

# SouthWest Sage

March 2010 [www.southwestwriters.com](http://www.southwestwriters.com)

## Annual Contest Judges Announced

The judges for SouthWest Writers' Annual Contest have been announced by Andy Mayo, Contest Chair. "We have a well-connected group of judges who are looking for great writers," he stated. "Opportunity abounds for our contest entrants." Writers should be aware that contacting any judge prior to winners being announced is immediate disqualification from the competition.

- Mainstream/Literary Novel:** Gabe Robinson, Harper-Collins
  - Mystery/suspense/thriller/adventure:** Thomas Colgan, Penguin Group USA
  - Science fiction/fantasy/horror:** Linn Prentis, Linn Prentis Agency
  - Historical:** Jessica Papin, Dystel and Goderich Literary Management
  - Middle Grade/YA Novel:** Elizabeth Evans, Kimberly Cameron & Associates
  - Memoir Book:** Jon Sternfeld, The Irene Goodman Literary Agency
  - Memoir Article:** Rebecca McGill, *Phoebe: A Journal of Literature & Art*
  - Mainstream/Literary Short Story:** Chris Cottrell, *The Portland Review*
  - Nonfiction Essay/Article:** Leigh Ann Henion, *Cold Mountain Review*
  - Personal Essay/Column:** Kathleen Guzda-Struck Newsroom Manager, *GlobalPost.com*
  - Nonfiction Book:** Sheree Bykofsky, Sheree Bykofsky Associates, Inc.
  - Children's Picture Book:** Paul Abdo, Editor-in-Chief, Abdo Publishing
  - Screenplay:** Tim Lambert, Abbot Screenplay Management
  - Poetry:** Lisa Lewis, *Cimarron Review*
- Lisa Lewis, Jon Sternfeld, Elizabeth Evans and Sheree Bykofsky have judged SouthWest Writers' competitions previously. All others are judging the competition for the first time.

## April National Poetry Month Reading

In addition to SouthWest Writers' regularly scheduled April meetings, to celebrate National Poetry Month we are holding a special poetry reading session, organized by Billy Brown. Mark your calendars for April 10 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m..

The reading will be held at Immanuel Presbyterian Church, 114 Carlisle SE, Albuquerque, in the Fellowship Hall. Please enter using the street-level door on the east side of Carlisle, near the northern end of the church building—do NOT go up the steps to the main entrance.

Billy Brown encourages all poetry lovers to attend, whether listeners or readers, "because poetry will save the world." Contact Billy at 401-8139, or [welbert53@aol.com](mailto:welbert53@aol.com) to reserve a spot to read. If you'd like to offer your help to organize, Billy says, "I need all the help I can get." Please call or email him to volunteer. A poetry book exchange will also be available at the reading.

## Check Out Our New Website

The address is still the same but our updated look is easier to navigate: [www.southwestwriters.com](http://www.southwestwriters.com) or [www.southwestwriters.org](http://www.southwestwriters.org). Let us know how you like it. The Storyteller photo is provided courtesy of Maxwell Museum of Anthropology. The artist is Dorothy Trujillo from Cochiti Pueblo. Remember, if you plan to order anything from Amazon.com, use the portal on our website and SouthWest Writers will earn a percentage of your purchase price.

If you have trouble viewing the site properly and your browser is Internet Explorer 6.0, you will need to update your browser. If you have other problems, please contact Larry at [swwriters@juno.com](mailto:swwriters@juno.com) or Ruth at [ruthsww@comcast.net](mailto:ruthsww@comcast.net).



## Marching Along

SouthWest Writers is still *marching* along, the transition of board officers running smoothly. Already this year (which is still new), we've had a tremendous conference, a fun workshop, a couple of classes, a new members'

breakfast, a few meetings with powerful speakers, and best of all—a lot of guests and new members at our monthly meetings.

Speaking of new members, the benefits of being a SouthWest Writer member are great. Your dues allow us to keep the doors open, not only for the church, where we meet, but the SWW business office (3721 Morris St. NE) as well. There is a multitude of expenses connected with running a business, as I'm sure you

know. In addition to keeping doors open, your dollars bring in top-notch speakers, keep the Sage newsletter in ink, and support the website. Without you, we'd be a mere shadow of our former selves.



**President  
Melody Groves**

Plans are to grow and expand this year, reaching out to other writing organizations, and writer support groups (bookstores, libraries, readers). We can't do this without your support and dues. No position on the SWW board is paid, we're all volunteers, happy to give our time helping our members grow to become professional writers or fulfill whatever writing goal they have.

If you haven't joined SouthWest Writers, please consider doing so. If anything, it looks good on a resume—shows the editor you're serious about writing. Another benefit of joining? You're around some amazing people! They are smart, full of ideas, and willing to share their publishing experiences. Countless times I've heard someone say, "I couldn't think of anything to write, but now that I've come to a meeting, I have dozens of ideas." Networking. What can I say?

In these "economic times," where else can you get such a deal for **five** dollars a month? Two meetings, food, friendship, and a newsletter. What a bargain! And students under 18 are \$25...a year!

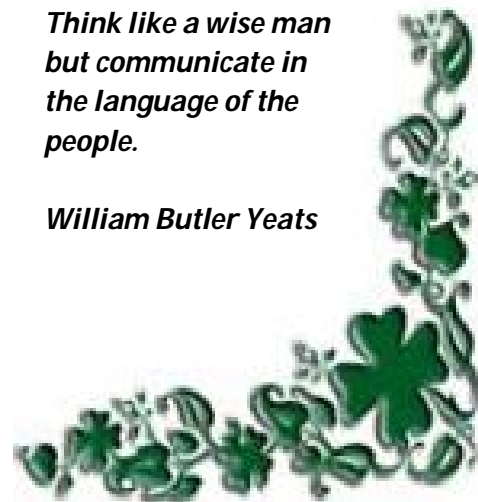
I'm still real new as president, so *march* on up, say "Hi," and let me know what you're writing. I'd love to chat with you.

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***Think like a wise man  
but communicate in  
the language of the  
people.***

***William Butler Yeats***



### SouthWest Sage Advertising Rates Worldwide Internet Circulation

The SWW website receives thousands of page requests every month.

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

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

### Annual Membership in SouthWest Writers

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

Requires proof of student status

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

Download the Sage from [www.southwestwriters.com](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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### SouthWest Writers Statement of Financial Condition (Balance Sheet) December 31, 2009

#### ASSETS

##### Current Assets:

Checking/Savings	
Sandia Area Credit Union	\$ 3,066
NM Educators Credit Union	5,356
Petty Cash	102
Savings-AG Edwards	48,085
Total Checking/Savings	56,609

Accounts Receivable	240
Fixed Assets (Property/Equipment)	0

TOTAL ASSETS \$ 56,849

#### LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Current Liabilities:	Taxes	\$ 345
Equity		
Restricted: Scholarships	185	
Unrestricted Retained Earnings	55,893	
Current Year Funds Increase	426	
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$ 56,849	

Harold M. Burnett, Treasurer

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Jeanne Bereiter  
Paula Papponi  
James Healey  
M. Kathryn Peralta  
Joanne Frederikson  
Marcie Summerlin  
Debra Turner  
Richelle Grant  
Deborah Marlene Grant  
Mary Frances Powers  
Marti Johns  
Bonnie Rockman  
Jeanne Favret  
Jane Johnson  
Judy McFadden  
Valerie Fladager  
Brinn Colenda  
Kimberly Mitchell  
Galen Kindley  
Michelle Jager  
Michael Dominguez  
Lucia Zimmitti  
Robert Downs  
Sally McCleary  
Diana Ceres  
Ramona Gault  
Elissa Gomez  
Penny Hogan

### CONGRATULATIONS to the Winners of the SWW 2009 Fourth Quarter Writing Competition

#### My Most Memorable Character

**1st Prize:** Ruth Friesen, Albuquerque, NM for "Arnie's Hats"

**2nd Prize:** A.C. Williams, Haven, KS for "June Landreth"

**3rd Prize:** Elizabeth Rose, Galisteo, NM for "Butterfly Messenger"

#### Honorable Mentions (alphabetical):

Alan Carlson, Albuquerque, NM for "Bob Waldmire"  
Lola R. Eagle, Albuquerque, NM for "A Good Teacher Never Dies"  
Yvonne Hood, Vancouver, WA for "My Most Unforgettable Character"  
Sey Kamm, Los Lunas, NM for "My Most Memorable Character"  
Kane S. Latranz, Albuquerque, NM for "Tea with Me"  
Charles R. Powell, Albuquerque, NM for "Charlie Brown, the Original"

## Revising Fiction: The Opening Scene

by Kirt Hickman

Your opening scene must accomplish several things:

### Make it clear from the outset who your hero is

Write the first scene of Chapter 1 from your hero's point of view. I go a step further and make my hero the first named character in the book. Your reader will pick up on these cues. If you start Chapter 1 from the viewpoint of some other character, your reader will incorrectly assume that this character is the hero, which might cause confusion later on.

### Show your hero's ordinary life

Your story should pull the hero away from his ordinary life. Before it does, however, you must show the reader what that life is like. This will help the reader understand the impact the crisis will have on that life and on the hero. Show the reader what kind of person your hero is. Give her a moment to connect with him in a setting she can understand and relate to.

### Hook your reader

Many people will read the first page of a book while they're standing in the bookstore deciding which book to buy. If your story doesn't rev up by the bottom of the first page, you'll probably lose these readers. Therefore, give your hero an immediate desire, even if it's just a cup of coffee, and place an obstacle between him and the thing he wants. Otherwise your opening will lack tension.

My first novel, *Worlds Asunder*, begins:

"It was really embarrassing," Edward "Chase" Morgan drew the top card from the deck: the queen of diamonds. "We'd just returned from hitting a crack factory and warehouse in Cuba. This was back when President Montros thought he could stop the drug trade with air strikes."

He tapped his cards on the table. Michelle Fairchild, his materials engineering intern from Mars Tech, had won every game that evening. Not this one, though, if he could help it. Chase needed just two cards to win and Michelle hadn't laid down any of hers. Unfortunately, the queen wasn't one of the two. He tossed it onto the discard pile.

Smiling, Michelle picked it up, then placed it and two others on the table. Chase groaned. That group put her in the lead and, at double or nothing, the credits were starting to add up.

The opening dialogue promises an embarrassing story about my hero, Chase Morgan. It hooks the reader in just four words. The rest of the paragraph reveals Chase as an

adventurous character, the card game gives him an immediate want, Michelle presents an obstacle to victory, and the credits provide the stakes of the game.

### Make your hero likable

As the scene progresses, I show Chase caring (in a paternal manner) for both his intern and his dog, poking fun at himself, and losing the game graciously. The scene gives the reader several reasons to like him.

### Define your hero's goal

Because you need to show a snippet of your hero's normal life before crisis disrupts it, you might not introduce the external conflict (your hero's goal in the story) until some time later. Nevertheless, reveal his goal before the end of the first chapter. In *Worlds Asunder*, I do this about two pages later:

The comm panel buzzed. Chase stretched his lanky frame and got to his feet, then leapt to the terminal against the slight lunar g.

"We've got a ship in trouble," Security Chief Stan Brower said. "The *Phoenix*. Snider needs you to assemble a team..."

[Chase] logged into NASA's data net and scanned the *Phoenix* file. He scrolled past the physical statistics—size, class, thrust-to-mass ratio—and came to the corporate data.

OWNER: Stellarfare

CREW: Randy Lauback, Phyllis Conway

He read the last line again. His investigations career had come full circle, it seemed. It would end where it had begun. With Randy Lauback.

Chase knew then that he had to take the case, however long it might last, and follow it through to completion. He owed Randy that much.

This not only defines his goal, solving the *Phoenix* case, but also gives him a personal stake (some unspecified, yet important, history involving the ship's pilot).

If you haven't accomplished all these things by the end of Chapter 1, find ways to do so. This may mean deleting scenes from the beginning of your book and starting the story when the crisis occurs; it may mean changing the viewpoint character of the opening scene or moving a different scene—one written from the hero's viewpoint—to the front of the book; or it may mean accelerating the pace by moving background information to later pages.

Kirt Hickman, author of *Worlds Asunder*, a science-fiction conspiracy thriller, and the 2009 self-editing guide *Revising Fiction*, teaches "Revising Fiction" courses through SouthWest Writers.



## Writing With the Senses

by John J. Candelaria

One of the pleasures of poetry is to write my first draft with a fountain pen. I am among a small group of writers who use some form of pen—fountain, rollerball, or ballpoint to release their story onto paper. They are a group affectionately called pen aficionados. Our love of pens brings an added dimension to our writing—an exciting sensual experience.

Our pens and pencils first enter our mind when we see a pen in a catalogue, at a pen store, or in the hands of another writer. As that beautiful color catches our attention, it slowly becomes a vision we pursue. We long to possess this pen and bring it into our own clan of pens. When it arrives at our homes, it comes in a small box, three by seven inches—sometimes smaller, sometimes larger. It is those few moments when we open the box, lift and touch the pen with our hand that every pen enthusiast prizes. Our new tool will now take us on another journey in writing with the senses.

I begin most of my poems with pen and paper before I move my words into my computer. It is satisfying to see my words flow from my mind through the fountain pen onto the silky paper. I like to savor my cool Namiki Sterling Silver fountain pen in my hand. The Crane design on the cap and barrel reminds me of the over 40 sandhill cranes I see feeding in a field near my condominium in Corrales, New Mexico.

My sensation presses on as I hear the touch of the gold nib on the smooth vellum Clairefontaine paper. Then I see the midnight black ink form my poetic six end words of a lovely first sestina stanza.

I use another fountain pen to change the timbre of my writing as I begin the fourth stanza. My dark blue Pelikan fountain pen glides effortlessly, spilling my words onto the satiny paper. As I begin my sixth stanza, my Sheaffer black and chrome PFM fountain pen, with its extra-fine white gold nib exudes thin words onto the paper and keeps the poetic flow alive.

The completion of the first draft of my sestina happens with the writing of the envoi, three lines using two of the six end words per line. My large Waterman Le Mans 100 fountain pen rushes the 18-karat gold nib over the vellum paper as it announces the poem's end.

My writing experience is not limited to the use of a fine fountain pen. Ballpoint pens, rollerball, and mechanical pencils are included in my ménage of quality writing instruments. This band of pens and pencils rests in a 48-pen

leather case (24 fountain pens and 24 ballpoint pens) among assorted penholders and wraps.

Fine writing implements present an array of colors and materials described in memorable words and phrases: rhodium-coated solid silver and enamel; sterling silver with blue lacquer; honey blond-granite with gold vermeil trim; polished palladium and lacquer; platinum plate; black with blue cabochon; acrylic resin; abalone shell; palladium and pink gold finish; sculptured stainless steel; chrome; celluloid; and refined resin. Wood colors and gemstones attract and bewitch the eye: Jaguar black; dark blue herringbone; ice white; green stripes, black walnut; maple; ebony wood; hand polished briar; Kauri wood; redwood; African Blackwood; ruby; diamond; Tiger Coral; and White Pearl shell. Seen together these pens and pencils are a veritable rainbow of color that intoxicates the eye.



The pleasing colors of a ballpoint pen, the smooth stroke and clean line of a fine rollerball, as well as the use of a sleek, contemporary gold plated and black striped mechanical pencil will also capture the poetic words I compose, each bringing a unique experience to my verses.

If you have never experienced the joy a pen can bring to your writing, visit a pen store. Look around for the pleasing color of an attractive ballpoint or rollerball pen. Note how the balance and weight feels as you caress it. Then, take it "for a ride" and write your name on a clean pad. Let your senses discover the joy of writing with a fine pen. It may change how you begin your writing project, or add a sensual experience to your journal writing.

*John J. Candelaria is a poet who became a pen aficionado during his college years. Since then, he has collected over 75 fine writing pens and pencils. He says he has stopped collecting, but admits he recently saw a capless fountain pen with a retractable nib and clip that has captured his attention.*

### SWW 2010 First Quarter Writing Competition

#### *Your Funniest Winter Memory*

Send us an essay about your funniest winter memory. Double-spaced, up to 500 words. Postmark deadline: Wednesday, March 31. Please note if you grant publication permission. All entries \$10. Prizes: \$150/1st prize; \$50/2nd prize; \$25/3rd prize. Mail entries to SWW Quarterly Contest, 3721 Morris NE, Albuquerque, NM 87111.

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

**Saturday, March 6**  
10:00 a.m. to noon

**Don Bullis**

***Adventures in Writing: A 50-year Odyssey***

How and when I got started, what I wrote and how it was received: from non-fiction to fiction and back again.

**Don Bullis** has worked in public relations, educational projects and business. After a 20-year career in law enforcement, he is currently concentrating on historical research and writing and giving talks on historical subjects.

He's been a columnist for *New Mexico Independent* newspapers and the *Rio Rancho Observer*, and has written for *The New Mexico Magazine*, *The New Mexico Stockman* and *Tradition Revista* magazines. He is also the author of 8 non-fiction books and two novels: *New Mexico and Politicians of the Past*; *Duels, Gunfights & Shoot-outs*; *The Old West Trivia Book Revised*; *New Mexico: A Biographical Dictionary Vol II*; *New Mexico: A Biographical Dictionary Vol I*; *Bull's Eye*; *99 New Mexicans...and a few other folks*; *Bloodville*; *New Mexico's Finest: Peace Officers Killed in the Line of Duty, 1847-1991* (2nd edition, 1996 and 3rd edition 1999); and *The Old West Trivia Book*.

**Tuesday, March 16**  
7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

**Jeanne Shannon**

***The Poetry Family: The Poem, the Prose Poem, and the Lyric Essay***

What's the difference between a poem and a prose poem? What is a lyric essay and what does it have in common with poetry and some types of non-fiction such as the memoir? What is a haibun and why is it considered poetry, not prose? Are prose poems sometimes found hiding (or not) in the pages of novels? How does the genre (if that's what it is) called "fragmentary writing" relate to poetry and the lyric essay? And did you know that you might have written something in the form of fragmentary writing called *zuihitsu*? We will explore answers to these and other questions, recognizing that in contemporary writing the boundaries between genres are sometimes very blurred.

**Jeanne Shannon** holds an M.A. in English/Creative Writing from the University of New Mexico. Her work has appeared in numerous small-press and university publications including *Quarter After Eight*, a journal focusing on work that blurs the boundaries between prose and poetry.



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

**Rick Reichman**

***Big Screen Writing Techniques--that can even make your novel better!***

Write the page turner; intensify the plot. By understanding dramatic protagonist and antagonist and how they affect the structure and major turning points of your narrative, you will significantly enhance how you shape and write whatever story you are trying to tell.

**Rick Reichman's** students have sold numerous scripts to Hollywood, both film and TV. One of his students is currently Co-Executive Producer on the CBS hit *The Mentalist*. Many of his students have taken what they learned in his classes and have become published novelists, mystery, western, and memoir authors, and playwrights.

**Tuesday, April 20**  
7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

**Chris Eboch**

***Theme: the Soul of a Story***

Theme is the soul that truly brings a story to life. But often writers don't put as much energy into developing theme as they do with the more obvious elements of plot, characters and setting. The result can be a weak or obscure theme. In some cases, the reader may even get a completely different message than what the writer intended. Learn to identify what you really want to say, and bring it out in writing.

**Chris Eboch's** *Haunted* series follows a brother and sister who travel with their parents' ghost hunter TV show. The kids try to help the ghosts, while keeping their activities secret from meddling grownups. The *Haunted* series includes *The Ghost on the Stairs*, *The Riverboat Phantom* and *The Knight in the Shadows*.

Chris Eboch is also the author of *The Well of Sacrifice*, a middle grade Mayan adventure novel that is used in many schools, and eight other books. Chris is the New Mexico Regional Advisor for the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. Learn more at <http://www.chriseboch.com>.



**FIVE EASY STEPS: GET YOUR FICTION BOOK PUBLISHED****Rob Spiegel and Melody Groves****FICTION****March 11 – April 15, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.**

Thursday evenings 6 weeks  
 \$89 members, \$99 non-members  
 Class limited to 14 students

SouthWest Writers Conference Room  
 3721 Morris NE, Ste A (NW corner of Comanche and Morris)

Want someone to buy your novel? Rob Spiegel and Melody Groves will teach this class to propel you on your way to fame and fortune. The six classes will address markets, the submission process (proposals), writing the synopsis (critiqued in class) as well as suggested conferences (why you should attend) and finding an agent.

**Rob Spiegel** is the author of six published non-fiction books. **Melody Groves** is the author of one published non-fiction book and three fiction books.

**THE SECRET(S) TO A SUCCESSFUL BOOK SIGNING****Kirt Hickman****Monday, April 5, 6:30-8:30pm**

SouthWest Writers Conference Room  
 3721 Morris NE, Ste A  
 (NW corner of Comanche and Morris)  
 \$20 members, \$30 non-members  
 Class limited to 14.

If you've ever tried to sell books at a signing, you've learned this: Selling a few books may be easy, but selling a lot of books is much more difficult. According to *Guerrilla Marketing for Writers*, the national average for books sold at a signing is four, but your signings don't have to be that way. There are secrets to selling books at signings (and they don't have anything to do with talking your family and friends into coming to the store to buy your book). In "The Secret(s) to a Successful Book Signing" you'll learn when to sign, where to sign, what to bring, what to do (and not do), and what to say (and not say). This one-night class can transform your signings from lonely and depressing, to fun and profitable.

**Kirt Hickman**, author of *Revising Fiction: Making Sense of the Madness* and the award-winning science-fiction thriller *Worlds Asunder*, has sold nearly a thousand books at signings in the past year. He has been teaching classes for years and was awarded SWW's "Instructor of the Year" award in 2009. His down-to-earth, no-kidding-here's-what-you've-got-to-do teaching style has resulted in consistently sold-out classes, so reserve your seat early.

**LEARNING TO WRITE THE MOVIE WAY****Rick Reichman****Friday evening, April 16, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.****Saturday, April 17, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.****Sunday, April 18, 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

SWW Office: 3721 Morris NE at Comanche  
 \$175 members, \$185 non-members  
 Class limited to 14 students

"Learning to Write the Movie Way" is about understanding structure and approach and technique. The course is mostly designed for film writers, but is also helpful for writing any type of fiction.

There is a structure to film writing that anyone who writes can learn and use. In this weekend course we start with the construction of the basic element of the scene, then delve into character creation, move to the three-act structure and its major turning points, focus on movie speak (dialogue), and then learn how to write the great opening. Marketing and pitching are also taught.

**Rick Reichman's** students have sold screenplays to many Hollywood studios and have sold teleplays and been on writing staffs of numerous TV shows. One of his former students is currently co-executive Producer for the CBS hit "The Mentalist." In addition to his successful film students, a number of Reichman's students have used what they learned in his film writing classes and gone on to sell novels, short stories, and plays.

Rick has won several screenwriting contests and *optioned two screenplays*. His first book on screenwriting, *Formatting Your Screenplay*, has sold over 14,000 copies and his second book *20 Things You Must Know To Write a Great Screenplay*--published this past year--was nominated by *Foreword* magazine as best instructional book of the year and by the New Mexico Book Awards as best non-fiction book of year.



*Register for classes and workshops  
 online at [www.southwestwriters.com](http://www.southwestwriters.com)  
 or call the SWW office at 265-9485*

## Workshop

### WRITING CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Chris Eboch

**Saturday, April 24, 9:00 am - 4:30 p.m.**

\$79.00 for members, \$89.00 for non-members, (includes lunch)

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

In this **hands-on workshop**, Chris will explore the children's book markets, discuss the elements of writing for kids, and brainstorm appropriate ideas. She will review the requirements for different genres, age ranges, and markets. Each participant will start developing a story and will leave this workshop with an article or story in progress and a list of ideas for future development.

## Class

### GET YOUR NOVEL READY TO SELL! NOVEL REVISION

Chris Eboch

**Wednesday Evenings, May 5-26, 7:00-8:30 pm**

\$85 SWW members, \$95 non-members

Class limited to 14

SouthWest Writers Conference Room

3721 Morris NE, Ste A (NW corner of Comanche and Morris)

You finished the first draft of your novel. Congratulations! But now what do you do with it?

Bring a first, second or third draft of a novel. Learn how to take it apart, and put it back together again -- a whole lot better! We'll use in-class exercises to analyze what you have, find trouble spots, and plan how to fix them. If you have an unfinished novel that you are struggling to complete, you can also benefit from this class.

See Chris' bio on page 6.



**The 2010 HILLERMAN MYSTERY COMPETITION** is accepting murder or serious crime mysteries set in the Southwestern United States. The competition is open to writers who have never been the author of a published mystery. All manuscripts submitted must be original, previously unpublished works of book length (no less than 220 typewritten pages or approximately 60,000 words). Deadline is June 1. Visit [http://wordharvest.com/novel\\_contest.php](http://wordharvest.com/novel_contest.php) for complete rules.

## Successes and Announcements

**Nancy Coggeshall's** book *Gila Country Legend: The Life and Times of Quentin Hulse* was selected as a notable book of 2009 by the Tucson-Pima County Library for its Southwest Book Lovers List.

Fan letter for **Karen McKinnon**: I am a reader for the Library of Congress, Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. I record books at the NM State Library. The NM program specializes in books by New Mexican writers. Recently, I recorded *Set In Motion* by **Karen McKinnon**. I loved the book, the woman who edited my recording loved the book, and everyone I asked to read the book loved it. Patricia Jonietz

A new **critique group** for horror writers is forming in the Albuquerque area. Contact [karenselliott@comcast.net](mailto:karenselliott@comcast.net).

**Lorian Hemingway Short Story Competition** is accepting entries in its 30th annual contest. Writers will compete for a \$1,000 first-place prize, \$500 second-place prize, and \$500 third-place prize and several honorable mentions are also awarded. As an added prize, *The Saturday Evening Post* will publish our first-place winner. Payment by *The Saturday Evening Post* for publication of the winning story will be in addition to our \$1000 first-place prize. Stories in all fiction genres are welcome. Maximum length is 3,000 words, and writers retain all rights to their work. The final deadline is May 15, 2010. For complete guidelines, visit [www.shortstorycompetition.com](http://www.shortstorycompetition.com).

**Duke City DimeStories** launched an open mic event for prose in February. The monthly event will take place every third Thursday in the Garden Room at The Source, 1111 Carlisle Ave. SE (south of Central at Anderson). Sign up at 6:45 p.m. and the show starts at 7 p.m. Donation requested for admission. DimeStories are 3-minutes prose pieces read by the author. Performances will be recorded and the best pieces of the evening will be posted online at DimeStories.org and will be eligible for inclusion on DimeStories Radio and DimeStories Showcase events. For more information about DimeStories, visit <http://dimestories.org>. For information about the Albuquerque event, call 505-503-1380 or email [dukecity.dimestories@gmail.com](mailto:dukecity.dimestories@gmail.com).

**NM Book Coop Festival**, March 20, Clear Light Book Gallery, 851 W. San Mateo, Santa Fe NM, 10am -4pm  
[www.clearlightbooks.com/events](http://www.clearlightbooks.com/events).

**Albuquerque Antiquarian Book Fair, April 2-3**, UNM Conference Center, Albuquerque. More info at [www.unm.edu/~alshal/aabf.html](http://www.unm.edu/~alshal/aabf.html).

**New Mexico Library Association Annual Conference, April 7-9**, Visit [www.nmla.org/annual-conference-2010](http://www.nmla.org/annual-conference-2010) for the conference schedule.



## Using Life Experiences to Help You Write

by Melody Groves

Ever read a story and you cry right along with the hero? Or the action takes you back to a time and place you'd forgotten? How about the bittersweet moment watching your offspring leave home for the first time? It's all there in stories...that someone wrote. But how were they able to elicit such a gut feeling from you, the reader? It's all in the experience. Life's experiences.

Many of us cringe when we realize we're getting older. For a writer, that's a good thing. Because, besides wrinkles, what do we have a lot of? That's right. Experience. And experience makes for good writing. All you have to do is dig down deep and re-live that feeling. Yes, I know. It can be painful, but I guarantee you that your story will come alive.

And the experiences don't have to be feelings. They can be actions. What did it feel like when you went sledding? Kayaking? Pulling up weeds? Did your knees hurt, hands get tired and dirty? Dirt under the nails? Put this in your story.

Since I write westerns, my characters ride horses and shoot people, or get shot. In order to give authenticity to my story with horses, I either go riding, or remember a time I rode (I try to forget when I fell off—hey, my horse fell in a ditch and so did I). I immerse myself into that moment—head just missing a branch, the smell of sweaty horseflesh, the clopping of her hooves on the gravel, the exhilaration of a full-out gallop, even taking off the saddle and wiping down the horse. Being saddle sore I try to forget.

Remember back to the five senses and incorporate those into your story. The aroma of baking bread, sweet cinnamon wafting...flaky taste, the rectangular shape with knife slashes across the top, the sound of chewing, the feel of the

hard crust yet soft inside. Made you hungry yet?

A passion of mine is gunfighting, or Old West reenacting to be exact. We dress in period correct clothing—a must if you write westerns—and perform in Albuquerque's Old Town every Sunday during the many warm months. I have literally stared at a sheriff pointing a real gun at me (we use blank ammunition); walked shoulder to shoulder with Billy the Kid and his "posse"; and yes, been shot and died (usually three times each Sunday). What do I understand? As a writer, I know what it feels like—that adrenaline rush during gunplay. While I know they're not real bullets I'm dodging, my reactions are real. The adrenaline is real. Falling down in the street is real. I use these experiences to write better.

Just as an aside, when you're lying on the street (I don't recommend doing this unless it's blocked off), you can hear footsteps real clearly and most conversations several yards away.

Whatever your character is doing, I urge you to try it yourself. Except murder. Don't do that. Everything else however...

In one of my stories I had my main character wrestling with another one, and I couldn't get it right. A friend of mine suggested we try it ourselves. We did and sure enough, I discovered that if I put my knee into her shoulder blade as we were struggling on the floor, she couldn't move. So, I wrote my story just like that, and it worked well. A word of caution—if you need to find out how it feels to tackle somebody, ask them first.

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## Upcoming Conferences in New Mexico

SouthWest Writers extends a hearty THANK YOU to **Sandra Toro** for organizing our February conference, The Business of Being a Writer and A Showcase of New Mexico Novelists. Held at the National Hispanic Cultural Center, it was well-attended. She is organizing our next conference, **Emerging Multi-Cultural Voices**, to be held September 11.

The Sixth Annual **UNM Writer's Conference** will be held on Saturday, April 24 at the Continuing Education North Building. This conference, co-sponsored by SWW, will feature a keynote address by **Lois Duncan**, the author of more than 50 books ranging from juveniles to adult non-fiction but who is best-known for young adult suspense novels. Three editors and four agents will take pitches from registrants. The cost is \$150 per person. For further information go online: [dce.unm.edu](http://dce.unm.edu) and look for the 2010 Writer's Conference.

Look for opportunities this year in writing conferences in New Mexico:

**Latino Writers Conference**, May 19-22, [nhccnm.org](http://nhccnm.org)

**The Screenwriting Conference in Santa Fe**, June 1-6, [www.scsfe.com](http://www.scsfe.com)

**Taos Summer Writers' Conference**, July 11-18, [www.unm.edu/~taosconf](http://www.unm.edu/~taosconf)

**The Glen Workshop**, August 1-8, Santa Fe, NM, <http://imagejournal.org/page/events/the-glen-workshop/glen-workshop-2010>

**Taos Writing Retreat for Health Professionals**, August 1-7, [www.taoswritingretreat.com](http://www.taoswritingretreat.com)

**SouthWest Writers, Emerging Multi-Cultural Voices**, September 11, [www.southwestwriters.com](http://www.southwestwriters.com)

## SouthWest Writers' 28th Annual Writing Contest

The SouthWest Writers' 28th Annual Writing Contest encourages and rewards excellence. Cash prizes are awarded to the top three entries in each of 14 categories. In addition, first-place winners in each category compete for the \$1,000 Storyteller Award.

The contest is open to all original, unpublished work by English-language writers. **Deadline:** Postmarked no later than May 1, 2010. **Late entries:** Postmarked no later than **May 15, 2010** (late fee applies).

### Contest Categories & Submission Requirements

1. **Mainstream/Literary Novel**
2. **Mystery/Suspense/Thriller/Adventure Novel**
3. **Science Fiction/Fantasy/Horror Novel**
4. **Historical Novel**
5. **Middle Grade or Young Adult Novel**

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

6. **Memoir Book.** Submit the first 20 pages.
7. **Memoir Article.** No more than 1,500 words.
8. **Mainstream/Literary Short Story.** No more than 5,000 words.
9. **Nonfiction Essay/Article.** No more than 1,500 words.
10. **Personal Essay/Column.** No more than 750 words.

For the above five categories, manuscripts must be double-spaced.

11. **Nonfiction Book.** Submit the first 10 pages plus a book proposal of no more than 10 double-spaced pages plus a one-page, single-spaced query letter.
12. **Children's Fiction or Nonfiction Picture Book.** Submit the entire manuscript, maximum 10 pages.
13. **Screenplay.** Submit the first 20 pages in industry-standard format plus a one-page synopsis.
14. **Poetry.** Submit one poem per entry of no more than three pages, any format.

For the above four categories, follow the category-specific instructions.

### Contest Rules

1. Each entry must be in a separate envelope accompanied by a completed Entry Form and Entry Fee. No certified mail. Enclose a self-addressed, stamped postcard if you want notification of receipt.
2. Write the Category Number you are entering on the outside of the envelope below your return address. Be sure to circle the Category Number on the entry form.
3. Your entry must be original, written in English, and unpublished or un-optioned at time of submittal.
4. If your manuscript previously won 1st prize in a particular category, it is ineligible for that category.

5. Using standard manuscript formatting, your manuscript must be printed on one side of 8-1/2 x 11 or A4 white paper in 12-point Courier or Times New Roman, double-spaced. Synopses and query letters must be single-spaced. Poems have no spacing requirements. Screenplays should follow industry-specific standards.

6. Your name **may not** appear anywhere on the manuscript, synopsis, book proposal or query.

**7. Submit two (2) copies of the manuscript, synopsis, book proposal or query as specified for the category you are entering.** Manuscripts will not be returned. Manuscripts will be shredded or otherwise destroyed by October 31, 2010.

**8. If your Entry Fee includes the cost of a Critique:** Submit **three (3) copies of your manuscript** plus a large, self-addressed envelope with enough postage stamps affixed for return mail (i.e. a large SASE). **NO METERED POSTAGE.** The critiqued manuscript will be returned in your SASE in August, 2010.

9. All First (1st) Place winning manuscripts in each category are sent to the Storyteller judge in consideration for the \$1,000 Storyteller Award.

10. Winners in each category will be notified in August, 2010. Prizes are as follows: 1st Place: \$150; 2nd Place: \$100; 3rd Place: \$50.

11. Contest judging takes place in two phases. A qualified panel of writers and editors selects the top 15 entries in each category. Those top 15 entries are then judged by an agent, editor or publisher appropriate to each category. The top three winners in each category receive a critique from the commissioned judge. Contacting any judge during the contest period about an entry is an automatic disqualification.

12. The professional editors, agents and/or publishers commissioned as judges are not employees of SouthWest Writers (SWW) and their opinions do not necessarily reflect the opinions of SouthWest Writers.

13. As part of the annual SWW Novel Conference, a banquet will be held September 10, 2010 to announce and honor the top three (3) winners in each category. Winners will also be posted on the SWW website.

14. SouthWest Writers reserves the right to disqualify any entry if contest rules are not followed, in which case the entry fee will not be refunded. Common mistakes include: (1) Writer's name is on manuscript. (2) Incorrect fee is enclosed. (3) Incorrect number of manuscript copies is submitted (See Rule 7).

### Critique Service

You may request a critique by another professional agent or editor (judges critique only first-place winners) by circling the appropriate fee on the Entry Form, submitting three copies of your manuscript instead of two, and enclosing the correct fee with your submission.

## ANNUAL WRITING CONTEST ENTRY FORM

**A. Your CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

If other than United States:

Country \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

**B. Please circle the appropriate ENTRY FEE:**

ENTRY FEE FOR ALL ENTRIES EXCEPT POETRY				
Postmarked	Members of SouthWest Writers		All Other Entrants	
No later than	Contest Only	Contest & Critique	Contest Only	Contest & Critique
May 1	\$20	\$45	\$30	\$55
May 15	\$25	\$50	\$35	\$60
ENTRY FEE FOR POETRY				
First Poem	\$10	\$35	\$20	\$55
Each Additional Poem: \$5				

**C. Please circle the appropriate CATEGORY:**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14

(A separate entry form must accompany each submission)

**D. Indicate METHOD OF PAYMENT:**☐ Check or Money Order (no cash) in US\$ payable to SouthWest Writers☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**E: Sign Entry Form:**

In consideration for SouthWest Writers (SWW) acceptance of my work for review in the SWW Contest 2010, I hereby submit my entry and fee and agree to be bound by all contest rules. I understand that questions regarding the interpretation of these rules and any matters relating to the contest which are not specifically covered by the rules, will be decided solely at the discretion of contest officials. I will accept as final and be bound by all judges' decisions. I understand and agree that my manuscript will be subjectively evaluated, and SWW cannot accept liability for consequences arising from any opinion expressed. I hold harmless and indemnify SWW, its agents, employees, and volunteers for any and all losses, costs, or expenses incurred from any dispute arising from my participation in the contest. I acknowledge by my signature below that I have read, understood, and agree to be bound by these rules. I understand that my contest submission will not be accepted without my signature below.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Co-Author's signature (if applicable) : \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**F. Mail COMPLETED ENTRY FORM & FEE to:**

SouthWest Writers Contest 2010, 3721 Morris Ave. NE, Suite A  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87111-3611



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

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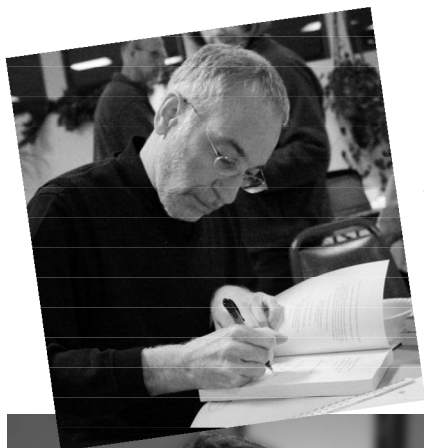
[www.southwestwriters.com](http://www.southwestwriters.com)

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

Change Service Requested

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

**Photo Gallery: January 19 Meeting**



*Gregory Lay*

*Mark David Gerson*



*Cynthia*



*Kathy Richter-Sand*



*Presenter Michael Clark*



*Penny Rogers*



*Photos by  
Peggy Spencer*