

SouthWest Sage

The Voice of SouthWest Writers

Vol. 37 No. 06

June 2021

IT'S SWW MYSTERY MONTH!

Now is the time to decipher the clues to creating believable problems for your sleuths to solve, understanding criminal minds that baffle, and building to satisfying resolutions.

MYSTERY Workshop Series EVERY Saturday in June, 12:30 p.m. (MT)

Details on page 14 or click [HERE](#) to go directly to the SWW Workshop page.

So You Want To Write A Mystery?

by Patricia Smith Wood

If you view the membership roster of SouthWest Writers, you'll find writers of all genres—romances, biographies, how-to-books, children's books, autobiographies, and mysteries. If you want to write mysteries, here's good news: lots of people love to read them. If you yearn to be a mystery writer, just be warned there's no shortage. Think it will earn you a living? Then make sure you have a large inheritance to sustain you during the journey.

If I haven't discouraged you, stay with me, and I'll give you "clues" about writing a mystery. You may already know most of this, but humor me because I love to give advice.

From her book *Plotting and Writing Suspense Fiction*, Patricia Highsmith says it best:

"The first person you should think of pleasing, in writing a book, is yourself. If you can amuse yourself for the length of time it takes to write a book, the publisher and readers can and will come later."

Here are some of my suggestions:

Rule #1

Pick the type of mystery you love best as a reader, and think about what appeals to you with that particular type. Is it funny? Is your protagonist clever and breezy? Or is he dead serious and brooding? Do you love to see lots of blood spilled on the pages, or are you more into discussing murder over a cup of tea? Once you know what "type" of mystery pleases you, go to the next step.

Rule #2

Mystery series were once all the rage. To some extent they still are. If you can find an interesting element for a cozy mystery series (think cooking, sewing, librarians, boat captain, nurse, doctor, caterer) you can use these things to attract your audience. I always enjoyed the Diane Mott Davidson mystery series. Her protagonist was a caterer, and somehow still managed in each adventure to become involved in murder. Anyone who has a knack for sleuthing or solving puzzles could be your protagonist. If you can bring their

PATRICIA SMITH WOOD'S father (as a police sergeant, and career FBI agent) sparked Pat's interest in law, crime, and mysteries. Her books: *The Easter Egg Murder*, *Murder on Sagebrush Lane*, *Murder on Frequency*, and *Murder at the Petroglyphs*, also reflect her own two-year employment with the FBI. She is the moderator and a participant in the June 26 Mystery workshop panel.

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SouthWest Sage

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Look Who JOINED SWW in April!

**Linda Harkey
Pamela Nowak
Lezlie Schreiber
Keith Windham
Hollis Slaton
Kevin Dooley
Jen (Ravi) Parker
Jeffrey Otis
Luna Maez**



MAKE A DONATION!

Donating to SWW can be as easy as rounding UP your membership dues or going to the Website. Earmark your gift for a specific purpose if you like.



Donations accepted at the SWW office, 3200 Carlisle Blvd. NE, Suite 114, Albuquerque, NM 87110, or on-line through the SWW website:

www.southwestwriters.com
(click the *Donations* tab and fill out the form to process your gift).

SPECIAL THANKS to JOHN CORNISH for his generous donation.

President's Corner



Greetings all!

As I write this, we just had the BEST thunderstorm I've seen in Albuquerque for at least two years. Marble-sized hail preceded a torrential downpour that turned my driveway into a lake. Two big German Shepherds have managed to curl up under my desk on top of my feet at the first clap of thunder.

The rain just stopped leaving cool temperatures and a delightful aroma in the air. (Did you know that the word for the scent the ground releases when watered is petrichor?)

Thunderstorms remind us that life needs its changes. Beautiful, hot, sunny days are our norm, but the air accumulates dust, pollen and pollution which rain scrubs away as it renews the vigor of the land.

We are about to begin the annual process by which South-West Writers renews its vision of writers helping writers. SWW elects a new Executive Board of Directors every year—this is the President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. After the election at the October board meeting, the President-elect searches for and chooses the other members of the voting board of directors. The new crew, which usually also has members of the old board for stability, is installed the following January.

All four positions on the Executive Board are up for renewal this year. The President must have been a member of SWW for at least two years and the general voting board for at least one year within the past five years in order to be eligible.

The office of Vice-President will be a one-year commitment. To be eligible for the office of Vice President a person shall have been a member in good standing for no less than one year imme-

diately preceding the date of nomination and shall have served one year on the Board within the past five years.

The Secretary and Treasurer shall be two-year commitments. They may be eligible to serve not more than two consecutive two-year terms in the same office. The Treasurer should have an understanding of basic best business practices in order to direct and oversee the monetary responsibilities of the organization.

Other members of the voting board are normally each in charge of one committee or integral facet of the organization's structure. SWW also has an advisory board with people who work on committees or projects for the group but who do not have to attend all of the voting board's meetings.

The ongoing programs and committees for which we need good people are: The Collegium (sets up the educational programs), Public Relations/Media, The Annual Writing Contest, the Zoom Team, and the Critique Group Committee. We also need someone to help out with the Sage Newsletter, and to do written interviews for the SWW website posts.

As we transition back to physical meetings we need some people to help with setting up the physical space and to run the cameras for recordings. Those who can edit videos can assist with getting things ready for upload to YouTube. So there are a lot of ways people can help out!

If you would like a say in the future of this wonderful group of writers, you need to let someone know. Even during Covid, we've had enthusiastic volunteers who ensure our programs and administration thrive. If you are interested in being a member of the board or on the Executive committee, or just want to lend a hand somewhere, contact our office (info@swwriters.com) and someone will give you a call!

Rose

Since the SWW Critique Group (CG) Guidance Program Launched April 1, 30 SWW members have accessed the Members Page in the CG Portal on the SWW Website. So far, 11 members have requested to form or join a CG and six of those have returned the CG Questionnaire, which is needed to match them with an appropriate CG.

This is enough interest to consider the startup of three new CGs—Fiction, Memoir, and Young Adult Fiction. One member has agreed to be the organizer of the YA Fiction group. The Memoir CG has three potential members, which is enough to start it up, if one or more of them agrees to be a group organizer. The three candidates for the Fiction CG each write a different kind of fiction so, for that group to work, they'll probably need to agree to critique all kinds of fiction. Three of our four program management team members have agreed to support the startup of the three CGs.

The CG team as it is now can't handle the startup of more than three new CGs, so more SWW members with critique group experience are needed before a more robust outreach program can be undertaken. If you'd like to be part of the team organizing and establishing critique groups, contact Robert Speake: critique@swwriters.com.

The CG team is considering the possibility of hosting a Zoom meeting in order to inform the membership of the progress, needs, and limitations of the current CG team. This will be an item for discussion at the June 8 board meeting.

If you've ever thought about joining or starting a critique group and you think you'd benefit from the experience and guidance of veteran critique group members, now's your chance. Get it Going!

Robert Speake, SWW CG Coordinator

Critique Groups
UPDATE

BULLETIN BOARD

A Call for Leaders!

Do you love SouthWest Writers? Do you want to have a voice in how the organization grows and flows? The SWW nominating committee is looking for candidates for the 2022 executive committee. The offices of President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer are up for election. For more information contact Jacqueline Loring at membership@swwriters.com.

Nominating Committee Member-at-Large Needed

Limited-Obligation!

The SWW Nominating Committee will oversee nominations for the upcoming election of executive committee officers for 2022. Current members of the committee would like to invite at least one additional member-at-large to participate in this important election process. This is a short-term commitment that ends with the election. For more information contact Jacqueline Loring, Membership Chair, at membership@swwriters.com.



set your

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

for any date you choose

Have you ever thought that a certain date, January 1 for example, would work better as your membership renewal date than the one you have now? If your answer is YES, here's what you do:

1. Call the SWW office (505-830-6034) and tell ReVaH you want to change your renewal date.
2. Pay whatever portion of the total fee makes up the difference – in the case of January 1, if the current renewal is June, then pay \$40, for the second half of the year (June-Dec.) to set your next renewal for January.
3. Start renewing every year on January 1!



Changes to SWW Zoom Meeting Procedures

In order to provide a more secure environment for our meetings, there will be a different zoom link for every meeting. Those persons receiving our weekly Elerts will have the link available. (Members can also log in to the [Members Only](#) portion of the website for access to the Zoom links.)

The SWW zoom meeting links will no longer be posted to the website for non-member access, but others wishing to attend can contact our office via phone (505) 830-6034, or email: info@swwriters.com to be sent an email link. The office manager will verify that you are a member. Non-members may attend but they will be required to give the office manager some information.

ALSO, please verify that your name or phone number is visible when you sign into the meeting. Unidentified individuals will not be allowed to attend. While attending Zoom meetings be aware that all other attendees can see and hear you at all times while you are signed in to the meeting. Persons causing disruptions, including but not limited to barking dogs, ringing phones, inappropriate camera position, eating with video on, etc., may be silenced or removed from the meeting. Thank you for complying with these rules—we really want to have you all there—but we need to keep out disruptors.
Rose Marie Kern
President



WANTED: VOLUNTEER INTERVIEWER

Are you a good listener who's interested and curious about the work and processes of other writers? Would you like to be part of a project that helps promote the published work of SWW members? You might be just the person our Webmaster, Kathy Wagoner, is looking for.

It seems a great many SWW members pushed through the pandemic to complete their writing projects and Kathy wants to interview each and every one of these intrepid souls so bits of their writing journey can be posted to the website. These interviews serve a marketing purpose for the authors and an educational purpose for website readers.

To volunteer or get more information, email Kathy Wagoner at webmaster@swwriters.com.

career choice into it, all the better. J. Michael Orenduff has made a name for himself with his “The Pot Thief Who” series. He uses Hubie Schuze, owner of a small pottery shop in Old Town Albuquerque, as his protagonist. He also happens to be a thief of ancient pots, too, but that just adds to the layering of his talents.

Rule #3

If you want more “meaty” mysteries, think of the thriller and suspense genres. Joseph Badal has had fantastic sales and success with several different series, and he’s still bringing them out faster than ever. All his books are considered suspense/thrillers. There’s not a lot of fun and frivolity in those books. But most guys eat them up. Robert Kidera is another good writer who does suspense/thriller. He also has great macho characters.

Rule #4

Never stop improving your techniques and ideas. Take as many classes as you can, and attend meetings where speakers give great advice. Just remember, one writer’s great advice can be another writer’s big snore. If you pay close attention, you’ll learn what speaks best to you and your style. For example, some writers don’t put a word on paper until they’ve outlined the entire book, or made a skeleton of one. They’re called “plotters.” Other writers might only need to be inspired with a beginning or a theme before sitting down and immersing themselves in the story as it pops into their heads. They’re called “pantsters.” Still others have an idea of the ending or even the middle, but are willing to be surprised if it changes as they go.

Rule #5

Find a really good critique group and ask to join them. Maybe start your own group, but it’s even better if you can find one with some seasoned writers and good listeners. Great critique groups can make the difference between success and failure. Bad ones might be out there so don’t hesitate to drop out if they don’t help you learn and grow. Never forget these groups are a two-way street. The secret is helping each other. If you can’t do that, find a different one. Look for a group with writers and critiquers who will tell you the truth. Flattery is nice but it doesn’t find publishers or readers for you.

Rule #6

Never stop reading other people’s work. You’ll learn even more by going back to spot techniques and styles. Take notes when you find a good one. Read your favorites again for technique. You’ll be surprised what you can learn.

Rule #7

Before submitting your manuscript to any publisher or agent, sit down and read it out loud—all the way—twice. Doing so will catch most mistakes. It can make all the difference.



Smile! Help SWW When You Shop on Amazon!

Many people shop on amazon for books, movies and so much more. Amazon donates a percentage of all its sales to non-profit organizations around the world. You can choose what organization receives the donation generated by your purchase, and SouthWest Writers could use your help.

To enroll in the program go to www.smile.amazon.com. They will step you through the process. The starting screen will ask you to select your charity.

1. Pick Your Charity: Type in **SouthWest Writers Workshop**. A list of organizations will pop up, click on the one based in Albuquerque.
2. Once you’ve confirmed your charity, you can browse and buy as usual.
3. Remember every time you go to purchase something, you must type smile.amazon.com into the URL. Once that is done you can shop as usual.

The Sage Writing Challenge

JULY

Tell the story of someone who has to face the consequences of a lie.
Read and follow the Guidelines (right).

SouthWest SAGE

The *SouthWest SAGE* newsletter is the professional publication of SouthWest Writers. Submissions focusing on all aspects of research, writing, and publishing in any genre are welcome. To familiarize yourself with the types of articles published in the *SouthWest SAGE*, read past issues at southwestwriters.com.

Here are four ways you may be 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.

Read, understand and follow the **guidelines** for submission, above right. **Submissions that do not comply with the guidelines will not be considered.**

The Abduction

by RH Marshall

I wake up disoriented, cold, my bones hurting. Where am I?

I sit up, hear the saggy couch beneath me creak. Daylight coming through a narrow window high on the wall barely illuminates the center of a large room, leaving the corner where I am in darkness.

What's going on? I get up, stretch, vertebrae and knees creaking same as the couch. I shake my head trying to control the thoughts bouncing like pebbles against my skull. I look around. Candles are everywhere, lined up like armies by size, by shape, by color.

My cell phone! I turn it on noticing the date, Satur-

SAGE CHALLENGE AND ARTICLE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- Payment is in bylines and clips.
- **Deadline is the 15th of the month prior to the next issue.**
- Standard article lengths are from 300-800 words; certain *Sage* Challenges may set more specific word count requirements (see the Challenge description box, left). Submissions may be edited for accuracy, readability and length. Submissions must be tasteful; free from profanity, explicit sex or violence, political commentary, etc.
- Send all submissions as either standard text in an email or in a Word document in 12 pt. size. Single spaced. Do not get fancy with formatting or fonts. To ensure proper author credit, your name or pen name must appear within the document you submit. Submissions with no name will not be considered.
- Polish your work. Submissions should be professional in appearance and quality of writing, fully edited and ready for publication.
- Accompanying art/photographs are appreciated but proper attribution and permission is required.
- Inclusion in the SAGE is subject to the discretion of the editor.

Send questions or submissions to:
Kathy Schuit
SouthWest SAGE Editor
sage@swwriters.com



The Challenge for June was to write a mystery set in a candle factory.

day June 12. My birthday. The phone screen darkens, turns off. I always forget to charge the useless thing.

Why am I here? I remember joining my family last night to come and watch the ever more sophisticated display the candle factory puts on every year to show a garishly over-lit world other creative and subdued ways of illuminating our existence. After the display, we followed the factory tour to learn how they make all the candles. But, why am I still here?

My memory is foggy at best, but I think I would remember being abducted. Aliens? Will they ask for a ransom? How much? Just curious. My memory starts listing the things I need to do at home: Pick up the car being repaired, make the bed I forgot to make yesterday, throw out the used takeout dinner containers, walk the dog.

Back to the immediate problem.

I check the front doors. Locked. The window display is dark, covered for the weekend by an outer metal shield. Feeling a sudden need, I start a new tour looking for a bathroom. Twinges of fear creep in. If there is an alarm system, I can't see one. There must be a phone somewhere. Do they still use regular phones? I rattle the door knobs of the two offices. Locked. A small kitchen, with a refrigerator against the far wall, reminds me that I'm hungry. I open the door to find two apples, some moldy cheese, a half loaf of seedy dark bread, bottles of a turbid purple liquid, a covered plastic container holding a single slice and crumbs of a demolished cake.

Which then reminds me that my family will show at my house this afternoon bearing smiles along with a cake large enough to feed a family grown beyond my ability to recall all their names. So many slow-fast days have passed since the last yearly gathering that my children find necessary. How did they get old so fast, their hair turning grey? Not for Ana, my love. Gone so soon. No more birthdays for her, her hair never white.

I eat the apple and some bread. Hours pass. I wait, I panic waiting for green monsters to start alien tortures. To stop the fear, I survey the place again, find a cabinet holding a selection of wines and sample-sized liquor bottles. I open a couple and pour brandy in a wine glass. Feeling brave, I ignore the impending doom and decide

to celebrate. The place is right. I gather 87 candles, lose count after 30, but who's counting? and make colorful circles around circles on a round table. I find a fire stick and light them all, walking around and around and imagining my family, including Ana, singing the birthday song. I feel their love and hold my glass up to them, smile. The amber liquid sends trembling waves against the rim.

After more songs, good wishes and hugs, they help me put out the fire in the candle forest and leave. And I wait. I sleep. I dream.

I wake up, knowing that I have solved the mystery. I remember arriving in the SUV of one of my four sons, happily squeezed between two great grandchildren, and three other cars following, loaded with as many extended family members as were able to come. I remember sitting down to rest a few times during the factory tour. I chuckle.

They forgot me. I must have fallen asleep while resting. The Technicolor image I was in their childhood becoming a sepia photograph, features already dissipating from the eyes of my children. By now they should know I'm missing. I feel vaguely disappointed at having generated no ransom request.

I solved the mystery.
Will they?

OPPORTUNITIES FOR WRITERS



Hindsight is seeking nonfiction stories from around the world that capture what it was like to wake up every day to a new normal — whether that means navigating emergencies as a first responder or tying the knot over Zoom. We're particularly interested in material that gets up close and personal with the struggles of 2020, rather than headlines or commentary on current events.

Hindsight is an independent, one-time publication. Content will be made available in two forms: Some stories will be shared on our website; the very best submissions will be compiled into a print anthology, which will be published in 2021.

- Submission fee: None
- Length: Up to 2,000 words
- Deadline: Rolling
- Compensation: Writers whose work is selected for the print anthology will receive a complimentary hard copy of the book, as well as a digital file.

hindsight

To learn more click on the icon.

Submission Letter Critique

Cold Reads

Paige Wheeler, SWW meeting speaker for Saturday, July 3, founded the Creative Media Agency, Inc. Her company represents authors on the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Publishers Weekly*, and International bestseller lists, and authors who have received major awards such as the Edgar Award, Agatha Award, Amazon Book of the Year, Holt Medallion, and Emmy Award. After Paige's talk, two of her acquiring agents will be conducting the workshop--open to all members for free--and will be doing COLD READS of YOUR submission letters, so here's your chance to take advantage of an amazing opportunity. Turn in your submission letter as soon as possible to the office (info@SWWriters.com). A few of the letters will be chosen for the cold reads where **Shannon Snow** and **Haley Casey** will offer feedback and suggestions for getting the attention of an agent or editor. We suggest you remove your name from your letter, or use a pseudonym. Don't miss out!

To register for the workshop call the SWW office (505-830-6034, Monday–Thursday, 9 a.m. – noon) or through the SWW website: SouthWestwriters.com.

Writing
Contests You
Can Enter
NOW

Writing
Contests You
Can Enter
NOW

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Contests You
Can Enter
NOW



WRITE A STORY — WIN A PRIZE! Arizona Mystery Writers*

Jim Martin Memorial Story Contest
Open to Adults of 18 Years and over

Entries accepted February 1 - July 1, 2021

Prizes: 1st=\$200, 2nd=\$100, 3rd=\$75.

Entry Fee: \$15

Open to Southwest-area writers only (Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, California, Colorado).

Genre: Mystery, suspense, or thriller, 2500 words max. Blind judging.

Rules and entry form: www.arizonamysterywriters.com.

Past winners are on the website. We are an independent, non-profit club supporting mystery writing in Arizona.

Reedsy

The popular writers website, Reedsy, has compiled a list of what the site calls the 123 “best writing contests of 2021.” If you’re looking for a contest, it’s likely something here will suit your style and your genre. Some Reedsy-selected contests are listed below as examples. Click [HERE](#) to go directly to the page and the full slate of contests.

The Reedsy Prompts Contest

Sponsored by: Reedsy

Respond to one of Reedsy’s weekly writing prompt newsletters with a short story for the chance to win \$50 and get featured on the Reedsy Blog!

Deadline: December 31, 2021

Top prize:\$50

Additional prizes: Publication on Reedsy Blog

Genres: Fiction, Short Story

Entry Fee: FREE

Daisy Pettles’ Writing Residency

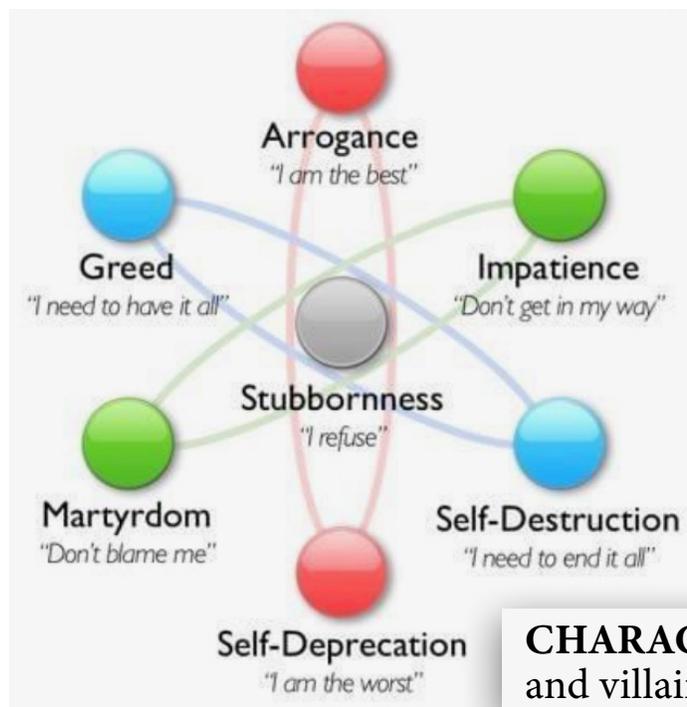
Sponsored by: The Daisy Pettles House

Women writers who are age 40 or older are invited to submit up to 20 pages of a work in progress to win a chance for a month-long residency in a house where you can focus on your writing. First prize comes with a \$1000 cash prize. Fee reductions and hardship waivers can be granted.

Deadline: December 12, 2021

Top prize:\$1,000

Additional prizes: Month-long writer’s getaway



American Compass is looking for first-person stories from all walks of life.

This is a call for short essays from individuals willing to share their perspective on what they wish others knew about their lives and how public policy could strengthen their family and community, especially in places that don’t always get the national spotlight, like New Mexico. In appreciation of their time, they’ll receive a \$250 stipend.

Prior essays in our series are available for reading [HERE](#).

Information of how to submit can be found [HERE](#)



CHARACTER FLAWS: for heroes, heroines and villains with REAL issues.

Common Dialogue Tag Problems

by Kirt Hickman

Dialogue tags come in two forms: beats and attributives. An attributive is the “he said” or “she said” that specifically attributes a line of dialogue to the speaking character. A beat is an action performed by the speaking character. It implies that any dialogue in the same paragraph is spoken by the character performing the action. There are a number of problems that can crop up in dialogue tags that will hamper the effectiveness of your writing.

Paragraph Breaks:

Never put the dialogue of one character in the same paragraph as the actions of another character. When you’re writing dialogue, give each character his own paragraph. Doing so will help your reader keep track of who’s doing the talking.

Consider this example from my science fiction novel *Worlds Asunder*.

Brower examined the display. His short, muscular body seemed to radiate confidence. “What’s that marker just north-northwest of the *Phoenix*?” Snider asked. “Checking on that now, sir,” Chavez said. But Robinson was faster. “That’s a geological research base. Chinese. Fairly new. Not much more than a couple habitation tents.”

This paragraph mentions four characters (Brower, Snider, Chavez, and Robinson) and contains three lines of dialogue. It takes a fair amount of deciphering to figure out who’s saying what. If I divide the excerpt into paragraphs by speaker, I can make the dialogue much more clear without changing a single word of the passage:

Brower examined the display. His short, muscular body seemed to radiate confidence.

“What’s that marker just north-northwest of the *Phoenix*?” Snider asked.

“Checking on that now, sir,” Chavez said.

But Robinson was faster. “That’s a geological research base. Chinese. Fairly new. Not much more than a couple habitation tents.”

Non-said Attributives:

Attributives tell the reader who is speaking.

He said.

She said.

Mark said.

Mary said.

The cab driver said.

A disembodied voice said.

Avoid non-*said* attributives. These are words like *remarked*, *exclaimed*, *announced*, *asked*, *answered*, *inquired*, *muttered*, *cried out*, *replied*, *argued*, and others that tell the reader who’s speaking. *Said* is invisible. Other words draw attention to the dialogue tag. What’s more, they often contain redundant information.

If the dialogue ends with an exclamation point, *exclaimed* is redundant. If it ends with a question mark, *asked* or *inquired* is redundant. If the character is responding to a question, *answered* is redundant. Others, like *announced* or *argued*, are shown by the content of the dialogue.

Choked, *grunted*, *growled*, and similar words are particularly bad because they aren’t forms of speaking. It’s physically impossible to choke, grunt, or growl a phrase.

When you must use an attributive, use *said* the overwhelming majority of the time.

Verb-first Attributives:

Consider the following sentences

“It’s over there,” said she.

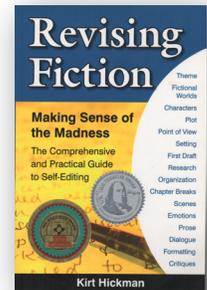
“It’s over there,” she said.

The former employs a verb-first attributive—the verb *said* comes before the name, noun, or pronoun used to identify the speaker. The latter seems more natural. It’s the form readers are used to. Avoid verb-first attributives.

Explanatory Tags:

Eliminate beats and attributives that explain dialogue content.

Chase crossed the room to Brower. He had to find out what was happening, and he suspected that Brower would know. “What’s going on, Stan? What’s with the spooks?”



Is the dialogue any less clear in the following passage?

Chase crossed the room to Brower. “What’s going on, Stan? What’s with the spooks?”

When you feel the need to explain your dialogue, it means the passage is unclear, you’re patronizing your reader, or both. Furthermore, it demonstrates a lack of self-confidence. If you’ve written the dialogue well, the reader will understand it. If not, revise the dialogue rather than explaining it.

When you’re not sure if the dialogue is clear, err on the side of subtlety. Your critiquer will tell you if it doesn’t make sense.

Dialogue, Actions, and Emotion:

Consider the following passage.

Jorge slammed his fist on the table. “Well, you know, I really don’t think that’s such a good idea.”

If the speaker’s words are inconsistent with his actions, the reader won’t believe whatever emotion you’re trying to show. Your character’s dialogue must match his actions and emotions.

Jorge slammed his fist on the table. “Over my dead body.”

This is better, but it’s clichéd. How about:

Jorge slammed his fist on the table. “Over my cold carcass.”

Tags that Tell Emotion:

Read through your dialogue and look specifically for tags that tell emotion, as in the example below:

“Herrera was on board.”

“On the *Phoenix*?” Chase said, surprised. “What was he doing there?”

You may have shown the emotion well enough through the actions, thoughts, and dialogue of the character. If you haven’t, find a way to show it. Either way, delete the part of the tag that tells emotion.

Below, I offer three ways to correct the passage above. I show Chase’s surprise through his actions, thoughts,

and dialogue, respectively:

“On the *Phoenix*?” Chase glanced at the central hologram, as if it could somehow confirm the news. “What was he doing there?”

“On the *Phoenix*?” He couldn’t be. “What was he doing there?”

“On the *Phoenix*?” Chase said. “What the hell was he doing there?”

Combined Beat and Attributive:

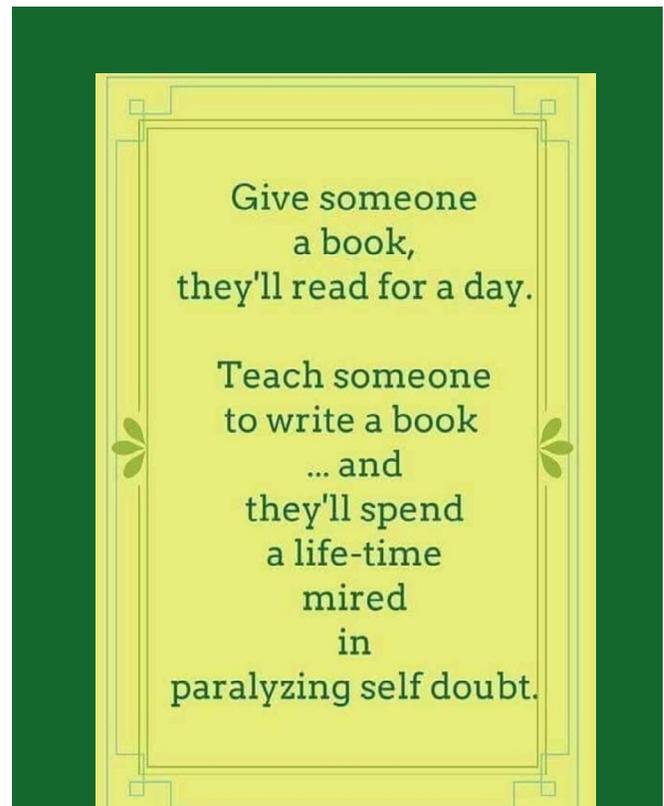
Don’t use both a beat and an attributive for the same line of dialogue. Consider the following sentence.

“I’m going out,” she said, snatching her coat from the closet.

“She said” is an attributive. “Snatching her coat from the closet” is a beat. You never need both. Fortunately, this problem is easy to fix. Wherever you find it, delete the attributive.

“I’m going out.” She snatched her coat from the closet.

Look for these problems anywhere you find dialogue in your story.



ARCHIVE
UNEARTHED
 TREASURES
 1995



BELOW: Carla Jeanne Bingham, author of *Never Say Never* (2001) and *Fourteen Pieces of Gold* (2001) was a speaker at the 1995 conference. She was an SWW member and Albuquerque resident who also co-authored



Southwestern Healing Arts: Paths to Wellness and Spirituality: Curanderas y Curanderos with Steve T. Willmon, Adamson and William Ulwelling (1999).

The 1995 SouthWest Writers Workshop was a two-day affair themed “From Inspiration to Publication.”

SWW archivists have been unable to identify many of the folks appearing on this page. If you can help us out with names for the faces email SAGE@swwriters.com. We’ll give you credit for super sleuthing!



Registration table. Always a busy place.



ABOVE/LEFT: A young (unknown) winner got a possibly unscheduled moment with Tony Hillerman.



Several observant members helped us identify the writers in this photo from the 1994 SouthWest Writers Workshop. Thanks to Patricia Smith Wood, Shirley Raye Redmond and David J. Corwell for chiming in so we could get it right! The attendees are: **L-R**, Paula Paul, Eileen Stanton (a founding member of SWW), Lois Duncan, and Madge Harrah.

Carolyn Johnston Wheelock

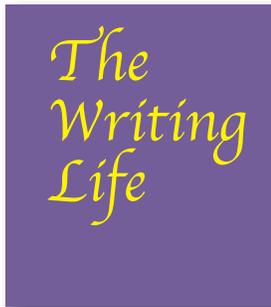
by Sherri L. Burr

Early in my writing career, I was blessed to have the witty Carolyn Johnston join my writing critique group, The Intrepids. Carolyn was the patron saint of late bloomers. After retiring from a 30-year government career at age 55, she took up freelance writing, learned to drive at 60, and married her first and only husband, James Wheelock, at 68. She had met him on the movie set of the 1994 romantic comedy *Speechless* starring Geena Davis and Michael Keaton. While they were waiting for their scenes to be shot, they conversed for hours. The recently widowed James invited her out on a date. He proposed three months later and they married six months after the movie shoot. Carolyn turned all of this into humorous fodder for her writing.

One of my favorite Carolyn stories was entitled “When You Ache for Steak, Why 100 Million Meat Eaters Can’t be Wrong.” Having grown up in South Dakota before moving to Albuquerque as a teenager, she had been exposed to good beef. Carolyn sold the article to *New Body Magazine*. Shortly after it was published, she suffered and survived a heart attack. When I asked whether she wanted to revise her opinions on meat, she declined. She felt she was right when she wrote the article and, indeed, she still craved an occasional filet mignon.

Carolyn scored an assignment with the magazine *Albuquerque Woman* to write about hats. Since she was not much of a camera person, she asked me to take the photos. I came over and we spent a couple of hours with me filming her in hats. She suggested I model a few and her husband Jim took this photograph (RIGHT) of the two of us.

After reading one of my chapters on an impending book about financial advice, Carolyn contributed a tip. I gave her the pseudonym Wiley Writer in *A Short & Happy Guide to Financial Well-being*,



and described her as a freelancer in her eighties. She had received a request to loan \$6000 to a relative. Wiley Writer charged the relative 7 percent interest, when the going rate was 10 percent, and documented how the money would be paid. All parties signed the contract. She was repaid in full, and remained friends with her relative. This story went against the advice in the chapter to not loan money because people rarely paid it back. Once again,

Carolyn lived her life against the grain.

After Jim’s health declined, the couple moved into independent living apartments at Bear Canyon Estates. Carolyn started writing articles for

Sherri L. Burr is the author of over two dozen books. Her 27th book, *Complicated Lives: Free Blacks in Virginia: 1619-1865* (Carolina Academic Press, 2019), was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in History. A graduate of Mount Holyoke College, Princeton University, and the Yale Law School, Burr has been a member of SouthWest Writers for over 30 years. She currently serves as the President of New Mexico Press Women and on the Board of Trustees of the Authors Guild.

the community newsletter about new residents, and then a book about life in senior housing. At dinner, one woman complained that “the rolls weren’t round enough.” She also wrote plays for seniors to perform. She staged one at Aux Dog Theater in Albuquerque. It was campy, yet in her eighties, Carolyn became a playwright whose work was performed.

Another woman asked the by-then-wheelchair-bound Jim if she could have sex with him because she wanted to experience the sensations one last time. He responded, “Go ask Carolyn.” The woman did just that.

We discussed what it meant to live in a facility where women outnumbered men by 10 to one. No longer did a man need hair, teeth, or even the ability to stand. He just needed to breathe in order to become desirable.

Carolyn was one of the few residents with a husband. After Jim passed, other men flirted with her, attracted, no doubt, by her vibrancy and continued physical attractiveness as she aged. She began dating a 90-something Porsche driver named Bill.

When Carolyn turned 95, her companion continued to be 97-year-old Bill. Two weeks before she passed on April 30, 2021, and right before experiencing a fall that would have fatal consequences, Carolyn proposed to the staff at another senior community that they start performing her plays. As she had throughout her life, she proved one is never too old to love, to create, and have fun.



Saturday, June 5, 10 a.m. (MT) Zoom MEETING

Screenplay From Stakeholder Perspectives

with Sheryl Brown

Writing a screenplay is very different than writing a novel or short story. Sheryl will share her screenplay experience from a variety of perspectives including the producer, director, and actor perspectives. Learn what to consider when taking your narrative concept to visual concept.



SHERYL BROWN is President of Real to Reel Productions LLC. She has produced spec commercials and TV trailers, a web series, short films, and two feature films (one narrative and one documentary). In addition to film production, she enjoys screenwriting and directing.

Join the Zoom Meeting

Our Zoom log-in policy has changed due to recent disruptions to our free meetings. Non-members are now required to contact our office (505-830-6034, Monday - Thursday 9 a.m. - noon, or info@SWWriters.com) to receive a link. Signing up for Elerts is another way to receive a link to our upcoming meetings.

SWW Members sign into the Members Only portion of the website, southwestwriters.com. Once in the Members Portal, follow the Zoom log-in directions posted prior to the meeting.

MYSTERY Workshop Series EVERY Saturday in June, 12:30 p.m. (MT)

June is SWW's month of Mystery. Attend one or all of these workshops led by published mystery authors.

June 5

The Art of Screenwriting with Art Eisensen and Sheryl Brown.

June 12

Mystery Genres & Subgenres

- Cozy: Margaret Tessler
- Amateur Sleuthing: Historical: Kari Bovee
- Romance with some fantasy: Judi Phillips
- Sleuthing with Noir tendencies: Marcia Rosen
- Legal Thriller: Michael Avery
- Hard Boiled: Thriller and Suspense: Joseph Badal
- Detective: Procedural: Historical: Western: Michael McGarrity

June 19

Tips from Successful Mystery & Thriller Writers

This workshop is open to participation by any published authors

June 26

The Mystery Market, Today and Tomorrow

Moderator: Pat Wood

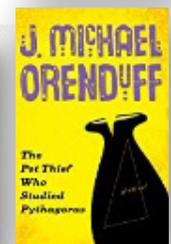
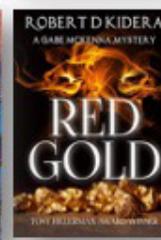
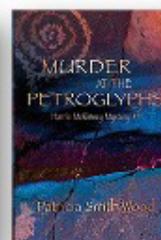
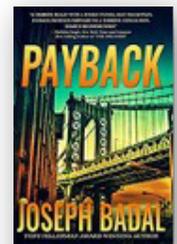
- Publisher: Michael Orenduff
- Indie Publisher: Robert Kidera

ZOOM LIVE WORKSHOPS
SWW and Croak & Dagger
members: FREE
Non-members: \$20

TO REGISTER

Call the SWW office (505-830-6034, Monday–Thursday, 9:00 am–noon) or use one of the online forms on the website: southwestwriters.com, *Workshops* page (Our online payment portal utilizes PayPal, but you'll be given an option to pay by credit card without signing into PayPal.)

The Zoom invitation link and the password will be emailed to those who purchase this workshop. For SWW members, the link and password will be sent once membership is verified.



Tuesday, June 15, 6:30 p.m. Zoom MEETING

Artists, Writers, And A Business Mentality

with Jeffrey Candelaria

In sales and business, “YOU” represent the products and services you sell and promote. Your personal brand or Your Brand Triad: Ethos (ethics, values, trust), Pathos (emotions, vision, people commitment), and Logos (credibility, skills) is tied to all aspects of the sales process. “YOU are YOUR Brand.” How do you sell your books? Is it based strictly on content or does it reflect YOU, your Character and your Personal Culture? Jeffrey Candelaria will discuss ways writers should focus on Behavioral Economics and “You as a Living Brand.”



As well as being an historical fiction author, **JEFFREY CANDELARIA** has worked across multiple disciplines including, Sales and Marketing, Corporate Relations, Media Relations, Behavioral Economic Sales & Training and has hosted various Television Programs. He is the former V.P. of Membership / Marketing / Corporate Relations for the Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce.

Join the Zoom Meeting

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SWW Members sign into the Members Only portion of the website: southwestwriters.com. Once in the Members Portal, follow the Zoom log-in directions posted prior to the meeting.

UPCOMING SWW SPEAKERS AND WORKSHOP PRESENTERS

Meetings are **FREE** to everyone. Workshops are **FREE** to members; registration instructions below.

JULY

SATURDAY, JULY 3
Meeting: **Paige Wheeler**
Authors and Agents

Workshop: **Haley Casey & Shannon Snow**
Query Workshop & Cold Reads

TUESDAY, JULY 20
Meeting: **Fauzia Burke**
Creating an Author’s Platform

AUGUST

SATURDAY, AUGUST 7
Meeting: **Robin Cutler**
Ingram Spark Publishing

Workshop: **Brian Reinhardt**
Taxes for Writers

TUESDAY, AUGUST 17
Meeting: **James McGrath Morris**
Researching for Your Novel

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To REGISTER FOR WORKSHOPS

Call the SWW office (505-830-6034, Monday–Thursday, 9 a.m. – noon) or through the SWW website: SouthWestwriters.com

For SWW members, the Zoom invitation link and password will be emailed once membership is verified.

For all others, the Zoom invitation link and the password will be emailed to those who purchase workshops. Please contact the class/workshop coordinator at info@SWWriters.com for more information.

Take a Class Via Zoom

REGISTER for classes by calling the SWW office (505-830-6034, Monday-Thursday, 9:00 am – noon), or by using the SouthWest Writers online registration form at SouthWestwriters.com. (Our online payment portal utilizes PayPal, but you'll be given an option to pay by credit card without signing into PayPal.)

Screenwriting

with Jacqueline Murray Loring

This six-hour class will provide an overview of the process of writing a story as a screenplay. Each writer will learn then practice shaping their story into a three-act structure. By the end, participants will craft the first five pages of their screenplay and work to shape their story into an industry-standard screenplay format. The use of a tag line, log line, outline, synopsis, and treatment will be discussed and why each is essential to getting a script completed and recognized in the industry.



JACQUELINE MURRAY LORING enjoyed a successful career as director of the Cape Cod Writers Center, while also working with the Eventide Arts play writing festival and the Cape Cod Screenwriter's group before moving to New Mexico in 2012. She has written/co-written eight short scripts. *Trains, Tracks & Aliens* premiered at the 2017 Indie Q Film Festival in Albuquerque. *The House on Normal Street* premiered at the Santa Fe Film Festival in 2017. She was a finalist in the 2017 New Mexico Film Foundation's "Let's Make a Western" contest.

3-week Course
Wednesdays: June 9, 16, and 23
6 – 8 p.m.
\$60 SWW members;
\$90 Nonmembers
SWW Members age 70 and older: \$30

REQUIREMENT: Participants must submit a 500-word overview of the story (beginning/middle/end) they plan to write as a movie script to the SWW Office at info@swwriters.com by Wednesday, June 9 at 5:30 p.m.

Advanced Plotting Tools and Techniques

with Chris Eboch

Many books and workshops teach the basics of plotting: conflict, complications, climax. Now learn advanced techniques that will make a decent plot dynamic. Start with a "grab you by the throat" opening to pull readers into the story. Learn how to pack the plot full by complicating your complications. Control your pacing through sentence and paragraph length. And finally, cliffhanger chapter endings ensure late-night reading under the covers. Learn techniques to make any story or book better. Novelists will benefit from these insights, whether they are just starting out or have years of experience.

CHRIS EBOCH is the author of over 60 books for young people, including mysteries, ghost stories, fantasy, and historical fiction. Learn more at ChrisEboch.com or her [Amazon page](#), or check out her writing tips at her [Write Like a Pro! blog](#).



4-week Course
Saturdays: July 10, 17, 24, and 31
3 – 4:30 pm
SWW members: \$60
Nonmembers: \$90
SWW Members age 70 and older: \$30

As **KRIS BOCK**, Chris writes novels of romance, mystery, and suspense. Her Furrever Friends Sweet Romance series features the employees and customers at a cat café as they fall in love with each other and shelter cats. Her humorous mystery series about an injured war correspondent who moves home again launches in May. She also writes romantic suspense novels about treasure hunting, archaeology, and intrigue in the Southwest. Learn more at KrisBock.com or visit [Kris Bock's Amazon page](#).

Workshop and Class Refund Policy

If you cancel one week before the beginning date of the workshop or class, you will receive a full refund. Cancellations after one week prior up to 24 hours prior to the beginning of the workshop or class will receive a credit only toward a future workshop or class of your choice. If you do not cancel or don't show up for the workshop or class you will receive no refund and no credit. For multi-session classes, if you miss a class, you receive no refund. We pay our instructors based on how many students enroll, so you are part of that roll count if you don't cancel as detailed above.

SWW Board Meeting Summarized May 2021

- Silver Vanus has joined the PR team and she will be working on Social media.
- ReVaH Loring is working with the Collegium to coordinate ZOOM activities and hosting.
- A set of new workshops, focused on poetry, is scheduled through August. See the website for more information.
- Members may now request a member user ID and password to access the Members-only portion of the SWW website.
- The Critique Group project is approaching the end of its pilot phase. 10 people have expressed interest in joining critique groups, to date.
- The Board is working on how to create hybrid meetings—both in person and simultaneously via ZOOM—for when SWW will meet in person again.
- “Elections of officers” occurs in the fall and the Nominating Committee is seeking a non-board member to participate on the committee.



Board of Directors

Rose Marie Kern, President
Brenda Cole, Vice President
Jennifer Black, Treasurer
Patricia Walkow, Secretary

Sarah Baker, Zoom Coordinator
Roger Floyd, Bylaws/Signage
Cornelia Gamlem, Marketing/PR
Robert Kidera, Member At Large
Dr. Kathy Kitts, Fundraising
Jacqueline Murray Loring, Membership
Sam Moorman, Facilities Manager
Léonie Rosenstiel, Print Media
Kathy Schuit, Sage Editor
Kathy Wagoner, Website
Dan Wetmore, Writing Contest

The SWW Board of Directors meets on the second Tuesday of each month from 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. Meetings are conducted via Zoom.

SWW Office:
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Albuquerque, NM 87110
phone (505) 830-6034
email: info@swwriters.com
website: www.southwestwriters.com

