



## Ten Great Reasons to Attend a Writers Conference

by Susan Denney

**G**oing to my first writers conference was an act of faith. I was just starting to make freelance sales when my writers group encouraged me to join them at a conference a few hundred miles away. The expense didn't seem justified as it was far more than I had earned through writing that year. But they convinced me and it proved to be a great investment. The benefits of a writers' conference are there for anyone who has a desire to be a better writer. Here are ten reasons I think you should go to at least one writers conference every year. I've even added a bonus reason that's a real winner.

**1. Meet other writers.** Wherever you are on the road to success, you will meet others who have been there before and are ready to help you. Writers as a group are very supportive. Make an effort to say hello and sit at tables with people you don't know. You may find others who will offer to take you to the next step in your writing.

**2. Practical information you can put to immediate use.** You might attend a seminar on how to organize your paperwork or how to format a manuscript or how to send a query to an editor or how to do your taxes. Whether a newbie or a pro, you will get nuts and bolts knowledge you can use to make your writing pay off better.

**3. Learn something.** You probably write partly because you love reading and gaining knowledge. Maybe you even liked English class. Humans are hardwired to get excited about learning new things and writers conferences are always full of ideas and insights on the craft.

**4. Get energized.** There's nothing more infectious than a bunch of people excited about the same thing. Remember those pep rallies from high school? Their goal was to inspire in you a desire to see the team win. Being a successful writer is a far more important goal.

**5. Win something.** If the conference includes a writing contest, you should definitely enter. Whether you win or lose, you will be doing some serious writing before you go and will make sure it is your very best. With any luck, you will get a helpful critique.

**6. Learn about different genres.** A friend entered a writers' conference contest to try confession writing. She would never have attempted that particular kind of

writing had she not been entering a contest. While disappointed that she didn't win, she later sold that story!

**7. Find new markets.** Conferences attract all kinds of writers. Some will write for markets you haven't even considered. They might know of a magazine that uses the kinds of things you write or a publisher who is looking for a book like yours.

**8. Improve your professional effectiveness.** Schoolteachers, doctors, engineers and lawyers all must attend a certain number of educational courses every year. Writers' conferences are an excellent way to further your education and improve your knowledge about your craft. Are you serious about writing? Attending a conference will prove you are committed to your chosen profession.

**9. Be inspired.** If you go with an ear to listen, some speakers may seem to be talking directly to you. Some have overcome great obstacles. Editors and agents also speak at writers conferences. They may give you hope, encouragement or that little push you need. Either way, you will find the courage to keep on writing.

**10. Meet editors and agents.** This is the ultimate payoff: editors and agents attend writers conferences to find people like you who have a book or an idea that will make them money. Writers really do find agents and editors this way. At many conferences, you can get an appointment and find yourself face to face with a living, breathing editor or agent who wants to hear about your work. This is a thousand times better than sending out a manuscript that will almost certainly land at the bottom of a slush pile.

And here's your bonus!

**11. Write off the trip and entry fees.** Uncle Sam will give you a tax break for attending conferences even if you haven't started making money. And that conference may get you so fired up about your writing that making money will be no problem! Check with an accountant to be sure.

*Susan Denney is a regular contributor to Writing for DOLLARS! and has published in Byline Magazine, The Friend, The Ensign, Writing-World, and Nuestra Gente Utah. She is a member of the Lone Star Night Writers and has won writing contests sponsored by the Oklahoma Writers' Federation. Visit her website at [susandenney.com](http://susandenney.com).*

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### ***MYSTERY, MAYHEM and MURDER***

A Conference for Mystery Writers and Fans  
Saturday, February 16, 2008

Details & Registration  
Inside, Page 12

## From the Editor

**I**t's almost time for **Mystery, Mayhem and Murder**. What? You haven't registered yet? Better get a clue!



No alibi is acceptable should you fail to deduce the value of this conference and are found guilty of--dare I say it?--being too late to attend. Sign your *John Henry* before February 13, the last day to choose a dish. Meal, that is, as in stuffed chicken breast or veggie lasagna. Details and registration forms are in this issue.

**Mind Your Own Business** classes are starting this month, too, at least those taught by yours truly. Sign up, yes, but don't stop there. **Bonnie Hayes**, SWW Class Coordinator, has pulled together a stellar line-up of veteran writing business instructors who'll help you free your mind and time for writing. These spring classes could truly change your writing life, so check out Bonnie's preview on page 6.

And start polishing your synopses and writing samples for the 2008 SouthWest Writers Writing Contest. One of the smartest changes is that you should get a critique *before* you enter the contest, which could help slide your entry to the top of the judge's heap. Ask any board member how to do that at a meeting or call the office some weekday morning.

Reorganized categories and simplified rules round out the contest changes, and the rules and categories are available now on [SouthWestWriters.com](http://SouthWestWriters.com). Don't wait for them to appear here next month. Get a head start by going online--it will be May before you know it!

## The Queen of Everything Retires

by **Sandy Schairer**

**L**ela Belle Wolfert, long-time SouthWest Writers member, retired recently from service on the SWW Board of Directors. She joined the board in 1994, and served as secretary before possibly serving on every committee at one time or another, often as chairperson. In recent years she has served on the Audit and Budget Committee, acted as interim Conference Chair and Historian, as well as volunteering on other committees, including the Annual Writing Contest, Tellers, Nominating and Executive Committees.

She was the current chair of the Bylaws and Policies and Procedures committee through 2007, and remains the most knowledgeable SWW member of both Bylaws and P & P. Lela Belle was most often seen at the head table during meetings as chief "board greeter" while selling SWW pens for fund-raising and prior to that as raffle chairperson. Lela Belle was the 2003 Parris Award recipient for exceptional volunteering with an honorary lifetime membership. Even though she'll be missed at the Board meetings, she'll still be

2

Attended a SWW meeting lately? Maybe you left something behind. The following items are stored in the Lost & Found box at the office:

- GM keys and remote
- Notebook with photos on cover
- Blue denim coat
- Brown leather coat

### Food for Thought

We could use help in the kitchen--*your* kitchen. Or even your grocery store. Loads of great food are contributed twice a year on the anniversary of our New Member Breakfast and Holiday Pot Luck and we really appreciate those who bring it. But we eat all year long. If you're so inclined, we need edible contributions at other meetings too. We'll make the coffee and tea!

As always, thanks to my **sage** assistants: **Harold Burnett** (who's helping with the book table at meetings now), **Lola Eagle**, **Larry Greenly** and **Jeanne Shannon**. If you're interested in helping, give one of us a holler. We'll do *SW Sage* over and over until we finally get it right.

*Peggy*

### Animal Valentines

by Eric Ian Schneider  
(With doffed hat to O. Nash)

#### PRAYING MANTIS

Oh, will you be my Valentine,  
And swear, forever to be mine,  
To spread for me until I'm dead,  
And thank me while you eat my head?

seen at SWW events in her distinctive costumes of color-coordinated outfits with matching jewelry and, of course, her amazing hats. The Queen of Everything, as she's known by SWW friends and fans, has no plans for retiring from her writing career. Lela Belle is the author of *Wishes in the Wind*, a collection of original poetry, and a new romantic suspense novel, *Deception and Desire*. We eagerly await publication of subsequent novels.



SWW attendees will still be able to meet and greet her on the first Saturday and third Tuesday of the month. With a PhD in literature, Lela Belle is a retired school teacher of 40-plus years, an active member of the Romance Writers of America local chapter, Land of Enchantment Romance Authors, and Writers to Writers (both as presenter and attendee), and the free writing classes held at Hastings on Coors at Montano once a month.

*Sandy Schairer, PhD is secretary of the Board, Author of Extremely Short Stories for Busy People, and The Vault of the Poeteer.*



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**Don't miss out! Register now!**

Mystery Writers and Fans

**Mystery, Mayhem and Murder**

**Saturday, February 16, 2008**

Conference

Banquet

**Features**

- 1 Ten Great Reasons to Attend a Writers Conference** by Susan Denney
- 2, 6, 9, 15: Animal Valentines** ..... by Eric Schneider  
*Eric Schneider took 1st Place in the 2007 Writers Contest, Screenplay Category*
- 2 The Queen of Everything Retires** ..... by Sandy Schairer
- 5 Education of a Writer** ..... by Meg Went
- 7 Strength in Words** ..... by Katherine A. Scott
- 10 Minding Finances for Writers** ..... by Sherri Burr
- Never Been Published? Fine Opportunity** ..... by Eileen Stanton
- 11 What the Right Comparison Can Do for You**.....by Kirt Hickman
- 12 Mystery Conference Information and Registration**

**Departments**

- 2 From the Editor
- 4 Successes, Announcements, Signings
- 6 SWW Classes
- 8 February Events
- 9 March Events
- 14 Monthly Writing Competition Critique Groups, Ad Rates
- 15 Contests

**Annual Membership in SouthWest Writers**

Individual: \$60 (\$100 for 2 years), Two People: \$50/each, Student: Over 18\* \$40,

Student: Under 18\* \$25, Outside U.S.: \$65, Lifetime Membership: \$750

\*Requires proof of student status. Download the Sage from SWW Website.

**Join us! First Saturday: 10am-Noon; Workshop: 1-4 pm. Third Tuesday: 7-9 pm. New Life Presbyterian Church, 5540 Eubank NE, Albuquerque, New Mexico**

**Read how one writer used SouthWest Writers to write, edit and publish her book.**

**Turn to page 5**

## Member Successes

From travel writer **Kay Grant**: the North American Travel Journalists Association (NATJA) has announced the winners of its 15th annual awards contest for pieces published in 2007. I am pleased and proud that I won three awards:

- First place, *Destination Travel Domestic* (Magazine) — “LA’s Two Getty Museums” in *Valley Life Quarterly* (published by the *San Jose Business Journal*)
- Runner Up, Personality Profile — “Working Undercover” in *New Mexico Magazine*.
- Honorable Mention, Leisure Activity — “Girlfriends Getaways” in *Valley Life Quarterly* (published by the *San Jose Business Journal*)

**Jeanne Shannon** has two poems scheduled for publication in *Bear Creek Haiku*.

**Meg Wente** has published her first book, *And We Ate the Leopard: Serving in the Belgian Congo*. This family memoir recounts the unusual life of the author’s parents--a doctor and a teacher--far up a tributary of the Congo River on a remote mission post living in a hunting and fishing culture. After 28 years, the Bakers were evacuated by the US Air Force when the newly independent Congo erupted in chaos. The author was born and spent her childhood there. The book is available from the publisher at *iuniverse.com* and from *amazon.com*.  
*Editor’s Note: See page 5 for the full story.*

As a result of last year’s SWW contest, **Karin Bradberry** was contacted by the editor of *Pudding Magazine: The International Journal of Applied Poetry*. Her prize-winning villanelle, “Wolves,” will appear in a forthcoming issue.

*The MoonQuest* received a glowing review in *Library Journal*, the prestigious national magazine, as well as a ninth five-star review on Amazon. Its cover was also voted the November 2007 book cover of the month on the Erinn Aislinn website. **Mark David Gerson**’s new book on writing, *The Voice of the Muse: Answering the Call to Write*, was released in January, along with *The Voice of the Muse Companion*, a 2-CD set of guided meditations for writers. Info at [www.calltowrite.com](http://www.calltowrite.com).

From **Marianne Powers**: I wrote a book called *Doing the Right Thing and Achieving All Your Goals at the Same Time*. It’s about people who work in offices and why we fight. Through SWW, I learned that I needed to become a public speaker on my topic since it is non-fiction. I got my first job as a public speaker through SWW when the Director of the Federal Executive Board Book Forum went to the SWW website and followed a link to my website. I was hired to give a talk to 100 people. Since then I have given talks at Albuquerque Quality Network, New Mexico Health Information Management Association, the EEOC, and Sandia Women’s Action Network.

## Announcements

**February 11 at 6:30 p.m.** Writers to Writers Presentation: Outside the Box - Alternative Marketing Techniques by Jill Lane. Westside Hastings (Coors Rd. and Montano), Albuquerque. Info: (505) 898-0624 or [dcorwell@hotmail.com](mailto:dcorwell@hotmail.com).

**February 23, 2-3 p.m.** Santa Fe Salon is hosting a talk on Intuition and Writing at the Zodiac Cafe in Santa Fe. A donation of \$5/person is requested, which is divided between the presenters and SFS.

**May 3 - 11, 2008:** Writers of all levels and genres are invited to attend an InkWell, Inc. and *Scrivere in Italia!* nine-day, intensive writing retreat and workshop in gorgeous Bolsena, Italy. Included are morning tours to spectacular nearby towns; afternoon workshops in a beautiful three-story home complete with nooks and crannies, a peaceful terrace, and wireless Internet; and evenings under the stars brainstorming ideas. Also, short workshops with writing prompts: Dario Castagno, tour guide and author (*Too Much Tuscan Sun*); Teresa Cutler, writing teacher and author (*A Dream That Keeps Returning: Travels in the Italian Sun*) and more. Workshops: Travel Writing, Living and Writing in Italy, Photography for Travel Writers, more. For more information, call Teresa Cutler at 505-306-0906 or visit [inkwell-inc.biz](http://inkwell-inc.biz).

## Book Signings

### Mark David Gerson book signings:

Friday, February 8, 6:00 p.m., Hastings (Tramway), *The Voice of the Muse: Answering the Call to Write*.

Saturday, February 9, 9:40 a.m., Moriarty Author’s Event & Lecture Series at Moriarty Community Library. Talk and book-signing for *The Voice of the Muse: Answering the Call to Write*. Will be present from 9am-3pm for book sales/signings.

Saturday, February 23, 2:00 p.m., Santa Fe Salon at Zodiac Café, 311 Old Santa Fe Trail, Santa Fe. Free talk on *Intuitive Aspects of Fiction-Writing*. Signing *The Voice of the Muse: Answering the Call to Write* and *The MoonQuest*.

Saturday, March 1, 9:30 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. Teaching Writing Workshop at Paradise Valley Community College, Phoenix.

Sunday, March 2, 2:00 p.m. An afternoon of Meditations for Writers at Sedona Heartwalk Center, Sedona, Arizona.

Saturday, March 8, 10:00 a.m. Meet the Authors Book Event at Holy Ghost Catholic School, 6201 Ross SE, book signing for *The Voice of the Muse: Answering the Call to Write* and *The MoonQuest*.

Saturday, March 15, 3:00 p.m. Borders downtown Santa Fe, booksigning for *The MoonQuest*.

Saturday, March 22, 2:00 p.m. Free Writing Class at Well Red Coyote Books, Sedona, Arizona

For information about benefits  
for SWW members contact:  
**Cheri Eicher**

**INDEPENDENT  
MEANS**

Group Benefits  
(505) 890-0358  
(800) 883-4310

## Education of a Writer

by Meg Wente

Eight years ago I decided to write a book. *The Poisonwood Bible* had made missionary work in the Belgian Congo famous and that is where I grew up. Surely a *real* story would be just as popular (well, almost, since few can write like Barbara Kingsolver). I had 28 years of letters my parents had written from the Congo, which I figured pretty well told the story by themselves.



Years ago I read a book by a woman named LeGuin in South Carolina who could hardly write. She probably didn't speak good English either, but she kept a journal and wished she had the money to do exciting things. Instead she cared for her family while her teeth hurt so badly there were long gaps in her journal. Finally, she scraped together the money to have her teeth pulled and rejoiced there was no more pain—no more teeth either, because she had no money. Her son grew up and became a professor of English. He printed a book of excerpts from her journal—probably by his university press. If a book of disjointed, ungrammatical writing could be published, surely my parents' interesting letters could find a publisher.

I found that letters need explanation; my friends said I needed more of "me" in the book. So, I wrote more and quoted less. Another friend advised me to join Southwest Writers and learn more about what I was doing. That led me to join the writing class taught by Larry Greenly and Rob Spiegel. My friend was right. I learned a lot, although probably not in the right order. The first draft of my book neared completion.

The class studied query letters and how to contact publishers. One classmate said that David Guterson, the author of *Snow Falling on Cedars*, had submitted his book to 37 editors before it was accepted for publication and won the PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction. Rob said the trick was to choose the right publishers to contact. I was ready to try.

Seal Press published a simple story *Blessed Thunder* written by a Cuban immigrant about her childhood under Castro. She wrote in her second language. Surely I was doing as well in my first language. Seal Press politely wrote me that they wanted only books about female successes. My dad played a pretty important part in my story, so I guess it didn't qualify, even if my mother was an astounding woman. I can testify that *Writers Market* isn't exciting literature, but I found some more possible publishers there.

I learned a book has to have a genre or no publisher will look at it. That took some reading. *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*, about a family living in Africa, turned out successfully. My mother wasn't an alcoholic, however, and I wasn't willing to show so many warts in the family—even if I could scrape some up. Another African family story told of the author's childhood in Botswana. She had to keep away from her incestuous father. These books were creative non-fiction, a genre new to me. I finally found out in *Love in the Driest Season* by Neely Tucker, a story about a journalist and his wife in Zimbabwe adopting a child, that I was writing a family memoir. Now at least I had a genre.

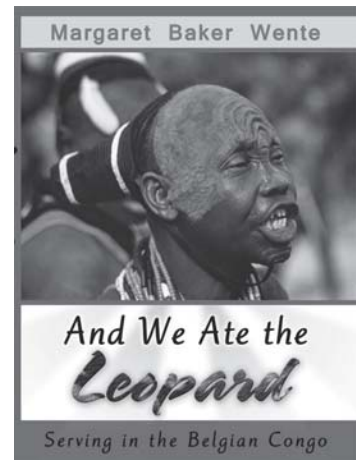
One editor scribbled on the margin of his form letter that he liked my title, *And We Ate the Leopard*—a small success at last among many rejections. One agent, who asked me to send him my first chapter, informed me that missionary kid stories were a drug on the market. I didn't find any regional press for Africa in American universities. Almost eight years had gone by. I had completed several revisions of the manuscript on my own and a major revision with the help of Dina Wolff, who spoke to SWW about memoir writing.

I began to consider self-publishing as less of a failure and more of a publishing choice. Melody Groves' speech about the advantages of keeping one's title and planning the presentation stuck in my mind. A friend of mine published with iUniverse a lovely memoir of her childhood in Congo. Others reported good impressions of iUniverse. After I signed a contract with that publisher, Bob Sanchez spoke to SWW about his success with iUniverse corroborating my choice of a POD publisher.

Now I needed to conquer imprinting pictures in the text. Thank goodness for sons! The proofing process revealed 20% of the index missing. With the index restored and help from friends on the corrections, I returned the document to iUniverse. The cover design looked great.

Now I can say I have both written *and* published a book. It's a family memoir about a doctor and his teaching wife raising their family in the Congo jungle.

*Meg Wente has been a member of SWW for over three years. Before that she served as volunteer office manager for the Albuquerque League of Women Voters and enjoyed teaching fourth and fifth grade for ten years before having her own kids. She's enjoying being retired and playing with her three-year-old and two-week-old grandsons.*



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Contact: [emailerics@yahoo.com](mailto:emailerics@yahoo.com)

Classes are held at the SWW conference room at 3721 Morris St. NE, Suite A, in Albuquerque, which is available to members wishing to teach writing skills. SouthWest Writers is not responsible for the opinions and methods of the instructors. However, we welcome constructive criticism and comments on any class, and these should be forwarded to the office. Classes are limited to 14 and may be tax deductible. Register by calling SWW (505) 265-9485 between 9 a.m. and noon weekdays.

## Word4Writers: Master Your PC and Word 2003

Series of 4 classes, 4 weeks each, starting February 6. Cost of each class series: \$49 for members, \$59 non-members plus \$10 materials—no materials fees if you attend all four series.

Get serious about using your PC for writing. **Peggy Herrington** takes you from hesitant user to confident master of your PC. You'll learn everything from taming Windows XP to writing books and articles with Word 2003 (or earlier) including organization, planning and research, and setup for chapters and entire books. **Sorry: Trouble-shooting is not offered since PC problems can't be investigated.**

### I. Mastering your PC

*February 6-27 6:30-8:30 p.m. 4 Wednesday evenings*  
Maximize Windows XP, organize/find your files, use Microsoft Word 2003 and OneNote 2007 (the writer's best friend) for organization, planning, research, and learn how to search the Internet and get things done. Tips and secrets revealed.

### II. Word4Writers Basic

*March 5-26, 6:30-8:30 p.m. 4 Wednesday evenings*  
Master Word 2003 using fonts, headers/footers, margins, paragraphs, indents, tabs, keyboard shortcuts. Links and tips about free Word lessons online, introduction to styles and templates—the keys to everything!

### III. Word4Writers Advanced

*April 2-23, 6:30-8:30 p.m., 4 Wednesday evenings*  
Master styles and templates and understand how they work, add images and captions, automate your table of contents and index. Necessary skills for all genre writers, but absolutely essential for creating eBooks and non-fiction.

### IV. Managing Longer Documents

*May 7-28, 6:30-8:30 p.m., 4 Wednesday evenings*  
Writing books with Word: more about tables of contents and indices, handling multiple chapters, master documents, outline view, section breaks, macro viruses, automating document summaries. Brief class series review.

**Peggy Herrington** worked for Microsoft from 1996 to 2001. A former technology journalist, she edits *SW Sage* and Friends of the Rio Grande Nature Center's newsletter. Peggy also serves on the SWW board, writes for *albuquerqueARTS* magazine and offers writing, editing, coaching, and Web services at [pegboard.com](http://pegboard.com).

**Animal Valentines**  
by Eric Ian Schneider  
(With doffed hat to O. Nash)  
**TOMCAT**  
Be my Valentine from hence  
I'll meet you on that old back fence  
A treat to meet, it always seems.  
(I really love the way she screams)

## Mind Your Own Business

Free your mind and time for writing!

Can filing be fun? Of course not! Does poise come in a tube? Afraid not! This series of SWW Classes is designed to minimize the pain and fuss of record keeping and marketing. Take advantage of the knowledge and savvy of our veterans to break free of whatever is holding you back. Our small classes (14 students maximum) allow for plenty of individual attention for feedback and support. Have confidence that they can provide the inspiration, the elucidation (or the swift kick) needed to help launch or redirect your writing career.

**Starting in February:** A series of four classes from **Peggy Herrington** give you the skills to Master Your PC and turn your computer from an aggravation to an ally.

Continue to take the steps to reach your goals with new classes coming this spring:

1. Identify your markets with **Rob Spiegel** as your guide. Develop a list of targets and a strategy to evaluate them.
2. Then take your target market list to **Melody Groves** and she will help you customize your bios and promos for those selected markets.
3. Take the next step and learn the do's and don'ts of interviewing with live demonstrations and practice sessions with **Melody Groves**.
4. Put the final polish on the presentation of your work with **Jonathan Miller**. Whether your speech is short or long, in an elevator or a stadium, be prepared to inform, engage, and motivate your audience.

**Watch for dates and details on [SouthWestWriters.com](http://SouthWestWriters.com) and here. Space is limited so sign up soon!**

## Trade Secrets: Boost Your Career by Writing for Low-Profile Magazines

*February 7-21, 2008 Thursday evenings, 7:00-8:30pm*  
Cost: \$39 members, \$49 nonmembers

You won't see them on most people's coffee tables, but trade magazines are the mainstay of many professional writers' careers. Writing for them produces income, generates clips, and develops professional experience. Thousands of trade magazines are published in this country, so there are bound to be some connected with your job experience, your hobbies, or your personal curiosity. This series of hands-on classes will help you identify potential markets for your work, focus your article ideas, and offer trade magazine editors what they want.

**Loretta Hall**, the author of four nonfiction books and more than 200 articles, has been writing for trade magazines for 15 years.

## Free Writing Class for Seniors

SWW offers a free writing class at Bear Canyon Senior Center every Monday from 3:00- 4:15pm. Taught by Larry Greenly and Rob Spiegel, classes are free to members of any Albuquerque Senior Center. Membership is open to anyone over 50 and annual dues are \$13. Bear Canyon is two blocks north of Montgomery, one block east of Eubank.

## How to Get Your Novel or Fiction Book Published

February 25 -- March 24, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Cost: \$69 Members, \$79 Non-members

Want someone to buy your novel? **Rob Spiegel** and **Melody Groves** will teach a set of evening classes to propel you on your way to fame and fortune. This fiction class will address markets, the submission process (proposals), writing the synopsis (critiqued in class), as well as suggested conferences (why you should attend) and finding an agent.

Rob is the author of six published non-fiction books. Melody is the author of one published non-fiction book and three fiction books.

**New Convenient Dates!**

## Revising Fiction: Making Sense of the Madness

Part I: Global Topics *April 3- April 24, 6:30-8:30pm, \$65 members, \$75 non-members*

Part II: Nuts & Bolts *May 1—May 22, 6:30-8:30pm, \$65 members, \$75 non-members*

With all the books, talks, classes and workshops out there on self-editing, a writer can quickly become overwhelmed. There's so much to edit for: plot, characterization, scene structure, digressions, consistency, setting, back story, point of view, passive voice, showing vs. telling, dialog, clichés, pacing, grammar, format, and much more. How do you catch it all? How do you know when you've got it right? How do you even know where to start?

**Kirt Hickman** will offer a practical approach to self-editing that covers everything from planning your novel to first draft to final product. Each class will include a lecture, prepared exercises, and class time to work on whatever obstacles you face in your own writing projects. In addition, you'll receive a complete set of presentation notes, including numerous examples, a self-editing checklist, and a list of recommended references—resources that you can take home and use to better your writing.

A technical writer for 14 years before branching into fiction, Kirt makes a living out of taking complex sets of requirements, in this case advice, and boiling them down into simple, effective procedures. His methodical approach to self-editing can help you convert your first draft from mess to masterpiece. Kirt has completed five novels and is currently working on a book titled *Revising Fiction—Making Sense of the Madness*. He's been an SWW mentor since the inception of the mentoring program and has participated in discussion or critique panels for multiple SWW conferences.

Part I: Global Topics (\$65 members, \$75 non-members)

Class 1: World Building and Characterization

Class 2: Plot

Class 3: 1st Draft, Research, Gross Manuscript Problems

Class 4: Chapter Breaks & Avoiding Information Dumps

Part II: Nuts and Bolts (\$65 members, \$75 non-members)

Class 1: Scenes

Class 2: Polishing Prose

Class 3: Dialog

Class 4: Finishing Touches and Critiques

## Strength in Words by Katherine A. Scott

As writers, we intensely study the words we put to paper. We may even look at one paragraph for an hour to make sure it is perfectly painted, carefully choosing the placement and timing of each individual word. We ensure that every word we write is interpreted by the reader the way we want them to perceive it. A lone word written out of context is all that is required to turn the perfect novel into a misunderstood book of ramblings. After writing for a short time I have come to learn that this is one of the most important things a writer can study. The play on words can be what makes or breaks you as a writer.



With that being said, here is my question: Knowing how detrimental our words can be, why do we not sometimes think before we speak or quickly jot out an e-mail in our everyday lives?

The play on words can be what makes or breaks our character as well. The words we chose and the context we speak them in are just as important as the words we chose to write in our books.

I recently experienced the unfortunate consequences of not thinking before jotting. Hastily writing words that were easily misconstrued, hurting people that I care deeply for. What a miserable way to learn a valuable lesson. It could have easily turned into a very bad situation with the final cost being the loss of two of my very best friends. Lucky for me, they are understanding people.

I am writing this to possibly save someone else the shame and embarrassment of not thinking before you speak or hastily jot. It is a phrase we so frequently hear throughout our lives: Think before you speak. What a stronger impact that phrase now has for me. We should truly slow down long enough to think about the results of our words and how they can so easily be misinterpreted. Just because you know what you meant, doesn't necessarily mean that the recipient does.

Please treat the words you speak or jot on a daily basis as if they were the words you've analyzed over and over before proposing them to a publisher.

*Katherine A. Scott is a long time native to Oklahoma. Manager of a fast paced customer-oriented business, she spends the majority of her time communicating with the public. Her spare time is spent with her family, and she enjoys writing poetry and short articles as a way of winding down. She is currently working on the completion of her first book.*

# February

## SWW Events & Workshops

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

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

### The Writing Life of Writing Lives

For years biography has remained a popular staple of publishing. With the right approach, it also continues to be a promising field for most non-fiction authors. However, many writers struggle when it comes to choosing a subject, researching his or her life, and putting it all together in a readable form. Biographer James McGrath Morris, who has taught courses and workshops on this topic, will discuss the current promising market for biographies and review appropriate research and writing techniques.

**James McGrath Morris** is currently at work on a new major biography of Joseph Pulitzer to be published by HarperCollins. His previous book, *The Rose Man of Sing Sing: A True Tale of Life, Murder, and Redemption in the Age of Yellow Journalism*, was selected as one of the best books of non-fiction in 2004 by *The Washington Post*. Morris is also the editor of *The Biographer's Craft* ([www.thebiographerscraft.com](http://www.thebiographerscraft.com)), a monthly newsletter for writers and readers of biography. He makes his home in Tesuque, NM.

Saturday, February 2, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

\$20 for members, \$30 for non members

No registration. Pay at the door.

### Turning Fact into Fiction:

#### Bending the Truth to Make it Fit

An odd animal, fiction needs to have enough fact to make it believable, yet should incorporate a touch of fantasy, married with whimsy, that nestles with larger-than-life, to create a realistic, make-believe world. It's a tough job, but you can do it!

In this workshop, we'll take a look at what makes good fiction including great character development, creating plots that twist and turn, building scenes from a scrap of an idea, and how to revise without making you crazy. Bring ideas and/or books you're working on, and we'll see how we can add a modicum of fact to make your fiction sizzle.

**Melody Groves** writes for *albuquerqueARTS* magazine, *New Mexico Magazine*, *True West Magazine* and others. Her Western novel, *Arizona War*, is due out in March. *Ropes, Reins, and Rawhide: All About Rodeo* is her first non-fiction book. Groves is the public relations chair for SouthWestWriters, and publicity chair for Western Writers of America, as well as vice-president of New Mexico Gunfighters Association.



We'll have the coffee and tea; you bring the eats. Donations of refreshments at SWW meetings are gratefully accepted.

Please consider providing this service.

Tuesday, February 19, 7 to 9 p.m.

### So, You Think You Could Write Criticism

**Wesley Pulkka** will discuss his experience as an artist and critic and what goes into critical writing. Topics will include what constitutes a "good" review, background research, visiting galleries, studio visits and learning to trust your intuition. Pulkka will address the joys and tolls of weekly deadlines as well as working with editors.

Wesley Pulkka earned his BFA and MFA in sculpture at the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore where he was awarded the Gold Medal for Excellence and a Rhinehart Fellowship in sculpture. He did graduate study at the University of Pennsylvania where he was a special graduate student and studio assistant to sculptor Robert Engman. Pulkka studied art history with Van Deren Coke at the University of New Mexico and earned his Ph.D in the history of sacred art at the Union Institute and University in Cincinnati. Pulkka's sculpture has been shown at the Maryland Institute Mt. Royal Galleries, Baltimore Museum of Art, University of New Mexico Art Museum, and the Corcoran Gallery in Washington DC. His drawings, paintings and prints have been shown at the Seattle Art Museum, University of Colorado, Yale University, Aldridge Museum of Contemporary Art and several private galleries. Pulkka writes feature articles, artist profiles, critical essays and reviews for *Architectural Digest*, *Southwest Art Magazine*, *The Santa Fean*, *Santa Fe Trend*, *Ministry and Liturgy Magazine*, *Elevation Magazine*, *THE Magazine*, *Art Santa Fe*, and *Crosswinds*, and has contributed to several books on art and design. Pulkka has written a weekly column for the *Albuquerque Journal* for the past 14 years.

## Welcome New Members

**Ron Chapman**  
**Tiffany West**  
**K.C. Mosier II**  
**Judith Candelaria**  
**Dixon Hearne**  
**Suzanne Potts**  
**Steve Marvin**  
**Sue Babcock**

**Nancy Sellin**  
**Aaron Stump**  
**Eileen Henry**  
**Tamara Boyd**  
**Ann Galer**  
**Shirl Brainard**  
**Joyce M. Perz**

SWW programs are rarely cancelled, but it is possible depending on the weather. If you have doubts about a program taking place or about the time or topic, simply call the SWW office (505) 265-9485 during business hours, M-F, 9am- noon.



**SWW Events & Workshops**

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

Saturday, March 1, 10:00 a.m. to noon

**Inside Picture Books**

Children's book author **Vaunda Micheaux Nelson** will share her experiences in the creation of her picture books and discuss the joys and challenges of writing in this highly competitive format. She also will present tips for picture book writing gathered from industry sources.

Vaunda Nelson is the author of several books for children including *Juneteenth*, *Always Gramma*, *Ready? Set. Raymond!* and *Almost to Freedom*, winner of a Coretta Scott King Honor for Illustration. She is a youth services librarian at the Rio Rancho Public Library.

Saturday, March 1, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

\$20 for members, \$30 for non-members

No registration. Pay at the door.

**The Long and the Short of It:  
What Makes a Poem Work?**

What makes the difference between an exciting poem and a ho-hum one? Is it concrete details? Vivid images? Emotional intensity? And why does ambiguity (I call it "mystery") sometimes make a poem more successful? Why are line breaks and spacing important? And why are very short poems often so memorable?

We will examine a variety of poems to see what makes them effective. Some of the poems tell a story brimming with what William Carlos Williams called "concrete particulars," some are noted for their vibrant images, and some speak volumes in only four or five lines. We will write some poems of our own, using techniques to make them come alive and stay in the reader's memory. We will also engage in exercises to stimulate creativity and silence the inner censor that tries to keep us in our "daytime mind" instead of in our "poetic mind."

**Jeanne Shannon** has been writing poetry since childhood. She has published three full-length collections of her poetry and nine chapbooks. Her work has appeared in numerous small-press and university publications in the United States, Canada, England and Japan. These include *Blue Mesa Review*, *Quarter After Eight*, *Bardsong*, *Appalachian Heritage*, and the UNM Press anthology titled *In Company: New Mexico Poets After 1960*. She founded *Blackberry* poetry magazine in the 1970s and currently is editor/publisher of *The Wildflower Press*, a small-press book publisher in Albuquerque. She holds a master's degree in English/Creative Writing from the University of New Mexico.

**Animal Valentines**

by Eric Ian Schneider  
(With doffed hat to O. Nash)

**WOLF**

My Valentine I wish you were  
I love the way you style your fur  
With our eight cubs, you'd guard the cave  
If tigers come, you'll be so brave!

**2008 SouthWest  
Writers Contest**

**NEW USER-FRIENDLY RULES**

Many Categories:  
Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry,  
Children's, and More!

**Cash Prizes to \$1000  
Awards Banquet**

Visit [www.southwestwriters.org](http://www.southwestwriters.org)  
or call (505) 265-9485



Tuesday, March 18, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

**Self-Editing or Critique Group?**

Editor **Larry Greenly** discusses whether you should edit your own manuscript or participate in a writers' critique group. Learn useful tips, techniques and various aspects of self-editing to make your manuscript shine. Learn how to participate in a critique group, how to start one and how to get the most out of a group.

Greenly is literary editor for *albuquerqueARTS* magazine, vice president of SouthWest Writers and the author of hundreds of magazine articles and columns about myriad topics in different publications.



"And I love the part when he finds out that it was his brother all along!"

## Minding Finances for Writers Adapting Your Work by Sherri Burr

I was fortunate to conduct one of the last television interviews with the late Navajo artist R.C. Gorman in 2004. I asked him about his propensity to exploit his copyrights by turning a single oil painting into lithographs, posters, greeting cards, mugs, calendars and so forth. Gorman's response was "Why limit?"



Writers should adopt Gorman's approach and explore the many ways that the written word can be adapted into other forms. Take for example Alice Walker's book *The Color Purple*. Ms. Walker licensed the movie rights to the book in the 1980s and Stephen Spielberg produced a haunting film starring Whoopie Goldberg as Celie and featuring Oprah Winfrey as Sophia in her film debut.

Oprah acquired musical theatrical rights and co-produced *The Color Purple: A New Musical*, which opened on Broadway on 1 December 2005 and was nominated for several Tony awards, but lost for best Musical to *Spring Awakening*. The latter was adapted from a play by Frank Wedekind. I saw both musicals in early January 2008 on a trip to New York and am often amazed at the power of authors to address the significant emotional issues encountered by human beings, including adoption, abortion, suicide, and emotional abuse.

In the version of *The Color Purple* that I saw, the role of Celie was played by Fantasia, an American Idol winner. Thus, a Reality TV participant teamed up with television talk show host Winfrey to present a variation of a book that won both the Pulitzer Prize and American Book Award.

Your work doesn't have to win major awards to be worthy of adaptation. Section 106(2) of the U.S. Copyright Act specifies that all authors of copyrighted works have the right "to prepare derivative works based on the copyrighted work."

Poems become songs (think of rap music as poetry spoken to a beat). Songs become films (remember Roy Orbison's song that became the inspiration for a film starring Julia Roberts). Many a *New Yorker* article has become a feature film. The point is to think expansively about your works. Be open to deriving other works based on your original works.

Take a page from R.C. Gorman's legacy: don't limit!

*Professor Sherri Burr has taught copyright law, art law, entertainment law, and intellectual property law at the University of New Mexico for almost two decades. She is the author of six books, four of which relate to art law and entertainment law.*

## Markets Never Been Published? Here's a Fine Opportunity by Eileen Stanton

K.C. Compton, editor-in-chief of five magazines, took time from her busy day to answer questions. Since I began my career writing short articles for local newspapers and magazines and editing two newspapers, I appreciate the fact that she is open to new writers and happy to take 10-minute pitches at our conference, "From Start to Sales IV," on April 19. It's co-sponsored by UNM and SWW. You can pitch your article or idea to K. C. Compton in addition to pitching books to an agent or editor.



### Q. Please list the five magazines and describe the themes in each one.

A. *Grit* is a rural lifestyle magazine that focuses on small-town living, small farms, community and people who aspire to country lifestyle. We like humor and pieces on interesting people who make their living there. *Herb Companion* caters to people who love growing and using herbs. We like stories on outdoor gardens, chefs, kitchen gardens and lots of recipes. *Herbs for Health* focuses on having a healthy lifestyle, with alternative medicine from experts with a good background. Each of these magazines comes out bi-monthly. *Good Things to Eat* has been a quarterly but is expanding to a website as well. Obviously, it's filled with great recipes. Finally, *Capper's*, a monthly tabloid-style newspaper, is all about good news, quirky pieces, a few poems, and human interest articles.

### Q. How many articles do you purchase for these magazines?

A. We buy about five features for each of the herb magazines and more for *Grit* and *Capper's*.

### Q. What do you look for in an article?

A. I look for good writing that is lively and knowledgeable, and writers who have a positive attitude. If we like an article, we count on the writer to meet our deadline.

### Q. If you like an article, will you assign another?

A. Yes. We often ask for more from the same writer. Our payment is modest, but everyone receives a byline credit.

### Q. What mistakes can turn you off besides misspellings & typos?

A. Writers who make mistakes that are easily cleaned up—but they didn't bother; or who don't respect the word count; writers who criticize previous editors—I know they'll criticize me!

Don't miss K. C.'s inspirational talk, "Inspired Writers Inspire Readers." Remember to e-mail me as soon as you register at UNM, 277-0077. Then send me another e-mail at [estanton@cableone.net](mailto:estanton@cableone.net) for brochures and your pitch session.

*Award-winning Eileen Stanton is an author, co-founder and past president of SWW, and long-time teacher at three universities including UNM. Having honed her interviewing talents over 15 years on the radio and in thousands of articles, Eileen brings this expertise to the Sage Markets column each month.*

Revising Fiction:  
**What the Right Comparison Can Do for You**  
 by Kirt Hickman

A picture is worth a thousand words (pardon the cliché; it's true). Good fiction draws the reader away from his mundane life and transports him to a world of wonder wholly different than his own. Whether this difference is physical, cultural, psychological, or situational, metaphors and similes can help bring your fictional world to life.



...the four of them made a dash for the igloo, bounding up and down in a ragged line, like so many horses on a merry-go-round.

#### Emotion

You can use comparisons to invoke emotion. The following passage describes the wreckage of a crashed space ship:

...the fuselage came into view, jutting skyward from the flat terrain, surrounded by sparkling debris.

Perhaps this invokes an image, but a couple of well-drawn comparisons will enhance the emotional impact.

... the fuselage came into view, jutting skyward from the flat terrain like a solitary tombstone in a garden of glittering metal.

When the fuselage becomes a tombstone in a garden, it forms the emotional image of death. It reminds the reader of something he already knows: a body lies here, probably inside the fuselage. The viewpoint character is approaching a grave.

#### Viewpoint

Comparisons can express an idea or a character's viewpoint more effectively than direct narrative.

...a tremendous pop reverberated through the cavernous hangar from the huge doors in front of the cockpit window. The squeal of the unused rollers filtered into the cabin like a scream of protest against this change in military posture...

This passage doesn't specify what the change in military posture is. Nevertheless, when I use "scream of protest" to describe a simple sound, I don't have to tell the reader how the viewpoint character feels about the change.

#### Use Comparisons Carefully

Look for opportunities to use comparisons in your fiction, but don't overdo it. A well-placed comparison that invokes the right image, at the right time, will enrich your story. But if every paragraph contains one, you'll force too many unrelated images upon the reader. Your own world will get lost among them.

Beware misused, imprecise, or cliché comparisons. Misused or imprecise comparisons can confuse your reader. Cliché comparisons will have no emotional impact.

### Kirt's NEW Class Schedule p. 7

*Kirt Hickman has Bachelor and Master degrees in electrical engineering from UNM. He has worked with high-energy laser optics, microelectronics, and other technologies relevant to science fiction, and leverages his knowledge and experience to enrich his stories. A technical writer for 14 years before branching into fiction, Worlds Asunder is his first novel. He has the sequel, Venus Rain, a how-to titled Revising Fiction, and a fantasy trilogy in progress.*

#### Description

When you use these comparisons, you draw a mental picture that relates an element of your story to something within the reader's realm of experience. In the following example, several characters in my science-fiction novel, *Worlds Asunder*, cross an open expanse of the Moon's surface.

...the four of them made a dash for the building. They ran side by side. In the Moon's gravity, they rose slowly with each stride and returned to the ground just as slowly, only to bounce again and again until they reached their destination.

This passage contains a detailed description of how my characters run in low gravity. It tries to invoke an image that will bring my setting to life and show how the Moon is different than Earth. The problem is, I've used so many words that by the time the reader gets to the end of the description, he no longer cares about the image. He just wants to get on with the story. Comparing the characters' motion to something familiar can invoke the desired image more clearly, and with fewer words, than literal description:

...the four of them made a dash for the building, bounding up and down in a ragged line, like so many horses on a merry-go-round.

Taking the merry-go-round out of context, putting it on the Moon, and using it to describe running makes the comparison unexpected. I've used a familiar object to show how my setting differs from the reader's here and now.

Yet I can improve the passage further. The word "building" lacks description. How big is this building? What does it look like? I've missed an opportunity to remind the reader that I've taken him to another world. In an earlier scene, I described the building like this:

The habitation dome was maybe a hundred meters in diameter with the semicylindrical protrusion of the equipment garage on one side, the only obvious entrance to the structure.

Can you picture the building? What if I add this sentence?

From afar, it looked like a giant igloo on a vast stretch of dirty ice.

The comparison solidifies the image. In *Worlds Asunder*, I refer back to this description in the merry-go-round scene by changing the word "building" to "igloo":

## ***MYSTERY, MAYHEM and MURDER***



**SOUTHWEST WRITERS and CROAK & DAGGER**



**Present a Conference for Mystery Writers and Mystery Fans**

**Saturday, February 16, 2008**

**WHERE:** The Conference will be held at the UNM Continuing Education Building, 1634 University Blvd. NE (just north of Indian School Road), Albuquerque, NM. The evening Banquet will be held at the MCM Elegaté Hotel, 2020 Menaul NE, Albuquerque, NM.

**WHEN:** February 16, 2008. Conference check-in (at the UNM Continuing Education Building) will be from 8:00-8:30 a.m. followed by the conference from 8:30-5:00. The Banquet (at the MCM Elegaté Hotel) will be from 6:30-9:00 p.m.

**WHAT:** Conference Registration includes conference presentations and materials, lunch with featured speaker Larry Barker, refreshments, and the possibility of a 10-minute pitch session with either an agent or an editor. **The number of pitch sessions is limited, and the sessions will be assigned on a first-come basis.** Banquet Registration includes dinner at the MCM Elegaté with keynote speaker Susan Dunlap.

**WHO:** Speakers for the daytime Conference include:

- Toni Plummer, editor, Thomas Dunne Books - "What Every Aspiring Mystery Writer Should Know"
- Jess Benson, Poison & Drug Information Center - "A Writer's Guide to Creating a Perfect Poisoning"
- Zoe Fishman, literary agent, Lowenstein-Yost Associates - "The Perfect Pitch"
- Dr. Michelle Barry, Office of the Medical Investigator - "Gunshot Wounds: Murder by the Bullet"
- Larry Barker, investigative reporter, KRQE News 13 - "New Mexico's Greatest Murder Mystery"
- Dianne O'Connell, book doctor - "The Key to Writing Success: Mastering Point of View"
- Lucinda Schroeder, former special agent, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - "The Language of Liars"
- Shirley Raye Redmond, award-winning author - "How to Hatch a Mystery Plot and Make it Chirp"
- Phil Young, former special agent, National Park Service - "A Grand Canyon Divorce"

The keynote speaker for the evening Banquet is **SUSAN DUNLAP**, founding member and past president of Sisters in Crime—and an Anthony-winning author of numerous books and short stories, including the Jill Smith mysteries, the Kiernan O'Shaughnessy series, and *A Single Eye*, the first book in a new series featuring stuntwoman Darcy Lott—speaking on "Sisters in Crime: Twenty Years of Mystery."

### **REGISTER BY FEBRUARY 1, 2008 TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE EARLY BIRD RATE**

**By mail:** Fill out and mail the REGISTRATION FORM with your check or credit card information to SouthWest Writers, 3721 Morris NE, Albuquerque, NM 87111 (postmark by 2/1/2008 for early bird rate).

**By phone:** Call SWW at 505-265-9485 between 9:00 a.m. and noon, Monday through Friday (credit card only).

**Online:** Visit the SWW website ([www.southwestwriters.org](http://www.southwestwriters.org)) to register online (credit card only).

**The number of spaces at the Conference and the Banquet are limited, as are the number of pitch sessions. We will try to accommodate everyone, but early registration is encouraged. Advance reservations for the Banquet are required and must be received no later than February 13.**

**HOTEL:** For hotel reservations, you may call the hotel of your choice or call the MCM Elegaté Hotel (505-884-2511 or 1-866-650-4900) and ask for the Mystery Conference special rate (\$79.99 plus tax per night), which includes Complimentary Breakfast Buffet and free shuttle service to and from the airport.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Visit the SouthWest Writers website at [www.southwestwriters.com](http://www.southwestwriters.com) or call the SouthWest Writers office at 505-265-9485 between 9:00 a.m. and noon, Monday through Friday.

# MYSTERY, MAYHEM and MURDER

**SW** SOUTHWEST WRITERS and CROAK & DAGGER



present A Conference for Mystery Writers and Mystery Fans

Saturday, February 16, 2008

## REGISTRATION FORM

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a current member of SouthWest Writers? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

Are you a current member of Croak & Dagger? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

How did you learn about this conference? \_\_\_\_\_

I am most interested in (please rank): The craft of writing mysteries \_\_\_\_\_ Forensic information \_\_\_\_\_

**THE CONFERENCE AND THE BANQUET ARE SEPARATE.**  
**YOU MAY REGISTER FOR ONE OR FOR BOTH.**

**Conference (non-member registration includes a one-year membership in both SWW and Croak & Dagger):**

\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$99.00 member cost, if a member of **either** SWW or C&D (early bird rate) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$109.00 member cost, if a member of **either** SWW or C&D (registered after 2/1/08) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$159.00 non-member cost - includes one-year memberships (early bird rate) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$169.00 non-member cost - includes one-year memberships (registered after 2/1/08) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Banquet (Advance Reservation Required – Banquet registration must be received NO LATER THAN 2/13):**

\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$35.00 (early bird rate) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$38.00 (registered after 2/1/08) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Indicate method of payment:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Check or money order (made out to SouthWest Writers)

\_\_\_\_\_ MasterCard \_\_\_\_\_ Visa (The only credit cards we accept are MasterCard and Visa)

**If paying by credit card:** Cardholder Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_ (last 3 digits of the number near your signature)

Billing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**LUNCH PREFERENCE FOR THOSE ATTENDING THE DAYTIME CONFERENCE:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Chicken wrap

\_\_\_\_\_ Vegetarian wrap

Please tell us if you have special diet requirements or allergies: \_\_\_\_\_

**BANQUET PREFERENCE FOR THOSE ATTENDING THE EVENING BANQUET:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Mediterranean Stuffed Chicken Breast

\_\_\_\_\_ Vegetarian Lasagna

Please tell us if you have special diet requirements or allergies: \_\_\_\_\_

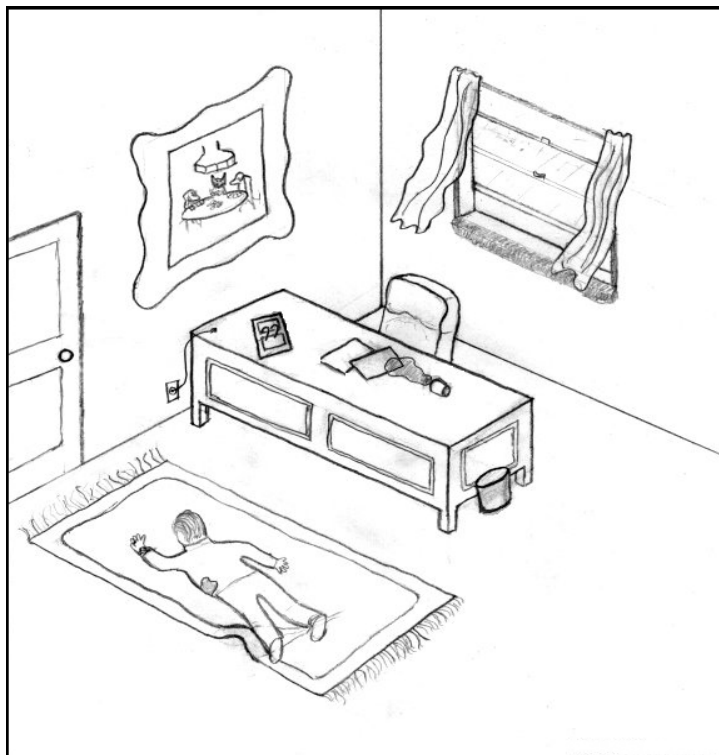
**IF YOU ARE A MYSTERY WRITER AND WOULD LIKE A 10-MINUTE PITCH SESSION, PLEASE INDICATE YOUR FIRST AND SECOND PREFERENCE:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Toni Plummer, associate editor, Thomas Dunne Books, a division of St. Martin's Press, New York

\_\_\_\_\_ Zoe Fishman, literary agent, Lowenstein-Yost Associates, New York

**NOTE: The number of pitch sessions is limited. We will try to accommodate everyone, but pitch sessions will be assigned on a first-come basis and we cannot guarantee that everyone will get a session. Early registration will increase your chance of getting the pitch session of your choice.**

# SWW International Monthly Writing Competition



## Critique Groups

Submit your requests to [SWWriters@juno.com](mailto:SWWriters@juno.com).

### Groups Seeking Members

#### Any Genre

**Estancia Valley Writers Group**  
Critiques and moral support  
Meets at Moriarty Community Library  
2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m.  
*Tina Ortega* 505-832-2513

#### Any Genre, Rio Rancho:

*Alice Harpley and Bob Harpley*  
505-867-1408  
[riversedgebob@cableone.net](mailto:riversedgebob@cableone.net)  
[riograndema@cableone.net](mailto:riograndema@cableone.net)

#### Land of Enchantment

##### Romance Authors:

Meets the second Saturday of each  
month at noon. Potential members:  
attend three meetings to try it out.  
[leranm.com](http://leranm.com)

#### The Screaming Ninja

##### Screenwriters:

Meets every other Thursday,  
Flying Star on 7th and Silver.  
*Marc Calderwood*  
505-897-6474  
[skatingkokopelli@hotmail.com](mailto:skatingkokopelli@hotmail.com)

#### All Facets of Writing

New afternoon critique  
group, all genres, NE  
Heights. Starting January.  
Leave message for  
Len Hecht 977-3178

#### Memoirs, Albuquerque

*John Ward*  
505-859-6768  
[JohnRWard@q.com](mailto:JohnRWard@q.com)

### Wanting to Start Groups/ Looking for a Group

#### Memoirs, Santa Fe

*Leona Stucky-Abbott*  
505-820-2433

#### Any Genre, Albuquerque:

Meet every other Friday  
NE Heights  
*Krys Douglas*  
505-830-3015

#### Any Genre, Las Cruces:

*Barbara Villemez*  
505-522-5734

#### Poetry:

*Billy Brown* 505-401-8139,  
[welbert53@aol.com](mailto:welbert53@aol.com)

## February Contest Writing Article

**D**oes your mystery novel or mystery short story have a dynamite hook? Or a fantastic finale? Or a riveting revelation scene? Submit one of those three crucial parts of your masterpiece. 750 words maximum, double-spaced.

Postmark deadline: February 29, 2008

### Instructions

- Open to any writer in the world.
- Original, unpublished work only.
- No cover sheets.
- Print the following on first page: Name; Address; Phone; E-mail (if any); Category Name.
- Manuscripts prepared in standard format: 1" margins, double-spaced unless otherwise specified.
- Entries are not returned, so no need for an SASE.
- \$5 entry fee for SWW members; \$10 non-members.
- You may enter more than once, but an entry fee must accompany each entry.
- Decisions of the judges are final.
- Prizes: \$50 1st Prize; \$30 2nd Prize; \$20 3rd Prize and certificates.
- Mail entries to:

SWW Monthly Writing Competition  
3721 Morris St NE, Ste A  
Albuquerque, NM 87111

(Print category name under your return address)

## Contest winners will return next month

## SouthWest Sage Advertising Rates

### Worldwide Circulation on the Internet

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thousands of page requests every month.

*Business card size:* \$16

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*1/4 page:* \$36

*1/3 page:* \$45

*1/2 page:* \$75

*Full page:* \$100

*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.

## Contests

This information is provided as a convenience. Before entering, be sure to check the listed website information or write the sponsors to make sure a contest is right for you. And don't forget to enter SWW's International Monthly Contest.

**Deadline: 2/1/08.** Fiction. *Blue Mesa Review* Short Story Award. Entry Fee \$10. Prize \$250 and publication in *Blue Mesa Review*. Only unpublished fiction manuscripts, max. 5000 words, will be considered. Judges Kimberly Witherspoon and Alexis Hurley are agents with Inkwell Management. Submission guidelines at: [www.unm.edu/~bluemesa/](http://www.unm.edu/~bluemesa/).

**Editor's Note:** This is a big year for *Blue Mesa Review*, the literary magazine of the University of New Mexico creative writing program. Their next issue will be the first under student editorship, putting *Blue Mesa* in league with *Indiana Review*, *Sycamore Review*, *Sonora Review*, and prestigious others.

**Deadline: 2/11/08 (online):** Poetry. No entry fee. Valentine's Day Poetry competition. The phrase "Heart Diamonds" or "Heart Diamond" must appear at least once in the poem. Award: Beautiful Heart Shaped Loose Diamond. Submission guidelines and information: [awdiamonds.com/loose-diamonds-valentines.asp](http://awdiamonds.com/loose-diamonds-valentines.asp).

**Deadline 2/15/08 (E-mail):** Flash story, poem, whatnot based on image online. Entry Fee: \$6. Awards: \$50 plus publication. Mad Hatters' Review Contest for science fiction/fantasy story or poem written from a visual prompt. Submission guidelines and information: [madhattersreview.com/contest.shtml](http://madhattersreview.com/contest.shtml)

**Deadline: 2/17/08 (postmark):** Romance, Mainstream Adult Fiction, Suspense/Thriller, Fantasy/Science Fiction, Children's & YA for unpublished writers. Entry fee: \$30, Friends of Library members \$20. Awards: \$50, \$25, certificates. The Sandy Writing Contest. Enter first 20 pages and up to a 2-page synopsis. Submission guidelines and information: [thesandy.com](http://thesandy.com); e-mail questions to contest coordinator [Theresa@theresarizzo.com](mailto:Theresa@theresarizzo.com).

**Byline Magazine: Mail entries to:** Contests: *ByLine Magazine*, PO Box 111, Albion, NY 14411. Submission guidelines and information: [bylinemag.com/contests.asp](http://bylinemag.com/contests.asp)

**Deadline: 2/2/08 (postmark): Poetry.** Entry fee: \$3 or \$5 for three poems. Prizes: \$35, \$20, \$10. Write a poem about a special memory that left a lasting impression or impact on your life or the life of a family or friend. Any style. Keep length to two pages.

**Byline Magazine (continued)**

**Deadline 2/9/08 (postmark): Character Sketch.** Entry fee: \$5. Prizes: \$35, \$20, \$10. Practice creating believable characters in 500 or fewer words. Show your character in a scene, doing something typical of him or her.

**Deadline 2/16/08 (postmark): Poetry.** Entry fee: \$3 or \$5 for three poems. Prizes: \$35, \$20, \$10. Write an ode, that is, a poem that glorifies or praises a person, place or thing. Both classic and modern forms are fine. (Unfamiliar with ode? Read William Carlos Williams) Keep length to two pages or less.

**Deadline: 2/23/08 (postmark): Filler.** Entry fee: \$5. Prizes: \$35, \$20, \$10. Short prose (up to 500 words) on any topic, from humor to tips, original anecdotes, etc.

**Deadline: 2/29/08.** Flash Fiction. WOW! Women On Writing Winter 2008 Flash Fiction Contest, sponsored by W. W. Norton & Company. Entry fee: \$5. Awards: \$200, \$150, \$100 plus gift certificates and W.W. Norton goodie bags. Open to any style and genre, 250-500 words. Winners will be published on WOW!, free downloadable e-book. Submission guidelines at: [wow-womenonwriting.com/contest.php](http://wow-womenonwriting.com/contest.php).

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### Animal Valentines

by Eric Ian Schneider  
(With doffed hat to O. Nash)

#### KANGAROO

"Ahem! Excuse me, young Miss Roo,  
I have a propozish for you.  
Where I go, swear that you will, too."  
"Are ye daft, mate? Even the loo?"



SouthWest Writers is a nonprofit organization dedicated to encouraging and supporting all people to express themselves through the written word.

## SouthWest Sage

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# Mind Your Own Business

Free your mind and time for writing!

See page 6