

SouthWest Sage

May 2009

www.southwestwriters.com

2009 SouthWest Writers Annual Contest Last Chance to Shine

By *Kathleen Hessler, Contest Chair*

Polish up those manuscripts and submit them to the 2009 SouthWest Writers Annual Contest! The deadline for submissions is May 1. However, for an additional late fee of \$5.00 you may submit your materials up through a May 15 postmark.

So, if winter writer's block had you stuck, step into spring and shine up the pages of your favorite piece for a late entry and potential prize! You may submit as many entries as you want in as many categories. Each entry must be submitted separately.

Below is the list of numbered categories with the corresponding judges. For a complete set of contest rules and category specifications, see www.southwestwriters.com.

- 1. Mainstream or Literary Novel**, *Diana Finch*:
Diana Finch Literary Agency, New York NY
- 2. Mystery/Suspense/Thriller/Adventure Novel**
Robert Brown: Wylie-Merrick Literary Agency, Kokomo, IN
- 3. Romance Novel**, *Sharene Martin-Brown*:
Wylie-Merrick Literary Agency, Kokomo, IN
- 4. Science Fiction/Fantasy/Horror Novel**, *Brandi Bowles*:
Howard Morhaim Literary Agency, Inc. Brooklyn, NY
- 5. Historical/American Frontier/Western Novel**
Mike Harris: La Fontera Publishing, Cheyenne, WY

- 6. Middle Grade or Young Adult Novel**
Rachel Abrams: HarperCollins Publishers, New York, NY
- 7. Memoir Book**, *Patricia Moosbrugger*:
Patricia Moosbrugger Literary Agency, Albuquerque, NM
- 8. Memoir Article**, *Tim McKee*:
Managing Editor, The Sun Magazine, Chapel Hill, NC
- 9. Mainstream or Literary Short Story**
Phong Nguyen: Editor, Pleiades Magazine, Missouri
- 10. Middle Grade or Young Adult Short Story**
Jodi Keller, Senior Editor at Random House
- 11. Nonfiction Article or Essay**, *Ashley M. Biggers*:
Associate Editor, New Mexico Magazine, Santa Fe, NM
- 12. Nonfiction Book**, *Deborah Herman*:
The Jeff Herman Literary Agency, Stockbridge, MA
- 13. Children's Picture Book Fiction/Nonfiction**
Emily Lawrence: Associate Editor/Aladdin Books, Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, New York, NY
- 14. Screenplay**, *Christina Hamlett*:
Script Consultant: Pasadena, CA
- 15. Poetry**, *Ruth Moose: Poetry Editor,*
The Rambler Magazine, Chapel Hill, NC
- 16. Christian Novel**, *Mary Sue Seymour*:
The Seymour Agency, Canton, NY

The Story Teller Award, *Elizabeth Evans*:
Agent, Reece Halsey North Literary Agency, New York, NY

Save the Date! August 15 The Novel Conference

The SWW Novel Conference is scheduled for Saturday, August 15 at the CNM Workforce Training Center. Speakers at this conference will discuss writing and selling novels in all genres.

JO-ANNE POWER, a novelist with 17 novels to her credit, including *Bare Bones* published by St. Martin's Press, will be our keynoter. Jo-Anne has been a literary agent and is currently a publicist working with numerous authors and publishing houses.

MICHAEL MCGARRITY, well known New Mexican novelist,

will also speak. His dozen New Mexico- based mysteries/thrillers portray the two-generation family dynamics of Anglo ranchers with a son who is Apache. McGarrity writes what he knows well: he is the retired deputy sheriff of Santa Fe.

We have invited several editors and agents from New York City who will take pitches from the first 40 persons who sign up for the conference. Registration opens May 1. Register online, at meetings, or call the office at 505-265-9485, and look for the registration form in next month's *Sage*.

Sandra Toro, Conference Chair

Preparing for the SWW Future

President's Message



Surprising as it may seem, the board of directors is already preparing for the 2009 officer elections. And this letter is our official call for nominations for our officer positions: president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. Those taking over these positions will be elected at our Saturday meeting in October. The president and vice president positions require a year of board service.

Board member Gary Ness will head up the nominating committee as he did last year. If you're interested in running, see Gary. A number of candidates have already come forward with an interest to serve. Melody Groves has decided to run for president for 2009. I'm going to run for vice president, and Larry Greenly plans to run for secretary.

We've recently had a change in our treasurer position. Pat Bost had to step down due to increasing family obligations. Many thanks for all your hard work and your smiling face, Pat. Our bookselling chief, Harold Burnett, has stepped up as treasurer. Thanks, Harold.

Over the coming months we'll keep you posted on the candidates and we'll present their bios here in the Sage.

Rob Spiegel

IN THIS ISSUE

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | Annual Contest, Conference | Hessler, Toro |
| 3 | Contact to Contract in 6 Days | Keith Pyeatt |
| 4 | Interviewing | Bob Gassaway |
| 5 | Dressing for Success for Less | Sherri Burr |
| 6 | Meetings | |
| 7 | Workshops and Classes | |
| 8 | Imaginal Fiction | Betsy James |
| 8 | Annual Financial Report | |
| 9 | Successes, Contests and Announcements | |
| 10 | Opening Scenes That Work | Kirt Hickman |
| 11 | Annual Contest Entry Form | |
| 12 | Critique Groups | |

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Bart Cleveland
Ann Rhoades
Gayle Watson
Scott Jones
Kathy Coleman
Lynn Mitzelfelt
Francis Avoiss
Jim Thompson
Gregory Lay
Robert Fine

SouthWest Sage Advertising Rates

Worldwide Internet Circulation

The SWW website receives hundreds of thousands of page requests every month.

Business card size: \$16 1/8 page: \$24

1/4 page: \$36 1/3 page: \$45

1/2 page: \$75

15% discount for 3 mos.

20% discount for 6 mos.

Deadline: 1st of each month for the following month.

Payment due with camera-ready ad copy.

Annual Membership in SouthWest Writers

Individual: \$60 (\$100 for 2 years), Two people \$50 each,

Student over 18: \$40, Under 18: \$25

Requires proof of student status

Outside U. S.: \$65, Lifetime Membership: \$750

Download the Sage from www.southwestwriters.com

Join us first Saturday: 10 AM-Noon: Third Tuesday: 7-9 PM

New Life Presbyterian Church, 5540 Eubank NE,

Albuquerque, New Mexico



South West Sage

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Contact to Contract in Six Days

By Keith Pyeatt

I'm a patient man. Everyone knows patience is a virtue, so does that mean I'm a virtuous man too? No, that means I'm a novelist, patient because I have to be. The publishing industry operates at glacial speeds, even for well-established authors. For us no-namers trying to break in, it's even slower.

Allow me to illustrate. Two years ago, I queried a publisher with chapters of *Dark Knowledge*. I was happy they requested the full manuscript after *only* two months. Eight months later, I learned it was moving up the ladder of editors. Three months after that, an encouraging phone message told me my wait was almost over, and things looked promising. Two more months, and a form rejection arrived. Fifteen months of waiting for a form rejection, so I can start all over again. Is it any wonder I'm a patient man?

Now I'll share my latest experience as a beacon of hope for other virtuous--or at least patient--novelists. My deal with Lyrical Press, from submission to contract, took six days.

This is the kind of excitement novelists anticipate before we know any better. The longest delay was my decision to query. Lyrical Press is new-ish, and I'm as careful as I am patient. Their website (<http://www.lyricalpress.com>) impressed me. So did their book covers. I monitored availability and sales rankings at Amazon. Good. I poked around writer websites, heard good things. I googled the owners, found nothing alarming. I emailed them with questions about marketing, reviews, and such. Good, good, good. My final hesitation was because they publish electronically. Some novels go on to be printed on paper, but there's no guarantee.

I had to warm up to electronic publishing, mostly because I read printed books. Published authors told me they were pursuing eBook contracts for their novels in print because sales were there. I noticed the fanfare when new versions of electronic readers were introduced. I read that eBook sales were increasing and spreading beyond the erotic and romance genres. In the meantime, praise for Lyrical Press piled up on writers' boards, and I traded emails with some of their authors. By the time I queried, I was quite excited about the possibility. I couldn't wait to hear back. Turns out, I didn't have to.

I'll probably never experience such speed in the publishing industry again. Still, it's nice to know it's possible. Patience may be a virtue, but fast is fun.

Keith Pyeatt writes paranormal thrillers. *Struck* comes out in paperback this July. *Dark Knowledge* will debut as an eBook, date to be determined after the ink on the contract dries. Keith invites you to visit his website at <http://www.horrorwithheart.com> and come hear him speak about working with small presses at the regular Saturday SWW program on September 5, 2009.

In the spring I have counted
one hundred and thirty-six
different kinds of weather
inside of four and twenty hours.

Mark Twain

Photo by Ruth Friesen



Interviewing For Fact or Fiction

By Bob Gassaway

Writing for me begins with curiosity -- curiosity about the world around me. I wonder about the things I encounter: What's going on here? How did that happen? Why did that happen? What would happen if ...?

I seldom know everything I need to know to write a story -- whether fact or fiction -- and interviews usually fill in the blanks.

When I have a new idea for a story, I usually think about it for a few days, read a bit about the subject in newspapers, magazines, books and online, and think about how I can get more information.

Interviewing is my favorite form of research because it takes me inside the lives of real people.

Finding sources

Interviews are easy to arrange for two reasons: 1) Most people are flattered that a writer wants to interview them, and 2) Most people enjoy talking about themselves.

I like to pick out individuals and ask them directly for an interview. But if a person works in a large corporation or university, I may call a public information person for help in reaching a source.

Of course, to conduct an interview, you have to know what you want to learn. My preliminary reading is part of my preparation. It's called "backgrounding." That helps me identify the topics I want to include and even write specific questions.

I begin an interview with easy questions. For example, if I'm doing a personality profile, I can verify my background research, such as the person's education and work experience. That signals to the source that I've done my homework and I care about accuracy.

Sometimes I get broader access. When I was studying the work of crime scene investigators in the Albuquerque Police Department, I followed them to death scenes off and on for two years. I could observe the investigators as they worked, take notes on what they said to each other, get copies of their reports, and interview them after each investigation.

Face to face

Watching people go about their normal lives in their natural environments provides a level of understanding that is difficult to achieve in any other way and gives you a wonderful basis for asking good questions when you sit down for a final interview.

Sometimes you have to settle for a telephone interview, or even an interview conducted through e-mail messages, but strive for face-to-face interviews. A person's body language and facial expressions add depth to the words and tone of the conversation.

Toward the end of an interview, ask questions that the source is likely to find difficult to answer. Then, even if your source becomes angry and terminates the interview, you probably will have enough information for your story.

Active listening

One way to encourage a person to talk is to be an active listener. You can nod, say quietly "OK," or "uh-huh," to signal you understand, or even laugh in an appropriate place. Taking notes on the interview also signals that you are listening, but look up now and then to make eye contact and observe your subject.

Record the interview if you can. Ask for permission in a positive way, such as: "I'd like to record the interview to help me quote you accurately."

But assume your voice recorder will fail. Take notes as aggressively as if you were not recording. I like to use a digital recorder plus a tape recorder as a backup. And I carry extra batteries and tapes.

However, you need to pay close attention so you can ask probing questions to follow up on things your source fails to make clear. Remember that your source understands the information he or she gives you in some context, but the source may not provide you with the context that will help you understand. Ask for additional details that put the interview into perspective.

At the end of an interview, ask your source if you have left out any questions you should have asked. And make arrangements to telephone the source later in case you discover as you're writing that you don't understand something.

Bob Gassaway has been a news reporter and editor, a journalism professor and a sociologist. He has interviewed people ranging from astronauts and famous entertainers to murderers and thieves and drug dealers. Now he writes mystery novels.



*Confidence has a lot to do
with interviewing - that, and timing.*

Michael Parkinson

Minding Clothing Finances: Dressing for Success on Less

by Sherri Burr

Should writers care about clothes and how we look? After all, we spend most of our time alone in our home offices pounding out words on keyboards, where our public never sees us. But what about those times when we venture out to give speeches or book signings, how should we dress?

A couple of years ago, I attended a National Federation of Press Women Conference in Richmond, Virginia, which featured a surprising session on "Dressing for Success." Nordstrom's Jane Barber dazzled the audience with \$400 shoes, a \$700 handbag, and clothing ranging from a \$150 blouse to a \$1000 coat. The initially packed audience of journalists, advertisers, and freelancers started trickling out as she told the audience that they needed to wear pantyhose and makeup to be considered professional.



Where did they head? To Richmond's Goodwill. Sheila, an Alaska anchorwoman, was told about the Goodwill when she inquired about a place to buy less expensive clothing. Instead of a \$400 jacket from Nordstrom, she spent less than \$200 at the Goodwill and came away with several designer jackets, skirts, and shoes to be seen by her none-the-wiser audience.

After Sheila showed off her purchases, several press women, including me, hopped taxis to the Richmond Goodwill. Are there lessons to be learned from this experience? You bet. It's possible to pick up the clothes we need for our adventures with the public, including designer clothing, and not bust the budget. Here are several tips:

Tip 1: Be open to shopping locations.

You can find junk at Saks Fifth Avenue or gold at Goodwill or a consignment shop like Albuquerque's Ritzy Rags. You have to be willing to go there. Instead of the \$700 bag Ms. Nordstrom peddled, I bought a Tommy Hilfiger black leather purse in perfect condition for \$5.00 at the Goodwill. The reality is that no one will know what you paid for an item or where you bought it unless you tell them.

Tip 2: Browse the major sales at high-end stores.

All stores, even those at the top of the fashion heap, eventually put items on sale. While visiting Phoenix, I once bought a brand new Nieman Marcus \$600 ball gown for \$22. After a friend mentioned that she had paid the full price of \$1200 for a Chanel bag that lasted 10 years, I told her I bought two Gucci bags for 75% off, plus take an additional 10 percent off and they lasted 15 years. She responded, "Burr, you didn't buy those bags, you stole them." Not quite, but I loved that they lasted many seasons. Buying quality merchandise saves time in the long run, and if you can purchase during sales, all the better.

Tip 3: Go with a friend.

Browsing merchandise with friends increases the fun quotient. Julie Ann Grimm, a reporter from the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, and I split the cab fare for our Richmond shopping expedition. When I asked her to appraise the Size 2 brown leather skirt that I managed to squeeze into, she said, "It would bother me that it keeps folding up at the top." I didn't buy it. Going with a friend who is willing to give honest feedback can save you from purchasing something you later regret. As someone long ago said, "Even a bargain can cost you money."

Tip 4: Know that size doesn't matter.

You have to try things on. Designer merchandise tends to vary in dimensions. A colleague who normally wears a size twelve tried on a size eight dress that fit. As she happily paid for the purchase, she said, "I can't believe I can wear a size eight dress."

In one store, I was amazed to find that a size zero skirt fit me perfectly. I didn't buy it because I couldn't wrap my mind around the concept of size zero, but I did buy a roomy size 8 orange and green skirt. Why? After looking at myself in the mirror, I couldn't stop dancing, which brings me to the dance test...

Tip 5: If you try it on and start to move, buy it!

If while trying on a new pair of shoes or new dress your feet start grooving to the rhythm of the store music, immediately purchase that item. Julie Ann Grimm noticed that I couldn't stop dancing while wearing the orange and green mini skirt. I bought it. It helped that the price was \$14.00.

Tip 6: Shop with cash only!

This is the most important tip of all. Leave your credit cards at home when you go on a shopping expedition. Decide what you can afford to spend, and take only that amount in cash. You'll enjoy your purchases longer if a bill doesn't show up a month later. Nevertheless, some people prefer shopping with their reward-type credit cards. This is fine so long as you pay off your entire credit card bill monthly.

The goal is to buy great goods with cheap cash that make you look and feel fantastic when signing books or meeting with agents and editors. After all, do you want to disappoint fans? They remember when meeting a favorite author and she wears rags. They also remember when an author shows up dressed as the protagonist from his or her book. Better to dress in a memorable manner or as a professional in discount designer clothing.

Sherri Burr is a long-time member of SouthWest Writers and the author of 11 books. She is a tenured professor at the University of New Mexico where she teaches Entertainment Law. This column "Minding Finances for Writers" recently won first place in the New Mexico Press Women contest for advice columns.

Program Location: New Life Presbyterian Church, 5540 Eubank NE, Albuquerque

Saturday, May 2
10:00 a.m. to noon

Irene Blea

***The Secret:
Vision Boards for Writers, Not for Women Only***

There is a secret dialogue predominant among women. Irene Blea will reveal the secret, demonstrate it and extend it to writers. She will discuss the abstract and the visual elements of writing, how to use Vision Boards as a motivational tool, an outline for plotting your narrative and breaking through that thing that cannot let you start or complete the writing to a finished published product. Blea will present two examples of how the boards assist her in goal definition and in "flushing out" the story.

Dr. Irene I. Blea is an award-winning scholar, poet and public speaker with areas of specialization on the Santa Fe Trail. Irene has written well over 30 articles and 7 university classroom text books with an emphasis on women. Her first historical novel, *Suzanna*, will soon be released this Spring.



Tuesday, May 19
7 to 9 p.m.

Molly Evans

Ruthless Revisions Leading to a Sale

Molly Evans, medical romance author, offers a variety of techniques to take finished manuscripts from stale to sale!

- get ruthless about your own manuscript
- add emotion at the right time and in the right amount
- pacing--where good manuscripts go bad
- recognize when and where to revise
- hands-on tricks that sharpen your prose and build emotional content
- how your critique group/partner can help you identify problem areas
- how a good editor can get you to your first sale

Molly Evans writes medical romances for Harlequin Mills & Boon, London. As a nurse for over twenty-five years she has many experiences to draw from. Her fourth book, *The Greek Doctor's Proposal* will be out in hardback in April and paperback in July. Molly lives in Albuquerque with her family.

Saturday, June 6
10:00 a.m. to noon

Kirt Hickman

Everything You Need to Know about Scenes

We will discuss the most important building blocks of your short story, novel, or memoir: your scenes. You'll learn the essential elements of a scene; how to choose your viewpoint character; how to write opening paragraphs and closing hooks; and how to create drama by showing (rather than telling) your story, by rendering your setting and characters effectively, and by infusing your scene with that ever-important adrenaline pump called tension.

Kirt Hickman, author of the 2008 science-fiction conspiracy thriller *Worlds Asunder*, was a technical writer for fourteen years before branching into fiction. He teaches self-editing classes through SouthWest Writers. He has been a mentor in the SWW mentoring program, has spoken at several conferences, and contributes a monthly column titled "Revising Fiction" to the *SouthWest Sage*.



Tuesday, June 16
7 to 9 p.m.

Bob Gassaway, Ph.D.

Interviewing -- Gathering Information and Using it Well

Interviewing is a critical skill for most writers, whether we write fiction or non-fiction. Very few of us know all the facts we need for an article, short story or a book. We have to ask other people what they know, what they saw, what they heard, and what they think about what they know. How do you find the right sources? How do you get them to tell you what they know? Interviewing is the answer.

Bob Gassaway became a television reporter at the age of 17 and worked more than 20 years as a writer and editor for newspapers, magazines and The Associated Press. After earning a Ph.D. in sociology, focusing on the symbolism of human communication, he began teaching journalism and conducting research as a sociologist. He is co-editor of the non-fiction book called *Dirty Work* published in 2007 and now is writing his second mystery novel.

SCREENPLAY CONFIDENTIAL**Rick Reichman****Saturday, May 23**

9:00 to 4:30, including a lunch break
 \$75 for members, \$95 for non-members.
 Workshop price includes lunch.
 Location: New Life Presbyterian Church, 5540 Eubank NE

Learn to structure and create screenplays and even improve your novels and short stories in this all-day workshop. The workshop will take you through:

1. Making the Scene—seven elements that each scene must have.
2. Character Counts—use the difference between literary and dramatic protagonist to develop characters and enhance your plot
3. Acting Out—the three-act structure
4. Opening Up—How to write dynamic opening scenes
5. Marketing—Learning and practicing the short pitch and finding and working with an agent.

Rick Reichman, who graduated with an MFA from the University of Southern California, has taught screenwriting for a number of years. His students have sold to Warner Brothers, Fox, HBO, Showtime, and all the major networks. Rick has won screenwriting awards and optioned two screenplays. His book *Formatting Your Screenplay* has sold over 13,000 copies and his second book, *20 Things You Must Know to Write A Great Screenplay*, was recently a finalist in the *ForeWord* magazine's best book of the year for writing instruction.

ADVANCED SCREENWRITING WORKSHOP**Rick Reichman****Eight weeks: June 11—July 30**

Thursday evenings 6:30-9:00 p.m.
 SouthWest Writers, 3721 Morris NE, Ste A
 \$160 members
 \$210 non-members includes a one-year SWW membership with online *SouthWest Sage*
 Class limited to 14 students

Now that you have the basics, Advanced Screenwriting is the way to put them into practice.

Rick Reichman's most successful screenwriting students have come from his rarely offered Advanced Screenwriting Workshop. If you have taken any of Rick's classes, have a screenplay you are working on, want to learn to hone, pitch, and market your script, this eight-week workshop is for you.

**IMAGINAL WRITING:****CHALLENGES IN FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION****Betsy James****Eight weeks: June 3, 10, 17, 24; July 1, 8, 15, 22**

Wednesday evenings 6:30-9:00 p.m.
 SouthWest Writers, 3721 Morris NE, Ste A
 \$150 members
 \$180 non-members includes a 6-month SWW membership with online *SouthWest Sage*
 Class limited to 10 students

Imaginal fiction—traditionally known as fantasy and science fiction—uses custom-designed cultures, earthly or otherwise, to illuminate the issues and visions of the world we live in. In weekly assignments we will experiment with the imaginal. Assignments will be appropriate to novel or short story, whether adult or juvenile. Clear and respectful peer critique will be taught and modeled.

Betsy James is the author of sixteen books for young adults and children. Her most recent fantasy title, *Listening at the Gate* (Atheneum 2006), is a James Tiptree Award Honor Book and a New York Public Library Best Book for the Teen Age. Visit her on the web at www.betsyjames.com.

TRAVELING THE HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS OF POETRY**Jeanne Shannon****Constance Hester****Saturday, June 20**

9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
 All prices include lunch
 \$59 register by May 1 (early bird special)
 \$69 register by May 31 \$75 register at door
 Non-members add \$10
 Location: New Life Presbyterian Church, 5540 Eubank NE

Whether you want to write poems or would simply like to be able to read poetry with more pleasure and deeper understanding, this workshop is for you. We will look at the work of well-known poets and less famous poets and try our hand at writing in various poetic forms. Writing prompts will help our imagination and stimulate the flow of creativity.

Jeanne Shannon has been writing poetry since childhood. She has published three full-length collections of her poetry and ten chapbooks. Her work has appeared in numerous small-press and university publications. She is currently the editor/publisher of The Wildflower Press, a small-press book publisher in Albuquerque.

Constance Hester has published many poems in poetry journals and anthologies and in 2004 published her first book, *Call Me Myriad*. She helped found Fresh Ink, New Mexico and has taught several all-day workshops.

Renaming the Retort: Imaginal Fiction

By Betsy James

The genre term "fantasy" has been corrupted by fairies (small and itchy, like gnats) and dragons (large and rapacious, like Humvees). And "science fiction": that's space-cowboy stuff, right? Escapist. It's not *reality*.

But reread Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. How do new paradigms arise? And new paradigms are what our beleaguered souls and planet so desperately need.

Pressured by colliding cultures and expanding scientific insights, we need fresh images, different ways of seeing. That takes the titration of deep thought, big dreams. One spacious retort in which that chemistry can happen is in what has traditionally been called fantasy and science fiction. But junk those tainted old names. Call this bold, inclusive genre *imaginal fiction*.

Imaginal fiction is a star nursery. After the collisions, expansions, and explosions of culture clash and scientific discovery, new metaphors arise from the hot plasma; fresh concepts sparkle and shine. Or it's anthropology: exploring unknown continents peopled by parts of ourselves we weren't aware of, learning languages whose generative grammars are vastly different than our own.

This innovative writing transcends those restrictive old labels. Imaginal fiction is not reality—yet not escape. It's a vehicle for revolutionary understanding.

Beginning June 3, **Betsy James** will facilitate an eight-week working course in imaginal fiction and peer critique. See more information on page 7.



SouthWest Writers offers a free writing class at Bear Canyon Senior Center every Monday from 2:00—3:15 p.m. Taught by Larry Greenly and Rob Spiegel, classes are free to members of any Albuquerque Senior Center. Membership is open to anyone over 50 and annual dues are \$13. Bear Canyon is two blocks north of Montgomery, one block east of Eubank.



The Ghost Amethyst
an Erotic Paranormal Romance
Hot Haunted Love:
A New Twist on the Love Triangle
Eternal Press
<http://www.eternalpress.ca/>
<http://www.sherryking-paranormalromance-books.com/>
ISBN-978-1-926647-81-4 (ebook)
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Statement of Financial Condition (Balance Sheet) December 31, 2008	
ASSETS	
Current Assets:	
NM Educators Federal Credit Union	\$ 9,421
AG Edwards	<u>50,875</u>
Total Current Assets	\$ 60,296
Property and Equipment:	
Furniture and Fixtures	\$ 9,673
Computers	5,434
Accumulated Depreciation	<u>(14,979)</u>
Total Property and Equipment	\$ 128
Total Assets	<u>\$ 60,424</u>
LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL	
Liabilities:	
Unearned/deferred rev. – other	\$ 1,963
Capital:	
R/E, Restrict, Scholarships	\$ 185
Unrestricted Retained Earnings	43,948
Current Year Funds Increase	<u>14,328</u>
Total Capital	\$ 58,461
Total Liabilities and Capital	<u>\$ 60,424</u>
<i>Keith Pyeatt, 2008 SWW Treasurer</i>	

Successes

Sally Severino's and her co-author, Nancy Morrison's book *Sacred Desire: Growing in Compassionate Living* was released in April by The Templeton Foundation Press.

Sarah Baker, writing as Sarah Storme, has a new romance out in paperback, *Carved In Stone*. Details can be found on her webpage, www.sarahstorme.com.

Lydia Parks' erotica novella, *Animal Instinct*, is part of the *Sexy Beast VI* anthology from Kensington, available in bookstores, and her story "Shadow Lover" is one of two April Nocturne Bites available at www.eharlequin.com. *Shadow Lover* will be in paperback as part of the anthology *Awakening the Beast* in October. Lydia's first novel with Kensington, *Addicted*, is a finalist in the Romantic Times' Reviewers' Choice Awards for 2009. For more information check out www.LydiaParks.com.

New Mexico Press Women has released the names of winners of its 2009 Communications Contest. Four members of SouthWest Writers won awards. **Sherri Burr** won first

place for Non-Fiction Instructional Book for *Sum & Substance on Entertainment Law*, first place for her *SouthWest Sage* column and second place for speeches for "Live Your Life in Search of Material" given to SouthWest Writers in October 2008. **Larry Greenly** won first place for editing the literary section of *albuquerqueARTS* magazine. **Peggy Herrington** placed third for her editorship of the *SouthWest Writers Sage* in 2008, and **Stephanie Hainsfurther** placed third as the editor of *albuquerqueARTS*.

At the recent Festival of the West in Phoenix, **Melody Groves** sold out of her books at the Western Writers of America booth. Her latest novel, *Border Ambush*, is scheduled for release the end of April. It is published by La Frontera Publishing Company. She is presenting a talk, "Living and Loving the Western" at the Ester Bone Library in Rio Rancho on May 14, 6:30pm.

Frank Carden, Las Cruces, held a book signing at Clear Light Book Gallery in Los Ranchos for his novel, *The Prostitutes of Post Office Street*.

Contests and Announcements

WOW! Women On Writing Spring 2009 Flash Fiction Contest, various sponsors. Guest judge: literary agent Wendy Sherman of Wendy Sherman Associates. Open prompt. 750 words max. Entry fee: \$10, or \$20 with critique. 15 Winners total. Awards: \$200, \$150, \$100 plus gift certificates and WOW! goodie bags. Deadline: May 31, 2009. Info: <http://wow-womenonwriting.com/contest.php>.

New Mexico Tech's Biology Department needs **detective-type short stories for crime scenes** that link characters, motive, and evidence for use in their new Virtual CSI: DNA course devoted to teaching high school students genetics in the context of crime scene investigation. The entire course will take place online. Full contest guidelines are available at <http://infohost.nmt.edu/~biology/CSIWeb/>. Prizes are \$100 first place, \$50 second place, and \$25 third place.

The Rebecca 2009, a writing contest for romance, will accept the first 30 entries in each of five categories. Enter the first five-thousand words of an unpublished romance novel-length manuscript. Entry deadline is May 30. For more information, visit www.ieranm.com/contest.html.

Websites for Contests

<http://www.firstwriter.com/competitions/>
<http://www.writers-editors.com/Writers/Contests/contests.htm>
<http://www.placesforwriters.com/contests/>

SWW Quarterly Writing Competition

The Best Hook

Both fiction and non-fiction books and articles use a "hook" in the first paragraph or so to draw in the reader. Write the opening page of an article or book, using your best hook. The best ones to grab the judges will win the prizes below. Wind up your imagination and let 'er rip. Double-spaced, one-page maximum. Postmark deadline: Tuesday, June 30. All entries \$10. Prizes: \$150/1st prize; \$50/2nd prize; \$25/3rd prize. Mail entries to SWW Quarterly Contest, 3721 Morris NE, Albuquerque, 87111.

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How to Write Scene Openings that Work

by Kirt Hickman

Scenes are the most important building blocks of your novel. Each scene must be a story in its own right, with a beginning, a middle, and an end. In this article, I'll focus on the beginning.

Every scene must open with a hook that will draw the reader into the scene. Consider this opening paragraph from a critique submission:

It was a filthy little joint, hidden among the shadows on the south side of Albuquerque. Jason wasn't quite sure what the attraction was to the scores of teenagers who chose the club as their hangout, but that didn't matter. The food there was good. Not the food on the menu, oh no, that stuff was horrid. The *other* food.



The author sets the scene in this paragraph, but all we get is setting. Notice how much more effectively the opening hooks the reader if she adds just three words.

It was a filthy little joint, hidden among the shadows on the south side of Albuquerque. Jason wasn't quite sure what the attraction was to the scores of teenagers who chose the club as their hangout, but that didn't matter. The food there was good. Not the food on the menu, oh no, that stuff was horrid. The other food. **The vampire food.**

Now she has put a vampire in a club full of teenagers. The reader will want to know what happens next.

The following examples are scene openings from my science-fiction novel *Worlds Asunder*, in which the hero, Chase Morgan, investigates the crash of the space ship *Phoenix*.

The transport came into the open and turned broadside to the geology team. Seconds later, all hell broke loose. Holes perforated the right side of the transport and a whirlwind of air rushed out. Sparks flew, equipment shattered, men screamed, and bullets ricocheted throughout the compartment.

This is the whizzing-bullet hook. Use it only if the remainder of the scene warrants the intensity you've given the hook. With it, you make a promise that the scene will be intense and edge-of-your-seat exciting. You must keep that promise.

Most of the time, your hook won't involve whizzing bullets, just something to tease the reader into having a go at the rest of the scene:

When Chase entered the conference room the following day, he felt tension in the air. Everyone was there—Snider, Brower, Forsythe, the techs, analysts, and administrators—all silent and brooding amid the sterile décor of aluminite paneling. The excitement of

the device discovery had worn off and everyone seemed to sense a change in the course of the investigation.

This hook is more subdued. No bullets, just our hero walking into a room. Notice how my description of the setting, and the people in it, foreshadows a turning point in the plot. The reader will want to know what it is.

Compelling dialogue can also make an effective hook:

"It was really embarrassing." Edward "Chase" Morgan drew the top card from the deck: the queen of diamonds. "We'd just returned from hitting a crack factory and warehouse in Cuba. This was back when President Montros thought he could stop the drug trade with air strikes."

The opening dialogue promises an embarrassing story about the hero. It hooks the reader in just four words. The rest of his dialogue reveals him to be an adventurous character. Here's another one:

"Sabotage? Are you sure?" Snider said when Chase reported later that day.

This line hooks the reader because it invalidates the underlying assumption that the characters have been working with: that the *Phoenix* crash was an accident. The reader will want to know what they'll do about it.

Use dialogue hooks carefully. Don't backtrack later to explain the context of the spoken line. In the example above, the dialogue tag provides all the context the reader needs. If you must do more than that to set up the context, do it before the dialogue.

Here's another kind of hook, one that introduces an interesting new character:

Major Bill Ryan tossed his duffel bag into the back seat of his cherry Calypso convertible and checked his watch. *Damn*. He pulled his tall, well-honed body into the driver's seat and turned the key even before he was fully settled behind the wheel. Tires chirped on the pavement as he pulled away from the curb. You'd think that sixteen years in the air force would've taught him punctuality.

As you can see, there are many ways to draw your reader into a scene. Don't make the hook disproportionate in intensity to the rest of the scene, but make sure every scene has some form of opening hook.

Kirt Hickman has Bachelor and Master degrees in Electrical Engineering from UNM. He has worked with high-energy laser optics, microelectronics, and other technologies relevant to science fiction, and leverages his knowledge and experience to enrich his stories. Worlds Asunder is his first novel.

2009 SouthWest Writers Annual Writing Contest Entry Form

Name: _____

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How did you hear of contest? _____

Entry Title _____

Circle Category Number: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

Circle appropriate entry fee:

May 1 deadline **SWW member/no critique** \$20

May 1 deadline **SWW member/with critique** \$45

May 15 late deadline **SWW member/no critique** \$25

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May 1 deadline **Non-Member/no critique** \$30

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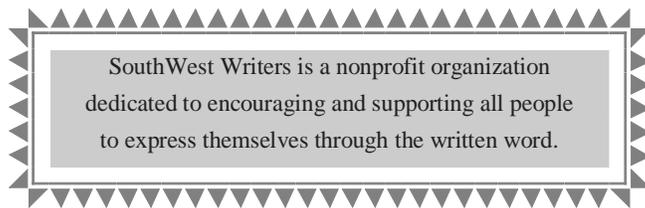
Signature _____

Mail completed entry form, entry and fee to: SouthWest Writers Contest 2009, 3721 Morris NE Ste A, Albuquerque, NM 87111-3611

Categories

1. **Mainstream or Literary Novel:** 1st 20 pages double-spaced + single-spaced synopsis, 2 pages maximum.
2. **Mystery/Suspense/Thriller/Adventure Novel:** 1st 20 pages double-spaced + single-spaced synopsis, 2 pages maximum.
3. **Romance Novel:** 1st 20 pages double-spaced + single-spaced synopsis, 2 pages maximum.
4. **Science Fiction/Fantasy/Horror Novel:** 1st 20 pages double-spaced + single-spaced synopsis, 2 pages maximum.
5. **Historical/American Frontier/Western Novel:** 1st 20 pages double-spaced + single-spaced synopsis, 2 pages maximum.
6. **Middle Grade or Young Adult Novel:** 1st 20 pages double-spaced + single-spaced synopsis, 2 pages maximum.
7. **Memoir Book:** 1st 20 pages double-spaced, no synopsis.

8. **Memoir Article:** 1,500 words maximum, double-spaced, with word count.
9. **Mainstream or Literary Short Story:** 5,000 words maximum, double-spaced, with word count.
10. **Middle Grade or Young Adult Short Story:** 1,500 words maximum, double-spaced, with word count.
11. **Nonfiction/Essay Article:** 1,500 words maximum, double-spaced, with word count.
12. **Nonfiction Book:** First up to 10 pages of book double-spaced + up to 10-page book proposal, double-spaced.
13. **Children's Picture Book Fiction/Nonfiction:** Entire manuscript, 5 double-spaced pages maximum.
14. **Screenplay:** 1st 20 pages + 1 page synopsis (using industry-standard formatting, Courier font, brad-bound).
15. **Poetry:** Any form, format, spacing or number of poems, 5 pages maximum.
16. **Christian Novel:** 1st 20 pages double-spaced + single-spaced synopsis, 2 pages maximum.



SouthWest Sage

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201 Highland Park Cir. SE
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Critique Groups

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