

SouthWest Sage

December 2011 www.southwestwriters.com

Why Learn About Screenwriting?

by Rick Reichman

Okay, you're wondering how the devil to make your story, novel or play better without making deals with the previously mentioned entity. I have one word for you. SCREENWRITING!

But don't take my word for it. Listen to John Grisham who said in an interview that when he writes, he thinks in terms of a movie. Or look at the success of several of my students who, because of what they learned in one of my screenwriting courses, have gone on to publish novels, short stories and plays, and even non-fiction books. One former student has a dozen mysteries and two thrillers published, and another wrote a historical novel for which she received a large advance.

Why learn how to write screenplays? Screenwriting offers the prose writer a concise and concrete method of presenting his/her story and capturing the reader from page one till the end. It allows the reader to concentrate on plot and the telling of a good story. Screenwriting also has ways of keeping a story moving forward while always paying attention to capturing the emotion of its reader.

A good screenplay must have structure, beat, rhythm, and pace. Learning how to produce these elements actually makes your work a more engaging read.

Applying techniques that make the screenplay "sing" can also produce harmony in any prose. If a writer knows how to quickly connect with time, place, and character, it will be a boon to engaging a reader in the story being told. Creating movie speak (dialogue) in the form and technique found in film can enhance what your characters say and how they say



it by using agenda-driven dialogue rather than casual or everyday speech. Each character who enters a scene in a film is trying to win something from that scene. And everything a character does—action, reaction, body language, verbal language—is done to promote that character and what he or she wants. To learn to prepare your characters' speeches before you actually write the scene, you can take a screenwriting course or you can find out more about screenwriting and what it offers you even as a writer of strictly prose. You can also read my book, *20 Things You Must Know*

to Write a Great Screenplay (I needed the plug).

Will screenwriting teach you to write like Faulkner or Fitzgerald or Wolfe? That would be no. But, if you're looking to write an exciting, engaging and enthralling work, then knowing something about writing screenplays can be exceedingly helpful.

Okay, but why bring this up now? Am I offering a new class? Do I, too, have an agenda? Sort of. Okay, most definitely.

I want you to think hard about attending the Southwest Writer's Screenwriting Conference, Saturday February 25. I want you to picture yourself there with some terrific writers and teachers. Headlining the event are Doug Eboch and Miles Swartout. The former created the story for *Sweet Home Alabama*, and the latter wrote what I consider John Wayne's best film, *The Shootist*.

Besides the headliners, there will be others who can help you with structure, approach, and something we haven't mentioned before—marketing. You might be thinking, "but I'm not trying to market a screenplay." No, but just about every way to sell a story these days seems to start with marketing. Every conference has agents, producers or publishers who are there to listen to your pitch and evaluate whether they want to read your work. Pitching has become the query letter, the phone call, the proposal, all in one. What you learn about pitching, especially pitching a screenplay, can be invaluable no matter what form and to whom you are pitching.

So there are lots of reasons to sign up for the SWW Screenwriting Conference. It's a small price for a big day. It will be instructive. It will be beneficial. And added to all of that, it will also be lots of fun. Don't forget Saturday, February 25 at the Elegante Hotel. I'll be there. Hope you will be, too.

Next issue: Visual Aspects of Screenplay Transferable to Prose

SouthWest Writers Conference
Screen and Script 2012
Saturday, February 25
Keynote Speakers:
Doug Eboch & Miles Swartout

Eleganté Hotel • 8:30 am - 5:00 pm
\$150 - Students with current student photo ID
Everyone else except Students:
\$155 - before Feb. 12 \$175 - after Feb. 12
More details coming soon.

President's Message *by Melody Groves*



A rollercoaster ride has to be considered tame in comparison to my last two years. On both a personal and professional level, 24 months whizzed past as well as crawled by. I didn't get everything accomplished I'd intended for SWW, but I take great pleasure in noting that our meeting attendance remained high. We offered classes, workshops, conferences and writing labs. Over a hundred new people joined us. I consider these two years incredibly successful.

As they say, "all good things shall come to an end." And that applies to my being president of SouthWest Writers. I've spent a lot of time thinking about what to say in my last letter to everyone. It dawned on me that it all boils down to two words: *Thank You*.

My list of people who've earned a *Thank You* is long—I'm sure I'm forgetting a few. But here goes anyway: **Rob Spiegel** for being a terrific vice president and confidant; **Larry Greenly** for keeping me grounded; **Cynthia Boyd** for "hanging in there"; **Susan Alexis** for stepping in when necessary; **Joanne Bodin** for understanding; **Kathy Kitts** for her hard work; **Terry Civello** for her dogged approach to public relations and finances.

Certainly needed to be included are others who are invaluable to Team SouthWest Writers: **Bob Gassaway; Jeanne Shannon; Edith Greenly; Arielle Windham; Rita Herther; Sandra Toro; Sandy Bazinet; Ann Marquez; Harold Burnett; Ruth Friesen; Kathy Wagoner; Terry Hicks; Andy Mayo; Kathryn Peralta; Don Dyer; Gregory Lay; Peggy Spencer...** and the list goes on.

And a huge *THANK YOU* to all the members. You've been great to work with, and I've enjoyed meeting and getting to know so many of you. You made my job easy!

SouthWest Writers is a team. No doubt about it. As outgoing president, I leave this esteemed organization in the more-than-capable hands of Kathy Kitts. Her visions for the future will take us in exciting directions. I have all the confidence in the world in her. She'll be a terrific president. Please extend to her all the support and good wishes you've given me these past two years.

Keep writing.

Melody

IN THIS ISSUE

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Why Learn About Screenwriting? | Rick Reichman |
| 3 | Service Awards | |
| 4 | Grammar Tip | Dodici Azpadu |
| 5 | Narrative vs. Authorial Voice | Uma Krishnaswami
and Joanne Rocklin |
| 6 | Mapping Your Career Path | Chris Eboch |
| 7 | Meetings | |
| 8 | January/February Classes | |
| 9 | 2012 Pushcart Prize Ranking (Fiction) | |
| 10 | SCBWI Handsprings Conference | Sue Houser |
| 11 | Member Successes | |
| 12 | Announcements | |

*The difference between
reality and fiction?
Fiction has to
make sense.
~ Tom Clancy*

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 (\$100 for 2 years), Two people \$50 each,
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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Service Awards from SWW Board of Directors

Each year SouthWest Writers honors members who have gone “above and beyond” with their contribution to this organization. This year it has been the board’s honor to acknowledge members who have helped make SWW run. Their awards were given out at the November meeting.

Honored are:

Betty Burnett, who has rarely missed a meeting in years. She brings homemade “goodies”—whether it’s a pan of brownies or a plate of warm cookies. She comes into the room with a wide smile on her face and something tasty in hand.

Gregory Lay—he’s the man behind the slide projector. An idea and tech guy, he creates slides and puts them on the screen to augment the business portion of the meeting. He’s helped out at conferences and banquets as well.

Tim Allison—a mystery man who keeps rather quiet. Tim drives in all the way from Grants and due to work restrictions, attends only our Tuesday meetings. But Tim receives this award with the board’s heartfelt thanks—he stays behind after the meetings to make sure everyone’s cars start and the women are safely driving away.

Sandy Bazinet—a woman who knows her way around a coffeepot. Sandy is always willing to jump in and help at a moment’s notice. A volunteer “wrangler,” Sandy contacts members to help out and often finds herself picking up the slack. She starts the coffee, makes sure the table is ready, and arranges the food during the meeting.

It’s with much gratitude SouthWest Writers presents these awards. Service Awards are voted on by the SWW board annually.

A Change in Membership Discount Beginning January 1, 2012

*Annual membership will still be \$60, but we are
discontinuing the 2 yrs/\$100 and 2 people/\$100.*

*In 2012, a new discount will be applied:
When a member renews 2 months in advance,
the cost of membership is reduced to \$55.*



Try out our new SWW Google Calendar link where you’ll see what’s coming up at a glance for each month. Use the link on the SWW website or click here: www.google.com/calendar/embed?src=swwcalendar%40gmail.com&ctz=America/Denver

Author Lynne Truss charmed readers a few years ago with her book *Eats Shoots and Leaves*. At least she charmed those of us who can laugh out loud about grammar. Everyone who loves the mechanics of language has his or her favorite grammatical errors. I have several that are not original to me, so I thank Diana Hacker, editor of a popular college text *The Bedford Handbook*, for the errors that follow.

After braiding Ann's hair, Sue decorated them with ribbons.

How much ribbon would it take to decorate two teenage girls? The error here is that the antecedent (**braids**) is implied, but not stated. The rule is not to use a pronoun to refer to an implied antecedent.

When Gloria set the pitcher on the glass-topped table, it broke.

Does Gloria owe the department store for a broken pitcher, a broken glass-topped table, or did she hit the jackpot and break both objects? The rule here is to avoid ambiguous pronoun reference.

Ambiguity also occurs in constructions where the nouns to which a pronoun could refer are both male or both female.

The boy told his brother that he was in trouble with their father.

The innocent party will want to resolve this confusion immediately.

Mentor Wanted

La Cueva High School Gifted Mentorship class is looking for a writer who would be willing to mentor an aspiring writer a few hours a week. Amber Arquitola is a very responsible and focused sophomore who enjoys writing short stories with an emphasis on fantasy. We have had several SWW mentors in the past several years and it has always been a very rewarding experience for both individuals. Including writing assignments/exercises, one short meeting a week would easily facilitate her requirements for our course. If you would like to assist in this endeavor, please contact Melody Groves (MelodyGroves@comcast.net) or Flip Knutson at knutson@aps.edu or call La Cueva High School, 823-2327 ext 278.

2011 Sixth Bi-Monthly Writing Contest

A Poem About the Southwest

Enter a poem of any form, double-spaced, no page limit. You don't necessarily have to write "about" the Southwest. You just have to make sure there is at least some Southwestern imagery in the poem. **Postmark deadline: December 31, 2011.** 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 Bimonthly Contest, 3721 Morris NE, Albuquerque, NM 87111.

Welcome New Members

Kim Agricola

Alice Benson

Alex Boyd

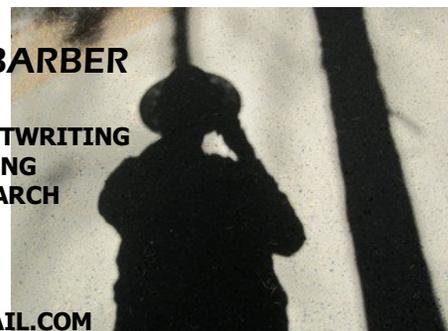
Chloe Diazdebedoya

John Martin

CYNTHIA BARBER

**GHOSTWRITING
EDITING
RESEARCH**

**505-239-9365
CYDBARB@GMAIL.COM**



Narrative vs. Authorial Voice *by Uma Krishnaswami and Joanne Rocklin*

The following is an excerpt from a blogpost interview (<http://umakrishnaswami.blogspot.com>) in which the authors discuss “voice” as it relates to their writing, originally posted on September 12, 2011 under the heading “Process Talk: Conversation With Joanne Rocklin, Part 2.”

[UK] We’re talking about narrative voice here, as opposed to a larger authorial Voice with a capital V. Can narrative voice be taught? Hmm, can writing be “taught” in that sense? It can be learned, I do know that. What I don’t believe is that voice is something I need to “find,” as if I’d misplaced the darned thing somewhere. Rather, I believe it’s my job to create many voices, each one suited to the story it needs to tell.

I think one can train one’s ear to become sensitive to voices on the page, and by that too I mean many voices. For instance, when I get stuck with writing I read. It’s that simple. And when I read I’m absorbing voices of characters and I’m also absorbing the narrative choices made by the writer. There may be some people who have a tin ear. Maybe they just won’t get this way of learning to write, but in that case maybe they shouldn’t be trying to write. There may be people who are more sensitive to narrative voice than others. Even so, I think one can learn to read to pick up the rhythm and flow, the echoes and recursions, of a narrative voice.

As to the other meaning of “voice”—the uppercase meaning of an author’s stamp that carries across many works—I prefer not to pay any attention to that. It’s just too bewildering to think of my own work that way. Crafting one story at a time is hard enough.

So maybe narrative voice can’t be taught, exactly. But you can create circumstances that will allow it to rise to the surface, as it obviously did for both of us, in both these books.

[JR] I love thinking/talking about “voice” because often it’s what separates mediocre from good to excellent work. It’s fascinating, even more so because it can’t be defined—or perhaps because different people are often discussing different things—even when they assume they’re on the same page (excuse the pun!)

I think you’ve delineated its aspects beautifully just now, distinguishing between narrative voice and “Voice.” There’s the

voice of a particular character, with all its particular quirks. There’s the voice of the times, and the slang, lingo used...And also the sheer voice of using lovely, poetic language...which may relate to voice with a capital V, as you put it.

That Voice is what editors are looking for. I think it means originality, fluency, courage, openness to intuition, personality, and what makes the reader enter your world and forget the real one, or at the very least, enjoy the writing. (Sometimes a voice that’s too unique makes the reader aware of the author at the expense of the story!)

Anyway, I don’t think THAT Voice can be taught—you either have it or you don’t. BUT, there are ways to make it more easily appear, if indeed it’s buried in there somewhere. And that’s to clear out extraneous critical voices in your head (i.e. critics, colleagues, other authors’ characters, your mother, your own Superego) and just plunge in, listening hard to the voices of the characters in your head.

In both our cases, this time, the omniscient voice did something interesting for us—liberating our stories and characters, as well as adding some richness to our Voices.

[UK] I think it’s true that writing is an act of courage. For myself, I do need to get all possible critical chatter out of my mind. Only then can I listen to the potential of my own stories and move beyond the obvious.

[JR] For *One Day and One Amazing Morning on Orange Street*, I knew I wanted to get inside all the characters who lived on Orange Street, even animals and that tree. The omniscient voice served to link them all, and to enter and leave each character.

At the time, I was fortunate to attend a 6-week artists’ retreat

(Continued on page 9)



Uma Krishnaswami writes for children and teaches writing in the MFA/Writing for Children and YA program, Vermont College of Fine Arts. Uma’s latest middle grade novel, *The Grand Plan to Fix Everything*, was published by Atheneum in May 2011 to starred reviews from Kirkus and Publishers Weekly. (Represented by Anna Webman of Curtis Brown, Ltd) Visit Uma’s blog, *Writing with a Broken Tusk*, at www.umakrishnaswami.com.

Joanne Rocklin is the author of several books: *One Day and One Amazing Morning on Orange Street*, an Indie Bound book published by Abrams, received starred reviews from Kirkus and School Library Journal; *Strudel Stories*, a School Library Journal Best Book of the Year and an American Library Association Notable Book; and *for Your Eyes Only!*, a School Library Journal Best Book and a Bank Street Best Book. www.joannerocklin.com.



The new year is a good time to review your writing goals. Where do you want to go in your writing life? Do you want to make a steady income, or is it more important to write what you love, regardless of the market? Do you care more about winning awards or providing escapism?

From the beginning, my focus was professional. I wrote for children because I love it, but I also wanted to live off of my writing, not hold down another job and write on the side. I pursued articles, work for hire, teaching, anything that might pay the bills. My career has had ups and downs, but for me, the focus on building writing as a career worked. I do work I love, and I get paid for it.

Art Versus Commerce

Not everyone puts income first. For Louise Spiegler, author of the children's novels *The Jewel and the Key* and *The Amethyst Road*, another job pays the bills. With writing, the main goal is always "to write compelling, passionate, funny, tragic, thought-provoking books that really speak to my readers. This means I need to keep pushing myself to work on my craft, to think hard and work hard."

Goals can change over time, as we learn more about ourselves and our field. Author and writing coach Esther Hershenhorn says, "I've watched writers assess their interests, talents and experiences to find related niches—reviewing books for a journal or website, writing curriculum materials, working with book fairs, selling at bookstores, writing PR plans for fellow writers, returning to library school."

It's important to realize when you are consciously changing goals, and when you're being led astray. Suzanne Morgan Williams found a tempting side path early on, when a fiction submission led to an offer of a nonfiction book project and eventually ten books. Williams could have stayed on that easy path, but she remembered her original goal: to write fiction. Eventually, she says, "I made the conscious decision not to pursue more nonfiction contracts until I'd spent some real time working on my fiction skills." With that new focus, Williams wrote and sold her first novel, *Bull Rider*.



Chris Eboch's career has led her through teaching, critiquing, [children's book writing](#) (including *The Eyes of Pharaoh: a mystery in ancient Egypt*, and *The Well of Sacrifice: a Mayan adventure*), and [writing romantic suspense](#) under the name Kris Bock (*Rattled*, *Whispers in the Dark*). Get more writing tips from her book [Advanced Plotting](#), and visit her on her blog: <http://chriseboch.blogspot.com/>.

Step By Step

A regular review of your personal goals can keep you on track or help you recognize when it's time to change. You may want a review whenever you feel bored or frustrated, as instinct may be telling you that you're on the wrong path.

Make your goals as specific as possible. For example, "Make money from writing" is vague. Will you be happy with \$10 from an online poem so you can say you've been paid? Do you want to be able to claim writing as a business on your tax forms? Contribute a certain amount to the family income? Quit your day job?

You also need to break down goals into short- and long-term. Making enough money to quit your day job may be a 10-year goal. You can then set short-term goals to help you get there.

Author Sydney Salter says, "When I decided that I really wanted to make writing a professional career, not just a hobby, I bought an engagement calendar to use just for my writing. Each day I recorded what I did to work on my writing career, whether revising a magazine article, researching a novel, writing 1,500 words, or reading a Newbery-winning novel over the weekend. I also recorded goals at the beginning of each month to keep myself on track—things like write 12,000 words, submit teen story to *Children's Writer* contest, read three MT Anderson books. This technique kept me focused on my goals and allowed me to have some small successes, such as published magazine stories and contest wins, while I worked toward book publication."

Each step on the path not only brings you closer to your destination, it also builds valuable skills for when you arrive. Salter says, "When I found an interested agent, I was grateful for the discipline that I'd learned through years of treating my writing seriously. My editor also appreciates my work ethic."

You may not achieve every goal you set. You can't win an award just because you want to, or even because you work really hard. But you can focus on improving your craft so you can write books of the style and quality that win awards. That puts you on the right path. Perhaps that path will lead to the realization of your dream. At least you'll be heading in the right direction, and can enjoy the journey.

Here are a few questions to help you set specific writing goals in the new year:

- What is my primary writing goal? My secondary writing goals?
- How can these goals work together? Do they contradict each other at all? Do they interfere with other career, family or personal goals?
- What steps do I need to take? Do I need to work on specific craft techniques, time management, market research, or submissions?
- Which steps come first? How can I schedule the steps to reach my goals?

Meetings

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



Holiday Brunch

Saturday, December 3
10:00 a.m.

Join us as we gather with lots of goodies to celebrate another year of SouthWest Writers.

Bring your favorite yuletide treats to share and help us ring in a new writing year!

Reminder:

There will be no Tuesday evening meeting in December due to the holidays.

Saturday, December 3
10:00 a.m. to noon
Members free, guests \$5

Adaptation: How to Turn Your Novel Into a Screenplay Without Having a Nervous Breakdown

Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez



Alisa Valdes-Rodriguez is a *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of many novels. Her work is published in 11 languages and she has more than 1 million books in print. Alisa was named one of the 25 Most Influential Hispanics in the United States by *Time* magazine; *Latina* magazine named her a Woman of the Year. *Entertainment Weekly* hailed her as a Break-out Literary Star, and *Hispanic Business* magazine has twice named her among the 100 Most Influential people in the nation. Alisa is a former staff writer for the *Boston Globe* and the *Los Angeles Times*, and holds a master's in journalism degree from Columbia University.

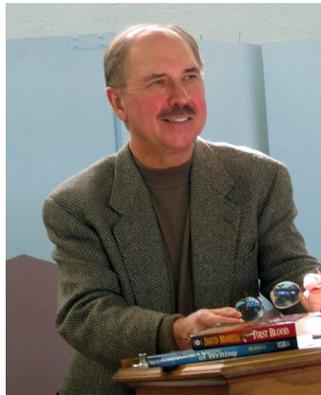
Saturday, January 7
10:00 a.m. to noon
Members free, guests \$5

The Current State of Publishing

David Morrell

David Morrell has seen numerous changes in publishing in the last four decades, but none as dramatic and rapid as happened in the past few years. Morrell will discuss those changes, including the rise of e-books, the Borders bankruptcy, self-publishing, and new royalty models, among various topics. This will be a lively session, so bring your questions. Copies of Morrell's writing book, *The Successful Novelist: A Lifetime of Lessons About Writing and Publishing*, will be for sale at the meeting.

New Mexico resident David Morrell created Rambo in his debut novel, *First Blood*. His other bestselling novels include *The Brotherhood of the Rose*, the basis for the only TV mini-series to be broadcast after a Super Bowl. Several of his books, including *Extreme Denial* and *The Spy Who Came for Christmas* are set in Santa Fe, where he lives. The upcoming year, 2012, will be David's 40th year as a published author, an eternity when most careers last 15 or 20 years.



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

Ghostwriting for Nonfiction and Fiction

Loretta Hall

People with important stories to write sometimes can't write them themselves. Perhaps they are too busy, or they don't have good enough writing skills. These people—or their employers—may be willing to pay you to do the writing for them. Writer and occasional ghostwriter Loretta Hall will explain how ghostwriting works and how to do it effectively.

Loretta Hall has four nonfiction books in print and is writing the next one. The lessons she has learned from experiences with several publishers will give you a head start with your sales efforts. Although her personal experience is in the nonfiction realm, her tips for thinking like a publisher can be useful to novelists as well. Hall served on the SouthWest Writers board for four years and received the 2007 Parris Award.



Find SouthWest Writers on Facebook

January/February Classes

CREATIVE MARKETING FOR AUTHORS

By Loretta Hall

January 21, 28, February 4, 11, 2 pm - 4:00 pm
\$160 members and \$190 non-members

Whether your book is self-published or produced by a publishing company, you will be its primary marketer. Learn a variety of strategies and techniques to market your book.

Loretta Hall is the author of five nonfiction books, two of which she actively markets. Only 30 percent of published books earn back their advance, and Loretta's book, *Underground Buildings: More than Meets the Eye*, is about to achieve that milestone. *Out of this World: New Mexico's Contributions to Space Travel*, published in 2011, appeals to a very different audience, but she is adapting the strategies she learned with the earlier book, adding some new twists.

SURFING YOUR ENTHUSIASM: Make Writing Goals Work

By Sue Sullivan

January 23 and 30 and February 6, 6 pm - 7:30 pm
\$90 members and \$120 non-members

Do you get enthusiastic and determined to write, but you aren't writing anywhere near as much as you'd like? Or have you done a lot of writing in the past, but you don't actually finish the work? In this class you'll work with writing goals that support you in developing your internal motivation so you don't have to force yourself to sit down to write.

Sue Sullivan has been actively involved in personal development for nearly 30 years. At one point, she found she hardly wrote any more and couldn't find the motivation to continue. She explored what was happening and discovered the underlying issues. She now enjoys writing again and is excited about where her writing is leading her. Visit her blog at: www.surfingyoureenthusiasm.com/blog/

For more information and to register for classes and workshops sign up at SWW meetings, register online at www.southwestwriters.com or call the SWW office at 265-9485

Workshop And Class Refund Policy

If you cancel one week before the workshop or class beginning date you will receive a full refund. Cancellations less than one week prior up to 24 hours prior to the beginning of the workshop or class will receive a credit only toward a future workshop or class of your choice. If you do not cancel or don't show up for the workshop or class you will receive no refund and no credit. 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.

DAZZLING DESCRIPTION: How to Show-Not-Tell

By Chris Eboch

January 24 and 31, 2 pm - 4 pm
\$80 members and \$110 non-members

You've been told, "Show, Don't Tell." Now learn how. Learn Chris' secrets in this fun, hands-on-pen workshop. We'll discuss facts versus opinions, sense data, body language, showing through dialog, and what point of view really means.

EXPLORE INDIE PUBLISHING:

Develop Your Own Business Plan

By Chris Eboch

January 24 and 31, 6 pm - 8 pm
\$80 members and \$110 non-members

You've heard the buzz about self-publishing. But is it right for you? And if so, how do you make it happen? We'll discuss who should and shouldn't self-publish (and why), explore the pros and cons, and study an overview of the process. Then we'll develop step-by-step business plans with timelines. You'll receive resources for editing, proofreading, cover art, and more, plus information on how to get the word out about your book.

Chris Eboch teaches writing workshops around the world. Her book *Advanced Plotting* helps writers fine-tune their plots and her *Write Like a Pro!* blog offers free writing advice at <http://chriseboch.blogspot.com>. Chris is the author of 13 books for young people (www.chriseboch.com) and writes for adults as Kris Bock (www.krisbock.com). She has 12 traditionally published books and two self-published books, with one more of each on the way.

X-RAY, MACHETE AND SCALPEL: Shaping the Novel

By Betsy James

February 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 & March 7, 14, 21, 6 - 8:30 pm
\$320 members and \$370 non-members

You've got a draft. What now? This class will help you whip that puppy into shape. With a focus on structure, we'll use respectful peer critique to consider aspects of the novel such as plot and pacing, characterization, dialogue, word-pruning, and the infamous "show, don't tell." For special requirements for Betsy's class, go to the SWW website at www.southwestwriters.com.

Betsy James is the author of sixteen books and many short stories for adults, young adults and children. Her most recent title, *Listening at the Gate* (Atheneum 2006), is a James Tiptree Honor Book and a New York Public Library Best Book for the Teen Age; her short stories appear in *Realms of Fantasy*. Visit her at www.listeningatthegate.com (adult) or www.betsyjames.com (juvenile).

Pushcart Prize Ranking (Fiction) for 2012

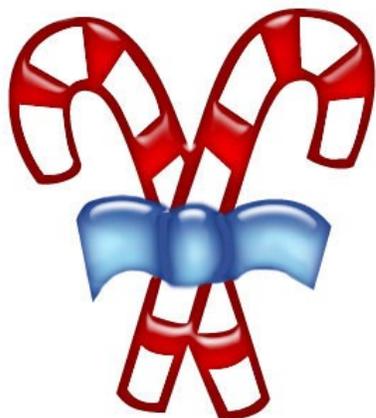
Every year author Clifford Garstang pores over his copy of the newest Pushcart Prize anthology and ranks magazines according to his findings in order to help target his submissions to literary magazines.

Garstang uses a ten-year rolling system that began with the 2001 volume—this year it includes 2003-2012. He includes only the Pushcart Prize and not BASS (Best American Short Stories) or O. Henry Awards for several reasons: “there is overlap among these different anthologies, so that some stories may appear in all of them or two of them. The ‘glossy’ magazines are considered for BASS, but not Pushcart. Online magazines are not considered for O. Henry but are beginning to be recognized by Pushcart...the Pushcart Prize anthology seems to me to best reflect the literary magazine world in which I participate.”

He offers a disclaimer on his website, saying, “Rankings of literary magazines are of questionable value. Most such rankings are subjective. Others depend on data that may not be available for all magazines, such as circulation or payment to authors, or response time. These are important factors to some and I don’t discount them. It’s just that diversity in these areas, and the advent of high-quality online magazines, make such factors problematic. This ranking, on the other hand, is extremely simple. I look at the annual volume of Pushcart Prize winners and the list of Special Mentions included in the back of the volume. I award a certain number of points for a winner and fewer points for a special mention. I add up the points and make a list.”

The table on the right includes only those magazines ranked in the top 25 (those marked with © might have stopped publication). To see Garstang’s complete 2012 list of hundreds of magazines and their corresponding scores, visit his blog at www.perpetualfolly.blogspot.com/ For his fiction, go to www.CliffordGarstang.com.

2012 Rank	Magazine	2012 Score
1	Ploughshares	103
2	Tin House	74
3	Conjunctions	72
3	Zoetrope: All Story	72
5	Southern Review	63
6	Georgia Review	54
7	Threepenny Review	50
8	One Story	48
9	Ontario Review ©	46
9	Paris Review	46
11	Epoch	45
12	McSweeney's	42
12	New England Review	42
14	A Public Space	41
15	Kenyon Review	40
16	Five Points	34
16	Missouri Review	34
18	TriQuarterly	33
19	Boulevard	30
19	New Letters	30
19	Noon	30
19	Shenandoah	30
23	Antioch Review	29
23	Witness	29
25	Agni	28



Voice

(Continued from page 5)

at the Ragdale Institute. Nothing to do but listen to all those voices in my head. I was in heaven.

[UK] A few years ago, I ended up spending some time in the Nilgiris, the mountains featured in *The Grand Plan to Fix Everything*. It was important for me to keep that “real” to the extent I could, so I listened to the “music” of the place—the wind, the echoes of faraway traffic, temple bells, goatherds driving flocks down dirt roads. All those sounds that fed a kind of melody that was starting to take shape in my mind.

Indian writer Ruskin Bond, a legend in his lifetime, says he’s willing to read anything “if it has tone, style, and substance.” I think it’s the qualities of voice that give tone and style to the substance of a story.

On October 7 and 8—a crisp, autumn weekend—more than 70 enthusiastic children’s authors and illustrators converged on the University of New Mexico Student Union Building for the annual SCBWI Handsprings Conference. What could be more fun than a roomful of children’s authors and illustrators?

SouthWest Writers was a co-sponsor of the SCBWI Conference. For those who may not know, SCBWI is an acronym for the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators.

The Friday evening social and Book Launch began with an icebreaker led by Stephanie Farrow. Each person was handed a paper with familiar lines from a picture book or young adult novel. The goal was to match the book with the author and to get signatures from people who knew the answers. What a fun way to meet a lot of people! In addition, four proud authors introduced their recently published books. A highlight of the evening was the presentation of a bouquet of flowers to Vaunda Michaeux Nelson for winning the Coretta Scott King award for her book, *Bad News for Outlaws: Bass Reeves, Deputy U.S. Marshall*.

Saturday morning, the conference attendees drank coffee and tea while decorating nametags with crayons and pens. The line-up of conference speakers was impressive: Stacey Barney, an editor at Penguin/Putnam Books for Young Readers; Andrew Harwell, an associate editor at Harper-Collins Children’s; Jill Corcoran, an agent representing children’s books at the Herman Agency; and Loraine Joyner, Art Director, Peachtree Publishing. Presenters profiled their publishing houses and backgrounds as well as their particular interests in children’s books. The focus seemed to be on middle grade readers and young adult novels, although they all had experience with picture books and chapter books.

When the presenters invited authors to send their manuscripts—an invitation for conference attendees only—everyone hurriedly scribbled the contact information.

As a panel, the speakers responded to several authors’ first pages. The consensus was that the first page *must* lure in the reader. The opening should reveal the genre, the setting, the main character, and the problem or conflict. Who says that writing for children is easy?

A long lunch break allowed the participants to dine at a number of eateries around the university area and, again, network with peers and editors and maybe pitch a manuscript.

The presenters held afternoon workshops to which attendees had been pre-assigned. Topics included “Reading with a Critical Eye,” “Keep Your Eye on the Arc,” “How to Improve Your Writing Voice and Your Characters’ Voice,” and “Once Upon a Picture.” The workshops focused on both the craft of writing and the importance of studying the market. As Jill Corcoran pointed out in her workshop, the market is constantly changing. She suggested going to a bookstore and reading the first page of every book in a specific genre to know what is selling in today’s market.

John’s Shelf, a book drive to collect books for children, has become an important feature of the conference and an opportunity to donate books to children who are fighting cancer at UNM Hospital. This year, attendees donated two boxes of books for children undergoing cancer treatment.

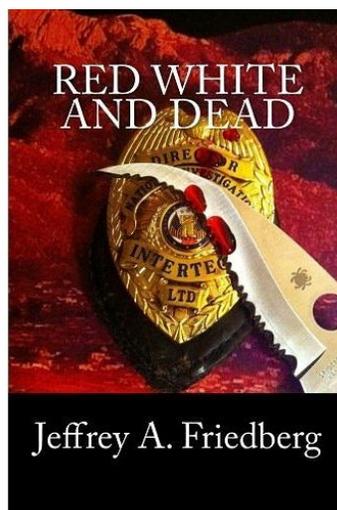
The SCBWI 2011 Conference renewed enthusiasm for writing and provided specific tools to improve manuscripts,

(Continued on page 11)

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**

Member Successes

Many Genres One Craft: Lessons in Writing Popular Fiction (which contains **David J. Corwell's** article, "Successful Book Signings: The Personal Touch") is a USA Best Books 2011 finalist in the Writing & Publishing category. The writer's guide was also reviewed as one of "10 of this year's terrific writing books" in the December 2011 issue of *The Writer* magazine.

Donald DeNoon received Honorable Mention in the 2010 Ohio Poetry Day Contest for his poem "Where I'm From" which was entered in The Road Taken contest category.

The book trailer for **Robert Downs's** *Falling Immortality* had a launch date of 11/11/11. You can find it on a number of video sharing websites including Youtube as well as his own website: www.robertdowns.net. If you prefer your writing tips in snippets, then check out his Facebook page at www.facebook.com/RobertDownsBooks.

Jan Fenimore placed 39th in the Children's/Young Adult Fiction category of the 80th Annual Writer's Digest Writing Competition with her entry "Pedro's Magic Apples." There were 11,899 entries in 10 categories. "Pedro's Magic Apples" also won 1st place in the CBI Clubhouse contest for children's stories. In the same contest, she received an honorable mention for "Butterflies are Free." Both stories can be read at: www.short-story-time.com/short-story-writing-contest.html

Nancy LaTurner announces the publication of *Voluntary Nomads*, a memoir recalling adventures of Foreign Service family life in Iran, Cameroon, New Zealand, Somalia, Dominican Republic, Austria, and Bolivia from 1974 to 1996. *Voluntary Nomads* is available in paperback on Amazon.com and in all eBook formats at Smashwords.com.

Gayle Lauradunn's poem "Summer Rain" appeared in the November issue of *The Rag*. Free copies can be found at Alamosa Books, Bird Song Books, Acequia Booksellers, Page One and other places around town.

Judy Liddell, co-author of *Birding Hot Spots of Central New Mexico* published by Texas A & M Press as part of their W.L. Moody Mr. Natural History Series, has had book talks and signings at UNM's Center for Development and Disability, Rio Grande Nature Center State Park and Bookworks. Upcoming talks and signings are scheduled for Alamosa Books, Nov. 27; Wild Birds Unlimited, Dec. 3; and Fat Finch on Dec. 4. The press asked her and her co-author to do a companion piece for them featuring northern New Mexico.

If you are a SouthWest Writers member and you have a success or announcement to include in the Sage, send it prior to the 15th of the month to Kathy Wagoner, SWW Sage Editor, at justwritesww@gmail.com.

Jonathan Miller's new novel hit the top 100 on Amazon.com. *Lawyer Geisha Pink*, a legal thriller with elements of anime, made it to No. 73 in Short Story Collections even though it is not a short story collection. Look for Jon when he gives his annual speech at SWW this March.

A brief report in the October 11, 2011 Publisher's Weekly announced that **Shirley Raye Redmond's** upcoming book *Fairies: a True Story* (Random House) will have a 50,000 first print run. The title will be released in March 2012.

New Mexico Book Award Winners

Winners of the 2011 New Mexico Book Awards were announced on Friday, November 18. Congratulations to the following SWW members who were honored:

Joanne Bodin *Walking Fish*, Outskirts Press • Gay/Lesbian

David Corwell *Daily Flash 2011*, Pill Hill Press
• Fiction, Sci Fi & Fantasy

Melody Groves *Hoist a Cold One: Historic Bars of the Southwest*, University of New Mexico Press • Travel

Loretta Hall *Out of this World: New Mexico & Space Travel*, Rio Grande Books • History, New Mexico subject • Best New Mexico Book

Katherine Hauth *What's for Dinner?*, Charlesbridge
• Juvenile

Marianne Powers *Doing the Right Thing*, Quillrunner Publishing • Business

Paul Rhett *Contemporary Hispanic Market*, Rio Grande Books • Art & Photography • Best of Show

Gail Rubin *A Good Goodbye: Funeral Planning*, Light Tree Press • Parenting/Family Issues • Best of Show

Sandi Wright *The Adventures of Santa Fe Sam*, Art Academy de los Ninos • Young Readers

SCBWI Handsprings Conference

(Continued from page 10)

as well as ways to study the market and reduce the number of rejection letters. Prior to the conference, a number of authors had requested written critiques, and editors requested additional material. The Peachtree Art Director also expressed interest in several of the illustrators' work. Could contracts be forthcoming?

Thank you, SCBWI and SWW, for a successful conference.

Announcements

Duke City Dime Stories is an open mic prose reading. Dime Stories are three-minute prose pieces read by the author. Join us at 7pm in the Garden Room at The Source, 1111 Carlisle Blvd. SE, south of Central at Anderson, every THIRD Thursday of the month. \$3 donation. Sign-up at 6:45pm. Remaining 2011 events: Dec 15. Go to the website www.dimestories.org, click through to Albuquerque, On the Air and Archives. Contact Merimee Moffitt 505-262-2508

Narrative Fall 2011 Story Contest. \$3,250 First Prize; \$1,500 Second Prize; \$750 Third Prize; and ten finalists receive \$100 each. Open to fiction and nonfiction. All entries considered for publication. **Deadline: November 30.** www.narrativemagazine.com/

The Sarasota County Film & Entertainment Office announces a call for entries for the 2012 TV ME! Contest -- the nationwide innovative writers' competition seeking fresh, creative content ideas for television programming. Entries may be submitted **through December 30.** www.TVMEcontest.com

The Anisfield-Wolf Book Awards annually honor books which contribute to the understanding of racism or appreciation of the diversity of human culture. This award for published books is \$10,000. **Deadline: December 31.** www.anisfield-wolf.org/submissions/submission-guidelines/

Pavement Saw Press Chapbook Award is offered for previously unpublished poetry chapbooks (up to 32 pages). First place wins \$500, plus publication and 50 copies. **Deadline: December 31.** www.pavementsaw.org/pages/chapcontest.htm

Glimmertrain Press, Inc. is accepting entries for their Fiction Open contest which is open to all writers, all themes.

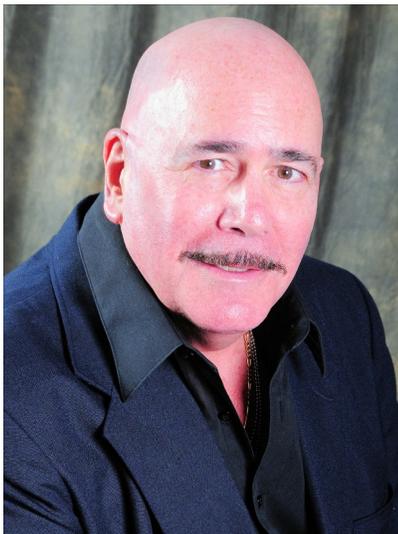
Submissions accepted **starting December 1. Deadline: January 2, 2012.** Reading fee is \$18 per story. 1st place wins \$2000, publication in *Glimmer Train Stories*, and 20 copies of that issue. 2nd-place: \$1000, 3rd-place: \$600. Go to www.glimmertrain.com and click on Writing Guidelines.

Attention women writers in New Mexico! **New Mexico Press Women** is looking for nonfiction books published in 2009, 2010 or 2011 to honor with the Zia Book Award. For more information, visit <http://newmexicopresswomen.org/contests/> and click on the **2012 Zia Book Award link.**

Nominations are now being accepted for the **William Saroyan International Prize for Writing.** Two prizes of \$5,000 each are given biennially for works of fiction and nonfiction. The awards are intended to "encourage new or emerging writers and honor the Saroyan legacy of originality, vitality, and stylistic innovation." **Deadline: January 31, 2012.** saroyanprize.stanford.edu

Brevity publishes well-known and emerging writers working in the extremely brief (750 words or less) essay form. We are currently reading for both our regular issues and our themed issue—*Ceiling or Sky: Female Nonfictions after the VIDA Count* (a special issue guest-edited by Susanne Antonetta, Barrie Jean Borich, and Joy Castro). Submissions **accepted until May 1, 2012**, authors will be paid a \$45 honorarium for work selected. To submit, go to: <http://brevity.submishmash.com/submit>

Registration is open for the tenth annual **Oregon Coast Children's Book Writers Workshop**, www.occbww.com, to be held 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.



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