



## SWW Screenwriters' Conference Preview

By Sandy Toro, 2009 SWW Conference Chair

To give credit where it's due, it was SWW member **Rick Reichman** who told me the best keynoter I could get would be Santa Fe's own historical genius screenwriter/producer **Kirk Ellis**, the man who wrote and produced "John Adams" for HBO.

The next day I found his phone number and, with my heart in my throat, cold-called this famous producer who hangs out with the likes of Tom Hanks and Stephen Spielberg. I left voice-mail saying why I was calling and my phone number. To my great astonishment, three hours later he called back and immediately agreed, saying, "I'll be happy to do my part." What a nice man! By registering early and requesting a pitch session you will be extremely impressed.



Kirk Ellis, producer of HBO's "John Adams" will deliver the keynote.

Ellis, having just garnered an Emmy for himself and 12 more for "John Adams," is currently working on another project for HBO: turning "1776" into a mini-series. Like "Adams," it will be produced by Tom Hanks' Playtone Co.

Ellis is also adapting the James Ellroy novel "American Tabloid" as a potential series for Playtone and HBO. He's working with Stephen Spielberg's DreamWorks to produce

"Blood and Thunder" for the big screen. This is an epic drama of Kit Carson and the Navajo Wars — and I suspect it will be filmed here in New Mexico. (You might be interested in applying for extra or crew positions for this film.)

In addition to his Emmy, Ellis has won the Western Writers of America's Golden Spur Award for Best Drama Script for "Hell on Wheels," an episode of "Into the West," on which he served as supervising producer and writer. The title of Ellis' address will be "From book to film...to Emmy!"

Inducing Tammy Ader, producer and writer for "Strong Medicine," a Lifetime series which ran for six years and 130 episodes, was far less stressful. A mutual friend who worked with her on the series introduced us by e-mail, and Tammy quickly agreed not only to speak on writing and producing an on-going series for cable television, but she also said she teaches pitching at Columbia University in New York City. One of the important aspects of her talk will be her personal history of breaking into screenwriting.

Our roster of speakers is not yet full, but we do have confirmation that Rich Reichman will speak on "The Seven Elements of a Scene," and UNM Law School professor Sherri Burr will tell us the pitfalls to avoid in screenwriting contracts.

The SWW Screenwriters' Conference will be held at the CNM Workforce Training Center, 5600 Eagle Rock NE, near Alameda and I-25 on Saturday, February 21. Registration will open at 8:30 a.m. Snacks and a box lunch will be provided. Advance registration will begin December 1. Requests for pitches will be on a first-come, first-served basis and we expect to accommodate at least the first twenty requests. Early-bird registration for SWW members for the day-long conference will be \$120.

Five to eight additional volunteers are needed to help with registration, door prizes and speaker gifts, managing pitch sessions, preparing packets, snacks and lunch table, distributing flyers, and general hospitality. Please e-mail me at [storo32567@aol.com](mailto:storo32567@aol.com) or call 505/797-1511.

I promise this will be an inspirational conference!



**Save Saturday, February 21, for the SWW Screenwriters Conference**  
Early-bird registration for SWW Members starts December 1st

## From the Editor



**K**udos to SWW Volunteer Coordinator Ron Schultz for making my photographs of the 2008 Writers Contest winners who attended the Awards Banquet available online for viewing and downloading. Interested? Take a look: <http://photoshow.comcast.net/watch/Wf5ys9vr>. Have patience and give the software and photos plenty of time to load and line up, so to speak. Here's what one happy writer had to say about the Writers Contest:

Thank you for sending the photos. Everything SWW has done with regard to the 2008 contest has been amazing to me. You are certainly a wonderful and dedicated group. I am proud to be a member.

Best,  
Sharon van Ivan



Tony Hillerman

Thank *you*, Sharon, for taking the time to send that thoughtful note.

It is with a heavy heart that I announce that this will be my last issue of *SW Sage*. I have loved working with the fabulous writers who so generously contributed time and talent to make this little publication shine issue after issue. I will miss everything about it with the possible exception of the eleventh hour rush to the printer -- and maybe even that. Your overwhelming kindness, encouragement and support has been appreciated more than you'll ever know, but due to the time constraints of my new editorial position at *albuquerqueARTS* magazine, I cannot devote the hours necessary to continue. Special thanks to my unsung heroes (the proofers) who have made me look good these past 20 months: Harold Burnett, Lola Eagle, Jeanne Shannon and Larry Greenly.

I'll still attend SWW events and serve on the board, so you're not rid of me yet. Take care, and let Rob Spiegel or another board member know if you'd like to work on *SW Sage*. Give it some thought! It's a grand project through which you'll make tons of industry contacts and professional friends.

**A**ward-winning author and journalist Tony Hillerman, who called New Mexico home, died in October at the age of 83. Born in Oklahoma in 1925, after returning from the European Theater a decorated World War II veteran, Hillerman worked as a journalist from 1948 to 1962. He taught journalism and creative writing from 1966 to 1987 at the University of New Mexico.

Hillerman's novels *Skinwalker* (1986) and *A Thief of Time* (1988) were adapted for television. In 1996, he was ranked New Mexico's 22nd wealthiest man. Had the rankings been based on his place in New Mexico's writers hearts, Hillerman might well have ranked number one.

So many...



Peggy

### 2009 SWW Officers Elected



Rose Marie Kem (far right) hosted the 2008 SWW Annual Meeting including election of 2009 officers. Dually elected were (left to right) Treasurer Pat Bost, Secretary Keith Pyeatt, President Rob Spiegler and Vice President Larry Greenly.



**SouthWest Sage**

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From one treasurer to another...



# In this Issue

Outskirts Press has tips on publishing for kids; Sage columnist Kirt Hickman shares when to tell while Sherri Burr helps mind your finances in tight economic times and Jerry Davis proposes a new way to increase your earnings. Read on...

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**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**

**Don't let SouthWest Writers fade away in tough economic times. Your support is needed to continue with our meetings, conferences, classes, workshops, contests, this newsletter and special events like our Holiday Pot Luck. Please join or renew your membership today.**



Rose Marie Kern shows the SWW Sand Polo Shirt.

*So little time...*



Friendly SWW members exchange news and tips at a recent meeting.

## SouthWest Writers T-Shirts!

SouthWest Writers is now offering T-Shirts and collared Polo Shirts to its members. Available colors are either Sand or Black featuring the special 2008 Bravos Award SWW logo imprinted in turquoise ink. These lovely shirts are real conversation starters!

Funds received from the sale of the shirts will be used to fund SWW programs. The shirts may be purchased through Solar Ranch, who will be taking orders through December 6. They can either be delivered or picked up at SWW Saturday meetings.

Circle multiple items below to order more than one shirt.

### T-Shirt Order Form

	Size-Circle one	Price
Sand Polo Shirt	S M L XL XXL	\$ 18.25
Sand T-Shirt - Men's	S M L XL XXL	\$ 13.50
Sand T-Shirt - Women's	S M L XL XXL	\$ 13.50
Black Polo Shirt	S M L XL XXL	\$ 19.50
Black T-Shirt - Women's	S M L XL XXL	\$ 14.50
Black T-Shirt - Men's	S M L XL XXL	\$ 14.50

**DELIVERY:** There is NO delivery charge if you choose to pick up your shirt(s) at the Dec. 6 SWW Meeting. **If you want it sent to your home, add \$3.50 Shipping.**

Visa/Mastercard/Discover accepted.

Member name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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

Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

or

**Paypal** orders - send total to: [solarranch@aceweb.com](mailto:solarranch@aceweb.com)

Checks or Money Orders should be made out to: Solar Ranch

### Send order form plus payment to:

Solar Ranch PO Box 9466 Albuquerque, NM 87119	Information - call Rose 505-417-6790 M-F 9am-noon S/S 9am-4pm
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**Note: This offer may not last long as the delightful Rose Marie Kern, who is behind it, may sadly be leaving NM for professional reasons.**

## Illustrations, Too, Can Sell Books

by Jerry R. Davis

**A**uthors need all the help they can muster in order to sell their books successfully. I have heard discussion after discussion about the methodology of doing that. Suggestions for the writers, of course, include such strategies as giving book talks and readings, doing signings at every available venue, promoting the books in newspapers and other publications, making radio and television appearances and, in general, practicing unabashed self-promotion at each and every opportunity. New marketing ploys are touted regularly at SWW meetings but I use a technique which to date I haven't heard discussed.

All three of my books are memoirs and are illustrated — the first two with my own drawings, and the third with a combination of drawings and family photographs. Ever since my first book signing about four years ago, the drawings have created interest and commentary. In fact, sometimes they appear to overshadow the books themselves. That circumstance inspired me to devise a new selling strategy. I made Xerox copies of the black and white drawings from my first two books, *Home on the Farm* and *Tales of the Road*. Then I matted and framed the copies after signing them. On the back of each frame I attached an information box telling in what book the illustration appeared, the year it was published, my name and contact information. Here is a sample:

**Illustration from the book  
Home on the Farm: Essays on a  
Michigan Childhood. Written  
and illustrated by Jerry R. Davis  
Albuquerque, NM 2003**

To order the book, e-mail: [jrd2820@aol.com](mailto:jrd2820@aol.com)

After constructing a simple, portable easel for displaying my framed illustrations, I launched the new sales strategy at a small art show arranged by a private club on Central



Thanks to all SWW Volunteers! Greeters, like those shown above, and other generous souls.



in Albuquerque. To my surprise both the books and the illustrations sold well. Participation in that event proved to me that art shows could serve as an additional venue for selling my books.

Since then the illustrations have been included at all of my book talks and signings and I have exhibited at many art shows as well. During that period sales of 143 illustrations have netted me just under \$2,000. In addition I have sold 1,500 books. My writing hobby is now firmly on the black side of the economic ledger and I credit at least part of that success to the framed drawings. The experience has proven to me that illustrations, too, can sell books.

*In addition to writing books, Jerry Davis has been a staff writer for Posh New Mexico magazine and has written articles for other publications. He writes monthly newsletter columns for two organizations in Albuquerque. His non-fiction books include Home on the Farm: Essays on a Michigan Childhood (2003), Tales of the Road: Essays on a Half Century of Travel (2004) and Leafing Through My Family Tree (2007). He is writing his fourth memoir which he calls Master of None: My Love/Hate Affair with Home Remodeling. Jerry's books may be purchased by contacting him at [jrd2820@aol.com](mailto:jrd2820@aol.com).*

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**Authors'  
Publishing  
House**

[www.authorspublishinghouse.com](http://www.authorspublishinghouse.com)

## SWW Classes

### Working Fiction: Challenges and Peer Critique

January 14, 21, 28, February 4, 11, (note skipped week), 25, March 4, 11, 2009

Wednesday evenings, 6:30-9 p.m.

\$150 members, \$180 non-members includes a 6 month SWW membership with online SW SAGE

Class Limited to 10 Students

Taught by **Betsy James**. One of the best stimuli of fresh work is the challenge of an outside idea, followed by respectful peer critique. In seven weekly assignments, we will write to various aspects of fiction—voice, description, dialogue, point-of-view, etc.—and then bring our work into the conversation of critique. Clear and respectful peer critique will be taught and modeled. Assignments will be appropriate to any fiction form: novel/short story, realistic/fantastic, adult/juvenile. Come prepared to work hard.

### 5 Easy Steps to Getting Your Book Published—Non-Fiction

January 12 through February 9, 2009

Monday Evenings 5 weeks, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

\$69 members, \$79 non-members

Ready to get your non-fiction book published? **Rob Spiegel** and **Melody Groves** will teach you how to propel your way to fame and fortune. These five classes address issues of non-fiction and will cover finding markets, writing queries (these will be critiqued by Rob and Melody), writing proposals (also critiqued and shared with the group), attending conferences (why that's crucial), 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.

### 5 Easy Steps to Getting Your Book Published—Novels

February 23 through March 23, 2009

Monday Evenings 5 weeks, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

\$69 members, \$79 non-members

Want someone to buy your novel? **Rob Spiegel** and **Melody Groves** will show you how to propel your way to fame and fortune. These classes will address getting your novel published and will cover 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 has authored six published non-fiction books. Melody is the author of a published non-fiction and three fiction books.

#### Free Writing Class for Seniors

SWW offers a free writing class at Bear Canyon Senior Center every Monday from 3:00- 4:15pm. The class time will be 1:30 to 2:45pm. 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.

## Other Writing Groups

By Melody Groves

Membership in SouthWest Writers brings many benefits—networking, classes, workshops, talks, networking, meetings with industry professionals, critique services and groups, links to other writing sites, networking (did I say that already?) and opportunities to publish. While SWW is a large, international group, there are other genre-specific writers' organizations that bear closer perusal.

Why join another writers' group? Why not? Belonging to a genre-specific organization makes it easy to "speak the same language." Meeting agents, editors, and/or published writers in your genre just makes sense. While many of the writing mechanics and even publishing is similar in all genres, there are certain areas specific to the different genres.

Western Writers of America welcomes all published writers who derive their livelihood, in whole or part, from writing about the land and peoples of the American West, past and present. Membership includes novelists, historians, essayists, journalists, poets, screenwriters and more. Application for membership is on an individual basis and requirements for the different levels of membership are somewhat flexible.

What do you get for being a WWA member? A subscription to the *Roundup Magazine*, networking opportunities with multi-published professionals, access to editors who specialize in western genre, attendance at the national convention, as well as opportunities for regional activities.

Active membership requirements: multiple publications intended for a general readership. The number will depend on the kind of writing and what proportion of your work concerns the West. Three or more trade books (fiction or nonfiction) about the West or a history of publication in nationally or regionally distributed newspapers or magazines is required, with a substantial proportion of this work being about the West. Screenwriters must include stories of the West and have been produced and exhibited.

Associate member requirements: publication of a single book about the West or a lesser number of short stories or articles (than for Active). If your work substantially concerns the West and you are a publisher, editor, bookseller, literary agent, literary reviewer, librarian, film or television producer or director, artist or illustrator, you qualify for membership. Dues are \$75 per year.

And who belongs to this organization? Elmer Kelton (*Good Old Boys*), for one. How about Kirk Ellis of *John Adam's* fame? Yep. Or Hampton Sides of *Blood and Thunder*? Professor Paul Hutton of History Channel fame is executive director. Need more names? Check out the WWA website.

For more information, contact the Western Writers of America. Paul Hutton, executive director, pah2@comcast.net, or visit their website: westernwriters.org.

Membership in a couple of writers' groups is fine. But if westerns aren't your *thang*, how about Romance Writers of America? Or Mystery Writers? Just don't give up SouthWest Writers. It wouldn't be the same without you.

## First Saturday Meetings

By Sally-Alice Thompson

Everything about the first Saturday monthly meetings at Southwest Writers is enjoyable: the variety of food brought by generous members, Larry's wry jokes, great speakers, rubbing elbows with the most creative, energetic people in the state. Looking at the wonderful assortment of books on the sales table – the whole morning is like a gorgeous banquet.



Back inside, Ron put a chair near the entrance so I could hear the speaker and be available when the tow truck arrived. I sat there and listened, enchanted by Sherri Burr. The next thing I knew, Ron tapped me on the shoulder and whispered that the tow truck had arrived. Under the supervision of several kind members, the driver had already jacked up the front end of my car and was placing boards across the canyon I had dug, so the wheel could be lowered to gain a grip.

I gently backed the car off the bridge and, after thanking him, drove off to another commitment. The whole episode had a dreamlike quality. If I had been "with it," I would have gotten the names of all the sympathetic writers who supported me when I needed it. I want to thank each and every person involved and say how fortunate I feel to be a fellow member of an organization of such wonderful people.

*Born in Versailles, Missouri, Sally-Alice Thompson is a child of the Great Depression. After serving briefly in the Navy during WWII, she married a veteran and taught school for 22 years. She is the author of "Central Asia Fantasia," a recounting of adventures as the first American woman to go alone to Turkmenistan, and "Green Eyed Woman," a post Civil War novel.*

The part I like most is the reporting of successes. Sipping my second cup of coffee, I listen with admiration sprinkled with tinctures of envy to tales of being published or making sales. I'm in the same writers organization as these notables, these larger than life intellectuals. Imagine!

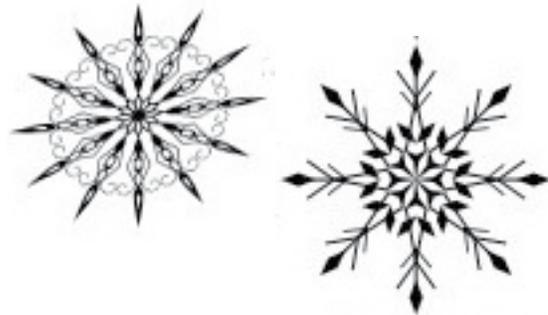
At last month's meeting I had new interaction with some members. I drove to an empty parking space when I had one of those awful uh-oh experiences. I felt a bump just prior to my braking. I knew something was wrong, so I put the car in reverse and stepped on the accelerator. Nothing happened. I gave it more gas—still no movement, but a lot of loud mm-mm-mming. I tried again. The car was simply not going to back up.

I got out and looked at the front wheels. Everything was normal on the driver's side. The passenger's side was a different story. The wheel had dug six inches into sand. I wished for a shovel to dig a ramp so the front wheel would get a grip that would allow me to back up. Having none, I took my books and the cake I baked and went inside to ponder what to do.

At the break I saw my good friend Cel Vigil. "Do you by any chance have a shovel in your car?" I asked. Not surprisingly, he wanted to know why. I confessed the awful truth and we went out and examined the hole I had dug myself into. Cel looked under the front of the car. "You're hung up on a post," he diagnosed.

Ron Schultz appeared. We came to the conclusion that the solution would be to call AAA. I had forgotten my cell phone, but boy scout Ron offered me the use of his. My limited hearing and the traffic noise on Eubank made instructions to AAA difficult. Again I was rescued by Ron, who gave instructions as to our location.

Several other kind writers came out. It was decided by someone, I'm not sure whom, that the car in front of me should be moved to give the tow truck frontal access to mine. Several other members gave advice and comfort including our esteemed president and vice president. An unknown member took down the license number of the car to go inside and ask the owner to move it. An obliging woman soon came out. Another person brought a chair and placed it in the empty space to prevent it being filled again.



**George Terrell**

**Novel, Short Story  
Author and Playwright**

See My Web site: [WWW.TerrellBooks.com](http://WWW.TerrellBooks.com)

**SWW Events & Workshops**

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

*Saturday, November 1, 10:00 am to noon***The Great Apprenticeship:  
Gear and Insight for the Journeyman  
Writer**

In Medieval Europe an apprentice spent seven years under a master, learning the basics of his trade; for yet more years, as a journeyman, he had to hold his own before a critical public. The craft of writing requires a similar long apprenticeship. How do we recognize and gain the tools of our peculiar calling? Without a master handy, how do we get a perspective on our work?

Join award-winning author-illustrator **Betsy James** in a conversation about how to build your own apprenticeship, with particular attention to the skills of peer critique. Don't miss Betsy's article in this issue on page 12.

*Saturday, November 1, 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm*  
*\$20 for members; \$30 for non members***The Write Answers:  
Solutions for Authors and Authoring**

In his June presentation, internationally accredited speaker and facilitator **Ron Chapman** explored our inner obstructions to success. Now in *The Write Answers* he'll offer his unique expertise in a facilitated trouble-shooting session that not only provides information on our challenges as writers and in the writing process, but provides interactive opportunities for each participant to tackle their personal barriers to success.

Bring several questions about what you perceive to be obstacles or your *stuckness*. Explore what you perceive as a limitation or obstacle and Ron will help you see the opportunity within. Ron will take those questions or experiences and work with you to find real solutions. From his own journey as a writer and author and through working with small presses and trying to get name and book recognition, Ron knows where you've been and how to move beyond limited thinking.

An internationally recognized and accredited speaker and consultant, Chapman nurtures creative thought and action while facilitating personal and professional growth and organization and leadership development, assisting clients in deepening their awareness, changing their perceptions, and cultivating insight and understanding to allow any challenge or problem to be overcome. A self-described full-time, all-time student of human, organizational, and cultural dynamics, Chapman, through his company, Magnetic North LLC, travels throughout the United States, Europe and recently, Zimbabwe, Africa, delivering powerful keynote addresses and conducting *Seeing True* seminars and workshops. Author of *Seeing True: Ninety Contemplations in Ninety Days*, *What a Wonderful World* and the *Seeing True* series of audio discs *The Way of Success in Leadership* and *The Way of Spirit*. Chapman is also a national award-winning social radio commentator.

*Tuesday, November 18, 7 to 9 pm***The Write Combination**

The Thurlos will discuss how they got published, how they've learned to work as a team, what you need to get from yourself, and what strategies and skills you need to develop in order to break into the industry and keep your sanity.

David and Aimée Thurlo have been married for thirty-eight years. David was raised on the Navajo Indian Reservation and left Shiprock to complete his education at the University of New Mexico. Aimée, born in Havana, Cuba, has lived in New Mexico for thirty-eight years. They currently have three poodles and one horse. Their home life can best be described as chaotic, but interesting.

Career writers, the Thurlos have 67 published novels to date. They are best known for their Ella Clah series about a Navajo FBI agent turned cop, but also have the Sister Agatha mystery series set in Bernalillo, and the Lee Nez novels featuring a half vampire NM state policeman. They've just completed the fourth novel in their Brotherhood of Warriors series for Harlequin Intrigue, and are now doing revisions for *The Bad Samaritan*, their sixth Sister Agatha novel, due out next spring. The Thurlos' novels, translated into many different languages, are available around the world.

Donations of refreshments at regular SWW meetings are gratefully accepted! Please consider providing this service.

**Welcome  
New Members!****Doug Partin Donna Coyle**

**SouthWest Writers delivers free meetings with great speakers and door prizes, low-cost workshops and classes, this monthly newsletter and an opportunity to network with aspiring and professional writers from far and wide. Join at any meeting or by calling the SWW Office weekdays from 9 a.m. to noon at 265-9485. You'll be glad you did!**

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

**INDEPENDENT MEANS**

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

Independentmeans@comcast.net

**SWW Events & Workshops**

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

**Holiday Pot Luck Breakfast**

Join our annual Holiday Feast at our Saturday meeting, December 6. Bring you favorite holiday treats. We usually get a cornucopia of breakfast burritos (thanks to Rob and Larry), posole, tamales, fruit cakes, decorated cookies, biscochitos, fruit pies and egg nog. Come very hungry.

*Saturday, December 6, 10:00 a.m. to noon***7 Things I've Learned About Writing**

(Which comes out to approximately one every eight years.) Novelist/writing coach **Lisa Lenard-Cook** takes a humorous look at the most important things she's learned about writing so far. Lisa is the author of *The Mind of Your Story*, a book about fiction writing published by Writers' Digest Books in April 2008.

*Dissonance*, Lisa Lenard-Cook's first novel, won the Jim Sagel Prize for the Novel while in manuscript. After its publication by the University of New Mexico Press in 2003, it was selected as a book of the year by such diverse libraries as the Tucson-Pima County Public Library and the Cincinnati Public Library. In 2004, the book was both a NPR Performance Today Summer Reading Choice and the countywide reading selection for Durango-La Plata Reads, and in 2005 it was short-listed for the PEN Southwest Book Award. Lisa's second novel, *Coyote Morning*, was published by UNM Press in 2004, was selected a Southwest Book of the Year, and was recently short-listed for the New Mexico Press Women's Zia Award.

*Saturday, December 6, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.**\$20 for members, \$30 for non members***Minding Finances for Writers**

Copyrights, Contracts, Trademarks and other Financial Matters

Learn when and how to register copyrights and trademarks with the appropriate government organization. Workshop participants will learn to evaluate contract clauses that are beneficial and practice negotiation techniques to change the problematic clauses in article and book contracts. Further, the workshop will teach participants methods of tracking income and expenses for tax purposes. This workshop will combine lecture with small group work so that writers will emerge energized and more willing and able to manage their finances.

**Sherri Burr** joined the University of New Mexico School of Law faculty in 1988 after having received degrees from Mount Holyoke College, Princeton University, and the Yale Law School. She received tenure and promotion to full professor in 1994. An internationally renowned lecturer, Burr has spoken at universities in Barbados, Canada, Chile, France, Greece, Japan, Mexico, Spain, and South Africa. Burr has written eleven books, numerous scholarly articles, and hundreds of newspaper articles for the general public. She is the recipient of over a dozen awards for her writing, speeches and television show ARTS TALK, which she produces and hosts.

**Note: There is no Tuesday evening meeting in December due to the holidays.**

**Holiday Fiesta for NM Literary People**

The annual !Holiday Fiesta! social gathering for all New Mexico book and literary people is coming up on **Friday, December 5 at The Lodge at Santa Fe, and SWW is co-hosting it!**

The Lodge is up St. Francis Drive, above the cemeteries and view of the mountains. We will get under way at 5:30 p.m. and go to 7:30 p.m. – mas o menos! The cost for each attendee is \$12 at the door.

Finger food (more than last year), including salmon, buffalo wings, fruits, cheese and veggies, cider, and sangria! Reservations not necessary. We'll present three awards in recognition of people who've accomplished much to get the word out about New Mexico-produced books.

**Meetings are occasionally cancelled due to bad weather.**

**January 2009***Saturday, January 3, 10:00 a.m. to noon***How Not to Start from Scratch**

(or Why Didn't Someone Tell Me This Stuff?)

Author **Sarah H. Baker** shares some of her lessons learned on the road to publication. A few are writing tips, but most concern selling manuscripts and working with publishers. Sarah's talk targets those not born into the writing world and is intended to be interactive, so bring your own hints to share.

Sarah Baker is the author of twelve published novels, has five more under contract, and has sold numerous novellas and short stories to publishers ranging in size from Echelon Press to Silhouette. Sarah writes romance as Sarah Storme, mystery as S. H. Baker, and erotica as Lydia Parks. Her latest book from Kensington, *Addicted*, is receiving rave reviews.

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## Minding Finances in Times of Economic Difficulty

By Sherri Burr

Headlines about the economy send chills through the arms of many freelance writers. As advertisers trim their budgets, editors of magazines and newspapers have curtailed farming out stories to outside talent and laid off permanent staff. What can writers do in times of uncertainty? Here are a few tips:



### *Tip 1: Expand your Sources of Income*

Freelancers should now seek to augment the markets for their work by selling to the Internet and corporations. The decline in writing skills among young people opens up opportunities for seasoned writers whose credits prove they can not only dot their i's and cross their t's, but also know the difference between affect and effect.

Search Google for websites that buy writing similar to yours. Start a blog, set up advertising, and then extensively market your website. You will receive pennies for each hit, which build into dollars quickly. Some writers make thousands of dollars off their blogs through advertising.

Try marketing your writing services to corporations who may need a copy editor to help their employees who struggle to write well. This could lead to a steady gig in a time when accuracy has become more important.

### *Tip 2: Become Suspiciously Frugal*

An article in the New York Times recently stated that subcompact cars are "long associated with drivers who are in school, single-and-struggling or suspiciously frugal." Freelancers should fall into the latter category. Comedian Gilda Radner once said that it was against her religion to buy something at full price. The freelancer's creed should be, "Always buy at a discount."

Read the ads in your Sunday papers for bargain prices for supplies at office retail shops and for other needs at various outlets. Stores always have sales and usually a bargain bin at the end of an aisle. Even a gallon of paint to revamp your office can be found at Lowe's Home Improvement Warehouse for \$5 if you're willing to peruse their mis-tinted paints. Another person's mis-tint can become the color of your dream writing area.

### *Tip 3: Send out the Previously Published*

Most writers sell "First publication rights" to their pieces and retain everything else. This permits opportunities to exploit the copyright for your economic enrichment. Consider packaging a collection of articles with a common theme into a book. Slightly revamp articles to give them a contemporary slant and sell to a similar publication.

While hurricanes rack the economy, writers can weather the storms by making adjustments to their business behavior and lifestyles.

*Sherri Burr is a long-time member of Southwest Writers and the author of 11 books. She is a tenured professor at the University of New Mexico where she teaches Art Law and Entertainment Law.*

## Red Hot Internet Marketing Workshop Delivers the Goods

by Dottie Williams

SouthWest Writers and the New Mexico Book Association teamed up to present the Red Hot Internet Marketing workshop on Saturday, October 18. Penny Sansevieri, Founder and CEO of Author Marketing Experts, delivered the entertaining and information-packed workshop, and her enthusiasm didn't lag throughout the day.

Penny shared her experiences in the good and the bad of internet book promotions. Number one tip on the bad side, stay away from "link farms," sites that promise to get numerous links for your site. They could be a fast track to getting your site pulled from Google altogether. Number one tip on the good side, blog. Comment on some reputable sites and get your name noticed. Start to build links to your site slowly, but start *now*.

Don't have a site? That's step one – build one. Penny presented a graphic example of a well-designed website and explained the layout of its content. Her advice stemmed from experimentation with her own company's site, and its rise to a steady 4-6 rank in Google. (MSN gets a 10 if that helps with the placement.) Penny pointed out that the most important real estate on a website is in the upper left-hand corner and that it should contain your most valuable information. She discussed the importance of having people sign up for something on the site and presented the idea of an "ethical bribe" to encourage them to do so. The bribe being something simple, but useful, that they get in exchange for their e-mail address. You can visit Author Marketing Experts, Inc. online at [amarketingexpert.com](http://amarketingexpert.com) to see how the layout works for them.

Another gem of advice: If you get a chance to give an interview, don't sell the book so much as you sell the topic. Never use the words "buy my book" and don't allude to the answer to the interviewer's question being in the book. Be straightforward with your answers and give the listeners/readers plausible "WIFM" information. (WIFM = What's In It For Me?) Be a resource, be an expert, or just be your charming self, but give them something apart from the book to pique their interest. They'll buy the book for those reasons.

After spending a day with Penny Sansevieri, the overall consensus on this workshop was this: It delivered the goods. Attendees got her book, got her information and presentation, and were entertained in the process. All the goods in one package.

*Dottie Williams spends her days as a Court Specialist for a local software company, training court staff and prosecutors to use their case management software. At night, she's a sci-fi writer, an avid reader, and an anime fan, traveling whenever possible.*

## Revising Fiction When to Tell

by Kirt Hickman

I have spent the last four months discussing ways to show, rather than tell. But you can't show everything. Even if you could, there are times when you should tell.

### To provide continuity

Short, occasional bits of tell can help keep the story from jumping, seemingly haphazardly, from scene to scene. In the following example from my science fiction novel, *Worlds Asunder*, the reader hasn't seen these characters for several scenes, during which two days of story time have passed. I had to account for the time without going into a long, blow-by-blow scene showing two days of unimportant happenings.



Two days into their stay, Bill managed to separate Dana from the guys so he could enjoy some time alone with her, which he hadn't been able to do since their first night on the base. They went to the Tranquility Restaurant, which he favored for its reasonable prices--by lunar standards--quiet atmosphere, and the subtly masculine, romantic feel of the burgundy and brass decor.

Neither had mentioned what had happened in his quarters. It was safer not to. There never seemed to be any repercussions from his advances as long as he didn't press them.

"It's nice to have a bit of a break." Dana dug into her vegetable lasagna.

"From the training schedule or from the guys?"

This is followed by a page and a half of dialog that constitutes about five minutes of story time. The two opening paragraphs of tell give the reader a context for the dialog and enhance the continuity of the characters. They give a sense that Bill and Dana carry on with their lives even when they don't appear on the page.

### To relate events that aren't important enough to justify a full scene

In this example, also from *Worlds Asunder*, Chase investigates the origin of an important piece of electronic hardware.

That done, he went back to his apartment and spent the rest of the morning and most of the afternoon on the telnet with NASA's Earthbound investigations branch.

Almost immediately, they determined that the chip was Chinese, not Japanese, and that the text on the package translated into a product code and serial number. That was promising. If they could determine who made the chip, they might be able to track it to a customer, and from there, to the person who planted it. They sifted through the data from China's many nanoelectronics manufacturers, but by mid-afternoon, they'd gotten nowhere. "Keep trying," Chase told his colleagues. "Somebody made that chip."

These two paragraphs are almost entirely tell. One critiquer suggested that I expand them to show the conversation that took place. Because the effort to track the component was, for the moment, fruitless, I didn't feel it justified a full scene. Ultimately, I left the passage as tell.

As a counter example, an early draft of *Worlds Asunder* contained the following text, right after Chase discovers signs of sabotage:

He went immediately to inform Director Snider of the finding. It would change the face of the investigation for both NASA and the press.

A critiquer called me on this, and rightly so. The second sentence states that this development is much too important to gloss over. I expanded the passage into a scene that shows Snider's reaction and the dialog that ensues.

### To avoid repeating events you've already shown

Mariano motioned to one of his aides, a man of maybe twenty-five years. The aide slipped a data card into a slot in the table and keyed the first image. A hologram of Lunar Alpha Base appeared over the emitter in the center of the table. "Ladies and gentlemen." The speaker shifted his weight from one foot to the other. "The People's Republic of China has made a series of deliberate and successful attacks on several United States interests located on the Moon. First, the Stellarfare freighter *Phoenix* and the US energy secretary. Second, NASA's Lunar Alpha Base and the federal agent investigating the first attack. And yesterday, the Fusion Resource Corporation and the new helium plant at the Montanari mine."

He spent the next ten minutes cycling through a series of holograms related to each attack.

In this passage from *Worlds Asunder*, the last sentence is tell. To show this, I'd have to include the monologue of the aide's presentation, which would relate the details of three events that I've already spent page after page, scene after scene, showing. Because the reader can recall those scenes, telling that the aide presented the details serves my purpose much better than showing does.

Though there are times when you should tell, do it sparingly, and only to achieve a specific effect in your writing. Don't let tell creep into your story as an oversight in self-editing.



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

## Announcements

Poetry and Shrine-making Workshop Saturday, December 6, 1-4 pm at OFFCenter studio/ 808 Park Ave SW Alb NM 87102 247-1172, or call Karin for more information at 323-3938 (evenings). Cost \$35, no prior registration required. Taught by Karin Bradberry, award-winning poet and teacher whose passion is creating art that incorporates her poetry. Learn how to give embodiment to your favorite poem or other piece of writing in this workshop. Bringing a poem with you will make the process easier; if you don't, we will start you off with a writing exercise and then move on to the visual art. If you already have pictures or memorabilia that relate to your poem, bring those, too! All other materials will be provided.

A message from Sheila Wyborny: The schools of Bridge City, Texas sustained major damage from Hurricane Ike. I am a former member of SWW and also served as a preliminary judge for several of your manuscript competitions. As a former member, I am aware that your membership reaches far beyond the southwestern United States, and your educational programs benefit students as well as adults. I am presently involved with the Golden Triangle Writers Guild in an effort to help refill the shelves of the Bridge City school libraries. We are gathering children's books, both nonfiction and fiction, for all reading levels. We are asking published writers to donate as many author copies as they can spare, and we are also asking editors for books. In fact, I just received the following information from the Bridge City ISD curriculum coordinator: The pre-K through 2nd grade school library was virtually wiped out. The 3rd through 8th grade school lost about half of its inventory, and the middle school lost all of its nonfiction and reference section. If you can help, please contact me at 281.213.3168 or ws1929c@sbcglobal.net.

Memoir Writers Group - Meeting Place: Unitarian Church at Carlisle and Comanche. Beginners and published writers are invited to participate in the Memoir Writers Group to be held twice per month in the Wesson Room on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday from 10:00 a.m. until noon. The group will get together informally (Oct. thru Jan.) for an exchange of ideas, writing styles and a brief review of sample material presented for gentle critique without sharp criticisms. Our goal is to encourage authors and potential authors to put to paper memoir experiences of their lives that others (family members, friends, etc.) would love to have in the years to come. Possible book publications could be arranged through contacts at the SWW Group. For more details, please contact Paul E. Bolduc at 293-5157 (H) or pebolduc@yahoo.com.

The 9th Annual *Writer's Digest* Short Short Story Competition is accepting entries! We're looking for fiction that's bold, brilliant -- but brief. Send us your best in 1,500 words or less. But don't be too long about it—the deadline is December 1, 2008. The Grand-Prize winner will receive \$3,000 (that's \$2—or more—per word). For details visit [www.writersdigest.com/short](http://www.writersdigest.com/short).

WOW! Women On Writing Fall 2008 Essay Writing Contest, sponsored by skirt! books. In less than 750 words, tell us how recreating your personal space has changed your life, or how by making changes in your life, it has moved you to express yourself and recreate your home. These can be personal stories of love, loss, moving to a new area, or anything that has affected or inspired you to recreate your life and your home. Entry fee: \$10, or \$20 with critique. Awards: \$200, \$150, \$100 plus gift certificates and skirt! goodie bags. Deadline: November 30, 2008. Info at [wow-womenonwriting.com/contest.php](http://wow-womenonwriting.com/contest.php).



## Member Successes

Audrey Hansen enjoyed an interview regarding her book, *Coyotes Always Howl at Midnight*. She is a member of Women Writing the West, and Marsha Ward is also a member.

Jeanne Shannon, Karin Bradberry, and Deborah Eagan served as the editorial committee that helped the New Mexico State Poetry Society publish an anthology of poems by its members. The book, just out from Outskirts Press, is titled *Along the Rio Grande: Poetry from New Mexico*. It contains work by several SWW members.

Mark David Gerson's inspirational essay was selected as one of only 20 to be included in Today's Brilliance, an e-book created by inspiremetoday for its new members. More than 150 essays were considered for inclusion. Mark David Gerson's *The Voice of the Muse: Answering the Call to Write* received its 15th five-star review on Amazon in November! Now, it and *The MoonQuest* have an equal number of five-star reviews on Amazon. Mark David also did three internet-radio interviews in November, two for *The Voice of the Muse*, one for *The MoonQuest*.

Lois Duncan was luncheon speaker at the Secondary Reading League "Day of Reading" in Chicago in early November. Her children's book, *Hotel for Dogs*, has been published by Scholastic. A movie based on that story has been filmed by Dreamworks and will be released to theaters nationwide on January 16, 2009.

Karin Bradberry received 3 honorable mentions in the *Writer's Digest* 2008 Annual Contest, which received over 17,000 entries: 1 for rhyming poetry and 2 for non-rhyming poetry.

Karen McKinnon has a poem in the Harwood Arts Center anthology *Looking Back to Place*, and another in the current issue of *Sage Trail Poetry Magazine*.

## The Second Verse

By Olivia Balla

I decided to become a writer after reading *Treasure Island*. By the time I'd completed it, a desire to tell gut-clinching, teeth-grinding, flesh-crawling stories had sunk tentacles deep into my fourteen-year-old subconscious. The intrigue, the exotic locations, the mysterious and threatening dialogue and characters all worked a synergistic magic in my pubescent mind. I was truly, and in perpetuity, hooked.



But the daily-ness of life intervened in subtle starts and stops, and little by little the dream was put aside. Life, as is its way, moved on.

Three grown children, eight grandchildren and forty years later, the dream resurfaced with a nearly audible explosive power. Unable to quiet the yammering writer I'd kept bound in the basement of my psyche, I began playing with an idea for a mystery, the genre of which I am an avid reader.

The first thing I wrote was a two-page prologue. That bit of exercise was so satisfying that I immediately wrote several scenes, saving each in its own file on my desktop.

What fun it was to take my protagonist from a life of peaceful humdrum and thrust her into one of isolation and terror. How satisfying to move her through the safety of her peaceful, innocent life-tunnel and out into an ugly reality of isolation and betrayal. And then there was the final treat of bringing her successfully through it all against staggering odds, leaving her a bit scarred, and most definitely changed.

It took me about three years to write my first mystery. *Gather at the River* is currently being critiqued in Los Angeles. I will then re-edit it, using the marvelously detailed and organized information I am gleaning from Kirt Hickman's workshop. When that process is complete, I will shop my book.

Meanwhile, I could sit back and wait for the critiquer to get my first book back to me before embarking on a new project. I could do that.

But now that my restless inner writer has been allowed out into the light, I find I cannot be idle. I am drawn to my computer and padded office chair, which has by now comfortably conformed to the outline of my backside. I sit hour after hour with my fingers on the keypad, clicking away in response to the "what-if's" churning up from the sandy bottom of my mind. I have become incapable of allowing more of life to pass me by – of allowing even one more facet of the dream-jewel to be squandered.

Of course I will introduce my new protagonist, an intriguing amalgam of several people I've known, to such

things as would make someone of lesser determination give up. I will pit her against madmen – or perhaps madwomen – and she will learn things about her world.

But most importantly, she will learn things about herself. She will learn that she has capacities about which she has never dreamed. Capacities that will have become obvious to the reader, and give rise to the occasional, "Ah, of course." I will most likely induce my heroine to grapple with various sub-human, primal kinds of inner-tuggings as are inherent to all human beings. And depending on my mood, she will adapt and survive – or not.

One novel down, a second begun and the process of putting words together has become, by definition, an addiction. Life revolves around whatever I'm working on at the time. Every day finds me seeking ingredients with which to fill the beakers lining the shelves of my word-smithy brain: every trip to the mall is in actuality camouflaged reconnaissance in search of grist for the character and human nature beakers; every t-shirt and bumper sticker is examined for potential dollops of local color; even road signage is scrutinized with plot in mind. My life is no longer my own.

Or perhaps it might be more accurate to say my life has finally become my own. Perhaps the very life experiences that before seemed to impede a writing avocation have gelled into something useable. Perhaps the glories, joys, angst, pain, fears and hopes of a lifetime can catalyze the dream, can shape it into something worth writing about. That's what I'm hoping.

I'm hoping that dreams never get too old to become reality. I'm putting my trust in the notion that if the all-consuming desire to write is present, so is the potential.

Check back in a couple of years – I believe the best is yet to come. At least that's what I'm hoping.

*Olive Balla lives in Los Lunas, has a BArts in Psychology and Spanish, and a Teaching Certification from Texas Tech University in Lubbock, where she interned as a therapist. She taught high school Spanish for 11 years, then became Executive Director for the National Family Partnership, a national non-profit substance abuse prevention organization. Currently consultant to federal agencies such as HUD and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Olive also serves with her husband as music minister for a church in Albuquerque, where she is pianist and cantor.*

**Happy Holidayze**  
from  
**SouthWest Writers**

## SWW International Monthly Writing Competition

**C**ongratulations to the winners of our June 2008 International Monthly Writing Competition: Fourth of July Anecdote.



**1st Prize: Ann Marie Potter, Las Vegas, NV for "I Was There."**

**2nd Prize: John Orman, Albuquerque, NM for "Dad's Fireworks and Car Show."**

**3rd Prize: Sharon W. Jeffers, Albuquerque, NM for "First Fourth."**

### Honorable Mentions

Toby Friedman, Albuquerque, NM for "A Memorable July Fourth."

Ruth Friesen, Albuquerque, NM for "The Farm."

Ruth Friesen, Albuquerque NM for "Fireworks in Germany."

Nancy LaTurner, Albuquerque, NM for "The End of Loneliness."

**Judges' Comments:** The winners and honorable mentions showed strong details, descriptions and emotional content--the winners even more so than the honorable mentions.

**Want your contest entry to be considered for publication in *SW Sage*? Submit it to the editor. You will retain copyright.**

### Critique Groups

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

*Wanting to Start Groups/  
Looking for a Group*

**Nonfiction, Valencia County**  
Karen Keese 505-261-0040  
[skywriter@wildblue.net](mailto:skywriter@wildblue.net)

**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)

**Short Story, Poetry, Screenplay**  
Santa Fe

Robert Evans 505- 690-6651  
[reevans1@mac.com](mailto:reevans1@mac.com)

**Children's Books** Santa Fe  
[ldiemand@cybermesa.com](mailto:ldiemand@cybermesa.com)

**Screenwriting**  
G. Hathaway 249-7957

**Memoir, contemporary culture,  
non-fiction**

Anna Redsand 872-3277

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Members*

**Any Genre**

**Estancia Valley Writers Group**  
Critiques and moral support  
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@cablone.net](mailto:riversedgebob@cablone.net)  
[riograndema@cablone.net](mailto:riograndema@cablone.net)

**Land of Enchantment  
Romance Authors**  
Meets second Saturdays at noon.  
[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)

### December Contest Christmas Anecdote

**W**rite up to a 500-word Christmas-related anecdote about an event that happened sometime in your life. Write in first person, double-spaced. Include word count. Humorous, poignant, whatever.

Postmark deadline: Wednesday, December 31, 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)

**Any Genre**  
**Albuquerque Press Club**  
201 Highland Park Cir. SE  
First Tuesdays 7 pm  
Samantha 401-1561 or [sclark.abq@earthlink.net](mailto:sclark.abq@earthlink.net)

### SouthWest Sage Advertising Rates

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*20% discount for 6 mos.*

**Deadline:** 1st of each month for the following month. Payment due with camera-ready ad copy. Layout available for a small fee.

## 4 Ways Parents and Grandparents are Self-Publishing for Kids

by Brent Sampson

Everyone wants to be an author these days. With the proliferation of print-on-demand technology and instant availability worldwide through e-retailers like Amazon.com, why not? Approximately 200,000 books will be published this year; one of them could be written by you. Many writers seek fame and fortune; others long to share their memories with their families; and some dream of sharing a message with a child.



Parents and grandparents represent a large number of “new writers” on the print-on-demand scene today, driven by the idea of sharing a moral or lesson with the children or grandchildren in their lives. Why are children’s storybooks so popular with these new authors? One reason is length. Many children’s books are less than 1,000 words long, so unlike the daunting endeavor of cracking out a 100,000 word novel, a children’s book can sometimes be composed in an afternoon.

In the past, what made publishing a children’s book an insurmountable hurdle were the illustrations and up-front printing costs. But today, even high-quality artwork is packaged for sale by many self-publishing services, and by using print-on-demand technology, authors only pay for printing the number of copies that actually sell. Formatting and distribution is often included as well. Many would-be authors are discovering the only thing standing in their way is desire.

For those who hold the desire, here are four steps to increase the chances for success when self-publishing an illustrated children’s book.

### 1 MAKE EVERY PAGE COUNT

Good advice for any well-crafted story, but especially true for children’s books that are short in length to begin with, and feature full-color illustrations. Printing books in full color is relatively expensive and this is particularly true with print-on-demand. Each two-page spread will need to feature at least one illustration (and preferably a full, two-page illustration spread), so you want to make every page integral to the story.

### 2 INCLUDE A LESSON OR MORAL

One appealing aspect of publishing a children’s book is the opportunity to impart knowledge to a youngster. All successful children’s books have a moral or theme. The protagonist must overcome adversity to change, improve or grow by exercising a positive trait, perhaps one adopted during the course of the story. Well-conceived children’s storybooks share good values and lessons to their readers; make sure your story has a strong moral without being preachy.

### 3 WRITE FOR YOUR AUDIENCE

While many themes in children’s books are universal, you may have more success finding the appropriate tone if you write specifically for girls or boys. Most successful children’s stories not only have an age group in mind but a gender. Keep a laser-like focus on your specific demographic. This will also help the artist produce appropriate illustrations. Children usually pretend they are in the story, at least on an abstract level, and it is easier for a boy to relate to a drawing of a boy than a drawing of a girl. Equally important to the artwork is the use of language and the message of the story. Concepts that fall outside your demographic or words that are too difficult for your target age group to understand will cause your book to miss its mark.

### 4 BE SMART ABOUT ORIGINAL ARTWORK

Artwork can be an expensive element of a children’s book. Commissioning original illustrations from a professional artist can cost you between \$300 - \$800 per drawing, or even higher. For a 32-page book, it’s easy to see how the costs can escalate.

On the other hand, with a self-publishing company like Outskirts Press, the same company you choose for publishing may also offer original illustration packages for considerably less money. Print-on-demand self-publishing companies often subsidize the up-front production and artwork costs because they make money on the back-end book sales, too. A self-publisher is motivated to see your book succeed, whereas printers and many independent artists do not care once they receive their fee.

Some new authors who have self-published a book compare the experience to birthing a child. It can be expensive and painful, but also incredibly rewarding. And through self-publishing, a growing number of parents and grandchildren are now sharing one bundle of joy with another.

**SPECIAL NEWS FOR SWW Members:** Outskirts Press is offering you a 10% discount on the publishing package of your choice. Visit [outskirtspress.com/](http://outskirtspress.com/) packages to compare each package and then contact your SWW Office for the promotion code, available only for SWW Members.

*Brent Sampson is the best-selling author of “Sell Your Book on Amazon” and the award-winning, “Self-Publishing Simplified.” As president and CEO of Outskirts Press, Brent offers full-service, on-demand, custom book publishing services to authors seeking a fast, cost-effective way to publish and distribute their books worldwide. Through Outskirts Press Brent has helped thousands of authors with writing, editing, marketing and entrepreneurship. Brent is also a member of the board for the Education & Literacy Foundation. For more information, call 888-672-6657 or visit [outskirtspress.com](http://outskirtspress.com).*



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

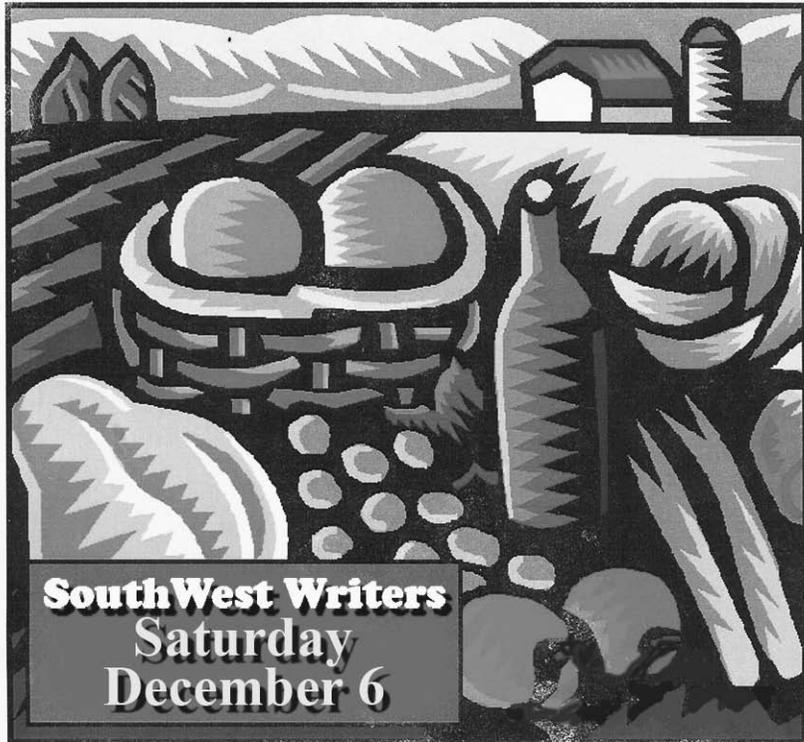
## SouthWest Sage

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SWWriters@juno.com

Label shows your SWW Membership expiration date.  
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**Bring a  
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to share.  
We'll all  
feast  
together!**



**SouthWest Writers  
Saturday  
December 6**

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