

South West Sage

The Voice of South West Writers

Vol. 36 No.23

March 2020

Memoir Stories From Baseball to Milk-Bone

More than 20 members responded to the March *Memoir* Challenge with personal, poignant and humorous true tales. The first seven submissions are scattered throughout this edition of the Sage; look for others to appear in future editions, beginning in May. Find guidelines for entering April's *Poetry* Challenge on **page 8**.

Mickey and Me by Joe Brown

Following my successful 1962 baseball season in our hometown of Cushing, OK, my dad arranged for the family to see my hero Mickey Mantle and the New York Yankees play the Kansas City Athletics, in Kansas City.

Dad got the family seats a few feet away from the locker room door where the Yankees came out to go down to the field. He wanted me to see "The Mick," up close.

Gameday, I took the seat nearest the locker room door, eagerly awaiting the Yankees.

The first Yankee I saw was my hero Mickey Mantle. I hollered, "Hey Mick, I'm an Okie."

Mickey laughed, he came over, his right hand out.

"Well, I'm an Okie, too, and I'm Mickey Mantle."

Taking his hand, I gushed, "Yeah, I know, and I'm Joe."

con't. on page 7



My Grandmother's Room

Margaret McNamara Tobin, 1870 to 1956

by Phyllis Ryan

My mother urged each of us girls to visit with Mama every day "to keep her spirits up." Mama's room was usually dark; I never knew at first glance into the gloom whether she was sleeping or dead. She was almost ninety when I was ten, and the easy banter she'd shared with my older sisters was absent with me. They remembered her as a younger, fun-loving grandma, who treated them to movies, had sleepovers and picnics, shared confidences. My daily visit became a scary duty for me, one fraught with dread.

I would stand at the foot of her massive old-fashioned bed with the high bed-stead—the same bed in which she had birthed ten children—and wait until she noticed me. My timidity seemed to irritate her, as she couldn't hear well and was accustomed to my sisters' strident announcements, their louder entrances. The smells of Ben Gay, Mentholatum, and unguents of all kinds created a permanent vapor around her bed. I always left with blinking eyes and a cleared head at the end of my visit. She seemed ancient to me, like a crone I read about in fairy stories: deeply wrinkled skin, dark sunken eyes, thin and crooked nose; sparse, wispy hair. She would groan, rise up and swing her heavy crippled legs over the side of the bed in one leaden movement, peering up at me in confusion.

Her nights were more often than not tormented and miserable, her mood the next day reflecting what her night had been. My memories of her are quick scenes of a quarrelsome, querulous, irascible old woman who frightened me. I never knew what to expect. It amazed me that the lump I had seen lying in bed when I entered the room could become this mass of energy when

con't. on next page

roused. Bent over and in unremitting pain, she was bed-ridden, my mother her main caregiver. Cheerful at times in spite of her afflictions, she fought against her failing health with as much dignity as her often humiliating and isolated life allowed.

Mama's world was confined within the space of her reach: her bedside lamp, that burned constantly; water and glass; writing and reading materials. She reached anything she needed beyond that span by the use of her silver-tipped cane. Mama's self-imposed discipline was writing lists to keep up her penmanship, for she wrote beautifully. In spite of her swollen and painful joints, she would write copious grocery lists, train schedules, addresses, dates of birth, death and marriage, president's names, exotic perfumes, the number of eggs the chickens laid. Hunched over and intent upon her task, she

seemed content and proud of her ability.

As I grew older and heard her story related by my mother, I began to understand Mama better. When, at the age of 55, she decided to follow her lifelong dream of learning to swim and become a Red Cross Lifeguard, she fell at the pool and broke her hip. The onset of rheumatoid arthritis began then. She did receive her certificate but her life was never the same.

I felt humbled by her great strength of character. Hampered by her sex and obeying the unbending Irish-Catholic dogma that locked her in and ruled her life, bearing too many children, and living a life of unmet emotional needs, she bore her painful old age as best she could, courageously fought her private battle. In my eyes, she prevailed as a victorious warrior.

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SouthWest Sage

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Choose Wisely

Lately, I've listened to members who have contacted editors to work on their books and who have ended up frustrated and angry because what they expected to happen...didn't. Sometimes, they paid quite a bit of money and, either the person they hired didn't give them what they needed or they waited for months without getting any response.

Choosing an editor is almost as personal as writing a book to begin with. Part of the problem lies in not knowing what kinds of editors you are looking for. Do you need a Developmental Editor or a Copy Editor? Are you wanting a critique? Do you really want editing, or is someone who can format your book for you to self-publish a more appropriate choice?

That's the first step in finding the help you need. When you begin casting about for help you should also be choosy about the person or company you hire. Do



they have credentials and references? Are they giving you a list of services and costs or just saying "I can do that for thousands of dollars paid in advance"? Are they committing to a deadline?

A true professional should provide all of this and, upon the project's completion, should also provide a detailed statement of their services. During your association with the person you select, they should communicate with you regularly,

give you updates and ask and answer questions as needed.

We spend so many hours, days, and, sometimes, years writing our book; we owe it to ourselves to find someone who will care about it as much as we do.

Rose

Hashtag Hacks

by Elizabeth S. Layton

To begin with - what is a Hashtag? It is a word or phrase preceded by a hash sign (#), used on social media applications, such as Twitter and Instagram, to identify messages on a specific topic.



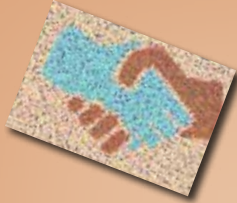
With more than 90 million images being uploaded to Instagram and Twitter every single day, getting noticed by your specific audience is an art. Here are Five Hashtag Hacks to improve your social media skills and engagement:

1. Find your hashtag categories by following the trendsetters, authors, or masters of your field. If they are using them, you should too.
2. Make a list of 100 go-to hashtags from your recent research and keep them near to wherever you post the most.
3. Use at least 11 or more hashtags (yes, you read that correctly), with a limit of 20, to receive the highest level of engagement. The use of 11 or more hashtags increases engagement percentage from 22 percent to 79 percent.
4. Be specific with your hashtags and their relationship to your postings. If Content is King, then Connection is the more proper and engaging Queen.
5. Every Twitter and Instagram post you write needs its group of hashtags before you send it off into the Social Media Sphere. Hashtags will give your post its specific set of pathways to reach your desired audience and demographic.



Look Who Joined SWW in January

Have you said 'Howdy' yet?



**Sara Padilla
Pamela McBride
Nawassa Hooks
Paris Valencia**

**Steven Brown
Jerry Jaz
Bridget Wilson
Alane Brown
Rebecca Gummere**



**Special Thanks
to
Sara Padilla
for donating to SWW!**

ATTEND A SouthWest Writers MEETING

**Saturday meetings start at 10 a.m.
Tuesday meetings start at 6:30 p.m.**

SouthWest Writers members, "Writers Helping Writers," meet the first Saturday and the third Tuesday of each month at the **Albuquerque Center for Spiritual Living, 2801 Louisiana Blvd. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110 (just north of Menual, entrance is west of Louisiana)**. Meetings include information, education and networking opportunities for writers. Visitors are welcome.

TUESDAY NIGHT MEETINGS FEATURE MEMBER READINGS

Once a month, at the Tuesday night meeting, pre-selected member/authors read selections from their own work. Attend for the entertainment, the education and for great conversations.



RMK
Publications

Need help with Self-Publishing?

Rose Marie will format and upload your completed manuscript for print or ebook on Amazon or Ingram Spark. She will assist you in creating your own KDP Amazon or Ingram Spark account, explain copyrights, ISBNs and uploading the final product. If you wish to do it yourself in the future she will walk you through it in a way that gives you the skills to do it yourself .

**Reasonable Prices & References Available.
Initial consultation free.**

**Rose Marie Kern
www.rmpublications.com
505-417-6790 author@swcp.com**



Sign Up For These Classes NOW!

Enroll in classes at:
southwestwriters.com
or (505) 830-6034

Writing for Magazines: Bagging Your First Assignment

with instructor Melody Groves

Thanks to the invention of the Internet, the opportunity to write for magazines is almost endless. With over 9,000 magazines published yearly, in addition to those online, the world is your oyster. But, there are tricks to bagging an assignment.

So if you've got a good idea but don't know where to go or how to start, look no more. This class is for you.



In six hours we'll cover:

- finding your story,
- finding the market,
- tweaking the same idea for different magazines,
- writing a query that sells,
- photo requirements,
- approaching an editor.

And that's just for starters.

Eight-time award-winner MELODY GROVES is the author of six historical fiction novels and three nonfiction books. Her dozens of magazine articles appear in *Wild West*, *True West*, *New Mexico Magazine*, *Enchantment Magazine* and many more. Past-president of South-West Writers, she's also a member of Western Writers of America. When not writing, she plays rhythm guitar (and tambourine) in the Jammy Time Band.

*"The value of learning (from Melody)
far exceeds the expense..."*

I am so glad I came. You have made me better."

Questions? melodygroves@comcast.net

WHEN: Two Saturdays, April 18 and 25
9 a.m. - Noon

WHERE: SWW office, 3200 Carlisle Blvd NE, #114

COST: \$79 SWW members; \$84 Osher; \$89 non-members

REGISTER: Online at www.southwestwriters.com
at a SWW meeting, or call the SWW
office - (505) 830-6034

Blogging Your Way to Success

with instructor Rob Spiegel

Blogging can build your writing skills while creating an audience. This class will explore all types of blogging, from poetry to how-to instruction, from spirituality to memoir. Rob will explain how to choose a free blogging platform, how to determine the blog length and frequency, and how to build an audience. This class will explain how you can use a blog to create the backbone of a book, just as Julie Powell did to create her bestseller, *Julie & Julia: 365 Days, 524 Recipes, 1 Tiny Apartment Kitchen*, which went on to become a major movie.

ROB SPIEGEL has been writing for 40 years. He makes his living as a journalist, serving as senior editor for Design News, an international trade



WHEN: Five Tuesdays, April 7 - May 5
3-5 p.m.

WHERE: SWW Office, 3200 Carlisle Blvd NE, #114

COST: \$130 for SWW members, \$135 Osher,
\$140 nonmembers

REGISTER: Online at www.southwestwriters.com
at a SWW meeting, or call the SWW
office - (505) 830-6034

magazine. He has published fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama. He has published six books with major publishers such as St. Martin's Press. Rob has taught writing at UNM, CNM, Osher, and at dozens of writing conferences across the country. For 10 years, he owned a magazine (Chile Pepper) and a book publishing company. His weekly writing output includes journalism, blogs, webinars, fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction.

Saturday, March 7

Meeting, 10 a.m. - Noon
Albuquerque Center for Spiritual Living

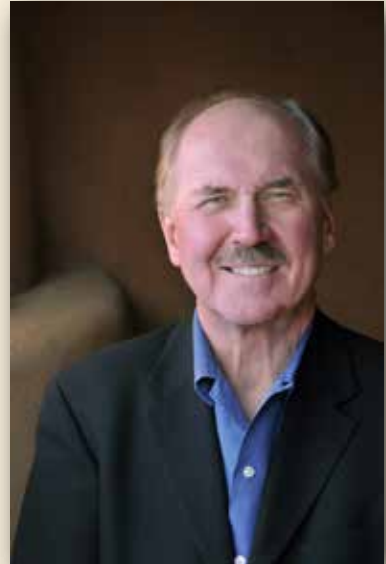
Getting Through It: How To Create A Storyline with best-selling author, David Morrell

New York Times bestselling author (New Mexico resident and *Rambo* creator) David Morrell will talk about how he creates a plot. He'll also discuss the current state of publishing.

DAVID MORRELL wrote *First Blood*, the novel in which *Rambo* was created. His New York Times bestsellers include the classic espionage novel, *The Brotherhood of the Rose*, the basis for the only TV mini-se-

ries to air after a Super Bowl. An Anthony, Edgar, Ellis, Left Coast, and Thriller Award finalist, Morrell has Inkpot, Macavity, Nero, RT, and Stoker awards as well as ITW's Thriller Master award and a Bouchercon Lifetime Achievement award. His latest novel is the acclaimed Victorian mystery, *Ruler of the Night*. His writing book, *The Successful Novelist*, will be available at his talk.

www.davidmorrell.net



Workshop, 12:30 - 2:30
ACSL, right after the meeting

Register at any SWW meeting, call the SWW office (505-830-6034, M-Th 9 a.m.- Noon) or online at www.southwestwriters.com.
\$20 members/\$30 non-members

Wizard or Wannabe?

How Writers Can Hire True Publishing Professionals
with Mary E. Neighbour

Often new authors and self-publishers rely on others to learn and implement publishing "best practices." Yet many discover—too late—that those they hire are not true professionals, and their books do not sell well, get reviewed, or win awards. This workshop teaches participants industry standards, terminology, and telltale signs of a true professional. All will receive a handy list of questions to use when vetting freelancers for editing, design, and book production.

Some people call **MARY E.**

NEIGHBOUR a "book shepherd," though Mary wields a blue pencil far more expertly than a herding rod. For the past ten years, she and her husband have helped dozens of writers bring their manuscripts to the marketplace, through professional editing, design, and book production. Passionate about helping authors make their work shine in the world, with the combined professional expertise of over fifty years, they help books win awards like Ben Franklin, Eric Hoffer, IPPY, Nautilus, and NIE.



Visit Mary's website at: MediaNeighbours.com.

Tuesday, March 17

Meeting, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
Albuquerque Center for Spiritual Living

Choosing the Best Word

with Ted Spitzmiller

Regardless of the genre in which you are engaged, vocabulary is a critical aspect of connecting with your audience. Selecting the best word for a given situation is not a simple matter. We'll explore some of the critical aspects of establishing a mindset for your reader.



TED SPITZMILLER began his professional career in the military at the Army's Ordinance Guided Missile School in Huntsville, Alabama. He went on to nuclear weapons training at Sandia Base in New Mexico,

where he taught for two years in the Atomic Weapons Training Group. He has worked for IBM, INTEL, and the Los Alamos National Laboratory from which he retired in 2001. Paralleling his profession in computing (he has an MS in Computing Information Systems), Ted has always maintained an intense interest in aeronautics and astronautics as a historian. He holds an FAA commercial pilot certificate for Airplanes, Single and Multi-engine land and sea, with Instrument privileges. Ted is a Flight Instructor (CFII) who has logged over 4,000 hours in more than 87 different types of aircraft. Combining his skills in writing with his knowledge of aerospace, he has published seven books and more than 100 articles in major aviation magazines over the past 35 years.

MICKEY AND ME, con't. from page 1

Mickey asked me: Where's home? How old are you? Do you play baseball?

I know I answered his questions, but I can't remember what I said. Mickey pulled over teammates as they came out and introduced me. "My little Okie buddy, Joey," he told them. I met Whitey Ford, Yogi Berra, Bill Skowron, Bobby Richardson, Tony Kubek, Roger Maris and, all the team.

After a while, Mickey said, "Joey, I better get down to the field and warm up."

As he turned to leave, I hollered, "Mick, hit me a homer."

Mickey looked back smiled again. "Joey, I'll sure try."

In Mickey's first at-bat, he hit a homer to left field that flew out of the ballpark. I saw the entire flight of the ball and marveled at the distance it traveled. Mickey seemed as excited by the homer as I was. As he rounded second base, he looked directly up above third base, toward me, took his ballcap off and twirled it. After the game, we hung around for a while. I wanted to see Mickey again and tell him how excited I was about the homer.

Dad said, "Joey, Mickey is probably being interviewed by reporters. We leave early tomorrow morning for New Orleans, let's go."

I hated to leave, but I was smiling from ear to ear because Mickey had hit a home run for me.

In 1970, I was living in Lubbock, Texas. I saw a full-page ad in the newspaper about Mickey Mantle coming to attend the grand opening of the Mickey Mantle's Country Cooking restaurant. On opening day, I arrived at the restaurant and saw a line of fans out the front door and down the street. I went and got in line.

A table was set up for Mickey to sign autographs. Mickey was smiling as he made everyone feel special.

He was being the Mickey I remembered from Kansas City. He looked up at each fan, asked their name and what they wanted on the picture.

When Mickey looked up at me, he gasped, and did a "double-take." To my complete surprise, he said, "Joey, how are you, and where were you after the game?"

It took me a moment to realize what he had said. Then it hit me, and I was shocked.

"I wanted to say goodbye, Mickey. We waited a while, but we had to go, and prepare to leave early the next morning for Louisiana."

"Okay, now where have you been for all these years?"

I mumbled, "Mick, you remember me?"

Mickey smiled and said, "Sure do, it was August of 1962 in Kansas City, right?"

I said, "Well, yes, but how...?"

Mickey stopped me, "Joey, you had no way of knowing this, but I had tried many times to hit a home run for a kid; that night, your homer, was the only time in my career I did it. It was an amazing night for me."

I saw the emotion in his face and heard it in his voice.

"Joey, what do you want on this picture?"

"Well...To Joe, Mickey Mantle, I guess."

"Now come on. How about, To My Li'l Okie Buddy Joey?"

"Oh no, just, To Joe, Mickey Mantle, is fine with me," and that's what Mickey put on the picture.

"I better let you get to all these people," I said as I turned to leave.

Mickey said, "Oh no, you come back here behind the table. We have a lot of catching up to do." Mickey continued to sign pictures and was very nice to everyone, but for the next couple hours, Mickey and me did a lot of catching up.

The Sage Writing Challenge

APRIL

It's poetry month! Send us your best poetry. Limit it to 300 words. Other secrets to success: keep it tasteful and well edited (have you read it out loud, to the mirror?), read and follow the guidelines below.

Email submissions to sage@swwriters.com

CHALLENGE AND ARTICLE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Payment is in bylines and clips. **Deadline is the 15th of the month prior to the next issue.** Standard article lengths are from 300-1000 words; certain Sage Challenges may set more specific word count requirements (see the Challenge description box, above). Submissions may be edited for accuracy, readability and length. Submissions must be tasteful; free from profanity, explicit sex or violence, etc.

Send all submissions as either standard text in an email or in an attached Word document in 12 pt. size. Single spaced. Do not get fancy with formatting or fonts.

Mission by John Hoover

We were hunkered down guarding a bridge. The Viet Cong liked to blow it up occasionally along the South Vietnam coastal highway during the Tet Offensive of '68. Night had arrived, yet the heavy jungle heat and Asian humidity hung thick as always. And it was semi-quiet, but not because of imminent enemy action across the primitive road—we made enough noise ourselves grumbling and muttering in our concealment.

It was our third night consecutively guarding the damn structure, built back in the Viet Minh rebel days during the French Indochina occupation. Francais graffiti, painted by those other obedient, dumb soldiers, still adorned the support buttresses, and now it was America's turn, 20 years later. Sorta like Afghanistan; our mission cycle to be frustrated and maybe die. At this time, the rallying theme was Communism.

When midnight came 'round, Harold Parker looked

SouthWest SAGE

The SouthWest Sage newsletter welcomes submissions focusing on all aspects of research, writing, and publishing in any genre. See past issues of SouthWest Sage for the types of articles we publish.

Here are four ways you may be included:

- Write an article for the Sage related to the craft of writing, getting published, etc.
- Enter stories, poems, or articles inspired by the monthly writing challenge announced in each Sage.
- Send in a short story/poem/essay of your own—on any topic (inclusion in the Sage is subject to the discretion of the editor).
- Enter artwork/photographs related to writing in general or accompanying your stories.

Be sure to read, understand and follow the guidelines for submission. **SUBMISSIONS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THE GUIDELINES CANNOT BE CONSIDERED.**

Send questions or submissions to:

Kathy Schuit
SouthWest Sage Editor
sage@swwriters.com



The March challenge was to share 750 words or fewer of a memoir story.

at me and said, "Hey man, let's take a walk." He raised his eyebrows expectantly, which I could barely see in moonlight and lying prone in the ditch paralleling the road up to the bridge. Big Harold was a black man from Knoxville, the first "Negro" (he had confided proudly) to bust the color barrier back in his high school when he was selected to the All-City Football first team—tight end, circa '64. Then he got drafted, like me.

Harold had been in Nam for three tours; with a bad drinking problem getting worse. I studied the dank jungle across the highway, considering, knowing the Cong or maybe even the NVA might be lurking out of sight, hoping to do an ambush on us all and reclaim that old girder span. Or destroy it completely.

Work all day on construction, sweating fluids 12 hours or more, seven days a week, and pulling guard duty often at night. But, as Sarge had said, "An engineer's second job is to be infantry." I squinted down the row of dudes in the ditch, stretched out, most nervously awake, some dozing off and half snoring despite the terror of surprises

which were all too plentiful in guerrilla warfare.

After a B40 rocket attack the night before and hearing random small-arms fire off in the bush, nobody wanted to show themselves much. It was getting mainly kind of sheepish, along with boring. Not much bravado in the spirit, no sir.

We had an M-60 machine gun, and each soldier carried his rifle and a few grenades. It was the unknown, the waiting that zapped the courage. Some took it better than others.

I gazed up at Harold, already standing, fixin' to walk the walk down that road—sorta make a point to everybody; it's what he felt was needed. So, we did.

I said resignedly, "What the hell," and we strolled on down the ancient highway, M-14 rifles swinging faux casual at our sides. Yeah, and half expecting a burst of bullets.

As we passed by a heavy, metal culvert, feining non-

chalance, a cool soul brother named Ace said from inside, "You two be crazy." But we kept walkin', maybe 200 feet, from one end of our deployment to the other, where the mangled bridge squatted silently in the misty gloom.

And, thankfully, nothing happened, not a thing. Except for the men...they immediately started to grin, those still awake at least. You could see them abruptly relax, start to kick back, talk. Even Ace's bugged-out eyes retracted a bit into his skull. There weren't any VC out there after all; they'd probably moved on to harass other areas hours ago.

We put in a call on the field phone to the Captain, waking up his privileged butt in base camp miles away. "Captain Lewis here," he said. "AOK, good. Keep watch on it tonight and, tomorrow, finish the repairs."

War is swell.

Sentimental Journey

by Annette Thies

A crisp bite of winter frost skates across my memory where I see two nine-year-old girls dressed in snowsuits over layers of warm clothing, making each girl resemble a winter version of the Pillsbury Dough Boy. Colorful stocking hats with matching mittens cover heads and hands. No slaves to fashion, our winter outfits are completed with large black snow boots a size too big to allow room for three pairs of socks. Strung over our shoulders, with shoelaces tied together, are our ice skates.

Pam and I met at the Huck Finn Pond when we were five. We discovered that we lived only three blocks apart and became best friends. Many times, instead of walking, we covered the distance between our houses with nonstop cartwheels until we met somewhere in between. Most days we would hang out at Pam's where her dad played the piano while we sang the songs he loved. His favorite, *Sentimental Journey*, became our theme song.

This day, we were meeting friends for a morning of skating, the first of our Christmas vacation. I loved skating and often imagined myself a famous figure skater even though I didn't own a pair of white figure skates like my friends. Mine were men's hockey skates of dark maroon and gold. The thick blades had no toe pick. My mom bought them used at the sporting goods store because they were cheaper than figure skates. Long past feeling embarrassed about my skates, I taught myself to cross-step, skate backwards and was working on spins. That day I planned to practice my spins while Pam goofed around with our friends.

Warm and clumsy in the below freezing temperature we began to inch our way across the railroad trestle bridge. Our breath lingered in the air as we stared down at the cold water roaring below. It was early morning,

the sun not quite high enough to warm our faces, but still welcome. We both looked toward the end of the bridge then down at our large boots before stepping onto the bridge. We didn't talk. The water roared and rushed beneath us as we stretched to step over the space between railroad ties. We were told not to use the railroad bridge as a shortcut to the Huck Finn skating pond. But early distractions made us late, so we decided just this once to walk across the bridge.

After a few steps I stopped; looked to the other end of the bridge. I took a deep breath, started to walk but I felt weightless, unmoored, high above the river's loud churning.

"It looks scary, do you think we should turn around and take the long way?"

"No, we'll be fine," said Pam, stepping past me onto the next railroad tie. "We'd better hurry, I'm sure everyone is waiting for us."

Halfway across the bridge, Pam started to sing *Sentimental Journey* and I joined in. "Gonna take a sentimental journey, gonna set my heart at ease..."

Just as I started belting out my favorite part, "seven, that's the time we leave, at seven," Pam screamed. Everything froze, our voices, the noise of the river, the sun in the sky and Pam's body. Her right leg dangled mid-air above the roaring river while the rest of her thick, snow-suited body held her, caught sideways in mid-fall between the railroad ties.

Pam and I have skated this memory many times through the years. We each tell a slightly different story, depending on who's telling and how much wine we've drunk. Our memories, frozen like ice at the side of the river, melt into rivulets until they merge in a shared narrative of fright, fear, and extraordinary luck as we worked to get Pam upright. We never told our parents until we were adults and could admit the fear of the moment and how we'd disobeyed. But that day, on the railroad bridge we were two nine-year-old girls who just wanted to meet their friends and skate.



B Beauty and the Nerds

by Bob Moslow

June 30, 1967

Mr. Gisolfi, our homeroom teacher, allowed us to use the last half-hour of the last day of our junior high school career to quietly socialize. I waited until I could see a patch of daylight between the most popular girl in the ninth grade and her semi-circled entourage. Her back was against the bookcase in the rear of the classroom. I was nervous, but determined. I deliberately drifted in her direction with my yearbook and must have caught her gaze because she sidled past some fashionable students, and stepped toward me.

"Shelley," I said to Shelley Weisenfeld, the most beautiful girl in the world, "thanks for being so nice to me and David this year." I had rehearsed this line to myself hundreds of times, going so far as to practice last night in the floor-length mirror at home. Much to my surprise, it came out correctly.

"Of course. Why wouldn't I?" She spoke softly, flashing her winning smile. Her white cardigan and black skirt hugged her developing figure. Her heart-shaped face was breathtaking, warmed by chocolate-almond eyes and full lips.

"I know we're in different groups. You with the popular kids, me and David, um...with the others. You live in a beautiful apartment building; we live in city housing."

Her sweetness wouldn't allow her to acknowledge this obvious truth. I felt the need to continue. "C'mon Shelley, you're a ten, me and David, maybe fives." I sported a smile to show I could handle it. I don't think it was very convincing.

"You're exaggerating, Bobby. Stop being silly."

I looked at her with a disbelieving expression—scrunched left corner of my mouth, half-closed left eye, furrowed forehead. Before I had a chance to further argue our unworthiness, she reached for my yearbook. She wrote something so sweet in her characteristic, swirling and looping, calligrapher's handwriting. It was my first experience in what has since been referred to as "melting in her presence."

The spell was broken as I glimpsed my best pal, David, still up front, hunched over his desk, frantically fumbling for something important, probably his yearbook. "Spsn," I sonically signaled to him, in our naturally evolved aural code, based upon his last name, Simpson. This sibilant sound made it possible for him to tune into my frequency, even at a bare whisper. Simpson perked up his head in the direction of the coded sonance, completely inaudible to others. Quickly spotting me among the clusters of kids in the classroom, he began to lumber over.

"Here comes David", I said to Shelley. We observed his slightly pigeon-toed gait and embarrassed, welcoming grin, along with his ever-present cowlick. His white shirt was half in, half-out of his pants. A Band-Aid held

together his cracked, thick black-framed glasses.

"Hey, finally found my yearbook," David said sheepishly, while waving the stapled folio that was already showing considerable signs of wear. "Hi, Shelley." He gulped with a downward glance to his shoes while shyly extending the yearbook to the Goddess of Junior High School #143, Bronx.

Shelley reached for the low-budget black and white annual. Her dimpled smile shone, as she tenderly inscribed a message to the present and future David. Dismissal was minutes away.

"Well, good luck, Shelley," I must have said. Silence. My anxiety rose. I awkwardly added, "I know you'll do well in whatever endeavors you pursue." Oh, no. That sounded way too stiff and rehearsed. Idiot, I chastised myself.

"Thank-you, Robert. You, too." Her words soothed me. I began to breathe regularly again.

"Where will you be going?"

"My dad has a big job opportunity in southern California. We'll be leaving in a few days."

The pang in my stomach hinted that I'd miss her more than I knew. Just before Shelley turned back to rejoin the semi-circle of popular people, she quietly added, "My dad is changing our last name to Wayne. He thinks it'll be better for us." She then brushed against my arm and whispered, "You know...the Jewish thing." The statement registered, but I didn't know how to respond. It sounded like something deep, something I wasn't ready for. I wished she would have told me earlier. Maybe I would have had time to say something supportive. As thoughts and feelings spun, crashing into each other, the one that came out on top was, *summer equals fun. But without Shelley Weisenfeld?* I wasn't so sure.

THANK YOU!



These SWW members volunteered to help other writers by judging entries in the 2020 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival:

- **Mary K. Stein**, MD Communications
- **Sarah Leamy**, Writer, Editor, and Publisher
- **Dan Wetmore**, Retired Military
- **Sonja Dewing**, CEO Plot Duckies
- **Carol March**, Freelance Author & Editor, Teacher UNM Continuing Education
- **RJ Mirabal**, Author of Fantasy and Animal Stories for grown-ups and young readers
- **Parris Afton Bonds**, Author of *The Brigands*
- **Jim Tritten**, VA Volunteer and Published Author
- **Francesca Stevens**, Former New Desk Assignment Editor: KOAT-TV
- **Marty Gomersall**, Southwest Writers Association

Character Viewpoint

by Kirt Hickman

Choosing Your Viewpoint Character:

Every scene must be shown from the viewpoint of one of your characters. In general, you should show the events from your hero's point of view. The more you show from her viewpoint, the better your reader will get to know her and the more your reader will care about what happens to her. Choose an alternate viewpoint character when:

1. Your hero isn't in the scene.
2. Another character is in the hot seat. Show the scene from the viewpoint of the character who has the most to lose if events go badly.
3. You must convey some overwhelmingly important piece of information your hero doesn't know.

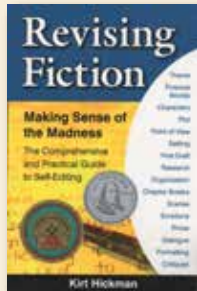
Viewpoint Violations:

Make sure your scenes don't express something your viewpoint character wouldn't know, like what's happening someplace else or the cause of a phenomenon he doesn't understand. Don't express the thoughts, emotions, or motivations of other characters, except as they are interpreted by your viewpoint character.

When you must convey pure information, include only facts being observed, heard, or considered by your viewpoint character. Doing so makes the information immediate and important. If you provide information your viewpoint character is not experiencing, it creates either a viewpoint violation or a digression. Your reader will recognize both.

Viewpoint, however, is not just about what your character knows or doesn't know. Your character's viewpoint must permeate every aspect of your writing, from the portrayal of her thoughts and emotions, to setting descriptions, level of detail and specificity, narrative tone, and even your word choices.

To do this, you must know your character's likes and dislikes, hobbies and interests, attitude, age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic circumstances, and background. The more you know about your character, the more real she will be to you and to your reader.



Setting:

Describe your setting in a way that reveals your viewpoint character's attitude and emotional state. Is the room cramped, or cozy? Is it cluttered, or lived in? Are the furnishings antiques, or are they just old and outdated? Consider this passage:

General Chang reclined in the womb of his stronghold with his feet propped on the conference table.

What does the word *womb* tell you about how Chang feels when he's in the control room of his stronghold? Later I describe this room from the perspective of my hero, who has been brought there as a prisoner. He's not going to think of it as a womb. From his viewpoint, I describe it as a *bunker*. Your word choice must reveal the attitude and emotional state of your viewpoint character.

Let character viewpoint define how many and which details to include in your descriptions. A character who's interested in architecture would drive down a street and notice the buildings. A character who's more interested in cars would notice those. A cop looking for a suspect or informant would focus on the people.

When Chase, an accident investigator in my science fiction novel *Worlds Asunder*, approaches a crash site, he has time to take in the details that are important to his case:

Chase's first view of the Phoenix was a mere glint of sunlight on the horizon. As he drew closer, the fuselage came into view, jutting skyward from the flat terrain like a solitary tombstone in a field of glittering metal. The effect gave a surreal beauty to the desolate scene.

The pod came to a stop at the boundary of the debris field. The ship was close now. The fuselage, largely intact, rested at an odd angle at the end of a long scar in the landscape. A debris field stretched out to the northwest. Dents and cracks that marred the hull suggested that the ship had tumbled into its final resting place. The aft section, the cargo hold, was mangled.

Chase not only notices the details but also assesses what they tell him about the crash. Contrast this with the following passage, which takes place during a gunfight inside the enemy stronghold:

Two terrorists moved before them as they wound their way through the labyrinthine passages. The defenders stopped at each intersection to fire a few odd rounds, which slowed Chase and his party, but the men never stayed in one place for long. Twice the terrorists fired through a window to bring down isolation doors and seal off part of the complex.

Here you get only a vague sense of passages, windows, and pressure doors. I left out the details because Chase has neither the time nor the inclination to notice them.

Vocabulary:

Character viewpoint should also determine the language you use. People from different age groups, regions, countries, cultures, socioeconomic backgrounds, levels of education, time periods, and even genders speak differently.

Write your narrative in your viewpoint character's natural voice.

Rosie the Riveter

by Sam Moorman

During my work career I always felt too busy when driving along Highway 580 near Richmond, CA to exit at a sign for Rosie the Riveter Memorial. But after retiring it seemed there was nothing else to do one day but veer off and visit that National Historic Park.

Two massive metal sculptures jutted twenty feet above the green lawn to represent hulls of combat ships used in World War II—ships built by women because American men were away fighting. A paved walkway extended from the massive constructions to the shoreline of San Francisco Bay to mark the length of those warships. Beside the long walkway were two square boxes to mark the fore and aft deck hatch locations. On my visit, these were planted with dune grass and rock rose.

Plaques along the walkway and on the sides of the metal monuments were etched with recollections of the hardy women who built the combat ships. These women were collectively called Rosie the Riveter from a popular song at the time.

On one plaque, a woman recalled griping to her supervisor about her job. She was being hoisted high into the sky by a crane before being lowered inside a ship's smokestack to insulate its inner wall. She complained, "Why did I get picked for this crummy work?"

"Because you're the youngest and smallest," she was told.

"And the dumbest," she countered, before returning to her grimy job.

Another woman remembered the great care female shipbuilders took to complete each weld and rivet. They knew a single mistake could cost the life of a woman's husband or son.

The Milk-Bone Dance

by Rose Marie Kern

I rarely set an alarm clock anymore. Inevitably, five minutes before it would go off, the guardians of the grounds pad quietly into my bedroom and arrange themselves closest to any unprotected areas of flesh. My skin contracts as three, very cold noses dig in. If I try to cover myself and slip back into sleep, they institute *Phase Two*.

Joe, the German Sheppard, has a bark that would put a Marine Corps Master Sergeant to shame. He maneuvers closest to my head and lets go.

"UP," he barks. "YOU DARE TO SHIRK YOUR SACRED DUTY TO YOUR GUARDIANS AND PROTECTORS! GET OUT FROM UNDER THAT BLANKET – NOW!"

Of course, once he starts, the two girls join in and an overwhelming cacophony of sound forces me to draw back the blankets. Years of such treatment have trained me to wear warm fuzzy socks to bed. Once I am sitting up, the yips, barks and pathetic moans drive me to my feet. Then, the Milk-Bone Dance begins. One German Sheppard and two big fluffy chows encircle me, leaping and spinning. They prance and prod, herding me towards the kitchen. I don't even think about making a side step to my dresser, the bathroom or the closet as two hundred and twenty pounds of canines steer my course.

Brain dead still, I am now conditioned to stumble from the room down the hall. They twirl and laugh, long tongues dripping with anticipation. Three long, strong tails pound the furniture and walls as we pass. If I slow down, I am licked until my steps go forward again.

The frenzy suddenly stills as I approach the pantry. Loud panting heightens the anticipation as I reach into the large Milk-Bone box and draw out three identical treats. Joe grabs his first and disappears through the doggy door to his spot on the front porch rug. Ginger steps up and firmly claims her prize, also disappearing outside. Lucy hangs back and waits for me to walk to her, then delicately draws the Milk-Bone from my hand and pads over to the carpet in the entryway to nibble away.

I might go back to bed, but most of the time I make a cup of Earl Gray tea with honey to clear the fog from my brain, and enjoy the silence before they notify me it is time for breakfast.



Photo by Kyrah Bowker, 2019

Dear Eliza,

I loved writing my first draft, but since I finished writing it has been sitting on the shelf gathering dust. I'm not sure how to edit it. The whole thing feels overwhelming. Where should I start?

Sincerely,

Revisions-Need-Work

Dear Revisions,

Here is a checklist with parts of a manuscript that usually need a little attention. Use it to get going. Keep in mind that you won't find all of these things useful for a particular piece – but most of them will be useful in a lot of works.

General Editing

- Remove Needless Words. Every word in your work should serve a purpose. Remove anything extraneous.
- Have someone else read your work and give you feedback. There is always something your eyes will gloss over and your ears will miss.
- Proofread. Try reading your work backwards to catch more errors.
- Consider your audience. Will your diction, style, and content make sense for the people you want to read your work?
- Opening hook. Do you open with something that catches the reader's attention and gives them a reason to read more?

Fiction

- Track your story arcs. Do you have any plot threads that still need to be resolved? Do any scenes not contribute to the plots?

- Character placement. Do all of your characters serve a purpose in the story? Are there any that are better combined or removed?
- Keep track of what happens in a scene. Does each scene have a sense of a location where the scene takes place? Do the characters who are present all contribute meaningfully to the scene?
- Dialogue. Does each character have a distinct voice?

Nonfiction

- Check for accuracy. Go over your notes/references to make sure you have stated your information accurately. Double-check the spelling of people's names and the wording of any direct quotes.
- Pictures. Make sure you have attribution for any pictures you use, and that you have removed pictures for which you were not able to get permission to use.
- Structure. Do your thoughts flow logically? Do you



Sincerely,

Eliza Haywood



CROSS POLLINATION:

*Artists inspiring Writers/
Writers inspiring Artists*

The Yucca Branch of the National League of American Pen Women: Carol Lopez, Caroline LeBlanc, Claire Hurrey, Fran Krukar, Jacqueline Murray Loring, Janine Wilson, Jeannie Hope Gibson, Jo White, Kathy Louise Schuit, Lyla Garcia, Martha Heard, Penne Roberts, Sharon Higgins, and Thelma Giomi

OPENING: FRIDAY, MARCH 6, 5-8PM & CLOSING: SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 6-8PM
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New Mexico Press Women

Finding the Story: From Investigative Journalism to Mystery Writing

When: March 20-21

Where: Canyon Club, the popular site of the 2019 conference



Marketing BootCamp

June 15-19, 2020

Book authors generally come in two categories: those who are working towards getting published, and those who are published and need some help with marketing. This summer, SWW plans a weeklong series of classes designed to help authors learn the ins and outs of marketing.

Planned classes include:

- Digital Media
- Social Media
- Interviewing
- Podcasts
- Marketing Fiction
- Marketing Non-Fiction



Look for more information in the April Sage and on the SWW website: SouthWestWriters.com



Writing Is a Business

A SouthWest Writers Conference



Saturday,
September 26,
8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

With speakers from NM Taxation and Revenue, an accountant, financial planners, etc.
Cost through Aug. 30 (after that, add \$20): \$99 members, \$109 non-members
Registration opens on the SWW Website June 1 and ends Sept. 23.

Kauai Writers Conference

The November, 2020, **Kauai Writers Conference** is now open for registration. Faculty includes some 35 prominent authors, literary agents and publishers. Discounts to SWW members - enter the code WG789 when asked for it on the check-out page.



<https://kauaiwritersconference.com>

Left Coast Crime



Left Coast Crime #31

Southwest Sleuths

Albuquerque, New Mexico
April 8-11, 2021

INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION:

www.leftcoastcrime.org/2021/AboutLCC.html

Left Coast Crime is an annual mystery convention sponsored by mystery fans—readers and authors. Conventions have been held from Anchorage to El Paso, from Boulder to Hawaii, and various locations in between. In 2021 it'll be in Albuquerque!

Each Left Coast Crime Convention raises money to support a local literacy organization with funds collected through silent and live auctions, and the annual Quilt Raffle.

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ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES:

- Twenty three (23) meetings annually with opportunities for large-scale networking as well as presentations by acclaimed writers, editors, or publishers.
- Your personal author page on the SWW website.
- A link on the SWW website to your personal homepage.
- The SouthWest Sage Newsletter – in addition to providing organizational news to members, members are offered writing challenges and opportunities to have their work published.
- Discounted prices for writing-related conferences, classes and workshops sponsored by SWW.
- Opportunities on both the website and in meetings to make announcements about your successes or personal, upcoming writing events.
- Discounts at selected local businesses.

Annual SouthWest Writers Membership:

Individual: \$80
Student: \$25 (requires proof of student status)
Outside U.S.: \$75
Lifetime Membership: \$750

GIVE TO OTHER WRITERS:

- Invite a guest to a meeting.
- Encourage guests to become members so they too can enjoy the many benefits SWW offers.
- Give annual SWW memberships as gifts to the writers you know.
- Donate an annual SWW membership or partial membership to the SWW scholarship fund.



WRITERS CONFERENCE

Navigating the Publishing Landscape

Saturday, April 18, 2020 | 8:30am-5pm

NM CONTINUING
EDUCATION

HOW TO REGISTER

Phone: Call 505-277-0077 x1 to pay by credit card.
In Person: Open M-F, 8:00am - 5:00pm,
1634 University Blvd, Albuquerque, NM 87102
Online: Register at ce.unm.edu/WritersConference

Cancellation Policy: No refunds will be given after April 1. However, registration for the conference may be transferred to another person.

UNM Tuition Remission Eligible: Visit ce.unm.edu/TR for information on how to register using tuition remission.

For more information, contact 505.277.0077 (option 1)

505.277.0077 ce.unm.edu/WritersConference

OPPORTUNITIES FOR WRITERS



Publishers of Jack Canfield's iconic *Chicken Soup for the Soul* series are at it again. Submissions are now being accepted for a possible new book, *Age is Just a Number*.



of a lifetime or taking long walks in the woods. The one thing you know for sure is that you're not ready to stop living! You feel energetic and young and there is still so much more to see and do and give and enjoy.

We are looking for stories about the humorous or serious sides of life after 60.

So, you're a certain age now, and you're ready for what's next. You might be enjoying an empty nest, or starting a second career, or winding down a first one. You might be downsizing, or traveling, or caring for elderly parents.

The DEADLINE for story and poem submissions is MAY 31, 2020.

You might be going on the adventure

<https://www.chickensoup.com/story-submissions/possible-book-topics>

SWW Board Meeting Summarized

Even though snowy weather forced two postponements of the scheduled SWW board meeting for February, board members persevered and finally convened on February 18 with a condensed agenda:

- New name tag design was approved
- 2020 Writing Contest categories were discussed
- Options were discussed for updated A/V equipment



THIRD TIME'S THE CHARM! Undeterred SWW board members hung in there through two postponements of the regularly scheduled February 3 board meeting. The meeting finally took place on February 18, just before the Tuesday night member meeting.

WordCamp Comes to Albuquerque

WordCamp is a two-day training seminar on how to use WordPress on your website.

This year, WordCamp comes to Albuquerque on March 20-21. Friday is mostly for those who are in the business of website development, but Saturday has a variety of speakers on all kinds of topics useful to beginners, occasional users and experienced professionals.

The entry fee is \$25/day and you can choose to come one day or both days.

More information at: <https://2020.albuquerque.wordcamp.org/>

Writing Contests You Can Enter NOW

The 2020 Hudson Prize



Each year Black Lawrence Press will award The Hudson Prize for an unpublished collection of poems or short stories. The prize is open to new, emerging, and established writers. The winner of this contest will receive book publication, a \$1,000 cash award, and ten copies of the book. Prizes are awarded on publication.

The annual deadline is March 31.

<https://blacklawrencepress.com/submissions-and-contests/the-hudson-prize/>

In Case You Missed It...

Collectively, more than 120 members and visitors attended the February 3 SWW meeting where



Sherri Burr's encore presentation of *Synchronicity And Perseverance: Two Elements To Finishing A Project*, delivered entertainment, ideas and discussion. Based on her experiences through the writing of her book, *Complicated Lives: Free Blacks in Virginia, 1619-1865*, Sherri's presentation was first delivered at the SWW, November 19 meeting.



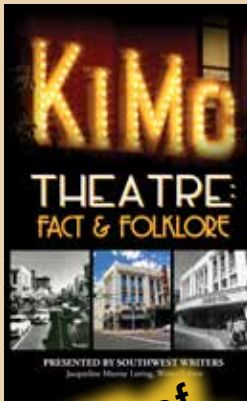
Board of Directors

Rose Marie Kern, President
Elizabeth Layton, Vice President
Jennifer Black, Treasurer
Patricia Walkow, Secretary

Michelle Auron, Meeting Media and Video
 Brenda Cole, Writing Contest
 Roger Floyd, Signage/Setup
 Melody Groves, Classes/Conferences
 Jacqueline Loring, Membership
 Sam Moorman, Facilities Manager
 Léonie Rosenstiel, Media/Public Relations
 Kathy Schuit, Sage Editor
 Camille Singaraju, Historian
 Kathy Wagoner, Website
 Dan Wetmore, Procedures/Awards

The SWW Board of Directors meets on the first Tuesday of each month from 6 - 8 p.m. at Chez Axel restaurant located on the northeast corner of Montgomery and San Pedro. Members are encouraged to attend.

KiMo Theater: Fact and Folklore



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Copies available at the meeting book table or at the SouthWest Writers office:
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 Suite 114
 Albuquerque, NM 87110

SWW Office:

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 phone (505) 830-6034
 email: info@swwriters.com
 website: www.southwestwriters.com

