



Vol. 24, No. 5

May 2008

Writing Book Reviews

by Gary Draper

Every book makes different demands on the reviewer. No single approach is right for all books. The suggestions that follow are just that: suggestions. Use as many of them as seem pertinent, but remain responsive to the book under consideration.

I. Reading the Book

When you read, your critical faculty should be alert, but that doesn't mean you are poised for attack. You can do your best if you read in a spirit that is at once critical and sympathetic.

Read the whole book thoroughly and carefully. Reread what you don't understand. Don't skip forewords, prefaces, and other parts that may not appear integral to the text. What you learn here might help you to understand the book better. If possible, it's best to read the book twice, the first time to get an overview, the second time to test your impressions and gather detailed evidence.

Take notes as you read. The list that follows will give you an idea of what to watch for. Taking notes also helps you stay alert as you read, and gives you the opportunity to mark effective passages for quoting.

II. Questions to Ask as You Read

What are the author's subject and the broad field into which the work fits?

What approach does the author take to the subject? What is the central thesis? What are the author's assumptions? What methodology is used?

What are the author's primary sources? How comprehensive is the research?

For whom is the book written? Fellow scholars? Non-academics? Is the book appropriate to its audience?

How is the book structured? Is its development orderly and logical? Is it clear?

Is the author's prose readable? Exceptionally good? Does the author have an intrusive style?

Does the book have illustrations? An index? Bibliography? What other features does it have? Are they effective and useful?

How appropriate is the book's title? Does it promise essentially what the book delivers?

Are you aware of factual errors in the book? Oversights? Faulty assumptions?

Why was the book written? Has the author met these objectives?

What is your personal response to the book? Is it satisfying to read? Enjoyable? Convincing? Why? If it isn't, why not?

III. Writing the Review

Writing a book review is much like writing any other short essay. There is no universal formula, but following a few basic guidelines can simplify the task.

Review your notes and list the points you'd like to make.

Arrange those points in a logical order. Time spent now on organization not only produces a strong, clear

structure, but also allows you to concentrate on phrasing during the writing of the first draft. One possible way of setting up the essay is like this:

1. A brief description of the subject, aim, and scope of the book
2. An outline of its thesis and its bias
3. A detailed assessment of the author's main contentions
4. An evaluation of the book's major strengths and weaknesses
5. A survey of topics not yet covered (sources, illustrations, indexes, etc.)
6. An assessment of the book's place in the literature of its subject

Write the first draft, not stopping to fine tune the phrasing, but aiming to get onto the paper all that you have to say.

After some time has elapsed, read the draft critically, noting where it is ambiguous, incomplete, overwritten, etc.

Read the second draft, checking for errors in grammar and punctuation, and making sure that you have said just what you meant.

Type the final draft. Proofread the typed copy, and correct as necessary to ensure that it is free from errors.

“Writing a book review is much like writing any other short essay.”

Got Book Lust?

Here's a thought. SWW members are eligible for generous discounts on books published by UNM Press. Better yet, members can get UNM Press books free in exchange for writing a review. The Editor tells all on page 2.

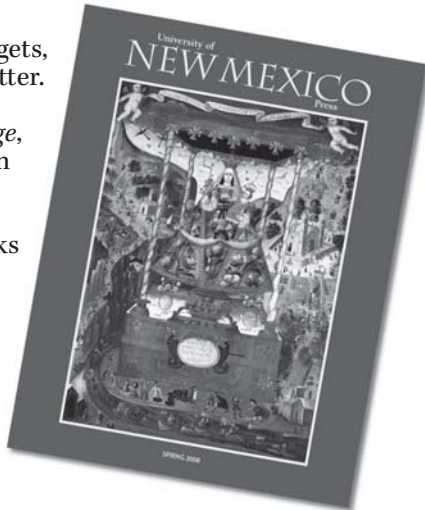
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From the Editor

Book lust comes with a writer's territory. Every author I've asked has a bad case of it--while some (including yours truly) have it worse than others.

As you know, one of the perks of joining SWW is a 20 percent discount on books published by UNM Press. Browse their online catalog (www.unmpress.com) and call (505) 277-1895 to order. You must refer to Luther Wilson to get the discount.

That's not as good as it gets, as I can make it even better. In exchange for writing book reviews for *SW Sage*, SWW members can earn totally free books from UNM Press. You must request free review books through me, Peggy Herrington, and I'll place the order from UNM Press. *SW Sage* Writers' Guidelines are published below and are also available on the *Sage* page at southwestwriters.org.



Caveat: *SW Sage* does not publish negative reviews so, in your opinion, the book must have over-riding value. Book availability is limited to first come, first served so don't delay. Go to UNM Press and choose your book today, then send the name of the book and author to me at peg@msn.com. I will assign you a book review which must be submitted within 60 days.

Free books inexchange for reviews are limited to those published by UNM Press, however, we publish book reviews in general. Card-carrying SWW members qualify for discounts on purchases at Hastings Books and Treasure House Books, for instance. See the member perks page on the SWW website for details on all member perks or benefits. Some of them are simply astonishing.

SW Sage Writers' Guidelines

You don't have to be an SWW member to be published in *SW Sage*. We're always looking for material about writing and publishing. Submissions focusing on personal experience are especially welcome: How-to articles on all aspects of researching, writing and publishing mainstream and literary, mystery, thriller, adventure, essays, romance, memoirs, science fiction, fantasy, horror, historical, children and young adult, inspirational, screenwriting, greeting cards and children's fiction and (creative) nonfiction. Book reviews and excerpts, short stories, and journalism articles are of interest, as well.

We want interviews with writers, agents, editors, publishers and producers, news and trends related to writing, and articles addressing the writing life, for example, balancing work and family, over-coming writer's block and increasing creativity and productivity.



Payment is made in bylines and clips. All rights remain with the author.

Deadline: 1st of the month prior to the issue day, for example, June 1st for the July issue.

Announcements, success stories, book signings, critique group info and other brief items may be submitted in the body of your e-mail.

Attach longer articles and stories in files formatted in .txt, .rtf or Word doc.

Font: Times New Roman 11 point.

Use one space after a period, single space text, no paragraph indent, a blank line between paragraphs, no right justification, add subheads for articles of 450+ words, no color.

Length: 200 to 1200 words; full page: 800 words; 1 column: 450 words (full page and 1 column length submissions preferred).

Image resolution: 200 dpi minimum, 300 dpi preferred. (Contact the editor for assistance.)

Include a brief bio and optional head-shot of the author.

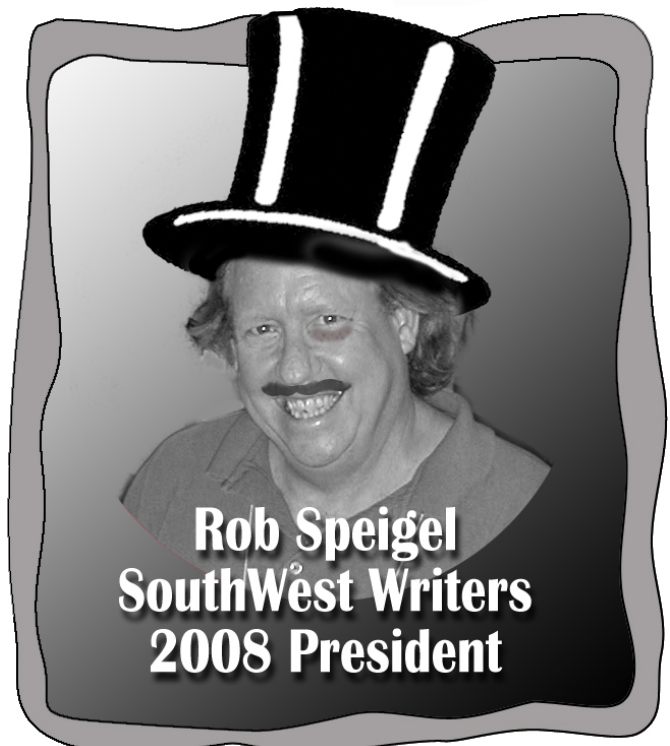
Submissions may be edited for accuracy, readability and length.

E-mail submissions and questions to peg@msn.com.

Queries are optional, and average response time is 1-2 weeks. If you haven't heard back in ten days, feel free to follow up.

Your interest and support of the *Sage* are greatly appreciated. For more information, talk to any of the fine folks who help produce it every month: **Harold Burnett, Lola Eagle, Larry Greenly, and Jeanne Shannon.**

Peggy



Rob Speigel
SouthWest Writers
2008 President



SouthWest Sage

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2008 SWW Annual Writing Contest



Submission deadline
is this month! Turn to
page 12 for rules and entry form.

How will you win the coveted **2008
SWW Storyteller Award** if you don't enter?

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Annual Membership in SouthWest Writers

Individual: \$60 (\$100 for 2 years), Two People: \$50/each, Student: Over 18* \$40,

Student: Under 18* \$25, Outside U.S.: \$65, Lifetime Membership: \$750

*Requires proof of student status. Download the Sage from SWW Website.

**Join us! First Saturday: 10am-Noon; Workshop: 1-4 pm. Third Tuesday: 7-9 pm.
New Life Presbyterian Church, 5540 Eubank NE, Albuquerque, New Mexico**

Mark Your Calendar!

**The SWW Memoir Conference: How to Write
and Publish your Personal Experiences**

Date: Saturday, August 16, 2008

Location: CNM Workforce Training Center
(Near I-25 and Alameda)

Minding Finances for Writers: From Receiving to Giving

by Sherri Burr

Many lawyers and writers dream of quitting their day job to write the Great American Novel. David Baldacci lives the fantasy. Author of 15 New York Times bestsellers, Baldacci is a graduate of University of Virginia Law School. He practiced corporate law and litigated numerous cases over a nine-year period before his first novel *Absolute Power* was auctioned off to Time Warner Books. The movie rights were purchased by Castle Rock Studios and subsequently filmed by Clint Eastwood's production company. Along with his sister, author Sharon Baldacci (*A Sundog Moment*), David Baldacci spoke about the writing process to the September 2007 annual conference of the National Federation of Press Women in Richmond, VA.



Baldacci grew up in a family enamored with going to the library.

As a child, he loved telling tall tales and one day his frustrated mother suggested that he write his stories down. Now he says, "I write because I cannot not write. Ideas come easily. I can walk down the street and fall down, and come out with 12 ideas."

Baldacci's ideas and tales are now gigantic. He regularly interviews individuals from the FBI, CIA, DIA, and other Washington acronyms. He does his own research. Initially, he found it a challenge to put such people at ease. Now they come begging to put their agency in one of his novels. One secret agency gave him a tour and took him to lunch, hoping to show up as the bad guys in his next novel.

Baldacci obtained his agent by not following the rules. He simultaneously submitted a one-page query letter and the entire manuscript to six agents. All six called back within a week. He flew to New York to interview the six and selected one who remains his agent today. That agent auctioned *Absolute Power* off to Time Warner Books. He says he was lauded in the press as an overnight sensation, but it took 7,000 nights to get there.

Then came the film deal and the legendary filmmaker Clint Eastwood starring in and directing *Absolute Power*, the movie. Baldacci says, "The sort of books I write tend to make great movies. They have lots of action." A major Hollywood producer is currently developing the Camel Club series for a franchise film vehicle and other producers are working to turn two of his characters, agents Sean King and Michele Maxwell, into a recurring television show based on his books. He suggests that writers be cautious about selling to Hollywood, however.

"They buy 100,000 properties a year and only make 425 movies a year." Not great odds. Also, authors have to realize that a director can only film part of a book so some of the characters and action will be left out.

While all writers complain about writer's block, Baldacci does something about it. He moves on to other projects or takes a walk and daydreams. "I write in my head," he says. He dismisses the idea that a writer has to commit to writing a certain number of words a day.

"Sometimes I write zero words in a day, sometimes 10,000 words in a day." He urges writers to not set a limit, and thereby squelch their creativity with word boundaries.

"Some of my best writing came from the seat of my pants," he acknowledges.

He acknowledges that some of the best fiction he ever wrote came while penning briefs for clients as a lawyer. He says that is good training for novelists because you have to take a set of facts and massage them into a credible story about what happened to your client.

Baldacci has put the earnings from the 65 million sold copies of his novels to good use by founding, along with his wife Michelle, the Wish You Well Foundation whose goal is to eradicate illiteracy in the United States. He says that 99 percent of dollars for adult literacy programs come from private foundations. The United States experiences an approximate 50 percent literacy rate, which surprises many people until they examine the true dropout rate of students from high school.

The good news is that for those of us who keep reading, he keeps writing.

Professor Sherri Burr has taught law (copyright, art, entertainment, and intellectual property) at the University of New Mexico for almost two decades. She is the author of six books, four of which relate to art law and entertainment law.

Mind Your Own Business

Free your mind and time for writing!

Is filing fun? Of course not! Does poise come in a tube? Afraid not! This series of classes is designed to minimize the pain and fuss of record keeping and marketing. Take advantage of the knowledge and savvy of our veterans to break free of whatever is holding you back. Our small classes (14 students max) allow for plenty of individual attention. They can provide the inspiration, the elucidation needed to help launch or redirect your writing career.

Reach your goals with new classes coming this spring:

1. Identify your markets with **Rob Spiegel** as your guide. Develop a list of targets and a strategy to evaluate them.
2. Take your target market list to **Melody Groves** for help customizing your bios and promos.
3. Learn the do's and don'ts of interviewing with live demonstrations and practice sessions with **Melody Groves**.
4. Put the final polish on the presentation with **Jonathan Miller**. Whether your speech is in an elevator or a stadium, be prepared to inform, engage, and motivate your audience.

Watch for dates and details on SouthWestWriters.com and here. Space is limited so sign up soon!

SWW Classes

Classes are held at the SWW conference room at 3721 Morris St. NE, Suite A, in Albuquerque, which is available to members wishing to teach writing skills. SouthWest Writers is not responsible for the opinions and methods of the instructors. However, we welcome constructive criticism and comments on any class, and these should be forwarded to the office. Classes are limited to 14 and may be tax deductible. Register by calling SWW (505) 265-9485 between 9 a.m. and noon weekdays.

Thursdays, May 1- May 22, 6:30-8:30pm

\$65 members, \$75 non-members

Class Limited to 14 Students

Revising Fiction: Making Sense of the Madness--Part II Nuts and Bolts

Class 1: Scenes

Class 2: Polishing Prose

Class 3: Dialog

Class 4: Finishing Touches & Critiques

Kirt Hickman was a technical writer for fourteen years before branching into fiction. He's 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 can help you convert your first draft from mess to masterpiece. Kirt has completed five novels and is currently working on a book titled *Revising Fiction—Making Sense of the Madness*. He's been an SWW mentor since the inception of the mentoring program and has participated in discussion or critique panels for multiple SWW conferences.

Wednesdays, June 4 – July 30, 2008, 6:30 - 9:00pm

\$150/member; \$180/non-member, includes 6 month SWW membership with online SW SAGE; extended to 1 year for an additional \$20 Maximum 10 students, Minimum 6

Working Fiction: Challenges and Peer Critique

One of the best stimuli of fresh work is the challenge of an outside idea, followed by respectful peer critique. In seven weekly assignments, we will write to various aspects of fiction—voice, description, dialogue, point-of-view, etc.—and then bring our work into the conversation of critique. The skills of peer critique will be taught and modeled. The instructor is best known for her Young Adult fiction, but assignments will be appropriate to any fiction form: novel/short story, realistic/fantastic, adult/juvenile. Come prepared to work hard.

Betsy James is the author of sixteen books for young adults and children. Her most recent title, *Listening at the Gate* (Atheneum 2006), is a James Tiptree Honor Book and a New York Public Library Best Book for the Teen Age. Visit her on the web at www.betsyjames.com.

Free Writing Class for Seniors

SWW offers a free writing class at Bear Canyon Senior Center every Monday from 3:00- 4:15pm. Taught by Larry Greenly and Rob Spiegel, classes are free to members of any Albuquerque Senior Center. Membership is open to anyone over 50 and annual dues are \$13. Bear Canyon is two blocks north of Montgomery, one block east of Eubank.

Betsy James Won't Teach Writing

For some time the Olympians of SWW have been after me to teach a writing class, forging patiently through evasions like *No time* and *Anybody who'd want to write is certifiable*. It's time to tell them, and you, the truth.

Writing can't be taught.

And I'm not a teacher. It's like, Don't come to me with your whining, I'm trying to get two people I don't know yet over an imaginary mountain range without using too many adverbs.

On the other hand, if you, as another working writer, want to sit down with me and talk shop, that's different. Hell, if you have secrets about adverbs I'll buy you coffee.

For there are aspects of writing that are well served by hashing them over with peers. Plot and basic armature, say. Or point-of-view; dialogue; use of flashbacks; those damned adverbs...uh...I've got a suspicion that *all* aspects of writing are well served by the critique of peers. You know, where you say, Look, I've got 'em halfway up the mountain and they don't even like each other, what can I do? and somebody says, Could you switch to the POV of the spaniel? and you say, Eureka! Thanks!

Now *that's* helpful. Peer critique is gold—but it must be skillful. Writers who gather to be challenged by outside assignments and puzzle over the resulting prose often need a bit of training to be effective, i.e., how to use respect and curiosity to stimulate better writing and not act like Norman Mailer.

The leader would not “teach” such a group. I despise long, Latinate verbs for stuff we do all the time, like *congregate* and *masticate*, but in such a group the leader would *facilitate*.

So: Betsy James will facilitate... Wait, though. Some of you think I write about bunnies or dragons. This is the cross borne by those who publish picture books (which are actually oral poetry) and then switch to fiction that gets shelved as Fantasy. I assure you my writing is certified bunny- and dragon-free, and rigorous prose is not age-specific.

How about this:

Betsy James won't teach writing. Betsy James will facilitate an eight-week group of writers by furnishing seven prose assignments to be hashed over in peer critique, the skills of which will be taught. No bunnies. No dragons. No Mailer. Great shoptalk.

Sound OK to you?

Don't be a silly bird. Sign up for a class today.



Announcements

Sunday, May 11 from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. Celebrate the reprint of *More Gifts from a Southwest Kitchen* by Adela Amador, illustrated by Claiborne O'Connor. Meet Adela Amador and artist Claiborne ("Mike") O'Connor. Bring Mom! Taste pies and other treats from Adela's collection of family recipes. Amador Publishers Mother's Day Book Bash: Art is... OK & Company Gallery & Sculpture Plaza, 3301 Menaul Blvd. N.E., Suite 28, Albuquerque. Details at www.amadorbooks.com/books/moregifts.htm.

Jean D. Schoppe needs help to write her story (a memoir), which she thinks will help other people. Payment negotiable. Call (505) 266-7192.

Upcoming Writers to Writers presentations at 6:30 p.m. at the Westside Hastings (corner of Coors Rd. and Montano):

May 12, 2008: "Who Qualifies to Write a Memoir?" by Jerry Davis.

June 9, 2008: "The Heartful Art of Revision," an Intuitive Approach to Editing by Mark David Gerson

July 14, 2008: "Severe Interrogation Methods: How to Get Sources to tell the Truth by Mistake" by Rob Spiegel

August 11, 2008: "The Purposeful Writer" by Laura Baker

Howard Fried loves coming to SWW meetings, but his eyesight prevents him from driving at night. If a volunteer would drive him to the Tuesday night meetings, he would be grateful. He lives near 6th & Menaul at 2820 Los Tomases Dr NW. His phone is 342-1724.

A writing conference for youth ages 10-17 will be held on Saturday, June 7, at the UNM Student Union Building. Workshop presenters include Lois Ruby, Betsy James, Vaunda Nelson, Teresa Cutler, Dan Mayfield, and Peter Ziomek. For more information, contact Naomi Sandweiss, Youth Supervisor, UNM Continuing Education (505) 277-0698.

Signings

May 24 from 2-4 p.m.: Jonna-Lynn K. Mandelbaum will sign *Unspoken Farewell*, her most recent book, based on her life in Africa, at the Moby Dickens Bookshop in Taos.

May 10, Mark David Gerson will be signing and selling copies of *The MoonQuest* and *The Voice of the Muse: Answering the Call to Write* at the Mother's Day Book Fair at the Eldorado Village Shops in Santa Fe.

Successes

Scott & Paula Merrow are happy to say that their short film, "The Spider Experiment," recently won a Special Jury Award at the Worldfest-Houston Film Festival. They wrote the screenplay and directed the movie. An interesting note: the origin of the screenplay is a short story written in Elsie Kreischer's class on writing children's stories. Also, their short screenplay, "Mortimer Smedley's Invention," won a Platinum Remi Award in the screenplay competition at Worldfest. And in February, another of their short screenplays, "Ooh La La," won Best Short Comedy Screenplay at the International Family Film Festival in Hollywood.

Cliff Gravel's short story "The Giant Rat of Sumatra" was published in the latest issue of *Words Of Wisdom Magazine*. His short story "Secret Spices" was published in the latest issue of *Fresh Boiled Peanuts Literary Journal*.

Frank Carden's novella *Prostitutes of Post Office Street* won the 2006 Sol Books national prose contest and has been published by Sol Books as an ebook at booksonboard.com. It will soon be available at Amazon.com. The work drops the reader into the red-light district of Galveston, where crooked cops and down-on-their-luck prostitutes dwell. Yet, in this seedy part of town, there is hope as these people seek to rise above the pain of broken hearts and misplaced passions, and break free from the ruts their lives have fallen into.

Irene Blea has an article, "New Mexico's Earliest Women," published on page 23 of the March issue of *New Mexico Woman*.

Catherine Fridey collected her mom's best French recipes and compiled them into an attractive, keepsake spiral cookbook. It contains over 100 well-loved recipes including appetizers, main dishes, and desserts. Cooking instructions are clear and easy to follow, and many recipes include interesting notes regarding the dish's origin or history. Price: \$9.00, plus \$3.05 for shipping and handling. Publisher: Morris Press Cookbooks

Mark David Gerson's writing book and 2-CD set, *The Voice of the Muse: Answering the Call to Write* and *The Voice of the Muse Companion: Guided Meditations for Writers*, were featured at the on-site bookstore for the Julia Cameron Conference in Sedona, AZ in April. All copies of both the book and CD set sold out! *The Voice of the Muse* book also received its first two Amazon reviews in April, both 5-star, and is glowingly reviewed in the spring issue of Michigan's *The Written Word*. This just in: *The MoonQuest* just got its 12th 5-star review on Amazon!

Someone Asked If I Had Ever Written a Love Poem

by Len Hecht

Once I wrote a poem of love
to a lass I thought I'd make mine.
I set on paper only sweet thoughts,
made sure all the words did rhyme.

I told of hair, golden tone,
eyes of the deepest blue.
Lips of fire, shell like ears,
skin of the freshest hue.

I praised her svelte figure,
the beauty of her face,
admired her choice of garb,
told of her impeccable taste.

I scribbled, how bright she was,
though she held no degree.
much cleverer than I, by far,
a natural savant was she.

Alas, to my rhyme she did reply,
with no ifs, no ands, nor buts,
that though I flattered her very much,
she really couldn't stand my guts!

Write What You Know...If You Dare by Mark David Gerson

Write what you know. How often have you heard that? How often has it frustrated you?

"I can't write about a black man unless I'm black."

"I can't write about a woman unless I'm a woman."

"I can't write about flying an airplane unless I'm a pilot."

"I can't write about a gay man or a lesbian because I'm not one."

"I can't write about an historic incident until I research it fully and completely."

How much research do you think Leonardo da Vinci did before he painted *The Last Supper*? Of course, he knew the story from the Bible.

But there are no physical descriptions of that scene or those individuals anywhere in any credible book.

Da Vinci knew *The Last Supper*. He knew it as well as if not better than any biblical source written decades after the fact. He knew it in his heart. Not in his head, which would have cautioned him against attempting anything so out of his experience, but in his heart. He had lived the emotions he represented and those emotions are the only truth in that masterful painting.

So you've never experienced the discrimination a black woman or gay man might have felt? Have you ever been attacked for who you are? Have you ever been denied what you believed was rightfully yours? Have you ever felt your personhood and humanity under attack?

No? Think back to your childhood. Think back to the emotions of childhood, to the bullies in the schoolyard, to the adults who criticized you.

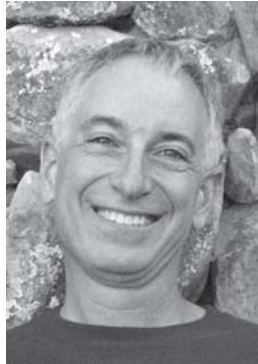
Do more than think back. Relive and re-experience those emotions. You have lived some of those same emotions you feel you dare not describe in someone else.

Accept the dare. Step up to the challenge. You owe it to yourself to at least try. For if any character — however far removed from your life and lifestyle — comes to you and demands that his or her story be told through you, then you can only trust that all you need lies within you.

Of course, research may be required. Remember, though, that unless you are writing a dry recitation of history, it's the emotions that will touch your readers, that will affect them, that will move them to deeper places within themselves. And we all — whether we're black, white, green or purple — draw from the same pool of emotions.

If you can give yourself permission to tap into that pool within you, you will always write what you know. For all you need to know lies within you.

Now. At this moment.

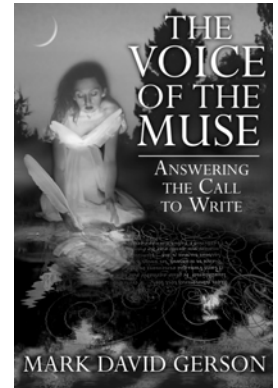


Write what you know — what you know in your deepest heart. Write your fire. Write your truth.

The only knowledge that's unique to you is the knowledge of your heart, the wisdom of your soul, the force of your passion. Write from those places that no one else can and you will touch readers in ways that no one else can.

Go ahead and write what you know...if you dare.

Excerpt from *The Voice of the Muse: Answering the Call to Write*
© 2008 Mark David Gerson. *The Voice of the Muse* book and CD set are available at Amazon.com, calltowrite.com and selected U.S. bookstores.



Mark David Gerson has taught writing as a creative and spiritual pursuit for more than 15 years in the U.S. and Canada. Author of the award-winning novel, The MoonQuest: A True Fantasy, Mark David has also created The Voice of the Muse Companion, a 2-CD set of guided meditations for writers. Mark David lives in New Mexico, where he's working on a screenplay adaptation of The MoonQuest and a sequel to the novel. For more information on Mark David or to subscribe to his free newsletter, visit www.markdavidgerson.com.

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SWW Events & Workshops

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

Saturday, May 3, 10:00 a.m. to noon

The Real-World Craft of Journalism

Journalism is a different beast than other types of writing, because, simply, we don't make it up. Journalism is a craft. Like bricklaying, a journalist takes pieces and parts from the real world and assembles them into something that can stand on its own. Sometimes the crafts are beautiful. Sometimes, not.

The old axiom, write what you know, applies as much to journalism as other types of writing, but it means more. Through research, interviews, and experience, a journalist has to really know what the story is and what the important parts are. If the mortar isn't strong, the wall won't stand up to the slightest breeze. At the same time, many of the standard principles of writing apply: style, structure, flair, composure, plot, all play important parts in a newspaper or magazine story. Mayfield will explain how it's done, why it's done, how the good writers do it, and how newspapers and journalists work.

Dan Mayfield is Assistant Arts Editor at the Albuquerque Journal, president of Albuquerque Press Women and an award-winning journalist with 11 years of full-time writing experience. As the *Journal's* Assistant Arts Editor, Mayfield wears many hats. He writes, edits, and assigns stories to the arts and entertainment staff, writes a weekly column on the state's film industry, and covers the state's boxing scene for the sports department. As a writer, he's won several state and national awards from the National Federation of Press Women, one of the largest press organizations in the nation. Mayfield has written for several magazines, including *Santa Fe Trend*, the *Harvard Journal of Public Policy*, and *The Albuquerque Tribune*, where he was a business reporter for five years. Also, he's the host of the Doo-Wop Stop, the weekly doo-wop radio show on Real Oldies 1600 AM in Albuquerque.

Tuesday, May 20, 7 to 9 p.m.

Perfect Your Plot: The Hero's Journey and Beyond

Kirt Hickman will briefly cover the hero's journey, a series of twelve checkpoints through which your plot should progress, but there's more to plot than these checkpoints. As a writer, you've got to fill in the gaps. You've got to get your characters from each checkpoint to the next. At the same time, you must make your book exciting to keep your reader engaged. Learn how to hook your reader; how to maintain suspense through the muddle... um, middle, of your story; how to keep your reader guessing; and how to satisfy him in the end.

Kirt Hickman earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in electrical engineering from the University of New Mexico. He has worked with high-energy laser optics, microelectronics, micro-machines, and other technologies relevant to the science fiction genre, and leverages his knowledge and experience to enrich his stories. He was a technical writer for fourteen years before branching into fiction, in 2003. *Worlds Asunder* is his first novel. He has the sequel, *Venus Rain*, a how-to titled *Revising Fiction*, and a fantasy trilogy in progress.

Saturday, May 3, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
\$20 for members, \$30 for non members

No registration. Pay at the door.

Today's Hottest Writing Tool: the Blog

Winner of the 2008 Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay, Diablo Cody started her career by writing a blog. Whether you use MySpace, as Cody does now, or WordPress, blogging is today's hottest writing tool. Did you know a blog can be your website? A blog can be low-cost, even free, but you must know how to develop a popular site and get people to return and post comments.

Why? Because agents and publishers look for writers with platforms—a following of most any kind. Whether your genre is fiction or non-fiction, blogging is a great way to develop your platform, provided you do it right.

Peggy Herrington, former technology journalist, worked for Microsoft from 1995 to 2001, after a decade of writing about online services such as CompuServe, America Online (now AOL) and GEnie before the World Wide Web debuted in 1993. Peggy will talk about using keywords and other tools to build a popular WordPress blog, developing and posting meaningful content, RSS feeds, graphics and photos. Included are hand-outs and a free, legal electronic copy of *The Medici Effect: Breakthrough Insights at the Intersection of Ideas, Concepts & Cultures* by Frans Johansson, published by Harvard Business School Press. Don't miss this workshop if you're serious about being a successful, published author.

Welcome New Members

Desiree Pounds
Roberta Boggess
C.J. Ondek
Mary Dudley, Ph.D.
Toni Bright
Sandrak Toro
Robertta Conatser-Beaty

Mansha Graf
Debra Border
Henry Collyer
Steven Martinez
Henry C. Finney
Adriana Vargas
David Mullen



SWW programs are rarely cancelled, but it is possible depending on the weather. If you have doubts about a program taking place or about the time or topic, simply call the SWW office (505) 265-9485 during business hours, M-F, 9am- noon.

SWW Events & Workshops

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

Say hello to
Debbie Coates,
SWW refreshment
meister!



We'll brew the coffee and tea; you help with the eats. Donations of refreshments at meetings are gratefully accepted.

Please consider providing this service.

Saturday, June 7, 10:00 a.m. to noon

From Obstacle to Opportunity

Breaking through Barriers and Taking Action for Success

From Obstacle to Opportunity is a unique approach to the challenges and common misperceptions authors encounter in seeking publication, promotion and success. From Obstacle to Opportunity engages the audience in an interactive exploration of their resistance and perceived limitations including such common problems as the failure to understand that the content of the book is not necessarily enough to ensure success, reticence to add value with improved interviewing and speaking skills, fear of both failure and success, and that counter-productive inner critic that keeps us from trusting ourselves.

Ronald Chapman is an award-winning radio commentator and interviewer and the author of *Seeing True: Ninety Contemplations in Ninety Days* (March 2008), *What a Wonderful World*, and *CDS Seeing True: The Way of Spirit* and *Seeing True: The Way of Success in Leadership*. He is also the founder and principal of Magnetic North LLC, specializes in fostering organization development, strategic planning, and personal and professional growth.



Don't Panic!

**Come get help
at an SWW
meeting.**

**You'll be glad
you did!**

Saturday, June 7, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
\$20 for members, \$30 for non members
No registration. Pay at the door.

The Mind of Your Story

Learning how to create fiction with a mind of its own involves a basic rethinking of the writing process. We begin by exploring fictional seeds—those things writers can't get out of their heads—and how these seeds are translated into fiction through the writers' experiences and imagination. Next, we explore time, pacing, and tense and tension, moving far beyond the basics into the realm of fiction that makes that mysterious connection with readers. And in the third hour, we'll discuss the all-important and too often neglected process of revision and rewriting.

Lisa Lenard-Cook's first novel, *Dissonance* (UNM Press, 2003), was awarded the Jim Sagel Prize for the Novel, short-listed for the PEN Southwest Book Award, and was a selection of Durango-LaPlata Reads and NPR Performance Today's Summer Reading Series. Her second novel, *Coyote Morning* (UNM Press, 2004), was short-listed for the New Mexico Press Women's Zia Award and was, like *Dissonance*, a Southwest Book of the Year. Her book about writing fiction, *The Mind of Your Story* has just been published by Writer's Digest Books, and will be their book club's main selection in June.

Tuesday, June 17, 7 to 9 p.m.

Novel by Novel: Learning as You Write

How do you improve a novel? Ask **Keith Pyeatt**, and he'll tell you he makes it the best he can, writes another novel, makes it the best he can, and then digs back into the previous novel(s). Keith tends to do things the hard way. He does, however, have five novels to show for his efforts, and he's working on number six. June 17th he'll discuss a learning curve that's spanned five novels — so far. Benefit from his experiences and shorten your learning curve for that novel you're editing, writing, or preparing to write.

Keith Pyeatt is a mechanical engineer turned novelist and freelance editor. He's serving on the SWW board for the third year. The first year he was the conference coordinator, and he became the treasurer and financial officer in 2007. Keith writes paranormal, psychological thrillers. You can sample his work at www.keithpyeatt.com.

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Lapsed Logic

by Barbara DuBois

When I tell writers that they should understand a principle because it is not conventional but logical, they often say, "Don't tell us logical! We don't know logical!" I'm beginning to believe them because I hear so many expressions backwards and upside-down today.

One trouble is with "Aside from" and "Besides" at the beginning of a sentence.

"Aside from" means "excluding" or "excepting" but I hear it used for "besides, in addition to": "Aside from my parents, my sister has an enormous vocabulary"; "Aside from presenting the background, the article focuses on the immediate political problems"; "Aside from serving tasteless food, the nurses in the hospital were inconsiderate"; "Aside from academic considerations, extracurricular activities are important, too." And my collection boasts a backwards "besides": "Besides having no clear theme statement, the style was good."

One writer's style was too good: he said that earth's gravity pull is "neither too weak to hold a protective atmosphere nor too strong to hold a dense atmosphere that would prevent sunlight from reaching its surface." Imagine being done in by a beautiful parallelism. A compassionate writer suggested that the bearer of bad news prepare the receiver so that the latter will not take the news completely by surprise. A public official heard the bad news that he had finally been convicted of committing arson to collect the insurance on a building he owned; he has always before appealed and escaped reckoning; this time he may not. The anchorperson said, "What hinges on his appeal is whether he has enough money."

Our urge to cooperate causes some inaccuracy: "McCain, like Romney, shares conservative views," said a commentator. Another said, "Senator Whoosis joins Senator Whatsis as the only two holdouts." How can one be the only two? Speaking of two, people no longer understand "between": a textbook suggests pauses between each word, and a description of the evening sky places the moon between a mass of clouds. Oh well, as a sophomoric freshman told me, "Times are changing along with beliefs."

A do-it-yourself magazine usually explains steps so that I can understand them, but a recent reader's hint is

illogical: "To keep intruders from removing hinge pins of an exterior door opening outward, hacksaw the heads off two 10d nails. Drive them into the jamb so they protrude ½ inch. Close the door to mark it with the nails. Then bore ½ inch deep holes in the door at the marks. Close the door so the nails seat." All that work may keep the intruders from opening the door and intruding, but it will not keep them from removing the hinge pins.

Did you hear the news item about the honest children who found a purse containing \$12,000 and turned it in to authorities? "Their honesty has paid off: in ninety days, no one has claimed it, and the money is theirs to split."

But if they had kept it to begin with, the money would have been theirs to split. "Honesty has paid off" should mean that someone claimed the purse and gave them a reward. But then they would not have as much to split.

Another backwards item involving children displays a confusing typo: "health problems ... enable dedicated teams of scientists to close in mercilessly on man's old age enemies of cancer, heart disease, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, and mental retardation that afflict our little children, senior citizens and men and women in the prime years of life." They must be age-old enemies.

But "worth" causes the most trouble and affords me the most fun. "You made my life worth living for," writes an amateur poet. A prosaic reminiscer writes, "I almost lost my job when I was late because of helping my girl with her homework. But I remember thinking that losing the job would be worth it because I helped her." A combat photographer on a news show said, "If you're committed to the job, the risk is worth it." It took me a while to explain the following to its writer: "The fires caused by the fireworks weren't worth the enjoyment of watching the display." I give up on this topical gem: "The inconvenience of coal is worth it."

It is difficult to choose a favorite. For a while, I thought I preferred the weatherman's "We're in store for bad weather," but then I found that it was not unique. A newscaster reported that the inmates may be in store for retribution. Perhaps the best is the radio announcement that promises, "And now a medley of beautiful music with a past as well as a future."



Revising Fiction: Is it *Show*? How can you *Tell*? by Kirt Hickman

You've heard it before: Never tell something you can show. This is a difficult concept for many new writers, but it's crucial. It lurks beneath a multitude of self-editing sins: problems from passive voice, to information dumps and narrative summary, to absence of tension, and others. Telling the story, rather than showing it, gives it the detached feel of a news article. It keeps the reader from experiencing it as though she *is* the viewpoint character. It leeches the importance—the very life—out of the events.



What is *Tell*?

How do you know if you're showing or telling? My rule of thumb is simple.

You may state facts:

Gerri threw the contract onto the floor, snatched up her coat and stormed from the room.

Don't draw conclusions for your reader:¹

Gerri was angry.

In the first sentence, you see Gerri's actions and are allowed to draw your own conclusion that she's angry. This is *show*. In the second, I've drawn the conclusion for you. This is *tell*. Decide for yourself which is more compelling to read.

Consider these examples from a critique submission.² The scene is written from the viewpoint of a teenage boy.

Tell: There was someone breaking into the house.

Show: The trapdoor burst down and Ian jumped backwards. Dust showered the cardboard boxes that cluttered the closet floor. As soon as the ladder thunked down, a black boot stepped onto the top rung, followed by another.

This example is the next sentence of the same submission.

Tell: [Ian's] first thought was that he should probably get help, but he was much too distracted.

Show: Before [Ian] could run for help, the shapely legs of the woman in the boots arrested him.

Ian fails to move because of the intruder's shapely legs. This shows that he's distracted without saying, "He was distracted." The phrase "before he could run for help" shows Ian's thoughts without saying, "He thought he should get help."

Here's an example in which the same author did a delightful job of showing:

[Rhiannon] leaned forward, her eyes fixed on the artery that had begun to pulse faster as she leaned close to it.

This is a great line. It shows the emotions of both characters. Rhiannon, whom you've surmised is a vampire, leans forward with her eyes fixed on Ian's pulsing vein. It's absolutely clear what she wants, and the author never said, "Rhiannon was hungry for blood." Ian's artery pulsing faster shows his fear without saying, "He was afraid," or "He was excited." Context will establish which emotion he's actually feeling.

How to Show

Rewrite any sections in which you've told something. To find a way to show it, ask yourself this question: What can the viewpoint character see, hear, feel, smell, taste, or recall, that allows him to draw the conclusions that you've told instead of shown? In other words: How does he know this? If you've drawn a conclusion for the reader, the viewpoint character must also have drawn this conclusion. On what is his conclusion based?

If the viewpoint character has nothing upon which to base the conclusion, no way to know the thing you've told, then the section of *tell* constitutes a viewpoint violation. Delete it or find some other place in your manuscript to reveal the information. Keep in mind, though, that if you move it, it's still *tell*. You must still convert it to *show*.

Be particularly attentive to dialog tags that tell emotion, as in this example:

"Herrera was on board."

"On the Phoenix?" Chase said, **surprised**.

"What was he doing there?"

You may have shown the emotion well enough through the actions, thoughts, and dialog of the character. If you have, that's good. If not, find a way to do so. Either way, delete the part of the tag that tells emotion.

Below, I offer three ways to correct the passage above. I show Chase's surprise through his actions, thoughts, and dialog, respectively.

"On the Phoenix?" Chase glanced at the central hologram, as if it could somehow confirm the news. "What was he doing there?"

"On the Phoenix?" *He couldn't be.* "What was he doing there?"

"On the Phoenix?" Chase said. "What the hell was he doing there?"

If finding ways to effectively show your characters' emotions is difficult for you, you're not alone. Next month, I'll begin a three-part column that will delve deep into this oft-troubling topic.

1. Noah Lukeman. *The First Five Pages*. Simon & Schuster. 2000.
2. Excerpts from critique submissions are reprinted with the permission of the original author.

Kirt Hickman has Bachelor and Master degrees in electrical engineering from UNM. He has worked with high-energy laser optics, microelectronics, and other technologies relevant to science fiction, and leverages his knowledge and experience to enrich his stories. *Worlds Asunder* is his first novel.

For information about benefits for SWW members contact: **Cheri Eicher**

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Group Benefits (505) 890-0358
(800) 883-4310

Independentmeans@comcast.net

SouthWest Writers 2008 Writing Contest

The 2008 SouthWest Writers Writing Contest encourages and honors excellence in writing. In addition to competing for cash prizes and the coveted Storyteller Award, contest entrants may receive an optional written critique of their entry from a qualified contest critiquer.

SouthWest Writers also has a critique service staffed by professional critiquers for any writers wishing an optional critique to help polish their manuscripts before entering this or any other contest. The SWW Critique Service is completely independent from the contest, has different staff, and its use has no effect whatsoever on contest eligibility or judging.



Categories

You may enter as many manuscripts as you wish in any of the following categories. Each entry must be mailed separately with an entry form and proper entry fee.

1. **Mainstream or Literary Novel:** 1st 20 pages double-spaced + single-spaced synopsis, 2 pages maximum.
2. **Mystery/Suspense/Thriller/Adventure Novel:** 1st 20 pages double-spaced + single-spaced synopsis, 2 pages maximum.
3. **Romance Novel:** 1st 20 pages double-spaced + single-spaced synopsis, 2 pages maximum.
4. **Science Fiction/Fantasy/Horror Novel:** 1st 20 pages double-spaced + single-spaced synopsis, 2 pages maximum.
5. **Historical/American Frontier/Western Novel:** 1st 20 pages double-spaced + single-spaced synopsis, 2 pages maximum.
6. **Middle Grade or Young Adult Novel:** 1st 20 pages double-spaced + single-spaced synopsis, 2 pages maximum.
7. **Christian Novel:** 1st 20 pages double-spaced + single-spaced synopsis, 2 pages maximum.
8. **Memoir Book:** 1st 20 pages double-spaced, no synopsis.
9. **Memoir Article:** 1,500 words maximum, double-spaced, with word count.
10. **Mainstream or Literary Short Story:** 5,000 words maximum, double-spaced, with word count.
11. **Middle Grade or Young Adult Short Story:** 5,000 words maximum, double-spaced, with word count.
12. **Nonfiction/Essay Article:** 1,500 words maximum, double-spaced, with word count.
13. **Nonfiction Book:** 1st 10 pages double-spaced + double-spaced 10-page book proposal + 1 page single-spaced query letter.
14. **Children's Picture Book Fiction/Nonfiction:** Entire manuscript, 10 double-spaced pages maximum.
15. **Screenplay:** 1st 20 pages + 1 page synopsis (using industry-standard formatting, Courier font, brad-bound).
16. **Poetry:** Any form, format, spacing or number of poems, 5 pages maximum.

Rules/Deadlines/Judging

1. Each entry must be in a separate envelope accompanied by an entry form and entry fee. **No certified mail.** Enclose a self-addressed, stamped postcard if you want notification of receipt.
2. Mark entry category number on envelope below return address.
3. Your entry must be written in English, original, 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. Synopses and query letters are single-spaced; poems and scripts are any spacing; all other categories and book proposals are double-spaced.
6. Your name may not appear anywhere on the manuscript, synopsis, query or book proposal.
7. **Entries must be postmarked by May 1, 2008. Late entries must be postmarked by May 15, 2008 and accompanied by an additional \$5.**
8. Entries without critiques will not be returned. Submit 2 copies of entry, following specified rules. No return envelope is needed.
9. Entries with optional, purchased critiques will be returned. Submit 3 copies of entry + a large, self-addressed envelope with enough postage stamps affixed to return materials. **NO METERED POSTAGE.**
10. Entries with an optional, purchased critique will be critiqued by a well-qualified contest critiquer in the category entered. Critiques will be returned in August, 2008.
11. All manuscripts will be screened by a panel and the top 10 in each category will be sent to appropriate editors or literary agents to determine the final top 3 places. The top 3 winners will also receive a critique from the judging editor or literary agent. Contacting any judge about an entry is an automatic disqualification.
12. Entrants retain all rights to their entries. By entering this contest, you agree to abide by the rules, agree that decisions by the judges are final, and agree that no refunds will be awarded.
13. Winners in each category are notified in August, 2008. 1st Prize, \$150; 2nd Prize, \$100, 3rd Prize, \$50. 1st place winners are eligible for the \$1,000 Storyteller Award. A contest banquet in September, 2008 (tba) will be held to announce and honor the top 3 winners in each category. Winners will be posted on the SWW website following the awards banquet.

New User-Friendly Rules!

Changes to the 2008 SWW Writing Contest include updated categories and simplified rules so be sure to check them out if you've entered before—and even if you haven't. The critique that formerly came with your entry is now available before the contest, so you'll have an even better chance with the judges. Details on SWW's Critique Service are published on southwestwriters.org.

Heedless, Hapless, Helpless, Homeless, Hopeless & Heartless

by Charles R. Powell

Heedless, he often exceeded the speed limit, drove recklessly, without using seatbelts.

Hapless, trying to retrieve the left lens of his glasses he lost control of his car, ran off the road into a tree, breaking both legs, an arm, and several vertebrae.

Helpless, he received huge medical bills his health plan didn't cover. Unable to work, lost his job, couldn't pay his rent and was evicted.

Homeless, he ate at the missions, panhandled on the streets and slept in the park.

Hopeless, he was plagued by disease and depression, and turned to alcohol and drugs.

Heartless, his society blamed him for his plight, ignored his suffering and left him to die on the street.

2008 SWW Writing Contest Judges

Mainstream and Literary Novel, Allison Wortche, Knopf/Crown Books

Mystery/Suspense/Thriller/Adventure Novel, Allison Brandau, The Berkley Publishing Group, Penguin Group

Romance Novel, Leis Pederson, The Berkley Publishing Group

Science Fiction/Fantasy/Horror Novel, Danielle Stockley, The Berkley Publishing Group, Penguin Group (USA)

Historical/American Frontier/Western Novel, Carolyn Morrisroe, Penguin Group

Middle Grade/Young Adult Novel, Kari Sutherland, HarperCollins Publishers

Christian Novel, Rachel Zurakowski, Books & Such Literary Agency

Memoir Book, Elizabeth Evans, Reese Halsey North Agency

Memoir Article, Fred Sauceman, Editor, *Now & Then* Magazine

Mainstream or Literary Short Story, Rose Marie Kinder, Editor Emerita, *Pleiades*, Co-editor, Sweetgum Press and Cave Hollow Press

Middle Grade or Young Adult Short Story, Susan Marston, Junior Literary Guild

Nonfiction Article or Essay, David Fryxell, Editor and Publisher, Desert Exposure

Nonfiction Book, Paul Rhett, LPD Press & Rio Grande Books

Children's Picture Book (Fiction and Nonfiction), Larry Rosler, Boyds Mill Press

Screenplay, Eleanor Bravo, Producer, Independent Filmmaker

Poetry, Lisa Lewis, *Cimarron Review*

Entry Form

2008 SouthWest Writers Writing Contest

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Country: _____

State: _____ Zip _____

Phone: () _____

Email _____

How did you hear of contest? _____

Entry Title _____

Circle Category Number: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

Circle appropriate entry fee:

	May 1 Deadline	May 15 Late Deadline
SWW Member		
No Critique	\$20	\$25
With Critique	\$45	\$50
Non-Member		
No Critique	\$30	\$35
With Critique	\$55	\$60

Method of Payment:

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

☐ Charge my ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard

Exp iration Date _____

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Security Code # _____

Signature _____

Mail completed entry form, entry and fee to:
SouthWest Writers Contest 2008
3721 Morris NE Ste A
Albuquerque, NM 87111-3611

SWW International Monthly Writing Competition

Congratulations to the winners of our January 2008 International Monthly Writing Competition: Writing Article.



1st Prize: Marcia Peterson, Benicia, CA, for "Get a Deadline and Get More Writing Done."

2nd Prize: Rose Marie Kern, Albuquerque, NM, for "Photography for the Professional Writer."

3rd Prize: Nancy LaTurner, Albuquerque, NM, for "Eight Connections to Creativity."

Honorable Mentions (alphabetical):

Katherine Baker, Philadelphia, PA, for "Polish Your Prose: Make War on Worthless Words."

Marc Calderwood, Albuquerque, NM, for "The Ninth Part of Speech."

Doug Ellerbusch, Albuquerque, NM, for "Writer's Block—A Pill-less Solution."

Katherine A. Scott, Lawton, OK, for "Blank Pages."

The judges say: Many good and publishable entries. Watch your spelling and punctuation; entries with myriad mistakes were downgraded.

Critique Groups

Submit your requests to SWWriters@juno.com.

Groups Seeking Members

Any Genre

Estancia Valley Writers Group

Critiques and moral support
Meets at Moriarty Community Library
2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m.
Tina Ortega 505-832-2513

Any Genre, Rio Rancho:

Alice Harpley and Bob Harpley
505-867-1408
riversedgebob@cablone.net
riograndema@cablone.net

Land of Enchantment

Romance Authors

Meets second Saturdays at noon.
Attend three meetings to try it out.
leranm.com

The Screaming Ninja Screenwriters

Meets every other Thursday,
Flying Star on 7th and Silver.
Marc Calderwood
505-897-6474
skatingkokopelli@hotmail.com

All Facets of Writing

Afternoon critique group, all genres,
NE Heights.
Len Hecht 977-3178

Memoirs, Albuquerque

John Ward
505.856.6768
JohnRWard@q.com

Wanting to Start Groups/ Looking for a Group

Nonfiction, Valencia County

Karen Keese
505-261-0040
skywriter@wildblue.net

Memoirs, Santa Fe

Leona Stucky-Abbott
505-820-2433

Any Genre, Albuquerque

Meet every other Friday
NE Heights
Krys Douglas
505-830-3015

Any Genre, Las Cruces

Barbara Villemez
505-522-5734

Poetry

Billy Brown 505-401-8139,
welbert53@aol.com

April Contest

Happy Memories

Write a personal memoir in first person of a happy or amusing incident you have fondly remembered all these years. Double-spaced, 750 words maximum.

Postmark deadline: May 31, 2008

Instructions

- Open to any writer in the world.
- Original, unpublished work only.
- No cover sheets.
- Print the following on first page: Name; Address; Phone; E-mail (if any); Category Name.
- Manuscripts prepared in standard format: 1" margins, double-spaced unless otherwise specified.
- Entries are not returned, so no need for an SASE.
- \$5 entry fee for SWW members; \$10 non-members.
- You may enter more than once, but an entry fee must accompany each entry.
- Decisions of the judges are final.
- Prizes: \$50 1st Prize; \$30 2nd Prize; \$20 3rd Prize and certificates.
- Mail entries to:

SWW Monthly Writing Competition

3721 Morris St NE, Ste A

Albuquerque, NM 87111

(Print category name under your return address)

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Contests

This information is provided as a convenience. Before entering, be sure to check the listed website information or write the sponsors to make sure a contest is right for you. And don't forget to enter SWW's International Monthly Contest.

Deadline: 05/15/08 (e-mail): Ramble Underground, Quarterly Journal of Fiction and Poetry semi-annual Short Fiction Contest. Entry fee: \$6 per story. 50% of the entry fees go to Ramble Underground for site upkeep. 35% to the First Place winner (\$100 minimum) 15% goes to the Second Place winner (\$50 minimum). Plus one honorable mention. All three stories will be published in the next edition of Ramble Underground. 2500 word max. Submission guidelines and information rambleunderground.org/underground_winter06_006.htm.

Deadline: 5/15/08 (online): 77th Annual Writer's Digest Writing Competition - 10 categories. 1,001 winners. Awards: \$3,000, \$1,000, \$500 plus more. Entry fees: Poems are \$10 for the first entry; \$5 for each additional poem submitted in the same online session. All other entries are \$15 for the first manuscript; \$10 for each additional manuscript submitted in the same online session. Submission guidelines and information at www.writersdigest.com:80/contests/annual/77th/

Deadline: 5/20/08 (postmark): 2008 Movie Script Short Contest. Turn your short story into a short script and win a chance to see your short script made into a short film. Awards: 1st place gets produced. 1st, 2nd, 3rd place receive fabled Golden Brad Award and prize package. Entry fee: \$40-\$50 (earlier entry, lower entry fee). Submission guidelines and information moviescriptcontest.com/enter_short.html; Movie Script Contest, PO Box 6336, Burbank CA 91510-6336.

Deadline: 5/20/08 (e-mail): High Prairie Poets - New Mexico State Poetry Society Bimonthly Contests. Open to all poets. 32-line limit. Award: \$20, \$10, \$5 plus 3 honorable mentions; no poems published. Entry fee: \$2 first poem; \$1 each additional poem. Submission guidelines and information: send SASE to Carol Dee Meeks, Silver Arrow Estates, 2601 South Elm Place, Apt. #108, Broken Arrow OK 74012; or e-mail c_pmeeks@hotmail.com.

Deadline: 5/31/08 (postmark): Seventh annual Lois Cranston Memorial Poetry Prize. Award: Publication plus \$300. Entry Fee: \$15 per entry (3 poems, 6 pages total). Submission guidelines and information: CALYX, Lois Cranston Poetry Prize, PO Box B, Corvallis, OR 97339, www.calyxpress.org.

Deadline: 5/31/08 (postmark): Short stories, short stories for children, personal essay/memoir, poetry. The Society of Southwestern Authors 2007 Writing Contest. Prizes: \$300 first, \$150 second, \$75 third in all four categories. Honorable mentions: \$25. Entry fee: \$10/entry. Critiques are an additional \$25/entry. No simultaneous entries. Short stories: 2,500 words max. Short stories for children: 1,500 words max. Memoir: 2,500 words max. Poetry: 40 lines max. Submission guidelines and information at ssa-az.org/contest.html.

Deadline: 5/31/08 (postmark): Society of Southwestern Authors Writing Contest. Poetry - 40 lines max; Short Story - 2500 words max; Personal Essay/Memoirs - 2500 words max; Short Stories for Children Ages 6- 12 - 1500 words max. Awards each category: \$300, \$150, \$75, \$25. Winning entries published in The Story Teller. Entry fee: \$10 per entry. Entry forms available at www.ssa-az.org, or send SASE to SSA

Writing Contest, Entry Forms Dept., PO Box 35484, Tucson AZ 85740.

Deadline: 6/15/08 (e-mail): A Cup Of Comfort For Adoptive Families. \$500 grand prize; \$100 each, all other published stories; plus copy of book. No submission fee. The primary purpose of this book is to celebrate adoptive families and to recognize the extraordinary and challenging experiences that are unique to "chosen children" and their families. We are most interested in stories written by adult adoptive children and their adoptive parents and siblings, but the book will also likely include some stories written by members of the extended adoptive family (grandparent, aunt/uncle, cousin), close friends of the adoptive family (i.e. godparent), and birth family members. Virtually any topic relevant to adopted children and their adoptive parents is acceptable—as long as it is authentic, positive, insightful, and uplifting or inspiring. We do not want heartbreaking stories about adoptive parents or birth families that regret the adoption; there is a place for stories of that ilk, but this book is not that place. All of the stories in this collection must show a positive aspect of adoption and must bring comfort or joy or inspiration to those who have been adopted and/or to the families who adopted them—no matter how difficult the experience and emotions portrayed in the story might be. All Cup of Comfort stories must be true, original, and positive; narrative essays (creation nonfiction); and 1,000-2,000 words. Submission guidelines and information at cupofcomfort.com/share.htm.

Deadline: 6/15/08 (e-mail or postmark): One Great Joke Contest. Awards: \$100, \$50, \$25, plus Become a Richer Writer book for honorable mentions. No entry fee. Submission guidelines and information at www.archangelshecky.com/Contest.html.

How many screenwriters does it take to change a light bulb?

Answer: Ten

- 1st draft:** Hero changes light bulb.
- 2nd draft:** Villain changes light bulb.
- 3rd draft:** Hero stops villain from changing light bulb. Villain falls to death.
- 4th draft:** Lose the light bulb.
- 5th draft:** Light bulb back in. Fluorescent instead of tungsten.
- 6th draft:** Villain breaks bulb, uses it to kill hero's mentor.
- 7th draft:** Fluorescent not working. Back to tungsten.
- 8th draft:** Hero forces villain to eat light bulb.
- 9th draft:** Hero laments loss of light bulb. Doesn't change it.
- 10th draft:** Hero changes light bulb.



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

SouthWest Sage

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and Tuesday evening, May 20 at 7 p.m.**

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The advertisement features a collage of five smiling individuals (three women and two men) in the lower-left corner. A small circular logo with the letters "SWW" and a pen nib is located in the lower-right corner of the collage area.