to the committee.

Review the Department's Courses, Initiatives, and Faculty

Want to know what priorities the department has or what kind of colleagues you'll have? Find out about the department through its webpage, faculty websites, or links to sample course materials. Department webpages will give information about past and upcoming events—Would you attend these? You can also learn about courses and curriculum initiatives/changes and faculty interests—Would you like to teach the courses offered? Can you support the curriculum? Would you want to have conversations with these faculty?

Asking those questions was another way to decide if I wanted to apply to schools. If I couldn't see myself at a school, I moved on to another listing. I wanted to see myself as a colleague in a department, and if that didn't happen, I knew (no matter how badly I wanted a full-time position) I would be wasting my time. Researching these elements and asking these questions also provided me with helpful information for phone and in-person interviews. I could answer questions that tied together what I had done with what I could do at this school.

As I mentioned in the opening, I recognize how fortunate I am to have had mentorship with the Job Market (many thanks Dr. Jennifer Wingard, Dr. Elizabeth Woodworth, Dr. Kit Hume, Dr. David Mazella, and Dr. Cedric Tolliver). The guidance and critique helped me with the process and finding a place that is a good fit for me—this is my way of paying that forward.

Many times, people talk about this experience as the "job hunt," and I think that last word reinforces how knowing the terrain can make us better applicants not just because we can show a school what they need to see about us, but because we can decide if a school should be in our sights. The more we know about what we're "hunting," the better equipped we are to find those schools where we will be a good fit.

Happy (job) hunting!

Additional Resources:

Kathryn Hume, *Surviving Your Academic Job Hunt: Advice for Humanities PhDs* (Revised and updated edition, 2010)

Karen Kelsky, *The Professor Is in: The Essential Guide to Turning Your Ph.D. into a Job* (2015)



Robert W. Wylie Service Award Recipient: Jill Gos, Lee College

by Nancy Herschap with Notes from Michael Gos

I remember the first time I attended a TYCA-SW conference; it too as today, was held in San Antonio, and I was nervous, apprehensive and in awe of the TYCA-SW members, busy and confident, setting up their presentations and mingling with colleagues. I am still a bit nervous and apprehensive, and still, very much, in awe of the vast knowledge and unique expertise that each member of TYCA-SW brings to our yearly conferences. But perhaps the most welcoming, the most becoming, and the most essential trait a member of TYCA-SW has is warmth for her colleagues. And this trait shines, among many others, in our 2016 winner of the Susan Faulkner Excellence in Teaching Award.

Back in San Antonio, that first time, I am fumbling with my computer, hands shaking, terrified that I will not be able to connect the cables and what not to my computer, when a woman with glossy black hair and a ready smile jaunts into the room to take pictures. She's the TYCA-SW archivist. I'd brought my own laptop, no USB (I didn't even know how to use a USB back then) and she volunteered cheerfully that she had an extra USB that I could use. Detecting my inexperience, she simply saved my PowerPoint to the USB, inserted it into the college's laptop, opened up my PowerPoint for me, and had my PowerPoint shining on the screen within minutes. Professional, helpful, and friendly, she saved my presentation, calmed me, and it was then, I knew, that I wanted to be part of TYCA and be a part of the TYCA-SW team and family.

Recently, on 8 October at the TCCTA Conference for Leaders held at the Menger Hotel, she sat next to Dr. Wintersole, the head of the English Department at Laredo Community College, and Dr. Wintersole had this to say about our dark-haired friendly colleague, "She is so cordial, so knowledgeable, and so enthusiastic. I'm going to join TYCA-SW." New members and institutional memberships begin with educators, like our recipient, encouraging other educators to sign up and share their expertise with all of us. In addition, and not

Continued on the next page.

surprising, her daughter, an educator as well, has joined TYCA-SW. Our recipient is also a member of CCCC, TCCTA, and WBA attending conferences and seminars diligently to keep current in her field. There is no doubt about it; colleges, teams, and families connect with such an all-encompassing individual.

And what a presenter she is! I attended her “Eyeballs and Bugs and Brains and Snakes” session and was transfixed with her hands on activity of veiny eyeballs and squiggly snakes, mesmerized with her adept use of clips of movies in her PowerPoint, and impressed with her ease in lecturing and conversing with her audience. Her preparation was evident! The twinkling in her eyes voiced her sheer enjoyment and enthusiasm for her subject. At the end of the table, her husband sat, supporting, approving, and positively beaming at her. Because she is a workaholic and stays up late grading papers, he refers to her as “Batgirl.” As the Lee College Composition director, she hires, supervises and mentors all adjuncts in the English and Humanities Division. She serves on the college's dual credit committee and teaches Dual Credit courses in high schools as well as teaching tradition courses, including British Literature, on campus. Both her colleagues and students attest to her knowledge and joy in teaching. Again, I saw that connection with learning, with students, with colleagues and family, which is so crucial to the empowerment and effectiveness of the classroom and to TYCA-SW.

It is with admiration that we present Jill Coe Gos, our enthusiastic and warm colleague, an educator for twenty-five years, with the 2016 Robert Wylie Service Award.

TYCA-SW is seeking submissions for publication in the TYCA-SW Newsletter. Topics related to teaching, legislation that may impact teaching at the college level, short works of fiction, and scholarly research are welcome.

**Submissions can be sent to Toni McMillen
at tmcmillen@collin.edu by April 20, 2018.**



Susan Faulkner Teaching Award Recipient:

Liz Ann Aguilar, San Antonio College

Our 2016 TYCA SW Susan Faulkner Teaching excellence Award winner, Dr. Liz Ann Aguilar, Professor of English at San Antonio College and the President of TCCTA, is an exceptional woman with varied skills and experiences; her love of learning, her passion for teaching, and more importantly, her ability to understand and focus on student needs with expertise and grace make her an ideal candidate to receive the Susan Faulkner Award.

Liz Ann Aguilar has taught at San Antonio College since 1995, when she started as an adjunct instructor, and then transitioned to full-time in 1997. Liz Ann States, "I am very Blessed and humbled to state that this past August, I completed 20 years of teaching full-time at the same academic institution where I attended college for kids and took my first college course in the evening while still a senior in high school. Of course, this was some time before dual-credit became popular!"

All of us who know Liz Ann not only see her gracious and charming demeanor but also her expertise in her subject area, her commitment to teaching and shaping the minds of her students, as well as her love of her family and faith. All five of her colleagues who nominated her, celebrated her commitment to her students, her engaging teaching style, her firmness, fairness, and kindness; in one her colleague's words, "she is and has always been a conscientious, thoughtful, and engaging teacher in developing assignments where her students not only learn the course curriculum but also learn to engage and participate in cooperative, social and community activities."

2016 was a year of awards for Liz Ann, and she refers to the many laurels she received as blessings from heaven revealing her true faith as well as humility. In addition to winning the TYCA SW Susan Faulkner Teaching Excellence Award, in October, Liz Ann also won the Western Region Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) Faculty member Award in New Orleans and also the national William H. Meardy Faculty Award, a national honor given for excellence in teaching which is a true testament to her excellence as a teacher.



Edgar and Poe

by Nancy Herschap

"Hey Edgar," I said. "Hey Edgar, stop stalking me."

He didn't think I would say it.

I said it again, "Stop stalking me."

I turned on my heel and walked away. I didn't have to turn around; I could hear him padding after me on soft cat paws.

"You Poe hoe," he hissed behind me.

The 1845 Wiley and Putman *Tales* slipped from my hand and I turned with a desperate deliberateness to dump once and for all this idiot of a man.

"Nevermore," I said. "It was a one nighter-talker. No more, no less."

"Nevermore," I said again.

"You Poe hoe," he slurred.

"Go home and sleep it off," I said with disdain picking up my book of forgotten lore and heading to San Jacinto to catch the Metrorail.

"You're killing me," he said catching up with me.

"You're chilling me," I shrugged.

"Edgar, let it be."

"No, no, you Poe hoe; you belong to me. Remember that evening in the bleak December? I thawed your dark heart."

"It was dreary," I said.

"And I am weary," I added wearily and warily.

"Never, never, nevermore," I muttered.

I shook my Raven locks musingly and morosely. I've taken to seasonal dying. Heh. Heh. For everything there is a season. In the spring my hair is copper fire red, but come December, in the bleak December, it is blacker and shiner than a raven's feathers.

Continued on the next page.

"Clang, clang, clang," grates the rail. I've walked up and down Montrose and I am weary.

"Caw, caw, caw," scold the black crows hopping and perching on Saint Paul's lawn. I want to go to the condo, but I don't want that obsessive obtrusive neurotic Edgar to follow me and find out where I live, on weekends that is, when I'm in Houston that is.

"Come on, Poe hoe, come on home with me, Poe Hoe", he whispers into the wind which besieges my dreadlocks and crawls up on the back of my neck making me shudder.

He uses his charm. He is a lithe good looking man with deep set brooding twinkling eyes...looks like a young Kristofferson -- and with a deep gravelly voice, too, but I heed the silver-haired poet's prophetic warnings about doubles "hiding intentions of evil under the smile of a saint."

"You're killing me," he trailed off softly, feigning tenderness. But I hear the violent voices vindicating themselves beneath his and Everyman's tenderness.

"You're chilling me," I mimicked, letting my words trail off. Heh. Heh. I couldn't help myself... I had to say it. Again.

Killing and chilling.

Chilling and killing.

The beautiful Annabelle, the lost Lenore, me....all enmeshed.

Wouldn't you know it, down at Half Price on Westheimer, I meet a man named Edgar in the Poe section and we strike up a conversation. Oh, I know he saw my 6.66 carat diamond ring and banked on it being real, but I'd been holed up in the condo on Crawford, alone for weeks, reading Papa Hemingway and Leo Tolstoy and Doris Lessing and whoever else I could claw off the bookcases ... and I hadn't seen a soul in weeks. Didn't bother to walk down to Herman Park either. Just stayed holed up in the condo. It was bleak, but nothing much I could do after sipping that Canadian beer soup laced with arsenic and living through it and looking back at that high definition security camera and seeing my tall Adonis of a husband, needing no axe and no tripping over cats, simply stooping down, opening up the cabinets beneath the sink, and retrieving a lovely shaped ginger jar and methodically pouring from that ginger jar some of that spice or flavoring into the soup he made especially for me because I was down with another horrid case of bronchitis.

Well I hurled and hurled and wanted to die...seems I was always hurling married to Hubert. And hurting.

My sister, Jean, comes over to care for me and to wash the dishes; I am still in my vomit-speckled, shining like infinitesimal Swarovski crystals, white gossamer night gown and she reaches below the cabinet for the dish-washing liquid and brings up instead the lovely shaped ginger jar. I laugh a bit and say, "That's Hubert's special spice for his famous soups."

Continued on the next page.

My sister held it up to the light and then, you know...we watched the high definition surveillance video and took the ginger jar down to the lab, and then I left Laredo and Hubert in my rear view mirror and I've been reading one author after another and one book after another trying to find the explanation for Hubert's recipes. Why all that? Why not just nevermore it?

Oh.

Axe me not.

Edgar stealthily comes alongside me, tries to take my hand, and I bolt faster than Usain Bolt himself. "Nevermore!" I scream into the dark dubious December evening.

"Nevermore!" I shout, raving and waving at Edgar.

"Nevermore!" I quip, trying to refrain from *kcufling* up that beautiful refrain, but nothing else will do.

"Nevermore!" And I leap with real alacrity into the railcar and leave Edgar in his Deuteronomy holy jeans and tattered Roquelaure swaying drunkenly on San Jacinto with that friendly fiend Alcohol.

It's crowded on the rail...doctors releasing grasping hands, lawyers lucratively lounging on their stuffed briefcases, pickpockets peering slyly at your wrists, ladies of the oldest profession winking at the grotesques, nuns getting none sinking into the *nadaness*, teachers talking redundant riddles, bums bumming banal buns, and the riffraff riding for Solitude's Sake. I settle into a seat, open up "The Man of the Crowd", and before I continue on the Reading Pilgrimage mapped in my genes, a shrill contemplative and bemused laugh erupts from me and I ask out loud to everyone, and no one in particular, "Now why, with a last name like Hoe, was I named Poe?"



TYCA-SW in San Antonio Fall 2016

*Go to
TYCASW.ORG
for updates and
information on how to join our
leadership team.*

TYCA-Southwest Leadership Team 2017

Raj Chakuri, Chair
Nancy Herschap, Vice-Chair
Brian D. Anderson, Treasurer, Newsletter
David Lydic, Secretary
Toni McMillen, Immediate Past Chair, Acting Secretary, Newsletter
Erin O'Niell Armendarez, NCTE Representative
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