

# SouthWest Sage

July 2009

[www.southwestwriters.com](http://www.southwestwriters.com)

## August 15 Novel Conference

*by Sandra Toro*

As this issue of the *Sage* goes to press, we are thrilled to announce that Gabe Robinson, an editor with William Morrow, which is part of Harper Collins publishing company, will join us for the Novel Conference—All Genres on August 15. Gabe works closely with senior editor David Highfill, and together they publish the novels of New York Times best-selling author David Baldacci.

Those of you who are mystery/thriller writers and considering coming to this conference should register immediately to ensure that you have an opportunity to pitch to Gabe Robinson. His ten pitching slots will fill up quickly.

In addition to Gabe, we've invited editors from The Penguin Group and Grand Central Publishing, and we are awaiting confirmation. These editors will participate in a round table moderated by our own Kirt Hickman, and they will also each take ten pitches.

Melody Groves, herself a multi-published author, will be our Mistress of Ceremonies.

During the day registrants will be treated to speeches followed by questions and answers by five published authors, each representing different genres. The line up includes: JoAnn Power—Women's Fiction and Mysteries

Michael McGarrity—Western Mystery

Walter Jon Williams—Science Fiction

Jane Lindschold—Fantasy

Sandra Toro—Historicals and Family Sagas

You may register for this conference by filling out a registration form at our meetings on Saturday and Tuesday, register on-line at [www.southwestwriters.com](http://www.southwestwriters.com), or mail in the registration form from page 11 of the *Sage*. Remember that the price for this conference will go up on July 15, so be sure to register as soon as possible.

*See Registration Form on Page 11.*

## Pitching A Novel

*by Bob Gassaway*

Pitching a novel is a performance—a performance that works better with a script and a rehearsal. The performance should begin long before a writer sits down in front of an editor or agent.

About 40 writers will have a chance to pitch their work to editors or an agent at the SouthWest Writers all-genre novel conference Aug. 15. But people planning to make a pitch need to prepare for it.

Common sense suggests a pitch is easy: You wrote the book, so you definitely know what it's about. You just go in and tell them. The problem with this approach is that your pitch needs to spotlight what is special about your novel -- what sets it apart from other novels in your genre.

You're a writer, so solve the problem by writing a pitch. Begin with a "hook." Focus on a special element that distinguishes your book from other novels that might be on shelves near yours in a book store.

Describe the novel in a sentence or two. If that's difficult, consider how a reviewer would describe your book. You need to know where it would be displayed in a book store. Capture the tone of the book; if it's exciting, the pitch should sound exciting. If it's warm and packed with emotion, the pitch needs to reflect that.

Tell the editor or agent in a sentence or two why you're the best person to write the book. Do you have special expertise that gives you unique insights into your subject?

Briefly point out your writing credentials: short stories you've published, writing awards you've won or some other appropriate writing background.

Once you've written the pitch, read it aloud to yourself. Listen for words or phrases you stumble over and rewrite them to smooth your prose. Remember: You're writing for the ear, not the eye. When your pitch feels smooth, ask another person to listen to it and make suggestions. Present it to three or four people. And practice it alone until you can present it without notes.

Then you're ready to make your pitch.

## Begging for Criticism

### President's Message



**Rob Spiegel**

One of the dangers in the writing life is isolation. The irony is that you're writing to connect and communicate—and you do it while you're completely alone, in thought if not physically. But to improve your writing it's almost always necessary to bring people into your circle. You need a community of critique beings.

Close family members are not your best choice. If you've ever had a dancing lesson from a spouse, you're familiar with the problem. Family members are not likely to have deep experience in writing or in your genre. And they might not want to hurt your feelings. Worse, they may want to hurt your feelings.

Taking a class in writing can help, especially if the class involves assignments that are critiqued by the instructor. But at the end of the class, you lose that stream of feedback. Using a critique service such as the one provided by Southwest Writers is also helpful, especially when you have a specific problem to solve – like writing the synopsis for a novel or a query letter for a magazine article. But it can get pretty pricy if you want an entire novel critiqued.

The best solution may be a critique group. I've been in one for four years and it has become an indispensable part of my writing process—at least for fiction. I don't seem to need it for non-fiction. A good critique team blends elements of a support group with brutally honest feedback. You can find some critique groups listed in our *Sage* newsletter. Or, you can stand up at one of our meetings (during announcements) and say, "Hey, anyone want to help me form a science fiction critique group?"

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*"Writing is a form of personal freedom. It frees us from the mass identity we see in the making all around us. In the end, writers will write not to be outlaw heroes of some under-culture but mainly to save themselves, to survive as individuals."*

*Don Delillo*

#### SouthWest Sage Advertising Rates

#### Worldwide Internet Circulation

The SWW website receives hundreds of thousands of page requests every month.

Business card size: \$16      1/8 page: \$24

1/4 page: \$36      1/3 page: \$45

1/2 page: \$75

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.

#### Annual Membership in SouthWest Writers

Individual: \$60 (\$100 for 2 years), Two people \$50 each,

Student over 18: \$40, Under 18: \$25

Requires proof of student status

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

Download the *Sage* from [www.southwestwriters.com](http://www.southwestwriters.com)

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

**New Life Presbyterian Church, 5540 Eubank NE,  
Albuquerque, New Mexico**



## SouthWest Sage

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## Minding Finances: Life Purpose

by Sherri Burr

My high school geometry teacher had a sign in his office that read "Every person should be afraid to die until he has contributed to humanity." Too often, society values a job by what it pays, rather than how it fosters the person's soul growth or the improvement of civilization.



Getting the right job will help you land on the path to finding your life purpose. There is no one way. Rather, each individual has the ability to craft a unique purpose.

Your purpose in life is what you do to make a difference in society. It's the imprint proving that the world is a better place because you lived. It is the positive impact that you leave on the lives of others. To test this, ask three people to write you a statement about how you impacted their lives. You may be surprised about the results.

I did this in early 2000 at the height of the dot.com buildup. My law school classmates were making \$500,000 a year practicing Intellectual Property law while I was being paid \$75,000 a year to teach it. I began to doubt whether I had made the right choice of careers. A friend suggested I ask three individuals to write me impact statements. Two of my students wrote such moving tributes that I knew I was fulfilling my purpose in life. I had been teaching since I was in kindergarten when I would return home and share with my younger brother what I had learned. I realized that I was fortunate to have discovered my purpose early in life.

For me, writing is often another form of teaching. As a teenager, I loved reading romance novels and thought I could write one. While I have not yet crafted fictional pieces, I have written nonfiction articles and books touching on topics ranging from sperm theft to war.

I found my writing voice when I became a weekly columnist for the now defunct *Albuquerque Tribune*. Having a general column meant I could write on anything, and I did for nearly three years. It was fun to write about how December babies were short on gifts or spending an evening going back and forth between a Snoop Dogg rap concert and a Republican fundraiser. When we write from our experiences, it forces us to keep interacting with others and trying out new situations.

Similarly, you should think about how you wish to use your writing talents. There are many ways to do this. How best can you serve humanity?

You'll find your life purpose quicker if you pay attention to your emotional reactions to situations. When you feel happy and fulfilled with the work you are doing, you contribute more.

After finding your purpose, your life will flow as smoothly as a river in Montana, sparkling with energy. Opportunities will appear as if by magic. You will meet the people who can help you. The ultimate goal is to get to the end of your life and have few regrets and lots of smiles associated with your memories.

*Sherri Burr is a long-time member of SouthWest Writers and the author of 11 books. She is a tenured professor at the University of New Mexico where she teaches Entertainment Law. This column "Minding Finances for Writers" recently won first place in the New Mexico Press Women contest for advice columns.*

## Make Your Characters More Than Cardboard Cutouts

by Kirt Hickman

Your characters must not be automatons. Your reader must buy into them as real people with real goals, real motivations, real relationships, and real emotions. They must have flaws as well as virtues. They must face internal struggles and external conflict. They must have past lives and prior relationships.

Use the tips below to individualize each of your characters. The traits you assign don't have to be sensational. They can be small, even subtle, qualities. Your goal is to make each character a believable individual, not an incredible eccentric (unless, of course, you want him to be).

### ***Give each character a unique set of physical traits.***

These don't have to be scars and tattoos, the obvious choices for truly unique identifiers. Furthermore, these traits need not be unique among all humanity, just unique within the context of your story. If you choose traits that are extraordinary, account for them in a credible way through the character's background.



### ***Give each character a unique style of speech.***

Each character should have a unique combination of dialect and vocabulary, based upon his personality, level of education, and upbringing. Make your characters' speech rhythms different enough that if a line of dialogue written for one character were attributed to another, that line would sound out of place.

### ***Give each character a flaw that the reader can understand.***

If you make your hero perfect, she won't be credible. Even if you manage to make her believable without building in a flaw or two, your reader won't be able to relate to her. Write about ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances.

Your hero's flaws often provide a source of internal conflict overlaid upon the external struggle provoked by the villain. Ratchet up the tension in every scene by exploiting your character's flaws to make her trials more difficult.

### ***Give each character a special skill.***

Special skills let your reader see into some aspect of life, some hobby or profession, that he might find interesting. Introduce your character's skill early in the story, well before she needs it. Otherwise it will seem contrived—an afterthought you invented to get her out of whatever fix you put her into. Present your character's skill at a technical level your reader can understand, and provide only information that is directly relevant to the events at hand.

### ***Give each character a definable personality.***

Is your character optimistic? Pessimistic? Grumpy? Funny?

Flirtatious? Adversarial? What does she get fired up about? The environment? Animal rights? Poverty? Duty? Family? Honor? Love? Hatred? Vengeance? Let's face it, without a definable personality and a passion for something, your character (your hero in particular) will be boring.

How does your character respond to frustration? This is an important decision. Your plot consists of obstacles and events designed to frustrate your character's efforts. How will she react? Will she get angry? Resourceful? Determined? Depressed? Will she get even? Will she seek help? Will she pray? I'm not suggesting your character should respond to every situation in the same way, but people tend toward certain emotional reactions to frustration. Your character should too.\*

### ***Give each character an identifying line, mannerism, or prop.***

Give your reader something to associate with your character besides a name. Establish identifiers early, preferably the first time you introduce the character. Exhibit the identifiers every time the character appears in a scene.

### ***Give each character virtues.***

This is particularly important for your hero. Generally speaking, the reader must like her. No matter how many internal demons your hero has to overcome, she must have at least one redeeming quality that your reader can latch onto and that makes him say, "I care. I hope she overcomes it all because she's worth saving."

Give virtues to your other characters as well, including your villain. The villain rarely considers himself to be the bad guy. Whatever he does, he does for a reason. Sometimes it's just for personal gain. Often, however, he believes he's working toward some greater good, however warped that perception might be.

### ***Know each character's backstory.***

You must know the details of your hero's backstory in far greater depth than you'll ever reveal in the pages of your novel. Your character's past has made him the person he is today. His past will determine his emotions, attitudes, and actions. And it will justify them to the reader. His past will make him real.

### ***Know how each character will change throughout the story.***

The change your character makes, and the way that change comes about, is the character's arc. Provide an arc for each major character, not just the hero, but make the hero's arc dominant in the story.

\* See also Nancy Kress. *Characters, Emotion & Viewpoint*. Writer's Digest Books. 2005.

Kirt Hickman has Bachelor and Master degrees in Electrical Engineering from UNM, and leverages his knowledge and experience to enrich his stories. *Worlds Asunder* is his first novel.

## A Creative Challenge

by Shirl Brainard

It was never my intention to write a textbook, but I did.

I was an adjunct instructor teaching two classes, Design and Color theory at a community college. In the mornings I wore the hat of an Administrative Assistant to the Art Program director. This was a diverse post. One part of the job was conferring with publisher's representatives and one day one said to me, "Do you know of any teachers that want to write a textbook?"

Flippantly, I said, "Sure. Me." I forgot the conversation.

About three weeks later, I received a letter from an editor of Prentice Hall Publishing, asking me to submit an outline for the book. My reaction was surprise and skepticism. I thought of it as a joke.

I sent off an outline based on a term's objectives for my Design class. The editor called me and asked if I could combine my two courses (that he'd noticed on my resume) into my outline...why sure I could.

Within ten days I received a notice to submit my manuscript draft and ideas that would make my textbook different from others, and was given a date deadline. Now I panicked.

I typed up my lectures verbatim, using my voice tone, which is conversational, not academic. I recalled the pedantic words of some design authors and the over-use of stock art photos.

I brazenly offered to do illustrative charts myself, use student work, contemporary American artists, magazine advertisements and a small percentage of stock as illustrations. I had the audacity to suggest using some of my own paintings. I had no idea how to accomplish all of this, but I still believed I wouldn't have to.

After summer term, 1989, I was on my way to New Mexico to make some final decisions about relocating after retirement. The day before my flight, "Bud", the editor, called me and said, "We're going to publish your book." He told me a Publisher/Author pack of do's and don'ts would be sent; I'd have \$5000 grant for expenses. He gave me a deadline for the manuscript and a later one for the illustrations. I was flabbergasted. What had I done?

I made a plan. I would teach my scheduled fall and winter classes, but gave notice that I would leave the office position after fall term. This was a creative challenge. I buckled down.

Word processing of the manuscript was hired out. I redid

my black and white geometric charts and took photos. As I worked, new ideas surfaced. I collected magazine photos of paintings and advertisements, but had to find ways of contacting these people. This was an adventure – to call an advertising company and speak to the head honcho and have a response, "Sure, we can do that," to my request. To finally track down an artist and chat as two artist-friends. I explained to each the permission forms they'd have to sign and return and that any payment would be paid *after* the printing. Many were flattered and charged nothing; others charged from \$100 to \$500. But one lawyer who represented an internationally well-known wildlife artist sent me a bill, even though he'd signed the publisher's contract. I called, reminding him of the agreement. He sent me more bills and finally turned me over to a collection agency. I freaked and called Bud, who intervened on my behalf. Then the U.S. Post Office lost 40 9 x12 manila envelopes with permission forms and SASEs inside. I did them over. I learned not to panic at every setback.

I had a clear vision of how I wanted my book to look and sound. Then I had a run-in with the text editor, who wanted to reconstruct my sentences properly, so it sounded more "professorial." I refused. I had students to whom I had to explain that "it's relative" didn't mean their aunt or cousin. I stood my ground. The text editor had Bud call me. He thought it was funny. It stayed in my tone and she was relieved of the burden.

I retired in the spring of 1990 and the book was released in the spring of 1991. I didn't have to give up ownership to the college. I've revised it three times... and this is far worse than doing the original. I've worked well with three great editors. I've had royalties twice a year for the past 18 years. It was purchased and translated into Chinese and Russian and purchased for an E-book by The American Intercontinental University.

I feel it was a successful endeavor because I was willing to take a risk and take an opportunity. I had nothing to lose by trying. And, I've been told the two things that have kept it selling were the conversational style and the illustrations. It's been a rewarding and creative experience.

*Shirl Brainard retired from a career of writing and teaching art at a community college. After moving to the Albuquerque area, she was active as a painter and continued teaching in adult education programs. She's now returned to writing as her secondary passion.*



"Our liberty depends on the freedom of the press,  
and that cannot be limited without being lost."

Thomas Jefferson



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

**Saturday, July 4**  
**10:00 a.m. to noon**

### ***Novel Extravaganza***

A panel of novelists gives you the dirt on their genre markets. **Bob Gassaway: mystery, Melody Groves: westerns, Keith Pyeatt: horror, Sandy Toro: historical fiction.**

**Bob Gassaway** has worked as a writer and editor for newspapers, magazines and The Associated Press. He is co-editor of a non-fiction book called *Dirty Work* published in 2007 and now is writing his second mystery novel.

**Melody Groves** is the public relations chair for SouthWest Writers. She has published three historical novels and two non-fiction books and writes for *True West*, *New Mexico*, and *albuquerqueARTS* magazines.

**Keith Pyeatt** spent a decade living in an isolated log cabin he built in northeastern Vermont. He began that decade an engineer and ended up a novelist, writing horror. Keith has been a board member at SouthWest Writers for three years. He has published two novels.

**Sandra Toro** specializes in historical family sagas and contemporary thrillers. She has published two novels and is finishing a third. She has previously been a television producer and has also taught creative writing and English literature at the University of Nebraska in Kearney.

**Tuesday, July 21**  
**7 to 9 p.m.**

### **Betsy James**

#### ***Herding Words: Organizing the Novel***

How the heck are you going to organize a novel? Especially when it involves illicit shenanigans in the State Department, or on Planet Blexx where they have eight legs and god knows they lose their socks. Betsy James, who writes extremely complex novels and rarely mislays her car keys, will present strategies for keeping track of fictional worlds, whether realistic or imaginal. She will bring examples of organizational tools, if she can remember where she put them.

**Betsy James** has managed to get it together to write and illustrate sixteen books for young adults and children. She will teach a SW Writers class on Imaginal Writing in June and July.



### **Newcomers Breakfast August 1**

Join us before the regular first Saturday meeting on August 1 at 8:30 for the semi-annual newcomers breakfast. Breakfast goodies will be provided by SWW board members. Anyone who has not already attended a new member breakfast is welcome. Board members will explain the range of services and benefits available through SouthWest Writers.

**Saturday, August 1**  
**10:00 a.m. to noon**

### **Mark Rudd**

#### ***Switching from Essay Writing to Storytelling*** ***Four Years to Write a Short Memoir***

Mark Rudd will discuss his process of writing "Underground: My Life in SDS and Weatherman." He'll illustrate his editing and rewriting process with examples from drafts. He'll also read a passage from the finished work and answer questions.

**Mark Rudd** was one of the main leaders of the 1968 student strike at Columbia University. He subsequently became National Secretary of Students for a Democratic Society, SDS, and was one of the founders of the militant Weather Underground, which sought to overthrow the government of the United States using violence. He was a fugitive until 1977. His recent book, "Underground," covers this period 1965-1977.

In 1978, Mark moved to Albuquerque and was an instructor at Central New Mexico Community College (TVI) until he retired at the end of 2006. He's been active in a variety of struggles in New Mexico: anti-nuclear, Native American land rights, solidarity with Central America, union organizing, anti-war organizing, and environmental justice work.

### **For Sale**

#### **Native American Western Collection**

Over 150 books including coffee table, popular, out of print, and 20th century classics. Used for research for my Native American Spirit Healing Books, 1991, 1998, and 2004. Call Mary Atwood at 881-4582 (after 9:00 am) to view. Collection goes to highest bidder before I move out of town.

**Tuesday, August 18**  
7 to 9 p.m.

**Pati Nagle**

***The Secret Handshake***

Is there a secret handshake that will help a new writer break into professional markets? A trick to getting the best agent? A way to rise above the slush pile? Since 1986, Pati Nagle has sold short fiction pieces to national magazines and anthologies, and six novels to New York publishers. She reveals some of the secrets of maintaining a career - not to mention personal sanity - in the vortex of chaos that is publishing.

Pati Nagle was born and raised in the mountains of northern New Mexico. An avid student of music, history, and humans in general, she has a special love of the outdoors, which inspires many of her stories.

Nagle's stories have appeared in *Asimov's Science Fiction*, the *Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*, *Cicada*, *Cricket*, and in various anthologies, including collections honoring New Mexico writers Jack Williamson and Roger Zelazny. She has also written a series of historical novels as P.G. Nagle. She is a Writers of the Future finalist and finalist for the New Mexico Press Women's Zia Award. Her short story "Coyote Ugly" received an honorable mention in The Year's Best Fantasy and Horror and was honored as a finalist for the Theodore Sturgeon Award. Her latest novel is the romantic fantasy *The Betrayal*, released in 2009 by Del Rey Books.

**Saturday, September 5**  
10:00 a.m. to noon

**Keith Pyeatt**

***Small Presses - Are They for You?***

Do you have a completed, polished novel or non-fiction book you'd like to have published? It's not always possible, or desirable, to get a contract with a major publishing house, especially in this market. Self-publishing isn't for everyone. Have you considered small presses?

**Keith Pyeatt** will discuss the different types of small presses, how to find appropriate ones for your book, what to look for, what to avoid, and what to expect. Keith has two novels being published by small presses. He will share experiences that led him to pursue this route to publication and reveal things he's learned along the way.

For more information about Keith and his novels, visit [www.keithpyeatt.com](http://www.keithpyeatt.com) or [www.keithpyeatt.blogspot.com](http://www.keithpyeatt.blogspot.com).

**Tuesday, September 15**  
7 to 9 p.m.

**Virginia DeBolt**

***Should You be Using Twitter?***

Learn what Twitter is, how to use it, and the potential value it might have to advance your writing career. You'll see specific examples of how to sign up and use Twitter. You'll learn how to find writers and people who share your interests on Twitter, and get tips on how to incorporate Twitter into your writing and marketing life.

**Virginia DeBolt** is a former educator who has found a second/third career as a technical writer. Virginia blogs regularly on her own blogs at [webteacher.ws](http://webteacher.ws) and [first50.wordpress.com](http://first50.wordpress.com). She's a contributing editor on technology topics for [blogher.com](http://blogher.com) and the Internet expert at [ehow.com](http://ehow.com). Virginia serves as the TGB Elder Geek for [timegoesby.net](http://timegoesby.net). She has researched and written about Twitter for all those web publications.

**Saturday, October 3**  
10:00 a.m. to noon

**Steven F. Havill**

***MOMENTUM — how to get it and how to keep it: easy ways to avoid the tarpits of writing***

The talk focuses on the 'tarpits' that capture writers and hold fast, ruining any chance of finishing that novel manuscript. Havill offers fundamental tips for keeping momentum high, some of which may surprise you.

**Steven F. Havill**, in addition to stints as a newspaper reporter, photographer, and editor, has taught for 25 years at secondary schools in Grants and Ruidoso, NM, as well as writing classes at NMSU-Grants and Trinidad State Junior College. Havill's first novel, *The Killer*, was published by Doubleday in 1981. That was followed by 20 more. One of Havill's hobbies is the history of medicine, and his historical/medical adventure *Race for the Dying* will be released by St. Martin's Press in October, 2009. Also coming in November 2009 from Poisoned Pen Press is the thoroughly New Mexican mystery, *Red, Green, or Murder*.

Havill has offered writing workshops around the Southwest for many years, including a continuing series of weekly workshops at the Arthur Johnson Memorial Library in Raton.

## Classes

### REVISING FICTION: MAKING SENSE OF THE MADNESS

Kirt Hickman

#### Part I: How to Write a Great Story

**Mondays, July 6,13,20,27, 6:30-8:30pm**

\$65 members, \$75 non-members +\$15.00 materials fee. *Students who take both Part I and Part II need only pay the materials fee once.* Class Limited to 14 Students

Class 1: World Building & Characterization

Class 2: Plot

Class 3: First Draft, Research, & Gross Problems

Class 4: Chapter Breaks & Exposition

#### Part II: How to Write it Well

**Mondays, August 3,10,17,24, 6:30-8:30pm**

\$65 members, \$75 non-members +\$15.00 materials fee. Class Limited to 14 Students

Class 1: Scenes

Class 2: Polishing Prose

Class 3: Dialog

Class 4: Finishing Touches & Critiques

Each class will include a lecture, discussion, prepared exercises, and class time to work on your own writing projects. You'll also receive a copy of the book, *Revising Fiction: Making Sense of the Madness*, a list of recommended reading, and a self-editing checklist.

**Kirt Hickman**, author of the 2008 science-fiction conspiracy thriller *Worlds Asunder*, was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1966. Kirt was a technical writer for fourteen years before branching into fiction. During his technical career, he made a living out of taking complex sets of requirements, or in this case advice, and boiling them down into simple, effective procedures. His methodical approach to self-editing has helped many make sense of the mass of advice available to the novice writer. He teaches self-editing classes through SouthWest Writers. He has been a mentor in the SWW mentoring program, has spoken at several conferences, and contributes a monthly column titled "Revising Fiction" to the *SouthWest Sage*.

### BEAR CANYON SENIOR CENTER WRITING CLASS

Larry Greenly and Rob Spiegel

**Every Monday 2:00—3:15 p.m.**

Free to members of any Albuquerque Senior Center. Membership is to anyone over 50 and annual dues are \$13. Bear Canyon is two blocks north of Montgomery, one block east of Eubank.

### Survey and Chance to Win

Getting to know you, getting to know all about you—Knowing you, our members, will help SouthWest Writers serve you better. Are we providing the information and support you need? What is your expertise level and what do you need to advance to the next level in your writing? Help by giving us your ideas for speakers, classes and workshops. We also want to provide more opportunities for members to share their expertise.

As an incentive to fill out and return the survey, SouthWest Writers will enter all responding members into a drawing for a free one-year membership. Ease your bottom line while enhancing your membership experience.

To enter, fill out and mail the survey on the facing page, complete the survey on-line at [www.southwestwriters.com](http://www.southwestwriters.com), or respond at one of the monthly meetings.

### More Writing Resources

Check out [www.writersdigest.com](http://www.writersdigest.com)'s list of 101 Best Websites for Writers. The 2009 categories are:

- Agent Blogs
- Writing Communities
- Publishing Resources
- Jobs and Markets
- Creativity and Challenges
- Genres/Niches
- General Resources
- Fun for Writers

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

James Tritten	Robert Samuel Cromartie III
Lori Colt	Marganne Glasser
Marganne Glasser	Shanti Bannwart
Kathleen McLaen	Jason Witter
Susanne Bradley-Brown	Elizabeth Klungneff
Patricia Thomas	Ellie Marek
Molly Houston	Daniel Smith
Nancy Gettings	Diane Solomon
Linda Roche	Denise Hammer
Connie Adams	Michael Thompson
Dan Allen	Bonnie Boryana Lavine
Kristy Garcia Blea	Eugenia Bas-Isaac
Merredith Rea	Jean Van Dusen
Mary E. Smith	Dilek Mir
David Ek	Beverly Lanzette
Janie Chodosh	Wrona Gall
Lucy Moore	David Brown
Eric Brown	

## SOUTHWEST WRITERS SURVEY

MAIL TO: SWW, 3721 MORRIS NE, ST A, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO, 87111

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Website: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

My writing status: ☐ just interested ☐ learning to write ☐ working on getting published ☐ publishedIf published, indicate types: ☐ magazines ☐ newspapers ☐ blog ☐ online contributor ☐ book

Genre: \_\_\_\_\_

Writing awards: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be willing to serve as a resource for writers needing expert information? Examples: in-depth knowledge of a given country, occupation, hobby, unique niche such as accident investigation, crime investigation, medical knowledge.

Areas of expertise: \_\_\_\_\_

I learn about SWW meetings by ☐ Sage ☐ website ☐ email ☐ ABQ Journal \_\_\_\_\_ Other☐ I attend SWW meetings at least once a month. ☐ Saturday mornings ☐ Tuesday evenings ☐ Both☐ I attend at least three times a year. ☐ I have taken classes and workshops from SWW.☐ I have attended a conference by SWW. Topic of conference: \_\_\_\_\_☐ I rarely attend any SWW functions because of ☐ location ☐ schedule ☐ topics☐ I forget to go ☐ I don't need them Other: \_\_\_\_\_

What topics would you like to have addressed at SWW meetings or classes/workshops?

Please rank the topics below, with 1 being most desired.

☐ how to write ☐ critiquing ☐ finding markets ☐ editing ☐ publicity/marketing☐ finding an agent ☐ financial and legal how-to

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

I'd like to attend a conference on the following topics:

\_\_\_\_\_

Are you interested in presenting a talk or class on the craft of writing for SWW? ☐ yes ☐ no

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Past experience in presenting: \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer to get the Sage newsletter: ☐ online ☐ on paper

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Please use a sheet of paper for any additional comments.

## Successes

**Mark David Gerson's** *The Voice of the Muse: Answering the Call to Write* was named one of the top writing books of the year in the Independent Publisher Book Awards, also known as the IPPYs. Gerson's Silver Medal in the "writing/publishing" category was awarded in New York in conjunction with BookExpo America, the U.S. book industry's premier trade show. This was Gerson's second IPPY. He won a gold medal last year for his novel, *The MoonQuest: A True Fantasy*, which continues to win awards in New Mexico and nationally. His screenplay adaptation of the book is currently in active development with Albuquerque's Anvil Springs Entertainment.

**"Happy" Shaw**, a past president of SouthWest Writers from its early years, published a humorous non-fiction piece "Resolutions Can Be Small Beginnings" in the *Clinton Chronicle*. She also completed the entire third draft of the mystery novel she started writing while attending SWWriters last summer and fall, and is working on the second mystery novel in the series. She can be reached at HappyK-Shaw@aol.com.

**David Halperin's** novel, *Journal of a UFO Investigator*, will be published by Viking Press. The book has also been acquired by publishers in Germany, Italy, and Spain. Viking is planning a release early in 2011. See the notice in the online edition of *Publishers Weekly*: [www.publishersweekly.com/article/CA6646487.html?nid=2286&source=title&rid=329540425](http://www.publishersweekly.com/article/CA6646487.html?nid=2286&source=title&rid=329540425). His novel, *The October Man*, won the SouthWest Writers Storyteller Award in 2006 but has not yet been published.

**MaryLou Dellafiora's** theatre review was published May 12 on the home page of The Vortex, [www.vortexabq.org](http://www.vortexabq.org). The presentation is a one-woman show *Golda's Balcony* about the life and reminisces of Golda Meir, first female prime minister of Israel.

**Jerry R. Davis's** fourth book *Master of None, A Love/Hate Affair with Home Remodeling* has been published.

**Shirley Raye Redmond's** nonfiction picture book, *Blind Tom, The Horse Who Helped Build the Great Railroad* has been released by Mountain Press Publishing. The illustrations were done by Albuquerque artist **Lois Bradley**.

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*Condolences to Sandy Schairer*

*on the sudden loss of her husband Ed*

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### Websites for Contests

<http://www.firstwriter.com/competitions/>  
<http://www.writers-editors.com/Writers/Contests/contests.htm>  
<http://www.placesforwriters.com/contests/>

## Announcements

**The International Cat Writers' Association (CWA)** is now accepting entries for its 2009 Communication Contest with more than \$12,000 in prize money in its kitty. Award topics in over 48 categories include veterinary research, health, behavior, nutrition, seniors, kitten care, safety issues, the human-animal bond, humane issues and responsible ownership, plus awards for fiction and new writers.

CWA's writing competition is open to work published between June 16, 2008 and June 15, 2009. Rules and entry forms are available from [www.catwriters.org](http://www.catwriters.org) or by sending a self-addressed stamped business-size envelope to contest chair Nancy Marano, 7601 Vista del Arroyo NE, Albuquerque, NM 87109. The deadline for submitting entries is July 1, 2009.

**Women Writing the West** is holding its 15th annual conference at the UCLA Conference Center on September 11-13, 2009. The registration deadline is August 30, 2009. For further information see [www.womenwritingthewest.org](http://www.womenwritingthewest.org).

**Writing Away Retreats** in Breckenridge, Colorado features agents, editors and authors in a small setting (10-12 writers only per session with 4 staff members). Scholarship application deadlines have been extended to July 10 for SouthWest Writers members. Each writer at the retreat has the opportunity to get 10K words critiqued from each staff member at their session. Session I in October includes agents from Folio Literary, Fairbank Literary and the Owner/Editor of Red Hen Press. Session II includes an agent from Sterling Lord Literistic, JaBberwocky Lit and an editor from Harper Perennial. Each retreat also includes three gourmet meals a day, lodging in a spectacular million dollar+ lodge on the side of a mountain. For additional information contact Cicily Janus at [cicily@ryanjanus.com](mailto:cicily@ryanjanus.com) or 719-761-1955.

## SWW 2009 Third Quarter Writing Competition

### *Anything Goes Poetry*

Send us your poetry. Any style. Any meter. Any subject. Any spacing. Rhymed or unrhymed. Just fit it on one page. Contact information may go on either cover page or the page with the poetry. Postmark deadline: Wednesday, September 30. All entries \$10. Prizes: \$150/1st prize; \$50/2nd prize; \$25/3rd prize. Mail entries to SWW Quarterly Contest, 3721 Morris NE, Albuquerque, 87111.

## Registration Form for the SouthWest Writers' Conference

## THE NOVEL—ALL GENRES

Saturday, August 15, 2009

CNM Workforce Training Center, 5600 Eagle Rock Ave. N. E., Albuquerque, NM

Registration includes conference presentations, a box lunch Saturday, refreshments, and the possibility of a 10-minute pitch session with an agent or editor. The number of pitch sessions is limited and will be assigned on a first-come basis. Not everyone will get a session, but the earlier you register, the better your chances. **Register by July 15 (postmark date if mailed) to take advantage of the early bird rate.**

Conference times: Check in from 8:30-9:00 Saturday morning. Conference from 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of SouthWest Writers? ☐ YES ☐ NO

How did you learn about this conference? \_\_\_\_\_

Conference Cost (non-member registration includes a one-year membership to SWW):

\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$99.00 SWW member cost (registered by 7/15/09) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$129.00 SWW member cost (registered after 7/15/09) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$149.00 non-member cost (registered by 7/15/09) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$179.00 non-member cost (registered after 7/15/09) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate method of payment (the only credit cards we accept are MasterCard and Visa)

☐ Check or money order (made out to SouthWest Writers)

☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa

If paying by credit card:

Cardholder Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_ (the last 3 digits of the number near your signature)

Billing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

I'd like a ten-minute pitch session with:

☐ an agent ☐ an editor

Saturday lunch preference (check one):

☐ Italian Chicken Focaccia ☐ The Awesome Veggie ☐ Ham and More Adventure ☐ Albuquerque Turkey

Special diet requirements or allergies \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail (SWWriters@juno.com) or mail this registration form to: SWW, 3721 Morris NE, Albuquerque, NM 87111

**For an update on speakers, check out our website: [www.southwestwriters.com](http://www.southwestwriters.com)**



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

## SouthWest Sage

### SouthWest Writers

3721 Morris NE

Albuquerque, NM 87111

[www.southwestwriters.com](http://www.southwestwriters.com)

[SWWriters@juno.com](mailto:SWWriters@juno.com)

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Label shows your SWW Membership expiration date.

Renew promptly to retain your membership benefits.

#### Wanting to Start Groups/Looking for a Group

##### **Any Genre, Albuquerque NE Heights**

Meet every other Friday

*Krys Douglas* 505-830-3015

##### **Poetry**

*Billy Brown* 505-401-8139

*welbert53@aol.com*

##### **Nonfiction**

*Peggy Spencer* 505-270-8914

##### **Screenwriting**

*G. Hathaway* 505-249-7957

##### **Nonfiction, Santa Fe**

*J. James Cunningham*

*grandpajimsf@peoplepc.com*

##### **Nonfiction, Valencia County**

*Karen Keese* 505-261-0040

*skywriter@wildblue.net*

##### **Children's Books Santa Fe**

*Idiemand@cybermesa.com*

#### **Fantasy/Sci-Fi**

Tramway and Lomas

*Abner Perez* 505-363-1166

*Abnerdontwanna@yahoo.com*

#### Groups Seeking Members

##### **Any Genre**

##### **Estancia Valley Writers Group**

Moriarty Community Library

2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m.

*Tina Ortega* 505-832-2513

##### **Any Genre**

##### **Albuquerque Press Club**

201 Highland Park Cir. SE

Second Tuesdays 7 pm

*Samantha* 505-401-1561 or

*sclark.abq@earthlink.net*

##### **Any Genre, Rio Rancho:**

*Alice Harpley and Bob Harpley*

505-867-1408

*riversedgebob@cableone.net*

*riograndema@cableone.net*

##### **Mystery**

[www.croak-and-dagger.com](http://www.croak-and-dagger.com)

#### **Critique Groups**

Submit requests to

[SWWriters@juno.com](mailto:SWWriters@juno.com)

#### **Duke City Screenwriters**

Every other Thursday,

Flying Star on 7th and Silver.

*Marc Calderwood* 505-897-6474

*skatingkokopelli@hotmail.com*

#### **Land of Enchantment**

##### **Romance Authors**

Second Saturdays at noon.

*leranm.com*