

The Storyteller's Anthology Lives!

By Peggy Herrington

2014 began with a bang at the January Saturday meeting when SWW members scooped up copies of *The Storyteller's Anthology* for \$10 flat. (Retail \$16.95.) By the end of the month 200 books had flown out the door! We ordered more and, if not there already, it will be available in stores soon. If you can't find it, ask!

The beautiful (if I do say so myself) 300+ page anthology contains text and photos contributed by almost four dozen SWW members, organized in seven categories: Welcome, Features, Short Stories, Memoirs, Book Excerpts, Essays & Nonfiction, and Poetry, each of which is introduced by a stunning southwestern photograph.

Sifting through 250-plus text submissions from over 150 members—about 150,000 words not counting poet-

Continued on Page 8

Tools of the Trade

The Pen is Mightier...

By Rose Marie Kern

For thousands of years human beings have sought a way to communicate that would pass knowledge from the writer to an audience not physically present. Whether it was by carving symbols on rocks or stabbing a wet clay tablet with a stick or painting pictures on a wall, humanity sought for ages to find some method of preserving thoughts.

Brushes, charcoal, chalk sticks...these primitive methods were useful but difficult to use. Dip pens and quill pens allowed more content on a smaller, thinner surface, but would frequently splotch and stain one's clothing. The first pen containing a reservoir was invented in the 10th century, but was perfected and patented as the fountain pen in 1827 by Petrache Poenaru.

Ball point, felt tipped, and rollerball pens joined the fraternity of writing implements since that time. In the last century the typewriter and computer keyboards have dominated the world of written communication, but they do not have the allure or romance of a pen.

At the January meeting of the SWW I asked the members present how many of them prefer to write their first drafts out in longhand using a pen. Almost a third raised their hands. I then asked to tell me why. Here, and scattered through the rest of the newsletter are their responses.

Writing for me is a sensory experience. I need to feel energy from strangers, from people in conversation, smell the dark roast brewing, burrow into the corner booth of my favorite restaurant, take out my spiral-bound writing notebook, pen to paper, sip of coffee, then words spill out like floodgates opening into unknown realms, story tells itself, and I disappear into the oblivion of the perfect moment.

Joanne Bodin

There they are, ordinary lined pages, waiting for the touch of their companion to transform them. We stare at each other and I am daunted by their nakedness and need. Then, as any powerful and benevolent god would, I pick up my pen to touch their nakedness and transform their world.

Jeannette Moore

President's Letter *by Lee Higbie*



The most momentous discussion among the Board of Directors is whether we should move our meetings to another location. One Board member has proposed meeting at First Unitarian Church. Before any move is made, we need input from many members on their preference. The advantages and liabilities of the venue switch are:

Advantages and Pluses

- More central location (Carlisle and Comanche)
- About a half mile from SWW office
- Somewhat better bus service
- Room orientation is better (speaker is at side, not end, of room)
- Facility large enough for conferences with several small rooms on the campus
- Setup for meetings looks easier (won't need to clear or redecorate tables)
- Parking is better, especially for those with difficult walking

Liabilities and Negatives

- Need a church member for key, otherwise \$75 charge
- Less convenient for some
- Air conditioning is not great (about like NLPC?)
- Storage adequacy not known but probably not an issue
- Chairs look less comfortable
- Probably 2 percent more expensive

On the first negative. Currently there are at least four people who are members of both organizations. Long term, SWW would have to identify others, and hopefully recruit more church members to SWW. That should be easy.

Those who attend the meetings should be the ones whose opinion matters, so I will be asking all of you who attend the meetings in February.

Lee

IN THIS ISSUE

- | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 The Storyteller's Anthology Lives | 6 SWW Meetings & Speakers | 15 SWW Meeting info |
| 1 Tools of the Trade | 7 February Classes & Workshops | 16 Announcements |
| 2 The President's Letter | 8 March Classes & Workshops | 17 Ask Rex |
| 3 A Note from the Incoming Editor | 9 SWW members networking | 18 Sound and Fury by Olive Balla |
| 3 Critique Groups | 10 Member Books | 19 Interview with RJ Mirabal |
| 3 Albuquerque Area Writing Groups | 11 This Odd Calling-Betsy James | 20 You can write for the Sage |
| 4 2014 SWW Board of Directors | 12 Get Noticed! By Robin Kalinich | 21 2014 Student Application |
| 5 This Month's Book Review
By A.R. AEBY | 13 Member Successes | |
| | 14 The 2014 SWW Writing Contest | |

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Download the *Sage* from www.southwestwriters.com

Join us first Saturday, 10 am-Noon and third Tuesday, 7-9 pm
New Life Presbyterian Church, 5540 Eubank NE,
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SouthWest Sage

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A Note from the Incoming Editor



Greetings fellow sophonsts!

When asked to become the next editor of the *Sage*,

I was a tad daunted. Editing the newsletter of any organiza-

tion can be a challenge. Editing the newsletter of a *WRITER's* association extends my poor talents into a rarified realm.

In my primary job I write analytical reports daily which must be formatted tightly and with great attention to detail. Yet, even there I know that not every single reader will automatically be checking the alignment of my columns nor the placement of my colons.

The next year shall be an adventure as we continue to bring you information relevant to the enhancement of your literary careers while offering new and exciting insights.

I will also be extending with each issue an opportunity to participate. This issue features answers to a question I asked at the meeting on January 4th—Who still prefers to write stories with a pen and why? A lot of you sent emails which I will publish—and hope to do more in the future!

Rose Marie Kern

Critique Groups Seeking Members

Fiction/Nonfiction

Wally Gordon, wallygordon@q.com or Chris Enke, enke@unm.edu
Erna Fergusson Library
Second Wed. each month, 4-6:00 pm
With interest, can change day & time

Mainstream Fiction

Online Critique Group
Christie Keele, ckeele10@hotmail.com

Sci-Fi

Send name and writing experience to:
Cosmic_Connections_SF_Critique_Group@yahoo.com

LOOKING FOR A CRITIQUE GROUP?

Email Rose Kern at swws-age@swcp.com with the following information and we'll publish your request: your name; email address and/or phone number; genre preference; geographic location (Belen, NW Heights, near UNM, etc.); preference for frequency/day of the week.

~ WRITING MARATHONS ~

Two SWW members host an 8-hour writing marathon on the last Sunday of every month, 2:00-10:00 pm, at alternating locations. Email ktvag@msn.com or ruffwag3@earthlink.net.

Albuquerque Area Writing Groups

The Albuquerque Croak & Dagger chapter of Sisters in Crime meets 4th Tuesday of the month, 7 pm, police briefing room at James Joseph Dwyer Memorial Substation. www.croak-and-dagger.com/

The Wordwrights: Don Morgan and Dennis Kastendiek moderate, all genres welcome. North Domingo Baca Multigenerational Center, Room 1, 2nd floor. Mondays, 1:30-3:30 pm. Contact Dennis: dwjkas@yahoo.com

Children's/MG/YA Writers: 3rd Saturday critique group meets monthly at Erna Fergusson Library, San Mateo and Comanche, 10:30 am-12:30 pm. Bring five copies of five pages, double-spaced, to share.

Duke City Screenwriters: Every other Thursday, 6-8 pm at UPublic Station on 3rd St: critique, education and fun. Contact Marc Calderwood at skatingkokopelli@hotmail.com.

SCBWI: Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators: 2nd Tuesday each month, 7-8:30 pm, Alamosa Books. Short workshops/discussions. Pre-schmooze dinner, Flying Star, Wyoming & Paseo, 5:30-6:45 pm. schmooze@scbwi-nm.org

Writers2Writers meets the 2nd Monday each month, 6:30-7:30 pm, Hastings Café, NE corner of Coors and Montano. Monthly speakers. All genres are welcome. Contact FAAiken@aol.com

MEET THE 2014 SWW BOARD OF DIRECTORS



2014 SWW Board of Directors

Back row, left to right: Rose Marie Kern, Kathy Kitts (past Pres), Peggy Herrington (Anthology mastermind), Theresa (Terry) Hicks, Andy Mayo (secretary), Dino Lebya (Treasurer), Lee Higbie. Front row: Larry Greenlee (Pres several times and has been a member for over two decades), Betty Higbie, Kathy Wagoner (past Sage editor), Sharon Serrano, Robyn Kalinich (VP).
Missing: Cynthia Boyd, Bob Kidera, Robyn Ruff-Wagner.

On the Craft of Writing By Lee Higbie

There's an old saw that the first page of a novel sells the book and the last page sells the next. I've read a number of Harlan Coben's books and loved the plot twists and interesting stories. Then about a year ago I read one that seemed to change the identity of the perp three times on the last page. I swore I'd never read another of his. Well I bought one recently and put it down about half way through the first chapter. Yuck, who would want to listen in on some idiots discussing religion? . And that seemed to be the way the characters viewed themselves, or at least each other. I'm sure many people like it, but why not start a thriller/mystery with something thrilling or mysterious? Maybe Coben can get away with it, but most of us can't.

So, my word of starting advice is to make sure you open with something that'll compel your readers to continue. Don't start with description or with drunks sitting in a bar arguing about nothing.

And my word of ending advice is to make it clear that you've tied up all the loose ends you started raveling earlier. If there was any threat, no matter how minor, to Aunt Mae, be sure you've explained what happened before "The End." Also, your best ending is the one that's inevitable and unexpected. A tall order, but it's the novelist's job. And when the memoirist can do that, so much the better for his sales.

One of my favorite endings was in the movie version of *The Firm*, I think. The mafiosi are swearing they're going to hunt down and kill, preferably slowly and painfully, the lawyer. He walks in and explains how he has just done them the biggest favor of their lives and as long as he's alive they'll be safe and protected. So he survives to be in the next novel.

Or, how 'bout the ending of "Loopers?" Time travel all over the place, but no hint that the protagonist will kill himself to stop his older self from killing another, until it happens. Well, as I recall there was one hint a few seconds before he turned his blaster on himself. Delightful.

The Word-Loss Diet by Rayne Hall

I am not afraid to admit that I am passionately and genuinely in love with words. I enjoy looking at them and admiring the beauty in their shape. I say them over and over again just hear them roll off my tongue like musical notes. I relish their various shades of meaning and stringing them together in my pursuit of perfectly conveying my ideas in a way I find pleasing - which admittedly is a more-or-less proposition as to degree of success. So understandably my writing tends toward the wordy, which brought about my interest in *The Word Loss Diet* by Rayne Hall.

Ms. Rayne Hall started *The Word-Loss Diet* as an online class, but eventually due to its popularity she turned it into a 70-page Kindle book where it has become a bestseller. Ms. Hall's practical, straightforward help for the self-editing process helps writers of many different levels tighten up their writing for maximum impact. Her suggestions tend to be easy to apply, with great step-by-step directions and clear examples.

This book is one of the most straightforward-writing books I have read in a long time. And the fact that it is an amazingly quick, but useful, read is great. Ms. Hall takes a lot of the guess work out of the editing process, and I am really excited to apply some of the techniques to my current and older projects. Of course, use only the suggestions you need. Apply the advice of the later chapters with discretion. For example, my current manuscript is a very introspective book, which considerably affects my writing style. Some of the recommendations to make everything quick and pithy, I feel, would really take away from the story.

Another thing to consider is the eBook format. This was the first writing book I have read on my iPad, so it took some getting used to. I ended up with a lot of paper notes for quick reference. If you are new to this format, like me, realize you may have to make some changes to your usual routine to accommodate it. The ending pages tended to be advertisements for her other books. Not really necessary, but you can easily ignore it if you want.

Ms. Hall had plenty of experience at editing both her own and others' works. She earned a degree in publishing management and a master's degree in creative writing. Her books, totally over 40, are published word wide in a variety of genres, using an assortment of pen names. She has also spent time as an editor for various projects during her long career. *Writing Fight Scenes*, and *Writing Scary Scenes* are her other bestselling books on writing and can be found on Kindle.



A.R. Aeby received a Bachelor of Arts in history almost solely from the love of stories, even nonfiction ones. She is the author of the book review blog Whymy Likes Books, where her goal is simply to share her passion for books. But she is a book author with the eternal hope of becoming a published book author. She lives in the deserts of New Mexico with her two young daughters and her husband of ten years. Visit her blog at <http://whymylikesbooks.blogspot.com>.

Self-editing can be a painful process. The love, time and care you devote to a project can make it heartbreaking to acknowledge the flaws, both small and large. But as I have gained experience writing, I learned nothing is too precious to cut if it isn't working. I love my words, but as a writer having a real impact and getting my story across is more important. *The Word-Loss Diet* helps with a quick clean up and makes suggestions for more depth changes, leaving a leaner, meaner project behind.

NEXT MONTH'S TOOLS OF THE TRADE CHALLENGE!

This month we asked our members if they preferred to write their manuscripts first in pen and why. Next month's Tools of the Trade column will feature Libraries. How many of you reading this newsletter still use libraries instead of finding everything out through the internet? What do you feel is the greatest advantage of a library?

Tell me how you feel. One sentence to one paragraph of 250 words or less by Feb. 15th. Send it to swws-age@swcp.com

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Guest Speakers and Topics at SWW Meetings

Members are free, Guests \$10

Saturday, February 1
10:00 am to noon

An Overview of Kindle Publishing

Vikki Kestell

This overview covers three major topics: 1) Why ePublish; 2) The Mechanics of ePublishing; and 3) Marketing in the ePublishing World. Using her own ePublishing experience with three novels and several studies over the past two years, she will explore available ePublishing options, her decision to publish exclusively on Kindle, and the results of her publishing efforts. There will be time for questions and discussion about this timely topic.

Vikki Kestell has more than 20 years of career experience as a writing, instructional design, and communications professional in government, academia, semiconductor manufacturing, health care, and nonprofit organizations. She holds a PhD in Organizational Learning and Instructional Technologies. Vikki is an accomplished speaker and teacher and belongs to Tramway Community Church in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where she teaches an evening Bible study for working women. Vikki and her husband Conrad Smith make their home in Albuquerque.



Tuesday, February 18
7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

How Books Live On

Judith Van Gieson

In spite of the emphasis on eBooks these days, print books live on in a way that eBooks don't. There is still that chance encounter with a book that leaps off the shelf and changes the life of the reader (who might also be a movie producer) and the author. Judith will talk about the ways these chance encounters have changed her life in recent years.

Judith Van Gieson is the author of 13 mystery novels set in New Mexico. Her first series (published by HarperCollins) featured Albuquerque lawyer/sleuth Neil Hamel. In the second series (paperback by Signet, hardcover by UNM Press), Claire Reynier is a librarian at UNM. Books in both series have been regional and IMBA (Independent Mystery Booksellers Association) bestsellers. *The Shadow of Venus* in the Reynier series was given the Zia Award from NM Press Women for the best work of fiction by a New Mexico woman. Judith runs the publishing company ABQ Press which helps writers self-publish their work. www.judithvangieson.com



Tuesday, March 18
7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Something Like Sherlock: A Fiction Workshop **Demetria Martinez**

After years of writing fiction, I am convinced that our characters will do anything in their power to hide who they really are from us. The result? Everything from writer's block to uninspired writing. During our time together we will act as detectives, coaxing our characters into revealing their true nature. We will experiment with different methods of accomplishing this. Bring pen and paper and be ready to write and have a good time.

Demetria Martinez is the author of two books of poetry, a collection of essays, and children's book co-authored with Rosalee Montoya. She has also written two prize-winning novels. The widely translated *Mother Tongue* won a Western States Book Award for fiction. Her most recent novel, *The Block Captain's Daughter*, won an International Latino Book Award for fiction, and an American Book Award. She works in Albuquerque and Santa Fe as a writing coach.

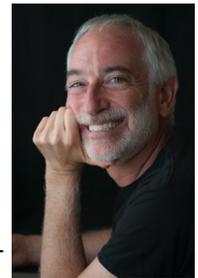


Saturday March 1st
10:00am-Noon

Writer's Block Unblocked: Surefire Ways to Free Up Your Creative Flow.

Mark David Gerson is the award-winning author/screenwriter and creator of the *O'ntana Trilogy* and author of two books for writers—*The Voice of the Muse: Answering the Call to Write* and *Writer's Block Unblocked: Seven Surefire Ways to Free Up Your Writing and Creative Flow*.

As a creativity catalyst and seminar leader, Mark has guided writers and non-writers alike to connect with their innate wisdom, open to their creative power and express themselves with ease. He is also a broadcaster, speaker and an accomplished artist and photographer. With his own memoir (*Acts of Surrender: A Writer's Memoir*) under his belt, Mark David is currently finishing up on a book on memoir writing. For more information go to www.markdavidgerson.com.



February Classes & Workshops

Classes and Workshops are held at the SWW Office, 3200 Carlisle Blvd NE, Albuquerque 87110, 505-830-6034

WRITE A MARKETABLE CHILDREN'S BOOK IN 7 WEEKS

A Half-Day Workshop
with Shirley Raye Redmond
and Jennifer McKerley

February 8

Saturday, 10:00 am - 12:30 pm

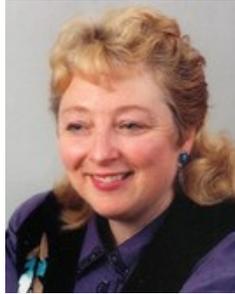
\$55 Members ! \$65 Osha Members

\$70 Non-members ! \$75 at the door

*The fee includes a copy of the 80-page
workbook required for the course.*

Using the method explained in their workbook, Shirley and Jennifer have sold dozens of children's books to major publishers. Covering everything from market analysis to plotting and building a story arc, this session is designed to jumpstart the participants' desire to write a kids' book. The authors will focus on the workshop's key word—marketable—and explain the importance of tying one's nonfiction topic or novel to the school curricula and/or current events.

Shirley Raye Redmond and **Jennifer McKerley** are award-winning authors of more than three dozen children books, many published by Random House and Simon & Schuster. Several of their titles have been translated into French and Spanish and a few have sold more than 200,000 copies each. Visit their websites at <http://jennifermckerley.com/> and <http://shirleyrayeredmond.com/>



WRITING GENRE FICTION AND GETTING PUBLISHED with Sarah Baker

4 Sessions: February 1, 8, 15, 22
Saturdays, 2:00 - 4:00 pm

\$160 members, \$200 non-members

You have a good start on your first novel, but are you on the right track? And what do you do after it's complete? With examples and discussion, this interactive class provides an overview of writing and publishing genre fiction. Bring your questions and we'll discuss them.

Topics include:

- Understanding Genre Fiction
- Submitting Your Work
- Editing to Sell After The Call
- Publicity

Sarah H. Baker, author of more than 20 published novels, grew up in New Orleans and has lived all over the country from Alaska to Georgia. She holds an MS in engineering and works full time, but also writes fiction under S. H. Baker, Sarah Storme, and Lydia Parks. Sarah's publishers range from Kensington and Harlequin to small presses, one of which she even worked for as an acquiring editor. Most recently, she has written award-winning full-cast audio books, and has self-published her backlist. Sarah teaches for Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UNM. More than anything else, she enjoys sharing her experience with other writers.

ALSO: Join Sarah on Saturday, January 25th from 1-4pm for a workshop on **GETTING AROUND BEGINNER'S BUMPS**. This special half day workshop will take place at the SWW main office conference room.

If you find yourself flailing about as you tackle your first book or writing project—here's an opportunity to pick the mind of a truly prolific author!

The Pen is Mightier...

I was taught in elementary school to write my drafts using pencil and paper. This habit is unbreakable. — **Michael Carlson**

SOUTHWEST WRITERS MONTHLY MEETINGS

are held at

New Life Presbyterian Church
5540 Eubank NE
Albuquerque, NM 87111

For more information,
call the SWW office at 505-265-9485.

To register for classes and workshops:
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March Classes & Workshops

Classes and Workshops are held at the SWW Office, 3200 Carlisle Blvd NE, Albuquerque 87110, 505-830-6034



SO! YOU WANT TO WRITE A BOOK!

with

Jacqueline Murray Loring



4 Sessions: Jan 4, 11, 18, 25 Saturdays, 1:00 - 4:00 pm

\$160 members, \$200 non-members

Do you have a story waiting to be written? What's stopping you from sharing that story with the world, your friends, your family? During this beginner course, attendees will see writing a book as a realistic goal and start the process of getting their story on paper. We will discuss tools to use immediately to get the first draft written and will set individual writing goals to keep students on-track to that completed draft. The class will also focus on story, characters, plot, point of view, beginnings, middles, chapter and story endings, and page stoppers. As time allows we can discuss agents, editors, query letters, book proposals, traditional publishing houses, supported self-publishing, and new technology such as Kindles and ePublishing. Join us and take the next step, or the first step, towards getting your story told.

Jacqueline M. Loring writes poetry, scripts and stage plays. She teaches writing and works as a book editor. She compiled, edited, published and contributed to *Summer Home Review Volume I* and *Volume II*. Her poetry is published in journals and anthologies including the *Scribner Anthology*, *From Both Sides Now*, *A Sense of Place: An Anthology of Cape Women Writers* and *Cadence of Hooves*. In 2012 she won the Doire Irish International Poetry Book Prize for her book *The History of Bearing Children*. *History* was the 2nd place winner of the New Mexico Press Women award for creative verse. She is the coordinator of the Eventide Arts Full Length Play-writing Competition, a past-president of the Cape Cod Chapter of the NLAPW and the past executive director of the Cape Cod Writers Center. She and her husband live in Albuquerque's South Valley.

The Pen is Mightier...

Writing in longhand puts the editor to sleep and lets me focus on the story that wants to be told. When I type, rather than handwrite a first draft, I'm always busy with the keys and the little errors I make on the keyboard. All this distracts me from the essence of the story. Even though I can touch-type, those errors inevitably show up and I always need to correct them -- *backspace, backspace, backspace, type, type, type, backspace....* Then there are the other elements of the editor which creep onto the scene when I'm typing a first draft. Elements which simply have no room when I'm writing in longhand. For example, when I'm writing with the keyboard, and I find I'm searching for a word, I can actually get stuck trying to figure out what word to use. The flow of writing is halted when that editor starts looking over my shoulder or into the thesaurus. While in longhand, though, the pencil just keeps on moving and I put in a placeholder word, knowing that I'll come back to it later when the pages get typed up and the editor is free to edit.

I believe that, for me, the physical action of connecting pencil with paper taps my creativity in a way that using the keyboard cannot. For a first draft, it is certainly my preferred method. Sometimes, the creative juices get flowing so much, that I barely have time to get my pencil and notebook out before the story is telling itself to me. That doesn't happen when I type. Typing is best for 2nd and further drafts.

Sheina MacCormic



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The Pen is Mightier...

Even back in the typewriter days, I have always written, whether prose or poetry, with a pen. I need to feel that flow from my vague thoughts directly from my brain down through my arm onto the paper. With the tactile experience of paper and pen I feel more connected to the process. I rarely know what I'm going to say until I write it, and composing on the computer makes that first draft look so "finished" that I hesitate to change anything.

A year or so ago, I saw a program on "Charlie Rose" on creativity. The five guests were brain scientists and researchers. They all agreed that at least the first draft should be done with paper and pen because the computer interferes with the tactile process that is essential to creativity. ———**Gayle Lauradunn**

SWW Members network during the break.

*Thanks to all who bring goodies to share at our meetings.
The board and the membership truly appreciate it.*

Get Your Manuscripts Ready!
**2014 SWW INTERNATIONAL
WRITING COMPETITION**

February 1 - May 15, 2014

For more information, see page 14

<http://www.swwcontest.com/>.

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ry and photographs—was a mammoth undertaking. Sadly, I soon realized we would be able to publish less than half of the prose and only a smattering of photos and poetry. We could have included more, but BIG books can seriously intimidate potential buyers. We pushed that boundary by aiming for fewer than 300 pages, a goal we slightly exceeded.

So, how did we determine what to publish? As I carefully studied each submission I disallowed those which were inappropriate—for example, not family-friendly or in need of major editing. Then, my editorial assistants, Patricia Woods and Jacqueline Loring, and I rated each one as #1-Looking Good, #2-Maybe with Help and #3-Sorry Charlie. After I retained works with ratings of #1 (with a few exceptions), we were still dealing with around 120,000 words. Another go-around reduced that by 20,000 words. Editing for size left us with around 90,000, which would have resulted in a 450-page tome. We still had 20,000 too many words. Lest I forget, our fine proofers—Betty Higbie, Rose Marie Kern, Rebecca Miller and Stella Pevsner—helped with the selection process by voicing their recommendations.

At that point I contacted those contributors whose works were between 2,000 and 4,000 words, with exception of those in the Welcome and Features categories. I explained that to stay in the running, each of them had to reduce their words about by about 50 percent. Several complained, a couple whined, but all except one managed to meet that requirement by the deadline. At last we had 70,000 words!

What's the moral of this story? We had an excess of good material, though not enough to publish a second volume. Realize that I was nearly exhausted and had agreed to edit only one book.

But here's my point: Authors of many of the works we disqualified early in the process could have dramatically increased their odds of being published by (1) getting opinions from a critique group, (2) having everything gone over by a skilled reader, (3) reading their material aloud, (4) grooming submissions by correcting spacing, phrasing, paragraphing and punctuation, (5) avoiding shot-gun submissions by concentrating instead on one or two carefully prepared pieces, and (6) if you're serious about getting published, paying to have your work professionally edited.

You've heard all this before—but it's time to listen up! These things pave the Road to Publication. The selection process described here fits the mold of publishing

today. Don't be discouraged if your submission wasn't chosen. You had major competition, so learn from it by writing those six items on the inside of your eyelids. Well, okay. How about on the cover or first page of your current notebook? You do keep one, right?

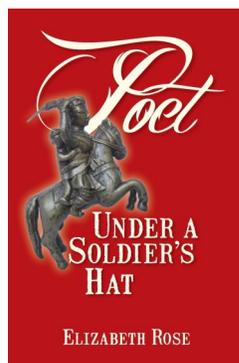
I'm busy promoting the anthology to mostly local media and bookstores, and to every contest I can find for which it qualifies. If you'd like to help publicize *The Storyteller's Anthology* ask for it by name in bookstores if you can't find it and suggest they order it from their distributor. Go to Amazon.com, find the book by name and post a "review." Just adding your opinion will work. (Amazon publicizes books that get lots of these reviews.) Show it to friends and family, perhaps even give a copy to anyone who shows interest. Attend our book signings at local bookstores and the formal book launch coming up in March. Come to meetings and watch SWW's website and Facebook page for details.

The Storyteller's Anthology, Presented by SouthWest Writers ISBN 978-1494406646

Peggy Herrington is a professional editor and proofreader who volunteered hundreds of hours to the creation of the *Storyteller's Anthology*.



Member Books



Few people are still alive who remember the British Empire. Hugh Rose served as a British Officer with the Gurkhas in India, and also with the Political and Foreign Service in the Hadramat, Iran and North West Frontier. Elizabeth Rose weaves the facts and details from her father's diary into a fascinating story of a time in history now fading to the past, including the tribal warlords in Waziristan and British society of the past century.



**THIS ODD CALLING:
CREATIVITY & THE WRITING LIFE**

ARTICLE AND ILLUSTRATION by *Betsy James*

A Watercolor Lesson for Writers

Fingers poised over the keyboard. The terror of that first stroke, of laying a speck of ink on a blank sheet of Staples copy paper...

Yeah, yeah. Now hold a #10 brush loaded with Alizarin Crimson poised over a sheet of Paris-made #400 Arches Cold Press, the Lamborghini of watercolor papers, so expensive that if you mess up you'll have to take out a second mortgage.

And?

Do it. *Do it!* Wreck it, be glorious, shriek and laugh and dance as you splash that Kolinsky down.

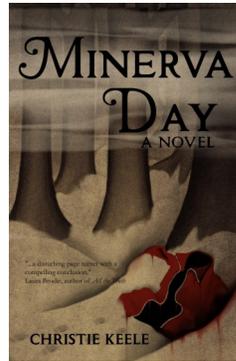
Because there's no such thing as terminal "you wrecked it." If an image doesn't work, flood that pricey paper with water and lift it off with a paper towel. Of course the paint will stain. Stains morph into gorgeous, subtle palimpsest and pentimento. The more you mess up, the better it gets. Your so-called errors lead and enrich you: even the pattern on the cheapo towel leaves a texture. It's a dare that can't fail. Roads that are unpredictable and uncontrollable are guaranteed to lead into new territory.

So I wonder: is "starting to write" the same? I mean, how can you go wrong? If you make a big mess, how rich and full of possibilities, of palimpsest and pentimento, of crappy roads that you don't have to take but that suggest other roads and ideas—whole mountains painted in and lifted away, faded to ghosts overlaid with mesas and trees and springs, a dozen lifts by metaphoric paper towels on totally indestructible metaphoric paper?

Ah: you realize the person I'm counseling here is myself.

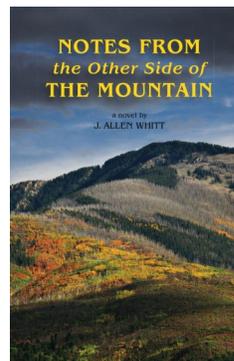
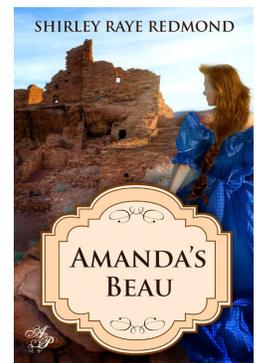
Betsy James is the author and illustrator of sixteen books for young adults and children. Visit her at www.betsyjames.com and www.listeningatthegate.com. Illustration above by Betsy James.

Member Books



When Minerva Day's grandson turns up missing at a Christmas carnival, her daughter accuses Minerva of his murder. Could she have done such a thing? Had she forgotten to take her medicine? The unnerving thought haunts Minerva, just like it did four years earlier when her husband died of a mysterious illness. A new love brings balance to Minerva's life, but her daughter still believes Minerva is guilty of this most horrendous of crimes.

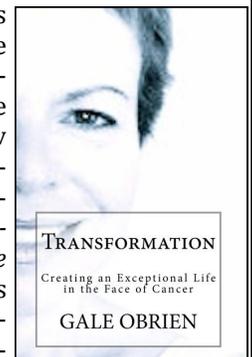
The year is 1905 in New Mexico Territory. While struggling to care for her ailing sister and her infant niece, spinster Amanda Dale falls in love with the local school teacher, a man intent on excavating the Anasazi ruins on the edge of town. The archeological project excites the cash-strapped farmers, but will it be enough to save Amanda's family from financial ruin? Available from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Astraea Press.



Gary Reed returns from war to his former hometown, hoping to reunite with his high school sweetheart Kristina Preston. They rekindle their relationship, fall in love, and begin to plan a future together. But he and Kristy discover that the toxic effects of war have invaded even the remote mountains of New Mexico—and threaten to change everything for them. Available at Amazon and BookBaby.



This much anticipated book explores the passion for living that lies inside each of us. Gale reveals how she conquered emotional repression and the fear of dying to emerge with a new attitude toward food, health and fitness, relationships, time management, work and spirituality. *Transformation: Creating an Exceptional Life in the Face of Cancer* is a no holds barred description of Gale's transformational journey to survival. At Amazon & CreateSpace.





Get Noticed!

Social Media Marketing for Writers

By Robin Kalinich

Knock, knock, knock. Knock! Knock! Knock!

Insistent pounding brings me running to answer the front door. It's a big-time New York publisher. She's heard about my fascinating collection of short stories and wants to do everything within her power to get them out to the public as soon as possible. This is exactly what I've been waiting for! I rush to grab the manuscript and then – I wake up.

This would never happen. Not in a million years. We can't wait around hoping someone will notice our work. Today's publishing markets require a more pro-active approach.

SouthWest Writers is in the business of helping you find success as a writer, and in my opinion, social media can play an enormous role in that success. This article is the first of an on-going column with the goal of teaching SWW members the basics of effectively using social media to promote their creative works.

Along the way, I will give advice on specific things you can do online to create an online platform, but the most important thing by far is that you get a grasp on the basic concepts. Things are always changing in the cyberworld. That old adage about the man and the fish applies in this situation, but I don't want to just teach you to fish; I want to teach you how to catch the biggest one in the lake and then sell it for top-dollar.

Let's skip ahead and pretend that you've just finished a novel or short story. You've done the very difficult work of bringing a new creation into the world, now what?

You need a way to share it with other people, but in order to do that effectively, you must have an idea of what you're trying to promote, why, and who your target audience is. This is basic marketing 101. Get a notebook or open a Word document and write

down the answers to these questions. Brainstorm. It's okay if you come up with multiple answers. Got it?

Now what makes you different from all of those other authors out there trying to promote themselves in cyberspace? If you don't know the answer to that question, you are not alone. Keep it in mind and try to come up with an answer as you begin to develop your platform. If you can find a way to differentiate yourself, you're well on the way to success.

I hope that the thing you're trying to promote is also something you feel passionate about in your life and here's why – promoting things online is not easy and it's not quick. I hate to start off on what seems like a negative note, but I'd like to establish appropriate expectations. Effectively promoting yourself is going to be a boatload of work and there really isn't a magic formula, so it's a lot easier if you're peddling something that you love. That being said, I believe social media is a very powerful tool for those willing and able to make it work.

SouthWest Writers is working on building our platform and we would like to invite you along for the journey. Build with us! We now have pages on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Google+](#), and [LinkedIn](#) and we hope you connect with us there. You can begin to construct a network. Learn by watching and participating with us. We're planning several speaker presentations geared to help you with marketing and promotion and I will be teaching a course later this year titled *The Basics of Building a Social Media Platform*. Stay tuned for my next column in which I'll define the term 'platform' and explain why you need one at all.

***Robin Kalinich** works for the man, but her true passions lie in the creative realm. In her spare time she works to enable artists and writers to effectively promote their works using networking and social media. She writes both fiction & non-fiction and is currently the Vice President of SouthWest Writers. You can connect with her and explore her website [here](#).*

I write in pencil because even my most imagistic thought is abstract, and I feel a need to be physically and tangibly connected by hand, pencil, and paper to the real world outside of my mind. Also with pencils I run no chance of hitting the wrong key and losing all my hard work. - - - **Phyllis Hoge**

Member Successes

Jeanne Shannon has poems in the latest issues of Malpais Review and Adobe Walls, and has a poem scheduled to appear in Glint Literary Journal in Fayetteville, North Carolina.

Joanne Bodin's poem, "What Might Have Been," is published in the recent SouthWest Writer's The Storyteller's Anthology. Her blurb appears on the front pages of the newly published book, "Times They Were A'Changing: Women Remember the 60's and 70's. Two poems, "Inception," and "New Age: a Sestina," appear in Adobe Walls #5, An Anthology of New Mexico Poets. Joanne will join the faculty at UNM for the tenth annual UNM Writer's Conference on April 12, 2014, where she will lead a workshop on writing gay/lesbian fiction. She will appear at the Factory on 4th, and read her poetry for the launch of the Adobe Walls Anthology on March 29, 2014 (1-4pm)

Rose Marie Kern's article on Notices to Airmen has appeared in the Atlantic Flyer, Fly-Low Magazine, Plane and Pilot News, and is now posted to the Lockheed Martin website: www.afss.com

Irene Blea, author and NM Humanities Council scholar, will give the keynote address at the 35th Annual Latino Chamber of Commerce in Pueblo, Colorado on February 22nd. She will talk about key elements of being a southwest writer, more specifically a New Mexico-Colorado author of several books and articles. During her stay in Colorado she will discuss and sign novels from her trilogy. The first book is titled *Suzanna*, the second is *Poor People's Flowers*. Blea is a New Mexico native educated in Colorado. She received her Ph. D. from the University of Colorado-Boulder in 1980. For more information visit Dr. Blea at www.facebook.com/blea

I prefer using longhand when I write rather than press keys at the computer. Ink on paper gives me a greater sense of being "in touch" with my creative process. **Don DeNoon**

**Send your successes and announcements
to the SouthWest Sage Editor at
swwsage@swcp.com.**



*"Write Here. Write Now.
Make it Happen!"*

22nd Annual Pikes Peak
Writers Conference

April 25-27, M arriott Hotel

The conference will focus on writing in the moment not in some future that may never come, fearlessly submitting your work, revving up a career in the slumps, and busting through writer's block. New payment plan option! Go to <http://www.pikespeakwriters.com/ppwc/>.

My Perfect Pitch is a free resource for authors seeking traditional publishers who accept book submissions and proposals. The site contains a database of over 1000 book publishers. Each link leads directly to the publisher's submission guidelines page. www.myperfectpitch.com

Welcome New Southwest Writer's Members!

Stephen Dillon Leslie Seckler

Katherine Ashe Holly Bahn

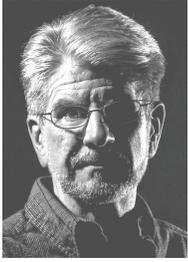
Jane Bardal Loretta Engelhardt

Lightspeed Magazine is accepting submissions to its all-woman SF issue (June 2014).

At Lightspeed, we think of science fiction as fiction that speculates on our future, where the basis of that speculation is science, not magic. This includes the social sciences, so dystopias are welcome, as are stories set in post-apocalyptic worlds. Steampunk is also welcome, as long as whatever is powering your cool stuff isn't magic.

Submissions will close at 11:59:59 p.m. Pacific on February 14, 2014. Submission Guidelines online at

www.lightspeedmagazine.com



Information from Writing Contest
Chairman

Andy Mayo

The 32nd annual writing contest is open for submissions at <http://swwcontest.com>.

Last year, New Mexican writers outdid those from beyond our state by winning 19 of the 36 prizes, or 53 percent. Only one of the eight entries from overseas was a winner—Kevin Dyer’s first place in the Mystery/Suspense/Thriller/Adventure Novel category.

This year’s contest adds categories for Women’s Fiction and Creative Nonfiction (merged with Memoir) and drops Historical/Western, Nonfiction Book, and Screenplay, the three categories with the fewest number of entries over the past several years.

Prizes for the 10 categories have been increased to \$300 for First, \$200 for Second and \$150 for Third, while the Storyteller Award has been dropped. This move was taken because some categories never won the award and because of the difficulty finding a judge willing to evaluate entries across genres.

The Mystery/Suspense/Thriller/Adventure category attracted the most entries (16%) followed by Children’s Picture Book (15%). Mainstream/Literary Novel, Mainstream/Literary Short Story, and Poetry each attracted 13% of all entries.

Entry fees this year remain the same as last year.

SWW MEMBERS: Place an ad for your book with cover art and blurb of 50-60 words. Only \$10 per month or \$25 for three months. Contact Rose Kern, Sage Editor, swwsage@swcp.com.

WOMEN VETERANS WRITING SALON hosted by Caroline A. LeBlanc, MFA, MS, RN, published writer and veteran, meets at Cherry Hills Library, 6-7:30 pm on the following Mondays: Feb. 20, 24; Mar. 10, 24; Apr. 7, 21. Free, open group. No writing experience necessary. For more, email Caroline at wildernessspalding@msn.com.



The SouthWest Writers International Writing Contest

opens for entries on February 1, 2014. The 2014 contest has 10 categories for novels, creative nonfiction/memoir, essay, short stories, children’s picture books, and poetry. Categories have been changed for 2014. Please read “Rules of the Contest” carefully.

A total of \$6,500 is awarded in cash prizes. Winners are selected by professional literary agents or editors unaffiliated with SouthWest Writers.

The contest is open to all original, unpublished work by English-language writers. First Place winning entries in prior SWW contests may not be resubmitted for judging in 2014. A First, Second, and Third Place winner will be judged in each of the 10 categories. Prizes: \$300 First Place. \$200 Second Place. \$150 Third Place.

Entries will be accepted only on-line between February 1, 2014 until May 15, 2014. There is no limit on: (1) the number of categories you enter, and (2) the number of entries you submit in each category below.

NOVELS:

- Mainstream/Literary Novel
- Mystery/Suspense/Thriller/Adventure Novel
- Juvenile/Young Adult
- Women’s Fiction

SHORT STORY:

- Science Fiction/Fantasy/Horror
- Mainstream/Literary

NONFICTION:

- Creative Nonfiction/Memoir
- Essay

OTHER:

- Children’s Picture Book
- Poetry.

Critique Service

All entrants may request a critique by a professional writer, agent, or editor who is unaffiliated with the contest judging. There is a small fee for this service.

Winners will be notified in August, 2014 by email. Winners’ names will be posted on the SWW website at or about the same time. For more information or to submit an entry go to: www.swwcontest.com



The SouthWest Writers membership meetings always have speakers with interesting and useful topics for all authors. Last January 4th, the speaker **Bill O'Hanlon** brought his extensive knowledge of the human psyche to bear on the personal poisons that can kill your writing dreams and ambitions. A Psycho-therapist turned author, Bill's perspectives made our members laugh and sometimes wince with their poignancy.

With 37 books to his credit, Bill has a lot to offer our membership. He will be giving online courses soon. For more information go to www.billohanlon.com

Kathy Kitts, Sharon Serrano and Dino Leyba man the book table during the SouthWest Writers meetings.

VOLUNTEERS are needed to help with greeting people at the door, bringing and setting up the snack table and especially with set up and take down.

Able bodied members are encouraged to either arrive an hour before the meetings or leave a little later to help set up and/or take down the tables and chairs. All are welcome!



WEST TEXAS WRITERS' ACADEMY

JUNE 9-13, 2014

HOSTED BY

New York Times and
USA Today Best Selling Author

Jodi THOMAS

&

WaterBrook/Random House Author

Timothy LEWIS



Choose one of these in-depth seminars and enjoy mini-sessions with all the instructors:

- *Crime Writers' Police Boot Camp: Experience It - Then Write It*, Lt. Matt Sherley
- *Screenwriting Tips for Authors*, Alexandra Sokoloff
- *Nuts and Bolts: Strengthening Your Story's Foundation*, Jennifer Archer
- *Deep Editing: Adding Power to Every Page*, Margie Lawson
- *World Building: A Guide to Developing a Series (for returning students)*, Jodi Thomas

WTWA, now in its seventh year, provides immersive courses that enrich writing skills toward publication in the commercial market. Stay on the beautiful campus in Canyon, Texas, (15 miles south of Amarillo) in well-appointed dorm suites with private rooms and bathrooms and enjoy the camaraderie of your peers. For more information or to register go to www.wtamu.edu/eod or call (806) 651-2037.

Announcements

SCBWI Workshops

FINDING THE ELUSIVE VOICE

Voice is one of the elements of writing most prized by editors and agents. What is voice? How do you recognize it and develop it? Chris Eboch will lead this half day workshop designed to refine and strengthen voice in writing.

Chris Eboch is the author of both middle-grade and adult (as Kris Bock) novels, including *The Well of Sacrifice*, *Rattled*, and *Whispers in the Dark*.

Saturday, February 1, 2014 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Fellowship Reformed Christian Church 4800 Indian School Rd. NE

NOVEL REVISION

Revision literally means "to see again." It is a key component to the writing process. But how does a writer begin? Using Editor Cheryl Klein's *SECOND SIGHT* and author Darcy Pattison's *NOVEL METAMORPHOSIS* as guides, Caroline Starr Rose will lead four sessions on the revision process. Participants will be expected to work extensively on their own manuscript as well as give thorough feedback on a partner's manuscript. Both books are included in the price of the class.

A minimum of ten participants is needed. Questions? Email Caroline Starr Rose at carolinestarr@yahoo.com

Caroline Starr Rose spent her childhood in the deserts of Saudi Arabia and New Mexico, camping at the Red Sea in one and eating red chile in the other. Caroline's the author of the ALA Notable book, *May B.* (2012), *Over in the Wetlands*, (2015), and *Blue Birds* (2015).

03/06/2014 - 03/27/2014 7:00 pm - 8:15 pm Heights Cumberland Presbyterian Church 8400 Academy NE - Albuquerque,

Registration, materials and costs for all SCBWI classes are available at www.scbwi.org. or contact ra@scbwi-nm.org

[More Ink](#) is a social media platform led by Robin Kalinich with a goal of helping creative people promote their works online. Visit [her website](#) to learn the details about [More Ink's Featured Program](#), find helpful [resources](#), and submit to become a Featured Writer (no cost) by submitting [this form](#).

The Pass in Review Magazine is seeking previously unpublished short fiction (1000-6000 words) by military veterans. <http://www.thepassinreview.com/>

OREGON COAST CHILDREN'S BOOK WRITERS WORKSHOP, SUMMER 2014

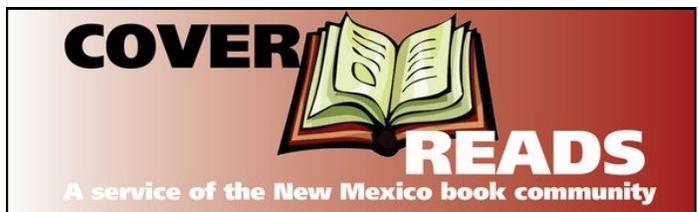
Next summer, **July 14-18**, we will proudly present the twelfth **Oregon Coast Children's Book Writers Workshop**, in the exquisite Oregon coast town of Oceanside.

The instructors for our next workshop are at the top of their game, with lots of books between them, many with prestigious awards. They include five authors (specializing in YA and MG novels, picture books, non-fiction, magazine pieces, and poetry), two children's book editors from major houses, and one children's book agent.

Summer Workshop 2014 promises - The instructor-student ratio will be a maximum of one to seven (probably less)

- Each day you will meet with an instructor for at least one comprehensive consultation
- One-on-one meetings with instructors each day possible
- Every student who wishes can have an anonymous first page manuscript critique by all eight instructors in front of the class
- We offer at least twelve instructional lectures on various aspects of writing and publishing
- There will be one or two evening presentations by instructors
- Out-of-class consultations with instructors are available
- There will be at least two guest lectures/writing workshops

More and more of our students are publishing and signing with agents. If you are ambitious to publish a children's book (or simply adore children's books) this is the workshop for you. It will allow you to connect directly with authors, editors, agents who are active in the children's book business More info at www.occbww.com



SUBMIT YOUR BOOK EVENTS

The New Mexico Book Co-op has launched a comprehensive book events calendar for book-related events in the Southwest to help readers find information about local book events throughout the region. The Book Events Calendar, called Cover•Reads, is available to everyone 24/7 on the web. Over 8,000 patrons are already using the service to find upcoming book talks, book signings, and book-related presentations. Readers are encouraged to sign up to receive regular updates of upcoming events. Libraries, book-stores, authors, and publishers are posting their upcoming book events as a way to encourage greater participation from the reading public. Go to <http://nmbookcoop.com/Cover-Reads/Cover-Reads.html> to list your upcoming book events.

ASK REX

Do you have problems with then and than? Do semi-colons wander through your paragraphs aimlessly? If you want some guidance on the craft of writing...Ask Rex!

Dear Rex, Please explain semicolons. What use are they other than for emoticons? —Semi-confused Writer

Dear Semi,

Your analysis is dead on if you're writing fiction. Semicolons in fiction are worse than adverbs. Just say "no"; dump them. But let me answer the more basic question: When would Miss Thistlebottom say to use semicolons. Well there are a few grammatically correct uses:

If you have a sentence with two complete clauses (ones that would be sentences by themselves) of equal weight that you want to run together, you separate the clauses with a semicolon. I won't even try to find an example, because "equal weight" probably means your scales are not sufficiently sensitive.

If you have a list of items and some of the items have commas in them, then you use semicolons to separate the items:

Confusing: I needed bacon and eggs, ham, Swiss and rye, and salsa, chips and nuts.

Better: I needed bacon and eggs; ham, Swiss and rye; and salsa, chips and nuts.

Dear Rex,

Why are you so down on adverbs? Verily and Truthfully Signed Writer

Dear VTSW,

Adverbs, like adjectives for that matter, are generally a sign of weak writing. The writer is telling, not showing the modification. Both are fine *for first drafts*, but you should eliminate them on the first rewrite. JK Rowling provides many examples of another possible reasonable use of adverbs—for young readers who need to be told what they're shown. Opening *The Sorcerer's Stone* at random I found "... said Harry groggily." For an adult audience it would be much stronger to say, "... Harry said. He rolled over and squinted at someone. Was that Wood?."

Rex I. Cographer, the Punctilious Writer

Rex On writing: In writing the proper choice of word is always important. Two words I've come across that do a wonderful job of describing and setting the scene are *Yats* and *Kerfuffle*. There is a district in New Orleans where, apparently, people would ask, "Where y' at?" That district became The Yats. I like the name because it is both unique and lends local color to the area just by its use.

"Kerfuffle," on the other hand, sounds so nice. Apparently it comes from Scots but now is the time to use it, before it becomes another hackneyed brouhaha fracas.

Send your questions for Rex to bjc@bjcreighton.com

If you are looking to work in a job field with books, the UNM Bookstore is currently seeking an Inventory Control Coordinator and a Business Manager. They are also seeking an administrator for Library Services. For more information go online to <https://unmjobs.unm.edu> and click on the STAFF box.

SOUTHWEST WRITERS CRITIQUE SERVICE

An experienced critiquer, picked from a panel of professional writers and editors, will be matched with your genre and will critique your manuscript for a reasonable price below the usual market rate.

The SWW Critique Service accepts all genres, including:

- Query letters
- Mainstream/literary fiction
- Synopses
- Genre fiction
- Articles
- Children's
- Essays
- Middle-grade
- Nonfiction books
- Young Adult
- Book proposals
- Screenplays/stageplays
- Short Stories
- Poetry

COST

- \$15 - Poetry of no more than 3 pages
- \$15 - Query letter of no more than 3 pages
- \$25 - Synopsis of up to 3 pages
 - additional pages are \$3.50/page
- \$35 - Minimum charge for up to 10 double-spaced manuscript pages
 - additional pages are \$3.50/page

SWW critiquers follow genre-specific guidelines. But feel free to include specific questions you want answered and any points you want the critique to focus on (such as point of view, plot structure, etc.). Go to SouthWestWriters.com for guidelines and information on submitting your manuscript to our critique service.

The affect of music on human emotions, feelings, and even physiology is a well-known and well-documented phenomenon. And while musical instruments have evolved over the millennia – archeologists recently discovered flutes made of bird bones and ivory that tested at over forty thousand years old – their *raison d’être* remains consistent: to create sounds and rhythms that alter the listeners’ mood or behavior. Powerful stuff is music. And as such, it can be a potent addition to the writer’s toolbox.

Without exception, every human culture has its own style, its own signature music. We use music in our worship, to get the blood pounding for battle, for exercise, and in ceremonies. We use majestic marches in parades and military exercises.

The power of music to change the listeners’ mood and mindset has been exploited by tyrants and their underlings. Pol Pot, for example, executed thousands of musicians simply because they were musicians.

Turn the decibel level up too high, and music becomes a means of torture. It can also be used as a means of defiance. Vedran Smailović, known as the cellist of Sarajevo, played his music in ruined buildings during the siege of Sarajevo, not only as an expression of peace, but of his unwillingness to give in to the ugliness of that time.

Research indicates our bodies actually undergo physiological changes in response to music. Ratchet up the music’s tempo from slow to fast, and the heart rate speeds up. Adrenalin infuses vital organs; our bodies prepare to either do battle or run for our lives. Slow the tempo to resting heartbeat tempo, and our brains slip into calm mode.

And the same dynamic holds true for animals other than those of the human variety. Cows give more milk than usual when classical instrumental music is piped into their bovine ears. And they stop giving milk when assaulted day in and day out with cacophonous sound pollution such as low flying jets or train whistles.

The study of how sound affects us has resulted in several high-paying vocations. Generators of movie soundtracks have learned to make music that mirrors the action on the screen; Madison Avenue pays big bucks to those who can grab their target market’s attention through use of music; Disc Jockeys achieve cult-following fame by producing signature tracks. “Elevator music” is designed to relax those in the dentist’s waiting room. Casinos long ago learned that when they spew frantic or pop music into their customers’ ears, the customers tend to spend more money faster. And most of us are all too familiar with the molasses-in-January tempo of musak geared to keep telephone callers from losing their cool while on hold.

Like blasting caps that set off dynamite, music can force the synapses in our brain to fire neurons in which are filed every experience of our lives. Experiences that can give our writing richness and depth. Music can pull the scabs off personal anguish and regret. Or it can sprinkle stardust on the most drab and hateful situations.



Olive Balla is a retired educator and professional musician who lives in Los Lunas, New Mexico with her husband Victor and their puppy HalfNote. Ms. Balla has authored one suspense novel entitled An Arm And A Leg, and is nearing completion on a second. The first chapter of An Arm And A Leg is posted on her website at www.omballa.com.

Lately, I’ve been incorporating music into my writing time. Here’s how it works:

1. Decide on a scene you want to write – a love scene, a hate scene, the murder scene.
2. Select music that matches the mood you’re aiming for. Take, for example, a car chase. You’ll need something fast and furious, probably not Barry Manilow. Or maybe you’re ready to write a scene in which the protagonist is confronted by her jealous rival. Plop in a CD of just about any Wagnerian opera, and the betrayal, revenge, and blood lust will flow like a newly roto-rootered drain. Working on a tormented love scene? No problem. Cue up the soundtrack from a movie of the love-story, chick-flick variety. With tears streaming down your cheeks, words of unrequited or doomed love will tumble over themselves in a rush to pour onto your page. Does your fictional heroine find herself in a tight spot requiring her to fight her way out? One of my personal favorites is “I Will Survive” by the Gloria Gaynor. Whatever your choices of tune and delivery system, you’ll find yourself effortlessly slipping into the desired mindset.
3. Then - either in front of your computer, seated at your desk with paper and pen at the ready, or with a digital recorder on record - listen to your selected tune. You’ll find words and images will bubble up from the depths of your creative brain. Type, write, or record it all. Don’t take the time to edit anything. At this point, every word, every thought, every image is potential gold.
4. Repeat step three as many times as you want.
5. Write your scene. If you require complete silence, turn off the music and review your notes. Thoughts will flow, and your internal Creative will be galvanized into motion. Or if you prefer, leave the music on. Experiment both ways to see what works best for you.
6. Take the elevator in your brain down to the basement, unlock your Editor’s cage, and set her free. Revise, redact, and polish.
7. Treat yourself to a good read. Having crafted your own tight, powerful scene, you’ll deserve it.

RJ Mirabal is a New Mexico native and former high school English teacher whose debut novel *The Tower of Il Serrohe* was published in 2012 by Black Rose Writing. The Tower was a finalist in the science fiction/fantasy category of the 2013 New Mexico/Arizona book awards. Visit RJ's website (<http://rjmirabal.blog.com/>) to read a synopsis and sample chapters of his novel, as well as postings of current events, a few "Don's Blogs" (his main character spouting off on many topics), links to interviews and reviews, and his own interviews of fellow authors.

Tell us about your debut novel.

Wrenched from a deteriorating lifestyle when his promiscuous wife kicks him out, anti-hero Don Vargas rents a dilapidated casita which, unknown to him, is actually a portal to another world. Vargas takes readers through a dusty portal on a Southwest contemporary fantasy quest into a larger-than-life alternate Rio Grande Valley where local clanspeople are at war with the Soreyes who terrorize them on a regular basis. The clanspeople need Don to save them from the wily Soreyes' mysterious Tower, but he only wants to drink his troubles away.

What do you hope readers will take away from *The Tower of Il Serrohe*?

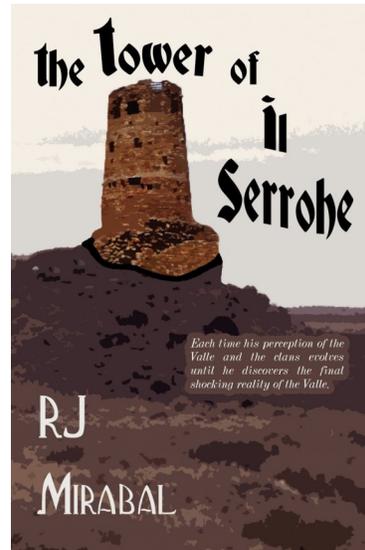
This book explores how perception governs our relationship with the universe. All of what we perceive to be reality is a function of our perception, which is informed by our normal senses and our emotional and philosophical states of being. And, as in most literature, I hope readers will see that evil is bad, kindness is good, and love is essential to life. But, honestly, my main focus is entertaining and enlightening my readers who can share in my imagination as they read the book.

What unique challenges did this work pose for you?

I had to put myself into the skin of a character who shares little with me in terms of values and lifestyle. And I wanted readers to appreciate the beauty and uniqueness of the New Mexico setting. We who live here find it second nature to enjoy our landscape and interesting lifestyles, but to capture it in a novel that isn't entirely realistic was a fascinating challenge. Finally, I wanted to take readers on a great adventure. Keeping it all interesting was a constant challenge, and only readers can judge whether I succeeded.

What was the most rewarding aspect of writing it?

To see my characters become a reality on the printed page, with their lives and unexpected problems taking place on the New Mexico landscape, has been the most rewarding for me. To talk with people about how these characters and their lives came alive for *them* is a writer's dream.



Tell us how *The Tower of Il Serrohe* came together.

The story idea was inspired by the old adage: "Write what you know." I knew New Mexico and I have enjoyed fantasy stories since childhood, so I combined the two and placed my fantasy in New Mexico instead of the typical Medieval European setting. The other spark that started the fire of my story was taking on the challenge of writing about someone with personal problems I didn't share. From initial idea and

a couple of short stories that gave birth to the much more complex novel, it took 30 years to complete this story. Of course, I wasn't working on it that whole time. I actually spent the last three years on the majority of the writing, editing, and getting it published by 2012. But the story ideas and my writing style improved over those years. I read continually, taking inspiration and tips from every author I read.

Are you a pantser or a planner?

I start out as a pantser once I have an idea that intrigues me. I usually write one or two chapters (not always the first chapters) off the cuff, usually in a torrent. Then I step back and start mulling and plotting in such detail I can copy my notes to the draft and flesh out additional details. Strangely enough, when I'm plotting, I'm still being a pantser because I seldom go back and make drastic plot changes unless I've discovered a logic gap or have a revelation that energizes the story.

Why do you write in the particular genre you've chosen?

I have always been more fascinated by stories beyond "reality." In junior high, I got hooked on science fiction and I still admire the icons of that genre: Isaac Asimov, Arthur C. Clark, Jack Williamson, Kurt Vonnegut, and dozens more. Then along came J. R. R. Tolkien and fantasy was added to my list, along with great mystery writers like Arthur Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie, and many new writers such as Henning Mankell (Kurt Wallander series). Two of my favorite writers are fellow New Mexicans: Tony Hillerman, the famous writer of Navajo detective mysteries, and Rudolfo Anaya, well-known author of the Hispanic experience. Both writers have evoked the New Mexico landscape, culture, and lifestyle. I have tried to bring together these diverse elements in my writing.

8. What has been the most challenging so far—writing or promoting?

(Continued on page 20)

At first, I thought writing was difficult. But now that I am learning and struggling to promote my book, I find the writing to be fun and the promoting to be drudgery. If I could afford it and found someone who could do a great job of it, I'd turn over the promotion to someone else. Maybe once I have a bestseller! Having to talk up my own work is not in character for me, in addition to the realization many contacts have to be made before one pans out. When I write, I can knock out as many pages, etc. as is needed to tell the story—much easier to me in comparison.

What are you working on now?

I am currently working on the final draft of the sequel to *The Tower of Il Serrohe* entitled *Extreme Dust Storms May Exist*. This story centers on Esther Jiron, a sixteen-year-old honor student, who is drawn into the alternate valley of the first book, the Valle Abajo. Once again the clanspeople of the Valle are under the cruel siege of the Soreyes who terrorize and dominate the Valle. Esther is called to the Valle to help the clanspeople fight off this continuing threat just as they had called Don Vargas. Of course, there will be many surprises as the story develops. It is my hope to conclude the saga in a third installment entitled *Zero Visibility Possible*.

KL Wagoner (writing as *Cate Macabe*) is the author of *This New Mountain*: a memoir of AJ Jackson, private investigator, reposessor, and grandmother. Cate blogs about writing memoir and living more and fearing less at www.ThisNewMountain.com/blog.

You Can Write for *SouthWest Sage*

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Payment is in bylines and clips. Deadline is the 15th of the month prior to the next issue. Article lengths from 300-1000 words. Submissions may be edited for accuracy, readability and length.

Please send all submissions as either standard text in an email or in a word document with Times New Roman or calibri font in 11pt. Size. Do not get fancy with any formatting or fonts—the more difficult it is for me to set it into the newsletter, the less likely I am to print it.

Send questions or submissions to Rose Kern, *SouthWest Sage* Editor, swwsage@swcp.com.

3rd Annual Apron Project

Last year a number of women poets & writers exhibited at the National Hispanic Cultural Center. It would be wonderful if we had more this year. These are aprons with messages: in words or visual images. Some are very artistic. Others are very simple. You can see pictures of last year's installation as well as more information on this year's installation on our ebsite: <http://www.womynswork.com/>. The Submission Form is also available online at: http://www.creativitycontinium.com/?page_id=1912.

Drop off at 123 A 9th St SW by February 12, 2014. This year's installation is going to be on the corner of 9th and Gold in the same empty lot we used in 2011, our first year. Opening Reception: March 7, 2014 6-7 PM. If you have any questions, please contact Ginger Quinn at 505 247-2537 or email her at gquinn411@gmail.com

Hope to see your apron waving in the wind.

Caroline LeBlanc, for Apron Installation & womyn's work

womyns work the Apron Project



2014 Installation Invitation
Installation site corner
9th and Gold
Albuquerque NM



Drop off Feb. 12th
123 A 9th St SW
Leave on porch with form.

opening reception March 7
4-6 PM

womynswork.com

STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

SouthWest Writers is seeking deserving high school and college students for one-year scholarship memberships in our organization. To be eligible, an applicant must be enrolled in high school or college. If you know someone with the interest and desire to pursue a writing career or if you wish to apply yourself, please print the application form on page 16 and mail it to our office at:

SouthWest Writers
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