scratching out that but always always scribbling
something about some thought or some adventure a hero's quest
SouthWest Writers sit in chairs with fisted pens scribbling this and
a villain's desire injustice turned to freedom's dreams in the hands of

SouthWest Sage

The Voice of SouthWest Writers

Vol. 35 No. 2 February 2019

WHAT'S INSIDE

It's that time of year when opportunities to enter your work into contests seem almost limitless.

So, if you're feeling ready to take on the competition and get the attention of the judges, we've showcased some possibilities. Descriptions, entry details, and links to sponsoring web pages start on **PAGE 9** with the ***Short Prose and Poetry Writing Contest,*** a newly-established contest sponsored by SouthWest Writers—a fun challenge to your writing skill without having to finish an entire novel to enter.

Even though the New Year is quickly moving into its second month, there's still time to make and/or keep a resolution to stay serious about your witing by continuing to learn and improve. Information about SouthWest Writers meeting speakers, classes, and workshops starts on **PAGE 2** (with an overview of what's happening on Saturday, February 2) and continues on **PAGES 3, 5, 11, and 12.**

Be sure to read about how one of our own, Gail Rubin, the Doyenne of Death, has been honored with a prestigious award for her work in business and the community, **PAGE 13,** and check out the photos from Larry Greenly's retirement bash, **PAGE 8.** The gauntlet for the March Sage Writing Challenge is thrown down on **PAGE 4**—pick it up and write like your life depends on it.

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sage@swwriters.com, Kathy Schuit, editor (deadline for submissions is the 15th of the month prior to publication)

SouthWestWriters.com *

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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 2

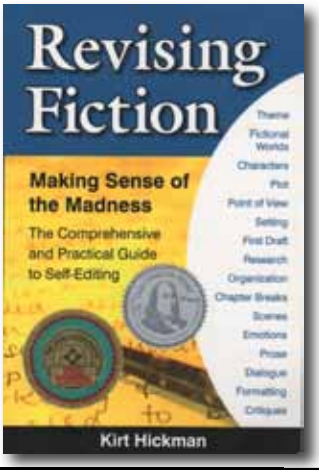
WRITE REALISTIC DIALOGUE

Kirt Hickman

meeting 10 a.m. - noon

Realistic dialogue is one of the most difficult things for some writers to achieve. It's also one of the most important. Many editors and agents, when they receive a submission, will read a section of dialogue first. If it's good, they'll consider the manuscript. If not, they'll reject it without a second thought.

Learn to transform your characters' spoken words into dialogue that is taut, dynamic, tension-filled, and—above all—realistic.



Kirt Hickman, author of the award-winning science-fiction thrillers Worlds Asunder and Venus Rain. He was a technical writer for fourteen years before branching into fiction. His methodical approach to self-editing has helped many make sense of the mass of advice available to the novice writer. He teaches self-editing classes through SouthWest Writers, has been a mentor in the SWW mentoring program, has spoken at numerous conferences, and contributes a monthly column titled "Revising Fiction" to the SouthWest Sage. He has also written Mercury Sun, the fantasy novel Fabler's Legend, and two children's books. His writer's guide, Revising Fiction—Making Sense of the Madness won a New Mexico Book award for Best How-To and was a finalist in the international Ben Franklin Awards.

Loretta Hall — Productive Presentations

workshop 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.

$20 SWW Members, $30 Non-Members, $25 Osher (w/card)

One of the most effective ways to market your book is to speak to groups of people who are interested in a related topic. It's not much harder (in fact, maybe easier) than speaking to strangers individually at a book signing, and it results in a higher percentage of sales. It's more fun, too. (Yes, public speaking can be fun, and Loretta will show you how.)

This workshop will answer your basic questions about speaking to promote your work: why it is effective, how to find groups to speak to, what you should speak about, how to make your presentation engaging, and how to tame your butterflies.

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WORKSHOPS & CLASSES

Who LOVES to LEARN? SouthWest Writers! Schedule

WORKSHOPS

In continuing support of writers' education, growth and achievement, SWW sponsors one workshop each month (directly following the Saturday meeting). Workshop presenters are chosen for their expertise in topics related to writing and/or publishing.

Sign up in advance by calling the SWW office, (505) 830-6034 or at a SWW meeting.

February 2 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.
Productive Presentations with Loretta Hall
This workshop will answer your basic questions about speaking to groups to promote your work.

March 2 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.
Preparing for a Conference: *Everything You Need to Know in a Nutshell*
Jointly presented by Rose Marie Kern and Sarah Baker

April 6 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.
Finding Online Work
Presented by Rob Spiegel
Keep your eye on the SouthWest Sage newsletter and swwriters.com for more information as it becomes available.

May 4 12:30 - 2:30 p.m.
How to Get Into Bookstores
With Steve Brewer and John Hofsis

Workshop Prices:
$20 SWW Members
$25 Osher Members w/Card
$30 Non-Members

CLASSES

Unless otherwise noted, classes are held at the SWW office, 3200 Carlisle NE (north of Candelaria).

Register for classes by calling the SWW office, (505) 830-6034, or at a SWW meeting.

If you have suggestions for future classes, email Melody Groves: programs@swwriters.com

February/March

Polishing the 1st Chapter
Instructor: Sarah Baker
Four Wednesdays, February 6, 13, 20 and 27
2 - 4 p.m.
Cost: $105 members/$115 non-members/ $110 Osher

Revising Fiction
Instructor: Kirt Hickman
Eight Saturdays, Feb. 9, 16, 23 and Mar. 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30
1 - 3 p.m.
Cost: $200 members/$210 non-members/ $205 Osher

Blogging your Way to Success
Instructor: Rob Spiegel
Three Mondays, March 4, 11 and 18
3 - 5 p.m.
Cost: $79 members/$89 non-members/ $84 Osher

April

Writing for Magazines
Instructor: Melody Groves
Two Saturdays, April 20 and 27
9 a.m. - noon
Cost: $79 members/$89 non-members/ $84 Osher

Workshop & 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.

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The President's Corner

Greetings my fellow literary aspirants!

As I settle into my presidency the words of Oscar Wilde bound to mind... "When the Gods wish to punish us, they answer our prayers." Being in the hot seat makes me appreciate my predecessors!

2019 is exploding with possibilities for the SWW membership. Classes, workshops, a joint conference, a short-story writing contest…and, of course, a parade of amazing speakers are lined up to teach and encourage us all to excel at our art.

We all have it…the itch, the longing, the need to pour our ideas out onto a clean white page creating a tapestry full of people, places, emotions and adventures. We all feel our stories are exceptional and anyone who reads them will be immediately enthralled. But many who have created these fabulous word strings are surprised and hurt when no one outside their families and friends seems interested.

There is nothing keeping us from writing our story and in today's world we can even easily publish ourselves, but these actions alone do not guarantee we will become financially successful as an author. For this to happen it is imperative that authors leash their natural creativity long enough to create and implement a business plan.

Do not say "I can't…" when the questions of marketing, personal appearances, or blog management arise. If you are naturally retiring and would rather not face an audience, or create a website, you are in luck because you are part of a large group of people who will help you learn to do both. Successful writing is a marriage of natural talent and comprehensive learning.

Instead of making excuses, keep in mind that Einstein was dyslexic, Beethoven was deaf and Handel was blind in his later years. You are the only one who can define your limitations.

Really look inside and see what is holding you back, then do something about it!

Rose Marie

The Sage Writing Challenge

MARCH

This month, challenge yourself to write a short essay, up to 1,000 words, that begins with:

This was not supposed to happen...

Email the results to sage@swwriters.com.

The SouthWest Sage newsletter welcomes submissions focusing on all aspects of research, writing, and publishing in any genre. See past issues of SouthWest Sage for the types of articles we publish.

You have four 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 challenge announced in each Sage.
- Send in a short story/poem/essay of your own—on any topic (inclusion in the Sage is subject to the discretion of the editor).
- Enter artwork/photographs related to writing in general or accompanying your stories.

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, Ariel, or Courier New font in 12 pt. size. Single spaced. Do not get fancy with formatting or fonts—your best chance for publication lies in making it as easy for me as possible.

Send questions or submissions to Kathy Schuit, SouthWest Sage Editor, sage@swwriters.com

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CHECK IT OUT

GET ENROLLED!

These classes are starting soon—will it be with you? Or without you?

POLISHING THE FIRST CHAPTER

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 6
WEDNESDAY, FEB. 13
WEDNESDAY, FEB. 20
WEDNESDAY, FEB. 27
2-4 p.m.

INSTRUCTOR: Sarah Baker
Where: SWW office: 3200 Carlisle NE, boardroom
Cost: $105 SWW members; $110 Osher;
$115 non-members
To Register: Call SWW office @ (505) 830-6034
(M-Th 9-12) or at a SWW meeting

This is an 8-hour class.

When submitting your manuscript to editors or agents, you only have a page or two to get their attention. Where do you start? How do you make an impact? What will help you get noticed? We'll look at all aspects of making your first chapter—and the rest of your manuscript—stand out. Participants will be invited to submit their first five pages before and after the class for critique by instructor, but this is not required.

Sarah H. Baker has lived all over the United States, but has sprouted roots in Albuquerque. Sarah writes mystery as S.H. Baker, romance as Sarah Storme, and erotica as Lydia Parks. She has more than 20 novels, a dozen novellas, and 3 audiobooks published by Kensington, Harlequin, Five Star, Siren Audio Studios, and other publishers. Sarah enjoys speaking at writers' conferences around the country and teaching classes for UNM Continuing Education, Osher, and SouthWest Writers.

REVISING FICTION: MAKING SENSE OF THE MADNESS

SATURDAYS, FEBRUARY 9, 16, 23 &
SATURDAYS, MARCH 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
1-3 p.m.

CLASS OUTLINE:

Week 1: World Building & Characterization
Week 2: Plot
Week 3: First Draft, Research, & Gross Manuscript Problems
Week 4: Chapter Breaks & Avoiding Information Dumps
Week 5: Scenes
Week 6: Polishing Prose
Week 7: Dialogue
Week 8: Finishing Touches & Critiques

This is a 16-hour class.

Write your novel and revise it to sell. With all the books, talks, classes, and workshops available on writing and self-editing, a writer can quickly become overwhelmed by advice. *Revising Fiction: Making Sense of the Madness* cuts through the clutter and offers an organized, practical approach to self-editing that covers everything from planning your novel, to first draft, through revision, to final submission-quality manuscript.

INSTRUCTOR: Kirt Hickman
Where: SWW office: 3200 Carlisle NE, boardroom
Cost: $200 SWW members; $205 Osher;
$210 non-members
To Register: Call SWW office @ (505) 830-6034
(M-Th 9-12) or at a SWW meeting

Each class will include a lecture, discussion, prepared exercises, and (time permitting) class time to work on students' own writing projects. This course is geared toward book-length fiction, but the vast majority of the topics are applicable to short stories and creative non-fiction as well. There are no prerequisites or required materials.

Read Kirt Hickman's bio on page 2.

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GRIEF RESOURCE CENTER

Book Signing and Presentation
by Local Authors Who Have Written About Grief and Loss

Join us for an inspirational time of sharing by authors who have written both poetry and prose to express some of the deepest longings of grief, and finding a way to hope.

Saturday February 16, 2019
10 am – 12:00 noon
Refreshments

Presentation by authors begins at 10:30

At the Grief Resource Center
1113 University Blvd. NE
(Behind FRENCH Funerals & Cremations)
Register at https://www.griefnm.org,
or call the Grief Resource Center at 842.7166.

Re: Book Signing and Presentation by Local Authors Who Have Written About Grief

by Jacqueline Murray Loring

Around this time last year, 2018, Desiree Woodland—dwoodland@griefresourcecenternm.org—spoke at a SouthWest Writers meeting and invited authors with books about grief to join other writers at The Grief Resource Center's "Book Signing and Presentation by Local Authors Who Have Written About Grief".

I describe my poetry collection, The History of Bearing Children, as one family's attempt to survive the peace after Vietnam. As Desiree concluded her invitation to read, I remember thinking, *my book fits into that category.* I emailed her that afternoon to ask to be included.

Last year's two-hour gathering of writers of poetry and prose was inspirational and gave me an opportunity to reflect on the moments of grief in my life. Furthermore, the readings and book sales were presented to a standing-room-only crowd. I sold more books that day, in that one place, than I had in years. The presentation was also an opportunity to meet and network with talented local writers of books about the self-healing we must all face when dealing with the loss or disability of family members and animals.

I've already signed up to read/speak at this year's event on Saturday, February 16 from 10 am - noon. It's a free event and open to the public, held at the Grief Resource Center's beautiful, new, spacious office. Join us. If you are an author who wants to participate, pre-registration is required because author space is limited.

The Grief Resource Center is located at 1113 University Blvd. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87102.

SWW Website Notes

Some of the benefits of being an SWW member include the ability to have your own author page on the site incorporating announcements about your awards and achievements, a book cover photo on the front page carousel and a link to your webpage.

Over the next month or so the webmasters will be updating the SouthWest Writers website. We will be removing any information linked to authors who have not renewed their membership. Since we are basing this process on the membership rolls at the office, there is always the possibility of errors occurring.

We will make an attempt to contact those who seem to be out of compliance. If you find that your information has been removed in error please contact info@swwriters.com.

ANY DAY

is a great day to give the SouthWest Sage Anthology.

Every copy sold helps SouthWest Writers provide programs, content, scholarships, conferences and more to WRITERS.

The SouthWest Sage Anthology

Always A Great Gift Idea!

Available on Amazon or at the SouthWest Writers Office

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In order to be effective, your opening scene must accomplish several things:

Make it clear from the outset who your hero is

Write the first scene of Chapter 1 from your hero's point of view. I go a step further and make my hero the first named character in the book. Your reader will pick up on these cues. If you start Chapter 1 from the viewpoint of some other character, your reader will incorrectly assume that this character is the hero, which might cause confusion later on.

Show your hero's ordinary life

Your story should pull the hero away from his ordinary life. Before it does, however, you must show the reader what that life is like. This will help the reader understand the impact the crisis will have on that life and on the hero. Show the reader what kind of person your hero is. Give her a moment to connect with him in a setting she can understand and relate to.

Hook your reader

Many people will read the first page of a book while they're standing in the bookstore deciding which book to buy. If your story doesn't rev up by the bottom of the first page, you'll probably lose these readers. Therefore, give your hero an immediate desire, even if it's just a cup of coffee, and place an obstacle between him and the thing he wants. Otherwise your opening will lack tension.

My fantasy novel, Fabler's Legend, begins:

Nicklan Mirrin frowned at the old woman. It was late in the day and her wagon was still laden with wares. "Three." He held the copper coins in his open palm. Seeing them would make her want them all the more. A half-pound jug of raw honey sat on a barrel between them.

"Four." She thrust out her chin and her eyes hardened in her wrinkled face.

"You sold me the same size jug for three last month."

"Long winter. You pay four."

Nick's immediate want is the jug of raw honey for a fair price. The old woman is the obstacle. It sets up immediate tension between them.

Make your hero likable

The scene progresses…

"I can't afford four. I still have things to buy."

"I tell you what," the old woman said after a moment's hesitation. "You buy full pound. I give you for six."

Nick guffawed. "I don't have four. What makes you think I can pay six?"

But the old woman stood firm. She might have been a statue carved from a tree stump. Nick knew the type, and he'd been on the opposite end of the sale often enough to know she wasn't as needy as she claimed to be.

He glanced again at her brimming wagon. "Ah, forget it. Like you said, it's been a long winter. Honey's a luxury we can't afford." After pocketing his coins, he walked across the packed-earth aisle of the Cedar Falls weekend market and examined the cooking utensils in the tent there, utensils he had no intention of buying.

When he emerged a few minutes later, the old woman held up the honey and waved Nick back to her. "You buy something every week. I tell you what. Today I give you half pound for three."

"Free?" Nick said, playing the game.

"Three! Three!" She poked three bony digits into the air. "You pay three."

Nick scrubbed his chin. He'd already told her he didn't need the honey. He could probably talk her down to two, but that wouldn't leave her much coin to live on. "All right." He surrendered the copper and stuffed the jug into his bulging pack.

"Next time four," she shouted as he walked away.

Here, I show Nick to be shrewd, but fair. He realizes that he could talk the old woman down, but he doesn't. As the scene goes on, I show him interacting with some children playing in the square. He likes kids, so we like him. We also learn that he's shy, even a bit naive, around women. All this helps make him likable.

Advertise your writing-related products and services.
Advertise your writing-related products and services.
Advertise your writing-related products and services.

Place Your Ad Here

Business Card Size only $20.00
1/4 page, vertical: $40 1/3 page, horizontal: $50
15% discount for 3 months/20% discount for 6 months.
Contact Kathy Schuit: sage@swwriters.com

Define your hero's goal

Because you need to show a snippet of your hero's normal life before crisis disrupts it, you might not introduce the external conflict (your hero's goal in the story) until some time later. Nevertheless, reveal his goal before the end of the first chapter. In Fabler's Legend, the first chapter ends like this:

By the time Zen and Nick neared the Mirrin farmstead, it was late in the evening. Nick stopped suddenly and grabbed Zen's shoulder. He sniffed the air. "Smell that?"

"Smoke."

Above the nearest screen of trees, a thick black column rose toward the darkening sky. "Oh, no." Nick bolted ahead. They'd been walking into the wind, and his home was the only structure for at least a mile in that direction.

The two sprinted around the last bend just in time to see Nick's farmhouse collapse upon itself, the ruins ablaze from the ground up.

This is the event that ensnares Nick in his quest. We don't yet know the nature of the quest, the scope and stakes of which escalate throughout the book, but at this point, he's in it.

If you haven't accomplished all these things by the end of Chapter 1, find ways to do so. This may mean deleting scenes from the beginning of your book and starting the story when the crisis occurs; it may mean changing the viewpoint character of the opening scene or moving a different scene—one written from the hero's viewpoint—to the front of the book; or it may mean accelerating the pace by moving background information to later pages.

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BOOKWORKS
ALBUQUERQUE'S LOCAL INDEPENDENT BOOKSTORE

In Case You Missed It

Larry's retirement party was a **BLAST!**

Above: Sarah Baker presents Larrry, a.k.a. Dr. Doom, with a plaque. Jeanne Shannon **(right)** and Jim Tritten **(below)** entertain with readings of Larry-inspired poetry and prose.

Special thanks to Rob Spiegel for organizing the big bash, to Dianne Laydon and Rose Kern, who also read limericks and prose, and to everyone who contributed food!

Do you Facebook?

Find Us On facebook

Most of our members, especially those actively writing and publishing in any genre, use social media as a way of marketing their books or stories. One of the best ways to do that is to post your news and announcements on the SouthWest Writers Online Facebook page. Because the announcements page on the SWW website does not get very many hits this is a much better venue!

What if...

...you entered one of these contests?

short prose and POETRY WRITING contest

SouthWest Writers invites entries for a *Short Prose and Poetry Writing Contest.* This competition welcomes previously unpublished works from first time writers as well as seasoned professionals. You do not have to be a SouthWest Writers member to enter.

Winners will receive an engraved medallion and certificate, to be presented at the jointly-sponsored Military Writers Society of America and SouthWest Writers awards dinner on September 14, 2019, at Hotel Albuquerque in Old Town. The best entries in each category will be eligible for publication by SouthWest Writers in its next anthology.

Entries will be accepted from February 1, 2019 until midnight April 30. Early bird registration fee is $10 per entry. After April 1 the fee is $15 per entry. All stories and poems must be the original, previously unpublished work of the submitting author.

Entries must be submitted electronically via the SWW website. Rules, required formats and judging criteria may also be found on the SWW website: **www.southwestwriters.com.**

Entries will be judged by published authors and editors.

First, second, and third prizes will be awarded in each of the following categories:

NON-FICTION
- Biography
- Memoir
- How-To
- Philosophy
- Self-Help
- Travel
- Science/Math
- History

FICTION
- Historical Fiction
- Mystery/Crime
- Romance
- SciFi/Fantasy
- Thriller/Suspense/Horror
- Action/Adventure
- Humor

POETRY
- Any form

Military Writers Book Contest — *Conference and Awards Program Spnsored Jointly with SWW, September 14*

Does your book or family have a SOLID connection to U. S. Military service? Are you ready, willing and able to help review the work of other writers who have submitted their books? If the answer to both these questions is YES, you might have what it takes to enter the Military Writers Society of America book contest.

Entry Requirements

Any SWW member who wishes to submit their book for review and award consideration with MWSA may do so if they agree to abide by the following points:

1. Be *qualified* to become a member of MWSA (you are not required to join)
2. Pay the $40 submission fee
3. Abide by all existing rules and procedures (excepting the one-time exemption from MWSA membership for SWW members).
4. Agree to be trained and review three books as an MWSA reviewer during the 2019 season (i.e. by August 15th).

Once you've read all the requirements and completed your MWSA reviewer training, you may submit your book to MWSA.

All SWW entries must include the following notations in the comments section of the submission form:

1. The fact that you're an SWW member.
2. Details of your qualifying military connection (e.g. "my mother/son/sister served in the Army" or "I often write about the military")

Full list of rules and requirements available at https://www.mwsadispatches.com/sww

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helping authors & publishers promote local books

The 13th Annual New Mexico-Arizona Book Awards

Now Accepting YOUR Entries!

Go to: http://nmbookcoop.com/BookAwards/BookAwards.html
CLICK on ENTRY INFO for entry forms and instructions.

Entries accepted until July 1, 2019

Finalists will be announced at the regular Co-op lunch meeting to be held on Friday, September 27, 2019 at Golden Corral on San Mateo in Albuquerque. These results will be announced online shortly after that meeting.

The 2019 Awards Banquet will be held Saturday, November 9, 2019 at the Tanoan Country Club, Albuquerque. Winners in each category will be announced at that banquet. The winners list will be announced online shortly after the conclusion of the banquet.

Word Sculptures, a Flash Fiction Contest

Entries accepted through April 15, 2019

Sponsored by Pikes Peak Branch National League of American Pen Women, Inc.

Can You Tell a Complete Short Story in 500 words or Less?

Entries MUST be narrative in form and rather than adhering to one theme, this year's stories must contain the following three words:

amber, fire, harmony

This contest is open to everyone.
You do not need to be a Colorado resident nor an NLAPW member to submit.
Men and teens are welcome.
All genres are encouraged, but no poetry.
Multiple submissions are acceptable.

Submission guidlines, rules and email links for entries at: http://www.pikespeakpenwomen.com/submission-guidelines/

PRIZES
First Place–$125
Second Place–$75
Third Place–$50

Entry fee is $20 for the first submission
$15 for subsequent submissions.
An extra $15 for each critique written by a published author.

What is flash fiction?
Flash fiction, unlike a vignette, often contains the classic story elements: protagonist, conflict, obstacles or complications, and resolution. However, unlike a traditional short story, the limited word length often forces some of these elements to remain unwritten – that is, hinted at or implied in the written story line. From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flash_fiction

Hint: Read past winners for examples. http://www.pikespeakpenwomen.com/flash-fiction-winners.html

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What if...

...a conference was your answer?

Preparing for a Conference

Workshop

Saturday, March 2nd
12:30pm-2:30pm

Preparing for a Writer's Conference –

You may be planning to attend a writer's conference in order to get a leg up on how to slip into the publishing world, but do you know how to get the most out of the experience?

Working as a published author is a profession. Like any profession, it has its own culture, rules, terminology, and etiquette.

Sarah Baker (fiction) and Rose Marie Kern (non-fiction) of SouthWest Writers are both published authors who will help you prepare to get the most out of your conference experience in a two-hour workshop.

They will cover:

- How to pitch your book to agents and editors in a way that grabs their interest
- What information and commitments agents/editors are looking for from you
- How to dress for success
- What NOT to do
- Finding and networking with people of like mind

Attendees will have a chance to write pitches and practice giving them in the workshop.

This workshop takes place right after a regular SouthWest Writers (SWW) meeting which always includes a presentation on some aspect of writing, publishing or marketing. Workshop attendees are invited to attend the meeting free of charge. The SWW meeting runs 10:00 am through noon, and takes place in the same place as the workshop.

Workshop details:

Location: Labyrinth Room of the Center for Spiritual Living, 2801 Louisiana Blvd NE (NW corner of Louisiana and Claremont – 2 blocks north of Menaul)
Cost: $20 for SWW members, $30 for non-members, $25 for Osher members
Information: www.southwestwriters.com

SWW Office (open M-Th 9am to noon) 505-830-6034
info@swwriters.com

Register in advance by calling the office or pay at the meeting or workshop.

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You COULD call it a MEETING. WE call it a plateful of FUN!

SouthWest Writers welcomes hopeful and published writers.

Annual membership includes:

- 23 meetings annually which offer opportunities for large scale networking and a presentation by an acclaimed writer, editor, or publisher.
- Your personal author page on the SWW website.
- A link on the SWW website to your personal homepage.
- The SouthWest Sage Newsletter – in addition to providing organizational news to members, it also offers writing challenges and opportunities to be published.
- Discounted prices for writing-related conferences, classes and workshops sponsored by SWW.
- Opportunities on both the website and in meetings to make announcements about your successes or personal, upcoming writing events.
- Discounts at selected local businesses.

Take full advantage of your membership then GIVE to other writers:

- Invite a guest to a meeting.
- Encourage guests to become members so they too can access all that SWW has to offer.
- Give annual SWW memberships as gifts to the writers you know.
- Donate an annual SWW membership or partial membership to the SWW scholarship fund.

Annual SouthWest Writers Membership:

Individual: $80
Student: $25 (requires proof of student status)
Outside U.S.: $75
Lifetime Membership: $750

MEETING DATES TO SAVE:

10 a.m. - noon
WRITE REALISTIC DIALOGUE

KIRT HICKMAN

February 2

7–9 p.m.

BRIAN STINAR
WORDPRESS FOR WRITERS: How to Use WordPress to Promote Your Work, Sell Your Products, and Build an Audience

February 19

COMPILING THE KIMO BOOK

JACQUELINE LORING

10 a.m. - noon

March 2

SouthWest Writers meetings are held in the Labyrinth Conference Room at the Albuquerque Center for Spiritual Living (ACSL) located at 2801 Louisiana Blvd NE., two blocks north of Menaul Blvd.

Gail Rubin, "Doyenne of Death"

a 2019 Women of Influence Award Winner

Most SouthWest Writers members know Gail Rubin, Certified Thanatologist, as the lady who writes about death but Gail isn't just a writer or just a business person, expert marketer, or public speaker—she's now been named as one of 20 Women of Influence by the Albuquerque Business First news outlet for 2019.

The awards selection process began with an open call for nominations from the community. Nominees submitted a detailed application, which was evaluated by a panel of judges who are leaders in the business community and alumna of the award. The judges evaluated applicants based on their professional achievement, community involvement and leadership.

Anyone who's ever heard Gail speak at a SouthWest Writers meeting or other venue is familiar with her trademark humor about death. She says her motto is "Talking about sex won't make you pregnant, and talking about funerals and end-of-life issues won't make you dead." SouthWest Writers have also learned how Gail came to be The Doyenne of Death. A doyenne is a woman who's considered senior in a group that knows a lot about a particular subject—Gail says she's an expert on "the party no one wants to plan."

Through her company, A Good Goodbye: Funeral Planning for Those Who Don't Plan to Die, she helps people plan ahead for end-of-life issues while drawing on that sense of humor, funny film clips, and outside-the-box activities.

A Few Things You Might Not Know About Gail Rubin:

Gail gives back to the Albuquerque community in a number of ways. She is:

- A board member of Fathers Building Futures, a nonprofit social enterprise that gives jobs and skills to previously incarcerated parents, reducing recidivism. Their clients make caskets and urns in their woodworking shop.
- A volunteer with the Chevrah Kadisha, the Jewish burial society, those who wash and dress the bodies of Jews in the traditional tahara ritual.
- A member of the cemetery committee for Congregation Albert synagogue.
- A past president and board member of the New Mexico Interfaith Dialogue, which holds an annual Spring Colloquium that facilitates meaningful conversations among Christians, Jews and Muslims.
- President-elect of the National Speakers Association New Mexico Chapter and an officer of Albuquerque Challenge Toastmasters International Club.

Rubin and the other 2019 Women of Influence will be honored at the 15th annual awards luncheon on Monday, February 25, at Sandia Resort and Casino. Awardees will also be featured in a special edition of Albuquerque Business First, along with the more than 300 women who have been honored through the event's 15-year history.

Treat yourself to a purusal of Gail's website, www.AGoodGoodbye.com, to learn more about Gail, this award, and her humorous approach to the inevitable end.

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something about some thought or some adventure a hero's quest
SouthWest Writers sit in chairs with fisted pens scribbling this and
a villain's desire injustice turned to freedom's dreams in the hands of

Dear Chaucer,

I've been told I'm not using punctuation correctly. Does it really matter? Specifically, I don't know when to use colons, semicolons, and ellipsis marks. Can you help?

Pitiful Punctuation

Ask Chaucer!

Dear Pitiful,

Punctuation *does* matter. Editors and agents will be impressed with correctly-used punctuation and, therefore, more likely to work with you.

Colons (:) and semicolons (;) are different in their functions. A colon is generally used between an independent clause (a complete sentence) and a dependent clause or list.

As a writer, you must know how to use the following: colons, semicolons, commas, and periods.

A semicolon separates independent clauses that are closely related and have no coordinating conjunction (and, but, or or) between them.

Most of the writers who contact me don't know how to use semicolons; you've used the semicolon correctly.

Semicolons are also used—generally in nonfiction—in place of commas in lists which might otherwise be confusing.

The writer may describe clouds, cloudbanks, and cloud formations; landscapes in arid ecosystems; or animals and humans in their overlapping habitats.

In fiction, however, colons and semicolons are generally used sparingly, if at all.

Most of the writers who contact me don't know how to use semicolons. You've used the semicolon correctly.

The ellipsis (…) is a punctuation mark that may show where unimportant material has been deleted, usually in a quotation.

"Today, after many long hours of editing, we finished the book." ⇢ "Today…we finished the book."

Ellipses (plural of ellipsis) were originally typed as three periods with spaces between them. Today they are generally typed without spaces. You may find some editors will use spaces before or after the ellipses.

If you need more specifics, or are still confused about punctuation, consult the *Chicago Manual of Style* or other grammar and punctuation reference. Punctuation is important; it helps make your meaning clear.

Signed,

Chaucer

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The Writing Life: Learning Structure from Playing Mexican Train Dominoes

By Sherri Burr

When crafting books, writers often feel challenged by structure, such as how the chapters should fit together. John McPhee in *Draft No. 4* uses circles, maps and other diagrams to illustrate structure issues. In *Lessons from a Lifetime of Writing*, David Morell, who is most famous for creating the Rambo character in his novel *First Blood*, recommends visualizing and sequencing the narrative elements of beginning, middle, climax, and conclusion. While reading McPhee's and Morell's thoughts about structure, I was given the game Mexican Train Dominoes for my birthday, and voila!

I grew up watching my father, uncles, brothers and their friends play dominoes. They delighted in matching dominoes to obtain five, ten, fifteen, and twenty points. Joy filled their faces when they placed their last domino while the other players still had dominoes in front of them. I played regular dominoes for the first time last November with my mother and older neighbors. Mom won by scoring the most points.

After mentioning my loss to women in their late 70 and early 90s, a friend gave me Mexican Train Dominoes. I played it with the same women after Christmas dinner and during our regular game day in January with a different outcome. Unlike conventional dominoes where the highest score wins, with Mexican Train Dominoes the lowest score triumphs. The object of the game is to be the first to play all your dominoes. Those with remaining dominoes have to count those points against themselves.

Mexican Train Dominoes can be played with two to eight players. A game with two, three, or four players begins with each player drawing 15 dominoes. Other group sizes draw different numbers. Play commences with the highest double, usually double 12, and then players begin building a train off that double. For example, a player may play a 12/11 domino followed by an 11/3 domino, followed by a 3/10 domino. On the player's first term, they may place as many dominoes as they wish to form a valid train.

After playing with others, I set up the game to play four hands by myself. After five rounds, starting first with double 12s, then double 11s, and so forth, I discerned important principles about dominoes and structure.

First, if a hand has no domino to match the double in the center, then the player will lose a turn. If you can't start, game over. Similarly, if an author has problems beginning a book, it is unlikely the book will ever be written. Whether fiction or nonfiction, the author needs to launch somewhere, even if the first chapter gets eventually moved to the middle or end.

Second, the object of Mexican Train Dominoes is to place the largest point dominoes first so they will not be in your hand should another person play off all of her dominoes and you have to count the points against yourself. Likewise, books capture the reader's attention with strong beginnings and authors should write captivating first sentences and chapters.

Third, sequencing dominoes showed me different trains can use more or less dominoes. I lined up all the potential starting dominoes. If the train had to begin with a double 12, for example, I would set out my 12/11, 12/5, and 12/1 dominoes and then see how the other dominoes flowed from those numbers. What first looked like only one possibility eventually metamorphosed into several options. The best I did was to sequence 14 of 15 dominoes on a first turn. This left me with one domino to play on a second turn.

And so it is with structuring a book. I recently sent out a sample chapter as a potential first chapter to a publisher. But after reviewing other chapters, I realized the sample worked better in the middle, and I needed a more compelling beginning.

Sequencing the Mexican domino trains taught me that sequencing doesn't necessarily have to go from 1 to 2 to 3. Indeed the unpredictability of the draw in Mexican Train Dominoes means there is unlikely to ever be a 12/11, 11/10, 10/9, 9/8 sequence. Rather sequences can flow organically in many directions from a 12/11 domino to 11/3 to 3/6 to 6/10.

Writers need to create structures that flow naturally while remembering that unpredictability entices and predictability disappoints. Stories necessarily have beginnings, middles, and endings. Yet unexpected sequencing can thrill readers to keep turning pages.

Sherri Burr is the president of New Mexico Press Women and the author of 26 books, including A Short & Happy Guide to Financial Well-being. She graduated from Mount Holyoke College, Princeton University, and the Yale Law School.

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STILL Worth Noting — New E-mail addresses

info@swwriters.com - office coordinator, SWWriters information and inquiries
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Venerable Visionaries Who Value Verse:

Did you say you love poetry?

Could you see yourself sharing that appreciation with an eager child?

Poets in the Classroom needs a few good poets to work with the children at Reginald Chavez Elementary School on Friday, February 22; at Alvarado Elementary on Friday, March 22; and at Cochiti Elementary on Friday, April 12. **Contact:** Bonnie Rucobo, mechistle@gmail.com, or Jacqueline Loring, jmljake@capecod.net.

YOUR AD HERE WILL CIRCUMNAVIGATE THE GLOBE!

A new issue the SouthWest Sage appears online every month and instantly flies around the world to thousands of pairs of interested eyes!

BE PART OF THE PHENOMENON!

Deadline is the 15th of the month for the following month's issue. Payment and camera-ready copy (email as jpg file) are due prior to deadline.

RATES PER ISSUE

Business Card Size: 2 x 3.5 - $20
1/4 Page: 4.75 x 3.5 (vertical) - $40
1/3 Page: 3.25 x 7.5 (horizontal) - $50

15% discount for 3 months, 20% discount for 6 months
Contact: Kathy Schuit, Sage editor, sage@swwriters.com.

Make Your Membership COUNT

SouthWest Writers sponsors four types of ongoing educational experiences:

1. All meetings feature SPEAKERS who offer, free of charge, new insights into the art of writing.
2. WORKSHOPS are one-time events which take place after the Saturday meetings. These offer more extensive presentations and/or hands on experiences.
3. CLASSES take place at the SWW office and offer in-depth information useful to authors who are serious about getting published.
4. CONFERENCES are held twice a year and bring in big name writers, artists, screenwriters, and sometimes publishers or agents.

Attend a SouthWest Writers Meeting

SouthWest Writers members, **"Writers Helping Writers,"** *meet the first Saturday and the third Tuesday of each month at the Albuquerque Center for Spiritual Living, 2801 Louisiana Blvd. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110 (just north of Menual, entrance is west of Louisiana). Most meetings include information, education and networking opportunities for writers. Visitors are welcome.*

Saturday meetings start at 10 a.m.
Tuesday meetings start at 7 p.m.

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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 address (such as point of view, plot structure, etc.). Guidelines and information on submitting your manuscript to our critique service can be found on the SWW website: SouthWestWriters.com

SouthWest Writers Meetings Visitor/Guest Policy

SWW encourages new people to come and look over our award-winning writers' association. However, since it is our membership dues that pay for the outstanding speakers, we request that visitors or guests limit their attendance to no more than three meetings, after which we hope they will choose to join the organization.

Visitors are requested to sign in with name, 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.

Do You Have a Published Book?

The SouthWest Writers Website scrolls member book covers across the Homepage. If you'd like us to add yours to the group, feel free to send it to sage@swwriters.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.

Book Table Policy

At each of our meetings, a table is provided where members may display their books for purchase. Melody Groves and Gayle Laurandunn volunteer to sit at the table and accept payment for books sold.

Following the meetings, when authors go to the table to retrieve their unsold books, they will receive cash payments for all of their books that were sold. Cash or check only. No credit cards unless the author provides their own card reader. If you would like to be a book table volunteer, please talk to Melody Groves.

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SouthWest Sage

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