



SouthWest Sage

The Voice of SouthWest Writers

Vol. 30, No. 3

March 2014

New Website Makes SWW SHINE!

You may have noticed something different when you opened up the SouthWest Writer's website this month. The new look carries us into a more advanced level of professionalism and credibility. It is classically and artfully designed with a great deal of versatility.

Spearheading the move to the new website is former SWW President Kathy Kitts. Kathy looked over several companies, and chose NetMud as a company that could ensure SWW will receive high quality service at a fair price.

The website incorporates links for the SWW Blog page as well as info pages about our contests, critique groups and links to our members websites. What you see is just the beginning as information is being added and updated continuously. If you have suggestions for information you'd like to see on our website, send an email to the office at swwriters@juno.com.



SWW Reaching Out in All E-Media Forms

Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Google, Goodreads, and LinkedIn.... anyone who owns a computer with internet capability has heard of these social networking websites. Thanks to SWW Board Member Robyn Ruff-Wagner, SWW is using all of them to reach out to anyone searching for the type of fun, education, and support offered by our membership to folk who long to create their own literary masterpieces.

We use them not only to enhance the image of our own organization, but to bring our members and the incredible array of talents and interests they possess to the world's attention.

Use the web information below or go to the SWW website homepage and click the links on the top right to find out more about what SWW is up to!

On your Mark, Get Set and GO! 2014 SWW INTERNATIONAL WRITING COMPETITION

February 1 - May 15, 2014

10 categories

With \$6,500 in prizes available!

For more information, see inside or go to

<http://www.swwcontest.com/>



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



Find SouthWest
Writers on Facebook



Follow us on Twitter
@SW_Writers



If you haven't already checked out www.SouthwestWriters.com, you should. I think we have a very good first cut at our new web presence, one we can be proud of. We will be adding features to make it more useful, but we have started. And, a major reason I wanted to mention it in my column, is that your last president, Kathy Kitts, is our web-master and deserves much of the credit for our new web presence.

Some of the features that I like about SouthwestWriters.com are

- ◆ The immediate access to the latest issue of the *Sage* (click on the picture of the front page of a *Sage* on the right hand side)
- ◆ There is a search button (upper right corner of the pages I've looked at) that even should search back issues of the *Sage* by the time you read this.
- ◆ List of meetings, speakers and topics
- ◆ List of upcoming workshops, classes and contests
- ◆ Links to a local bookseller, Bookworks, and to Amazon. If you click through to Amazon from our web site, it will help support SWW.
- ◆ Archives of contest info and *Sage* articles.

Many of us prefer reading paper newspapers, but the cost of mailing the *Sage* is too great. If you are one of those who prefer ink on paper, please download the *Sage* and print it, or at least print the parts you want to read, on your own printer. As time goes on and the search engines learn more of the contents of our site and our own search comes on-line, you will also have a searchable access to the *Sage*. You already have an archive of ten years of the *Sage*, whenever you want it.

Lee

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SouthWest Sage Advertising Rates Worldwide Internet Circulation

The SWW website receives thousands of page requests every month.

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

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

Annual Membership in SouthWest Writers

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

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

Requires proof of student status

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

Download the *Sage* from www.southwestwriters.com

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

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You Can Write for SouthWest Sage

Want to add a byline to your portfolio? We welcome submissions focusing on all aspects of researching, writing, and publishing any genre. See past issues of *SouthWest Sage* for the types of articles we publish.

Payment is in bylines and clips. Deadline is the 15th of the month prior to the next issue. Article lengths from 300-1000 words. Submissions may be edited for accuracy, readability and length.

Please send all submissions as either standard text in an email or in a word document with Times New Roman or calibri font in 11pt. Size. Do not get fancy with any formatting or fonts—the more difficult it is for me to set it into the newsletter, the less likely I am to print it.

Send questions or submissions to Rose Kern, *SouthWest Sage* Editor, swwsage@swcp.com.

Critique Groups Seeking Members

Fiction/Nonfiction

Wally Gordon, wallygordon@q.com or
Chris Enke, enke@unm.edu
Erna Fergusson Library
Second Wed. each month, 4-6:00 pm
With interest, can change day & time

Mainstream Fiction

Online Critique Group
Christie Keele, ckeele10@hotmail.com

Sci-Fi

Send name and writing experience to:
Cosmic_Connections_SF_Critique_
Group@yahooogroups.com

LOOKING FOR A CRITIQUE GROUP?

Email Rose Kern at swwsage@swcp.com with the following information and we'll publish your request: your name; email address and/or phone number; genre preference; geographic location (Belen, NW Heights, near UNM, etc.); preference for frequency/day of the week.

~ WRITING MARATHONS ~

Two SWW members host an 8-hour writing marathon on the last Sunday of every month, 2:00-10:00 pm, at alternating locations. Email kt wag@msn.com or ruffwag3@earthlink.net.

Albuquerque Area Writing Groups

The **Albuquerque Croak & Dagger** chapter of Sisters in Crime meets 4th Tuesday of the month, 7 pm, police briefing room at James Joseph Dwyer Memorial Substation. www.croak-and-dagger.com/

The Wordwrights: Don Morgan and Dennis Kastendiek moderate, all genres welcome. North Domingo Baca Multigenerational Center, Room 1, 2nd floor. Mondays, 1:30-3:30 pm. Contact Dennis: dwjkas@yahoo.com

Children's/MG/YA Writers: 3rd Saturday critique group meets monthly at Erna Fergusson Library, San Mateo and Comanche, 10:30 am-12:30 pm. Bring five copies of five pages, double-spaced, to share.

Duke City Screenwriters: Meets every other Thursday 6:00 - 9:00 pm Critique group, education, and fun! Contact Terry Hicks: earthreflection@aol.com or Marc Calderwood: marccalderwood@hotmail.com

SCBWI: Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators: 2nd Tuesday each month, 7-8:30 pm, Alamosa Books. Short workshops/discussions. Pre-schmooze dinner, Flying Star, Wyoming & Paseo, 5:30-6:45 pm. schmooze@scbwi-nm.org

Writers2Writers meets the 2nd Monday each month, 6:30-7:30 pm, Hastings Café, NE corner of Coors and Montano. Monthly speakers. All genres are welcome. Contact FAAiken@aol.com

Guest Speakers and Topics at SWW Meetings

Members are free, Guests \$10

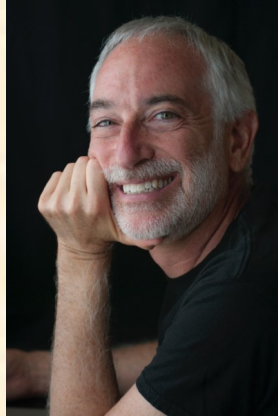
Saturday March 1st
10:00am-Noon

Writer's Block Unblocked:

Surefire Ways to Free Up Your Creative Flow.

Mark David Gerson is the award-winning author/screenwriter and creator of the *O'tana Trilogy* and author of two books for writers—*The Voice of the Muse: Answering the Call to Write* and *Writer's Block Unblocked: Seven Surefire Ways to Free Up Your Writing and Creative Flow*.

As a creativity catalyst and seminar leader, Mark has guided writers and non-writers alike to connect with their innate wisdom, open to their creative power and express themselves with ease. He is also a broadcaster, speaker and an accomplished artist and photographer. With his own memoir (*Acts of Surrender: A Writer's Memoir*) under his belt, Mark David is currently finishing up on a book on memoir writing. For more information go to www.markdavidgerson.com.



Tuesday, March 18

7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

Something Like Sherlock: A Fiction Workshop

Demetria Martinez

After years of writing fiction, I am convinced that our characters will do anything in their power to hide who they really are from us. The result? Everything from writer's block to uninspired writing. During our time together we will act as detectives, coaxing our characters into revealing their true nature. We will experiment with different methods of accomplishing this. Bring pen and paper and be ready to write and have a good time.

Demetria Martinez is the author of two books of poetry, a collection of essays, and children's book co-authored with Rosalee Montoya. She has also written two prize-winning novels. The widely translated *Mother Tongue* won a Western States Book Award for fiction. Her most recent novel, *The Block Captain's Daughter*, won an International Latino Book Award for fiction, and an American Book Award. She works in Albuquerque and Santa Fe as a writing coach.



Saturday, April 5 10:00 am to noon

SOCIAL MEDIA: POSTING FOR PERFORMANCE

Lauren MacEwen

Discussing the best networks for promoting your writing, as well as tips and tricks to increase your exposure.

Lauren MacEwen is a social media strategist, blogger and speaker on social media topics. She has a BA from Smith College and an MBA from ASU. Having a passion for social media and technology, Lauren has worked with non-profits and businesses to create highly effective and award-winning social marketing campaigns. She is a guest blogger on top industry blogs such as Technorati and Blogher in social marketing technology, business development and politics. Visit her website at www.laurenmacewen.com.



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

PAIRING PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH GENRE: Memoir, Essays, Autobiographical Fiction and More

Candace Walsh

When beginning a story, how do you decide which genre to pursue? New Mexico Magazine managing editor Candace Walsh's personal stories have led her to publish a full-length memoir *Licking the Spoon: A Memoir of Food, Family and Identity*; to work on an autobiographical fiction novel; to edit two Seal Press anthologies; and write personal essays which regularly appear in *The Huffington Post*. In this lecture, Walsh will share advice, tips, and practical exercises to help you pair your personal narrative with the right form.

Candace Walsh has written for numerous national and local publications such as *Newsday*, *Travel and Leisure*, *Sunset*, *Mademoiselle*, *New York Magazine*, and *New Mexico Magazine*. She has also worked on staff at Condé Nast International, *Mothering Magazine*.

March Classes & Workshops

Classes and Workshops are held at the SWW Office, 3200 Carlisle Blvd NE, Albuquerque 87110, 505-830-6034

SO! YOU WANT TO WRITE A BOOK!

with

Jacqueline Murray Loring

4 Sessions: March 29, and

April 5th, 12th, 19th Saturdays, 1:00 - 4:00 pm

\$160 members, \$200 non-members

Do you have a story waiting to be written? What's stopping you from sharing that story with the world, your friends, your family? During this beginner course, attendees will see writing a book as a realistic goal and start the process of getting their story on paper. We will discuss tools to use immediately to get the first draft written and will set individual writing goals to keep students on-track to that completed draft. The class will also focus on story, characters, plot, point of view, beginnings, middles, chapter and story endings, and page stoppers. As time allows we can discuss agents, editors, query letters, book proposals, traditional publishing houses, supported self-publishing, and new technology such as Kindles and ePublishing. Join us and take the next step, or the first step, towards getting your story told.

Jacqueline M. Loring writes poetry, scripts and stage plays. She teaches writing and works as a book editor. She compiled, edited, published and contributed to *Summer Home Review Volume I* and *Volume II*. Her poetry is published in journals and anthologies including the *Scribner Anthology*, *From Both Sides Now*, *A Sense of Place: An Anthology of Cape Women Writers* and *Cadence of Hooves*. In 2012 she won the Doire Irish International Poetry Book Prize for her book *The History of Bearing Children*. *History* was the 2nd place winner of the New Mexico Press Women award for creative verse. She is the coordinator of the Eventide Arts Full Length Play-writing Competition, a past-president of the Cape Cod Chapter of the NLAPW and the past executive director of the Cape Cod Writers Center. She and her husband live in Albuquerque's South Valley.



**Help Support
SouthWest Writers!**

*SWW receives a commission on
any books ordered via this link*

to [Amazon](#).



WHAT A WRITING GROUP CAN ACCOMPLISH (SYNERGY)

A Half-Day Workshop with Patricia Walkow and Jim Tritten

Saturday, May 10th 10:00 am - 1 pm

Cost: \$40 SWW Members

\$50 Osher members with membership card

\$70 non members

\$75 at the door

The registration fee includes a copy of the Corrales Writing Group 2013 Anthology. To register, call the SWW Office (505-830-6034) or sign up at a monthly meeting.

The discussion will include synergy within a writing group, making it a business, determining content, editing a group work, the self-publishing process and marketing. Students should be interested in self publication, computer literate in word processing applications and possess an Email account.

Patricia Walkow holds a Liberal Arts degree from the City University of New York, and a Master of Education degree from Lehigh University in Pennsylvania. She taught math and science to middle school children for eight years and then became a computer programmer at a major corporation. In 1997, she formed Walkow Consulting and co-authored *Where People and Projects Meet – Tools and Techniques for Understanding and Managing the People side of Projects*. Jim Tritten retired after a 44 year career with the Department of Defense. He holds advanced degrees from the University of Southern California. Jim's non-fiction publications have won him numerous writing awards, including the Alfred Thayer Mahan Award from the Navy League of the US and in writing contests sponsored by the US Naval Institute. He has published four books and hundreds of articles and government technical reports. Other members of the Corrales Writing Group may be present and part of the workshop.

HALF-DAY WORKSHOP PRICES:

\$40 SWW MEMBERS

\$50 OSHER MEMBERS W/CARD

\$70 NON-MEMBERS • \$75 AT THE DOOR

Workshop and Class Refund Policy

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

Upcoming Classes & Workshops

Classes and Workshops are held at the SWW Office, 3200 Carlisle Blvd NE, Albuquerque 87110, 505-830-6034

FUNDAMENTALS OF SCREENWRITING – Giving your Script a Solid Foundation

WITH MARC CALDERWOOD

4 Sessions: April 9, 16, 23, 30
Wednesdays, 6-8 pm
\$160 members, \$200 non-members

To register, call the SWW Office (505-830-6034) or sign up at a monthly meeting.

Have a great idea for a movie but don't know how to write a screenplay? Get going with Fundamentals of Screenwriting. This four-week class is the perfect introduction to the world of writing a screenplay, from the fundamentals of the story down to the revision process. In this course, you will gain insight into format, required structure, character development and what a screenplay requires to be successful. At each step, you will receive feedback on your story, concept and screenplay.

The Fundamentals of Screenwriting will have you well on your way to writing a screenplay in just four short weeks. During the course we will use one or more films to uncover how the pros do it so you can adopt the same successful path to make your work shine.

This course is for those who have never written a screenplay and those whose work needs a bit of tweaking. Marc will read and give notes for one script for each participant (\$100 value – good for six months).

Marc Calderwood has written numerous award winning screenplays. He is the founder of Duke City Screenwriters, the oldest continuous screenwriting critique group in the State. In 2008 he made his directorial/producer debut in the 48-Hour Film Project completing the short "Water Torture," an award winning short chosen to be shown at the Santa Fe Film Festival. He is currently active as a reader for three top screenwriting sites and has read and given valuable notes on over 300 spec screenplays.

WRITING FOR MAGAZINES: How to Land Your First Assignment

WITH MELODY GROVES

4 Sessions: May 7, 14, 21, 28, 2014
Wednesdays, 6-8 pm
\$160 members, \$200 non-members

To register, call the SWW Office (505-830-6034) or sign up

at a monthly meeting.

Have you wondered how 9,000+ magazines stay in business? Ever wondered who writes for them? Even wondered why not me? Good questions—why not me, indeed!

Topics:

- Choosing magazines
- Choosing topics
- Writing query letters
- Writing the article
- Taking photos
- And everything else in between

Melody Groves Melody Groves, SWW past president, writes for True West, Wild West, New Mexico Magazine, American Cowboy, abqARTS, Albuquerque the Magazine, and other regional publications. Three of her books have won the prestigious NM Book Award. Questions? Contact her at melodygroves@comcast.net.

Who's There? Inviting Vivid Characters, Seeing Through Their Eyes

WITH BETSY JAMES

8 Sessions: June 11, 18, 25 and July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30
Wednesdays, 5:45 to 7:45 pm
\$320 members, \$370 non-members
Class is Limited to 10 students, please sign up early.

To register, call the SWW Office (505-830-6034) or sign up at a monthly meeting.

Ann Tyler said she became a novelist "because I refused to have only one life." How do you invite the character who won't be ignored, who drives you to assume their life and build for them a world of words? It's what writers live for—and there are ways to make it happen more often. Join author Betsy James for eight weeks of assignments designed to find your characters and set them in motion. Each will be a maximum of 1000 words, followed by respectful peer critique, a mini-lesson and professional-level editorial feedback.

Betsy James is the author and illustrator of sixteen books for adults and children. Among other honors, her books have been named: New York Public Library Best Book for Teens; Voices of Youth Advocates Best Book; Junior Library Guild Selection; Canadian Children's Book Center Best Book; International Reading Association Children's Choice; and Tiptree Award Honor Book. She leads workshops nationally, in Zuni Pueblo and in New Mexico public schools. She lives in the North Valley



The Writing Life: Why Writers Need Friends

By Sherri Burr

Perhaps it should go without comment that writers need friends, and particularly writing friends. The latter type can offer tips on writing, attend writing conferences with you, and generate common experiences for material. Fortunately, the uni-

verse gifted me such a friend in Sue Bohannon Mann, a former president of SouthWest Writers who ascended to the Writing Heavens in October 2013.

Sue Mann and I met when we joined the same critique group in 1991. She named our group “The Intrepids.” That phrase certainly fit Sue. She went back to school to get her Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees after her daughters were in college. She even studied with famed writer Tony Hillerman.

Sue used that knowledge to become an educator and offer sold-out classes on “Writing the Local Scene.” A common Sue phrase was “chop the would.” She considered the word w-o-u-l-d redundant and crossed it out, either at Critique Group or on student papers. She also hated passive verbs, and circled “to be” verbs to encourage her fellow Intrepids and students to replace them with active verbs. I still have an article called “Returning to An Age of Innocence” that Sue sent me. She had circled all ten “to be” verbs and wrote, “I’m using this article as an exercise in how to improve writing by adding active verbs.”

I met Sue three years into my academic career and used a lot of “to be” verbs. All her circling helped cure the tendency and I now strive to write with active verbs in all of my writing.

Exercise like walking or hiking stimulates thoughts. As an outdoors person, Sue loved hiking the foothills, volunteering for the Forest Service, and climbing mountains. I was in my early thirties and enjoyed a good hike, but couldn’t keep up when Sue upped the ante. Climbing Mount Wheeler, New Mexico’s highest peak, before Social Security kicked in, became a Sue goal. She drove us to the Taos Ski Valley in “Grey Bird,” her Cadillac, for the jumping off point. Sue accomplished her objective while I petered out early due to exhaustion from having just finished teaching the semester. We both wrote about the experience. My story centered on being out-hiked by someone who was more than twice my age! Sue’s first

Social Security check arrived the week after we returned to Albuquerque.

Because Sue adored taking writing courses (she believed one could never get enough education), we agreed to study at the Taos Writers School for a week one summer. Sue drove us in Grey Bird. Unfortunately, she had to stop every fifteen minutes or so to let me outsource the contents of my stomach. It took much longer than normal to get to Taos, but Sue didn’t complain. Once we arrived, she arranged for the staff to bring me tea and saltines to quiet my stomach. We bonded on that trip.

I tell this story to share ultimately what a good friend Sue became to me, and probably to everyone who had the good fortune to come within her orbit. Not only did SouthWest Writers elect Sue Mann its president, but so did New Mexico Route 66 Association, the Women’s Association of Immanuel Presbyterian Church, and P.E.O., a philanthropic women’s organization. Indeed, it seemed every organization Sue joined chose her to lead them.

Sue Mann adored the line from the Nat King Cole song: “Get your kicks on Route 66”. She lived the words by having a lot of fun along the famed highway and its nearby streets and mountains. At her memorial service in October, one person said, “Sue wouldn’t do anything unless it was fun.” Another person said, “If it wasn’t fun, Sue would make it fun!”

Combining the two creates a takeaway from Sue Mann’s life: “If it isn’t fun and you can’t make it fun, don’t do it.” This certainly applies for writing. If you start a writing assignment and drag your feet to get to the computer, that’s not a good sign. Writing should be fun. Find projects where you can barely contain your enthusiasm to sit in the chair and type away with the words flowing automatically.

Every writer can use a friend like Sue Bohannon Mann who supports, encourages, and laughs generously. Sue found inspiration for her writing on Route 66 and everywhere else she walked, hiked, climbed, or drove. Even the phrase “may she rest in peace” doesn’t apply to her. Indeed, Sue’s probably making heaven fun, as you read these words.

Sherri Burr is the Regents’ Professor of Law at the University of New Mexico School of Law where she teaches Entertainment Law, Intellectual Property Law, and Art Law. A graduate of Mount Holyoke College, Princeton University, and the Yale Law School, Burr authored or co-authored twenty books, including the forthcoming *A Short and Happy Guide to Financial Well Being* (West Academic 2014)

It's a cousin to Buyer's Remorse, which my friend and constant companion Google defines as an emotional response to a purchase. Feelings like regret, fear, depression or anxiety. You know - the letdown that grabs the buyer by the throat immediately after he's spent a pile of money on something he just knew he wanted more than anything.

But the feelings accompanying what I've dubbed Writer's Remorse go beyond those just mentioned. Although depression is definitely part of it, the feeling is more of - as Peggy Lee crooned in the golden oldie of the same name - Is that all there is?

Regardless of what it's called, I've been suffering from it.

After working for six years on my novel - six years, during which I thought about it constantly, jotted down snippets of overheard conversations to pepper into the dialogue, basically lived, breathed, and showered with it - the thing is suddenly finished. I've polished, re-written, edited, and re-edited, and then found a Beta-Reader who was a professional editor in a past life. It's the best I can do.

But just as with the sudden cessation of any other perpetual activity, the completion of my novel left a void. I just didn't know what to do with myself.

So I checked in with my online chat group of writers. I told them of the unexpected feelings of loss that have accompanied my novel's completion. I poured out all my writer-angst, certain that what I was going through was an anomaly. And a little fearful for my sanity. (Okay, maybe a bit melodramatic, but I was concerned.) I wondered if Stephen King had ever struggled with letting go of one of his twisted babies.

The responses that came pouring in from my colleagues boosted my morale. One savvy writer said that I have a case of what is basically empty nest syndrome. She said I'm missing my characters. That they became an integral part of my life and now I'm grieving their loss. And that feels about right.

Having raised three actual children, I must admit that the feelings I was experiencing were akin to those of giving birth, raising the child, and then watching her walk away to seek her fortune in the world without so much as a backward glance. The whole process was accompanied with the bitter-sweet knowledge that it's all part of the beat of life - that once you've done your job, your services will no longer be required.

After all, I spent over half a decade scheduling my life around my writing time. I'd waken early, hurry to eat breakfast, and then happily lock myself away into my writing space - what author Elizabeth Sims calls getting into *garret mode*. I closed myself off to the here-and-now, completely immersed myself in a different dimension, and then for the next couple of hours I alternately dug through the darkness and marveled at the brilliant nobility of our human nature.

But now I was stricken with an energy-sucking ennui. I walked aimlessly around the house in search of something - I didn't know quite what. But judging by the way my husband took to surreptitiously watching me out of the corner of

his eye, I suspected my behavior verged on something clinical.

So I again approached my writer friends - much cheaper and less time consuming than therapy.

Within minutes, commiserations flew back across the ether and into my waiting arms. I wasn't alone. Other writers had suffered the same feelings.

Several of them told me to get back on the horse and start another novel. Others said I should take a break and do something totally un-writer-like for several weeks before rolling up my sleeves and giving myself over to the birthing pangs of a new story.

I decided to do both. First, with unwavering determination, I powered down every piece of computer hardware in my house that could even remotely be used for word processing. And then, with an unexpected sense of freedom, I accompanied my husband on a road trip to Mount Rushmore.

The glorious scenery that flew past our car windows, the rest stops where I overheard people speaking about everything from saving the wild horses to ingrown toenail, all sparked dozens of ideas, which I verbalized into the tiny digital recorder I'd snuck into my bag. I know, I know, I cheated. But the change of scenery was like a cool drink of water on my parched writer-tongue, and I was overcome with a renewed joy in my chosen field of endeavor.

Once home, I replayed and then transcribed my recorded observations and comments. *What if...* and *Yes, and then...* cavorted and tumbled elbows over arse through my electrified imagination. I made more notes.

But I still didn't have the heart to begin a new novel. At least, not until this morning.

Today I awakened to my Protagonist's index finger tapping me on the forehead. She was yammering away about a woman who just moved from South Dakota and into the house across the street.

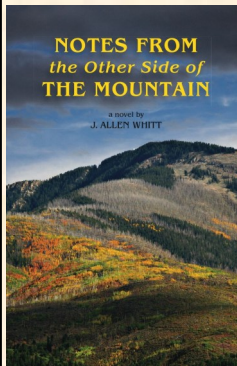
"She's having trouble sleeping because of weird noises coming from her basement," said my Protagonist around a mouthful of leftover welcome-to-the-neighborhood brownies.

"Aha," I say. "Weird noises coming from her basement? That's good. Then what if..."

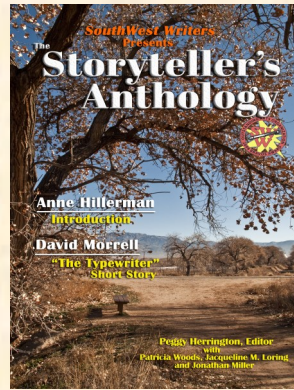
And we're off.



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



Gary Reed returns from war to his former hometown, hoping to reunite with his high school sweetheart Kristina Preston. They rekindle their relationship, fall in love, and begin to plan a future together. But he and Kristy discover that the toxic effects of war have invaded even the remote mountains of New Mexico—and threaten to change everything for them. Available at Amazon and BookBaby.



Show your Pride!

Purchase a copy of the Storyteller's Anthology—containing stories from dozens of your fellow members.

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Comments received about the Storyteller's Anthology:

From Marie Kern in Indiana..

"My daughter sent this to me and I was delighted by how all the different stories brought out a myriad of views about the southwest. Each story was a unique perspective of the people and places there."

From the Amazon Website Comments:

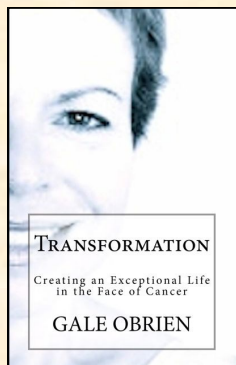
"Wonderful diversity of stories and poems. Good as a gift to all who read."

"If anyone has any curiosity about how good New Mexico writers are and how their unique state inspires them, this will satisfy your longing."

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- Book proposals
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- Genre fiction
- Children's
- Middle-grade
- Young Adult
- Screenplays/stageplays
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COST

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\$15 - Query letter of no more than 3 pages

\$25 - Synopsis of up to 3 pages

- additional pages are \$3.50/page

\$35 - Minimum charge for up to 10 double-spaced manuscript pages

- additional pages are \$3.50/page

SWW critiquers follow genre-specific guidelines. But feel free to include specific questions you want answered and any points you want the critique to focus on (such as point of view, plot structure, etc.). Go to SouthWestWriters.com for guidelines and information on submitting your manuscript to our critique service.

Ask Rex!

Dear Rex, When do you use “alright” and when should it be “all right?” – Ahl Writer

Dear Ahl, the easiest answer was that *alright* was not an English word, so careful writers never used it. The confusion with already apparently started people using this non-word. As it came into widespread mis-use then widespread use, it's caused a ker-fuffle. Miss Thistlebottom would never tolerate it, but the new dictionaries I've checked all list it as an “informal” usage. That means, you should avoid it, but you can always say, “Well, it's in my dictionary.”

Speaking of that, *alright* is not in my 1983 *American Heritage Dictionary* and is listed as a misspelling of *all right* in my 1980 *Oxford American Dictionary*. On the other hand, *alright* is listed as acceptable but informal in the 2001 editions of the *Random House Collegiate Dictionary* and the *American Heritage Dictionary*. So, while my pet tyrannosaurus will complain, most editors will accept *alright*.

Dear Rex, Are you supposed to use commas before the next to last item in a list. You know, the one before the “and?” – Coma Tose

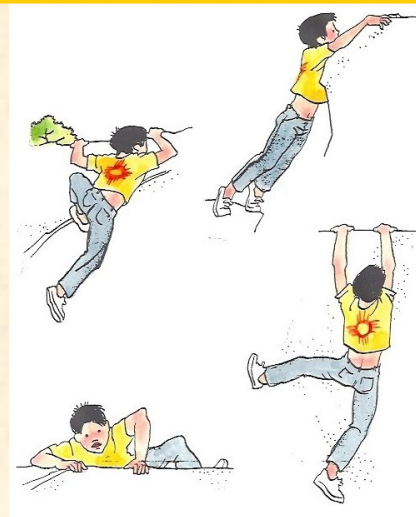
Dear Coma, my brother the English professor, said to use a comma if some of the items in the list before the *and* are more than one word long but not otherwise. The real rule is that you should avoid the use of the extra comma unless it is needed for clarity. In practice this seems to me to boil down to this, easy-to-follow rule for fiction and most non-fiction. Most legal writing should use the extra comma to avoid any chance of ambiguity:

I ordered bacon, eggs and orange juice. Here there is no ambiguity and an extra comma makes the whole thing look like a legal brief.

I ordered bacon, Eggs Benedict, and orange juice. In this case, you *may* want to include the second comma, as the rule states. Without the second comma and the capitalization, readers unfamiliar with Eggs Benedict, might think I ordered Benedict and orange juice

Dear Rex, I notice that many people put punctuation inside quote marks instead of outside where it belongs. For example, in the last letter, the question mark should be outside the quote. It's not part of the quote but the quote is part of the question. – Mark Right

Dear Mark, So who says English is sensible? Or that it needs to be sensible? Actually, on this matter, UK English, like programming languages, is more sensible than American English. In American English the accepted usage is to put nearly all punctuation inside quote marks. We make up about 2/3 of the English speaking world, so who can say it's wrong. Well you did, but you must be an engineer or something like that, someone who expects language to be regular and logical. Actually, for my money, I'd prefer the Spanish practice of signaling questions, for example, with a mark at the beginning of the question, not just one at the end. ¿N'est-ce pas?



This Odd Calling: Creativity and the Writing Life

by Betsy James

Picture Book Illustration as Visual Code

Picture book illustration: it's a lively offshoot of fine art, storytelling and code.

It works quite differently from either single-image illustration or so-called fine art. Its aim isn't static beauty, but rather to tell a story in a kinetic visual code that the illustrator, by repeating and sustaining a style, teaches the observer to read.

A painting can be a novel in itself. But picture book illustration must use its (usually thirty-two) pages to design a sub-novel built of many paintings that parallel and enlarge the verbal novel.

Each painting relates to the text and expands it; each painting relates to every other. The illustrations may enact a subplot or plots that diverge from, complement or even oppose the plot offered by the text. Look at Jon Klassen's Caldecott winner, *I Want My Hat Back*. Which is telling the truth, the text or the illustrations?

The portfolio of a would-be picture book artist should not consist of exquisite single images. That worked for Victorian children's books with gorgeous, single, tipped-in plates, but for the narrative journey of a contemporary picture book you must build your portfolio of narrative sequences. Demonstrate that you can tell a story in sustained visual code.

Author-illustrator Brinton Turkle (*Do Not Open; Thee, Obadiah*) claimed the place to learn the visual story-coding skills of picture book illustration was short film. In our visually and kinetically literate age, he was right.

Betsy James is the author and illustrator of sixteen books for young adults and children. Visit her on the web at www.listeningatthegate.com and www.betsyjames.com

POETS!

Come out, come out,
From where you are hid
And bring your words
To fair Sage, I bid.

Next month is April—when flowers advertise the spring and birds build nests of twig. It is also the month in which we celebrate poetry in its many forms.

Here is a challenge for the SWW Poets....can you tell me what style of poetry you enjoy the most and why? Send your thoughts on this to me before March 15th to be included in the April edition.

—Rose Marie Kern, editor

swwsage@swcp.com

PS: I'd like to see some poetry in the issue too—preferably no more than 40 lines per piece, any topic in general, but I wonder if some of you can create poems about poetry?

"Why am I afraid to write?"

That is a damned good question!

By Margeurite Moore

I get lost when I write, as though I'm small and only whistling in the dark forest. There are so many paths to take with a sentence, paragraph and story, which path to choose? The clock ticks faster and before I know it, an hour has elapsed. A precious hour; one that could have been used to do the laundry, crochet a scarf, talk to a friend or work out on an exercise bike. A precious hour that could have been used for something mundane and without risk. I forget about the craving to tell my stories, the stories don't make any sense and anyone that reads them will probably think I'm crazy.

I'm not doing this again. I can't subject myself to those whispered looks and hooded eyes.

I stop and breathe, realizing I have not been enjoying the journey, only keeping my eyes on the destination. I seem to have forgotten that the destination is the journey.

I stumble on this root-strewn path and realize that I'm afraid my syntax and grammar won't be correct. Though e e cummings didn't screw around with that and he was a Harvard graduate.

Another obstacle blocks my path: *Will I be able to effectively get that drama that's unfolding in my brain on paper in such a way that others will not only understand it, but hold it precious on their bookshelf?*

How much does it matter if others don't like my tales? Who am I really writing for anyway? If I write just to get something out of my head and on paper, what does it matter what others think of it?

Another reason I'm afraid to write is because I'm a bad mother. I want to "kill my darlings" and wait for the perfect child with no deformities, having perfect health and beauty. I envy those that have perfect story children, grown to adulthood without the pains of adolescence.

Maybe I should look more closely at those I envy so. What did it take for them to get that perfect child? Years of having imperfect ones? Did they kill other darlings along the way? Was it a violent death, bloody and crude, or a gentle death with friends singing around the bed surrounded by a beautiful blue-white light?

Of course all of the above are just excuses. Why I use them, I still don't know.

Writing is my relief valve. When I write it relieves me of the building tension from the stories inside my head. So, why not jump off the cliff of security into the void? I may find it's not so bad after all...

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The SouthWest Writers International Writing Contest

opens for entries on February 1, 2014. The 2014 contest has 10 categories for novels, creative nonfiction/memoir, essay, short stories, children's picture books, and poetry. Categories have been changed for 2014. Please read "Rules of the Contest" carefully.

A total of \$6,500 is awarded in cash prizes. Winners are selected by professional literary agents or editors unaffiliated with SouthWest Writers.

The contest is open to all original, unpublished work by English-language writers. First Place winning entries in prior SWW contests may not be resubmitted for judging in 2014. A First, Second, and Third Place winner will be judged in each of the 10 categories. Prizes: \$300 First Place. \$200 Second Place. \$150 Third Place.

Entries will be accepted only on-line between February 1, 2014 until May 15, 2014. There is no limit on: (1) the number of categories you enter, and (2) the number of entries you submit in each category below.

NOVELS:

- Mainstream/Literary Novel
- Mystery/Suspense/Thriller/Adventure Novel
- Juvenile/Young Adult
- Women's Fiction

SHORT STORY:

- Science Fiction/Fantasy/Horror
- Mainstream/Literary

NONFICTION:

- Creative Nonfiction/Memoir
- Essay

OTHER:

- Children's Picture Book
- Poetry.

Critique Service

All entrants may request a critique by a professional writer, agent, or editor who is unaffiliated with the contest judging. There is a small fee for this service.

Winners will be notified in August, 2014 by email. Winners' names will be posted on the SWW website at or about the same time. For more information or to submit an entry go to: www.swwcontest.com

Announcing the Judges for the 2014 SouthWest Writer's International Writing Contest!

Literary/Mainstream Novel— Laura Biagi, literary agent
The Jean V. Naggar Literary Agency NYC

Mystery/Thriller/Suspense etc.— Sandy Lu, literary agent
L. Perkins Agency NYC

Juvenile/Young Adult— MacKenzie Fraser-Bub, literary agent,
Trident Media Group NYC

Women's Fiction— Shira Hoffman, literary agent,
McIntosh & Otis Inc. NYC

SciFi/Fantasy/Horror Short Story— Leah Bobet, editor
Ideomancer Speculative Fiction Ontario, Canada

Mainstream/Literary Short Story— Caitlin McGuire, editor,
Fjords, Columbia, SC

Creative Nonfiction/Memoir— Mollie Glick, literary agent
Foundry Literary + Media NYC

Essay— Robert Fogarty, editor, Antioch Review, Yellow Springs, OH

Children's Picture Book— Allison Moore, editor
Little, Brown Books for Young Readers NYC

Poetry— Susan Lynch, editor The Conium Review,
Portland, OR

Welcome New Southwest Writer's Members!

**Freed W. Brown
Jon Cottin
Susan Washburn
Evelyn Neil
Matthew Barbour**

What is a Social Media Platform?

By Robin Kalinich

You've been hearing that editors want submissions from authors with an established platform. It seems that the Facebook logo has infiltrated the entire world and has even begun popping up in your dreams. (I can't help you with that dream thing, by the way. Seek professional help.) If cyberspace makes you a little nervous, you are not alone and this column is here to help you get started.

First, what exactly is a social media platform? This is simply a series of sites that you build around yourself and your work to interact with the world. I can't give you a bulleted list or an exact formula because each platform will be individual and tailored to your specific goals. It will also be affected by the amount of time and effort that you decide to devote to it.

You know how some people are great at parties? You always include them on your guest list because you know they will fit in with all of your other friends, are great conversationalists, make others feel listened to, and are just fun to be around. They energize the gathering and make things happen.

Effectively managing your platform is a lot like that, only with a much bigger potential impact. I'm sure most of you have been to book signings or gallery openings, either for your own work or someone else's. You're walking around the room making small talk, mingling. The author is secretly hoping someone will buy her books, but is doing her best to not be too obvious about it. Everyone is networking. Too soon, the whole thing is over, and everyone goes home to their normal lives. Online networking is just like this, except that you can do it on your own timetable, at your own pace, and while wearing comfortable clothes.

Most importantly, the party never ends. The book signing never ends. But it's even better than that, because in this case you're both the author and the marketing director and this bit is incredible, because it means that *you* have complete control over the process. It allows you to have an almost constant flow of interaction and exposure for your work if you learn to manage it properly. At the same time, it's both terrifying and overwhelming because it's an awful lot of responsibility. You're busy with your writing and your day job. You might not even have any idea how to get started, which can be very intimidating.

What you're selling is special. You're not selling widgets; you're not selling something that can be purchased at the nearest convenience store. You're selling a tiny piece of your life. You're selling your time and your heart and you should acknowledge that and market accordingly. A quick, easy, cookie cutter approach is not going to work in this situation. Let's face it – writing is not known to be a get rich quick business and we all know that. It's really tough to make money selling writing and I suspect that for most of you, money isn't the primary goal anyway. If it were, you'd be investing in pork belly or going to medical school instead. So yes, you need and want

to make money, because the electric bill isn't going to pay itself, but this is about more than money. It's bigger than that.

It's going to take some time, energy and creativity for you to effectively implement social media into your life, but I think it's worth it. I would like to note at this point that you still have other, more traditional options: you can hire someone to do your promotional work for you; you can enter into a relationship with a traditional editor or publishing house and hope they market you effectively and enthusiastically. I recommend taking a multi-faceted approach. This is what we call defense in depth at my day job. Your goal is to establish layers upon layers within a process to ensure that if one fails, you still have a back-up. Learn to recognize and seize opportunities when they come your way. Networking is full of small potential opportunities and there is no way for you to predict which is more valuable or what the outcome might be so you have to learn to make the best of them.

Combine many different ideas to promote your business, keep what works and trash what doesn't. Do everything you can to promote yourself using traditional methods and then add it to your own targeted social media campaign, and you have a very good chance of accomplishing your goals.

Probably the most common response I hear is - *I don't have time to build an online presence. I'm very busy and when I do get free time, I'd rather be writing.* Believe me, I get that. I'm busy, too.

Want to know the secret?

You're not going to like it, but here it is: In order to become a success at using social media, you need a combination of hard work, great content, and consistency. This doesn't have to be incredibly time consuming if you take it seriously and find a way to get yourself organized.

I'll let you in on one last little secret – everything I know about this topic was gleaned by just sitting down and experimenting. Trial and error, and then I filled in the gaps by Googling. I suggest you take the same approach. Just start. Start somewhere. You can learn as you go and tweak things along the way.

We've spent a lot of time on general concepts and this was intentional. I can (and will) teach you specifics about setting up your sites and maintaining them, but be aware that cyberspace is a very dynamic environment. Things change online very quickly, making the specifics go out-of-date so fast it will make your head spin. Focus on the general concepts. You can always do an online search to figure out exactly which button to click. Don't worry, we will talk about practical ways in which you can build your platform, I promise, but don't wait for me. If you have a great idea that you want to try, do it! If you get stuck, shoot me an email and I'll do my best to help you get headed in the right direction.

Robin Kalinich lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico. In her spare time, she works to enable artists and writers to effectively promote their works using networking and social media. Find her at www.robinkalinich.com.



Museum of the American Military Family Postcard Project. Writer in Residence, Caroline LeBlanc (left) and CEO, Circe Olson Woessner (right) collected about fifty stories about military family life from people attending the 2013 Veteran Administration's Diversity Day

The Postcard Project By Caroline LeBlanc

In 2013 the Museum of the American Military Family, where I am the Writer in Residence, launched its Postcard Project. Our goal is to collect 500 postcards with stories about the impact of the military on individuals, particularly the life of families. Completed postcards will be assembled into a mobile for display in our Summer, 2014 exhibit, *Sacrifice and Service: The American Military Family*. The National Museum of Nuclear Science is our host and partner in this exhibit. Mobiles of completed postcards will hang above a desk station where exhibit goers can write their own stories on blank picture postcards we will provide. These cards will become part of the permanent mobile installation in the museum's future building. We will also review the stories for inclusion in a future anthology.

The word limit for the MAMF postcard project is 9 to 90 words, though we have not enforced a word count as long as the story fits on the postcard. Most people write something on the spot and squeeze in as much information as they can. There are many other postcard projects with a word limit ranging from 6 to 250 words. Reports of an overwhelming response to Michelle Norris's *Race Card Project* (<http://theracecardproject.com/>) inspired our venture into the genre. Thousands of people have sent her their thoughts on race, cultural and ethnic identity.

A Google search of postcard projects pulls up links to writing and art projects from American elementary schools to the slums of India. Most postcard projects consist of online calls for postcard story submissions with a particular focus. Topics include secrets, memoir, obsessions, the military life and war. Some, like *MI-*

CHAEK KIMBALL WRITES YOUR LIFE STORY (ON A POSTCARD), become books. (<http://postcardlifestories.blogspot.com/>)

For over a decade, postcard projects have been one of several publishing venues for flash fiction, memoir and commentary. Flash genres are themselves divided into subcategory genres based on the number of words in a piece—as few as 6 and almost never more than 2,000 words. Flash fiction pieces have classic story elements, implied even if not written. Flash fiction and prose poetry can be difficult to distinguish, which is how I, a poet eager to find my way into writing fiction, discovered the genre.

Listings of hard copy and online journals which publish flash fiction, non-fiction and micro-essays are easy to find. SMITH Magazine, has published several “Six Word” memoir collections by the “Famous & Obscure.” *SIX WORD WAR*, a website of six word memoirs by Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, recently published a hard copy volume of submitted memoirs. One animated post, by Thomas Loux reads, “Boredom...Boredom...Boredom...Sheer Terror! Boredom...” In 2012 USAA (an insurance company serving military populations) posted a call on their “Spouse Buzz” blog for military spouses: “Can you describe Your Military Life in Six Words?” (<http://spousebuzz.com/blog/2012/05/can-you-describe-your-military-life-in-six-words.html>) The blog entry's author, Jacey Eckhart, a sought after speaker and nationally syndicated writer, offered these six words to describe her military life: “AIR FORCE BRAT. NAVY WIFE. ARMY MOM.” That same year, *O Magazine* online called for “Mini-Memoirs: Your Life Story in Six Words,” then posted entries in an attractive blackboard and chalk format. Oprah's entry is first, “Seeking THE FULLEST Expression Of Self.” (<http://www.oprah.com/omagazine/Six-Word-Memoirs-O-Magazine-Mini-Memoirs/2>)

Jacey Eckhart, like most who mention the history of the flash genres, recounts the (sometimes challenged) traditional belief that Ernest Hemingway wrote the first flash story in the 1920s. In response to a challenge create a story in six words, and he wrote “For sale. Baby shoes. Never worn.” Flash fiction also appears in Hispanic, French, German and Arabic literature.

There is no end to the creative possibilities offered by the various versions of flash writing. It is a great way to challenge our own writing skills. It is a non-intimidating way to invite people who do not think of themselves as writers to put a story—fictional or non-fictional—on paper. Postcard projects are particularly useful in overcoming writing anxiety since most people have written postcards to loved ones, at home or away. Try it on your own, with school or community groups of all age and education levels—in person or online.

Member Successes

Larry Greenly's book, *Eugene Bullard: World's First Black Fighter Pilot*, has received a starred review in the February American Library Association's *Booklist*, a recommendation in the February issue of VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates), and a favorable review on the Roger-Wilco.net air traffic management blog.

Jeanne Shannon has had a short (very short) story called "Parsnips" accepted by *Trickster*, the literary magazine of Northern New Mexico College in Espanola. She wrote the piece in an SWW workshop several years ago, so thanks, SWW!

Betty Higbie has been ask by Hawaii University Press to submit her children's picture book, *Flossie Q Fish*.

Award winning author, **Dr. Irene I. Blea**, profiles the night of her birth and the disappearance of the Mexican Gray wolf in 1946. In the New Mexico Mercury web blog she shares a photo of her mother, and her at age three, besides their log cabin in northern New Mexico: http://newmexicomercury.com/blog/comments/wolf_medicine Dr. Blea is the author of nine books, many articles, and the trilogy *Suzanna*, a three novel series about a 13 yr. old girl married off to a 32 yr. old man. The second *Suzanna* novel, *Poor People's Flowers* will be released in March. Visit Blea on www.Facebook.com/blea

SOUTHWEST WRITERS MONTHLY MEETINGS

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Albuquerque, NM 87111

For more information,
call the SWW office at 505-265-9485.

To register for classes and workshops:
sign up at SWW meetings or register online at
www.southwestwriters.com.

Libraries: Fading into the Past

This month we asked our members if they still use Libraries on a regular basis. The lack of emails regarding the topic displays apathetic interest in this form of research. But one member did respond...Here is what she had to say.

My first source for information is to see whether the library has any books on the subject I am researching. In concert with that, if I have done an online search and books or even DVDs pop up, I will still check the library for them first. I am at the library at least once a week, either picking up books I have put on reserve or returning them. I regularly search the library's database. For example, I am preparing content for a tea retreat at Ghost Ranch, and have checked out books on the subject of tea and related topics. If the book is something I think I should have in my own library, I will then usually buy it.

Another great resource for me is talking to people. I recently checked out a book from the library by an author who knew Georgia O'Keeffe (GOK loved tea) and who wrote two books on her and her family's friendship with O'Keeffe. She lives in Texas, so I searched on her name, got an address and phone number, and called her. Her two books were very expensive on Amazon, and I learned she had some to sell. She gave me an excellent price, and mailed them to me. If people are using only the Internet to research something, they are missing out on many other sources of information that can lead them to even more information (as the Texas author did for me).

Marsha L Thole

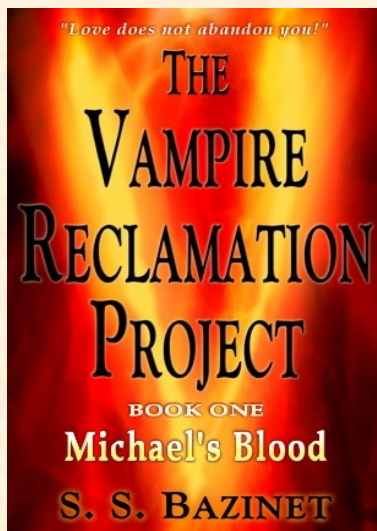
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An Interview with an SWW Author:

S.S. Bazinet

by KL Wagoner

S.S. Bazinet is the author of four published books including two fantasies, a children's book and a self-help book. *The Vampire Reclamation Project: Michael's Blood* is the first of eight in her vampire series – a story that “continues to write itself as its characters learn more ways to find what’s been lost,” just as she found her passion while writing about them. Stop by her website at <http://ssbazinet.com/wp/> to see what she’s up to and read interviews she’s posted with authors like Anne Hillerman, Joseph Badal, Slim Randles, Sarah Baker, and Steve Brewer. Better yet, stop by the snack table at the next SouthWest Writers meeting. She’ll be the bright light at the back of the room encouraging everyone to pursue their dreams.

Give us your elevator pitch for “Michael’s Blood”.

“Heaven and hell collide when a vampire named Arel persuades Michael, an incarnate angel, to give him his blood. However, angelic blood comes with a lethal warning and dangers that Arel never imagined.”

When readers turn the last page of the book, what do you hope they’ll say about it?

One of my readers expressed my desire best in her review when she wrote, “If you’ve ever had nightmares about unspeakable horrors, and you know inexplicably that man’s inhumanity to man is part of your personal history, this book will ultimately give you courage to carry on.”

How was writing this book different from your other projects?

From the moment I started writing it, I was possessed with a need to tell the story. I wrote for ten and twelve hours a day, sometimes more. I barely slept. Most nights I got maybe four hours of sleep, but I wasn’t tired. I’d get up around 3:00 or 4:00 a.m., write for a while, then take

three mile walks. The creative fount I tapped into gave me everything I needed to complete not only the first book, but five more in the series in the year that followed. I’ve since completed a seventh book and have the eighth one waiting to take form.

Where did the inspiration for the story come from?

I never planned to write a book about vampires or angels. Instead, I got fed up with having writer’s block. One day I decided to just have fun and not care about writing for anyone but me. That decision seemed to be the permission slip I needed to open the doors to my creativity. When I sat down with pad and pencil, the story flowed out on its own. Yet it contained all the things I felt passionate about. Soon I needed a keyboard to keep up with the torrent of words and feelings that poured forth from my heart and soul. The first book was completed in a little over a month. However, I did about nine edits on the novel before I felt I’d done it justice.

What was the most rewarding aspect of writing “Michael’s Blood”?

Writing the series gave me an opportunity to purge many deep down, sometimes hidden, fears– the ones I didn’t have the courage to face head on. At times, I doubted my ability to plunge into the depths of pain the story required me to understand and then to give it a voice. When I completed the first six books in the series, I felt a little like my character, Arel. We had both reclaimed large portions of our lives.

Which of your books did you enjoy writing the most?

I didn’t think I could write a thriller, but my novel *In the Care of Wolves* surprised me. It started off rather innocently, but quickly demanded that I find a way to express the non-stop action and emotional upheaval that drives the story. When I finished the book, I felt a wonderful sense of pride and achievement.

What first inspired you to become a writer?

The inspiration has always come from within, from the “greater” me that doesn’t seem to know anything but possibility and the joy of creation. However, to truly access that part of myself, I have to let go of all my expectations about writing and the story I’m telling. I have to allow whatever wants to come forth, whether it is dark or light, to have a voice. When I do, when I put aside my judgments and criticisms, I experience a true lightness of being.

What do you struggle with most in your writing?

One of the fears I still entertain is that I’ve purged so much of my angst—and I’m generally so happy with my life—that I won’t have the ability to write passionate stories anymore. However, I recently started a new novel that soothed my fear. All the depths of feeling within are not only available, but my ability to express emotion is better than ever. What a thrill that is.

Why do you write in the fantasy genre?

I love fantasy because I love to create worlds that go beyond the boundaries of the reality we live in. These worlds allow my characters to do whatever they need to do to free themselves from situations and belief systems that have kept them shackled. More than anything, I'd like to be thought of as a writer who helps people to strip away the barriers that keep them from connecting with who they are on a heart and soul level.

Do you have unfinished projects keeping you busy?

I'm in the final stages of editing books two and three of the vampire series. I have another novel, *When the Gods Come Back*, that's nearly finished. I'm also writing a new story with a first person POV. It wasn't something I planned, but once I realized I'd slipped into first person, I enjoyed it and decided it was right for the story. I recommend that every writer give first person POV a try. It can provide an opportunity to delve deeper into the main character's view of life.

Which has been more challenging for you—writing or promoting?

Promoting has been more of a challenge, but maybe that's a good thing. I'm overcoming more fears as I learn how to get my creations out in the world. SouthWest Writers has been a blessing in that regard. The organization provides a great environment for writers to grow in knowledge and self-confidence. With these attributes under one's belt, promoting becomes easier.

KL Wagoner (writing as *Cate Macabe*) is the author of *This New Mountain*: a memoir of AJ Jackson, private investigator, reposessor, and grandmother. She blogs about writing memoir at www.ThisNewMountain.com/blog and has a new blog devoted to speculative fiction at <http://klwagoner.wordpress.com/>.

Call for Board Members!

Are you excited to be a member of SWW?

Do you want to work with some forward thinking, dedicated volunteers?

Next month begins the annual search for new SWW board members. If you have talents or enthusiasm or both which you can share with us to forward the goal of helping new authors carve a place for themselves in the literary realm, please consider joining us. See next month's SAGE for a nomination form.

LET'S FACE FACTS

by Janet K. Brennan

We know this has been a difficult year for authors around the world. Book buying is at an all time low and even e-book sales are suffering. Of course we hope for a return to the "good old days."

Once again I will remind everyone to be realistic about your books. There were over 15 million books published world-wide this year. The more you get out there and market your book, the better your sales will be. Good publishing companies can make your books available to the world but they can't make people buy them. In these tough days of book selling, many authors are going back to the old tradition of hiring an agent or publicist, and it is something you might want to think about. Take a look at the top ten best sellers on the New York Times this year. You will recognize all of their names and titles; they are celebrity authors. It is extremely unrealistic for you to think that as a first time author you will sell a large number of books.

Advice: Pick a topic to write about that you are interested in and that you know about. Always fully research your book. Mysteries are in, westerns are out. UFO's, paranormal are a niche group as is art and poetry. Build a resume of previous submissions and publications before you even attempt to write your first book. Readers WILL google you if they do not recognize your name. You MUST be a business person. If you are shy, you will not sell your book.

Affiliate: If you are a serious writer, then you will want to affiliate with an organization. It is wonderful to be around other writers. Stay away from organizations that charge you a huge fee to join and then charge you for every benefit that they offer. They are sharks for the wannabe authors and really do not care about your needs, only your wallet. We are fortunate to have several excellent places to hang your hat should you want to affiliate with an organization and SouthWest Writers is one of them. Last, but by no means least, NEVER write a book to earn a lot of money, write for the art form. If you are a committed writer, making money should be secondary.

Janet Brennan is a fiction author and poet, an SWW member who's on the board of NMBA, and is also the Editor-in-Chief of Casa de Snapdragon Publishing (www.casadesnapdragon.com).

Announcements and Contests

The WOMEN DESTROY HORROR! special issue will be guest-edited by legendary editor Ellen Datlow. Ellen will be selecting all of the original fiction and the reprints for this issue. The reprints will all be solicited, but we will have an open reading period for original fiction. Submissions will open on March 15, 2014. If you'd like to submit a story, see *Nightmare's* [guidelines](#) page for more information.

The WOMEN DESTROY FANTASY! special issue will be guest-edited by former *Fantasy Magazine* editor Cat Rambo. Cat Rambo will select all of the original stories, and long-time editor of the fantasy half of *The Year's Best Fantasy & Horror*, Terri Windling, will select the reprints. The reprints will all be solicited, but we will have an open reading period for original fiction. Submissions will open on March 15, 2014. If you'd like to submit a story, see *Fantasy's* [guidelines](#) page for more information.

Narrative Magazine (<http://www.narrativemagazine.com/winter-2014-story-contest>) has a Winter 2014 Story Contest each year. They are looking for short shorts, short stories, essays, memoirs, photo essays, graphic stories, all forms of literary nonfiction, and excerpts from longer works of both fiction and nonfiction - deadline March 31. First Prize is \$2,500, Second Prize is \$1,000, Third Prize is \$500, and ten finalists will receive \$100 each. All entries will be considered for publication.

The Martha's Vineyard Institute of Creative Writing is now open for registration and scholarship applications for our 2014 Summer Writing Program (July 13-18). A detailed description of the 2014 Summer Writing Program, along with registration and scholarship application information is available at our website: <http://mview.com/>

Northern Colorado Writers announces its 4th annual Short Fiction contest (you do not need to be a member of NCW or in Colorado to enter). Winners receive 1st: \$1,000; 2nd: \$250; 3rd: \$100. Winners and honorable mentions of this and the other two contests in the series (Personal Essay/Creative Nonfiction and Poetry) will be published in and receive a free copy of the winners' anthology, *Pooled Ink*. Entry fee is \$20. The final judge for Short Fiction is Seth Brady Tucker. Any style or genre, max 5,000 words. Deadline March 31. See website for full submission guidelines: <http://northerncoloradowriters.com/upcoming-events-mainmenu-133/writing-contests/307-2012-writing-contests>

**Send your successes and announcements
to the SouthWest Sage Editor at
swwsage@swcp.com.**

Writer's Digest has been shining a spotlight on up and coming writers in all genres through its Annual Writing Competition for more than 80 years. Enter our 83rd Annual Writing Competition for your chance to win and have your work be seen by editors and agents! The winning entries of this [writing contest](#) will also be on display in the 83rd Annual *Writer's Digest Competition Collection*. **Early Deadline: May 5, 2014**
www.writersdigest.com

The Writer Magazine is looking for short stories of practical jokes for our April Fool's Day themed contest. Enter your story on our submissions page by March 16. This themed contest is subject to the same rules and guidelines as our regular weekly contests. Open to writers over the age of 40. No entry fees. Cash Prize. Submit online at: <http://www.writermag.com/contests/practical-jokes-contest>

MIDLIFE COLLAGE has a free weekly writing contest open to anyone over the age of 40. Cash prizes. <http://midlifecollage.com>.

West Texas A&M will host a Writer's Academy June 9-13, 20013 in Canyon TX— 20 miles south of Amarillo.
[Wwww.wtamu.edu/eod](http://www.wtamu.edu/eod)

STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

SouthWest Writers is seeking deserving high school and college students for one-year scholarship memberships in our organization. To be eligible, an applicant must be enrolled in high school or college.

If you know someone with the interest and desire to pursue a writing career or if you wish to apply yourself, please complete the application form on page 19 of this newsletter and send to: *SouthWest Writers, 3200 Carlisle Blvd NE, Suite 114, Albuquerque, NM 87110*

Give the Anthology to a Library!

Do you have a local public library or school library that you feel should have more books by New Mexico authors? If so, would you consider purchasing a copy of the **Storyteller's Anthology** and donating it to them?

In most cases your purchase is tax deductible and it will help raise funds to support SWW's ongoing mission to help writers succeed!

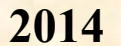
Click on the link below to order today!



to [Amazon](#).

**Help Support
SouthWest Writers!**

SWW receives a commission on any books ordered via this link



SouthWest Writers is seeking deserving high school and college students for one-year scholarship memberships in our organization. To be eligible, an applicant must be enrolled in high school or college. If you know a student with the interest and desire to pursue a writing career or if you wish to apply yourself, please complete this application and mail to the address at the bottom of the form.

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-Mail: _____ **Phone:** _____

Current School: _____

Current Level: _____

Area(s) of Interest: _____

(In 250 words or less tell us why you would like to be a student member of SouthWest Writers):

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

Recommended by: _____

Send this application to SouthWest Writers, 3200 Carlisle Blvd NE, Suite 114, Albuquerque, NM 87110