

## SWA 2024 Contest Rules and Guidelines:

**Who can enter?** Ten opportunities to win! Our annual SWA-sponsored contests are free to all SWA members [except for current SWA board members who would potentially have an unfair advantage]. Annual membership to join/renew SWA is \$35. You do not have to register for our upcoming June meeting at Epworth by the Sea in order to place in our contests, but it is our hope that you will want to join us and participate in our annual on-site meeting.

**Constraints:** Only one entry/ category. Your entry must be unpublished on the date of submission. You can't submit the same manuscript to more than one category. You can't be a current SWA board member. If you are a contest sponsor and not a current SWA board member, you can't submit a manuscript to the same category you are judging. You must agree that you have not used A.I. in the creation or writing of your story. You must be a current SWA member.

## What are the contest categories and possible cash awards?

- Cappy Award for Southern Humor [\$150]
- Microcosm Award [\$50, \$30, \$20]
- The Hal Bernard Memorial Award for Novel [\$75, \$50, \$25]
- The Vega Award for Speculative Short Fiction [\$100, \$50, \$25]
- Crime Fiction Contest [\$100, \$50]
- Herbert Shippey Award for Excellence in Southern Poetry [\$50]
- Limerick Award [\$25, \$15, \$10]
- Thursday Writers' Cozy Mystery Award [\$100, \$50, \$25]
- Short Story Contest [\$100, \$50, \$25]
- The Lighthouse Prompt Award [\$100, \$50, \$25]

\* In the event of a tie, the award amounts will be adjusted by the contest sponsor. If a contest sponsor decides there are not enough entries for their specific contest *or enough entries of sufficient merit*, then he or she can decide to give out fewer awards or not award a prize in their sponsored category. Honorable mentions [if any] will receive an award certificate, but no prize money.

## Timetable for contest entrants:

- By December 15 a list of contests to choose from will be published on the website [along with descriptions and specific instructions regarding format and submission].
- Contests will be open on January 1 and close on April 30 [end of the day] and submitted directly to the contest coordinator at: [swa50cne@gmail.com](mailto:swa50cne@gmail.com). \*[ready to take entries via email on January 1] and when the website goes live [later in January] via online submissions].

- By May 31 a finalist list [by title under contest categories\*] will be published on the website [Finalists registering at the last minute will be able to take advantage of our early bird discount rate]. \*Assuming there are enough entries to merit publishing a finalist list.
- At our June 2024 meeting: Placement in SWA contests will be announced LIVE during our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary meeting to be held in June at Epworth by the Sea in St. Simons, GA.
- A list of winners will be posted on the website within a week of the live awards ceremony and will be included in our summer newsletter edition.
- If applicable, feedback to contest entrants will be shared with the entrants via email [within a week of the awards ceremony].
- PDFs of award certificates will be emailed to those who can't attend our 50th-anniversary celebration meeting within a week of the ceremony. Award money checks will be mailed via USPS to their specified physical address. Physical award certificates will be mailed via UPS *provided* the award recipient agrees to reimburse mailing costs.

**How are the contests judged?** All personal information is to be removed from your entries and sent to the contest director along with the contest form filled out. On April 1, the contest director will forward entries to judges and make a spreadsheet based on the filled-out form. Each judge will develop a rubric of some sort *based on their contest description* to score each entry and forward the results to the contest director. The contest director will keep track of the entrant's identity and will match winning titles/categories with the winners to fill out award certificates.

**Who'll be doing the judging?** The contests are judged by our kind sponsors who have graciously donated money to be used as a cash prize for our contest winners. Many of our sponsors are long-time members of SWA and have served on the SWA board either currently or in the past, some of them have served as faculty at least once over the course of SWA's history and all are passionate about the genre behind their contest as well as SWA and most of them have a remarkable publication history. Our sponsors will be encouraged to provide constructive feedback to contest entrants [note this is up to the sponsor and what they are willing to provide to our entrants. Some sponsors may choose **not** to provide feedback]. Here is a list of our sponsors/judges:

- **Cappy Hall Rearick** [former SWA president and faculty member, she is a syndicated humor columnist and known for Southern humor writing].
- **Charlotte Henley Babb** [former SWA board member, retired English Professor, and former faculty member, she is known for her speculative short stories and novels].
- **Buzz Bernard** [former SWA president and faculty member. He is the multiple-award-winning author of thrillers and WWII historical fiction].

- **Sandra Giles** [former SWA board member and faculty member, she is a published author of a variety of speculative stories].
- **Lynn Hesse** [SWA member, board member for the Atlanta Pen Women and Southern Sisters-in-Crime, retired law enforcement, and award-winning author of a crime series, a mystery, and a suspense novel].
- **Jeff Newberry** [current SWA board member, former faculty member, known for his poetry].
- **Susan Lindsley** [long-time SWA member and award-winning author. She is known for her historical fiction and nonfiction based in Georgia's old south as well as for her poetry and nature writings].
- **Muriel Pritchett** [current SWA board member and award-winning Georgia author of fiction for women, young adults, and middle-grade readers; will be assisted in judging by members of the Thursday Writers Critique Group].
- **Jim Furry's Eye on the Page** [current SWA president, he is an FBI agent turned writer].
- **"Jack Torrance"** [judging under a pseudonym, he is an active member of the Apex-Writers and a valued writer friend of Amy Wethington. A retired cop, he is now free to work full-time on his detective stories set in space. He picked this year's writing prompt and has graciously agreed to take over the judging of the Lighthouse Prompt Award].

## **Who is judging what and what are the contest category descriptions?**

### **Cappy Rearick's Cappy Award for Southern Humor**

-- Submit complete manuscript, not to exceed 1,000 HILARIOUS words. Any subject suitable for all ages.

### **Charlotte Babb's Microcosm Award**

-- Fiction, any genre, no poetry, slice of life, or vignette. A complete manuscript with beginning, middle and end -- which is character-driven and has a resolution. Less than 1,000 words; up to 999 words, not counting the title.

Buzz Bernard's **The Hal Bernard Memorial Award for Novel** [will offer at least some minimal feedback]

-- Submit first 10 pages of manuscript (double-spaced); plus a 1-page synopsis and 1-paragraph "elevator pitch." Any genre, literary or mainstream.

### **Sandra Giles's The Vega Award for Speculative Short Fiction**

-- Submit complete manuscript, not to exceed 4,000 words. Short fiction in any of the fantastical genres, such as science fiction, fantasy, horror, weird, magical, supernatural, superhero, utopian or dystopian, apocalyptic or post-apocalyptic, alternate history. Short story or flash; stand-alone novel chapters also accepted.

### Lynn Hesse's **Crime Fiction Contest**

-- For an idea of what crime fiction is, check out the sub-category definitions of crime fiction: <https://kwawriters.org/handouts/genre-writing/crime-fiction-sub-genres/>. Please note that I don't "get" cozies with animal heroes and food recipes as part of the main plot. Stories with a strong female protagonist as the main character are preferred.

Submit the first 30 pages using 12-point font, double-spaced sentences. Please use Shunn's formatting: <https://www.redlagoe.com/2021/04/29/formatting-your-manuscript-a-brief-guide-to-shunn/>. As a professional, you'll need to know this formatting to submit any of your manuscripts to publishers. In this case, *don't* put your author info in the header or on the first page. \*Note, I reserve the right to void the contest should I not receive at least three entries.

### Jeff Newberry's **Herbert Shippey Award for Excellence in Southern Poetry**

-- Single poem of no fewer than 10 lines and no more than 50 lines addressing the Southeast in some broad way, either through subject matter or through style or through homage.

### Susan Lindsley's **Limerick Award**

--Submit no more than two limericks (each consisting of five lines using an AABBA rhyme scheme). They can be nonsensical, comedic, outrageous, raunchy, or just plain fun.

### Muriel Pritchett's **Thursday Writers' Cozy Mystery Award**

--Submit first 10 pages of manuscript (double-spaced), plus a 1-page synopsis and 1-paragraph "elevator pitch." Please remember that cozy mysteries are a sub-genre of crime fiction -- a comfort read that leaves the reader satisfied rather than scared.

### Jim Furry's Eye on the Page, LLC Contest's **Short Story Contest**

--The author shall compose a fictional short story with a word count not exceeding 1,000 words. It can be any genre and will be judged on grammar, on adherence to the prompts and word count. The prompts consist of, 1) Somewhere in the story, "50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary," must appear, 2) "A midnight encounter with a weird stranger," must be a critical turning point in the story, and 3) A surprise ending.

### "Jack Torrance's" **The Lighthouse Prompt Award**

--The story can be fictional or (auto)biographical. It can be set in the past, present, or future. Entries can be of any genre for any age group [picture books should only include text]. Entries

can be flash fiction, a self-contained story, or a chapter of a larger work. **Constraints:** It must involve the following writing prompt: **Beast Within**. Entries should **not exceed 5,000 words** as counted by Word and use Shunn format: <https://www.shunn.net/format/>.

**The handing out of award certificates and prize money:** The SWA treasurer will provide award money and the contest director will provide signed award certificates with author names, titles, and contest categories. Any sponsor/judge present at our live awards ceremony will hand out award certificates and award money to the winners for their category. Otherwise, the contest director take care of that on their behalf. After the SWA June meeting, the contest director will make sure winners not in attendance at our award ceremony receive their award money and a PDF of their award certificate.

**How to submit?** Fill out our online form OR submit via email: By email, please copy the Email Submission Form and fill it out along with your attached contest entry to SWA50CNE@gmail.com. Items marked with asterisks are mandatory, please don't leave them blank. Please type in the contest you are submitting to in the subject line of the email.

NOTE: Whether submitting online or via email, you should receive an email confirming your entry and information within 48 hours. Questions about your entry? Send Amy an email to [SWA50CNE@gmail.com](mailto:SWA50CNE@gmail.com).

**Email Submission Form to fill out with your contest entry:**

First Name: \*

Last Name: \*

Pen name [if applicable, this name will replace your name entered above on the contest certificate]:

Email Address: \*

Contest Category: \* choose the appropriate one from a list of ten

- Cappy Award for Southern Humor
- Microcosm Award
- The Hal Bernard Memorial Award for Novel
- The Vega Award for Speculative Short Fiction
- Crime Fiction Contest
- Herbert Shippey Award for Excellence in Southern Poetry
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**Title of entry \***

**This is my only entry to this contest category** [\* agree \_\_\_]

I have read the contest description [see website under contests] and:

- **my entry is formatted appropriately** [\* agree \_\_\_]
- **my entry meets the word count criteria** [\* agree \_\_\_]
- **my name doesn't appear in the header, byline, filename, or anywhere else** [\* agree \_\_\_]
- **This has not been previously published in any form, including blogs** [\* agree \_\_\_]
- **I have not [nor plan to] submitted/submit this same manuscript to a different SWA-sponsored contest** [\* agree \_\_\_]

**My SWA membership is current** [\* agree \_\_\_]

**I have not used A.I. to generate any of this content** [\* agree \_\_\_]

**I plan to be at the award ceremony** [\* yes \_\_\_, no \_\_\_] only people in attendance will receive a printed certificate. All other award certificates will be emailed as pdfs unless the applicant is willing to cover shipping costs. If applicable, shipping details will be worked out via email.

**Attached file** [\* yes \_\_\_, no \_\_\_]

**Subject line contains contest category** [\* yes \_\_\_, no \_\_\_]