

SouthWest Sage

December 2010

www.southwestwriters.com

Making the Most of the Markets

by Chris Eboch

You've heard about the enormous slush piles at publishing houses. And no doubt you've heard what's in those piles—90 percent inappropriate submissions. These can be outrageous mistakes, such as sending fiction to a publisher that only does nonfiction, or even erotica to a children's book publisher.

You would never make such a beginner mistake. You understand the importance of market research. But are you doing the best possible job with it?

Many editors report "close but not quite" submissions. Marileta Robinson, Senior Editor at Highlights for Children, says, "The majority of submissions we see are in the ballpark of meeting our guidelines. That's not to say that the majority are right for Highlights. Tone, length, writing quality, age appropriateness, and subject matter have a great deal to do with a manuscript's chances of success."



Digging Deeper

2011 market guides are coming out in time for the new year. These are a great place to start your research. They list hundreds of publishers, with details about what the editors want. Most include a category index, which can help you narrow your selections. The listings then give detailed writers' guidelines.

Don't stop there, though. Most publishers now post their catalogs online. These help you understand what the market guide listings mean, and identify differences between a publisher's imprints. Websites may also offer more detailed and up-to-date writers' guidelines. The final step is to read some of the publisher's offerings.

Robinson suggests, "Reading the guidelines and current needs posted on our web site and studying several issues of the magazine can help a writer learn what we are and are not looking for."

Molly Blaisdell, author of the picture book, *Rembrandt and the Boy Who Drew Dogs*, starts market research with "a reader's approach. I learn about books all over—

networking at conferences, going to bookstores, chatting with folks online." She keeps a journal that lists each book's title, publisher and editor, plus notes about the editor, and any personal contact.

After gathering this information, Blaisdell keeps it organized with a submission spreadsheet. "I start a new line every time I learn the name of a new house or editor that I am interested in. After some research I will add the title of my book that I think best connects with that house. I gather hard concrete evidence about what these editors and agents like: books, genres, etc. That stuff goes in the comments."

Once you have all the market information, you can use it in your queries to show the editor that you understand her needs. "My queries are always specific," Blaisdell says. "I met you at the XYZ conference. I read about you on XYZ blog. You edited XYZ book. I love that book and feel a connection to my work because of XYZ."

I'm sending to you because you like XYZ. If the editor or agent that you are interested in has a blog, you need to become a faithful reader and post on it sometimes."

The payoff? Blaisdell says, "If I glance down my spreadsheet, my last 20 submissions all led to personal responses [such as] requested manuscripts or a wish to see more work."

Time Well Spent

All this research sounds like a lot of work, but, Blaisdell says, "You have to be pretty lazy these days to not target houses. Just Google the editor's name! Don't know the editor? Google 'editor' and the book title and the author's name."

With all the information available, beware of getting carried away by market research. "The tricky thing is not wasting your time," Blaisdell says. "You should be working toward creating a list of targeted editors. Do not collect any information about anyone that is not a real connection. Do not put a name in your spreadsheet without a reason!"

Continued on page 5

President's Message



President
Melody Groves

How can this possibly be the end of the year? Where did 2010 go? As I write this, the leaves are still on the trees, but they're starting to go golden. There's a crispness to the air even as I have to turn on my car's air conditioner to run afternoon errands. Wasn't the furnace on this morning? ah...New Mexico. I love it.

This year for SWW has been one of growth—trying new ideas and discarding old ways that were cumbersome. Just to recap some of the changes—the meetings' format is more focused on our members, and we've partnered with BookWorks and Treasure House Books, two independent local bookstores. Our annual writing contest brought in the most entries ever, thanks in large part to Andy Mayo and his team's efforts. Also, it's easier now to renew membership or to sign up—membership chair Rita Herther has set up a separate table at the meetings. Our two conferences were huge successes—our top state writers and New York agents and editors presented up-to-date industry information. Sandra Toro was instrumental in setting up these conferences. Ruth Friesen continued to tweak not only the Sage but our website as well.

I'd like to thank all the board members for their above-and-beyond efforts this year: Rob Spiegel, Larry Greenly, Harold Burnett, Kathryn Peralta, Joanne Bodin, Jeanne Shannon, Ruth Friesen, Arielle Windham, Terry Civello, Bob Gassaway, Edith Greenly, Andy Mayo, Sandra Toro and Rita Herther.

As we look to the future, we're restructuring our classes. See more about this on page 7. And putting a toe into the 21st century, we're considering the pros and cons of putting the Sage newsletter on-line only. Don't panic—we'll give you plenty of notice before changes are made. Changes are never easy and we'll inch our way into modern technology.

I'd like to welcome three new board members for 2011: Kathy Kitts, Classes Chairman; Cynthia Boyd, Contest Coordinator; and Sandy Bazinet, Volunteer Chairman. Thanks to all three for stepping forward.

And a big thank you to all of you—the writers, editors, publishers and readers. You are what makes this world an interesting one.

Melody

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Dorothee Baker
Jennifer Frank
Pete Mateu
Jim Wagner
Theda Harubin
Patricia PUNCHES
Susan Switzer



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Individual: \$60 (\$100 for 2 years), Two people \$50 each,
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Join us first Saturday: 10 AM-Noon: Third Tuesday: 7-9 PM

**New Life Presbyterian Church, 5540 Eubank NE,
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SouthWest Sage

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The Perfect Storm

by Kathy Kuenzer

Time may heal wounds, but the scars of memory are often permanent. Even now, six decades after the accident, my stomach still knots whenever I see a water tower. Each one brings back memories of my first confrontation with death.

The water tower of my childhood loomed over the house below it like a four-legged metal monster. Perched on a hill not a mile from our own small home, the silvery giant was a persistent presence in the surrounding neighborhoods. Silent and powerful, it contrasted starkly with the small wood-frame house at its feet. No one could have foreseen the crime that nature and the water tower would commit on the family below, which probably had grown not so much to trust the giant as to co-exist with it.

The winds blew cold through Iowa in that February of 1946. Ponds became slippery mirrors, milk bottles left on back porches wore their paper caps jauntily askew on columns of frozen milk pushed up from beneath, bed sheets hung out to dry became board stiff - and the water in the tower froze.

On that same day, bitter winds blew down from the north, chilling the landscape and keeping people in their safe, warm homes.



Photo by Ruth Friesen

What happened can only be described as a tragic coincidence - a perfect storm: The water in the tower solidified into a heavy mass of ice; the unrelenting wind blew against the tower's legs, causing it to lean, ever so slightly, toward the unsuspecting house below. Assisted by mass and gravity, the ice pushed down on the two front legs of the metal tower - and the monster's knees buckled under the weight. Overwhelmed by a burden too great to withstand, the tower fell forward, burying the house beneath it, killing two sleeping children within.

I remember, still, the horror I felt when peering down from where the water tower had once stood and into the tangled mass of wood and metal below. My mother told me that a family like our own had lived there, beneath the corpse of twisted steel, but my four-year-old mind wouldn't believe it. This destruction looked nothing like my own comfortable home. Real people never lived here. I saw no life. I felt no warmth. I heard no laughter, no sounds at all.

Except the sound of the winter wind rushing southward, shoving aside everything in its path.

Kathy Kuenzer's story won first place in SouthWest Writers 2009 first quarter contest, A Memorable Event. Kathy is a retired professor of literature and a former technical writer. She started writing for magazines after moving to Albuquerque a few years ago. Her articles have appeared in American Music Teacher and American Fitness, and she is a regular contributor to New Mexico Kids! magazine.

Revising Fiction: The Final Polish

by Kirt Hickman

Your manuscript is written and you've done all the revisions, but is it really ready to submit? Here are a few last-minute things to look for:

Read Out Loud

This is an important step. Don't skip it.

Does the overall flow of the text have a pleasing, easy-to-read rhythm? Read each scene aloud for sound and tone, or better yet, read it into a tape recorder and listen to the playback, or have someone else read it to you.

Pay attention to errors you make when reading out loud. Reading aloud reveals awkward passages more readily than reading silently does. You may decide to undo a few of your prose edits or make additional changes to smooth the rhythm of the text, particularly at paragraph transitions.

Pacing

Put yourself into your reader's frame of mind. Kick back with your manuscript; forget about scene structure, prose, and consistency; and read your book for fun. Enjoy the story.

Mark any place that seems too slow or moves too quickly. Don't correct anything while you're reading. Just note "slow" or "fast" in the margin and keep going. Once you've identified the pacing problems, what can you do about them?

Sections that are too slow may suffer from any of the following problems:

- The subject matter isn't interesting.
- The viewpoint character doesn't have enough at stake.
- The passage contains too much description, too much telling, or repeated information.

Sections that are too fast may suffer from either of the following problems:

- The passage is plot-driven, not character-driven.
- The passage contains too much dialogue.

Style Decisions

Create a style worksheet. Divide a sheet of paper into sections and assign a few letters to each. Make a section for numbers and one for abbreviations and acronyms. Alternatively, create a sorted electronic list. Use the worksheet to help keep your style (capitalization, hyphenation, spelling of character names and other words with alternative spellings, expression of numbers and abbreviations, etc.) consistent.

Read through your manuscript and note your style decisions on the worksheet. Then search electronically for

words that don't match your style decisions and correct them. If, for example, you have a character named Sarah (spelled with an "h"), search your manuscript for Sara" (match case, whole words only) to make sure you haven't misspelled her name anywhere.

Commonly Misused Words

Elements of Style, 4th Edition, by William Strunk, Jr. and E. B. White, contains an exhaustive list of commonly misused words. The list is too long to repeat here. Therefore, I refer you to *Elements of Style* to obtain it.

Search electronically for each commonly misused word. Read it in context everywhere it appears. Make sure you haven't misused it. This is a tedious process, especially with words like *this* or *than* that will appear time and again in your manuscript. Nevertheless, do this step carefully. You may be surprised, and better now than later. A profusion of misused words will get your manuscript rejected.

Other Details

See *Rewrite Right!, 2nd Edition*, by Jan Venolia, for a listing of guidelines for capitalization and expression of numbers. Search your manuscript electronically for errors and inconsistencies.

Run a grammar and spelling check. Be wary of the grammar checker provided with your word processor. Consider each passage it flags, but understand that word processors often err. Find a good grammar text and look up anything you're unsure about. Even when the checker is right, recognize that grammar conventions are looser for fiction than they are for other forms of writing. Sentence fragments, for example, are often acceptable, especially in dialogue. Any violation of the rules, though, should be deliberate and should produce a specific effect in your writing.

Proofread

Proofread carefully. Your spell checker won't catch missing words or homonyms. To catch the former, I touch each word with the tip of a pen as I read it. When my pen touches the wrong word, I know I have an error (a missing or extra word).

I can't catch homonyms for myself. Problems like *heal* in place of *heel* or *cutoff* in place of *cut off* are invisible to me. My mind knows what I'm trying to say, so it sees the correct word rather than seeing the word that's actually typed on the page. Therefore, I have somebody else proofread my work for me. I suggest you do the same.

Kirt Hickman, author of *Revising Fiction: Making Sense of the Madness and Worlds Asunder*, has sold nearly a thousand books at signings in the past year. He won *SWW's "Instructor of the Year"* award in 2009.

Hickman Concludes Column

This is my final Revising Fiction column for the *SouthWest Sage*. I want to thank you for sticking with me throughout the column's three-year run. I hope you've found my insights both entertaining and helpful. For more information on the topics covered in my articles, I recommend my book, *Revising Fiction: Making Sense of the Madness*, which is available at www.quillrunner.com (or anywhere else you buy books). Best of luck to you in all your writing endeavors.

Kirt Hickman

New Columnists for Sage

Chris Eboch joins Sage this month with "Making the Most of Markets" on the front page. Her monthly column for the Sage will cover the craft and business of writing. She is the author of 12 books for young people and dozens of articles on writing. Her blog, Write Like a Pro! A Free Online Writing Workshop, is at <http://chriseboch.blogspot.com/>.

Dodici Azpadu's column, "A Grammatical Tip," appears on page 11. She earned an MFA at the University of Iowa Writers Workshop and a PhD at Pacific Western University. She has taught at UNM, and currently teaches at CNM. Her third novel, *Living Room*, is a finalist for the NM Book Awards in Fiction. Her website is www.dodici-azpadu.com.

Long-time Sage columnist Sherri Burr will continue with four articles in 2011, appearing in January or February, May, July, and November. Author of 11 books, Sherri is a tenured professor at the University of New Mexico where she teaches Entertainment Law.

Market, continued from page 1

Writers' conferences can also provide insight to an editor's taste. A critique or pitch session can also help you jump over the slush pile, or reach editors who aren't generally open to submissions. Make sure you have a suitable manuscript before submitting, though. At one conference, I met an editor and we got along well. But I was writing historical fiction and fantasy at the time, the two genres he dislikes. Later, I developed an original paperback series—just what he published. I sent him the proposal and first manuscript. A month later, he called to express his interest in the Haunted series, and we contracted for three books, *The Ghost on the Stairs*, *The Riverboat Phantom* and *The Knight in the Shadows*. Networking paid off—but only because I paid attention to my market research and waited until I had something he wanted.

Go ahead and grab a new market guide as a holiday present to yourself. But know that your marketing journey is just beginning. Researching markets and making connections is a year-round process—one that's worthwhile when it leads to the gift of publication!

Tips for Writers from Authors

by Sherri Burr



Expo America offers writers unique opportunities to attend sessions with authors like Barbara Streisand, John Grisham, and Sarah, Duchess of York. Over three days in May 2010, I took notes as big and smaller named authors gave advice to writers as part of a talk or in an interview. In many instances, I asked either individually or in a group event the follow-

ing question: "What tips would you offer to writers?" Here's a sampling of words of wisdom:

- "Until you are writing one page every day, you are not serious. It's best to have a routine. Use time as an excuse. The pages will pile up quickly."
John Grisham, Author of *The Confession*
- "If you're always thinking about it, you will never get there."
Condeleeza Rice, author of *Extraordinary People: A Memoir of Family*
- "I recommend hiring a team."
Jon Stewart, author of *Earth (the book): A Visitors Guide to the Human Race*
- "Do your homework. Find out about the publishing industry. Learn how it works, but do not let it interfere with your dreams. Writers must believe in themselves. Dream and set goals with an action plan."
J.J. Michael, author of *Secrets Unrevealed*
- "Strive for excellence."
Barbara Streisand, author of *My Passion for Design*
- "When you feel bad about yourself, give to others."
Sarah, Duchess of York, author of *Emily's First Day of School*
- "You have to read a thousand books before you can write one.... Nothing is real until it is written down."
Richard Peck, author of *Three Quarters Dead*
- "If you are a writer, you write.... Telling an author he's written a bad book is like telling a parent they have an ugly child."
Cory Doctorow, author of *For the Wind*
- "Trust your instincts."
Mary Roach, author of *Packing for Mars: The Curious Science of Life in the Void*

Meetings

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

Saturday, December 4
10:00 a.m. to noon

Meeting and Holiday Brunch



Every year we gather with lots of food and other goodies to celebrate another year of SWW. Bring your favorite yuletide treats to share with your friends, new and old, and help us ring in a new writing year!

Susan Slater

Amazon and Hollywood: A Writer's Boon or Bane?

Times have changed—have you as a writer changed with them? Or do you still have unreal expectations of what “being published” means?

You can be successful today—reach more people and make more money—if you understand your options. Book tours are fast becoming an expensive thing of the past—unless you're a name (athlete, politician, movie star). But “virtual” selling and exposure is coming into its own. What are the secrets of becoming a best-seller on Amazon? Or how can that cute You Tube clip get Hollywood's attention?

Susan Slater is the author of six published mysteries—four in the Ben Pecos Indian series, *Pumpkin Seed Massacre*, *Yellow Lies*, *Thunderbird*, a novella, *A Way to the Manger* and two stand-alones, *Flash Flood* and *Five O'clock Shadow*. Her novel, *O to 60* (July, 2009), is women's fiction and has been optioned for a feature film, “Eye for an Eye.” A paranormal short story is included in the *Rod Serling Twilight Zone Anthology II* (July, 2010) and *Rollover*, the second Dan Mahoney mystery, will be out 2011. Susan lives in Taos and writes fulltime.

Book Fair

Saturday, December 4, 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.
New Life Presbyterian Church

SWW members will sell their books, and non-members and the general public are invited to purchase. Children are welcome to attend. To reserve your spot, sign up at SWW meetings at the Volunteer/Membership table or call the SWW office at 265-9485.

*There will be no Tuesday evening
meeting in December due to the holidays.*

Saturday, January 1, 2011
10:00 a.m. to noon

Slim Randles



Writing a Great Query Letter – your foot in the door

Queries letters: What to include. What not to include. The thinking of an editor. The problems of an editor. And the overwhelming universal truth: make life easy for an editor and you'll get checks in the mail.

In describing himself, **Slim Randles** says: I taught magazine writing at UNM for eight years, and am former editor of *Petersen's Hunting Magazine*. At the moment, I write a syndicated newspaper column called “Home Country,” which runs in 156 papers in 36 states. We just went over 1.3 million readers.

I'm 68, my dog loves me, and I must wear corrective lenses.

Tuesday January 18, 2011
7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m

Betsy James

Refusing to Live Only One Life: Inviting Vivid Characters



Much has been written about “character development” as an act, like auto mechanics, over which the writer exerts conscious control. A more organic approach is to create an environment in which characters present and develop themselves, for they are, after all, multifaceted aspects of the writer's self. Join novelist Betsy James in a conversation about how to help characters emerge, evolve, and carry the story as they grow.

Betsy James is the author-illustrator of sixteen books for young adults and children. Her most recent book, *Listening at the Gate*, was a Tiptree Honor Book and a New York Public Library Best Book for Teens.

Workshop

Write Your Memoir

Sandra Toro

Saturday, January 22

1p.m. -4 p.m.

New Life Presbyterian Church,
5540 Eubank NE
\$40 SWW members, \$70 non-
members (includes 6 month
membership)



Learn how to jog your memory and get started writing that memoir you've always wanted to write. Whether you write for family and friends or with the aim of being commercially published, this workshop will provide answers to the issues which arise when one contemplates writing a memoir for publication. What are the key differences in memoir, autobiography, genealogy and fiction? What should you do about possible invasion of privacy of persons still alive? How do you determine which incidents to include and which to leave out? Do you need tension and conflict in memoir as you do in fiction? Is it important to show rather than tell when writing memoir?

Recommended reading before the workshop: *The Glass Castle* by Jeanette Wall, available in paperback at Target and all bookstores.

The workshop will be taught by **Sandra Toro** who won 1st place in the memoir category in the 2009 SouthWest Writers Annual Contest. Her book-length memoir is now making the rounds in publishing houses in NYC. She is the author of three novels and a fourth one is to be published in August, 2011. **Register online at www.southwestwriters.com or call 265-9485.**

Coming in 2011

Bi-monthly Writing Contests

Now More Chances to Win an SWW Award!

4th Quarter Writing Contest

Thanksgiving Fiction

Write a fiction story about a Thanksgiving dinner, 500 words total. First half is from the guest of honor's point of view, and second half from the host's point of view. Postmark deadline: December 31, 2010. Please note if you grant publication permission. All entries \$10. Prizes: \$150/1st prize; \$50/2nd prize; \$25/3rd prize. Mail entries to SWW Quarterly Contest, 3721 Morris NE, Albuquerque, NM 87111.

New Education Programs for 2011

by Terry Civello

"Our mission is to support published and unpublished writers to improve their craft." With those words, President Melody Groves established a Curriculum Committee to develop a 2011 educational initiative for SWW members.

A core curriculum of courses and workshops has been planned to be offered simultaneously. Highly-credentialed instructors will teach on weekdays, evenings, and Saturdays, as well as concentrated weekend classes. The education calendar is divided into quarters, with the core syllabus available to members throughout the year.

Writing Mechanics is a series of four, 2-hour classes. Writing Mechanics classes review the complexities of grammar, punctuation and language usage and are a "must-take" for every level of writer. The series will be offered throughout the year.

The Fiction Track, a series of six, 2-hour classes in a continuous track of Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced fiction writing, will be offered in sequence throughout the year.

In addition to the core curriculum, programs for specialized genres, such as writing for children and teenagers, will be offered throughout the four quarters of 2011. The series begins with Introduction to Writing for Children in the first quarter, Writing for Middle Grades in the second, and Writing for Young Adults in the third quarter.

Non-fiction writers have a choice of workshop offerings in memoir, personal essay, editorial, and technical/expository writing. Based on demand, non-fiction workshops may expand into the core class curriculum.

An Introduction to Memoir Writing Workshop is offered in January. Non-Fiction Workshops will be presented in four-hour sessions with Personal Essay in the first quarter of 2011, followed by Consumer Magazine Writing and Trade Magazine Writing throughout the year.

Visual Storytelling is the theme of our first day-long conference on February 19. Presentations by experts in screenwriting are the highlight of the day, which also includes opportunities for attendees to pitch their stories to media guests. In addition to the conference, popular Screenplay Writing classes, as well as concentrated weekend learning courses, will continue to be available throughout the year.

The 2011 program calendar, to be published in late December, will afford our members the ability to choose in advance from an array of learning tracks that meet their writing needs and schedule their time and resources accordingly.

Committee members are Joanne Bodin, Terry Civello, Melody Groves, Rita Herther, Jeanne Shannon, Rob Spiegel and Sandy Toro. Kathy Kitts is the 2011 Class Coordinator.

Successes and Announcements

Jan Fenimore won 71st place in Children's/Young Adult Fiction category of the 79th Annual *Writer's Digest* Writing Competition out of 1001 winners. The manuscript is titled "Eyes."

Karin Bradberry's poem "Stone Age Diorama" has been awarded 15th place in Non-Rhyming Poem category of the 79th Annual *Writer's Digest* Writing Competition. Her sonnet "Slatted Sun" has been awarded 22nd place in Rhyming Poem category of the same contest. Last year there were over 2,000 entries in this competition. Also, Karin's villanelle "Come On Bro" was recently published in the New Mexico poetry anthology *Adobe Walls*.

Connie Harrington's short story "The Great Lunch Debates of 1960" will be published in the upcoming winter issue of *Rosebud*.

Shirl Brainard has recently published *ARTbreakers*: 12 short suspense stories in the world of art.

Nancy Ave Miller's *Pervert: Notes from the Sexual Underground* has been nominated for a National Leather Association Writing Award: the Geoff Mains Nonfiction Book Award.

The **2011 Zia Award** will be given to the female author of an outstanding book in children's literature published in 2008, 2009 or 2010. The contest is open to all subgenres within children's and youth literature. The award, given each year by New Mexico Press Women, is open to women writers who live in or have a strong connection to New Mexico. Entries must be postmarked no later than Friday, Jan. 14, 2011. Visit <http://newmexicopresswomen.org> for full information.

Looking for Authors for SouthWest Sage

Would you like to add a Sage byline to your portfolio? We welcome submissions focusing on all aspects of researching, writing and publishing any genre.

Suggested topics include interviews with well-known authors, news and trends related to writing, and articles addressing the writing life, for example, balancing work and family, overcoming writer's block and increasing creativity and productivity. See past issues of *SouthWest Sage* for the type of article we publish.

Payment is made in bylines and clips. All rights remain with the author. Submittal details are available under the newsletter tab at www.southwestwriters.com. Contact Ruth Friesen, Sage Editor, at ruthsw@comcast.net with any questions.

The **New Mexico Press Women 2011 Communication Contest** is accepting entries in 81 categories. The entry deadline is January 11, 2011. For further information, visit <http://newmexicopresswomen.org>.

Hayden's Ferry Review is calling for flash fiction, prose poetry and short essays on/about/exploring these forms for their Spring/Summer 2011 issue. The special focus on short forms is designed to explore and celebrate big achievements in small spaces. There are no restrictions on subject or theme. The submission deadline is December 15. For full information visit www.asu.edu/piper/publications/haydensferryreview/news.html.

The "Why I Write" Challenge sponsored by **Book Marketing - The Authors Marketing Powerhouse** invites participants to enter the challenge by submitting a 300 word essay entitled "Why I Write". The author of the winning entry will receive 100 books, printed at no charge by AA Printing, www.PrintShopCentral.com, the authority for book printing and self-publishing for over 30 years (\$400 value), and other prizes. For further information, visit www.TheAuthorsMarketingPowerhouse.com.

The **American Society of Journalists and Authors (ASJA)** will open The Arlenes: Books and Articles That Make a Difference and The Donald Robinson Memorial Award for Investigative Journalism to the public, marking a change from ASJA's long-time policy of these monetary awards going exclusively to members. The Arlene Article Award is presented annually for articles published within the last two years. This year the award will be given to articles published in 2009 or 2010. Entries for the Donald Robinson 2011 award must have been published in 2010. For complete details and submission instructions, visit www.asja.org/awards/awards.php. Submission deadline is January 7, 2011.

The **Kiplinger Social Media Fellowship** will teach innovative digital tools and approaches, at no cost to participants. March 30-April 6, 15 journalists will spend an intensive, hands-on week at Ohio State University, using social media to build a following, develop sources and cover their beats. Participants will talk Twitter, conduct web searches and learn about SEO. Back at the office you can log in for coaching sessions – getting tips and ideas from renowned journalists. To apply, visit KiplingerProgram.org.

The **Oregon Coast Children's Book Writers Workshop** will be held July 11-15 in the coastal town of Oceanside. The organizers say they fill up early, so if this is of interest, you may want to register sooner than later. Visit www.occbww.com for details.



SWW Third Quarter Writing Competition Winners

Poetry

1st Place: Cathleen Cherry, Prescott, AZ, "Wish"
2nd Place: Elizabeth Rose, Galisteo, NM, "a look back"
3rd Place: Charles R. Powell, Albuquerque, NM,
"Begging Eyes"

Honorable Mention:

Donald DeNoon, Albuquerque, NM, "I Thought About You"
Bernie Lieving, Albuquerque, NM, "The Crack Defined"
Jennifer Alumbaugh, Glendale, CA, "Family Tree"
Jerry Self, Albuquerque, NM, "Smiles"

PayPal and Awards Page Coming to SWW Website

SouthWest Writers has many talented members. We'd like to let the world know that, so we are creating a new Awards page on our website, www.southwestwriters.com. To launch the page, we are seeking information on member awards for 2009 and 2010.

Awards are contest winnings and honors. This does not include winning SouthWest Writers contests because they are listed separately under the Contests tab. It also does not include book or article publications or booksignings. Those successes are listed in the Sage under the Successes heading.

If you have awards you'd like to see on our website, and you are a current SWW member, please email the information to Ruth Friesen at ruthsw@comcast.net. Include your name, the honor/award received, and the date you received it.

Another change we are bringing to the website, and the way we do business, is adding PayPal as a method to pay for membership, classes, workshops and conferences. The PayPal button will be available soon. You do not need to have a PayPal account to use PayPal for SWW activities. You'll just need to provide a credit card number to pay.

Desert Muse Publishing is collecting stories for an anthology due out in mid-April, 2011, in time for Mother's Day. Original stories, essays and poetry from 250 to 2,000 words capturing favorite memories of Mom will be considered. Desert Muse is granted one-time publication rights. There is no entry fee, and selected authors each will receive one copy of the anthology. The deadline is January 15. To submit or for more information contact Ann Marquez at ADesertMuse@aol.com.

The New Mexico Food & Gift Showcase, a new store at 6920 4th Street NW, 505-881-4989, hosted the first of many planned book signings in November. The Showcase carries almost 200 book titles from New Mexico authors and publishers. The books range from children's to cookbooks, novels, historical, biography, activity books for children, and coffee table books great for gifts.

The Christmas Letter

by Ruth Friesen

'Twas the week before Christmas and deep in my house
Not a creature was stirring but me and my mouse.
The Christmas cards stood on the mantle with care.
I hoped that my own letter soon would be there.

The children were nestled all snug in their beds
While visions of grandeur filled up their heads.
My old cocker spaniel, curled in my lap,
Had just settled down for a long winter's nap

When out on the hearth there arose such a clatter
I sprang from my desk to see what was the matter.
Away down the hallway I flew like a flash
Tore open the doors and saw, with a gasp,

The Adams were fighting, with photos held high,
Against Sally Smith, with award-winning pie.
The blue-ribbon pastry fell down with a splat
Onto the hearth, where baby Jones sat.

"My kid's smarter than your kid," I heard someone shout.
"Oh, no, my son's better! Of that there's no doubt.
He's Phi Beta Kappa and Mensa, to boot."
"Oh, give me a break, you dirty old coot."

I threw up my hands in deepest chagrin
Decided my letter just might do me in.
I closed down my laptop and gave up the fight.
"Have your own Christmas." And called it a night.



Keeping the Author Whole

by Shirl Brainard

I didn't know the meaning of "keeping the author whole." I know now.

In early April, I was browsing through Amazon, looking for an author-friend's fictional book. Totally by accident – Amazon has a way of steering you to 'recommended books' - I ended up staring at a book titled, *Visual Design Theory: 4th Edition* by Shirl Brainard – my name and also listing two other names: one with the subject photography, the other typography. My textbook is on design.

What did this mean?

My textbook, *A Design Manual*, 3rd Edition, was sold to Shanghai People's Fine Art Publishing and translated for sale in China, the 4th Edition was sold to the American International University as an e-book. In these cases a formal letter had requested my permission, even though Prentice Hall the publisher, holds the copyright. It was a formality and a gesture of respect to the author. It also alerts the author to possible earnings, royalties.

However, this had not happened with this book. Published by Pearson Custom Publishing, it and Prentice Hall are under the one big umbrella: Pearson Education (London). Technically they had the right to publish my book. It's called derivative usage. But it was a shock to see this book advertised for sale on Amazon.

My next thought was, *I don't remember getting any royalty money for this title or ISBN number that represented the book.*

I've kept every royalty statement since 1991. I went back over the last several years. I sure couldn't see one dollar, and royalties are listed with/by ISBN numbers.

By April 12 I was e-mailing my editor who is now editor in chief of Prentice Hall art department. She knew nothing about the publishing of another book using my book. But she said, "This is important. We need to keep our authors whole."

In other words, we can't just be chopped up by miscellaneous usage of our material, but literally it means, an author needs "to get 100 percent of what he or she is entitled to by contract."

Now it's June. In the meantime, my editor tracked down copies of the book in question, and sent me a copy. I was further shocked to see my whole textbook from stem to

stem in print in another book! Even my preface! I had believed a small part had been used... not the whole damned thing.

Now I've had telephone conversations with her. She found the book had been custom printed for a special class that is now defunct...but the book is for sale on Amazon. The Royalty department pointed out a payment made to me two years ago... but the explanation for that ISBN number was the book in China. Then replying to a letter I wrote directly to Pearson Custom Publishing, I was told a royalty payment had been made on a different date. That turned out to be the AIU's e-book.

I waited while the royalty department searched. Finally, I had a conference call with my editor and the director of royalties.

Aha! He solved the question. All derivatives royalties are/were paid using a derivative ISBN. They can have twenty things published using a different ISBN for each separate publication, but the original ISBN is how it's identified on royalty statements.

The one positive is this: I know my material is still good information and the publisher thinks enough of it to use it as a further teaching tool.

Another positive: yes, I'll still get a royalty check. And in the future, protocol will be in force, asking my humble permission.

Shirl Brainard is a retired design and color theory instructor from a community college. Just after she retired, her college textbook was published and is now in its 4th edition. Shirl writes non-fiction articles, her memoirs and is working on several fictional short stories.



Photo by Peggy Spencer



A Grammatical Tip: Excuse me. Your modifier is dangling.

by Dodici Azpadu

Dangling modifiers hint at a subject, but fail to refer logically to any words in the sentence. They cause confusion; occasionally, they cause a smile. Easy to correct, dangling modifiers are often difficult to spot. Look at the sentences below.

As a young man, my sister often pushed her girlfriends on me.

Seated in the car, the soft music filled my ear buds.

We can usually grasp the meaning of these faulty sentences, but when a sentence opens with a modifying word or clause, readers expect the subject of the next clause to name the actor of the modification.

We cannot simply move the modifier to a different part of the sentence. Look what happens to the examples.

My sister often pushed her girlfriends on me as a young man. [The gender is still mixed.]

The soft music filled my ear buds seated in the car. [Along with your tush.]

Repair the sentence by naming the actor in the subject of the sentence or in the modifier.

Seated in the car, I listened to soft music fill my ear buds.
When I was a young man, my sister often pushed her girlfriends on me.

Sometimes modifiers are simply misplaced. My personal favorite follows.

The bandit was a six-foot-tall cowboy with a heavy mustache, weighing 160 pounds.

Readers should be able to see immediately the relationship of the words. In order to avoid dangling modifiers, we are sometimes in a hurry to name a subject.

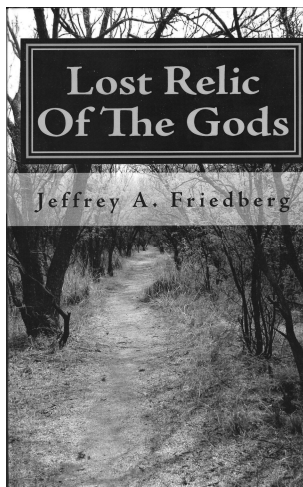
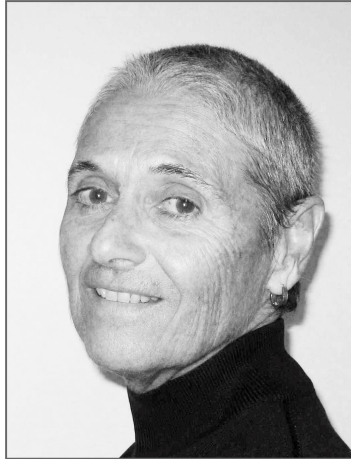
The politician, after years of corruption, greed, and malfeasance, was voted out of office.

Generally, we should avoid long phrases that separate a subject and verb. Try this:

After years of corruption, greed, and nepotism, the politician was voted out of office.

Correct written grammar and standard punctuation don't come easily to many of us.

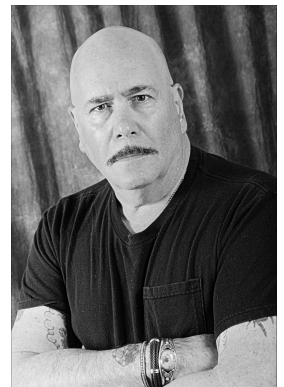
Language is always changing, and technology has accelerated the pace of change. I frequently refer to *The Bedford Handbook* by Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers because I've taught college writing from it for years. *The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White is also excellent.



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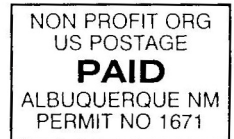
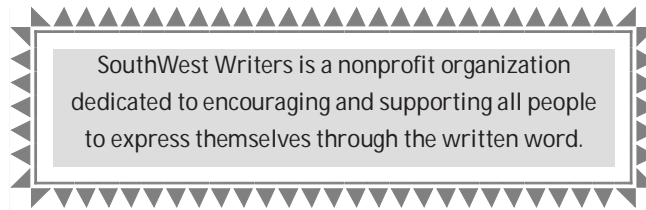
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International Women's Writing Guild

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Diane Schmidt
dianeschmidt22@hotmail.com

New Mexico State Poetry Society

2nd Saturday 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
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