

SouthWest Sage

January 2011

www.southwestwriters.com

Use SouthWest Writers Know-How to Elevate Your Career

by Laurel Burnett

"Congratulations! Your half-day workshop has been selected..." After an exuberant "Wahoo," I reflected on how I was selected to present at the Association for Death Education and Counseling (ADEC) national conference. I attribute this success to what I have learned from SWW. The same tools that provide a roadmap for successful writing are applied to the "Call for Submissions." A proposal must be tightly written, well crafted, and follow specific submission guidelines.

Presenting an education seminar or workshop at a professional conference strengthens your platform as a writer. These are my tips to parlay SWW know-how into speaking engagements at state and national conferences.

Surround yourself with enthusiastic writers. Attend SWW meetings on a regular basis. There are 23 meetings per year and a multitude of dynamic seminars and workshops that help hone writing skills. Every gathering provides opportunities to applaud other writers' successes and glean ideas from compelling speakers. Augment your SWW networking with a mentor, colleague, critique group or editor that challenges you to stretch your creative capabilities.

Create a hook. Identify local, state and national conferences related to your professional career and educational background. Brainstorm unique and value-added topics specific to the conference theme.

Grab the reader. During the SWW workshop, "How to Publish Your Nonfiction Book," I learned to make every word count when composing a query letter. The same principle applies when crafting a presentation summary. It is imperative to choose cogent words to describe what the seminar is about. Since the summary is used for marketing and to publicize specific conference offerings, submission guidelines emphasize, "The proposal summary cannot be changed; text will appear in the conference announcement exactly as submitted."

Speak up and out—at as many venues as possible. Practice speaking in a concise manner. Fine-tune and eliminate

any unnecessary distractions "like, you know" and excess "uhs" that dilute your message. The monthly SWW meetings provide great opportunities to network and announce your success. Combine word choice, tone and mannerisms to enthusiastically convey your message.

Tailor your biography. SWW offered a seminar on "Writing Your Biography" and even though I haven't used my six-word bio yet, I customize every biography to suit the venue. Evaluate your target audience and highlight credentials and professional experience specific to the conference theme.

Editing is vital. Review archived *SouthWest Sage* articles for tips on editing. Even though many state, national and international conferences require on-line submissions, electronic templates are designed for off-line use of a word processing program with cut-and-paste functions. No matter how closely you have scrutinized your proposal allow time for another set of eyes to review the draft before you click "submit."

Respect submission deadlines. Entering the SWW quarterly and annual contests are great practice for writing to a deadline. Most contests and national conferences announce a firm due date for submissions. If the window is missed, it can be one year before the next opportunity. If electronic submission is required, allow a margin for computer related and technology emergencies.

Practice your elevator speech before you are in the elevator. When writers or presenters are exuberant about their latest project, there can be a tendency to ramble. Rehearse concise and polished ways to convey your ideas to a wide spectrum of contacts—family, friends, networking groups, colleagues, conference participants. You will then be prepared for serendipitous encounters such as riding the elevator with a literary agent or the chairperson for an upcoming national conference.



Continued on page 5

President's Message



President
Melody Groves

I know, I know. I agree with you. *It's the New Year already?* I know they say that time flies when you're having fun, but by golly goodness gracious—are we having THAT much fun?

Welcome to 2011—New Mexico is officially 99 years old this month. I've been thinking about those 99 years and marveling at the changes during those decades. Planes, rockets, the Internet, penicillin, Facebook, man on the moon, iPods...the list goes on. And I've been thinking about SouthWest Writers in the past 30+ years—we've gone from five writers forming a group while using manual typewriters, to a group of over fifty using electric typewriters with tapes of whiteout, and now over 500 writers using computers—do you even remember there used to be no “delete” key?

While SouthWest Writers looks back, we're also looking forward and planning great events for this year. SouthWest Writers' contests will now be bimonthly instead of quarterly. We'll also continue our mini-workshop Tuesday meeting agenda—on January 18 we'll have some of our members read their works, in addition to a speaker.

A HUGE thank you to everyone who worked on the Mega Book Sale and Signing Fair December 4. Initially, we thought we'd have maybe five authors, but as word spread, we ended up with thirty-seven! Not only did we have authors selling their books, but we had musicians and food. It was crazy, but a truly fun time was had and I'm hoping we can do it again.

Check out our newest change on the Website—the awards page. It's plain by taking a quick glance that we're a talented group of writers! Congratulations to everyone on that list.

As the new year begins, I'd like to personally wish each and every one of you a wonderful new year. If your resolution, wish or idea is to write, whether it's the Great American Novel or your memoirs about the time Aunt Betsy poured brown gravy on the white cat, SouthWest Writers is the place to be. Join us. You'll be glad you did.

Happy 2011.

Melody

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Helen Atkinson
Leon Sterling
Elke Zinner
Jacqueline Robison
Bobbi A. Adams



SouthWest Sage Advertising Rates Worldwide Internet Circulation

The SWW website receives thousands of page requests every month.

Business card size: \$20 1/4 page, vertical: \$40 1/3 page, horizontal: \$50
15% discount for 3 mos. 20% discount for 6 mos.

Deadline: 1st of each month for the following month.
Payment due with camera-ready ad copy in .jpg format.

Annual Membership in SouthWest Writers

Individual: \$60 (\$100 for 2 years), Two people \$50 each,
Student 18 and over: \$40, Under 18: \$25

Requires proof of student status

Outside U. S.: \$65, Lifetime Membership: \$750

Download the Sage from www.southwestwriters.com

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

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SouthWest Sage

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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

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 Humorous Winter Event

by John Kennedy

I spent most of my life in country with harsh winter weather. It was not unusual for me to be stuck in snow or mud for an extended time, so I drove a large, 4-wheel drive SUV with accessories such as a winch, tow hooks, and a two-way radio. I also hauled a food box, a bedroll, four jacks, two shovels, an axe and 50' tow chain.

A friend and I took a ski trip to Purgatory Ski Resort near Durango, Colorado. After a day of skiing during a heavy snowstorm, we decided to drive twenty-five miles to Durango for dinner. The storm had not diminished.

The road was icy and snow-packed. An oncoming car slid onto my lane of traffic. I took evasive action that resulted in burying the front end of my vehicle at a 45-degree angle in a deep snow bank.

Using my radio, I called the highway patrol, which in turn summoned a nearby tow truck. When the truck arrived, we assessed the situation and then hooked a cable to my vehicle. The steep angle, deep snow, and weight of my vehicle compromised the tow truck. My friend and I each took a shovel and began to dig in waist-deep snow while the tow operator smoked a cigarette and watched us.

After thirty minutes of intense, aerobic activity we moved enough snow for an extraction. I then asked the driver if he would adjust his fee, since we did all of the digging. He wouldn't compromise. He reminded me that had he not responded, we could have stayed in the snow all night.

Our hundred-dollar transaction was completed in the presence of a highway patrolman.

The tow truck and highway patrol car started back toward Durango and we loaded equipment and discussed our plan to continue our trip. Despite a hard day of skiing and a hard night of shoveling, we decided to proceed with our plan.

In fifteen minutes we came upon a traffic jam. The situation was caused by the tow truck, which had spun on ice and stalled perpendicular to the highway. The truck was immobile as the back wheels spun on ice. Both lanes of traffic were blocked.

I approached the highway patrolman. I told him that I could winch the tow truck back into traffic. He took me to the truck driver who was relieved at my suggestion.

Before committing to the job, I raised the question of my fee. It was one hundred dollars. The driver screamed like a mashed cat and the patrolman laughed. I responded that the truck could spend the night where it was or wait several hours for another tow truck. Meanwhile, I could return to the ski lodge for a nice dinner. He agreed to my fee.

I winched the tow truck around in a few minutes and the driver paid me.

As I retracted my winch cable, the highway patrolman gave me a high-five. "Nicely done" he said, sporting a big smile.

John Kennedy won first place in the SWW 2010 First Quarter contest with this essay. He is a NM native having spent most of his life in the trading business in Gallup. His first book is A Good Trade: Three Generations of Trading in and around the Indian Capital, Gallup NM, and he is currently wrapping up a manuscript for his second book.

Writing In No Time

by Chris Eboch

So many things demand our time—job, spouse, children, volunteer work, housework. It's tempting to say, I'll write during vacation, or when the kids are back in school, or when the kids leave home, or when I retire

Yet if you want to be a writer, you must find time to write.

Becoming a writer requires commitment. If you don't take your work seriously, your family and friends certainly won't either. The new year is traditionally a time for resolutions, so make one for your writing self. Let people know how important writing is to you. Insist that writing time is your time, and you must not be disturbed. Carve out a few hours each week. Then close the door and ignore your phone and e-mail, or take your laptop to the library.

Finding even a few hours may seem hopeless when you have young children. Louise Spiegler, author of middle grade novel *The Amethyst Road*, says, "It is impossible for me to write with my kids awake and active. I either tried to get both kids to nap at the same time or I spent my non-existent savings on two hours of babysitting."

Try trading babysitting with other writing parents. Or start a play group/writers group: the kids play, the parents write or critique.

Molly Blaisdell, author of the picture book *Rembrandt and the Boy Who Drew Dogs: A story about Rembrandt van Rijn*, and mother of four, found another creative way to keep her kids busy. "I kept all the special toys in my office. When I wanted to work on a scene, I'd pull down that box and say, "This is quiet time for special toys." It would always be good for about half an hour and sometime would go for two hours."

No Use for a Muse

When your writing time is limited, you can't afford to waste a moment. After having a baby, Michele Corriel, author of *Weird Rocks* says, "I still managed to get up before my daughter and cram in even half an hour. The problem with a shorter amount of time is you really have to switch it on."

Successful writers agree: no waiting for the right mood. Spiegler says, "As soon as the kids were asleep or safely dropped off, I would sit down and start working—no waiting for inspiration."

The most productive writers work anywhere and everywhere. Jean Daigenau says, "I take advantage of the few minutes of downtime I have at school or home—while I'm

eating lunch or supervising the homework group at our after-school latchkey program or soaking in the bathtub."

If you can't do serious writing in five-minute bursts, use the time in other ways. Daigenau suggests, "Get it written on the computer and then use those few minutes here and there to revise."

Christine Liu Perkins, author of *The Tombs of Mawangdui* comments, "When I'm constantly being interrupted, chauffeuring, or sitting in waiting rooms, I brainstorm and pre-write. Wherever I am, I focus on a specific problem for that short session. What points do I want to include in this article? What happens next in the story?"

Compromise

The best organized life can sometimes just get too full. Spiegler, who also teaches college now, cautions against buying into the super-woman myth. "It is almost impossible for me to work at a demanding job and take care of kids and write regularly. The only way I can write is to be teaching something familiar that I can spend less prep time on."

You can't do it all, so decide what's most important. Then look for areas to cut back. Reduce your work hours, or cut commute time with a job closer to home. Commute by bus and write as you ride. Arrange car pools or play dates for your kids. Dictate into a tape recorder as you walk for exercise. Let the housework slide, and make quick meals. Cut back on email, web surfing or TV. Try keeping a journal of your activities for a week to find out just how much time you waste.

Put your family to work as well. Train your kids (or spouse) to do housework and some of the cooking—they'll learn important skills while you get free time!

When a real crisis intrudes—sick kids, ailing parents, a job change or divorce—you may need to take time off from writing. Just don't let it drag on forever. Plan how you'll handle the crisis, and schedule a time to return to writing. In the meantime, read writing magazines or books for a few minutes each week to keep your focus.

How about your time? Where does writing fit in your life?

Decide, and make a commitment to your work. Then repeat this mantra: I am a writer, and writers write.

Chris Eboch is the author of 12 books for young people and dozens of articles on writing. Her new monthly column for the Sage will cover the craft and business of writing. Visit her blog, *Write Like a Pro! A Free Online Writing Workshop*, at <http://chriseboch.blogspot.com/>.



Develop proactive and professional responses to FAQs.

After our presentation in Kansas City, several participants asked me and my colleague, "Do you have a book? We want to buy it." We were delighted to hear that, but our reply was not polished. Our stuttered response, "Oh. No. We don't," was a missed opportunity. We discussed a better way to handle the situation the next time. We formulated a new plan: an enthusiastic, "We are working on our book. Thank you for your interest." followed by providing our business cards and obtaining their contact information for our marketing list. Anticipate questions such as, "What are you working on now? What is your next project? Can you send a full manuscript?" Deliver a powerful pitch worth remembering.

Lessons learned from SWW meetings, seminars, workshops, conferences, contests, marketing strategies, networking—and encouragement from other writers—are portable. Pack your SouthWest Writers know-how when and wherever you go!

Laurel Burnett is a NM Licensed Mental Health Counselor. Her proposals were accepted for the International Death, Grief and Bereavement conferences Association for Death Education and Counseling conference and the upcoming American Counseling Association conference. Visit her at w.laurelburnettcounseling.com.



SWW Awards Page

SouthWest Writers has many talented members. We'd like to let the world know that. Our new Awards page on our website, www.southwestwriters.com lists member awards for 2009 and 2010.

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 ruthsww@comcast.net. Include your name, the honor/award received, and the date you received it.

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 Bi-monthly Contest, 3721 Morris NE, Albuquerque, NM 87111.

SWW 2011 Annual Writing Contest

by Cynthia Boyd, Contest Chair

Welcome fellow writers, a new year is upon us. The 2011 SouthWest Writers annual writing contest is up and running. We bring you 14 different genres of writing categories to compete in. Poetry now includes a Haiku category. You can enter in one or more categories with an unpublished manuscript or poem. There is a fee for each one and a late fee will apply when you miss the May 1, 2011 date.

Critiques are available by a professional writer, agent or editor, and can be requested by enclosing the appropriate fee with the entry form and an additional manuscript upon submission.

The winner of the top 20 is given the Storyteller Award and \$1000 with a real opportunity to put his/her manuscript in front of a publisher. The first place winners each receive a cash award of \$150. The second place winners receive \$100. The third place winners receive \$50.

This past year we had over 600 contest entries and participants from as far away as Kitimat, British Columbia, Canada. Yes, we are known and going international. So pull that manuscript out of that desk drawer, polish up the first 20 pages and have it postmarked by the first of May, 2011. You can do this. Now if writing is not your area of expertise, come volunteer and help, be a part of the SouthWest Writers Contest and see it from a new perspective. We always need volunteers to work with handling paper and that lovely banquet at the end of the contest. So, we have a place for everybody. Come find your niche, and be a part of the 2011 SouthWest Writers Contest.



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 ruthsww@comcast.net with any questions.

Meetings

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

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.



Saturday, February 5, 2011
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 Coger Award for Distinguished Performance for her solo performances and adaptations of fiction for the stage. Lisa's first novel *Dissonance*



Lynn C. Miller

Continued on page 7

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.**

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

Classes

Class Schedules Available Soon

The 2011 program calendar will afford SWW members the ability to choose in advance from an array of learning tracks that meet their writing needs and to schedule their time and resources accordingly. Courses in Writing Mechanics, Fiction, Young Readers, Non-Fiction, Memoir, and Visual Storytelling will be offered. At *Sage* publication time, the schedule was not yet available. Look on-line at www.southwestwriters.com for the new class schedule. Announcements will also be made at the regular SWW meetings. The *Sage* will contain class offerings and schedules as they are available.



Call For Submissions to Devotional Book

Dr. Gary Chapman, best-selling author of *The Five Love Languages*, and Jeanette Littleton, editor of *Cup of Comfort* series of inspirational stories and *Guideposts'* Extraordinary Answers to Prayer, are seeking submissions for a new book. The collection of pieces sharing how God's love has transformed lives will be published in a volume titled *The Love is a Verb Devotional: Stories of God's Love in Our Lives*, which Bethany House will publish in autumn, 2011. It will contain 365 daily one-page stories, each with a title and one Scripture verse and a one-sentence concluding thought. The main body of the story must be between 150 and 175 words. The Scripture verse can be between 10 and 30 words. The title would ideally be four words but may be up to six. The concluding thought would ideally be 10 words but no more than twenty.

The devotionals should demonstrate how God's love for you, and in you, has empowered you to love authentically and transformed you and your relationships.

If your piece is selected, you will receive a one-time fee of \$10 upon publication per piece, author copies, and author discounts of 50 percent. We do not accept reprints, but after the book is published, authors may resell their devotions to other markets. You may submit as many devotions as you like.

Deadline for submissions is February 1, 2011, with announcement of selected authors around April 15. Please include all contact information (name, address, e-mail address, phone, brief bio) on your manuscript (not just in the e-mail), and attach your submission as a Word file. Please send all submissions and address all queries to Jeanette Gardner Littleton, at livseries@earthlink.net.

Successes and Announcements

SWW member **Judith Avila** and Code Talker Chester Nez sold Chester's memoir, *Code Talker: Memoir of Navajo Marine Chester Nez*, to Berkley Press. Their agent is Scott Miller of Trident Media Group, LLC. Their advance would be termed a "good deal" by *Publisher's Marketplace*. The memoir is slated for publication in 2011.

Karen McKinnon has an essay titled "On Teachers and Their Students" in *Solo Cafe* magazine. In it she discusses a creative writing teacher who gave her an identity as a writer when she was an undergraduate, and looks back at her long friendship with the late poet Robert Creeley, a classmate of hers at UNM.

MacMillan/McGraw-Hill purchased both English language and Spanish anthology rights for **Shirley Raye Redmond's** nonfiction early reader, *Lewis & Clark: A Prairie Dog for the President* (Random House). This is the fourth time subsidiary rights for the title have been sold.

Rob Spiegel received an assignment to do an article for the 2012 *Writer's Market* on how to find writing work on the internet.

Jeanne Shannon will have three poems and a memoir essay in an anthology focusing on "memory" to be published in 2011 by Monadnock Writers Group in New Hampshire. Her essay, "Learning by the Fireplace," recalls her experience of being home-schooled as a child. Selections for the anthology (title not yet decided) were chosen from over 900 submissions and were evaluated anonymously.

Susan Wyatt's recently published memoir *Arabian Nights and Daze: Living in Yemen with the Foreign Service* has been selected for the Memoirs and Occasional Papers Series of the Association of Diplomatic Studies and Training in Arlington, VA. The book recounts Wyatt's adventures in this remote southwest corner of Arabia in the early 1970s with her late husband David McClintock, a US Foreign Service officer and Arabic specialist. It also offers two postscript chapters that discuss the major challenges facing Yemen today as it attempts to deal with international terrorism inside its borders and the media hype that surrounds it. For more information, visit Susan's website at www.susancwyatt.com.

Joanne Bodin's novel *Walking Fish* has been nominated for the 17th Annual EVVY Awards. Outskirts Press, which published the book, nominated it to participate in this Colorado Independent Publishers Association book awards event. The EVVY Awards recognizes the highest quality of alternatively and self-published books.

Donald DeNoon's poem "Ragged Man" was selected for publication in the December 2010 issue of *The Rag*.

Winners of the 2010 New Mexico Book Award include the following SouthWest Writers members :

Young Readers Book (to grade 3): **McKerley, Jennifer**
Guess Amazing Armadillos, Random House

Novel – historical fiction: **Norton, Hana Samek** *The Sixth Surrender*, Plume-Penguin

Science Fiction & Fantasy: **Hickman, Kirt** *Venus Rain*, Quillrunner Publishing

Poetry Book (individual or collection): **Stablein, Marilyn**
Splitting Hard Ground, La Alameda Press

Self-help Book: **Hickman, Kirt** *Revising Fiction: Making Sense of the Madness*, Quillrunner Publishing

The **Crested Butte Writers** has announced the lineup of final judges for the 2011 Sandy Writing Contest. Find the list at www.thesandy.org. The deadline is February 13, 2011. The website contains the final judges' bios and each category's score-sheet as well as a whole wealth of other information, such as formatting help and writing synopses advice.

A new **online nonfiction literary** magazine, *Junk*, is seeking contributors. The magazine focuses on addiction, but you don't have to be an addict to submit. They are looking for new and different stories, photographs or artistic expressions that lend some insight into what it means to be filled with need, to have some insatiable craving or infatuation. Visit <http://junklit.com/submit/> for details.

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>.

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 award is open to women writers who live in or have a strong connection to New Mexico. Entries must be postmarked no later than Friday, January 14, 2011. Visit <http://newmexicopresswomen.org> for details.

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You know how to write.

I can make your manuscript error-free.
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JIM WAGNER

Now living in Albuquerque

Let's talk: (850) 803-9298 or jaw1340@comcast.net

New SWW Board Members for 2011

We welcome the incoming 2011 SouthWest Writers Board of Directors. Returning board members include Joanne Bodin, Workshop Coordinator; Rita Herther, Membership Chair; Ruth Friesen, *Sage* Editor; and officers Melody Groves, President; Rob Spiegel, Vice-President; Larry Greenly, Secretary; and M. Kathryn Peralta, Treasurer. New board members are listed below, with their bios.

Sandy Bazinet, SWW Volunteer Coordinator, is a website and graphic designer who fell madly in love with writing a little over two years ago. Since then, she's completed the first six books in a series called *The Vampire Reclamation Project*. She's also completed the first book in a second young adult series called *In the Care of Wolves*, and the first book in a third series called *When the Gods Come Back*. She recently penned a whimsical book of poems titled *When Stars Fall Down*. She hopes to have at least two of her books in print by the spring of 2011.

Don Dyer, SWW Special Events Coordinator, grew up in Colorado and found an escape from a childhood of turmoil in creating creatures and worlds and eventually forming stories. Now those stories will take the reader through four of his books. He is currently working on his first and second thrillers. MEL is a serial killer, and that's all he will reveal right now. He currently publishes eBooks, creates book covers, and paints (in watercolor) for a living. He just finished Kirt Hickman's cover for *Host of Evil*.

Dr. Kathy Kitts, SWW Class Coordinator, is a recently retired geology professor who served as a science team member on the NASA Genesis Discovery Mission. Before that, she directed a planetarium for nine years. Having been born and raised in the Southwest, she always planned on moving to Albuquerque and joined SWW before leaving Northern Illinois University. She has dozens of non-fiction publications encompassing everything from professional papers to general interest articles to textbooks. However, she no longer wishes to talk about "what is" but rather "what if." To that end, she has moved to writing both short literary fiction and novel-length science fiction.

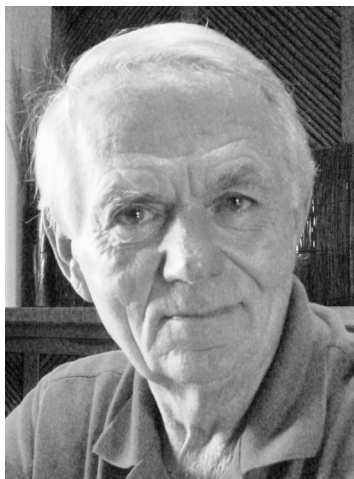
Terry Civello, SWW Publicity Chair, spends time between New Mexico and New York City, where she was the senior executive at NYC Medicaid in charge of Public Affairs, Community Outreach and Information Services. After leaving city government, she established a successful management consulting firm serving healthcare providers throughout the New York area. A much sought-after conference speaker, Terry is noted for using humor to teach the fine-print technicalities of public health insurance. Upon arriving in the Duke City, Terry checked out the writing class run by Rob Spiegel and Larry Greenly at Bear Canyon Senior Center and credits them for hooking her on writing creative non-fiction. One of her stories was just published in the 2010 OASIS National Anthology.

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Researching Military Fiction

by Jay Brooks

No writer likes to make mistakes, and no reader likes to read them. Recently I read a novel set in Europe during World War II. The first several chapters moved well-drawn characters into well-plotted conflict. In Chapter 6, the protagonist met General of the Army George Patton carrying a pearl-handled revolver. Unfortunately, Patton was never a General of the Army and carried only ivory-handled pistols. I still haven't finished that novel. The mistakes could have easily been avoided.



When writing military fiction, use secondary sources to get a birds-eye view of any chosen period. Dupuy and Dupuy's *The Encyclopedia of Military History* (2nd revised edition) is an excellent source. For particular campaigns and battles, Eggenbergers' *An Encyclopedia of Battles* goes into more detail. Similarly, *The Harper Encyclopedia of Military Biography* provides

salient details about historical military figures. Individual biographies and autobiographies allow for an even closer-grained look at an individual.

Memoirs have the additional advantage of catching the voice of the individual to include slang and figures of speech. Any facts drawn from memoirs should be checked against other primary or secondary sources.

Other secondary sources can lend authenticity and prevent embarrassing errors. Vogel's *Soldiers of the Old Army* details the social and military structure of the U. S. Army between 1922 and 1941.

The Internet can provide a mountain of data. However, unless the site provides the data source, be sure to check internet data against other secondary and primary sources.

If you are not sure where to start, check with the reference librarian at any university or large public library.

Finally, run your manuscript past a historian or some other subject matter expert (military pilot or military nurse). An experienced review can keep your story accurate and realistic.

Jay Brooks graduated from West Point and pursued an Air Force career as a navigator and clinical psychologist. He later received an MA in history from UNM.

Do I Need an Editor for My Manuscript?

by Patricia Fry

This question is on the minds of every hopeful author at some point in the process of writing a book. Some of you verbalize it. Others just wonder. I am often the recipient of this question, and my answer is always the same: "Most authors need the trained eye of a good editor."

You might be surprised to find out how many mistakes still loom large in your manuscript even after you've done a thorough self-edit. How can that be? Think about it, how many times have your eyes tricked you into overlooking blatant errors in your manuscript? You know what I'm talking about—you sometimes see what you expect to see even when it's incorrect.

You know your story or the material you are presenting so well that it has become a part of you. The bad thing about this is that sometimes you are so caught up in the story or the information that you begin to take it for granted. You know what the intent is, but your many rewrites and revisions sometimes taint your attempt at clarity and the message becomes clouded.

You've heard the term, "You're too close to your story." This can happen and, unfortunately, it's often to the detriment of your project. A set of well-trained, fresh eyes can make all of the difference to the integrity and purity of your work.

Authors fear that an editor will change his/her voice or edit out the best parts of the manuscript. On the contrary, a good editor will give your "voice" a firmer definition than you may have accomplished on your own. And those "best parts" of your manuscript—well, whether or not you go along with the editor when she hits delete, you'll probably eventually see the wisdom in her suggestion.

Turn your manuscript over to someone who is not emotionally attached to the content and it will, in most instances, become a better book.

I've edited probably close to 100 book manuscripts in recent years and here are the most common problems I see:

Muddy writing. The author might be telling a good story, but his complicated way of presenting it gets in the way of it being a good read.

Incomplete sentences.

Inconsistencies with tense and person.

Unnecessary words and phrases.

Chronic punctuation errors. This often includes the misuse of the apostrophe.

Repeated words where the writing would be more interesting if the author varied his vocabulary.

Passive sentences.

Don't take chances with your manuscript. The competition is way too fierce. Before you even decide to write a book, start saving your money for an editor. And when you are finally finished, turn it over to an editor or two who will evaluate it and give you some preliminary feedback. And then hire the editor of your choice for your final edit. Your potential publisher will be glad you did and so will your readers.

Patricia Fry is an editor and the author of 31 books, including The Right Way to Write, Publish and Sell Your Book. She is the executive director of SPAWN (Small Publishers, Artists and Writers Network) www.spawn.org. She teaches online, on-demand courses, including a Self-Editing Course. www.matilijapress.com/course_self-editing.htm.

Board members, continued from page 9

Cynthia N. Boyd, SWW Annual Contest Chair, is a trained doctor in Oriental Medicine and practices acupressure and meditation. She also attained the rank of Major in the US Army, with five and a half years active duty. She is currently working on a trilogy in the "metaphysical meets thriller" genre.

Ann Marquez, SWW Conference Chair, is a native New Mexican and has been a member of SWW since 2002. She is a freelance writer, author of *Journey Into Probate and Back*, and founder of Desert Muse Publishing, which is publishing an anthology. Her blog is DesertMusePublishing.wordpress.com. Currently she is writing a nonfiction book with the working title, *In-Timid-Nation: one woman's struggle to find freedom of speech in America*. She has an associates degree in accounting.

Susan Alexis has been named SWW Historian. Her bio will be available in the next *Sage*.

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A Grammatical Tip: Correcting Run-on Sentences

by Dodici Azpadu

Complex and compound sentences add depth and nuance to writing, but they must be constructed and connected correctly; otherwise, the errors make us look like amateurs.

This is a run-on sentence it contains two independent clauses incorrectly connected.

An independent clause is a group of words that can stand alone as a sentence; however, two independent clauses cannot be in the same sentence without a proper connection. If we omit a connection, the error is a fused sentence (as above). If we place a comma between the independent clauses, the error is a comma splice (below).

This is a run-on sentence, it contains two independent clauses incorrectly connected.

Comma splices are relatively easy to repair. After the comma, simply add one of the seven coordinating conjunctions. The mnemonic FANBOYS contains the coordinating conjunctions: FOR, AND, NOR, BUT, OR, YET and SO.

A semi-colon between independent clauses will also repair a run-on sentence.

This is no longer a run-on sentence; it contains two independent clauses correctly connected.

If the second independent clause explains the first (or summarizes it), we could replace the semi-colon with a colon or a dash. Use the dash only in informal writing.

This is no longer a run-on sentence: it contains two independent clauses correctly connected.

We can also repair run-on sentences by using a semi-colon, a transitional expression, and a comma, as in the sentence below. Transitional expressions include conjunctive adverbs such as *therefore*, *consequently*, *however*, and other transitional phrases like *as a matter of fact*, *for example*, and *on the other hand*.

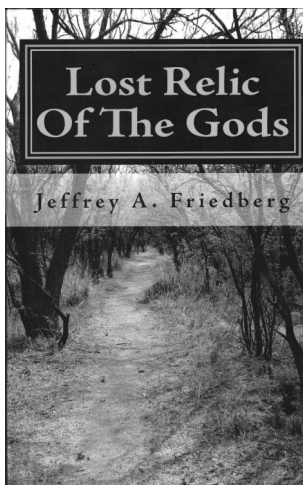
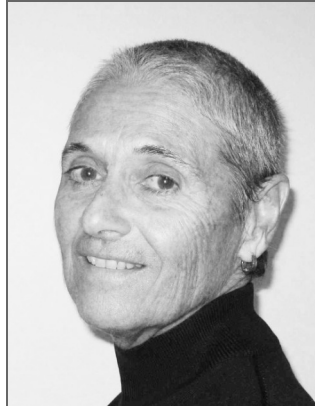
This is no longer a run-on sentence; as a matter of fact, it contains two independent clauses correctly connected.

We can also restructure run-on sentences by making one of the independent clauses, dependent. Then, we need only a comma to separate the clauses. If the independent clause begins the sentence, we can usually omit the separating comma.

While some sentences run on, others are short. Some sentences are short while others run on.

These tips are guidelines. For better or worse, published writers frequently ignore grammar conventions.

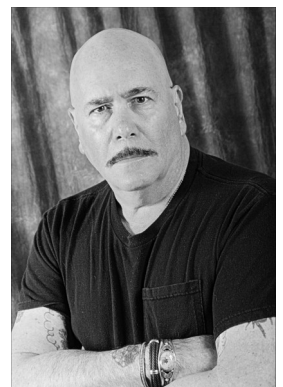
Dodici Azpadu, MFA, PhD is the author of three published novels, numerous short stories, and many poems. Her third novel, *Living Room*, was a finalist for the 2010 NM Book Awards in Fiction. Visit her website at www.dodici-azpadu.com.



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