



# South West Sage

The Voice of South West Writers

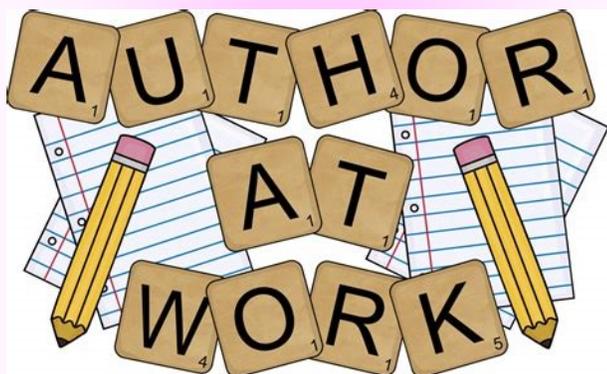
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SWW members are invited to submit articles and information to the *Sage* and to the SWW website. Acceptance and printing is at the discretion of the editor. Contact Rose Kern at [swwsage@swcp.com](mailto:swwsage@swcp.com) with proposals for new articles.



## In This Issue

There is an ongoing debate concerning the advantages of self-publishing versus going through a traditional publisher. In addition to the big national publishers there are smaller regional publishers that fill a needed gap.

In *The Independent Full Service Publisher* on page 4, Marty Gerber, the editor in chief of Terra Nova books gives us his take on the subject and insights as to what traditional publishers can offer writers.

On page 7, Sheri Burr discusses how personal tragedies can inspire new directions of thought.

SWW members Linda Yen, Colin Patrick Ennen, and Stan Rhine offer new short stories for us to enjoy.

Mary Dorsey asserts her *Resolutions* for the New Year on page 3, and Fred A. Aiken goes over his personal writing goals on page 11.

Reminder for the month: keep notes.

I traveled for work to Magadan, Siberia, in 1992 or 1993, shortly after *perestroika* (when the Iron Curtain fell). To say the 10-day trip was a learning experience is an understatement. I remember bits and pieces very clearly and included some of the trip in a short story a few years later. What I didn't remember was that I'd kept a travel journal. Today, while looking through the massive piles of notebooks I obsessively collect, I found that journal. Of course, most of it is uninteresting minutiae, but I found this list at the end.



Rules for traveling to Magadan:

- ◆ Take toilet paper.
- ◆ If staying in a Russian home, don't ever fill up – you'll be eating again in an hour.
- ◆ Stay in a Russian home.
- ◆ Never expect anyone to be on time.
- ◆ Change only a few dollars into rubles at a time. A closed bank will open to take dollars, but an open bank will close before giving dollars back.
- ◆ Never walk in front of any moving vehicle; it will only stop if you're a dog.
- ◆ If traveling by car very far from Magadan, take a dust mask, water, and Cutters (mosquito repellent).
- ◆ Don't travel by car very far from Magadan.
- ◆ Learn to say 'thank you' in Russian (*spasiba*) – you'll say it a lot.

I share this list not because I thought it was funny (although I did), but because as soon as I read it, I remembered more of the trip and thought of a short story. The story certainly would not have come to me if I hadn't stumbled across the list, and I'm off to write it. I've never been a big journal person, but I will definitely be keeping notes during my next trip. Maybe, when I'm eighty, I'll find the journal and write another story.

So, my advice is, keep notes.

And Happy Valentine's Day to you all!

### **SouthWest Writers Meetings - Visitor/Guest Policy**

SWW wants new people to come and look over our award winning writers association - but since it is our membership dues that pay the fees for our outstanding speakers, we only allow up to three visits for visitors or guests before they are required to join the organization.

Visitors are requested to sign in entering their email and/or phone number and wear a name tag. They will be invited to stand, introduce themselves and tell what kind of writing they do so that other writers in that genre can network with them during breaks in the meeting.

The "Successes and Announcements" made at our meetings are limited to SWW members.

As always, we encourage visitors to join SWW – a bargain at only \$80 per year.

# RESOLUTION

(revolution/revelation)

New Year...already?!

I hope 2018 will be better than this past year.  
Full of promise and potential instead of pain and heartache.  
Therefore...

I resolve to thrive rather than simply survive.  
To make my life great again!

I must remember to accept there are things over which I have no control.  
That anger and fear generated by the thoughtless, dangerous, ego centric actions of those elected to protect but have failed is unproductive.

To make myself sick over their actions is victory for them. I will not give them the power to bring me down, wear me out, make me heartsick.  
Will not let their decisions that affect me defeat me, for I will rise. I will persevere. Will make the best of what I have. Be strong once more. Be grateful for my life and all the abundance it contains.

Focus on the light, not the darkness.  
Move within the rhythms of the moment.  
Not walk slower than yesterday nor run faster than tomorrow. But to be content in the ever present now.

To realize as in all tragedies both private and public that...

THIS TOO SHALL PASS.



Mary Dorsey  
January 2018



CelaPhontus, LLC  
A Decision Strategy Innovation Company



## “Developing the Inner Life of the Character

### Using an Intuitive Process”

#### A CelaPhontus Workshop Event

Presented by Danute Debney Shaw

This workshop is being offered to the acting and writing community. If you have ever experienced difficulty working with a character this is the workshop for you!

- Stuck with a character who won't do what you want?
- Working with a vague script and weak direction, or no direction at all?
- Have no idea where to begin?

Then come work with Ms. Debney Shaw and your peers to develop an approach on tackling those pesky character challenges. Arrive early and enjoy a delicious meal and “elixir” at the Oxygen Bar “Kavern”. Bring your scripts and character pieces, or any tough scripts you have to share and work on.

**About the Workshop Speaker:** Danute Debney Shaw worked in New York in the performing industry on stage, before and behind the camera. She is a member of SAG/AFTRA, AEA and AGVA. Ms Debney Shaw studied with teachers at the Herbert Berghoff Studio, and privately with Jack Walzer.

She is now Managing Director and Consultant for CelaPhontus, LLC, a Decision Strategy Innovation Company. With over 25 years in the areas of organization, facilitation and problem solving, Ms Debney Shaw assists businesses and private individuals with thought process development, to identify possibilities and effectively engage in challenges to maximize opportunities in professional and personal contexts by creating vision, and actualizing a strategic approach.

For more information and to register contact [dds@CelaPhontus.com](mailto:dds@CelaPhontus.com)

- When: Saturday, February 10, 2018 from 2:30-4:30PM
- Where: The Oxygen Bar “Kavern”, 134 West San Francisco Street, Santa Fe, NM
- Cost \$85 (discount available for non-union actors)
- Register by February 3 - limited to 20 participants

## SWW is on YouTube!

- Have you ever missed a SouthWest Writers meeting you wanted to attend?
- Do you ever wish you could go back and listen to your favorite speaker again?
- Are you a devoted member who just can't make it to Albuquerque twice a month?

If you've said yes to any of the above, you'll be happy to hear that we record our meetings and put them on YouTube for you to enjoy—for free!

Go online to the YouTube homepage ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)). Once you're there, go to the search box at the top and type in “SouthWest Writers.” You'll get a page with search results, some of which will be recordings of past meetings, and one of which will be the channel itself. The channel will have the SWW pen logo.

Click on that, and you'll get to the **SouthWest Writers YouTube homepage!**

## The Independent, Full Service Publisher

By Marty Gerber

It is a truism of the modern book world that self-publishing has made it easier than ever for an author to physically turn a manuscript into a book—and harder than ever to connect that book with readers.

For independent, full-service publishers like Terra Nova Books, this is the reality that has enabled us to thrive. In 2018, we have found, authors are realizing the value in many publishing areas of skills and knowledge that may be beyond their own, as well as the benefits of national distribution and marketing that make their work more than just one more title among the many millions on Amazon.

What we provide as a publisher is simple—everything! There is no way to scrimp and cut corners and still hope to find readers when faced with the almost-unbelievable competition of *800 books* being published in the U.S. *every day*.

Most of this deluge consists of books whose lack of professionalism is pretty easy for readers to spot. It jumps from the page, so to speak, when compared with titles from a quality-focused publishing house—a difference we make clear through the entire range of Terra Nova's complete package of services:

Editing, proofreading, layout, cover design, formatting for print and e-book, publication online and in paper- or hard-back, national distribution through a sales force calling on every bookstore in the country, and marketing via print and broadcast reviews/articles/interviews; author appearances; and the social media (as well as providing the “technical” essentials of ISBN, copyright, barcode, etc).

Terra Nova is always looking for worthwhile manuscripts in any genre. Our criteria are four:

- Is this book about something people will care to read?
- Does it not duplicate 10 or 12 (or maybe even 3 or 4) other books already out on the market?
- What's the writing like? Is it of professional quality, or can it be brought to that level through our editing process?
- Will the author truly commit to being our full partner in marketing this book?

Seems simple. But the major percentage of manuscripts submitted to us fall short. We ask for a synopsis of the book, chapter summaries, and two sample chapters (including the first), along with a cover letter outlin-

ing the intended audience for the work, the marketing the author believes will reach this audience most effectively, and the author's own planned role in these efforts—plus a short resume of the author's publishing, personal, and professional history.

Sometimes writers are put off by this. They have a wonderful book, they believe; it should be enough. So they turn to self-publishing—which is not necessarily a bad decision when made realistically. The problems come for those who don't truly understand what they're getting into, and what they're not.

“Self-publishing,” of course, is almost always a misnomer. Very few are the writers who can—or want to—take all the many steps in the publishing process themselves. Thus, the typical self-publisher generally ends up:

- Taking a chance and hiring contractors whose skills are sometimes sadly deficient;
- Making decisions that he or she doesn't really have the background for; or
- Trusting to one of the online “packagers” like Lulu or CreateSpace—which often have serious drawbacks as well.

In addition, the author who goes this route usually finds there are virtually no bookstores anywhere that will carry the works of self-publishers—simply because retailers would rather do business with the industry's established distributors than with individual authors.

Undeniably, most books are sold on Amazon these days. Among those 800 published every day, there are many authors for whom what it offers is enough, and is the right way to go. But many others, I see increasingly, don't become clear on all the upsides and downsides until it's too late. There are few options left—maybe none—for authors with a good book that they can't get to the right readers, or for those with a less-good book after they realize it could have been better had they not tried to do so much themselves.



**Marty Gerber** is the editor and co-owner of Terra Nova Books, a full-service Santa Fe publisher with titles in all genres. He has been a newspaper writer and editor and has taught journalism at New York University and the University of Arizona. Marty has ghostwritten two books and written two others as himself.

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

Ask

Chaucer!

Dear Chaucer,

Is it worth the time and money to attend writers' conferences? If so, how do I choose which one to go to?

Ready to Learn

Dear Ready,

Writers' conferences can be very helpful moving you along in your writing career. The key is to decide what you want to accomplish and then choose the conference that is right for you. For example, if you're a new writer, you'll want a conference that offers workshops and talks specifically aimed at new writers. If you're ready to publish, you'll want a conference that offers appointments with editors and agents.

Once you've decided what you want to accomplish, consider what you enjoy doing and what you can afford. If you're energized by crowds, enjoy making connections with many other writers, and can afford a conference fee as well as lodging and food for a few days, look at the larger, longer conferences. For example, the [Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers' Colorado Gold Conference](#) in September is several days long, offers many

## In Other Worlds

### A Science Fiction/Fantasy Writers Conference Update

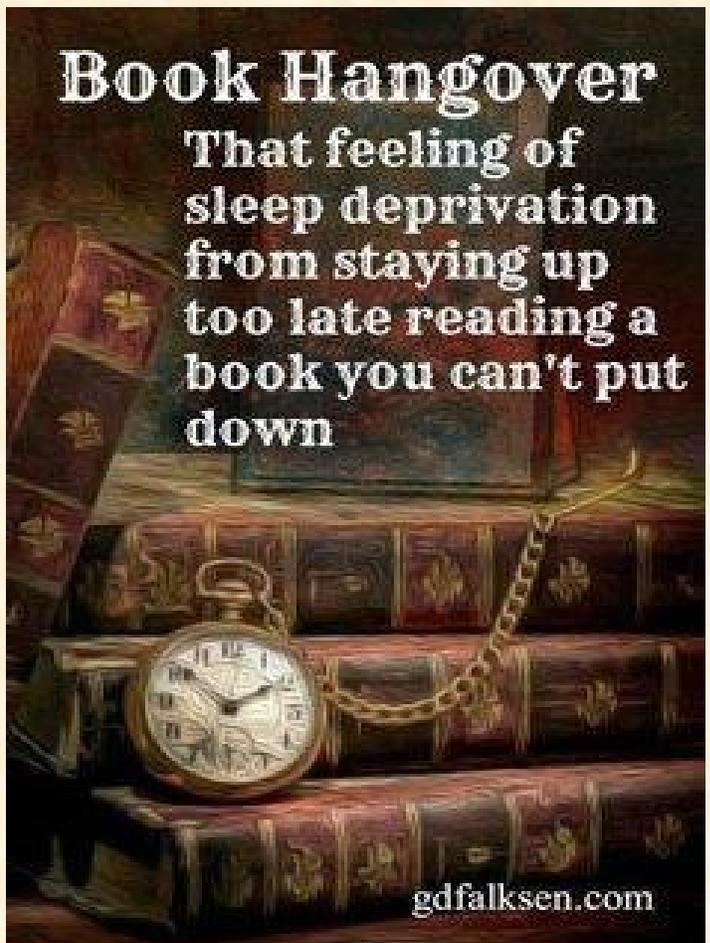
Due to unforeseen circumstances the SciFy/Fantasy conference is being moved back to May 19th. Look for more information and registration forms in the February *Sage*!

workshops and events for all writing levels, includes editor and agent appointments, and has hundreds of attendees. Or you might look for a genre-specific conference such as the [Romance Writers of America National Conference](#), which will be in Denver this year. This is the ultimate conference for romance writers; several thousand romance writers show up.

If, however, crowds make you uncomfortable or a large price tag isn't appealing, look for smaller or local events. This year, [SouthWest Writers](#) will have two one-day conferences. One will be genre specific (for Sci-Fi and Fantasy authors) and one will be topic specific (for those wanting to know how to get published). The conferences are very affordable and most attendees won't have any lodging expenses. The [University of New Mexico](#) also offers a popular one-day conference each year, *From Start to Sales*. This year's conference will be on April 14<sup>th</sup>. Keep an eye on their website for the conference announcement.

There are many other writers' conference around the state, the Southwest, the country, and the world. All offer unique opportunities to invest in your career. No matter what you choose to attend, you'll most likely increase the size of your network and gain new writing skills. Enjoy!

Chaucer,



## We Are Stardust

### A Night's Journey into Our Past

By Stan Rhine

It was night, midsummer, 1963. We were alone. The closest human was probably at the Jones Hole Fish Hatchery or the Jones Hole Ranger Station, at least three miles away across Wild Canyon. The nearest town, Artesia (now renamed "Dinosaur"), in northwestern Colorado, was over 30 miles away across the tumbling Green River, Blue Mountain and the Yampa Plateau.

Our campfire blazed high into the night sky with dead sagebrush. It popped and crackled, sending sparks skyward. Its pungent smoke swirled around us, permeating our clothing with its acrid odor. Tired after a day of searching the broken, rough terrain of Dinosaur National Monument for any bit of worked stone, old fire rings, any trace of ancient human habitation, it was wonderful to rusticate in the warmth of our fire.

Detailed geological maps had guided the steps of our small archaeological survey crew. We systematically swept the 6,000-foot-high, sparsely vegetated limestone ridges along Lodore Canyon, incised deep into the ancient rock by the turbulent Green River. Eons down, at the bottom of the canyon, lay the Green River-carved Gates of Lodore, Disaster Falls and Hell's Half-Mile. Up here lay the unknown, more recent past.

Tomorrow would be more of the same, plodding step-by-step across our half of this 210,844-acre wilderness, about 164 square miles for us to cover.

Dinosaur National Monument is justly famed for its dinosaur quarry, located in the western leg of the Monument, near Vernal, Utah. An entombed *Jurassic Park*, the quarry is the resting place of a varied and jumbled medley of dinosaur bones washed down into this prehistoric swamp, covered with silt and turned to rock by pressure and passing millennia. Many fossil dinosaur skeletons have been excavated here and reassembled in faraway museums. The quarry displays the abundance left, thousands of dinosaur bones, laboriously freed of their overburden and displayed as a massive rock wall of protruding, tangled skulls, pelvises, vertebrae, ribs and leg bones.

Time fossilized. That was what most people come to see.

We came to seek out traces of the early human inhabitants.

Tonight, however, we relaxed on our folding canvas campstools, our eyes following the trail of sparks and sagebrush smoke up into the inky sky. "Inky," of course, tells only part of the story. Over a mile high in the Middle Rocky Mountains, far from city lights and city pollution, millions of distant celestial fires illuminated the night. From horizon to horizon, the sky was ablaze with the light of distant galaxies. The Milky Way smeared an impossibly bright belt above us. Those light-years-away suns shone down on us so brilliantly we could have driven without headlights.

Some of those stars were so far away that light left their surfaces before any of us were born—before America was born. Some of that light began its journey when the dinosaurs still trod these parts. The night sky told not of the present, but of the past—a past much more remote than the prehistoric past we searched for, far more remote than even the fossilized past of the dinosaurs. Some of the starlight we saw came from stars that had already gone supernova. Other night sky watchers would see their explosions years—centuries—in the future. This was a light show set in the far, far distant past.

Astrophysicists agree the heavier elements that populate the universe were spawned in the star factories that spew them out as they slide into their death throes. The universe is the king of recyclers; those bits of stardust recombine and accrete under the force of gravity to form new solar masses, which kindle into new stars and form new planets. And though we could not see it, those processes were continuing at that moment, far above our heads.

The universe is filled with exploded and exploding stars following their own natural life cycles from birth through adolescence to old age and extinction. Mesmerized by this brilliantly lit canvas, we unrolled our sleeping bags, staring silently upward into an incomprehensively remote time. This fantastic celestial light show illuminated our past. Our galaxy, our sun, our earth, ourselves, were once parts of other stars, other galaxies. We are, quite literally, stardust.

And we are surely not nearly as alone as we thought that night.

## The Writing Life: Creating Through Pain and Loss



By Sherri Burr

We have often heard the phrase, “When life gives us lemons, make lemonade.” These pithy words imply that we are supposed to turn whatever sour comes our way into something sweet. It can be a lot easier to squeeze a lemon, add water and a sweetener to make a refreshing summer drink than to fashion something wonderful from the death of a close loved one.

After spending seven years, 364 days in a semi-comatose, locked-in condition, my brother Ralph’s heart stopped beating for the last time on 13 November 2017. After the charge nurse at the Arizona healthcare facility called me that evening to say Ralph had been found without a pulse, my hands shook so violently that I could barely type an email cancelling the next day’s meetings. Ralph’s last illness had commenced on 14 November 2009 when he suffered a heart attack and clinically died for 22 minutes. The resulting anoxic brain injury robbed him of his ability to speak.

As days turned into weeks, and weeks into months of praying for a miraculous recovery, I began chronicling my experiences as my brother’s caregiver. Chapters of a book began almost writing themselves as I stepped into Ralph’s life to pack up his belongings, return keys to his landlord, resolve lawsuits and a tax audit, and look after the financial wellbeing of his two children. His level of stress before his heart event initially threatened to overwhelm me.

Doctors sometimes shocked me with their pessimism and greed. One doctor, for example, apparently billed for services never provided. When I confronted him, he said, “I will stop treating your brother.” I then told him that, according to a google.com search, the Arizona medical board had suspended his license. “My staff is working on that,” was his response.

I finally moved my brother from that facility after the staff sent him to the ICU with sepsis. During his hospital stay, I discovered his weight had dropped to 127 pounds from 205. Only when Ralph was out of harm’s way did a nutritionist confide that the facility was behind on payments for patients’ food. The facility eventually closed.

Journaling and writing the chapters made me feel as if Ralph’s experience with the medical system could help others who might find themselves in this situation. Perhaps it might encourage some to write Living Wills to specify what kind of treatment they would like in the advent of a catastrophic illness.

My brother didn’t have a Living Will or a Power of Attorney. Given his relative youth at the time of his major heart attack, 48 years old, it had never occurred to me to ask. Instead, I had to intuit what he might have wanted after a court proceeding granted me the legal right to make decisions for him as his guardian.

Looking back, I realized that I lost my brother twice: first when the heart attack robbed him of his ability to speak, and second when he died. During the in-between years, I prayed for a miracle that would return him to his full capacity. That was the ending I wanted for my book. I could see the headlines: “Scottsdale man recovers after eight years in a semi-comatose condition.” “Semi-comatose man could understand all around him.”

That was not the ending I received, however. Only fiction writers have the flexibility to craft their perfect ending. Instead, Ralph passed away quietly in his nursing home room, was briefly revived, sent to the emergency room with an erratic pulse, and then expired. No headlines. No spontaneous recovery.

Then I began to ask myself: what if the miracle was the additional seven years, 364 days? During that time, I became lonely for family and began a search for more Burr relatives. Our father had been an only child, grandchild, and great-grandchild. Could our line be this sparse?

Pursuing my father’s great aunt who had lived in Wyoming led me to the Family History Museum in Salt Lake City where I found that her father (our great-great grandfather) had been born a free black male on his grandfather’s Virginia farm in 1847. What? How could that be? Weren’t all blacks slaves before the Civil War? Weren’t they all freed by Lincoln?

After I further researched our ancestors, a different narrative unfolded. I became a Monticello Fellow, and lived in a house on Thomas Jefferson’s estate grounds while researching my project. Jefferson, Washington, and other slaveholding presidents had interactions with Free Blacks. After DNA testing, I began to consider that our Burr name might have descended from Founding Father Aaron Burr.

Ultimately, researching and writing about my brother’s lemon of a situation became something that could make a contribution to understanding American history.

\*Sherri Burr is a Yale Law School-educated law professor and the author of 26 books. She is currently working on “My Brother’s Guardian, My Family’s Legacy.”

## Razzle Frazz

By Colin Patrick Ennen

The lazy Sunday afternoon had begun to chafe Razzle Frazz—and the little pup into whose adorable head he'd jammed his consciousness. Of course, his mere presence, semi-ethereal, psychic, from-the-future, was vexing the dog as well, making the poor beast doubly miserable. But Raz refused to feel guilty about this; he *was* on a personally and professionally important anthropological mission, folks. Anyway, like all his blessed species, Shylock would need nothing more than a glance from his master to get his tail wagging, intruder consciousness be damned.

Incidentally, the history books had failed to report the animal's name, this being a rather fuzzy period in the life of its master, the brilliant satirist and speculative fiction writer Colin Patrick Ennen. It had surprised Raz at first, as the dog was so not...Shylock-y. To him, at least. After all, the last performance he'd seen—on the moon—had put a dolphin-human hybrid in the role. At the same time, he realized, it *would* be just like his favorite early-21<sup>st</sup>-century author to name a pet after an oft-maligned, perpetually misunderstood (even in the mid-22<sup>nd</sup> century!) Shakespearean character. Without a hint of pretentiousness, too.

Okay, maybe a little.

Razzle Frazz had entered the dog's mind a few weeks before to observe Mr. Ennen up close, to un-fuzz what was thought to be a crucial period in his artistic development. That was the idea anyway. So far, he'd done a lot of walking around in the balmy Albuquerque winter—good, maybe, if Raz were an archaeo-climatologist. And he'd watched Mr. Ennen stare at a computer screen at great length, the future author honing his scowl, shaking his head, drifting off more times than he could count.

This was important, sure—it showed artistic process and all that. However, Raz had done extensive calculations, given the chrono-gineers a specific destination; he was sure this was when things were supposed to kick off for the author, and he only had a couple of months to hang around. True, Mr. Ennen had, since November, been published three times, including a story considered a classic by Raz's time. But then the author got sick on Christmas, fell off a ladder a week later, and was now contemplating a low-carb meal plan.

"Who writes a book while on a diet?" Razzle Frazz had yelled. Only, given the circumstances, it had come out as a series of howls and woofs. He'd have to talk to the technicians about that.

So, here it was, Sunday, three o'clock, and the guy was staring at the computer screen again, his tongue sticking out of his mouth like a fat pink slug. The keyboard had been silent for close to eight minutes. On the other hand, dude *had* clicked around with the mouse a bunch, but probably only to yet another depressing news article about the current state of the world. Oh, how Raz yearned to assure his hero that everything would turn out; he just had to be patient. But, again, "woof-woof."

That's when the wannabe writer suddenly stopped procrastinating. He sat up straight at his computer, like a string had been pulled from the top of his head, or someone had stuck him in the rear with a thumbtack. Mr. Ennen shook out his hands, winked at his puppy, and started authoring, his tongue creeping ever further from his mouth.

Raz listened to three minutes of furious tapping before he willed the dog to stand and approach his master. Okay, maybe it wasn't ideal to interrupt an artist at work, but they'd told him he couldn't alter history.

Mr. Ennen tore his attention from the screen to address the pup, grinning. "Sup, little fella?" He reached out and caressed Shylock's head, sending a cascade of dopamine shooting through the animal's brain.

Razzle Frazz felt it, too, and knew his body, lying strapped to a table, fixed with countless wires, a century-and-a-half in the future had to be jamming right along.

"Strap in, dude," Mr. Ennen instructed his dog. "This is it." He pointed to the computer screen before returning to work.

Raz directed the dog's eyes up to the glowing square on the table in front of the writer. Another surge of chemical warm-fuzzies coursed through the mutt, this time coming from the brain-intruder.

The dumb bastard had finally started, and Raz would recognize that first paragraph anywhere, anytime.



**Colin Patrick Ennen** lives in Albuquerque and works at a doggie day-care, because they actually make more sense than most humans. He writes/plans to write some combination of satire and speculative fiction, possibly combining the two someday in a world-changing work of literature. He's been published by Writers Resist and The Coil, and has a short piece in an anthology from the late fall entitled *More Alternative Truths*. See him attempt to be witty on Twitter @cpennen.



## SCHOOL DAZE(S)

A Memoir By  
Linda Yen

### DARK

To this day I can see the old crone's piercing eyes, her pale, wrinkled face, hear the screech in her voice as she wrenched me from my chair and made me stand.

Next appeared a matron whose crown of curly red hair I remember because I had never seen that color of hair before. There was a gentleness in the way she held me by the shoulders as she spoke to the crone.

But she soon moved away, and I stood, paralyzed by fear, for what seemed an eternity in the assembly room, surrounded by a sea of students and teachers, feeling isolated and humiliated though I had no idea what I was guilty of. This was my initiation into fourth grade in the United States.

Before classes began I had flunked with flying colors a written exam since I neither spoke nor read any English. It was 1956. There were no remedial English courses, no special classes for children of newly arrived immigrants. I was casually left to fend for myself in the regular class.

Maybe my parents and the school officials carried the idea of immersion too far. I don't recall learning much, if anything, that year. Other than the old crone and her icy stare whenever she saw me in assembly hall, I don't recall by name any of the teachers or students.

I do recall the canned prunes we were forced to gulp down for lunch. They looked like snails mark-

ing slimy purple trails as I scooted them around the plastic bowl. Perhaps the cafeteria cook was obsessed with constipation. Who wouldn't be constipated from the tasteless fare of rubbery meats and soggy vegetables?

In retrospect, the old crone must have had a notion of loyalty that bordered on lunacy. The red haired teacher brought my younger brother, who apparently fared better than I, to explain to me in Chinese that I must stand, place my hand on my chest, and sing the patriotic song.

I told him I was born Chinese, and would never sing songs to any other country. But then, not wishing to be terrorized any longer, I grudgingly complied. After the mandatory mouthing of "My Country 'Tis of Thee," the old crone made all the students dance the minuet. Upon noticing that I rose obediently for the singing, she directed a young boy to escort me to the dance floor.

I dragged my feet, wanting to escape the bizarre charade. Why would an American public institution celebrate an archaic European dance during grade school lunch hour? The crone must have had more than one screw loose. Perhaps she believed she descended from European royalty. Perhaps she thought she was Marie Antoinette. Too bad the schoolyard wasn't equipped with a guillotine.

I was too young and naïve to come up with more twisted motives. It was, after all, the fifties. Maybe she thought I was Japanese and my family should have remained in the internment camps. Maybe she thought I was a spy from North Korea or, worse yet, an agent provocateur for the Communists and labor unions.

### LIGHT

Mr. Heineman blinked and almost tripped when he entered our sixth grade classroom. "Surprise!" we shouted as we leapt from our crouched positions behind our desks. After he realized what we had done, he moved to the middle of the room and sat down on a student's desk.

With a sigh, he removed his dark rimmed glasses. "Oh you guys," he said, wiping away the tears in his eyes. The class huddled around him for a hushed second, then broke out in giggles and joyful laughter.

One does not need to understand a person's words

to sense the kindness in a smile or a nod. The spoken word is defined by the culture that generated it, while the language of the heart is universal. Mr. Heineman guided us, not simply with words, but with his heart.

His face lit up like a proud parent whenever we accomplished a task, however small and insignificant in the scheme of things. He gave us hope and encouragement so that, by the end of the school year, each one of us went home convinced that we possessed a particular gift, despite the fact that we had been relegated to the “slow learners” class.

We were a mongrel lot. The classmates I recall were Annabelle, a tall Swedish girl with long blonde braids; Annette, a petite, pretty Puerto Rican who wore low cut tops to show off her budding breasts; Roberto, an Italian kid with a shy, radiant smile; Sam, a pockmark faced Anglo boy who was slow as a tortoise, but would eventually reply to a question. Though we each had an idiosyncratic way of expressing ourselves in English, we had no difficulty understanding one another.

Class began with Mr. Heineman explaining the day’s lesson on the blackboard. Later, he’d stop by our desks to check our progress. He stooped down next to me when he noticed that I had completed a long division problem. “What a genius!” he exclaimed. I lapped up the compliment but knew better. By the time I had completed third grade in Taiwan’s regimented, learn-by-rote Chinese school, I already knew decimals and fractions. I was relieved, though, that my sixth grade textbook did not go beyond long division. It meant being spared from doing any more math homework.

Mr. Heineman swept the cobwebs from our minds by taking us out of the classroom. We’d scamper across a grassy knoll in Central Park, lugging crayons, paper pads, and lunchboxes, to settle down and draw the fall foliage. We strolled, wide eyed, mouths agape, past gigantic displays of dinosaur skeletons in the Museum of Natural History. We emboldened ourselves to dream under a wide canopy sky as we traveled to distant planets, comets, and stars at the Planetarium.

For the final day of class, Annette, a natural team leader, suggested we throw him a surprise party. We pooled our resources, blew balloons, taped them on the walls alongside streamers made of supple construction paper, and cobbled together a farewell poster bearing each of our signatures. It was the last time I’d see Mr. Heineman or my fellow classmates. That day I watched a grown man weep, and learned, without need of words, the meaning of gratitude.

**Linda Yen is a retired lawyer who writes poetry on the sly. She is now experimenting with writing prose pieces on the sly**



Hometown **READS**



**SouthWest Writers named Read Local Champion!**

For info go to [www.hometownreads.com](http://www.hometownreads.com)

## Goal Setting by Fred A. Aiken

As I write this, it is the first week in January, which means it is time to formulate my personal and business goals for this year (2018). The system that I use is the **SMARTER** system, which stands for:

Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-dependent, Evaluated, and Reformulated, meaning:

- The goal must be specific, not general.
- The goal must be quantifiable, meaning that it can be measured.
- The goal must be achievable, given my time and resources and other things within the sphere of my control.
- The goal must be realistic, given my education/knowledge and resources (time and financial).
- The goal must be time dependent having a definite beginning and ending date.
- The goal must be evaluated periodically
- The goal must be reformulated, if necessary, to get the goal back on track to successful completion.

This year, I have reduced the number of goals to twenty-six: nine personal goals and seventeen writing goals. Each meets the SMARTER system criteria. The business goals for 2018 will be:

- ◇ Spend 1,500 hours on Writing Related Activities.
- ◇ Attend the Romance Writers of America national conference in Denver.
- ◇ Attend the Super Stars conference in Colorado Springs.
- ◇ Attend Bubonicon.
- ◇ Write a weekly Thoughts for Tuesday blog post and a biweekly Friday Food for Thought blog post for my website

- ◇ Write a semi-annual writer's newsletter to subscribers of my website.
- ◇ Read a minimum of five books per quarter, either genre or craft.
- ◇ Write one Devotional per quarter and submit it for publication.
- ◇ Take one workshop or class per quarter.
- ◇ Enter one writing contest per quarter.
- ◇ Participate in the 2018 NaNoWriMo event.
- ◇ Revive the Cosmic Connection SF Critique Group during the Calendar year.
- ◇ Present one workshop or class during 2018.
- ◇ Write and submit six articles for the SWW Sage this year.
- ◇ Update my Writer's Business Plan for 2018.
- ◇ Write two hundred fifty thousand new words, sixty two thousand one hundred seventy-five new words per quarter.
- ◇ Send out at least one short story per month to magazines and keep them in circulation until sold, and send out one novel this year and keep it in circulation until sold.

I have also prepared my accountability spreadsheet to record my progress in meeting these seventeen goals. At the end of each quarter, I will evaluate my progress in meeting these goals and adjust the next quarter goals accordingly so that I will stay on course to have met each goal by December 31, 2018.

For more information on the SMARTER Goal method and how I handled the quarterly goals, visit my website at [WWW: The Writing and Thoughts of FredAAikenWriter.com/Thoughts for Tuesday](http://WWW:TheWritingandThoughtsofFredAAikenWriter.com/ThoughtsforTuesday). While you are there, sign up for my newsletter!



Photo from SWW meeting

*“I love writing. I love the swirl and swing of words as they tangle with human emotions.”*

- James Michener

## Local Authors Book Signing and Presentation



Join us for a book signing and presentation by local authors who have written about grief and loss.

\*Michelle Anderson \* Chandra Bale \* Jade Bock \* Patricia Conway \* Jacie Coryell \* Yvonne Williams Cordova \* Joyce Gilbert \* Teranda King \* Jacqueline Loring \* Trish Miller \*  
\* Linda Phelps \* Dan Wetmore \* Desiree Woodland \*

Saturday, February 24, 2018

10:00 am -12:00 pm.

Presentation begins at 10:30 am

The Grief Resource Center is located at 1113 University Blvd. NE 87102 (located behind French Funerals and Creations). www.griefnm.org -505.842.7166

*Lighting the Pathways to Healing*

## SouthWest Writers

### Volunteer Opportunity!

### Do you Tweet? Or Facebook?

SWW needs a social media coordinator to work with Kimberly Rose. This fun task brings SWW into the public eye and allows members an avenue for intercommunication. Improve your own e-marketing skills, be innovative in your support of your fellow authors.

Kim Rose is the one behind the cameras at the SWW meetings - go up and introduce yourself - she'd love to mentor you in the basics of using social media!

### 2 HOUR WORKSHOP PRICES:

SATURDAYS AFTER THE MEETINGS

**\$20 SWW MEMBERS**

**\$25 OSHER MEMBERS W/CARD**

**\$30 NON-MEMBERS**

### Workshop and Class Refund Policy

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

### SOUTHWEST WRITERS CRITIQUE SERVICE

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

*The SWW Critique Service accepts all genres, including:*

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

#### COST

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

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

## UPCOMING CLASSES



### Revising Fiction - Making Sense of the Madness

Presented by

Kirt Hickman

Monday Evenings at 6:30pm beginning  
March 12

### Writing for Magazines: Bag- ging Your First Magazine As- signment

Presented By Melody Groves

Saturday, April 21, 2018 9am-  
noon and Saturday, April 28, 2018  
9am-noon

More information about classes and speakers is  
available on the SWW Website Classes page.



SWW members donate lots of goodies  
to share during the meetings!

## Speakers for Upcoming Meetings

### Saturday, Feb 3 10am-noon

- Steve Brewer
- Nuts and Bolts

### Tuesday, Feb 20 7pm-9pm

- Lorena Hughes
- To Err is Human, To Learn Divine

### Saturday, March 3 10am-Noon

- Melody Groves
- Putting Emotions into Writing

### Tuesday March 20 7pm-9pm

- Judy Avila
- Topic TBD

### Saturday, April 7 10am-noon

- Kirt Hickman
- Pitching Your Novel Effectively
- 

### Tuesday, April 17 7pm-9pm

- Joanne Bodin & Jeanne Shannon
- Poetry

### Saturday, May 5 10am-noon

- TBD

### Tuesday, June 19 7pm-9pm

- Michael Backus
- Topic TBD

NOTE: Dates missing have not been set up yet.

More information about these upcoming speakers  
for SWW Meetings is available on the SWW web-  
site:

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



## Upcoming Workshops

These workshops take place after the regular Saturday meetings from 12:30pm to 2:30pm.

Saturday March 3, 2018

### What I Learned from Nancy Drew

with Chris Eboch



Saturday, April 7th

### *Pitch Your Novel Effectively*

With Kirt Hickman



Saturday May 5th

### Historical Fiction

with Sandra Toro



Saturday June 2, 2018

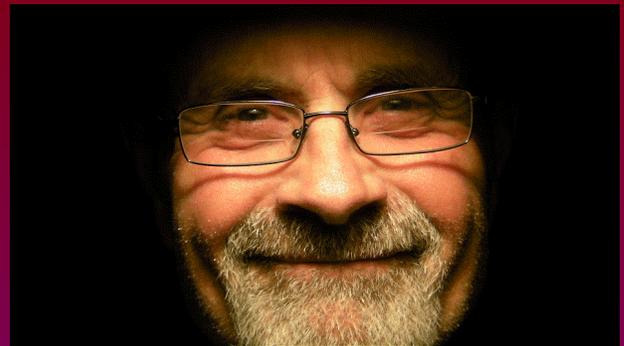
## Using Humor in Writing

with Steve Brewer



More information about the workshops and speakers is available on the SWW Website Work-

## Workshop



### Celluloid Aspirations Redux

With Marc Calderwood

Saturday Feb. 3rd 12:30pm

This workshop looks at novels and short stories that made transitions to film and whether or not the cross-over worked and why. Tagging 10 screenplay issues that require the attention of the novelist and/or short story writer, I'll define the primary issues that must be considered in a current work or those things that need to be considered prior to the start of a new piece. This working supplement to last month's Celluloid Aspirations will give you the film industry viewpoint of character, setting, plot, conflict, resolution, and more. We will discuss and work on the one tool that will allow you to determine whether or not you have a good concept for film. We will cover briefly how to approach screenwriting and what to do if you've read a novel that you would like to turn into a screenplay.

An award-winning screenwriter, **Calderwood** received his Certificate in Screenwriting from UCLA in 2007. In 2008 Marc made his writer/directorial/producer debut in the 48 Hour Film Project with the short Water Torture, an award-winning film. He's been active as a reader for three top screenwriting sites and has read and given notes on over 300 spec screenplays.

Currently, Marc and his wife and live in Albuquerque where he writes screenplays teaches screenwriting classes privately and through UNM at OLLI. He works as a substitute teacher and in the summer he operates Hahn Youth Voices a summer film camp for local Native American students.



**Welcome to 2018  
Battle of the Books Competition  
on April 28, 2018 at  
Los Lunas High School Cafeteria**

Los Lunas is sponsoring a reading contest called *The New Mexico Battle of the Books*. The Battle is a reading competition for students in grades 4-8. Children read and meet with their peers throughout the year, then enter a quiz-style battle in which they are asked about books that they have read from the year's designated Battle of the Books reading list. Teams are sponsored by schools, public libraries or other organizations, and compete in either the Elementary or Middle School Division.

They are inviting New Mexico authors to bring their books to sell during the morning of April 28, 2018. This is particularly a good event for those who write books in the young readers and young adult genres.

ALL AUTHORS ARE INVITED TO PROMOTE, SELL or AUTOGRAPH BOOKS DURING THE COMPETITION. Contact **Teresa Martinez (below)** for an application.

Please plan to set up at 8:00 a.m. and tear down is at 1:00 p.m. Set-up is free and there is NO application fee. One table is available to each author. Fact: Every author last spring sold book(s).

**[http://nmlibraries.org/  
battleofthebooks](http://nmlibraries.org/battleofthebooks)**

**Contact: Teresa Martinez, (505) 865-7273 ext. 8434 [tmartinez@lsschools.net](mailto:tmartinez@lsschools.net)**

**One book donation is requested from each author and will be a silent auction item or giveaway during the competition.**

**Last chance to enter  
NMPW Communications Contest**

You still have time to enter the New Mexico Press Women 2018 Communication Contest. All entries must be submitted and paid by **February 6, 2018**. Enter online at [NewMexicoPressWomen.org](http://NewMexicoPressWomen.org) by selecting 2018 Communication Contest from the Awards/Contest menu.

Complete information are on the [Communications Contest page](#) of the NMPW website and on the National Federation of Press Women site when you click on the link for the online entry form.

For more information please contact 2018 Communications Contest Chair Carolyn Carlson at [CTCarlson03@gmail.com](mailto:CTCarlson03@gmail.com).



## Upcoming Programs

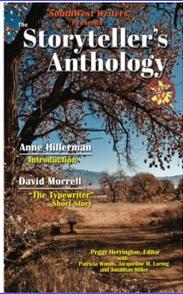
**Tuesday, Feb. 13:** "Empower Your Negotiation." Workshop with Dr. Richard Kaye, internationally known expert and lecturer on negotiation skills. \$20 for NMBA members, \$25 for yet-to-be members).

**Note:** Dr. Kaye will give a preview of his workshop at the NMBA Networking Luncheon on **Friday, Feb. 9, 11:30 AM** at Tiny's Restaurant in Santa Fe.

**Thursday, March 15:** "How to Qualify as a Business (according to IRS rules)." Workshop with Therese Francis. As an accountant and a publisher, Ms. Francis is conversant with and up-to-date on the IRS rules pertaining to small businesses, especially as they relate to authors and publishers. \$30 for NMBA members (\$35 for not-yet-members); includes an informative booklet.

**Tuesday, April 17:** "Book Reviews: Why they're important, how to get them, and how to write them." Workshop with Art Tucker and Mari Angulo of Artotems Co., a marketing, publicity, design, and consulting firm specializing in services to authors and publishers. \$20 for NMBA members (\$25 for non-members).

**Location and Reservations:** All programs take place at 6 PM at the Unitarian-Universalist Congregation of Santa Fe, 107 W. Barcelona Road (off Galisteo Street), Santa Fe. Lots of free parking! Reservations are highly recommended. Secure your place now by email: [admin@nmbook.org](mailto:admin@nmbook.org)



## The Storyteller's Anthology

is available to order in paperback on Amazon. A great addition to any library, it exemplifies the diversity of talent we bring to the literary world. Please consider leaving a positive comment on the Review page with a 5-star rating to enhance salability of this excellent example of outstanding authorship by members of SouthWest Writers!

**Annual Membership in SouthWest Writers**  
**Individual: \$80 as of Jan 1, 2018**  
**Student: \$25**  
**Requires proof of student status**  
**Outside U.S.: \$75,**  
**Lifetime Membership: \$750**  
**Download the Sage from**  
**www.southwestwriters.com**



### SouthWest Sage Advertising Rates Worldwide Internet Circulation

The SWW website receives thousands of page requests every month.

*Business card size:* \$20

*1/4 page, vertical:* \$40

*1/3 page, horizontal:* \$50

*1/2 page horizontal:* \$75

*15% discount for 3 mos.      20% discount for 6 mos.*

**Deadline:** 15th of each month for the following month.  
Payment due with camera-ready ad copy in .jpg format.

### You Can Write for SouthWest Sage

Want to add a byline to your portfolio? We welcome submissions focusing on all aspects of researching, writing, and publishing any genre. See past issues of *SouthWest Sage* for the types of articles we publish.

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

Please send all submissions as either standard text in an email or in a Word document with Times New Roman or Calibri font in 12pt. size. Do not get fancy with formatting or fonts—the more difficult it is for me to set it into the newsletter, the less likely I am to print it.

Send questions or submissions to Rose Kern, *SouthWest Sage* Editor, [swwsage@swcp.com](mailto:swwsage@swcp.com).

### Santa Fe Science Writing Workshop

Applications are being taken for the 23rd annual Santa Fe Science Writing Workshop, which runs from Monday evening, May 7, 2018 through Saturday morning, May 12, at the Inn of the Governors in downtown Santa Fe, New Mexico.

The workshop was founded and is directed by

- [Sandra Blakeslee](#), longtime science writer for the *New York Times* and co-author of *Sleights of Mind*, [The Body Has a Mind of its Own](#) and other books, and

- [George Johnson](#), two time winner of the AAAS Science Journalism Award and author of [The Ten Most Beautiful Experiments](#), [The Cancer Chronicles](#), and other books

We will be joined by three guest instructors:

- [Henry Fountain](#), climate reporter for the *New York Times* and author of [The Great Quake](#)

- [Cornelia Dean](#), former Science Editor of *The New York Times* and author of [Making Sense of Science](#), [Against the Tide](#), and other books

- [Robert Lee Hotz](#), Pulitzer-prize-winning science journalist for *The Wall Street Journal*

<http://sciwrite.org/>

# "The Best of the Sage" Anthology Will You Take a Chance to be Included?

**Have you noticed** that many of our membership's contributions to the Sage are excellent?

**Well, we have!**

Next Fall the board is considering publishing another anthology - this time it will contain articles and stories published in the Sage and written by SWW members.

You have three ways of possibly being included:

- Write an article for the Sage related to the craft of writing, getting published, etc...
- Enter stories, poems, or articles inspired by the monthly writing challenges announced in each Sage.
- Send in a short story/poem/essay of your own - 800 words or less - on any topic. (inclusion in the Sage is subject to the discretion of the editor)
- Artwork/photographs related to writing in general or accompanying your stories.

In September of 2018 the editor of the Sage will submit stories and articles received over the past three years to a Board appointed committee who will review the pieces without names attached for inclusion in the "Best of the SouthWest Sage Anthology".

The plan is for the Anthology to be in print and available by November of 2018.

## STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

SouthWest Writers is offering one-year scholarship memberships in our organization to high school and full time college students. To be eligible, an applicant must be enrolled in high school or college. If you know someone with the interest and desire to pursue a writing career or if you wish to apply yourself, contact the SWW office at [swwriters@juno.com](mailto:swwriters@juno.com).

**Are you ready to be published?**

**March Sage Writing Challenge**

**Do you feel lucky?**

**Can you write a story about someone who has had either really good, or really bad luck? What happened? Where did it lead to in their lives?**

The article can be sent as either a word document or as text in an email. Don't use any fancy fonts, Times New Roman, Courier, or Arial will be fine. 12pt type. Pictures are allowed. Please send a headshot and short bio with each submission.

Some of the planned challenges for 2018 include:

In general the stories and articles should be about 800 - 1000 words unless otherwise stated in that month's challenge.

Send your masterpiece to Rose Kern :

[swwsage@swcp.com](mailto:swwsage@swcp.com) by February 20th for inclusion in the March Sage.

**Welcome new**

**SouthWest Writer Members!**

Marcia Fine

Bonnie Basson

Anne House

Les Davidson

Terry Mullins

Judy Mullins

Geoff Habiger

Marica Petta

Gail Weinstein

Heather O'Shea

Jeannette Moore

Nancy Gettings

Search New and Used  
[amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

**Help Support SouthWest Writers**  
SWW receives a commission on books ordered via this link to [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com).



### **SouthWest Sage**

*Published monthly by the Board of Directors of SouthWest Writers, a nonprofit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization.*

### **2018 Board of Directors**

- Pres: Sarah H. Baker, sbaker46@comcast.net
- VP: Rob Spiegel, robspiegel@comcast.net
- Treasurer: Kent Langsteiner, klangsteiner@yahoo.com
- Secretary: Kimberly Rose, kimberjanerose@gmail.com
- Sage Editor: Rose Marie Kern swwsage@swcp.com
- Donald DeNoon, abqpoet@gmail.com
- Dollie Williams, msdollie1215@aol.com
- Larry Greenley, swwriters@juno.com
- Jim Tritten, jimtritten@comcast.net
- Joanne Bodin, jsbodin@msn.com
- Sam Moorman, eva1245@juno.com
- Su-Ellen Lierz, slierz@comcast.net



## **SOUTHWEST WRITERS MONTHLY MEETINGS**

are held at  
New Life Presbyterian Church  
5540 Eubank NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87111

***For more information, call the SWW office at  
505-830-6034.***

***To register for classes and workshops: sign  
up at SWW meetings or register online at  
[www.southwestwriters.com](http://www.southwestwriters.com)***

Member meetings are held on the 1st Saturday of the month from 10am to noon, and on the 3rd Tuesday of the month from 7 to 9pm. There are nearly 350 members, all of whom are encouraged to come together in celebration of the art of writing. At each meeting, many members announce their recent successes and have an opportunity to network with other writers. Most meetings feature prominent speakers who bring their expertise in the arts of writing, publication, editing, and many other topics of interest to those in the profession.

Frequently after the Saturday meeting, an additional workshop session is held to provide members with training in a variety of areas.

#### ***SWW Office:***

***3200 Carlisle Blvd NE, Suite 114***

***Albuquerque, NM 87110***

***phone: (505) 830-6034***

***e-mail: SWWriters@juno.com***

***website: [www.southwestwriters.com](http://www.southwestwriters.com)***

***Articles and stories are copyrighted by the author, sending them to the Sage implies the Sage has permission to print. Facts, views and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the viewpoints or opinions of the SouthWest Writers organization. SWW does not necessarily endorse the advertisers.***

## **Do You Have a Published Book?**



The SouthWest Writers Website scrolls member book covers across the Home page. If you'd like us to add yours to the group, feel free to send it to swwsage@swcp.com. No more than one book cover per author. Can be updated as your next book comes out. Send a small picture file .jpg no more than 140dpi. The book covers will be a bit larger than icon sized. Webmaster reserves the right to edit to fit.