

SouthWest Sage

February 2011

www.southwestwriters.com

The Rewards of Writing a Memoir

by Sandra Toro

About two years ago, I decided the time had come to write my book-length memoir. I'd written short pieces before, but my demons had now been dead for sixteen years, and I felt I'd achieved enough emotional distance to objectively explore the dynamics of my birth-family. Going in, I knew it would be emotionally painful to relive my childhood, and I also knew that the major attribute of commercially published memoirs by non-celebrities was the ability to dramatize events, not merely summarize them. In other words, to show rather than tell.

The first issue a would-be memoirist faces is how to organize the story of one's life. I made a list of the women who had most influenced me, followed by the men who'd been important in my life. I listed the memorable books which had influenced me to become a novelist, those writers I most admired. Finally, I made a list of the worst events in my life, the horrible, soul-wrenching confrontations with my parents and older brother. To counter the horrors, I listed the fabulous, glamorous, fulfilling moments of achievement—mostly in Washington, D. C.—once I escaped from my family. I lay awake in the wee hours of the morning trying to synthesize all these horrible and wonderful memories. Over and over I asked myself what others have asked me: How did I survive my childhood as well as I did?

My three siblings did not fare as well. My older brother committed suicide at age 52. My younger sister has been institutionalized as a paranoid schizophrenic for the past 20 years. My younger brother has been unable to keep a job, and his son committed suicide at age 20. I believe all four of us can trace our psychological problems back to our childhood. To understand that, you'll have to read the memoir.

As I began the writing, I believed that I remembered everything. I've never been one to believe in repressed memories, and I had very clear memories of the worst and best moments of my life. I was in for a surprise!

There were days when the writing of the memoir was delightful. I plowed through my scrapbook, seeing myself again at some of the most glamorous moments. I chose the best and recreated them as chapters in the memoir: My first State Dinner at the White House when I was 26 years old. Sitting next to George Hamilton at dinner, dancing with the

Vice President under the blazing chandelier in the East Room to the music of Peter Duchin. I found a picture of myself interviewing Golda Meir on ABC-TV, which brought back memories of that splendid afternoon and my years in television.

Intertwined with these years of joyous accomplishment in Washington were visits back to Omaha, to my parents and siblings, mainly for weddings and funerals. I recreated those too, painful as it was to do so.

In contemplating all of those years and using the skills I'd learned in writing fiction, I chose the emotional high points and low points—exactly as one does in writing a novel—and dramatized them for the reader. And in every chapter I focused on the conflict, the tension, the tremendous joy, the feeling of liberation I experienced every time I returned to Washington.

Most memoirists struggle with where to begin the story. This was not an issue for me: I knew the defining moment of my life, that event which was the crisis. Everything else happened either before—or after. The dramatization of that event was the first chapter, the first twenty pages of my memoir which won the SouthWest Writer's contest in 2009.

As I continued to write on a daily basis, I found myself lying awake at night trying to understand my mother and her life. We'd shared fifty-four years together and sixteen years after her death snippets of conversations over the years came together in my mind and gradually formed a whole picture of her attitudes toward sex, incest, her father and brother, her husband (my father), and her sense of guilt and innocence. As I put it all together, I gained a new understanding, which seems valid to me, of her struggles with these issues and with her marriage.

As all memoirists do, I struggled with what to include and what to leave out. Though my villains are dead, their children and grandchildren—my grandchildren too—might be shocked and extremely embarrassed to discover these facts about their ancestors. I'm not concerned with defamation; rather, I'm concerned with the younger generation having "plausible deniability." Thus, I have chosen to use a *nom de plume*.

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President's Message



President
Melody Groves

It crossed my mind the other day that SouthWest Writers runs on the back of those members who volunteer. And they volunteer more than just their money or their time. They willingly give their experiences and ideas. It's said that it takes a village to raise a child. Well, it takes a village to raise one writer.

Here how it works: SouthWest Writers offers lectures, classes, workshops, networking opportunities and conferences to enhance a writer's knowledge. While true the writer gives money and time for this education, hopefully he receives a lifetime of skills, which equates to being published or just being a better writer. Our goal is to help that person achieve his writing goal.

As an organization, we can't do it alone. True, there is the board of directors, composed of fourteen of the five hundred members. From the board comes a myriad of committees...from preparing and organizing classes, setting up workshops, putting together a conference, running the contest, to creating marketing opportunities for members...the list goes on.

SouthWest Writers is a truly blessed organization when it comes to members who volunteer. We're the best! Your help is always welcome and needed. Check with Sandy Bazinet, Volunteer Chairman, who is usually at a table at the meetings or contact any other board member and they'll let you know where there's a need and how you can fill that gap.

Right now, we have a big need for help with the contest. Cynthia Boyd, Annual Contest Chairman, is looking for people to help with processing entries (we're expecting over 600 this year), notifying winners, notifying those who didn't win, and yes... setting up the Awards Banquet. There are a ton of moving parts with SouthWest Writers, and if you've got even an extra thirty minutes a week, we could sure use your help.

SouthWest Writers is YOUR organization. After all, raising a writer is everyone's job.

Happy February.

Melody

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Sandra Toro
Dodici Azpadu
Chris Eboch
Cathleen Cherry

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Chris Cervini
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Max Middleton
Donald Cram
Julie Fulcher
Rhonda Wetherbe



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Download the *Sage* from www.southwestwriters.com

Join us first Saturday: 10 AM-Noon: Third Tuesday: 7-9 PM

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President Melody Groves
MelodyGroves@comcast.net

Vice-President Rob Spiegel
robspiegel@comcast.net

Secretary/Parliamentarian Larry Greenly
SWWriters@juno.com

Treasurer M. Kathryn Peralta
mkperalta@yahoo.com

Conference Chair Ann Marquez
amarq77@aol.com

Annual Contest Chair Cynthia Boyd
St.Boyd@comcast.net

Speakers Rob Spiegel
robspiegel@comcast.net

Public Relations Terry Civello
terryrose150@yahoo.com

Class Coordinator Kathy Kitts
kkitts@kkitts.net

Workshop Coordinator Joanne Bodin
jsbodin@msn.com

Volunteer Coordinator Sandy Bazinet
sandy@compuwing.com

Membership Rita Herther
RMHerther@aol.com

Special Events Don Dyer
dyerink@yahoo.com

Historian Susan Alexis
sjalexis@msn.com

SWW Sage Editor Ruth Friesen
ruthsww@comcast.net

E-lert Mistress Gail Rubin
Gail_Rubin@comcast.net

SWW Office:

3721 Morris St. NE, Suite A
Albuquerque, NM 87111

phone: (505) 265-9485

e-mail: SWWriters@juno.com

website: www.southwestwriters.com

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A Grammatical Tip: Pronoun Consistency

by Dodici Azpadu

Correct use of pronouns includes agreement with an antecedent, clear reference to an antecedent, and appropriate case selection. An **antecedent** is the noun that a pronoun substitutes for. All related pronouns and antecedents must agree in number—all singular or all plural.

*Maria carried **her** son.*

*The parents carried **their** children.*

INDEFINITE PRONOUNS

A frequent error is using plural pronouns with indefinite pronoun antecedents or with generic nouns. Be on guard for the following words. Some may look plural, but they all require singular agreement.

anybody	each	everyone	nobody
somebody	anyone	either	everything
no one	someone	anything	everybody
neither	nothing	something	

*Everyone wants to do **his or her** best.*

In addition to using **his or her**, another way to correct mismatched indefinite pronoun antecedents and plural pronouns is to make the antecedent plural.

*People want to do **their** best.*

Making the antecedent plural is the easiest solution, and it avoids the wordy **his or her** repetition. Making the antecedent plural also avoids gender assumptions such as all doctors are male and all flight attendants are female.

*The doctors went to **their** cars.* [Not *The doctor went to **his** car.*]

*The flight attendants took **their** seats.* [Not *The flight attendant took **her** seat.*]

GENERIC OR COLLECTIVE NOUNS

A second type of agreement error is using plural pronouns with generic nouns or collective nouns. **Generic nouns** refer to one member of a group such as *trucker* or *cowboy*.

*The cowboy ethos includes a loner and **his** horse.*

Collective nouns ordinarily operate as a unit, so the noun and its related pronouns should be singular.

*The jury gave **its** verdict.*

If the meaning is clearly plural, use the plural, but to be on the safe side, add a plural antecedent.

*Members of the jury announced **their** verdict.*

Errors with generic or collective nouns and pronouns can be corrected by the same three methods described for common agreement errors: use the singular *his or her*, create plural antecedents, or rewrite the sentence.

Finally, note that **compound antecedents** joined with **and** are usually plural.

*Jack **and** Jill went to **their** favorite watering hole.*

However, compound antecedents joined by **or** or **nor** (or with **(n)either... (n)or** combinations) agree with the closest antecedent.

***Neither** the students **nor** Mr. Ghastly finished **his** job.* (This is correct but should be re-written to avoid confusion.)

***Neither** Mr. Ghastly **nor** the students finished **their** jobs.*

The Stories in History

by Chris Eboch

Hot trends may come and go, but for some writers and readers, nothing takes the place of great historical fiction. So in honor of Black History Month (February) and Women's History Month (March) let's look at this enduring genre. It can explore any period, from ancient—even prehistoric—times, to recent decades (that's right, your childhood is now historical). The best books let readers explore a fascinating time in the past, through a character who appeals to modern tastes.

Regardless of the time period, historical fiction requires heavy research, in books, online, at museums and through interviews. D. Anne Love has published seven historical novels for young people, including *The Puppeteer's Apprentice* and *Semiprecious*. "Although the former is set in medieval England and the latter in Oklahoma and Texas in 1960, my research process for both books was similar. I read as many primary sources (diaries, letters, journals) as possible, and followed up with other books on the topic. I conducted much of my research online, but I also used libraries for hard to find materials. For *Three Against the Tide*, a Civil War novel set in Charleston, South Carolina, I visited the area five times, taking photos, notes, and visiting local libraries and historical societies."

With all this research, authors must be organized. Albuquerque author Lois Ruby (*Shanghai Shadows*), says, "I take extensive notes, each fact on a separate index card, all arranged by detailed subject. I do about two years of research before I even begin writing, then re-check for details after the writing is underway."

By nature, historical fiction writers love research and the minutia of the past. But resist the urge to include every fascinating detail. Patricia Curtis Pfitsch, author of *Riding the Flume*, says, "I read my work aloud and I tune my ear to anything that sounds too 'teacherly.' I keep reminding myself that it's not nonfiction. It's okay if the readers don't learn everything I learned."

Mary Ann Rodman, author of *Yankee Girl*, agrees. "Sometimes it's hard to keep from showing off all that research you did! For me, a detail only works if it adds to the story in some significant way. If I am unsure, I ask myself 'Would I include a comparable detail, if this were a contemporary story?'"

The People of the Past

Character is key in bringing stories to life, and in making the past appeal to today's readers. Love notes that, "I try to show young readers that although we may be separated by hundreds of years from the characters in books, their emo-

tions, goals, struggles, and dreams are very much like our own."

Historical characters must be appealing, yet believable for their time. "I have to watch myself carefully for 'thought anachronisms,'" Rodman says. "I like strong, feisty female characters, but if you are going to have one in a book that takes place in the pre-feminist world, you better have a good reason for her behavior." Changing social standards produce another challenge. Rodman adds, "It is really hard to write characters who have what are today considered racist or sexist beliefs (but were widely accepted in their time) and make them likable...or at least not villains. I hope that my books show the complexity of events that shaped the way we live in twenty-first-century America."

Character authenticity is one of the big challenges of historical fiction, but authors risk confusing readers if the language is *too* authentic. Doris Gwaltney suggests, "In some instances, as in my Elizabethan novel, *Shakespeare's Sister*, the language had to be altered a bit for today's readers." She kept the basic language clear, and then "I threw in a few words of the period to create the flavor of the time."

To Market

Like the authors who write it, the editors who publish historical fiction tend to love the genre. Dianne Hess, Executive Editor at Scholastic Press, says, "We learn from the past. History repeats itself when we are unaware of it. I also feel that we appreciate the value of life when we see it as a continuum." However, she notes, "As an editor, I'm charged with publishing books that will make money. We need to find books that will have a significant readership."

An unusual setting may attract attention, but the story comes first. According to Jennifer Wingertzahn, Editor at Clarion Books, "More important than time period or location, I feel, is a fresh and unique story. It's not enough to simply set a story against an exciting historical backdrop—readers want depth, layering, texture, and vivid characterizations."

The path to great historical fiction is clear: A spark of inspiration, months of research, carefully chosen details to bring the setting to life, and a dynamic character who appeals to today's readers, while expressing the differences of her time. With a little luck, the end result is a book that will last long beyond modern trends.

Chris Eboch is the author of *The Well of Sacrifice*, a Mayan adventure for ages 9 and up, which is used in many classrooms. Visit www.chriseboch.com for a sample, more advice on writing historical fiction, and a list of favorite historical novels.



WISH

by Cathleen Cherry

Three times I went to see him there.
The first: I was alone and triumphant: June.
But the shock of witnessing the mouth slack, one eye open.
He slept fitfully.
Frightened, I thought of Poe, *the Telltale Heart*, and the evil eye, afraid
he would die
right there
right now
in front of me.

*He made campfires so hot and huge we had to stand back twenty feet,
singing the old songs, and
he'd always snort when we inevitably jumbled the verses of the Ballad of Ivan Skavinsky Skavar.*

The second: July (or was it August?) with my sister.

He looked better, was even ornery. I did not feel as guilty.

*He made drinks so stiff even my big brothers couldn't finish one, and he'd offer you your first
as soon as you turned sixteen. And by god, you'd better accept it.*

The last: Hoping the end was near, I stopped at the shrine in the muted December rain to
light candles and pray.

He was defeated.

I helped Gram wrestle him out of his blue jeans.

He didn't protest, only moaned softly, resigned.

His skin had sunk into the hollows, like fine silk draping the bones he could feel disintegrating.

His knees grotesquely round.

He hid his left hand, swollen, red: the gout, Mom had said, was an indication his organs were failing.

*His goodnight kisses meant rough whiskers and the scent of Chivas Regal, and occasionally a
raspberry blown into our necks, sending us squealing off to bed.*

Uneasy, Gram wanted to run errands, could no longer bear the struggle of this man
she had loved for more than sixty years.

Later, alone on the way home

I stopped again at the shrine, dumped all of my change into the sturdy steel box and lit two more
candles.

Three weeks later, my wish was granted.

But it was before dawn,
and he was alone.



Cathleen Cherry submitted this poem which won first place in the SouthWest Writers Third Quarter Writing Competition. She, with her husband Dan, endeavors to raise their two daughters to become successful, compassionate individuals. She lives in Prescott, Arizona, where she teaches French, and writes poetry, fiction, and personal essays for her blog Chez Cerise (www.cathleenc.blogspot.com).

Meetings

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

Saturday, February 5
10:00 a.m. to noon

Lois Ruby

"The Hunger Games: Beyond Apocalypse, Faeries, Werewolves, Sorcerers, and Vampires"

There's got to be room on the bookshelf for a bite of real life. But it's hard to get jaded New York editors hooked on normal, everyday life in books for young readers. We'll lament briefly, then explore sneaky ways to infuse excitement, conflict, humor, and suspense in stories about ordinary, quirky, hometown people happily lacking in supernatural powers.

Lois Ruby has been writing books for middle grade children and teens since the late '70s. Her thirteenth book, *Shanghai Shadows*, took her back to World War II and the 20,000 European refugees -- some of them spies -- who survived the war only because China opened its gates to them. Even though Lois touts reality as the substance of her novels, she sheepishly admits that her most recent book, *The Secret of Laurel Oaks*, is overrun with ghosts on a Louisiana plantation. .

Tuesday February 15, 2011
7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m

Lynn C. Miller and Lisa Lenard-Cook

Knock 'em Dead at the Mike: Performance Pointers for Writers

It's one thing to give voice to the voices in your head; it's another to stand in front of a crowd and read those words aloud. The presenters will offer five tips for reading your work that will move you from knock-kneed knuckle-chewer to powerhouse public performer.

Lynn C. Miller and Lisa Lenard-Cook have made names for themselves as both writers and teachers. Lynn's career at the University of Texas at Austin included two major teaching awards: she received the Cogger Award for Distinguished Performance for her solo performances and adaptations of fiction for the stage. Lisa's first novel *Dissonance*



Lynn C. Miller

Saturday, March 5
10:00 a.m. to noon

Jonathan Miller

Writing New Mexico People and Places

Jonathan Miller will discuss how to write about New Mexico, both in fiction and non-fiction. He will explore ways to make New Mexico come alive in your writing.

Jonathan is the author of six books. *La Bajada Lawyer* recently won the silver medal for multi-cultural fiction in Foreword Magazine's National Book of the Year contest. His last book, *Conflict Contract*, was a finalist for New Mexico Mystery of the Year and New Mexico Adventure Story of the Year. As a lawyer, Jonathan has traveled all over the state and has lived in Albuquerque, Roswell and Las Cruces. He also had a short-lived job in Santa Fe.



Tuesday March 15
7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m

Judy Avila

A Great Idea for a Book

So you want to earn a living by writing books? That's great. But expect days when you'll feel like you're skimming the Atlantic in a Concorde, then days when you're crossing that ocean in a freight train. Judy Avila talks about the life cycle of a book from creation to sale. She covers her ups and downs in the industry and how, with a little talent and lots of determination, you can make it work.

Judy Avila has been writing for thirteen years. She joined SouthWest Writers in 1998. During the past four years she helped WWII Navajo Code Talker Chester Nez write his memoir. Although she has written four novels, the memoir, to be published by Berkley Books in 2011, is her first book sale. Judy's writer's website is www.JudithAvila.com.



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Classes

INTRODUCTION TO WRITING FOR CHILDREN

Chris Eboch

Wednesdays, February 2, 9, 16 and 23, 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.

\$120 SWW members; Non-Members: \$150 (includes 6-month SWW membership) Limited to 14 participants. SouthWest Writers, 3721 Morris St. NE, Suite A (northwest corner of Comanche and Morris), Albuquerque

When you write for children, you have the most appreciative audience in the world. But to reach that audience, you need to understand the craft and business of writing for children. In this hands-on workshop, we'll explore the children's book markets, discuss the elements of writing for kids, and brainstorm appropriate ideas. Then we'll look at the essential elements of writing for children, and each participant will start developing a story. Expect to leave this workshop with an article or story in progress, and a list of ideas for future development.

Chris Eboch is the author of 12 books for young people. Her *Haunted* series includes *The Ghost on the Stairs*, *The Riverboat Phantom* and *The Knight in the Shadows*. *The Knight in the Shadows* won the 2010 New Mexico Book Award for Juvenile Book. Her other books include *The Well of Sacrifice*, a middle grade Mayan adventure, used in many schools, and two inspirational biographies in Simon & Schuster's Childhood of Famous Americans series, *Jesse Owens: Young Record Breaker* and *Milton Hershey: Young Chocolatier*, written under the name M.M. Eboch. Read excerpts or learn more about Chris at www.chriseboch.com or visit her "Write Like a Pro! A Free Online Writing Workshop" blog at <http://chriseboch.blogspot.com/>.

To register for classes and workshops go to www.southwestwriters.com, sign up with credit card or check at the SWW meeting, or call 265-9485.

Miller, Lenard-Cook, continued from page 6

was short-listed for the PEN Southwest Book; her subsequent books, the novel *Coyote Morning* and a book about writing fiction, *The Mind of Your Story*, are also award-winners. Lynn is the author of two novels, *The Fool's Journey* and *Death of a Department Chair*, and co-editor of *Voices Made Flesh: Performing Women's Autobiography*.

Her play, *Passenger on the Ship of Fools* (with Laura Furman) won a new play award in 2009. Both writers conduct workshops nationally as well as locally and serve as mentors to writers on individual projects.



Lisa Lenard-Cook

INTRODUCTION TO WRITING FOR MIDDLE GRADES

Chris Eboch

Wednesdays, February 2, 9, 16 and 23, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

\$120 SWW members; Non-Members: \$150 (includes 6-month SWW membership) Limited to 14 participants. SouthWest Writers, 3721 Morris St. NE, Suite A (northwest corner of Comanche and Morris), Albuquerque

From *Harry Potter* to *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*, Middle Grade novels are a popular and entertaining genre that can include realistic fiction, adventure, historical fiction, fantasy, science fiction, humor and more. If you'd like to write for this appealing age group, this class will get you on your way. We'll review the genres and special requirements, work on developing characters and planning a plot, and start writing!

GRAMMAR AND WRITING MECHANICS

Dr. Dodici Azpadu

**Wednesdays March 9, 16, 23, 30, and April 6.
6:00 p.m. to 8 p.m.**

\$180 SWW members. Non-members: \$220 (includes 6-month SWW membership) Limited to 14 participants. SouthWest Writers, 3721 Morris St. NE, Suite A (northwest corner of Comanche and Morris), Albuquerque

This is a refresher course on sentence mechanics and usage. Starting with sentence fragments and subject verb agreement, participants will learn to use the semi-colon with confidence; avoid unnecessary commas, comma splices, and run-on sentences; and manage antecedent/pronoun agreement and strategic modification. Participants will also practice using active and passive voice and appropriate word choices for particular nuances.

Enrolling in this course can help you save time and money:

- **Revising your draft?** A copy editor or proofreader charges \$35 avg. per hour.
- **Sending out a Query and/or manuscript to an agent or publisher?** Mechanics errors can land your work in the circular file.
- **Submitting your work to a contest?** Entries with errors will eliminate you on the first screening.

Dodici Azpadu earned a PhD in Language and Literature, and also holds an MFA from the University of Iowa Writers' Workshop. She has taught in the Honors College at UNM, and currently teaches at CNM. Her novels *Saturday in the Prime of Life* and *Goat Song* were published in the United States and Great Britain. Her third novel, *Living Room* was a finalist for the 2010 NM Book Awards in Fiction.

Workshop

CONQUER SHYNESS: A SPEAKER'S WORKSHOP FOR WRITERS

Rose Marie Kern

**Saturday March 19, 9:00 a.m. to
4:00 p.m.**

\$75 SWW members, \$105 non-
members (includes a year's SWW
membership for \$60) Fees include
lunch.

New Life Presbyterian Church
5540 Eubank Blvd. just north of Spain



You love to write and you really want to make money at it, but the thought of appearing on TV or radio shows, or speaking to groups or even doing book signings really bothers you. You are not alone. Conquer shyness by using some of the techniques used by professional actors to overcome stage fright. This interactive workshop will allow you to astonish yourself as you create your "Author's Persona."

Topics that the course will cover include: Finding your voice; creating your Persona; connecting with your audience; Radio/TV interviews (using a tape recorder). Participants should come to the workshop with a one expository paragraph - less than four sentences - about their current writing project. This workshop focuses specifically on the physical and psychological person. There will be a handout available so participants can practice exercises at home.

Rose Marie Kern lectures for professional organizations, environmental groups, and aviation conferences. She has won professional awards from Lockheed Martin, the New Mexico Solar Energy Association and the Federal Aviation Administration for her ability to bring education and understanding on a number of topics to widely differing audiences. Rose Marie began appearing in TV commercials at the age of fifteen and studied theater arts at Butler University. She has acted on stage and directed shows for more than 20 theaters.

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Successes and Announcements

The **Moriarty Community Library** will host their annual Authors for Literacy event on February 19. If you are interested in reserving a table, or would like further information, please contact Cyndi Waite at 832-2513, or at the moriartylibrary@yahoo.com.

The **Cosmos Critique Group for Science Fiction and Fantasy** meets on the 3rd Saturday of the month at 1 p.m. at the Westside Cafe, 504 Old Coors Rd. For further info call Anne at 301-7200 or Ed at 922-1072.

High Desert Journal's 2011 Obsidian Prize in Fiction awards writers working in or inspired by the West. The deadline is February 28, with a 6,000 word maximum. www.highdesertjournal.com

Fiction Fix seeks creative nonfiction and artwork submissions for their Spring 2011 issue, guest edited by Mark Ari. The deadline is February 1. www.fictionfix.net

Brighton Community of Writers (COW)'s Short Story Fiction competition seeks submissions up to 3,000 words on any theme. The deadline for entries is February 28. www.brightoncow.co.uk.

The Normal School literary magazine offers its second annual Normal prize in fiction, nonfiction and poetry. Submissions for the contest are only accepted online between January 1 and March 4. For complete guidelines, visit www.thenormalschool.com/contestguidelines_2.html.

The 10th Annual **CrossTIME Short Science Fiction Contest** has an entry deadline of March 15. The story must be 7500 words or less and demonstrate the best of the human spirit. Writers will be chosen for the anthology. First place is \$250, Second \$125, and Third \$5. All entrants will receive a copy of the anthology. For rules and guidelines: contest@crossquarter.com.

The **Wet Mountain Valley Writers' Workshop** with Dorothy Allison and Abigail Thomas will be held August 7 - 13. Conference location is Westcliffe, Colorado - 80 miles southwest of Colorado Springs. www.twincompass.com

Narrative Magazine's Winter Story Contest seeks short stories, short shorts, essays, memoirs, photo essays, graphic stories, all forms of literary nonfiction, one-act plays, and excerpts from longer works of both fiction and nonfiction. Prior winners and finalists in Narrative contests have gone on to win other contests and to be published in prize collections, including the Pushcart Prize, Best New Stories from the South, an *Atlantic* prize, and others. The contest deadline is March 31. All entries will be considered for publication. www.narrativemagazine.com



Successes and Announcements

Don Bullis has been named the official New Mexico Centennial Author. His work will be highlighted throughout the statehood Centennial commemoration in libraries statewide. "The individuals chosen for these honorary positions will highlight the importance of poetry, storytelling and literature to preserving and disseminating the state's heritage and rich cultures," said Cultural Affairs Secretary Stuart Ashman. Communities statewide are preparing a wide range of projects, exhibits and events to commemorate the state's 100th birthday in 2012. For more information visit www.nmcentennial.org.

Luise Putcamp jr.'s ballade, "Pompeii Exhibit," won Second Place in the Rhyming Poem category of the 79th Annual *Writer's Digest* Writing Competition. In the same contest, her sonnet sequence, "Schizophrenia as Hades," won 34th place and her poem, "Amber," won 50th place.

Dianne Layden's recent essay on campus violence won third place in the 2011 *Santa Fe Reporter* non-fiction writing contest and was published in November.

Jeanne Shannon has two poems, "Counting the Stars of Ten Thousand Years Ago" and "Singing the Duende," in the current issue of *Midway Journal*, www.midwayjournal.com.

Gayle Lauradunn has a series of 12 haikus, titled "Cross-Country Haikus," published in the *Small Canyons 4 Anthology*.

Ruth Friesen's photo, "Frozen," will be published in the Spring 2011 issue of the literary journal *Front Range*. www.frontrangemt.org.

Rob Spiegel had poems accepted recently in *New Verse News*, *Adobe Walls* and *Mused*.

Gail Rubin's *A Good Goodbye: Funeral Planning for Those Who Don't Plan to Die* has been published by Light Tree Press. It is available at Amazon.com as well as www.AGoodGoodbye.com. She also completed her *30 Funerals in 30 Days Challenge* during the month of November. Read all of the blog posts at: <http://thefamilyplot.wordpress.com/category/30-day-challenge/>.

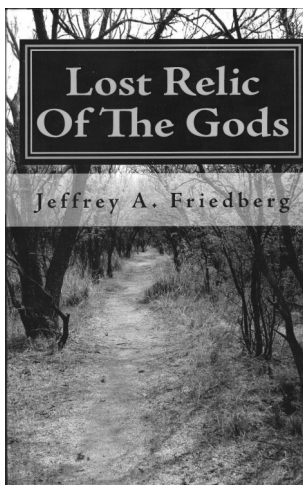
John Orman placed in the *Albuquerque Journal's* Photo Caption contest for the competition started on December 14.

SWW Historian Bio

Susan Alexis, SWW Historian, holds a Master's Degree in Spanish, lived and worked in Mexico for seventeen years, and has been a member of Southwest Writers for ten. Her writing has appeared in *The World & I*, *Grit*, *Guideposts*, *Woman's World*, *El Diario de Colima* and other publications. She is the author of two books, *Healing the World One by One: Reflections on Third World Encounters* and *Caring Hands: Inspiring Stories of Volunteer Medical Missions*.

2011 First Bi-Monthly Writing Contest

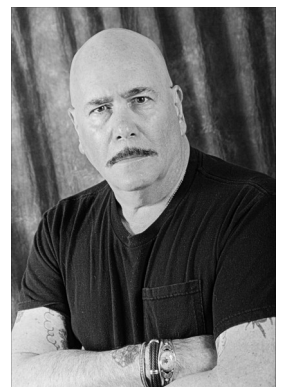
Submit the opening two pages of a memoir, the initial hook, no longer than 500 words. Postmark deadline: February 28, 2011. Please note if you grant publication permission. All entries \$10. Prizes: \$150/1st prize; \$50/2nd prize; \$25/3rd prize. Mail entries to SWW Bimonthly Contest, 3721 Morris NE, Albuquerque, NM 87111.



What if you could *live forever by moving heaven and Earth?*
...but heaven and Earth *suddenly moved by themselves!*

Private investigator Jack Vane is forced into a mythic journey by murder. Half-crazed, he is trapped by discovery of ancient secrets, vengeance—and a chance to save the world. Follow Jack through a labyrinth of doom-confronting situations, shadow-governments, the menace of a world overlord, and a climactic battle with an ancient Power—deep into the most terrible secret ever *not* known.

"Makes Indiana Jones look like child's play...action, love, magic, secrets, good and evil, and flat out outrageousness. Every surprise is topped by an even bigger, more unexpected explosion. Had me going right up to the end. ~Jenny Nathans, Book Review."



Jeffrey Avalon Friedberg

<http://lostancientknowledge.com> a1.detective@gmail.com
Available at Amazon.com, and elsewhere online, or order at any bookstore.

29th SWW Annual Contest Rules

The SouthWest Writers 29th International Writing Contest puts winning manuscripts in front of acquiring agents and editors. The contest is open to all original, unpublished work in the English language. Cash prizes are awarded to the top three entries in each category. First-place winners compete for the \$1,000 best-of-show Storyteller Award. **You do not have to be a SouthWest Writers member to enter.**

Deadline: Postmarked no later than **May 1, 2011**

Late entries: Postmarked no later than **May 15, 2011**
(\$5 late fee applies)

FICTION

1. Mainstream/Literary Novel

2. Mystery/Suspense/Thriller/Adventure Novel

3. Science Fiction/Fantasy/Horror Novel

4. Historical Novel (any locale and period)

5. Middle Grade (4-6th grade) or Young Adult (7th grade and up) Novel

For the above five categories, submit the first 20 double-spaced pages of the manuscript **plus** a single-spaced synopsis, two pages maximum. Number pages, starting with page two.

6. Mainstream/Literary Short Story. No more than 5,000 words. Manuscript must be double-spaced. Place word count on top of first page. Number subsequent pages.

NONFICTION

7. Memoir Book. Submit the first 20 double-spaced pages of the manuscript.

8. Memoir Article. No more than 2,500 words, double-spaced.

9. Nonfiction Essay/Article. No more than 2,000 words, double-spaced.

10. Personal Essay/Column. No more than 750 words, double-spaced.

For the above four categories, place word count on top of first page. Number subsequent pages.

11. Nonfiction Book. Submit the first 10 pages **plus** a book proposal of no more than 10 double-spaced pages **plus** a one-page, single-spaced query letter. Number pages, starting with page two.

12. Children's Picture Book. Submit the entire manuscript, double-spaced. Maximum 10 pages. Number pages, starting with page two. Do **not** submit illustrations. Target age: 4-7 years.

SCREENPLAY

13. Screenplay. Submit the first 20 pages in industry-standard format **plus** a one-page synopsis.

POETRY

14. Poetry. Submit **one** poem of up to three pages **or** up to **three**

haiku on **one** page.

OPTIONAL SOUTHWEST WRITERS CRITIQUE

You may purchase a professional critique from SouthWest Writers: Enclose the appropriate fee with your entry (see entry form); submit two copies of your entry; and enclose a 9x12 envelope with correct return postage (NOT metered postage). Poetry critiques may use a #10 envelope.

- Each entry must be in a separate envelope accompanied by a completed Entry Form and Entry Fee. No certified mail. Enclose a **self-addressed, stamped postcard** if you want notification of receipt. Please provide an email address.
- Write the Category Number you are entering on the outside of the envelope below your return address. Be sure to circle the Category Number on the entry form.
- Your entry must be original, written in English and unpublished or un-optioned at the time of submittal. If your entry previously won 1st place in a particular category, it is ineligible for that category.
- Using standard manuscript formatting, your manuscript must be printed on one side of 8-1/2 x 11 or A4 white paper in 12-point Courier or Times New Roman, double-spaced. Synopses and query letters must be single-spaced. Poems have no spacing requirements. Screenplays should follow industry-specific standards.
- Your name **must not** appear anywhere on the manuscript, synopsis, book proposal or query.
- Submit one copy of the manuscript, synopsis, book proposal or query, as specified for the category you are entering. Two copies are required if you request an optional SouthWest Writers critique.** Manuscripts will not be returned except for those receiving a SWW critique. **IF YOUR ENTRY FEE INCLUDES A CRITIQUE FEE:** Submit **two (2) copies of your manuscript PLUS** a 9 x 12 self-addressed envelope with enough postage stamps affixed for return mail. **NO METERED POSTAGE.** Put YOUR Return Address on the SASE. The critiqued manuscript will be returned in your SASE in August 2011. Poetry critiques may use a #10 envelope.
- Winners will be notified in August 2011. Prizes are as follows: 1st Place: \$150; 2nd Place: \$100; 3rd Place: \$50. All First Place winners compete for the \$1,000 Storyteller Award.
- Contest judging takes place in two phases. A qualified panel of writers and editors selects the top 20 entries in each category. Those top 20 entries are then judged by an acquiring agent, editor or publisher appropriate to each category. The top three winners in each category receive a critique from the acquiring judge. Contacting any judge during the contest period about an entry is an automatic disqualification.
- The professional editors, agents and/or publishers commissioned as judges are not employees of SouthWest Writers (SWW) and their opinions do not necessarily reflect the opinions of SouthWest Writers.

2011 SOUTHWEST WRITERS WRITING CONTEST 5-STEP ENTRY FORM

**Step
1**

Name: _____ Phone: () _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Country: _____
 Email: _____

Entry Title: _____

**Step
2**

Circle Category Number: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

**SWW
Mem-
bers**

SOUTHWEST WRITERS MEMBERS: Circle Fee Enclosed

Postmarked no later than May 1, 2011

Contest Only	\$20	Poetry Only	\$10
Contest & Critique	\$45	Poetry & Critique	\$30

Step 3

Postmarked no later than May 15, 2011

Contest Only	\$25	Poetry Only	\$15
Contest & Critique	\$50	Poetry & Critique	\$35

**Non-
Mem-
bers**

NON-MEMBERS: Circle Fee Enclosed:

Postmarked no later than May 1, 2011

Contest Only	\$30	Poetry Only	\$20
Contest & Critique	\$55	Poetry & Critique	\$40

Step 3

Postmarked no later than May 15, 2011

Contest Only	\$30	Poetry Only	\$25
Contest & Critique	\$60	Poetry & Critique	\$45

**Step
4**

Method of Payment:

☐ Check or Money Order (no cash) US\$ payable to SouthWest Writers

☐ Charge my ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard # _____

Exp. Date: _____ Security Code # _____ Signature _____

**Step
5**

How did you hear of contest? _____

Mail completed entry form, entry and fee to:

SouthWest Writers Contest 2011
 3721 Morris NE Ste A
 Albuquerque, NM 87111-3611

southwestwriters.com swwriters@juno.com (505) 265-9485

SouthWest Writers Workshop

3721 Morris NE

Albuquerque, NM 87111

www.southwestwriters.com

SWWriters@juno.com

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

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SouthWest Sage



**National Federation of
Press Women
2010 Award-Winning
Newsletter**

**Label shows your SWW Membership expiration date.
Renew promptly to retain your membership benefits.**

Change Service Requested

Contest Rules, continued from page 10

10. Winners will be posted on the SWW website.
(www.southwestwriters.com)
11. SouthWest Writers reserves the right to disqualify any entry if contest rules are not followed. Common mistakes: (1) Writer's name on manuscript; (2) Incorrect fee enclosed; (3) Incorrect number of manuscripts submitted for critique; (4) No return address written on the SASE (See Rule 7).
12. You agree questions regarding the interpretation of these rules and any matters relating to the contest that are not specifically covered by the rules, will be decided solely at the discretion of contest officials. You will accept as final and be bound by all judges' decisions. You understand and agree that your manuscript will be subjectively evaluated, and SWW cannot accept liability for consequences arising from any opinion expressed. You agree to hold harmless and indemnify SWW, its agents, employees and volunteers for any and all losses, costs or expenses incurred from any dispute arising from your participation in the contest.

**Save the Date
SWW Conference September 16-18**

Continued from page 1

Jeanette Wall, the author of *The Glass Castle*, dealt with this issue by asking her siblings to read her work and give her permission to publish it, which they did. Surprisingly, her mother also agreed to publication.

The other solution—that used by Pat Conroy in *The Great Santini* and *The Prince of Tides*—is to write your memoir and label it fiction. He's told me that at various points in his life, both his father and mother refused to speak to him after reading his novels. But, happily, he reunited with each of them before their deaths. As Conroy's work so aptly demonstrates, the great advantage of writing fiction is the permission to embellish events and make the events and the characters larger than life—and a better read!

The single most important reward of writing a memoir is the self-understanding one gains. When I finished with *Loveknots*, and two critique groups totaling a dozen writers had read it, I felt enormous peace. I could sleep through the night, I could go for days without thinking of my mother.

Writing is a lot cheaper than psychoanalysis!

Sandra Toro taught an SWW class on Memoir Writing in January.