

# C.W.A.G. Rules and Guidelines

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Central Washington Authors Guild functions as an umbrella organization for member writer's groups and hopes to provide exposure, education and networking for authors at any stage in their careers. In order to function smoothly and to provide the best support for all members, it is necessary to have a few rules and guidelines in place as outlined below.

## 1. Organization

A. CWAG membership exists on two levels, with individual or chapter distinctions. An author may join as an individual or may become a member by procuring membership to one of the official CWAG chapter groups.

1. Requirements for individual membership are simple. The individual must express an interest in improving their craft and eventually publishing their writing. Member benefits include a listing in the CWAG directory, invitations to CWAG open events, and the opportunity to submit to promotions and anthologies. Individual members are required to support the CWAG group through either their actions or donations. Support can include but is not limited to: promoting CWAG events and authors, organizing events to which CWAG membership is invited, and/or donation of cash. All members are expected to read, and follow CWAG guidelines and rules of conduct. Participation at CWAG events and communicating, maintaining a presence on the email loop, submitting to anthologies and supporting CWAG efforts overall, will all be considered actively supporting your membership.

2. Requirements for chapter membership include reading and following the CWAG rules and guidelines, supporting CWAG as per the individual membership rules above, and in addition, chapter must have a minimum of 4 members and show regular meeting activity. Chapters will be listed on a directory page, and may provide promotional logo and links as part of member benefits.

3. Applications for both individual and chapter memberships can be found on the official CWAG website at: <http://www.cwaguild.weebly.com>

B. The CWAG community is multi-faceted. We maintain an online, open writer's group, various individual chapters, annual anthologies and both a business and a promotional website. We also host events throughout the year where our authors are able to sell and promote their work, including an annual storefront at Radcon.

1. Any active member of CWAG is encouraged to join the email group. The majority of our news and vital information is shared on this loop. Members should be participating on this as much as possible, and if there are questions or if information is requested, a timely response is appreciated. Consistently ignoring the email group can negatively affect your status as an active CWAG member.

The CWAG business website is open to all members and will showcase our member directory, chapters and events. If you have information you would like posted here, it is your responsibility to provide it to the moderators for posting. If you see an error in any of the information, we appreciate having it pointed out in a timely and polite manner for correction.

The CWAG promotional website functions as our online sales generator and promotional tool. In order to maintain a professional appearance, showcasing on this page is not a guarantee of membership. All members with published works may apply for inclusion, but that is at the discretion of the organizers. Application to feature your work on this page can be found on the CWAG business page and includes images of book cover and writing sample.

2. Individual chapters function as autonomous organizations aside from their requirement to follow CWAG guidelines and support. This means, meeting structures, internal

organization, finances and rules are at the discretion of the member group except when they are functioning as a CWAG member or attending a CWAG event.

## 2. Code of Conduct

a. Though in person and business meetings can be more relaxed, it is still vital to maintain acceptable, respectful behavior at all times. Though common sense should dictate the appropriate way to treat and interact with fellow members, we have provided a non-exhaustive list of ground rules.

1. Absolutely no predatory behaviors. NO behaviors that could be construed as aggressive or harassing by other members.
2. No racist, sexist, or otherwise defamatory language or conversations. (unless in the context of discussing a written work, and then remember to remain respectful.)
3. Respect diverse opinions, philosophies, and life choices of other members at all times.
4. DO discuss divergent opinions respectfully and in a normal, conversational tone of voice. Do feel free to discuss and disagree WITH RESPECT the opinions or criticisms of other members.
5. Do not dominate conversations that require group participation or derail topics of relevance or discussion. Practice polite conversational etiquette.
6. Keep issues with other members out of public meetings. If issue persists, seek mediation as per Conflict Resolution below.
7. No SPAM. Please feel free to notify the online group of your releases, events and promotions, respectfully. Members are encouraged to share these things and to support one another's endeavors. That being said, the email loop is not a sales opportunity. Spam will not be tolerated.

b. CWAG also hosts and participates in a number of public events throughout the year. In these situations it is VITAL that all members obey the above codes of conduct as well as:

1. Do not badmouth the group or group members in public. Complain in private or seek out Conflict Resolution.
2. Maintain professional behavior at all times. This means, dress, speech, hygiene, word choice, and polite behavior are of the utmost importance.
3. NO hard-selling, gimmicky or aggressive dealings with potential fans or customers. Follow a friendly, investigative sales approach, the steps of which can be found on the CWAG website.
4. CWAG events promote ALL our authors simultaneously. There is no spotlight. Diva behavior, sniping, or competitive sales techniques will not be tolerated.
5. In public situations, defer to members' pen names/pseudonyms of choice. If you are unsure of an individual's pen name, ask how they would prefer to be addressed.

### c. warning system

1. Violation of the code of conduct may result in a verbal warning. If repeated verbal warnings are given and ignored, a written warning and/or a suspension from public events may be administered. Ignoring a written warning will result in suspension from public events.
2. Suspension will remain in effect until the conflict has been fully resolved as detailed below.

## 3. Beta reading vs. Critique vs. Editing.

Members of CWAG often support one another by offering and trading beta reading, critique and editing. It is important to have a clear understanding of the differences between these and clear, open communication about expectations prior to entering into a critique situation. We recommend reading the Giving as Good as you Get document, available on the CWAG website.

Beta Reading: A beta reader is an early reader who provides feedback on story development, characters, tension, prose quality, story arc and some editorial feedback too. It is less formal than a

critique and does not include detailed line editing in most cases. Editing/Beta combinations can be arranged on an individual basis.

**Critique:** Critique is a formal feedback process that usually involves an organized, group setting. In critique situations manuscripts are read and commented on without author input, either one on one or in a round robin setting. Author is then allowed to ask questions/clarify and can take notes throughout.

**Editing:** There are multiple forms and levels of editing, from content editing to copy editing, line editing and proofreading. Editing is often purchased and while some group members are proficient at this process, free editing is not guaranteed. Editing can be included in the beta reading process, but should be clearly requested and agreed upon before entering into the arrangement.

a. Most often, anyone in need of beta readers or critique will request such on the online email loop. It is important at this stage to clearly state: genre, length, level of beta/editing requested and to reveal any objectionable or controversial content. Giving a clearly stated timeframe in which the manuscript needs to be returned is mandatory as is maintaining a willingness to beta read and critique for other group members as much as possible. If a member wishes a public critique session or circle, they can request one and the group will make an effort to arrange such.

b. Beta Reading/Critique rules and guidelines

1. A beta read is a private interaction and is not to be discussed with other group members outside of the reader/author pairing. Discussing a member's manuscript or beta feedback in public should be done only with the member's permission or as part of a formal requested critique session.

2. All feedback should be done respectfully and with a the positive goal of improving the work and supporting the member's growth.

3. Authors in CWAG are at many diverse stages in their careers, comparing one member's work to another's is counterproductive and unhelpful as well as potentially detrimental to the group synergy.

4. Members who request betas but refuse to provide them will likely find that the number of individuals willing to provide this valuable benefit will rapidly deplete.

5. Feedback should be honest but never mean-spirited. We maintain a iron-clad separation of the author from their work. This means, at all times, a beta reader or critiquer must focus on what is on the page and not criticize the person who wrote it.

6. If desired, CWAG provides an optional beta reader questionnaire form that can be found on the CWAG website.

**4. Communications**

a. The majority of communication between group members will take place on the email loop. Communications that require a direct response should be replied to in a timely fashion. While we prefer to reach decisions through consensus, if you do not respond, you will not be included in the vote. It is the responsibility of the individual member to ensure that you are receiving the messages/emails sent though the loop.

**5. Finances**

a. CWAG maintains a treasury, most of which comes from member donations combined with sales from CWAG anthologies and miscellaneous group projects. Donations can be made directly to CWAG via: Paypal or mail at the following addresses:

Paypal to:

or mail to:

b. All funds will be used to support production of anthologies, attendance at sales and promotional events, supplies and materials for CWAG functioning.

c. Chapters will maintain finances if they so choose, separate from CWAG monies. CWAG takes no responsibility for use or collection of individual group's finances or funding.

d. CWAG treasury balance and accounting will be posted bi-annually on the email loop.

**6. Events**

a. CWAG is interested in hosting and participating in many types of events. Examples include but are not limited to: author signings, readings, sales events, conventions, classes, and festivals.

b. If you or your chapter is interested in planning or suggesting an event, it should be brought up on the email list or through your chapter's in-person meetings. Group approval is required for any event to be declared an official CWAG outing. Please solidify details, dates, and willingness of participation BEFORE scheduling any CWAG events.

c. If you volunteer to organize an event, or if you seek CWAG funding and approval for an event, then participation should be open to CWAG membership. At the very least, in a curated situation, members should be invited to submit.

d. If you volunteer to organize an event, it is your responsibility to communicate your needs and details with the group, and to follow through on all tasks required to produce the event.

**7. CWAG produces Anthologies as a primary means of funding the organization. As such, it is important and highly encouraged for member to promote and support the books. This becomes even more significant if your story is included in this opportunity. All anthology authors will be expected to promote their anthology in some way.**

a. Submission invitation to the CWAG anthologies is considered a benefit of membership.

b. CWAG membership does not guarantee acceptance into any anthologies. Stories will be included based on merit and application of theme.

c. All anthology funds go to CWAG.

d. Submitting a story to a CWAG anthology counts as supporting the organization for membership requirements. Assisting with editing and production of the anthologies also counts as support of CWAG.

e. Anthology themes, guidelines and covers will be organized and revealed on the CWAG email loop. Guidelines and deadlines are not negotiable. Ignoring them will result in a rejection.

**8. Public Relations and media opportunities can greatly benefit the organization. However, some guidelines are required to ensure that experiences are positive.**

a. Do alert the group to any opportunities or ideas that may result in positive exposure.

b. Before submitting anything to any public media, obtain approval from the organization, if you plan to use the name, or refer to the group in any way.

c. Do not talk to the media in direct reference to CWAG without notification and approval of the organization.

d. If you wish to obtain swag or promotional materials for CWAG exposure, they can be requested on the email loop. We have official CWAG swag for member usage. Do not design or distribute materials that are not approved by CWAG but contain the name or information about the organization.

**9. Conflict Resolution: Though we strive to get along in all situations and believe that these guidelines will eliminate the majority of issues, in order to ensure group solvency, we provide the following steps for resolving any conflicts that may arise.**

a. The first step in successful conflict resolution is to avoid conflict in the first place. Following these guidelines and maintaining a positive, solution-focused outlook is the best recipe for peaceful coexistence among group members.

b. Direct communication: In the event that a problem arises, despite efforts to avoid it, the first step would be for the involved parties to attempt resolution one on one, directly, openly and without involving the other members of the group. This process should be focused on discovering a mutually beneficial resolution and NOT on placing blame or demanding repercussions.

c. In the event that members cannot resolve their differences, when all other options are exhausted and a good-faith effort has been made, the next step would be to seek mediation. This is not something to be undertaken often or lightly and we encourage the use of step one and two in most situations. Mediation can potentially result in the loss of membership, and should not be asked for unless the situation is severe or threatens to damage the group or create a hostile environment for one or more members.

c. Mediation. Once mediation has been requested on the email list or by emailing one of the following members:

nephys@gmail.com  
RooRooMEB@gmail.com  
sted1354@gmail.com

Mediation will be done in person and will be managed by at least two senior members who are also neutral parties in the dispute. Should mediation be requested in reference to one or more senior members, then two different mediators will be assigned. Mediation will be conducted in an orderly fashion, will allow all involved parties to state their position and will always focus on a solution rather than on blame or repercussions. Mediation requires respectful communication and interaction at all times. No exceptions will be made.

d. Results of Mediation. Mediation will continue as long as all parties are willing to focus on finding an amicable solution. If at any time a participant refuses to seek resolution, their membership may be forfeit. If both parties refuse to focus on a solution, both memberships may be forfeit.

**10. Leaving CWAG/termination of membership.**

a. Voluntary removal from membership. In the event that a individual no longer desires to be included in CWAG membership, notification should be made to a senior member of the group. If the member intends to completely leave the group, they will no longer automatically be invited to participate in CWAG events and anthologies. If they feel that you cannot remain a member, but would still like to be included in events you may request to be invited, and this will be decided on an individual basis.

b. Involuntary cessation of membership. Membership may be revoked for the following reasons:

1. refusal to obey code of conduct and refusal to heed official warnings
2. as a result of failed mediation
3. illegal, dangerous, or harmful behavior with or without warnings