

SouthWest Sage

January 2013 www.southwestwriters.com

I Have a Dream Today

by Rebecca L. Boschee

Why would a 23-year-old white girl from the Midwest clip a newspaper printing of the speech Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered at the Lincoln Memorial in 1963 and tuck it away among her treasured mementos where it remains 19 years later?

Because she believed in the power of a lofty dream to drive change? Because she had faith in the unalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness? Because Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. was a compelling writer and speaker who knew how to captivate a diverse audience?

Yes, all of that and more. But, today I want to focus on three reasons I think the Reverend's writing moved me the way it did back when I first clipped that article and why it still does today.

He created a universal problem and emotional connection. While the Reverend's speech was in no small part directed at those whose rights were being abused, he was brilliant to make it deeply personal for all Americans by invoking a patriotic problem. He speaks of when the "architects of our Republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which *every American* was to fall heir." If this problem, this refusal of rights, can happen to one population of Americans, what keeps it from happening to anyone?

Reverend King Jr. makes us care because most Americans are cognizant of the greatness of the promise of our Constitutional rights. With an increasing global awareness, we're even less likely to take them for granted. "It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream."

The writing lesson here: whether writing fiction or non-fiction, give your audience a personal reason to care by creating a problem they can relate to, an emotional connection either to the characters or the cause. Especially in fiction, even though your problem or plot may (and probably should) be extraordinary, your readers should be able to find the common humanity there.



He used powerful language, metaphors and active verbs to show, not tell. Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech did not simply "tell it like it is," he *showed* it through the use of active verbs and metaphors. While metaphors can be frowned upon in genre fiction today, few could argue they created an unforgettable visual of the plight of 1963: "seared in the flames of injustice," "crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination," "sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent," "whirlwind of revolt," "battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality...."

And, he also showed it in the vision of his dream: "on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood," "Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed to an oasis of freedom and justice," "every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight...." These are convincing visuals.

The writer's lesson here: more than simply showing vs telling, try to break from the same worn and weathered words to paint vivid pictures. Scrap those clichés and push yourself to make your language—descriptions and actions—tell their own stories. This doesn't mean your writing should be thick with purple prose, just that each word should be thoughtful and deliberate. For fiction writers, this also applies to dialog: if your reader can easily predict what your character will say next, it may not even be worth saying.

He leveraged the "Power of Three" and then some. A trick of great speakers—presidents and members of the clergy know this—is the rule of three. What most people remember

(Continued on page 12)

CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP DUES & VISITOR FEES

See page 4 for details.

Though not an Arizona native, **Rebecca Boschee** has lived in the Valley long enough for her blood to have thinned, and she loves the Southwest. She is the author of two contemporary romances, *Mulligan Girl* and *Last Resort*, and one paranormal romance, *Zombies for Breakfast* (2012). She also writes young adult fiction under the name Becca Leone. Visit her website at www.beccaleone.com. ("I Have a Dream Today" was first posted January 16, 2012 on the WordServe Water Cooler site. www.wordservewatercooler.com.)

President's Letter by Kathy Kitts



As many of you know, David Steinberg is retiring from the *Albuquerque Journal*. In its infinitesimal wisdom (pun intended), the *Journal* has decided to drop the Sunday Book Page, which covered local writers and writing events. They plan on substituting pages from the *New York Times*.

I don't know about you, but if I wanted to read the *New York Times*, I would subscribe to that. The reason I bother with the *Albuquerque Journal* is because I am looking for local events. I get my national news from other sources. Since writers tend to be readers, this might not be the best strategy.

What does this mean to us as SWW members? The *Albuquerque Journal* will drop most, if not all, local book reviews and listings of writer events from book signings to SouthWest Writers events. This has the potential of harming the entire book community. Several other book and writing organizations are asking their members to make their feelings known to the staff at the *Journal*. I am doing the same. If you read the *Journal* and if you want the Sunday Book Page to continue, please write a letter or email the *Albuquerque Journal*.

The contact information webpage for email addresses is <http://www.abqjournal.com/main/contact>. Specific people to whom you might want to address email and letters: Kent Walz, Editor; Dan Herrera, Editorial Page Editor; Rene Kimball, Arts Editor; T.H. Lang, Publisher.

For actual letters, the snail mail address is:

Letters to the Editor
Albuquerque Journal
PO Drawer J
Albuquerque, NM 87103

It is doubtful that the *Albuquerque Journal* will change its mind. However, I found SouthWest Writers through the *Albuquerque Journal* and would hate to think how impoverished my writing life would be without SWW.

Happy Writing!

Kathy

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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: \$70 (\$65 renewal if paid two months in advance)

Student: 18 and over, \$40; under 18, \$25

Requires proof of student status

Outside U.S.: \$75, Lifetime Membership: \$750

Download the Sage from www.southwestwriters.com

Join us first Saturday, 10 am-Noon and third Tuesday, 7-9 pm
New Life Presbyterian Church, 5540 Eubank NE,
Albuquerque, New Mexico



SouthWest Sage

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Members Seeking Critique Groups

Fantasy/Sci-Fi

Linton Bowers, lbowers27@gmail.com
prefers: online/email group

Mainstream Fiction Only

Stephen Gregg, sgregg5@cableone.net
Albuq./Bernalillo/Rio Rancho
Flexible: day/time

Mainstream Fiction/Other

— and Genre
Mike Zimmerman, mikeyzman@gmail.com
Albuq./Rio Rancho
Mon-Thu evenings

— and Memoir

Kate Leistikow, Call 867-9586
kathleenleistikow@gmail.com
Albuq./Corrales/Placitas/Rio Rancho
No evenings, flexible time

Memoir

Terry Wright, Terry_w38@yahoo.com
anywhere near Montgomery Blvd
11:00 am, Mon-Fri

Mystery/Suspense

Pete David, cp_david@msn.com
Albuq. NE Heights
flexible: day/frequency

Young Adult Fiction

Damita Butler
deneemarieb@yahoo.com
any day, after 4:00 pm

Critique Groups Seeking Members

Mainstream Fiction

Online Critique Group
Christie Keele, ckeele10@hotmail.com

Nonfiction

Contact John Egbert or Wally Gordon
egbertenator@gmail.com
wallygordon@q.com

Sci-Fi

Send name/writing experience to:
Cosmic_Connections_SF_Critique_
Group@yahoo.com
Visit [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/
Cosmic_Connection_SF_Critique_Group/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Cosmic_Connection_SF_Critique_Group/)

Screenwriting

Duke City Screenwriters
Every other Thursday, 6-8 pm
UPublic Station on 3rd St
Contact Marc Calderwood
SkatingKokopelli@hotmail.com

New Critique Group Forming Novel length, Genre fiction

Meeting the second Tuesday of each
month, 7:00 pm, starting February 13,
2013. They will review a ready-to-
query novel in four months or less.
Manuscripts distributed via email by
the end of the month before the meet-
ing. Limited to six writers. If many
people are interested in joining, the
group will preferentially take mystery
writers. Lee@seki.com.

Welcome New SouthWest Writers Members

Peggy Alley

Amber Arquitola

Charlotte Banchi

Ralph Estes

Wrona Gall

Jonathan Lesser

Kendra Loring

Rene Mullen

*Kaatje van de
Gaarden*



Find SouthWest
Writers on Facebook



Follow us on Twitter
@SW_Writers

CHANGE IN 2013 MEMBERSHIP DUES AND VISITOR FEES

The cost of membership has remained steady for twelve years, but due to the rising costs of keeping our non-profit organization going, the SouthWest Writers board of directors has voted to raise the membership dues. This was not an easy decision to make and took months of deliberation and working and re-working the budget. The new annual membership dues will be \$70 effective January 1, 2013.

Also, beginning with the first SWW meeting in February 2013, the visitor fee will be changed to \$10 per meeting. The student (with ID) visitor fee will remain at \$5.

With these necessary changes, we'll be able to continue to help published and unpublished writers improve their craft and further their careers.

—THE SWW BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Albuquerque Area Writing Groups

The **Albuquerque Croak & Dagger** chapter of Sisters in Crime welcomes mystery fans who enjoy felonious fun, absolutely criminal companionship and sensational speakers. Fourth Tuesdays of the month, 7:00 pm, police briefing room, James Joseph Dwyer Memorial Substation (one block east of Tramway on Montgomery).

www.croak-and-dagger.com/

Bear Canyon writing group: Don Morgan and Dennis Kastendiek moderate, all genres welcome. Mondays 2:30-3:45 pm. They'll meet at Page One on Juan Tabo and Montgomery until the Bear Canyon Senior Center is available again.

Duke City Screenwriters meets at UPublic Station on 3rd St, every other Thursday (email for next date) from 6:00-8:00 pm for valuable critique, education and lots of fun. Contact Marc Calderwood at skatingkokopeli@hotmail.com for more information.

SCBWI: Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators has monthly schmoozes in Albuquerque on the second Tuesday of each month, from 7:00-8:30 pm at Alamosa Books, 8810 Holly Ave NE, Albuquerque, NM 87122, phone (505) 797-7101. Schmoozes feature short workshops/discussions, followed by social time. Pre-schmooze dinner at the Dion's on Wyoming and Paseo from 5:30-6:45 pm. Contact schmooze@scbwi-nm.org for more information.

Writers2Writers meeting, the second Monday of every month, 6:30 pm at the west side Hastings at Coors and Montañño. Monthly speakers. All genres welcome.

Congratulations to the Winners of the Fifth 2012 SWW Bimonthly Writing Competition

~ Your Most Memorable Character ~

1st Place

Barbara Ragsdale • Germantown, TN
"Simple, Huh?"

2nd Place

Eileen Wiard • Ranchos de Taos, NM
"Alice Hughes: The Secret Guardian"

3rd Place

Wally Gordon • Tijeras, NM
"Freedom"

Honorable Mention

Patricia Lamborowski Williams, Albuquerque, NM
"My Hero, My Nemesis"

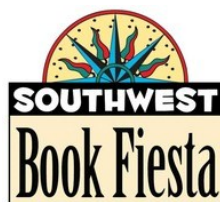
David Kyea, Clayton, NM
"Grandfather"

Heidi Wells, Albuquerque, NM
"Daughter of Elements"

Susan J. Alexis, Albuquerque, NM
"Survivor"

Melissa Zamites, Rio Rancho, NM
"Illegal Friend"

*Read the Second Place winning entry
on page 14 of this newsletter.*



May 10-12, 2013
Albuquerque Convention Center
Albuquerque, New Mexico
Southeast Hall

More tables are available at the Southwest Book Fiesta. They have also added a new 1/2 booth option for those who want a little more room than the tables but don't want to spend the money on a whole booth.

These will go quickly, so don't delay if you are interested in a table at the biggest book show in New Mexico.

Reserve any of these spaces online at <https://boothboss.com/floorplan/index.php?showID=317>.

AN INTERVIEW WITH MERCEDES M. YARDLEY by Bentley McGrath

Mercedes M. Yardley writes whimsical horror and wears poisonous flowers in her hair. She has over 100 publishing credits to her name and works for Shock Totem Magazine. Mercedes' first collection of short stories, *Beautiful Sorrows*, was released in October of 2012. Visit her at her website at www.mercedesyardley.com, on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/mercedesmy>, and Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/mercedes.murdockyardley>.

I met Mercedes M. Yardley a few years ago at a National Novel Writing Month event in San Francisco. She is the quintessence of style and substance. And she's a pretty kick-ass writer, too. Check out her collection of short stories, *Beautiful Sorrows*, for proof.

What question have you not been asked about your writing or *Beautiful Sorrows* that you're dying to answer?

Maybe, "Why did you write it?" I wrote it because it had to be written. And now that it has, I'm so very proud of it, my darling, shiny new baby.

You describe your genre as "whimsical horror." That's an intriguing paradox. What does it mean, exactly?

I could wax philosophical about it, telling you that the language is high, the subject matter is dark, and there's an eerie beauty in every story. But basically the short version is "Fairy tales with a high body count." Think of smiling, ethereal dead girls.

Many writers struggle to find their genre niche. How did you discover yours? It was 100 percent fluke. I had conversations with friends that pretty much went like this:

FRIEND: Let's write horror stories!

ME: I can't write horror!

FRIEND: So try writing a fairytale.

ME: Pfft! I can't do fairytales. I do not like them, Sam-I-Am!

Now I specialize in whimsical horror. This is where peer pressure will get you, kids. A comfortable niche and a job.

How does your life influence your work? My work very much springs from my life. Characters are based roughly on the people I associate with (watch out, you guys! You'll all end up in my novel!), and I realize that I write whatever I'm working through at the time. Writing is how I process. What is in my heart ends up bleeding onto the page, eventually.

I know your writers' group is important to you. What do they do for you that you could not accomplish alone? They yell at me. Seriously. I respond very well to their yelling and goading. "Oh, yeah? Says you!" I shriek. I like to out-write them. We're in friendly competition over everything. I edited something super quickly so Mason owes me a song. He won first place in a contest so I owe him a recorded dance. Ryan still owes me a copy of *HEAVY RAIN*.

What do you learn about your own genre or writing by reading other writers' submissions to Shock Totem? I learn what's truly cliché. I realized how important a great beginning is. Get to the story quickly instead of boring me

with 12 pages of setting the ambience. I've learned that mood can be established quickly, and it's usually better to do so. Especially with short stories.

What do you consider to be your platform?

Oh, geez. Um, a woman in horror? Fitting nicely in an unusual niche? Insanity in one high-heeled package? I'm terrible with platforms. Obviously.

Do you think horror writers see the world differently than other genre writers?

I think we all see the world differently than each other. It's easy to say that romance writers see more romance in the world, and sci-fi writers see more wonder. Do we see more horror? I don't think so. Do we process it differently? Perhaps. That might be why horror writers are such amazingly friendly folk. It's true. We're a giggly, huggable riot. And we all look cool in velvet and leather.

Why do you love sharks? They're beautiful, perfectly designed for what they do, live only for their purpose, and can rip your face off with razor teeth. What's not to like?

If I could have dinner with one person, dead or alive, it would be: Somebody alive. The alternative is fairly disgusting.

What are your three desert island books? Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead*, Richard Adams' *Watership Down*, and maybe Theodore Taylor's *The Cay*, because it's a good book and the irony would be delicious.

What is your favorite song lyric? "Hide the telephone in case you realize that sometimes you're just not okay." — "Clumsy" by OUR LADY PEACE.

Invisibility or telepathy? Telepathy. People are already invisible.

Hemingway or Fitzgerald? Orson Scott Card.

Ball point or roller ball? Ball point. Blue fine point. And not a clickable pen, either. I get all clicky and people take my pens away from me.

Print or e-book? Print smells better and you can sign it. E-book takes up less clutter. Augh! I'm a Pisces! I'm naturally indecisive!

Vampires or zombies? Vampires, hands down. A hundred million times over. Huh, guess I was pretty decisive about that.



Bentley McGrath writes a monthly column for the Sage. Visit her website at www.BentleyMcGrath.com.

Meetings

Members are free, Guests \$5

Saturday, January 5
10:00 am to noon

Sneaky Secrets to Get Magazine Writing Gigs in the Digital Age

Lexi Petronis

Lexi Petronis writes regularly for *Glamour*, *Fitness*, *SELF*, and other magazines, but as publications increase their presence in the digital realm, the very process of pitching article ideas and landing assignments is changing before our eyes. Lexi shares some sneaky secrets to getting your foot in the door before everyone else.

Lexi Petronis graduated from the University of New Mexico where she studied writing and music performance. She received a Master of Science Degree at Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism in New York City. After graduating from Columbia, Petronis worked as assistant editor at *Parents* magazine, and associate editor at *CosmoGIRL!*. She has written for *Glamour.com*, *Disney Baby*, *Everyday Health*, *Baby Zone*, *Total Beauty*, and other national publications. Petronis first joined *Albuquerque the Magazine* in 2005 as editor-in-chief and left in 2010 to complete and publish a children's book. She returned to *Albuquerque The Magazine* in the fall of 2012 once again as editor-in-chief.



Saturday, February 2
10:00 am to noon

What I Learned About Writing and the West from Tony Hillerman

Anne Hillerman

Join us for Anne Hillerman's presentation as she discusses what she learned about writing from her father, Tony Hillerman.

During more than twenty years as a journalist, **Anne Hillerman** worked as editorial page editor for the *Albuquerque Journal North* and the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, and as an arts editor for both papers. Since 2001, Anne has been the Northern New Mexico food critic for the *Albuquerque Journal*. She is also a director of Wordharvest Writers Workshops and the Tony Hillerman Writers Conference. Anne has published nine books, and is expecting her debut novel *Spider Woman's Daughter* to be released in the fall of 2013.



Tuesday, January 15
7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Write Prose that Flows—Perfecting Your Narrative Style

Kirt Hickman

Have you ever tried to create prose that flows—prose that doesn't wander, that doesn't drag; prose that engages rather than bores; prose that carries emotion, tension, and a vivid descriptiveness born out of word choice rather than from an excess of verbiage? Effective narrative style results from careful revision. It does *not* come from instinct or inspiration. It is learned. Whether you write fact or fiction, learn to perfect your narrative style as Kirt Hickman shares the secrets to crafting the kind of taut narrative that has won him three New Mexico Book Awards.

Kirt Hickman has written the award-winning science-fiction thrillers *Worlds Asunder* and *Venus Rain*, the fantasy novel, *Fabler's Legend*, and two books for children. His comprehensive and practical self-editing guide, *Revising Fiction: Making Sense of the Madness*, won a New Mexico Book Award and was a double finalist in the Ben Franklin Awards. Kirt has taught classes through SouthWest Writers for many years and has contributed a monthly column titled "Revising Fiction" to the *SouthWest Sage*.



Tuesday, February 19
7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Jumping Genres, Telling the Truth, and Learning How to Wait

Lynne Hinton

Hear from a veteran published author about publishing in more than one genre, the importance of being truthful with your characters and their stories, and some tips on what to do while you're waiting for replies from agents, editors, and contests.

Lynne Hinton has published fifteen books including the award winning *Friendship Cake* and *Pie Town*. She has also written a mystery series and a nonfiction book of essays. She is a regular guest columnist with *The Charlotte Observer* and leads retreats and workshops on Writing as a Spiritual Practice. Lynne is from North Carolina and lives in Albuquerque.



Help Support SouthWest Writers
SWW receives a commission on all books ordered via the Amazon link on SouthWestWriters.com



Try our Google Calendar link and see what's coming up at a glance for each month. Use the link on the SWW website or click here: www.google.com/calendar/embed?src=swwcalendar%40gmail.com&ctz=America/Denver

Classes & Workshops

Classes are held at the SWW Office, 3721 Morris NE, Suite A, Albuquerque 87111, 505-265-9485

THE "GET YOU WRITING" FICTION CLASS By Betsy James

8 Sessions:

Jan 30, Feb 6, 13, 20, 27 and Mar 6,
13, 20

Wednesdays: 6:00 - 8:00 pm

\$320 members, \$380 non-members

Limited to 10 students



It's a new year. You want a nudge, a boost, and a fresh eye for your writing.

Join Betsy James's popular jump-start course. Seven weekly assignments challenge you to consider various aspects of fiction—voice, description, dialogue, point-of-view, "show, don't tell"—and invite you into the conversation of respectful peer critique. Looking for a critique group? By the end of the course you and your classmates will have the skills to facilitate your own. Assignments, a manageable maximum of 1000 words, suit any fiction form: novel/short story, realistic/fantastic, adult/juvenile. Get your writing and the new year off to a lively start!

Betsy James is the award-winning author of sixteen books for young adults and children. Her most recent title, *Listening at the Gate*, was a New York Public Library Best Book for the Teen Age. Visit her at: www.listeningatthegate.com and www.betsyjames.com.

HOW TO WRITE FOR MAGAZINES: OR HOW YOU CAN BAG YOUR FIRST MAGAZINE ASSIGNMENT By Melody Groves

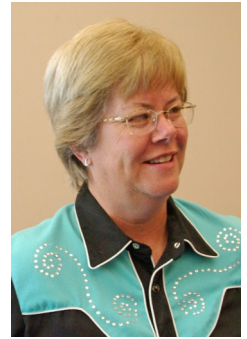
4 Sessions:

Feb 4, 11, 18, 25

Mondays: 6:00 - 8:00 pm

\$160 members, \$200 non-members

Limited to 10 students



In today's writing world, the opportunity to write for magazines is almost endless. With over 9,000 published yearly, in addition to online magazines, the world is your oyster. But there are tricks to bagging an assignment. Finding the right market and the right editor, finding out about the competition—all tricks of the trade. So if you've got a good idea but don't know where to go and how to start, look no more. This class is for you. In four short weeks, the class will cover finding your story, finding the market, tweaking the same idea for different magazines, photo requirements, and approaching an editor. And that's just for starters.

Melody Groves writes for *New Mexico Magazine*, *True West*, *American Cowboy*, *Enchantment*, *Chronicles* (on line), *Albuquerque the Magazine*, *abqARTS* and *Desert Exposure*.

INDEPENDENT SELF-PUBLISHING: PROS, CONS, & HOW-TO

A Half-Day Workshop by Kirt Hickman
Saturday, February 23 • 9:00 am - Noon

See Workshop Prices on this Page, Location TBD

Let's face it, most writers don't get picked up by one of the big-five New York publishers the first time out. So unless you hit the jackpot (and I sincerely hope you do), you'll be faced with some serious publishing decisions. Is independent self-publishing right for you? If so, how do you do it? In this workshop, students will learn the pros and cons of independent self-publishing (as opposed to author-services companies and small traditional publishers) in terms of cost, product quality, rights, control, marketing, time commitment, and income. Students will also learn how to create their own publishing company and publish their own books.

Kirt Hickman, author of two award-winning science-fiction thrillers, a high fantasy novel, two books for children, and the comprehensive and practical self-editing guide *Revising Fiction: Making Sense of the Madness*, was a technical writer for fourteen years before branching into fiction. His methodical approach to writing and teaching has been a blessing to his writing students for years. He has taught through SWW, UNM Continuing Education, and at numerous writing conferences throughout the southwest, and has contributed a monthly column to the *SouthWest Sage*.

* Thanks to all of you who bring snacks *
* to share at our monthly meetings. *
* The board and attendees greatly appreciate *
* (and enjoy) your thoughtfulness. *

HALF-DAY WORKSHOP PRICES:

\$40 SWW MEMBERS • \$50 OSHER MEMBERS W/CARD
\$70 NON-MEMBERS • \$75 AT THE DOOR

New Workshop and Class Refund Policy

Full refund if cancellation is received more than 7 days before class. From one week out to 24 hours before class, participant is entitled to select another class. Inside of 24 hours, participant receives no refund or class. For multi-session classes, if you miss a class, you receive no refund. We pay our instructors based on how many students enroll, so you are part of that roll count if you don't cancel as detailed above.

You're over fifty, your kids are raised, your relationships are simple, you've learned most of life's lessons first hand, and now you want to write. Welcome. Welcome to the ranks of Late-Blooming Writers. As one of the aforementioned, I'll share some of the bits and pieces of information gleaned along my path toward publication.

First, set a goal. Want to write meaningful poetry? Want to knock out a bestselling novel? Write down what you want to make happen. And then put it someplace where you'll see it. Often. Next, stretch your brain-muscle. A good way to do that is to meditate. Thousands of pages of research indicate that meditating a few minutes a day will change the actual physical make-up of your brain. So will Sudoku, or jigsaw and crossword puzzles. And you'll need to grow a tough skin. Not the kind that insulates you from the world, or squeezes the juice from your sensitivities. But the kind that allows the slings and arrows of rejection to roll harmlessly off as you do the trial and error thing to find your Writer's Voice.

Then you'll need to bone up on the basic rules of grammar and the elements of style. Strunk and White offers a small but priceless treasure trove of style tidbits. Besides learning the difference between showing and telling, you'll need to use strong verbs, stay away from passive voice, and use few, if any, adjectives or adverbs. Oh, and you would be wise to eschew any iteration of the verb "to be." You get the idea. Just as with any craft, you must first learn the rules, beginning with the basics.

Pitfall number one: Writer Entitlement. It's an interesting but recurring phenomenon in wannabe writers, that their opinions about their own writing skills outshine the reality. I've read this in countless articles and blogs, so there must be something to it. We've always been told how well we write, so we figure our success is assured. However, none of us have been born with the Consummate Writer Gene already firmly installed. The kind of writing that gets published requires hard work and focused attention, followed by vigorous, time consuming, often painful revision.

Pitfall number two: Memoirs. Once you've generated dozens of chapters of the novel you can't quite finish, after writing several essays and short stories, and once you're absolutely certain you've reached the apex of writing competency, you'll find yourself considering the possibility of writing your memoirs. Some would say it's never too early to chronicle your life experiences. But unless your aim is to produce something solely for the historical value it might have to your family, it seems to me a better idea to put a memoir on hold—at least until after your first book is published. Although your life has doubtless resembled a roller coaster in its hairpin curves and surprising twists and turns, it's tough to sell a memoir until someone, somewhere, knows your name. That is, unless you dated someone famous and decide to write a kiss-and-tell. Note: Just a suggestion, but if you want to write your memoirs as revenge for a lifetime of wrongs, you might consider finding a good attorney to cover your back. Libel suits can be expensive indulgences.

Pitfall number three: You believe the only-partially-true statement that all one has to do to achieve publication is to write. A lot. But the sad truth is it takes much more than cranking out ream upon ream of verbiage to make one's way into the semi-rarified strata of published writer. Unless writers have occasion to be catapulted into the focus of the national news media, they must learn the ropes of the publishing industry, subscribe to various writers' magazines and e-zines (or better yet, start one), join critique groups, build an extensive platform, and basically eat, drink and sleep writing. The key is to never stop learning and revising yourself.

Pitfall number four: You fear time is against you. Late bloomers often fall victim to this downward spiral of thought. You grow more and more impatient as the days, weeks, and months go by and your folder of rejections thickens. But hang in there. The process will not be hurried. Google writers who were published after the age of fifty and revel in the knowledge that you're not alone.

The good news is that hundreds of books have been written on the subject of writing. Everything from workbooks to software is available. Pick one and get started. You're on the ground floor, so there's nowhere to go but up. Good luck. And as Tiny Tim said, "God bless us every one."



*This article marks the beginning of a monthly column for **Olive Balla**, a retired educator and professional musician who lives in Los Lunas with her husband Victor and their puppy HalfNote. Ms. Balla has authored one suspense novel entitled *An Arm And A Leg*, and is nearing completion on a second. The first chapter of *An Arm And A Leg* is posted on her website: www.omballa.com.*

You Can Write for *SouthWest Sage*

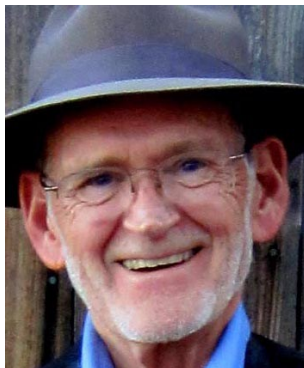
Want to add a byline to your portfolio? We welcome submissions focusing on all aspects of researching, writing, and publishing any genre. See past issues of *SouthWest Sage* for the type of article we publish. Payment is in bylines and clips. Deadline is the 15th of the month prior to the next issue. Article lengths from 300 to 1000 words. Submissions may be edited for accuracy, readability and length. Send questions/submissions to Kathy Wagoner, *Sage* Editor, JustWriteSWW@gmail.com.

Grandpa, I think you have scurvy." The three-year old we met, waiting for our table at the Range Cafe, had heard the word on the television the day before and was diagnosing everyone with it, her mother said. It's easy for me to understand how a child can become enchanted with a new and different word, especially a word like scurvy, that feels so good squirting out of the corner of your mouth, between tooth and cheek. It's got a strong "r" in it, like a pirate word, and sounds exotic enough that you might just be getting away with something.

I was hooked on words before I became a writer and have never gotten over it. There are still words that I overuse and often probably misuse because I like the feel of them in my mouth and my ear. *Accoutrements* is one. *Fumfer* is another. A decade ago a radio host used *fumfer* to express her stumbling in trying to get her point across. You won't find it in a dictionary, but it's a perfectly functional word, and, in context, there was no doubt as to what she meant.

I like the word *skookum*, a Chinook word I learned in Seattle, meaning good or hearty or strong or brave. *Bumbershoot*, *canoodling*, *perspicacity*, *loquacious*—all fun, rhythmic, nearly musical words.

But the strength of words, and most of the fun, is in their use. Questing for the right word is an adventure. What words are best to inspire a child, welcome a friend, inform a colleague, threaten your protagonist, seduce a lover? What word catches the light just so and casts the best shadows on the narrative and on those words before and after? Is there one word that will replace three? Sometimes the apt word glows from within, illuminating the page. The right word must provide the right function at the right time—propelling ideas when needed, reining in when the pace has become too quick, or pushing off in a new direction. "Propel" and "push" are the chosen words here but, in another mood or context, "thrust"



or "drive" might be better. Yes, they hint at sexuality.

How does the word fit with its neighbors? Does it stand too tall and dominating, drawing attention to itself rather than conveying meaning? Is it so timid that it hides, embarrassed, begging to be replaced or deleted?

And it's the power and vitality of words that are important, not their splendor. Clarity is more important than eloquence. So, though I like the feel of rare words, I prefer to use those I can find in my battered, paperback Webster's.

Words are ecological. They can be used and used again, even overused, but never be used up. They can be consumed by the reader yet they remain.

And they're democratic. They're free! The same words are available to you and me as to J.K. Rowling and Terry Pratchett—well, mostly, they *are* British. The vocabulary that built the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights and the Constitution belongs to all of us. The parts and pieces needed to construct the speeches of Abraham Lincoln, the works of Ernest Hemingway, John Steinbeck, Mark Twain, James Thurber and T. H. White, and the diatribes of the TV pundits for that matter, are there in our toy box, ours to use as we want. Or misuse. Part of freedom is the right to be wrong.

Words! We love them. So, fellow writers, get out your kit of words and build a story. Have fun. But choose your words carefully.

E. H. Hackney is a retired engineer, freelance writer and sometimes jazz guitarist. His essays and articles have appeared in Albuquerque The Magazine, East Mountain Living Magazine, The Independent, and the Mountain View Telegraph. He is currently writing a fantasy novel to be published in early 2013. He writes, hikes, bikes and plays at the edge of the forest on the east slope of the Sandias, where he lives with his wife and two opinionated cats.



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Member Successes

Joanne Bodin's poem "Birds on a Wire" was accepted for the January 2013 issue of *The Rag*. Her poem "Inception" was accepted for the Zingara poet blog, (theme of "origins") for 2013. She will be doing a book signing at noon at the UNM Bookstore on February 9th for her novel *Walking Fish* and poetry book *Piggybacked*.

Author **Janet K. Brennan** will release her book *Tango Sunday*, short stories on the edge, in mid-January 2013 with special guest author, "Horror with a Heart," **Keith Pyeatt**.

Shirley Jones' novel *Spirits of the Jungle* was released in e-book format by Casa de Snapdragon, LLC Publishing (SWW member **Janet Brennan**, Editor in Chief).

Gayle Lauradunn is one of 14 poets invited to participate with 14 artists in a collaboration at Vivo Contemporary Gallery in Santa Fe. Each poet wrote a poem for the work of one artist. The show, "Giving Voice to Image," will be on exhibit during January/February, 2013. Gayle's poem "Quiet Voices" reflects the work of glass kiln artist Barrie Brown.

Annmari H. Pearson read from her books *The Fetish Ruby* and *Nature Rhymes with Natural Impressions* at the Village of Los Lunas Heritage and Art Museum on December 13. Both books were 2012 New Mexico/Arizona Book Award finalists.

2013 First Bimonthly Writing Contest A Love/Revenge Poem

February is where St. Valentine hangs out, so an obvious theme for this bimonthly writing contest is love (or revenge related to love). Write a poem relating to love (or revenge)—past, present or future, real or imagined. Any style, any format (as long as it fits on no more than two pages). It can be memoir, total fabrication, funny, serious, whatever—the sky's the limit.

Tweak our interest and win \$150/\$50/\$25 or an honorable mention. Your entry may also be published in the *Sage* newsletter, if your permission is given. See the rules. Postmark deadline is Thursday, **February 28, 2013**.

Please include your address, phone, and email plus permission to publish or not on a separate sheet. Do not include identifying information on the manuscript itself. Mail to SWW Bi-Monthly Contest, 3721 Morris NE, Suite A, Albuquerque, NM 87111.

FICTION BOOK ENTRIES SOUGHT FOR NM WOMEN WRITERS CONTEST

The 2013 Zia Award will be given to the author of an outstanding fiction book published in 2010, 2011, or 2012.



The writer must be a woman who lives in or has a strong connection to New Mexico. The contest is open to all subgenres of fiction except children's books, which will be eligible for the 2014 contest.

Submissions can be made by the author or by someone else on behalf of the author. Membership in New Mexico Press Women is not required.

To submit, send a cover letter including complete contact information, the author's biography (including her connection to New Mexico), and a description of the book, a copy of the book, and a check for the \$25 entry fee payable to New Mexico Press Women to:

Loretta Hall
Zia Book Award Chair
3219 El Toboso Dr NW
Albuquerque, NM 87104

Entries must be postmarked by Monday, January 14, 2013. For more information, send correspondence to Loretta Hall at the address listed above or e-mail loretta@authorhall.com.



New Mexico Book Association honored Treasure House Gifts and Books with its annual Book in Hand Award. NMBA also presented the prestigious Richard Harris Award to *A Garlic Testament: Seasons on a Small New Mexico Farm* by author Stanley Crawford.

Calendar of Events

The NM Book Co-op has organized a new service that will become the only comprehensive Book Event Calendar. Anyone can now list their book events and share them with people who are interested in books and reading. Go to <http://nmbookcoop.com/Cover-Reads/Cover-Reads.html> to list your upcoming book events. Then send an email to everyone on your list asking them to go to this page and sign up for regular notices about book events. A great FREE way to promote your book.



If you're a SouthWest Writers member with a success or announcement you want to share, send it to Kathy Wagoner, SouthWest Sage Editor, JustWriteSWW@gmail.com.

Announcements

Vine Leaves Literary Journal is accepting vignette submissions from **January 1-February 28** for its April issue. Prose, poetry, script, and artwork/photography for the cover and/or interior of the issue. All vignettes accepted for publication online will be considered for the best of 2013 print anthology. Visit: www.vineleavesliteraryjournal.com.



Colorado Prize for Poetry: \$2,000 honorarium and book publication by the Center for Literary Publishing. Submit book-length collection of poems by **January 14, 2013**. \$25 entry fee includes subscription to *Colorado Review*. Guidelines at <http://coloradoprize.colostate.edu>.

For a special "Sustainability" issue, **Creative Nonfiction** is looking for essays that illuminate environmental, economic, ethical and/or social challenges related to the state of the planet and our future. All essays must tell true stories, be factually and scientifically accurate, unpublished, up to 4,000 words. \$20 reading fee. Deadline: **January 15, 2013**. <http://brevity.wordpress.com/2012/10/03/sustainability-cnf-special-issue-and-book/>

Bellevue Literary Review plans a special theme issue on Multiculturalism, for Fall 2013. Seeking fiction, nonfiction, and poetry that explore health, illness, and healing through a cross-cultural lens. Prose (up to 5,000 words), Poetry (up to 3 poems). Deadline: **February 1, 2013**. For details and submission guidelines, visit www.BLReview.org

A Call for Lost Paragraphs: Jill Talbot is currently seeking your "darlings," those paragraphs that have been excised from published or forthcoming works (specifically essays, stories, memoirs, or novels) for a book-length project addressing fragmentation and omission via editing in writing. Send to [the e-mail listed on my contact page](#). In addition, please provide a sentence (or two) explaining why the paragraph was eliminated. Deadline: **February 1, 2013**.

San Miguel Writers' Conference and Literary Festival. **February 13-18, 2013** in the World Heritage writers' haven of San Miguel de Allende, Mexico: 64+ speakers, faculty, and agents; 56 workshop options, 4 keynote speakers. One-on-one pitch sessions with agents. Individual consultations.

www.sanmiguelwritersconference2013.org/

Writing Contest With Over \$1,600 in cash and prizes. The 2013 Laine Cunningham Novel Award contest is open to all book-length fiction works including novellas, collections of linked short stories, YA novels, and novels in progress. First prize, \$500; Second prize, \$125; First, Second, Third prizes include a library of books valued over \$1,000. Send first 10-20 pages, synopsis not required. Deadline: **February 28, 2013**. For more, go to www.blotterrag.com



FREE six-week memoir workshop at the North Valley Library (on 2nd St about one mile south of Paseo del Norte) to be held every Saturday from 10 am-noon, starting January 26 and ending February 23, 2013. To sign up, contact Nancy LaTurner at nalurner@yahoo.com or 792-9471. Please leave a message. Enrollment is limited to twelve.

The Bakery is looking for poems to feature online every day Monday through Friday. www.thebakerypoetry.com.

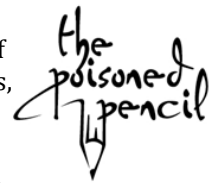
Cairn Press is currently seeking remarkable, completed, fine-tuned fiction manuscripts (non-genre driven). They prefer novels, but great short story collections are always welcome. Open submission periods are January-March and June-August. Submission guidelines: www.cairnpress.com/pages/submissions

Cup of Tea Books, an imprint of independent publisher PageSpring Publishing, is accepting submissions of novel-length titles in the category of Women's Fiction. Go to: www.cupofteabooks.com



Darker Times Fiction hosts a monthly short story contest open to UK and international writers. Focus is on horror stories up to 5000 words but they accept entries linked to the theme of "darker times." Deadline: **the last day of each month**. Entry fee £5/\$8 via paypal. Monthly winners receive a percentage of money raised by entry fees plus publication in a Darker Times Horror Anthology ebook. For more details, go to www.darkertimes.co.uk.

The Poisoned Pencil (a Poisoned Pen Press imprint) is open for submissions of YA mystery novels, 45,000-90,000 words, both traditional and cross-genre with a protagonist between the ages of 12-18. They encourage off-beat approaches and narrative choices that reflect the complexity and ambiguity of today's world. Submissions from teens are welcome. www.thepoisonedpencil.submittable.com/submit



Straylight, the literary journal of the University of Wisconsin-Parkside, is calling for submissions of fiction for their print magazine and website. Their online edition (*The Villa*) is also calling for creative non-fiction submissions on the topic "Why write?" and novella and novella-length fiction submissions for serialization. For fiction, go to <http://straylightmag.com/fiction-submission-guidelines> and for poetry, <http://straylightmag.com/poetry-submission-guidelines>. Electronic/snail mail submissions.

I've never aimed for the great American novel or award winning new classic or, dare I even say, a *New York Times* bestseller. My goal as an author has always been to not write crap.

Don't get me wrong. I would love that kind of recognition. I would love to suddenly find myself sought after and interviewed as the newest talent with a long and prestigious career ahead of me. To have those in my life want to link themselves to me as a pseudo-celebrity and share I-remember-when-stories and other anecdotes. To finally put my obsessive need to read to great use and pretend this was the plan all along. But here is the reality. I, along with massive numbers of other people, have deluded myself into writing a book.

Now this was not my first attempt at writing a book over my lifetime. I have deluded myself countless times, with varying results. The beginnings of chapters, character sketches and possible plot lines litter my old computer and notebooks. But, I had a problem—I was not a finisher. My interest would quickly wane; the enthusiasm and seemingly boundless amount of energy I wished to put into my latest project would disappear. Some might chalk it up to writer's block or lack of inspiration or another such thing, but the truth was the material wasn't the problem. I was the problem.

I have heard from others attempting to cross over the line to being a writer, that they spent their whole life writing with almost a compulsive need to express themselves in this medium. At first I was completely distraught, because I don't remember that compulsion. My expression was a bit different; my mother says I lived my stories. I would compose just enough of a story line to act out my favorite parts, occasionally aided by my little brother. A costume was always necessary, and an audience, when I struck a particularly brilliant idea. To me, my imaginary characters in some ways were more real than the reality around me. Like my heroine, Anne Shirley, I found the interactions with them quite a bit more satisfying than those in my mundane surroundings.

As I transitioned from child to adult I never gave up the fantastical worlds I lived in. Sure, as an adult I pursued them in secret with a certain amount of shame, but I could never really let them go. My imaginary worlds could go on for years morphing into different things, based on where I was in life and what was interesting to me right then. They fed me and nurtured me—along with the books I read—in a way I could find nowhere else.

As a child, I thought being an author a very grand thing, but even then I had a problem with limiting myself in the real world. I always told myself that I wasn't capable of being a writer. I allowed my grammar issues and my poor self-esteem to stop me. I gave in to the fear of failure with barely a token resistance. Because when you write, you are putting yourself out there in a way you can never take back. You



leave yourself open to all the opinions and criticism of the reader. You offer up something very precious and commit yourself in completely binding ways. I didn't think I could take that chance. Until about four years ago.

It finally came to me as I fed my baby an orange substance vaguely called food, when I was taking yet another foray into a more pleasant place than the one my body occupied, that maybe I should take another stab at writing. Maybe this time I could make sure things were different. And to my complete and utter astonishment, I did. I threw off the shackles of my fear long enough to

actually complete my goal.

Now I can say I'm a finisher. I wrote a book, and maybe it will never get published, and maybe, occasionally I feel like my efforts were wasted. But at times I wrote the perfect combination of words to express exactly what I wanted to, and it felt almost like they were singing to me. Now, granted, not everything I wrote carries the perfect tune, but no matter what anyone else might think, to me it's not crap.

A.R. Aeby received a Bachelor of Arts in history almost solely from the love of stories, even nonfiction ones. She is the author of the book review blog [Whymy Likes Books](#), where her goal is simply to share her passion for books. But she is a book author with the eternal hope of becoming a published book author. She lives in the deserts of New Mexico with her two young daughters and her husband of ten years.

I Have a Dream Today

(Continued from page 1)

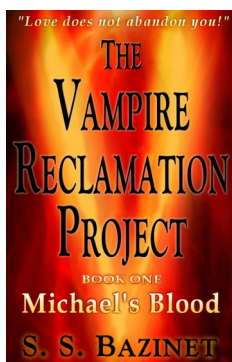
from a speech is no accident. The key thoughts and takeaways are memorable because they are repeated or weaved throughout, *at least three times*.

Reverend King Jr.'s words "I have a dream" were repeated no less than six times throughout his speech. Same with "let freedom ring." But, in addition to those memorable lines, he opened with repeated concepts around "One hundred years later" to describe the state of despair long after Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. Then with "now is the time" to spur urgency of action, and also with "we can never be satisfied as long as...."

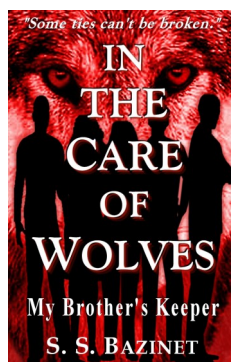
This rule of three can work in your writing too: repeated themes and ideas stick. In fiction this may need to be more shrewdly thought out so you're not overusing a word or repeating a catch-phrase, but if there is a key point you want to make sure the reader doesn't miss, this is a technique anyone can apply.

In respect for the holiday, I'd like to suggest you take a moment to read the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.'s [speech](#) and reflect not only on his great vision but how charismatically he used the tools of language to share that vision with the world.

Member Books



How can a loving angel create a disaster? Michael, an incarnate angel, shares his blood in an effort to purge vampire Arel of his dark curse. Facing death instead of redemption, Arel is left wondering if he's been cursed a second time. Published by Renata Press. Available at Amazon and Barnes & Noble. Visit Sandy Bazinet www.ssbazinet.com

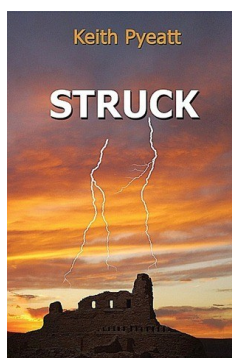
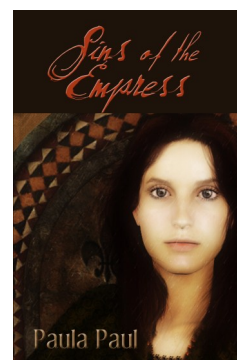


Is sixteen-year-old Theodore a secret weapon, programmed to destroy his lost family? Reunited with them and learning that they're werewolves, he helps them escape from those who are hunting them to extinction. He learns about loyalty and devotion. But in the end, will he unwittingly betray them? Published by Renata Press. Available at Amazon and Barnes and Noble. Visit Sandy Bazinet at www.ssbazinet.com.

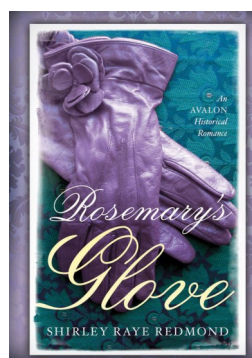
Spirits of the Jungle is a science fiction/fantasy set deep in the jungles of Central America. Cheryl, an archaeology student, joins a team to excavate Mayan ruins and discovers lavish treasures, crystal caves, and artifacts. But rebel soldiers frequent the area in a country where war is a daily occurrence. The team eventually experiences alien creatures and lights of an unknown source, not of this earth. Available in e-book.



"All that I have ever done, I have done for love.' The opening line says it all: Paula Paul's novel of the life of Catherine the Great is a story about the great loves and losses of the Russian empress, an obvious work of love by the author. Highly recommended." ~ Historical Novel Society Reviews
Buy at <http://amazon.com> or <http://coolwellpress.com>



Lightning isn't always an act of nature. Sometimes it's a calling. *STRUCK*, is a paranormal thriller set in Albuquerque and Chaco Canyon. 2009 NM Book Award winner for best mystery or suspense novel. "This is a gripping novel with murder, mayhem, and other-worldly emanations expertly sewn together into an engrossing page-turner." ~ Lola R. Eagle, Reading New Mexico. www.keithpyeatt.com



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SECOND PLACE
5TH BIMONTHLY WRITING COMPETITION
Alice Hughes: The Secret Guardian
by Eileen Wiard

Alice Hughes never moved anywhere quickly, and never took a step that didn't have to be taken. She had been short, stout, and old for as long as I'd known her. She wore a flat navy blue hat with a half veil that would come down a little over her forehead, secured with a hat pin. Her bifocals were large and manly, but fashion was not her concern. Her dresses always covered her large midsection, and the flab on her arms was ample and freckled. We called her Grandma Hughes, not because she was our flesh and blood, but because we wished the real one were more like her.

Grandma Hughes was my mother's social worker from the time she was fourteen until she graduated from Girls' Latin High School in Cambridge, MA. Mom had run away from home, not once but several times, "until it took," she said. Mom's life was a miserable one, stuck in a dingy Charlestown tenement with Emma Hatch—cold, mean, and what people would now call abusive. Back then, during the Depression, she toyed cruelly with my mother's hunger, giving whatever meat there was to her real son, Donald, and leaving my mother to beg from the neighbors for bread with butter and sugar sprinkled on top, a Depression-era delicacy.

When my mother found a letter from her real biological mother in the bottom of a drawer, she started running, sometimes staying overnight in her classroom at school, sometimes sleeping on a neighbor's porch. Emma always found her and dragged her back home.

When she finally ran away for good, a policeman found her and asked what she was doing so far from home. "What's the use?" she said. "Nobody believes me."

"I already believe you," he told her, and he brought her case to the courthouse in Boston. She was made a ward of the state in record time, and before long, came under the auspices of one Alice Hughes, who followed her "kids" and wouldn't lose track of them. She got my mother the best placements she could find, from Holliston, Massachusetts, to Cambridge proper, taking care of a doctor's kids to working for her room and board at Mount Auburn Hospital, where she stayed until she graduated, then completed her nurse's training there, graduating with her Registered Nurse's cap.

Grandma Hughes was as proud of my mother as if she were her own. She liked her choice of husband, too, even though my father drank too much. She would come to visit with another friend, driving the three hours from Arlington, Massachusetts to Torrington, Connecticut with her car's trunk full of trinkets and toys she picked up from tag sales and church bazaars. Every time Grandma Hughes came to visit, it was like Christmas.

Once I remember she came without presents. Instead, she took my sisters and me out shopping at Woolworths, and told us we could have anything we wanted. The Beatles had just come out and, more than anything, my sister Ginny wanted a pair of white patent leather go-go boots. We got identical pairs, brand new, and to our hand-me-down eyes, they were better than a pony that year.

Alice Hughes was kind, dropped the "r" off every word and placed it carefully where it wasn't needed, at the end of words like "idea" and "saw," but I understood everything she said to me. She loved us extravagantly, and we loved her back.

It was Grandma Hughes who told me that I was named after my mother's real mom, Eileen McMahon. Mom's birth certificate still says her mother's name was Margaret Flanagan.

Later in life, when I was looking for clues to my mother's history, I kept running into dead ends. Finally, before she died, I asked my mother one more time. "Why didn't you look for her? Why didn't you find her?"

"Grandma Hughes took care of all that," Mom said. "She destroyed my file when I turned 18. 'Your name is Doris Hatch, and that's all anyone needs to know.'" Mom believed she did it as a favor because back in the 1940s, it was still a shameful thing to have been born out of wedlock.

I still wonder, today, where the trunk is located on our family tree. Alice knows, but she took the secret with her.

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