

SouthWest Sage

April 2012 www.southwestwriters.com

A Year in the Life of a Storyteller Award Winner

by Chuck Greaves

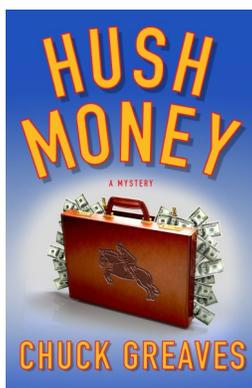
In September of 2010, I was honored to receive SWW's Storyteller Award, for my debut novel *Hush Money*. The year that followed was an exciting one, to say the least, and I thought that a brief recap might be of interest to the membership, and particularly to those who've ever considered entering the contest.

First, some background. After spending 25 years as a trial lawyer in Los Angeles, I moved to Santa Fe in 2006 to pursue a writing career. Working full-time, I banged out two novels over the next three years—*Hush Money*, a contemporary legal thriller, and *Hard Twisted*, a work of literary fiction set in the Depression-era Southwest.

By the end of 2009, I had what I thought were two pretty strong manuscripts. What I didn't have were an agent, a publisher, or a plan for acquiring either. Then I saw an advertisement in *The Writer* magazine for SWW's annual writing contest.

I submitted both manuscripts to the contest, then promptly forgot all about it, focusing instead on crafting the perfect agent query letter. Which proved less than perfect, since I began to accrete form rejections by the bushel. So you can imagine my surprise when, in late August of 2010, I received an e-mail from contest chair Andy Mayo advising me that *Hush Money* had been chosen as a top-three finalist in the Best Mystery Novel category. And my shock when, two days later, I received a second e-mail from Andy telling me that *Hard Twisted* was a Best Historical Novel finalist.

Fast-forward to the September 10, 2010 awards banquet where both novels took first place in their categories, and where *Hush Money* won the Storyteller Award. Feeling



validated, and with a newfound sense of purpose, I spent the next morning e-mailing those agents who still had one or both novels under submission, advising them of my good fortune. And then, some two weeks later, a remarkable thing happened.

I was at my desk putting another polish on *Hard Twisted* when the telephone rang. Antonella Iannarino from the David Black Agency in New York (Mitch Albom, Erik Larson) was calling to tell me how much she'd enjoyed *Hush Money* and how pleased she would be to have me as a client. And just as we were getting down to cases, an e-mail

popped up on my screen from veteran agent Bob Diforio, with the subject heading "Agency Contract Attached."

So yes, winning the Storyteller Award really does make a difference.

I was now faced with a difficult choice between youth and enthusiasm on the one hand and seniority and experience on the other. In the end, I settled on Antonella—a decision I've never regretted.

We decided to pitch *Hush Money* as the first book in a series, and so I set about drafting synopses for the next two installments. We soon sold *Hush Money* to St. Martin's Press/Minotaur Books in a two-book deal (for North American rights) that included a sequel.

Meanwhile, Antonella had the inspired idea of soliciting pre-submission blurbs on *Hard Twisted*, resulting in praise from Steinbeck Award winner Pinckney Benedict ("the perfect amalgam of Cormac McCarthy and Jim Thompson . . . Utterly irresistible") and from *Helter Skelter* author Vincent Bugliosi ("an exceptional true story, written in a superbly innovative way"). Heady stuff for a guy with a pile of still-fresh rejection letters littering his office.

We eventually sold world English rights to *Hard Twisted* to Bloomsbury. And when the sale was reported in the May 23, 2011 "Deals" column of *Publisher's Weekly*, we began fielding film inquiries from Hollywood. And so I welcomed a film rights sub-agent, Lucy Stille of Paradigm, to the team.

The months that followed were, for me anyway, a crash-course in Publishing 101. Working with St. Martin's editor

(Continued on page 10)



Enter Now
2012 SWW Writing Contest
 Deadline: May 1, 2012
for regular entry fees
 Extended Deadline: May 15, 2012
for late entry fees
 See pages 18-20 for more information



Y ep. It's spring. Today it snowed, rained, cleared up and then hailed. I am waiting for the dark of night so I can claim I'm a postman.

Spring is like that, a clash of two forces. Winter and summer. It works as a metaphor for dealing with the hardships of writing as well: a winter of rejection versus the summer of a sale.

In ancient times, the peak of starvation occurred during early spring before the newly plowed fields could produce and after the winter stores ran out. And this is precisely where new writers find themselves, right smack in the middle of early spring. They have written their pieces, and like seeds, they have planted them. Now, they wait for one to flower. Until then, how do they keep from succumbing to an emotional starvation, laying down their pens, unplugging their computers and quitting? They seek out their fellow writers and we all share our meager rations.

In *The Art of War for Writers*, James Scott Bell explains how to tell the difference between a hero and a fool. "A hero gets knocked down and quietly regroups to write again; a fool gets knocked down and whines about it ever after." Bell goes on and suggests that writers are like a pyramid. The base is huge and is made up of wannabes. The next level is smaller and is made up of people learning to be writers such as those who attend conferences and take classes. Farther up is the level of writers with a finished piece. This is the level where real writers start. Higher up still are those with multiple finished works and then finally, perched on the apex, is a Wheel of Fortune. It spins, and quite randomly, some author wins the prize of publication.

All the way up to published, a writer has control. After that, he or she does not. Speaking directly to the new writer Bell adds, "Your job is to keep moving up that pyramid. That's it. If you write, work your craft and keep submitting; some day, the wheel will land on your number."

If you are a new writer, or an old hand having run through a harsh winter, hang in there. Just as the tilt of the earth inevitably brings summer, honing your craft and sending out your pieces will eventually bring you to a sale.

Happy Writing!

Kathy

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 A Year in the Life of a Storyteller Award Winner Chuck Greaves
4 Annual Contest Judges Announced
4 Bête Noire: Pacing K. Kitts
5 On Finding a Reason to Join the Crowd Bentley McGrath
6 The Sum of the Parts: Writing a Synopsis Janice Hardy
7 SWW Meetings
8 April/May Classes
9 May Classes & Workshops
10 June Master Class with Joe Badal
10 Upcoming 2012 Workshops & Classes
11 Finding My Writer's Voice O.M. Balla
13 Student Scholarship Application
14 Member Successes
15 Announcements
16 An Interview with Katrina Guarascio, Poet Kathy Wagoner
17 Nomination Forms for 2013 SWW Board Officers
18 Annual Writing Contest Entry Form
19 Annual Writing Contest Call for Entries/Rules

The lines stack up,
broken thing by broken thing.
Before I know it, I have a poem.
This surprises me. And I wondered,
is that all it ever is, really.
A willingness to write
in fragments,
to struggle towards
the whole.
~ L.L. Barkat

SouthWest Sage Advertising Rates
Worldwide Internet Circulation

The SWW website receives thousands of page requests every month.

Business card size: \$20 1/4 page, vertical: \$40 1/3 page, horizontal: \$50
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 in .jpg format.

Annual Membership in SouthWest Writers

Individual: \$60 (\$55 if paid two months in advance)
Student: 18 and over, \$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 and third Tuesday, 7-9 PM
New Life Presbyterian Church, 5540 Eubank NE,
Albuquerque, New Mexico



SouthWest Sage

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flexible: day/time

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Donald DeNoon, abqpoet@gmail.com
preference: North Valley,
NW Albuquerque or other metro areas
late afternoon: Wed, Thurs or Fri

Screenwriting
Eric Schneider, ericapril46@yahoo.com
Meet in Pueblo, Colorado
or by phone/email
flexible except for Mondays

Welcome New SouthWest Writers Members

<i>Sue Boggio</i>	<i>George Lepisto</i>
<i>Mark Cosman</i>	<i>Carol Mengerink</i>
<i>Ann Daniel-Hartung</i>	<i>Adrienne McConnell</i>
<i>Crystal Davis</i>	<i>Bruce McConnell</i>
<i>Chris Enke</i>	<i>Liam McCurry</i>
<i>Janie Franz</i>	<i>Carolyn Handler Miller</i>
<i>Gilbert Gordon</i>	<i>Brian Montross</i>
<i>Todd Griffin</i>	<i>Kelly Ryan</i>
<i>Kathleen Johns</i>	<i>Cathy L. Wright</i>
<i>Carolyn Kuehn</i>	



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Annual Contest Judges Announced

Category 1

Mainstream/Literary Novel
Chelsea M. Gilmore, Literary Agent
Maria Carvainis Agency, Ins

Category 2

Mystery/Suspense/Thriller/Adventure Novel
Thomas Colgan, Executive Editor
Penguin Books

Category 3

Juvenile/Young Adult Novel
Katherine R. Harrison, Assistant Editor
Alfred A. Knopf Books for Young Readers

Category 4

Historical/Western Novel
Mike Harris, Publisher
LaFrontera Publishing

Category 5

Science Fiction/Fantasy/Horror Short Story
Michelle Vega, Editor
Berkley Publishing Group

Category 6

Mainstream/Literary Short Story
Sarah Marshall, Editor-in-Chief
Portland Review

Category 7

Nonfiction Book Proposal
Sheree Bykofsky, Literary Agent

Category 8

Memoir
Paul Rhetts
LPD Press-Rio Grande Books

Category 9

Nonfiction Essay/Article
Leigh Ann Henion, Editor
Cold Mountain Review

Category 10

Children's Fiction/Non Fiction Picture Book
Sara Sargent, Assistant Editor
Balzer + Bray, HarperCollins Children's Books

Category 11

Screenplay
Greg Gretmenian, General Manager
Abbot Entertainment

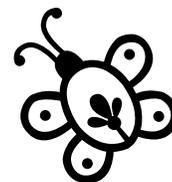
Category 12

Poetry
Lisa Lewis
Cimarron Review

Storyteller

Linn Prentis, Literary Agent

Bête Noire: Pacing by K. Kitts



Do your critique circle members consistently point out where your scene drags or where it whips along too fast? Are you having trouble gauging the pace of your work? Then you will find this month's *Bête Noire* quite useful.

In *The Writer's Little Helper* (©2006), James V. Smith states that bestsellers have a Reading Ease Index (REI) of no lower than 65 in any chapter. He describes how to obtain the REI for any piece of writing by using the readability tools that come with Microsoft Word. (It is very simple. Click the checkbox in preferences and any time you run spell check, Word will produce the report.) See below for a sample REI of the average thriller.

REI Guidelines

	REI Based on Bestseller
Words per sentence	15 max
Characters per word	4.5 max
Passive voice	< 5%
Flesch Reading Ease	80 minimum
Flesch-Kincaid Level	6 max
Pacing Composite*	> 65

*Pacing composite is calculated by subtracting Flesch-Kincaid Level from Flesch Reading Ease. The ideal example above: $80 - 6 = 74$.

Using this REI, you can determine the pace at which your reader will fly, or drag, through your piece. The guidelines are below. (These numbers are based on national bestsellers, not literary fiction. Your mileage may vary but having an entirely flat pace isn't optimal for any written work.)

Pacing Guidelines

Level of Pacing	REI Composite Score Range
Breakneck (red zone)	> 86
Thriller (orange zone)	80-85
Compelling (green zone)	74-79
Downshift/breather (blue zone)	65-73

You should run the REI on one scene at a time. If all your scenes have the same composite score, then you might consider varying the pace to raise and lower the tension. If the scene is the climax, and your pace is a downshift, then perhaps you should increase the pace.

How do you do that? By examining sentence length (words per sentence), verb tense (more passive = slowing the pace; less passive = speeding it up) and vocabulary (both characters per word and reading comprehension level). After you work your piece, run the REI again to see if you are heading in the right direction. Good luck!

I attended my first SouthWest Writers Saturday meeting a couple of months ago. By the time I got there, all the seats were taken, so I stood in a back corner of the room. I began meet-and-greet by circling the room, smiling at people and idling near interesting conversations. When I gathered the nerve, I bee-lined into the most densely populated part of the room with every intention of adding my perspective to some rousing debate. But by the time I made my way into the hub, my heart was racing, my palms were sweating and I felt as though my expression had gone wild-eyed and maniacal. In a panic, I beat a retreat to the food table, grabbed coffee and a cookie, and tucked myself back into the corner from whence I came.

Standing there terrified and praying that the crowd wouldn't turn on me like an angry mob of rabid zombies—have I mentioned that my anxiety is both wildly irrational and excessively creative?—I wondered why I seemed to be the only writer completely paralyzed by her own introverted nature. Goodness knows, I can't have been the only introvert in the room. And yet, if there were others, they were so graceful in maneuvering their way around that particular obstacle that no one was the wiser.

Dusting cookie crumbs from my shirt, I began to wonder what motivates introverted writers to behave so against the grain of their nature in situations such as this. Myself, I am hard-pressed to think of more than two things that I value enough artistically to push through the hyperventilation and flop sweat to discuss with complete strangers. Then I remembered a lovely encounter that my husband and I had on a recent weekend in Santa Fe.

We were having a quiet breakfast at Bishop's Lodge. The restaurant was empty, but for ourselves and a well-dressed older woman contently dining alone. At the end of our meal, as we rose from the table and moved to push in our seats, the woman politely motioned us over to her table. My husband and I were taken aback and a bit incredulous. She just wanted to thank us, she said, for our genteelness and consideration. She appreciated that we didn't talk on our cell phones during the meal or make her an unwilling participant in our conversation by talking too loudly. She told us it was refreshing to have a peaceful breakfast out and to be able to hear herself think. Or, more accurately, to have a peaceful breakfast out and to be able to concentrate on editing.

As it turned out, she had been editing the galley of her novel while dining. When I asked her about the progress of her



Though it has virtually nothing to do with this article, Bentley McGrath wonders if zombies can get rabies. Opine and give her a piece of your mind at www.BentleyMcGrath.com

editing, she smiled courteously and mildly cursed the "find and replace" function of her editor's word processing program. But when I asked her about her novel, she transformed from a quiet, unassuming diner to a passionate artist and enthusiastic salesperson. While she maintained her impeccable decorum in discussing her novel, her eyes lit up, her vocabulary became peppered with hyperbole and she leaned in so close to us that she nearly put her elbow in her eggs. The novel she was editing was the first in a series that married theology, spirituality and history. And while this combination isn't my usual fare, her exuberance made me want to run out and buy the first copy to hit the bookshelves.

Clutching my Styrofoam coffee cup to my chest and willing myself to breathe deeply, I thought about the impetus for her transformation from mild-mannered Lone Diner, valuing quiet and solitude, to enthralling Intense Writer, discussing theology with strangers. Quite simply, I had asked her about a piece of work that she believed in, that she had worked on for years and that she now wanted to share with others. Discussing and promoting her book were so important to her that there was nothing else she could have done in that moment but passionately broach taboo subjects with two random fellow-diners.

If this level of enthusiasm and passion for writing is at the heart of the conversation and buzz at our Saturday meetings, I am simply awestruck. Awestruck and humbled. Awestruck, humbled and determined to find that piece of work that will propel me into the throng with wild abandon, leaving my introversion in the corner with a cookie.

*The secret of it all
is to write in the gush,
the throb, the flood, of the moment—
to put things down without deliberation,
without worrying about their style,
without waiting for a fit time or place.
I always worked that way.
I took the first scrap of paper,
the first doorstep, the first desk,
and wrote, wrote, wrote....
By writing at the instant
the very heartbeat of life is caught.
~ Walt Whitman*

The Sum of the Parts: Writing a Synopsis *by Janice Hardy*

Aside from queries—and maybe electronic hotel card keys—few things are as frustrating as writing a synopsis. I've found that approaching it similarly to how I approach outlining my novel helps me narrow down what to include. This format works for genre and plot-heavy stories, though the same basic principles can apply to literary or purely character-driven fiction. You might need to be a bit looser in definitions, for example, "disaster" can be a literal disaster, or an emotional one.

A few "rules." A synopsis is written in third person present tense, even if the novel is not. The goal is to show an agent you know how to plot, and you have a story that does what a story should do. Grab a reader, build on conflicts and stakes, and resolve the story in a satisfying way. You want to show your story and make it active, but a certain amount of telling is going to happen due to the nature of synopses. Don't fret too much if it sounds that way. If it sounds boring, then worry, but as long as the story sounds like something someone would want to read, you're okay. You want that sense of building doom and escalating trouble, and you want someone to wonder what happens next. You can test it by reading it to someone paragraph by paragraph, stopping each time to ask if your listener feels compelled to know what happens next.

There are usually half a dozen or more major moments in your story. The set pieces. The stuff that makes up the turning points of the story. Those fall out something like this:

1. Opening Scene
2. Inciting Event
3. Act One Crisis
4. Act Two Revelation
5. Midpoint Reversal
6. Act Three Disaster
7. Climax
8. Wrap Up

Opening Scene:

In the book: The opening scene introduces the protagonist and the world and gives a taste of why this person is different or special enough to ask someone to read about them.

In the synopsis: Try to stick to a paragraph to cover this, summing up the key points someone needs to know to



Janice Hardy always wondered about the darker side of healing. For her fantasy trilogy The Healing Wars, she tapped into her own dark side to create a world where healing was dangerous, and those with the best intentions often made the worst choices. Her books include The Shifter, Blue Fire, and Darkfall from Balzer+Bray/Harper Collins. You can visit her at www.janicehardy.com or chat with her about writing on her blog, The Other Side of the Story at blog.janicehardy.com.

understand the character. The details that, without knowing, you couldn't understand the synopsis. Like if the protagonist happens to have a magical ability to shift pain.

The Inciting Event:

In the book: The inciting event is the trigger that sets the rest of the story in motion. It's usually the thing the query hook is based on, and what you'd find on the back of a cover jacket.

In the synopsis: Another paragraph that covers this event and why it matters. Motivation is very important in a synopsis, as that shows the story drive and why these things are important. So don't forget to tell "the why" as well as "the what and how" (this goes for the whole thing not just the beginning).

Act One Crisis:

In the book: This is when things go horribly wrong. Your protagonist has just discovered she has a big problem and needs to solve it or else. Typically, this is what happened when she tried to deal with whatever she encountered in the inciting event.

In the synopsis: One to two paragraphs on what happens and why it's important. Don't forget your stakes, since this will show how the story problems escalate. She had problem A, but now it's worse and she has to do B.

Act Two Revelation:

In the book: The protagonist has done some digging and found out things are not what they seem. A secret is revealed that makes it clear she's in a bit over her head, but she has no choice but to go on. Or else.

In the synopsis: Unless it's a complicated plot, you can usually get away with one paragraph here. Show how the protagonist is stuck between a rock and a hard place, and up the stakes yet again. Don't forget why she needs to do this.

Midpoint Reversal:

In the book: Not everyone does this, but I like to send the story sideways in the middle and give readers something they weren't expecting. The reader thinks they know where the story is going, but wait! Suddenly it all changes.

In the synopsis: One paragraph here that sums up the protagonist's world being turned upside down and forcing her to act in a way she swore she never would. Or thought she couldn't.

Act Three Disaster:

In the book: This is the race to the climax, so things are usually pretty bad by now. The protagonist has a big plan to save the day, and of course, she fails miserably. It was one of those all or nothing plans, so she's worse off now than she's been the entire story.

In the synopsis: One paragraph that shows the event and how the stakes have been raised yet again. A good spot to

(Continued on page 12)

Meetings

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

Saturday, April 7
10:00 a.m. to noon
Members free, guests \$5

The Top 10 Worst Mistakes a Writer Can Make

Shirley Raye Redmond



Using practical examples from the 1955 film classic *To Catch a Thief*, starring Cary Grant and Grace Kelly, Shirley Raye will reveal what successful writers *should* have in common with successful cat burglars—but too often don't.

An award-winning nonfiction writer and former columnist for *The Santa Fe New Mexican*, **Shirley Raye Redmond** has sold 27 books and over 450 articles to a variety of publications, including *Mountain Living*, *Woman's Day*, *Writer's Digest*, and *Cosmopolitan*. Two of her nonfiction book titles have sold more than 200,000 copies each. *Lewis and Clark: A Prairie Dog for the President* (Random House) was a Children's Book of the Month Club selection. *Pigeon Hero!* (Simon and Schuster) won an Oppenheim Toy Portfolio Gold Award. Her most recent title is *Fairies: A True Story* (Random House) about Arthur Conan Doyle and the Cottingley fairy photos. Visit her website at www.readshirleyraye.com.

Watch for e-lert updates or check southwestwriters.com for more details on upcoming speakers/topics.

Tuesday, April 17
7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Members free, guests \$5

Inspiration, Responsibility and Troublemaking

Stewart Warren



A discussion of the role of poetry, and of the poet, in society. Are poets guardians of truth and beauty, bell ringers of emerging consciousness, activists insisting on higher ideals, or children offering flowers to any passerby? Drawing upon the shared wisdom of the group, we'll read, rant, and inquire about the role of poetry in 2012.

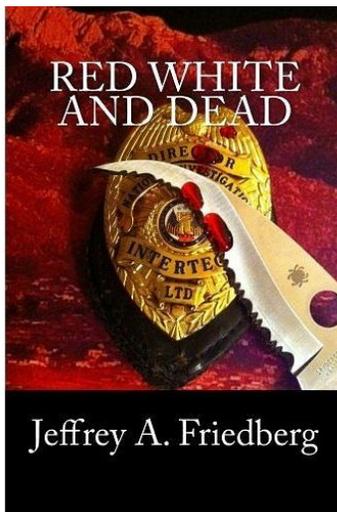
Stewart Warren, is author of ten poetry collections. His poetry is both personal and transpersonal with a mystic undercurrent. As publishing coach and organizer of community events, Stewart assists others in deepening their creative experience and realizing their artistic visions. He is founder of the Albuquerque Poet Laureate Program. Visit his website: www.heartlink.com.

 *
 * **Upcoming Speakers for May** *
 *
 * **Dave DeWitt, Sat., May 5, 10:00-noon, Topic TBA** *
 * **Robin Perini, Tue., May 15, 7-9:00 pm, Topic TBA** *
 *

New Mexico private eye Jack Vane had no choice. The Mob decreed either he take the case and succeed in finding the lost treasure of Spanish Conquistador Francisco Coronado, worth billions – and probably only a legend – or Jack dies.

The situation becomes worse when Jack discovers a mysterious international cabal also seeks the treasure with the goal to finance a vast conspiracy to steal New Mexico's energy riches. This scheme will wreak environmental havoc and destroy Indian sacred lands.

Suddenly suffering strange blackouts, Jack is accused of brutal murders. He must find the treasure and the killer – even if it turns out to be himself. The clock is counting down as powerful forces gather in a relentless death-race to destroy him. What path should Jack take?



The Exciting New Prequel To Lost Relic Of The Gods

"An updated, TODAY kind of private eye thriller...Riveting verisimilitude reminiscent of Thomas Harris, Michael Connelly, and Elmore Leonard...plot twists and surprises galore kept me delighted and reading onward!" – CJ Cole, WVES AM, 99.3

**Available on Amazon
 and Barnes & Noble**

April/May Classes

HOW TO WRITE FOR MAGAZINES: Or How You Can Bag Your First Magazine Assignment

By Melody Groves

April 2, 9, 16, 23

Mondays: 6 - 8:00 pm

\$160 members, \$200 non-members

Class limited to 14 students

In today's writing world, the opportunity to write for magazines is almost endless. With over 9,000 published yearly, in addition to online magazines, the world is your oyster. But, there are tricks to bagging an assignment.

Finding the right market, finding the right editor, finding out about the competition—all tricks of the trade. So if you've got a good idea but don't know where to go and how to start, look no more. This class is for you.

In four short weeks we'll cover finding your story, finding the market, tweaking the same idea for different magazines, photo requirements, and approaching an editor. And that's just for starters.

Melody Groves writes for *New Mexico Magazine*, *True West*, *American Cowboy*, *Enchantment*, *Chronicles* (on line), *Albuquerque the Magazine*, *abqARTS* and *Desert Exposure*.



CREATING PROFESSIONAL NEWSLETTERS

By Ruth Friesen

May 2, 9, 16, 23

Wednesdays: 6:30 - 8:30 pm

\$160 members, \$200 non-members

Class limited to 14 students

Use your newsletter to enhance the image of your organization or your business. Learn what makes an eye-catching publication that your audience will read. This class covers: purpose, audience and content; the four basic principles of design; using fonts for readability and contrast. We'll study various publications as examples, including your own newsletter. We'll talk about print versus electronic newsletters. Astonish yourself with the improvement in your newsletter after only four weeks.

Ruth Friesen began editing newsletters when cut and paste actually involved paper and scissors. For three years she edited *SouthWest Sage*, which won second place in the 2010 National Federation of Women Communications Contest. She edits *Wagon Tracks*, the journal of the Santa Fe Trail Association (having redesigned it), and also edits *Spanish Traces*, the journal of the Old Spanish Trail Association.



SYNOPSIS AND QUERIES

By Melody Groves

April 19, 26 and May 3, 10

Thursdays: 6:30 - 8:30 pm

\$160 members, \$200 non-members

Class limited to 14 students

Synopsis. Query. Those two little words can strike terror in even the seasoned writer's heart. So, what can we, the not-so-seasoned, do without hiring somebody else to write it for us? All is not lost. You can do this. Melody Groves explains, with tips and techniques, how you, too, can write them.

The first two sessions will be devoted to the synopsis. It's much easier to write a query when you really, truly understand what your story is about. Sessions three and four will cover writing that query. We'll talk format, voice and who exactly to send these to.

Melody is the author of two published non-fiction books and three fiction books—and has written lots and lots of queries.

Spring Cleaning for Classes and Workshops

Spring-cleaning came early this year. We've had to move around the furniture, as it were. The good news is that we have scheduled three workshops, are negotiating for a fourth, and three additional workshops are in the planning stages.

The three-hour workshops are attractively priced:

Workshop Pricing

\$40 SWW Members • \$50 Osher Members w/
Membership Card • \$70 Non-Members • \$75 At the Door

Rob Spiegel begins the workshop season with *The Magic Steps to Getting Your Nonfiction Book Published*, Saturday, May 5, 2-5:00 pm after the Saturday SWW meeting. **Kirt Hickman** presents *Promoting and Marketing Your Self-Published Book*, Saturday, June 16, 9:00-noon. **Betsy James** teaches *Creative Fiction Writing for Teachers*, Saturday, July 14, 9:00 am-1:00pm. **Lisa Hase-Jackson** is scheduled Saturday, August 11, 9:00-noon with *Writing Your Heart Out*. These workshops will be held at the New Life Presbyterian Church on Eubank, north of Spain, where the SWW meetings are held. See the workshop schedule for details.

Unfortunately, we've had to cancel two classes. **Hana Samek Norton**, instructor for *Historical Fiction Rules!* must travel to Canada for family business. Poet **Kelly Yenser**, instructor for *Writing Short Lyrics*, rescheduled due to unforeseen circumstances. Dates and prices for **Rob Spiegel's** classes have also been changed. Please review the details for all classes and workshops carefully.

May Classes & Workshops

WRITING FOR DIGITAL MEDIA— Exploring New Opportunities For Writers

By Carolyn Handler Miller

May 4, 11, 18, 25

Fridays: 2 - 4:00 pm

\$160 members, \$200 non-members

Class limited to 14 students

These classes introduce writers to the huge, diverse universe of story-based content made possible by digital technology including works written for the Internet, video games, mobile apps, etc. How does writing for digital media compare to writing for traditional media—both fiction and non-fiction? What techniques are needed? What special considerations must the writer keep in mind? Includes slide shows and demos of developed projects, and the chance to develop projects for various forms of digital media. Expand your writing horizons with this class. No special abilities needed beyond being comfortable with the internet.

Carolyn Handler Miller is the author of *Digital Storytelling*, a *Creator's Guide to Interactive Entertainment*, and one of the pioneer writers of digital media.



WRITE YOUR SCREENPLAY NOW!

By Marc Calderwood

May 4, 11, 18, 25

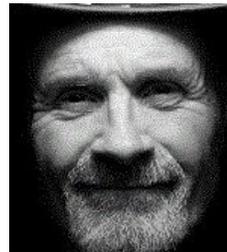
Fridays: 6 - 8:00 pm

\$160 members, \$200 non-members

Class limited to 14 students

Whether you're starting your first screenplay or your fifth, this course will guide you in avoiding treacherous, time-wasting mistakes and help focus your efforts and abilities on writing a credible screenplay—NOW. Some of what will be covered: Write a great Main Character by adding one simple thing ■ 6 Drive Elements of a screenplay ■ Imperative importance of form and structure ■ Writing a compelling tale ■ Critiquing a screenplay ■ Truths and lies about Hollywood ■ Best ways to market you and your screenplay ■ Industry Do's and Don'ts ■ Some great films.

Marc Calderwood is an award winning screenwriter and founder of the Duke City Screenwriters. He made his directorial/producer debut in the 48 Hour Film Project completing "Water Torture," an award winning short shown at the Santa Fe Film Festival. Calderwood received his Screenwriting Certification from UCLA in 2009.



FREELANCING IN A WEB-BASED WORLD By Rob Spiegel

May 7, 14, 21, 28

Mondays: 6 - 8:00 pm

\$160 members, \$200 non-members

Class limited to 14 students

To succeed as a freelance writer, you need to learn how to write for the Internet. In recent years, magazines have bolstered their Websites. Either that, or they've gone out of business. Print magazines are now competing with growing Web-only sites on every subject from cooking and gardening to music and film. The growth in Web-based journalism has opened up a wide range of opportunities for freelancers. That is, if you know how to write for the Internet and how to pitch over the Internet. This intensive and thorough course will give you the tools to find the right markets and pitch your writing talents.

Rob Spiegel has been a journalist for 30 years. He began freelancing in the 1970s, writing for magazines such as *New Mexico Magazine* and *True Confessions*. He is now a senior editor at *Design News*, a print trade magazine that has reinvented itself as a powerful Internet site for engineers. Rob has written about Web-based freelancing for *Writer's Market*, and he has presented numerous classes on the subject for SouthWest Writers, UNM and other writers' groups.



THE MAGIC STEPS TO GETTING YOUR NONFICTION BOOK PUBLISHED

By Rob Spiegel

Saturday Workshop, May 5, 2-5:00 pm

See Workshop Pricing on Facing Page

Rob will cover all the steps it takes to get your nonfiction book published. How do you find the right publisher? Do you need an agent? How do you find an agent? What goes into the query? What doesn't go into the query? What goes into the proposal? Do you need to write the book first? While this workshop contains tons of material, all the steps are very concrete, magical, but concrete.

Rob Spiegel is a former book publisher who has had six books published with major publishers such as St. Martin's, Dearborn and AMACOM. He's currently a senior editor with a major trade publisher, United Business Media.

New Workshop and Class Refund Policy

Full refund if cancellation is received more than 7 days before class. From one week out to 24 hours before class, participant is entitled to select another class. Inside of 24 hours, participant receives no refund or class. For multi-session classes, if you miss a class, you receive no refund. We pay our instructors based on how many students enroll, so you are part of that roll count if you don't cancel as detailed above.

June Master Class

MAKING YOUR MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION-READY!

By Joe Badal

June 13, 16, 20, 23, 27, 30

Wednesdays: 6 - 8:00 pm

& Saturdays: 10:00 - Noon

\$240 members, \$300 non-members

Limited to 14 participants



Students will submit to the SWW office by noon June 8, 10-20 manuscript pages that the instructor will read, edit and comment on for the first class. The course will involve sequences of rewriting, revision, and feedback from the instructor and other participants. Students will learn how to sharpen their manuscripts to improve their chances of finding an agent, a publisher, and, ultimately, more readers. This is a hands-on course for serious writers who want to hone their craft and who are willing to accept constructive criticism.

Joseph Badal has four published suspense novels: *Evil Deeds*, *Terror Cell*, *The Nostradamus Secret*, and *The Pythagorean Solution*. Joe's next novel *Inside Job* is due for release in 2012. He is also completing a non-fiction book about *Relationship Selling* and writes a blog titled *Everyday Heroes*. Joe has also written dozens of articles that have been published in a variety of business magazines and trade journals.

Joe has worked for thirty-eight years in the banking and financial services industries. Prior to his finance career, he served as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Army in critical, highly classified positions in the U.S. and overseas, including tours of duty in Greece and Vietnam. He earned numerous military decorations.

(Continued from page 1)

Peter Joseph on *Hush Money* while simultaneously working with Bloomsbury editor Anton Mueller on *Hard Twisted*. Collecting blurbs from bestselling crime novelists for *Hush Money*. Closing an audiobook deal with AudioGO. Launching a website, and creating a Goodreads profile, and joining Facebook. I learned to tell a First Serial Right from a Selection Right, and a copyedited manuscript from first pass pages. Meanwhile—and now on deadline—I toiled away at *Green-Eyed Lady*, the first of what I hope will be many follow-ons to *Hush Money*.

It has been, as I said at the outset, one heck of a year.

And it all began with SouthWest Writers. I joined SWW in October of 2010, and I've taken pains wherever possible—including the Acknowledgments to both novels—to mention and thank this wonderful organization for the doors it opened for me. May it continue opening doors for many, many years to come.

Chuck Greaves lives and writes in Santa Fe. Hush Money will be in bookstores nationwide on May 8, 2012, with Hard Twisted to follow in November. For more information, please visit www.chuckgreaves.com.

Upcoming 2012 Workshops and Classes

Workshops

Kirt Hickman:

Promoting and Marketing Your Self-Published Book
June 16, 9:00-noon

Betsy James:

Creative Fiction Writing for Teachers
July 14, 9:00 am-1:00 pm

Lisa Hase-Jackson:

Writing Your Heart Out
August 11, 9:00-noon

Classes

Melody Groves: Pitches ☐Mondays, Jul

Betsy James: Adventures in Writing
☐Wednesdays, Jul/Aug/Sep

Gail Rubin: Cross-Selling & Promoting Your Book
☐Thursdays, Aug

Lisa Hase-Jackson: Memoir ☐Wednesdays, Aug/Sep

Kirt Hickman: Fantasy ☐Thursdays, Aug/Sep

Melody Groves: Westerns ☐Mondays, Sep/Oct

Sarah Baker: Romance, Fantasy & Erotica
☐Wednesdays, Oct

Kathryn Cameron PhD & Sarah Kotchian PhD:
Writing into the Spirit ☐Thursdays, Oct

Wally Gordon: Writing Articles from Life Experiences
☐Mondays, Nov

Betsy James: Science Fiction & Fantasy
☐Wednesdays, Nov/Dec

Check www.SouthWestWriters.com for updates

Science tells us no two humans are exactly alike, that each of us is a distinctive amalgamation of DNA and life experiences. It follows, then, that inside every writer lives a one-of-a-kind Voice, a Voice I believe resides not only in the brain, but in the gut. And it's never too late to find it.

Searching for my Voice as a writer has been an interesting process. It has not been as easy as I thought it would be, but after nearly twenty years of plugging away, some things are finally beginning to click. My writer's Voice is making herself heard. And it's been an amazing trip of self-discovery, albeit one that is taking place late in my life.

I always assumed clever writing to be just a matter of focusing one's mental faculties. I thought anyone plopped down into the right scenery could crank out creative, imaginative stuff that people would clamor to read. Cool stuff, the warp and woof of which open up new neural pathways in the reader's brain, the cadence of which draws the reader in and compels him to better himself, or the cocoon of which offers solace to one overwhelmed with the pain that life inflicts upon the living.

But from the moment I first put my fingers on the keys of my laptop, I realized that was a false hypothesis. Great writing is not merely the result of a writer's ability to wax cerebral. Great writing springs from the craftsman's ability to connect with his unique Voice.

Early on in my writing career, I tended to pattern my own writing after that of some of my favorite authors. I mimicked Agatha Christie, Helen McInnes, and even Isaac Asimov. It was as if I could plug into a writer's version of one of those electronic voice filtering gizmos. You know, the things that have the ability to make a five-year-old girl sound like James Earl Jones.

And why not ape the best of the best? After all, the greats became so by opening their writer Voices full-throttle. Copying their Voices saved me the trouble of having to search for my own.



I soon discovered, however, that the trouble with writing in someone else's Voice is that it pushed my own into the periphery. But as is the way of things, even as I felt secure in my not-me mask, my authentic Voice would stubbornly make herself heard. And the more often I glimpsed her, the more determined I became to give her air.

Pursuant to that end, I bought some books guaranteed to catapult my writer's Voice into up-and-running mode. Each author offered a list of tried-and-true strategies to get one's metaphorical peristaltic muscles moving "in no time at all."

One interesting how-to suggested I dress, act and talk like one of my characters for a day. Another told me to flood my senses with potpourri and my favorite instrumental music while writing. Yet another commanded me to meditate on the meaning of life while staring at my navel.

I did all that. And I found it interesting. However, while those strategies may be effective devices for some, they didn't work for me. My explain-everything-so-the-kids-can-understand-and-pass-the-test inner teacher didn't seem to want to let go of the controls.

That is, until I discovered something called *free writing*. Here's how it works: I sit comfortably at my desk, a pen and pad of paper in front of me. I clear my mind as much as possible, and then write whatever thoughts pour forth. I don't censor anything. Sometimes I write the same word several times, and sometimes the result is meaningless drivel. But often, fun and exciting things pop onto the page. Things I've then built into stories—uniquely my own.

According to a Dutch proverb, "We get too soon old and too late smart." While there's something to that, it's encouraging to note that Mary Wesley didn't get published until she was seventy-one; Colonel Harlan Sanders didn't start up his first Kentucky Fried Chicken establishment until he was sixty-six; the famous American artist known as Grandma Moses didn't begin painting until in her seventies, and Laura Ingalls Wilder wrote and published her *Little House* books when in her sixties.

So, my evenings and weekends are spent spelunking into the caverns inhabited by my Voice, relishing the tasty morsels she leaves in the pathway for me to follow. And I, in turn, saw away at the chains forged by the fear of being seen as different, fear of making mistakes, fear of rejection, and the fear that it's too late. Because, it's never too late. It's NEVER too late.

A retired educator, O. M. Balla is a professional musician who lives in Los Lunas 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: www.omballa.com.

You Can Write for the Sage

Submissions focusing on all aspects of researching, writing and publishing any genre are welcome. See past issues of *SouthWest Sage* for the type of article we publish. Payment made in bylines and clips. All rights remain with the author. Submissions may be edited for accuracy, readability and length. Deadline is the 15th of the month prior to the next issue. Article lengths from 200-1000 words. Send submissions/questions to Kathy Wagoner at justwritesww@gmail.com.

(Continued from page 6)

show how the protagonist feels about it all as well, since this will usually show what she's willing to risk to win.

Climax:

In the book: The final showdown with the bad guy. The protagonist has to face off with who or what has been making her life miserable for 400 pages, and because she's learned XYZ over the course of the book, she wins by a truly stunning and surprising ploy.

In the synopsis: One to two paragraphs that sum up this ending. Don't hold back on the details trying to save it for the novel. You want to show the agent or editor that you can deliver a solid and satisfying ending.

Wrap Up:

In the book: The happily ever after. Or the burning apocalypse if that's your thing. What the protagonist is going to do now that she's saved the day.

In the synopsis: One paragraph that ties it all up. If there's a moral or something the protagonist was supposed to learn in the story, this is a good spot to sum it up. "Bob learns that trying to outdo Jack in tequila shots was a bad idea indeed."

Following this format will give you a one- to two-page synopsis, and you can add or cut where needed. A common rule of thumb is to give the same ratio of space to the events in the synopsis as you do the book. If the opening takes up 5 percent of the novel, it'll take up 5 percent of the synopsis. That shows the pacing and flow of the story.

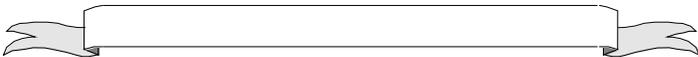
For the first pass, don't try to limit yourself too much. Just write it, even if it's bad. The goal of the first pass is to get the basic information down. At this point, the synopsis won't be perfect, but you'll make it better once you figure out what needs to go in it.

After you get it all down, then start tweaking. This is where all that practice you did cutting out weak verbs and adverbs in your manuscript comes in handy. You have to say a lot in a limited space, so every sentence needs to be as tight as possible.

Once you're done, find someone you trust who knows nothing about the story. Have them read it and mark where they got confused or didn't understand something. You want people to be able to follow the story, even if some of the details are unclear. For example, they might not know what a Vexon capacitor is, but they know the bad guy uses it to blow up the hero's home world.

A few more things to keep in mind:

The human brain can only remember so much, so be wary about naming everything and everyone. You want the key players mentioned, but you don't want to throw in so



SouthWest Writers Offers Student Membership Scholarships

Southwest Writers is seeking deserving high school or college students for one-year scholarship memberships in our organization.

The first of these awards has been given to **Kimberly Mitchell** of Valley Vista High School. Four scholarships still remain to be awarded.

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 the next page and mail it to:

**SouthWest Writers
3721 Morris NE Suite A
Albuquerque, NM 87111-3611**



much that it all starts to blend together. I usually all-caps the protagonist's name the first time I use it. Some writers all-caps all POV characters the first time they're introduced. This varies by taste.

If you have more than one protagonist, weave in the multiple POVs. Chances are the characters are doing something that moves the plot along, so you can often do a back and forth thing. Bob does this, and back at the ranch, Jack does that. The set pieces are probably the same, but different POVs will be present at each. (You probably won't have two complete novel arcs for each POV, even if they do have their own story arcs.)

One final point, it's a good idea to let your synopsis sit between readings. Just like your manuscript, time away gives you perspective and lets you spot those awkward sentences you gloss over when you've been reading it over and over.



Student Scholarship Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-Mail: _____ Phone: _____

Current School: _____

Current Level: _____

Area(s) of Interest: _____

(In 250 words or less tell us why you would like to be a student member of SouthWest Writers):

Recommended by: _____

Contact (phone/e-mail): _____

Send this application to SouthWest Writers, 3721 Morris NE Suite A, Albuquerque, NM 87111-3611

Member Successes

Dodici Azpadu will be the featured speaker at the Writers2 Writers meeting on April 9 at 6:30 PM at the Hastings on Coors and Montano. Her topic will be "Poetry as Memoir." Bring a short poem on the subject to share.

Shanti E. Bannwart is very happy to announce that her memoir *Dancing On One Foot: Growing Up in Nazi Germany* has been born, is alive and well, and available on Amazon and in local bookstores. Visit her website: www.DancingOnOneFoot.com.

Joanne Bodin was invited to sign her award-winning novel *Walking Fish* at the Tucson Festival of Books, March 11 in the author's pavilion. She also did a book signing at Bookman's on Speedway in Tucson on Friday, March 9th. Her poem "Royal" was recently published in the *Fixed and Free: Poetry Anthology 2011*.

Parris Afton Bonds just had her 36th novel—and first ebook—released at amazon.com/kindle. *Dancing With Wild Woman* features Janet Lomayestewa, US Customs Tracker, the first in the Tracker series.

Karin Bradberry has had several recent poetry successes. Her writing group, Albuquerque Word Weavers, published

its first chapbook *Weavin'* this past fall. Her sestina "Crazy Woman Creek" appeared in the *Fixed and Free: Poetry Anthology 2011* and won 3rd place in SouthWest Writers 6th 2011 bi-monthly contest, Poetry with a Southwest Theme. She was a featured poet on Duke City Fix with three love poems appearing for Valentine's Day, one of which, "Winter Blossoms," also appeared in the February 2012 issue of *The Rag*. Her poem "Comfort Food" will appear in *Adobe Walls* #4 this April.

Bloomsbury, the venerable British publishing house, has announced the nine titles selected to launch their new Bloomsbury Circus imprint in the UK. Included among them is the novel by **Chuck Greaves** (writing as C. Joseph Greaves), *Hard Twisted*, winner of the Best Historical Novel category in SWW's 2010 annual writing contest. The Depression-era novel (based on a true crime) will be in bookstores worldwide in November.

Several poems from **Jeanne Shannon's** book *In a Rose Wood Wandering* have been translated into Japanese and posted on the Plaza Poetry website (<http://plazapoetry.com/>) which originates in Tokyo.

A Good Place To Stumble Upon — Illustrated Haiku about City Open Space

A Good Place to Stumble Upon is a collection of illustrated Haiku poems submitted by local Albuquerque poets for a special exhibition at the City of Albuquerque Open Space Visitor Center. These poems capture the essence, wonder, and intellect of the landscapes of the City's Major Public Open Space. First, the poets submitted their work to the review committee. After selection, the imagery complementing the poems was added as a secondary project—each haiku in the exhibit was interpreted by an artist in watercolor and scripted by a calligrapher onto archival paper. The application of imagery to the poems changes the Haiku poems to "Haiga." Just as in Haiku, the goal of Haiga is simplicity of expression.

The poems will be available for viewing in the Open Space Visitor Center gallery from March 5 to April 29. A reception will be held on April 7th from 3 to 5 pm. The visitor center is located at 6500 Coors Blvd NW between Montano and Paseo del Norte at the end of Bosque Meadows Road. Call 897-8831 for more information or visit www.cabq.gov/openspace/visitorcenter.html.



Above, **Nancy Pogue LaTurner** with her Haiku selected for the exhibit *A Good Place to Stumble Upon* at the Albuquerque Open Space Visitor Center. Artist: Kent Swanson. Calligrapher: Jay Lee Evans.

If you are a SouthWest Writers member with a success or announcement you would like to share with SouthWest Sage readers, send it to Kathy Wagoner, SWW Sage Editor, www.justwritesww@gmail.com.

Announcements

Script Frenzy is an international writing event in which participants take on the challenge of writing 100 pages of scripted material in the month of April. As part of a donation-funded nonprofit, there is no fee to participate. No valuable prizes awarded or "best" scripts singled out. Every writer completing 100 pages is victorious and awe-inspiring and will receive a handsome Script Frenzy Winner's Certificate and web icon proclaiming this fact. Even those who fall short of the page goal will be applauded for making a heroic attempt. For more information go to www.scriptfrenzy.org.

Silver Boomer Books is pleased to announce their Call for Submissions for a new holiday anthology, *Times to Remember—A Pocketful of Holidays*, to be released Fall 2012. You're not limited to Thanksgiving and Christmas but may consider the Day of the Dead, Groundhog Day, Labor Day, or other commonly celebrated holidays. See guidelines at the "FOR WRITERS" link at <http://silverboomerbooks.com/sbb/wp/for-writers/times-to-remember/>.

The 2012 Indie Excellence Awards is taking submissions! National Indie Excellence Awards (NIEA) celebrates overall excellence, including design and promotional text. To enter, send one copy of your book per category entered. Books with publication dates of 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 are eligible. Books published anywhere in the world may be submitted as long as they are in English and can be purchased in the United States. Deadline April 15, 2012. For more information visit: <http://www.indieexcellence.com>

Chautauqua's spring contest now open—flash fiction, micro-essays, prose poems. Send your best work in 750 words or fewer. The theme, Journeys and Pilgrimages, means more than tales of travel and the open road. They seek works that explore what it means to encounter difference—of personal, social, political, spiritual, and aesthetic importance. Submit through April 15, 2012. Prize \$1000.00 and publication. See website for more information: <http://www.ciweb.org/literary-journal>.

UNM's Writers Conference: From Start to Sales VIII, Saturday, April 21, 2012, 8:30 am-4:30 pm, \$150. Learn what's selling in today's market. Meet agents and editors wanting new clients. Learn from successful, multi-published authors. For more information and to register, go to: <http://dce.unm.edu/writers>

Announcing a 2012 short screenplay contest. The top script in each of three categories will be executive produced by Kim Moore of Destiny Films, and produced by award winning producer Michael L Miller of 9 Point Productions, LLC. All scripts must be original creations for this project. The winning scripts will each receive \$500 and have their film produced. (See the official rules.) See official rules for categories and guidelines. No entry fee, deadline April 30, 2012.

Gordy Hoffman, the Sundance award-winning writer/director and founder of the BlueCat Screenplay Competition,

will lead a **screenwriting workshop** on Saturday, July 28 from 9:00 am-6:00 pm in Albuquerque. Workshop limited to seven writers. Participants read each other's scripts in advance of the workshop. Screenplays can be first drafts or rewrites. First-time writers and veterans are welcome. Direct, in-depth feedback provided on each screenplay. You can audit the workshop, which lets you attend without submitting written material, read the scripts in advance and still participate in the discussion. Go to: <http://www.bluecatscreenplay.com/workshops/albuquerque/>

Oregon Coast Children's Book Writers Workshop, July 9-13, 2012 in the exquisite Oregon coast town of Oceanside. Instructors include five established children's book authors, two children's book editors from major houses and one children's book agent. Visit www.occbww.com.

Crimson Romance, the new e-book romance imprint at Adams Media, is launching in June! They're now open for submissions in five popular romance subgenres (romantic suspense, historical, paranormal, contemporary, and erotic romance), preferring 50K words. If yours is longer or shorter, they'll still consider it. They love fresh takes on favorite themes, and smart, savvy heroines tangling with heroes that readers will fall in love with. Full guidelines can be found at: www.adamsmedia.com/call-for-submissions.

The **Albuquerque Croak & Dagger** chapter of Sisters in Crime welcomes mystery fans who enjoy felonious fun, absolutely criminal companionship and sensational speakers. 4th Tuesdays of the month, 7:00 pm, police briefing room, James Joseph Dwyer Memorial Substation, (one block east of Tramway on Montgomery). www.croak-and-dagger.com/

Writers2Writers meeting, the 2nd Monday of every month, 6:30 pm at the west side Hastings at Coors and Montano. Monthly speakers. All genres welcome.

2012 Second Bi-Monthly Writing Contest Story-Telling Hook

The first 500 words of a novel of any genre or the first 500 words of a short story of any genre. Post-mark deadline: April 30, 2012.

Please include your contact information (address, phone and email) and permission to publish or not on a separate sheet. Do not include any identifying information on the manuscript itself.

All entries \$10. Prizes: \$150/1st prize; \$50/2nd prize; \$25/3rd prize. Mail entries to SWW Bi-monthly Contest, 3721 Morris NE, Suite A, Albuquerque, NM 87111.

An Interview with Katrina K. Guarascio, Poet *by Kathy Wagoner*

I recently met Katrina Guarascio at a publisher's meet-and-greet where she introduced me to performance poetry. This encounter led to the following interview.

Is there something in your poetry or writing journey you struggle with?

Sometimes I struggle with the vulnerability of poetry. After all, poetry can be very personal and is often inspired by specific events and experiences. The trick is to be honest and still be effective. Virginia Wolff once wrote about how, in order for a female writer to be truly effective, she must "kill the angel in the house." Basically that little voice in all our heads (I'm sure men have it, too) that says "don't write about this" or "you can't say that word" or "what will people think." You have to kill her good and dead, and then you can develop into an honest writer with a voice which truly reflects yourself. I struggle with my instinct to self-censor.

What is performance poetry?

Basically, performance poetry is any type of poetry performed in front of an audience. However, it can take on many guises. Some people enjoy the simplicity of the Open Mic, where all forms are generally accepted, while others prefer something more theatrical, such as performing alongside musicians (even busking on street corners) or One Man Shows that might incorporate poetry, prose and music. The competitive form of performance poetry, Slam Poetry, incorporates rules, judges, and expectations: poems are judged by five randomly chosen audience members on a 0-10 scale, Olympic style; props or musical instruments cannot be used; poems must not exceed three minutes and ten seconds or penalties will ensue. There is a winner of the slam, although usually there is no grand prize.

What is the difference between "regular" poetry and performance poetry?

That depends mostly on the poet and the poetic intention. Any poem, regardless of length, theme, or form can be read aloud and therefore can be performed. However, at least in the arena of Slam poetry, poets may prefer certain themes over others—personal identity (like race or gender), political unrest, and traumatic experiences tend to be more effective to a Slam audience. Also, the use of comedy can be very effective toward an audience of mixed interests.

Is there a difference between writing "regular" poetry and writing performance poetry? Do you write with performance in mind?

There is much controversy on this topic among performance poets. I believe there is a difference when it comes to a performance feature or a poetry competition. Some poems are better suited for an audience because they will have a stronger effect on the crowd and elicit a stronger reaction. Some poems, playfully referred to as Page Poems, are more effective left on the page for the reader to interpret. I have crafted and practiced several poems to be read in such competitions and performances, while others which I love just as dearly remain in the pages of my books.

Do you think education makes a person a better poet?

Yes, education makes a person a better poet, an education in literature, but not exclusive to literature. The more read, the more written, the more listened, all these things will contribute to the development of the skill of writing. I am a far better writer now than I was fifteen years ago not only because I write continuously (sometimes obsessively) but also because I read, I witness, and I absorb the world around me.

What can a prose writer learn from a poet?

The benefits of reading, hearing and writing poetry are unique to the individual, but worthy of everyone. The more you experience, the more chances you have of awakening that inner muse. Even someone who is not a poet may find inspiration, emotion or catharsis in a poem, just as someone driving down the road listening to the radio may break into tears because the lyrics of a song hit them at just the right time and in the right way. Also, poets do write in a slightly different manner than prose writers or lyricists. The ability to be concise and economical with words and images is a special talent.

When did you start on your writing journey?

Reading and education were valued in my home, but no one read classical literature. No one read poetry. I remember specifically requesting a copy of Hamlet when I was eleven years old, but I don't recall the specific moment when I decided to be a writer. I just started writing and haven't stopped yet.

Why do you write?

I don't write because I want to or even because it gives me great joy (at times it can be very frustrating). I write because I have to. It feeds my soul and gives me a form of peace. I enjoy sharing it with others but I also have some written works I will never share with anyone. I love expressing myself, my ideas, my beliefs, but it's more than that. It's my trade. I am not a painter, a photographer, a cook; I am a writer. That is my art form. That is who I am.



*Katrina K. Guarascio resides in New Mexico where she teaches Literature, Language Arts, and Creative Writing. As an active member of the poetry community, her focus resides in bringing poetry into the classroom and making it accessible to students. She sponsors the Cleveland High School Poetry Community, coaches a youth Slam Team, and produces a yearly literary magazine of student poetry. She also produces a monthly poetry performance, *The Smokin' Slam*, which is the only monthly open mic, feature, and slam venue in Rio Rancho, NM. Guarascio has authored two poetry chapbooks and two book-length publications, *A Scattering of Imperfections* and *They don't make memories like that anymore...* available through Casa de Snapdragon Publishing, Amazon, and Barnes & Noble. Visit her website: www.wix.com/kkquar/kquarascio or explore her Amazon author page: www.amazon.com/-/e/B0039T049Q.*

Call for 2013 Nominations

For the Offices of President, Vice-president, Treasurer, and Secretary of SouthWest Writers

Please use the forms below to write in the names you want to submit to the nominating committee to fill the 2013 SouthWest Writers executive board of directors. Nomination forms will also be available for your convenience at upcoming SWW meetings. Submit your nominations by May 31, 2012 at any SWW meeting or mail to: SouthWest Writers, 3721 Morris St. NE, Suite A, Albuquerque, NM 87111.

Office of President SWW

Eligibility Requirements: Any member in good standing who has served on the SWW Board for 1 year within the past 5 years.

Reference SWW By-laws and Policies & Procedures www.southwestwriters.com for complete duties.

Nomination Name (please print):

Name of Nominating Member:

Office of Vice-President SWW

Eligibility Requirements: Any member in good standing who has served on the SWW Board for 1 year within the past 5 years.

Reference SWW By-laws and Policies & Procedures www.southwestwriters.com for complete duties.

Nomination Name (please print):

Name of Nominating Member:

Office of Treasurer SWW

Eligibility Requirements: Any member in good standing.

Reference SWW By-laws and Policies & Procedures www.southwestwriters.com for complete duties.

Nomination Name (please print):

Name of Nominating Member:

Office of Secretary SWW

Eligibility Requirements: Any member in good standing.

Reference SWW By-laws and Policies & Procedures www.southwestwriters.com for complete duties.

Nomination Name (please print):

Name of Nominating Member:

2012 SOUTHWEST WRITERS WRITING CONTEST 5-STEP ENTRY FORM

Step 1

Name: _____ Phone: () _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Country: _____ Email: _____
 Entry Title: _____

Step 2

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

**SWW
Members
Step 3**

SOUTHWEST WRITERS MEMBERS: Circle Fee Enclosed

Postmarked no later than May 1, 2012

Contest Only	\$20	Contest & Critique	\$45
Poetry Only	\$10	Poetry & Critique	\$30

Postmarked no later than May 15, 2012

Contest Only	\$30	Contest & Critique	\$55
Poetry Only	\$15	Poetry & Critique	\$35

**Non-
Members
Step 3**

NON-MEMBERS: Circle Fee Enclosed:

Postmarked no later than May 1, 2012

Contest Only	\$35	Contest & Critique	\$60
Poetry Only	\$20	Poetry & Critique	\$40

Postmarked no later than May 15, 2012

Contest Only	\$45	Contest & Critique	\$70
Poetry Only	\$25	Poetry & Critique	\$45

Step 4

Method of Payment:

Check or Money Order (no cash) US\$ payable to SouthWest Writers
 Charge my
 Visa MasterCard # _____
 Exp. Date: _____ Security Code # _____
 Signature _____

Step 5

How did you hear about the contest? _____

Mail completed entry form, entry and fee to:

SouthWest Writers Annual Contest 2012
 3721 Morris NE Ste A
 Albuquerque, NM 87111-3611

southwestwriters.com swwriters@juno.com (505) 265-9485

The SouthWest Writers International Writing Contest 2012 Call for Entries

First- through third-place winners will be awarded in twelve categories. All first-place winners will automatically compete for the grand prize, the Storyteller Award. The entries must be original, unpublished (see definition below) and in English. You do not have to be a member of SouthWest Writers (SWW) to enter.

Deadline: Postmarked **May 1, 2012** • Postmarked **May 2-15, 2012**, late fee applies.

Categories:

FICTION

1. **Mainstream/Literary Novel:** Submit the first 20 double-spaced pages of the manuscript and a single-spaced (two-page maximum) synopsis.
2. **Mystery/Suspense/Thriller/Adventure Novel:** Submit the first 20 double-spaced pages of the manuscript and a single-spaced (two-page maximum) synopsis.
3. **Juvenile or Young Adult Novel:** Submit the first 20 double-spaced pages of the manuscript and a single-spaced (two-page maximum) synopsis.
4. **Historical/Western Novel:** Submit the first 20 double-spaced pages of the manuscript and a single-spaced (two-page maximum) synopsis.
5. **Science Fiction/Fantasy/Horror Short Story:** Submit a double-spaced manuscript of 4000-6000 words with the word count in the upper right corner of the first page.
6. **Mainstream/Literary Short Story:** Submit a double-spaced manuscript of 4000-6000 words with the word count in the upper right corner of the first page.

NONFICTION

7. **Nonfiction Book Proposal:** Submit the first three chapters or the first 50 pages, whichever is less, a chapter outline of no more than three pages and a query letter of no more than two pages.
8. **Memoir:** Submit the first 20 double-spaced pages of the manuscript and a single-spaced (two-page maximum) synopsis.
9. **Nonfiction Essay:** Submit a double-spaced manuscript of no more than 2500 words with the word count in the upper right corner of the first page.

CHILDREN'S PICTURE BOOK (FICTION OR NONFICTION)

10. **Children's Fiction or Nonfiction Picture Book:** Submit the entire double-spaced manuscript (maximum of 500 words) without illustrations.

SCREENPLAY

11. **Screenplay:** Submit the first 20 pages in industry-standard format plus a one-page, single-spaced synopsis. The screenplay must be unoptioned at the time of submission.

POETRY

12. **Poetry:** Submit one poem of up to three pages **or** three Haiku on one page.

Definition of Unpublished: The submitted work must **not** be available to the public for sale. This includes, but is not limited to, the following venues: eBooks (Nook, Kindle, iBooks), Traditional Publishing (HarperCollins, etc.), or Print-on-Demand (Amazon or other distributors with an ISBN assigned).

Entry Fees:

SOUTHWEST WRITERS MEMBERS

Postmarked no later than May 1, 2012

Contest Only	\$20	Contest and Critique	\$45
Poetry Only	\$10	Poetry and Critique	\$30

Postmarked May 2-15, 2012

Contest Only	\$30	Contest and Critique	\$55
Poetry Only	\$15	Poetry and Critique	\$35

NON-MEMBERS

Postmarked no later than May 1, 2012

Contest Only	\$35	Contest and Critique	\$60
Poetry Only	\$20	Poetry and Critique	\$40

Postmarked May 2-15, 2012

Contest Only	\$45	Contest and Critique	\$70
Poetry Only	\$25	Poetry and Critique	\$45

(Continued on page 20)

The SouthWest Writers International Writing Contest 2012 Call for Entries *(continued)*

Submission Requirements:

1. Each entry must be in a separate envelope accompanied by a **completed Entry Form** and **Entry Fee**. No certified mail. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped postcard if you want notification of receipt. Contestants must provide an email address.
2. The **Category Number** must appear on the outside of the envelope below the return address.
3. The **Category Name and Number** must be circled on the entry form.
4. First place manuscripts from previous SWW Contests are ineligible.
5. The manuscript must be printed on one side of 8-1/2 x 11 or A4 white paper in 12-point Courier or Times New Roman font. All manuscripts must be double-spaced. Screenplays should follow industry-specific standards. Brads should **not** be included.
6. Do **NOT** type your name anywhere on the manuscript or synopsis.
7. Submit one copy of the manuscript and synopsis (if required). Manuscripts will **not** be returned.
8. If you request a **written critique**: Submit **TWO (2)** copies of your manuscript plus a 9 x 12 self-addressed envelope with enough postage affixed for return mail (i.e. a large SASE). **NO METERED POSTAGE AND NO SIGNATURE-REQUIRED DELIVERY**. The critiqued manuscript will be returned by August 31, 2012. Poetry critiques may use a smaller number 9 or 10 return envelope.

Prizes and Notifications:

Winners will be notified in August 2012 by email. Winners' names will be posted on the SWW website (<http://www.southwestwriters.com/>) at or about the same time.

Prizes are as follows: 1st Place \$200; 2nd Place \$150; 3rd Place \$100. All First Place Winners automatically compete for the \$1,500 Storyteller Award.

Judging:

Contest judging takes place in two rounds. A committee of writers and editors selects the top twenty entries and sends them to the round two judges who are genre-specific. From these top twenty, the three winning entries are identified.

The top three winners in each category receive a critique from the commissioned judge.

Contacting any judge about an entry during the contest period will result in automatic disqualification.

The professional editors, agents and/or publishers who serve as judges are not employees of SouthWest Writers (SWW). Their opinions do not necessarily reflect the opinions of SouthWest Writers.

SouthWest Writers reserves the right to disqualify any entry if contest rules are not followed, in which case the entry fee will **not** be refunded. Common mistakes include:

- a. Writer's name appears on the manuscript.
- b. Incorrect fee is enclosed.
- c. Incorrect number of manuscripts is submitted for critique.
- d. No return address appears on the SASE.
- e. Failure to fill out the Entry Form correctly (i.e. omitted or illegible address, email address or phone number).

By entering the contest, you agree that matters relating to the contest, which are not specifically covered by these rules, will be decided solely at the discretion of contest officials. You will accept as final and be bound by all judges' decisions. You understand and agree that your manuscript will be evaluated subjectively, and SWW cannot accept liability for consequences arising from any opinion expressed. You agree to hold harmless and indemnify SWW, its agents, employees, and volunteers for any and all losses, costs, or expenses incurred from any dispute arising from your participation in the contest.

Critique Service:

All entrants may request a critique by a professional writer, agent or editor by enclosing the appropriate fee with the Entry Form. Please submit two copies of your manuscript instead of one, and enclose a 9 x12 SASE with the correct return postage (not metered mail). Poetry critiques may use a smaller number 10 or 9 envelope.

See critique service pricing under Entry Fees.