



## SWW Receives Grant to Produce Military Anthology

Thanks to the dedication of SWW member Jim Tritten, and with a commitment from the Board of Directors, SWW has secured a \$2,000 grant from New Mexico Arts and the Military.

In accordance with the grant's requirements that proposals should incorporate the arts to facilitate healing, Jim came up with the idea of creating an anthology of stories from NM veterans, their family members and caregivers.

On January 24, 2023, Jim received the following email notifying him that the SWW proposal was accepted:

### Mr. Tritten and SouthWest Writers Network,

Congratulations, New Mexico Arts has selected your proposal for the first-ever Arts & The Military Mini Grants initiative!

New Mexico Arts is looking forward to supporting your work to engage military connected audiences with the arts.

Please review the "Next Steps" below and return your Agreement Document as soon as possible.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

### Kevin A. Lenkner

Program Coordinator - Poetry Out Loud, New Mexico Arts & the Military  
Grants Administration & Arts Education Liasion

## Now, It's Time to Tell Your Story

SouthWest Writers in partnership with New Mexico Arts and the Military Community is creating an anthology of veterans' stories, essays, poetry, and art.

We are looking for perspectives on military life in general, or insights into the broad scope of events, feelings, and viewpoints of veterans and their families.

Entries can be memoirs, short fiction, poetry, artwork, or photographs.

Submissions are open to current and former active-duty members of the military, their immediate family members, and veteran caregivers from New Mexico.

The submission window is March 1, 2023 through April 1, 2023. **There is no entry fee.**

For more information, visit the [SouthWest Writers website Military Anthology submission page](https://southwestwriters.com/military-anthology), email [military@swwriters.com](mailto:military@swwriters.com), or call 505-453-6795.



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#### SouthWest Sage

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SouthWest Writers,  
a nonprofit, tax-exempt 501 (c) (3) organization.*

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#### ATTEND SouthWest Writers MEETINGS IN-PERSON or ONLINE

SouthWest Writers meets the second Saturday (Zoom/in-person hybrid) and the fourth Wednesday (Zoom only) of each month. Directions and login information at [SouthWestWriters.com](https://SouthWestWriters.com).



## Board of Directors

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The SWW Board of Directors meets on the second Tuesday of each month from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Meetings are conducted via Zoom.

**“To write great books you have to understand yourself really well.”**

-Robin Perini, from her SWW meeting presentation, Taking Your Writing to the Next Level, Nov. 2022

**“She crossed the room and sat at the writing desk with her back to him. Songs of birds and insects slipped into the room from open windows, filling the silent spaces.”**

-Sarah Baker, from her SWW workshop, Who Is Telling This Story?, Sept. 2020.

## President's Corner

The year began with fireworks and celebration, but shortly thereafter SWW lost two of its most beloved members. Both Sarah Baker and Robin Perrini authored books and stories that gained national recognition. Both ladies also donated their time and experience to SWW's educational programs. Sarah gave many hours to the organization as a board member and as president. SWW celebrates their legacy through the video recordings of their presentations available to all members on YouTube.

We all work towards becoming successful authors. Our definitions of successful may vary, but once a writer achieves their goal, they are encouraged when the public in general and other authors in particular show interest in their work by reading it.

In the SAGE, on the website, and through elerts, SWW members announce when their books are published and where to find them. We encourage all our members to read each other's work. After all, most of us like to read as much as we like to write.

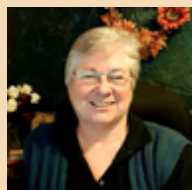
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SouthWest Writers has a lot of members—around 400. We strive to offer high-quality programs and information all year long, while keeping the cost of membership low. The price of everything else, it seems, has skyrocketed, but an SWW membership is still just \$80 annually. The ongoing small streams of revenue from sales of SWW anthologies through Amazon, purchases of swag from Redbubble and any grants and donations we find help keep us running.

All of the SouthWest Writers Anthologies are available through Kindle Unlimited. Every time someone downloads those e-books, the organization receives a bit of support. By the same token, if you have Kindle Unlimited, it does not cost a penny extra for you to download other books by your fellow SWW members.

As each of you travels your personal road to literary success, I encourage you to take a moment and support each other. If you are a SouthWest Writer member, be sure to put that information into your Amazon author page, or personal website, making it easier to find you. And don't forget to read the SWW Anthologies!

Rose Marie Kern



## With Heavy Hearts

*We remember Sarah Baker and Robin Perini*

In January the world lost two iconic authors who each made a point of contributing to the success of other writers. They both chose to accomplish this, at least in part, by supporting SWW programs and members. We are shocked and saddened by the loss of these two SWW friends.

### SARAH HANBERRY BAKER

Anyone whose SWW membership started before 2020 knew Sarah Baker, who passed away in Houston, Texas on January 22 after a long battle with cancer.

Sarah served as SWW president from 2017-2018, and was the 2018 Parris award winner. In 2019, she mentored her successor, current president Rose Marie Kern, during her first term in that office. At the same time, Sarah continued a three-year-long habit of contributing a monthly advice column for writers, Ask Chaucer, to the SAGE. Sarah's leprechaun smile and appreciation of a "good pint" imbued every gathering around her with joy, inclusiveness and good Irish humor.

For years, SWW members flocked to Sarah's fun and informative classes and presentations, and to writers

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### ROBIN LYNN PERINI

Robin Perini was a member, supporter and frequent speaker for SWW, with her most recent presentation taking place in November 2022. Robin passed away on January 10 after a short illness.

The author of 16 mystery romance novels with more than a million copies sold, Robin, nevertheless, busted all the stereotypes of a romance author. Her obituary details her many academic accomplishments as well as her literary success. Robin was Valedictorian of her Hobbs, NM high school class, earned a degree in biochemistry from the University of Oklahoma and attended the University of New Mexico School of Medicine for three years before deciding to become a writer. She also obtained a master's degree in Business Management Technology, held down a full-time job at Sandia Laboratories and cared for her ailing mother through a lengthy illness.

Social media manager Maegan Marshall posted a final message to Robin's Facebook account:

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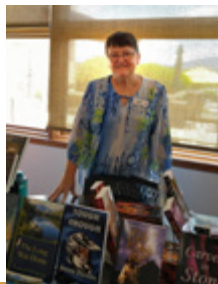
**SARAH BAKER**, continued from previous page

conferences where she was often a key organizer and speaker. It's fair to say that SWW would not be what it is today without the influence of Sarah Baker.

Sara participated broadly in the world of writing. She successfully wrote, traditionally published and sold books in three separate genres—romance (as Sarah Storme), mystery (as S.H. Baker), erotica (as Lydia Parks)—and, at the time of her passing, was working on the second book in her Promise Me Tomorrow speculative fiction series (as Sarah H. Baker).

As of January 31, SWW had not received word of services or obituary, but you can read more about her life on her website, [sarahhanberrybaker.com](http://sarahhanberrybaker.com). Sarah's sister Laura posted an announcement on the SouthWest Writers Facebook page, which included this farewell from Sarah:

Several months ago, she requested that I post the following message from her when the time came: "I approach the final transition without regret. I've lived a life full of joy, excitement, beauty, and love. You, my family and friends, have made it the wondrous experience it has been. I hope to encourage you all to reach for what you want with both hands and without fear. Hugs to all of you, Sarah"



**ROBIN PERINI**, continued from previous page

"It is hard to say goodbye to Robin, as she has been an amazing friend and client for the past nine years. Though we are having to say goodbye to Robin, we can smile knowing her writings will live on forever. Please take a moment to send a prayer to the Perini family during this difficult time.

This will be the final post under this account. Please take a moment to leave a comment in her memory or about one of her novels; she would have loved reading them all."

Eight days before her death, Robin was still marketing books on her Facebook page. Current posts register disbelief at her sudden passing:

### **Harlequin Intrigue**

It is with great sadness that I must tell you Author Robin Perini has died at the young age of fifty-seven. She was a wonderful author, a super-intelligent woman, one of the kindest human beings I've ever known, a sister-of-the-heart to many and one of my closest friends.

~Angi Morgan

A memorial service for Robin was held on January 28, 2023 at St. Stephens United Methodist Church in Albuquerque.

The full obituary is available [HERE](#), and condolence comments may be made on her Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/RobinPeriniAuthor/>



## MEETINGS IN FEBRUARY



**Saturday, February 11**

10 am – noon

In Person & Zoom

### **Two Important Writing Rules**

with Joseph Badal

Grab your readers by the throat: Joe will provide examples of opening sentences/paragraphs that grab the reader's attention (and don't), influencing the reader's decision as to whether he/she will want to read on. Don't use 10 words when 6 will do: Examples of both "punchy" and "wordy" writing will be provided. He encourages attendees to read the first paragraphs in provided works prior to attending the presentation. Attendees will be given the opportunity to recraft the openings in the works discussed.

Details, directions and Zoom login information on the [SouthWestWriters.com Meetings Page](https://SouthWestWriters.com/MeetingsPage).

**Wednesday, February 22**

6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Via Zoom

### **Finding Humor in Everyday Situations (Including Valentine's Day)**

with Ernie Witham



Humor is everywhere! In this workshop, I will discuss finding humor in everyday situations; developing humorous ideas into columns and scenes; the importance of rewriting to make things funnier; and finding markets for humor. I'll present some "rules of humor writing." I'll talk about developing holiday pieces, including my Valentine's Day pieces and, if time permits, I have a fun class assignment we can do.

More details and Zoom login on the [SouthWestWriters.com Meetings Page](https://SouthWestWriters.com/MeetingsPage).

#### **Attend and Join!**

SouthWest Writers meetings are free to everyone. We ask individuals who have attended up to three meetings to please join our organization. Memberships enable us to continue bringing high quality speakers to meetings.

## WORKSHOP

### **Finding Your Niche Markets**

with Rose Marie Kern



**Saturday: February 11, 2023**

12:30 – 2:30 pm

Via Zoom

SWW members: \$20

Non-members: \$30

Are you searching for an audience? Rose Marie Kern will give you some insights into the knowledge, skills, and abilities you already have which can stimulate your creativity in writing.

#### **To Register:**

Call the SWW office (505-830-6034, Monday–Thursday, 9:00 am–noon) or use the [online registration form](#). Our online payment portal utilizes PayPal, but you'll be given an option to pay by credit card without signing into PayPal.

The Zoom invitation link and the password will be emailed to those who register. Please contact the class/workshop coordinator at [Info@SWWriters.com](mailto:Info@SWWriters.com) for more information.

# The Writing Life:

## THE YELLOWSTONE UNIVERSE

Like many, I have become a fan of writer/showrunner Taylor Sheridan's television series *Yellowstone* and its two prequels *1883* and *1923*. I joined Sheridan's fandom late in the game. After hearing my friends extol the virtues of *Yellowstone*, starring Kevin Costner, an actor I admired in *Silverado* and *Dances With Wolves*, I checked out the first and second seasons at the public library. Then eager to see season three before the library had accessible copies, I ordered it through Amazon. I also paid for seasons four and five.

I became interested in *1883* after reading the publicity surrounding *1923* starring A-listers Harrison Ford and Helen Mirren. How can one resist watching a show starring the actors who headlined the movies *Indiana Jones* and *The Queen*? Paramount Plus made the first *1923* episode available for free. Hooked, I signed up for Paramount Plus. After finishing the available episodes, I was directed to *1883*. I didn't intend to binge-watch, but two days later I finished the season and felt deprived for having to wait until the next Sunday to catch the third episode of *1923* and another episode of *Yellowstone*, Season 5.

After contemplation, I decided the appeal of *Yellowstone* and its spin-offs derived from masterful world building with complex characters who are neither heroes nor villains. When watching *Yellowstone*, I re-live my adventures in Montana, one of my favorite states. When watching *1923*, I not only re-experience the big skies of Montana, but I journey back to Tanzania, one of my favorite countries. For some viewers, watching the shows may be their first experience with Montana and Tanzania and they too become hooked by the scenery and the Taylor Sheridan-created stories.

As a twenty-year-old college student, I interned for the U.S. State Department in Tanzania. My adventure began by hopping a flight to London on Laker Air with no plane reservations, and then on to Copenhagen, Denmark, and a refueling stop in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia before touching down in Dar Es Salaam at midnight. I had made no hotel reservations in advance, so I went to a hotel for girls with new friends from the plane. Weeks later, I went on safari. I remember walking out of my tent and the guide asking me whether I heard the lion outside of our camp. I had not. I had slept soundly, as I did in Montana while visiting to participate in a photography conference co-



SHERRI L. BURR has authored over two dozen books. Her 27th, *Complicated Lives: Free Blacks in Virginia: 1619-1865* (Carolina Academic Press, 2019), was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in History. A graduate of Mount Holyoke College, Princeton University, and the Yale Law School, Burr has been a member of SouthWest Writers for over 30 years. She currently serves as President of New Mexico Press Women and on the Board of Directors of the Authors Guild Foundation. In 2021, she was named the National Federation of Press Women Communicator of Achievement.

lead by a photographer who beautifully shot the stills for *A River Runs Through It*.

Perhaps the conclusion of episode two in *1923* explains the series' attraction. Two people are in a bar in Nairobi, Kenya. Spencer Dutton drinks away memories from having served in World War I and recently being attacked by a lion and a leopard. Alexandra has escaped her engagement party. She is to be married to a "kind" English gentleman, but trepidation engulfs her soul. Alexandra asks Spencer, "Where does the next adventure take you?"

"East," he replies. "Where does it take you?"

"I'm afraid all my adventures are over," she says with dread.

"That's a shame."

They are interrupted by a call of, "Alexandra," from her fiancé. Spencer takes one look at the fiancé and says, "I see what you mean."

The next day, Spencer is being driven away toward Tanganyika (as the country was then known before it later merged with the island of Zanzibar) and nods at Alexandra, who is standing with her fiancé and bridal party. She stares at him and the receding car. Suddenly she grabs her bag and runs.

continued on next page





YELLOWSTONE, continued from previous page

"Stop the car," Spencer tells his driver after seeing Alexandra through the side mirror. With a smirk, the driver does as told.

"Do you have room for one more?" Alexandra asks Spencer.

"No, not really," he replies.

"My Knight in Shining Armor," she says, throwing her bags in the backseat and jumping in.

Spencer is surprised by this sudden turn of events. Alexandra then tells him, "Look at me. If you don't want me, I will get out now."

"Where I am going is dangerous," he says.

"Let's look death in the eye, shall we?"

As I watched the scene over and over, it occurred to me that Taylor Sheridan has become his fandom's Knight in Shining Armor. In creating a Yellowstone Universe, he takes us on adventures, while braiding in stories involving Native American History and adding substantive characters of African descent. In 1883, we accompany a wagon trail ride from Texas to Montana without the discomforts of poisoned water and potential starvation. In 1923, we explore the wilds of the Serengeti Plains without worrying that a bull elephant might charge our truck, or a lioness might climb the tree where we are lodged.

From the comfort of my couch, I can now return to the magnificent African landscape and the beaches of Zanzibar and watch the universe Taylor Sheridan has built. The relationship between Alexandra and Spencer reminds us to never put all our adventures behind us. As writers, we can venture forth and build worlds based on prior and forthcoming discoveries.

## *A Diversity of Expression*

SWW 2022 Writers Contest Anthology

Now available in print **AND**  
ebook formats.

Print book price reduced to just  
**\$15 on Amazon .com.**

Ebook is **downloadable for \$5.99**  
through Amazon Kindle.

Subscribers to Kindle Unlimited  
can download and read the ebook  
**FREE!**



## Look Who JOINED SWW in DECEMBER!

Sush May  
Laura Lynch  
Adalucia Quaun  
Connie Mitchell  
Margaret Trousdale

*Welcome!*



Now with more than  
**400 members**  
**WORLDWIDE!**

# Self Publishing?

## PROTECT YOURSELF!

SAGE Staff Report

Today's publishing market is very different than it was in the past.

With the advent of companies which allow authors to easily print and distribute books themselves, the big traditional publishers have become choosier in how many titles they will handle each year. This means that a higher percentage of authors are turning to smaller publishing houses or choosing to self-publish their work.

Here is where authors who are not savvy about all the elements involved can find themselves in a predicament if the person(s) they are working with represent themselves as something they are not.

We've had a few situations reported to us at SWW wherein a person who helped authors navigate the twisty pathway to publication represented themselves as a legal publishing company. They took the authors' manuscripts and provided services such as editing, proofreading, and formatting. With the author's full consent, they uploaded the manuscript to Ingram Spark, Amazon KDP, or one of the other "printer/marketing" entities, but instead of setting the author up to receive their royalties from sales directly, they ran it through their own bank accounts—then sent the author a percentage of the income when it was received.

"But that's how it is done...isn't it?" Yes, if you are working with a legitimate publishing house. There will be contracts and clauses that ensure you are going to get whatever has been agreed upon up front. Beyond that, because it is a registered company, you have legal recourse if something happens to the publishing house—like bankruptcy, or some other disaster.

But what happens if a one-person operation, that has been working under a brand that is not a legal entity, suddenly disappears due to death, illness, bankruptcy or divorce? This has occurred to several authors recently. Suddenly, the person is not sending any royalty checks and is not available to talk to, and the book is still listed for sale.

When the author, who is the legal owner of the copyright, attempts to contact whatever company is actually printing/distributing the book—like Amazon or Outskirts Press or Bookbaby, etc.—and have

their books taken down or put into their own name so they can get their money directly, they hit a wall. They may find that the friendly, competent individual they worked with had never even registered as a business—they just made up a company name.

The problem is in how authors perceive these "companies." We are excited to have someone show interest in our work and if they are friendly and encouraging and competent in getting it published and available for sale, we assume they are legitimate. So how can you tell the difference?

A real full-service publishing house, or a concierge publishing house, will be registered as a business and will have a federal and state tax ID. You will receive a contract from them stating exactly what is expected of you as the author and what they promise to do on your behalf. The contract will specify who pays for what and who receives what percentage of the profits, and most importantly, who has control of the copyright.

NOTE: THIS IS NOT SELF-PUBLISHING.

Authors who self-publish may still seek assistance and advice from individuals and companies for editing, book formatting, cover art, etc. They may also have someone give them advice on how to set up their own accounts with a printer/marketer such as Amazon or Ingram Spark. But that person's services will be paid for separately and the author's royalties will not go into their bank accounts first before being distributed to the author.

If you are working with someone who is helping you to SELF-publish, make sure you at least have a letter of agreement specifying what you expect them to do. If they claim to be a company, check to see if they have a website and/or ask them for their Federal Tax ID number. You should be able to look up the company name on your state's business website.

Do not give them your social security number or bank account information. They can help walk you through creating an account with whatever company you plan to use as a printer/marketer, but they should not set up or represent your book as one of their own.

You've worked hard to create your manuscript and deserve to receive whatever proceeds it accrues. Get the facts on whoever you work with over and above a recommendation from a buddy.



The Challenge for publication in the February SAGE was to include the phrase “the tinkle of ice cubes” in prose or poetry.

## She

by Ed Lehner

“So, Johnny, you’re off again tomorrow. I’d like to go out tonight for a burger and then hit Louie’s for a while. There’s a new band playing there that Sue says is supposed to be pretty good . . . do a lot of covers from the sixties and seventies. What do ya think?”

“Oh man, I don’t know. I gotta be on the road to Albuquerque early. Gotta off-load there, pick up another load and head for L.A.”

“Shoot, Johnny, you’re always on the road and I’m tired of bein’ alone all the time. You’re never home.”

“Hey, I’m sorry but it pays the bills. You knew I was a long-haul driver when we got married. It was fun when you used to come with me, and you thought it was cool. You haven’t made a trip with me in forever.”

“It’s boring, Johnny, just riding all day, crummy truck stops, crappy food. It’s boring. I’m goin’ out tonight with or without you. You comin’?”

“Aw crap. I suppose, but I ain’t stayin’ out late. I gotta get some sleep.”

After burgers and fries at the Skillet, we headed to Louie’s. It was already packed, noisy and smoky. All the tables were taken, so we settled for two stools at the bar.

The band was okay but not great, mainly just loud with a guy who thought he was Mick Jagger or something. There were a lot of folks dancing, but I guess if you had enough to drink, anything sounded good.

Knowing I had a long day ahead of me tomorrow, I ordered a Coke for myself and for her, the usual gin and tonic. She slammed her drink, grabbed my hand, and said, “Come on, Johnny, let’s dance.”

“Naaah. It’s too crowded and the band sucks. Want another drink?”

“Heck yeah. You know I do.”

I could tell she was pretty wound up, but I didn’t care. I just wanted to get this over with and go home.

“You’re such a sorry piece of crap these days. You never want to have any fun,” she said. She took a sip of her drink, sauntered off to the dance floor and joined in the frenzy.

I sucked on my Coke, feeling sullen and anxious, wanting to get away from the smoke and noise. That’s one thing I liked about driving my rig. It was peaceful, no noise except that of the diesel horses under the hood and the whine of eighteen wheels on the highway. There were the mountains and the deserts on my usual runs

## The Sage Writing Challenge

### MARCH

**March** is a noun (the month) or a verb (to march). Write a story of 800 words or less that includes both forms, march and March.

Read and follow the submission guidelines on page 12.

Send submissions or questions to:

Kathy Schuit

SouthWest SAGE Editor

[sage@swwriters.com](mailto:sage@swwriters.com)

between Denver and L.A., Frisco, Reno, Salt Lake, and sometimes up to Portland, Seattle, Missoula, and Boise. I loved seeing all the places, my only regret being that I could never stop to enjoy them. Someday I’d get me a motorhome and go to all the places I drove by.

I spied her out on the floor, now dancing with some guy in tight jeans and a cowboy hat. The music stopped and she came back and sat, taking a long pull on her G and T. “Man, that was fun.”

“Who’s the dude you were dancing with? Never saw him around before.”

“His name’s Kyle and he’s a real cowboy. Works on his family’s ranch down by Rocky Ford. He’s in town for the stock show.”

I grunted a response. “I’m needing to get out of here. It’s too noisy and you know I can’t stand smoke. I need to get to bed.”

“You’re such a loser. Never want to have any fun. Just sleep and drive that darn truck. You go. I’m staying. Kyle and his friends are going to a party, and they want me to come. I’ll see ya whenever. I’m gonna have some fun.”

When she got up from her stool and picked up her drink, I noticed she wasn’t wearing her wedding rings. She sashayed away with the tinkle of ice cubes from her G and T. She headed over to where this Kyle and his friends were sitting, and I realized I just simply didn’t care anymore. I’d most likely be gone in the morning before she would get home, and I didn’t care. I was tired of caring. My life was the road. Hers, I didn’t know anymore. I was tired and didn’t care.

# A Meeting of Minds

by Brenda Wolfenbarger

"What have we here?" a sultry voice asked, waking me up to unfamiliar surroundings. I sat amid plush pillows, in a darkened room that was empty except for me and the newcomer. "Fresh company? And so handsome, too." My hands lay slack in my lap, an empty glass beside me. Cool, slender fingers wrapped around my wrist for a moment. I flinched against the chill touch.

"Ah, the peace of the ignorant," the voice continued, as if I had not moved. Had I moved? Why would I move? My blissful stupor beckoned, a soft blanket of uncaring. A twitch of panic awakened me further. What was I ignorant of? The thought wisped away.

"Your heart rate is much too low for a gathering such as this without some influence. I wonder who had you before me. I shall have to talk to our host about such heavy handedness. You are barely aware." The newcomer's scent, cold and earthy, hardly made an impression on me as he drew closer. I opened my eyes, reluctant to see who was talking.

The stranger bent down, white shirtfront gaping, exposing pale, smooth skin and a delicate gold chain with an amulet of sorts dangling from it. Tiny garnets or rubies, I couldn't tell which, adorned a complex symbol wrought in gold. Bright, it fascinated me.

"I am Sean. You are?" His slitted gaze caught me, coaxed me, demanded I respond.

"David," I whispered.

He looked to be far too young for the avaricious expression on his face. I drew my chilled hand to my chest, trying to warm it. I remembered meeting a beautiful woman who invited me to a party her friends were having. How I got here, in this well-appointed, quiet room, I did not know. I shook my head in an attempt to clear the cobwebs.

"Don't fret, my sweet. I'll take good care of you. Let me refresh your drink. Orange juice, was it, for your strength, yes?" Long fingernails clicked against the

empty glass that had been resting against my thigh as he picked it up to refill it from the bar.

"Scotch, actually." My voice sounded strange to my ears, almost breathy. I tried again. "Scotch on the rocks. I believe it was Glenlivet."

"Ah, that explains things. No, no, you need to build up your energy for what I have planned for us, not dull your senses further. Let us make a bargain. Orange juice before and your Scotch afterwards. I will even have one with you, if a slightly better choice. The Glenfiddich, perhaps."

He raised his own nearly empty glass and shook it gently. The tinkle of ice cubes teased my memories. I remembered what I had been doing here; drinking Scotch in this richly decorated room, and with whom, or should I say what. She was coldly lovely, but rough, even cruel, once I said yes and let her in to my mind to suckle on my most painful memories. My childhood. The War.

I shuddered. I was not aware I would relive the memories or I would not have agreed.

I had always wondered what it was like to be taken by a mind vampyre; my curiosity had been ill-rewarded. I shifted in my seat, wondering if the door was locked.

"Ah, not so unaware, after all? Well, a little seasoning never spoiled the broth, they say." He sat down on the velvet and satin settee next to me, as careful and gentle as a hunter setting a snare. He took my arm and traced the veins delicately, his cool fingertips somehow leaving fire behind them.

"I do not want you entirely afraid, my pet. It rather spoils things. I want you willing and relaxed. Pleasant memories are so much more sustaining." He patted my knee reassuringly. "Even now, you have a choice. Will you let me partake?" His will tugged at me, a tide dragging me into the depths of my mind. Did I really have a choice? I sipped at my juice. It was cool and sharp, clearing my mind somewhat, but not enough. I could not resist the opportunity of experiencing other, again.

"Yes," I said aloud. God help me, I let him in.



## IMPOSSIBLE

by RH Marshall

I sit the stemmed glass down on the table and reach for the wine bottle. The inexpensive Grigio, pale golden, and as transparent as the glass, tastes surprisingly good, even at room temperature. I pour a refill, adding a couple ice cubes this time. I settle into my old chair, lean back to recline, and use the side lever to lift the feet support, all the while balancing the glass to keep the wine and the agitated, tinkling ice cubes from spilling on my lap.

My husband walks into the room, frowns at the full

glass I hold aloft, and gives me the *how-many?* look. I try to distract him.

"Do you know that you can make ice cubes with leftover wine?"

"That's impossible."

"It's true, I'll show you. You can use them later to flavor foods, or to cool a drink."

"I know that. I meant it's impossible for you to have any leftover wine."

Oh, the married life.

## CONTESTS and OPPORTUNITIES for WRITERS



**THEY'RE  
AT IT  
AGAIN  
WITH THIS  
NEW  
TOPIC!**

### The Power Of Positive Thinking

We are looking for true stories and poems written in the first person about how deciding to use positive thinking changed your life. What was the situation that inspired you to think positive? What changes did you make in your attitude — from negative to positive — that turned your life around? How did you train yourself to be a positive thinker?

These inspirational stories will remind readers to focus on hope and show them that each day holds something to be grateful for. Stories can be serious or humorous, or both. Tell us your success story about using the power of positive thinking.

#### **REMEMBER:**

All stories and poems need to be true — we do not publish fiction. Stories should be no longer than 1,200 words. Please write in the first person about something that happened to you or someone close to you. Every part of your story must be true.

If your story is chosen, you will be a published author and your bio will be printed in the book if you so choose. You will also receive a check for \$250 and 10 free copies of your book, worth more than \$100. You will retain the copyright for your story and you will retain the right to resell it or self-publish it.

The deadline for story and poem submissions on this topic is FEBRUARY 28, 2023.

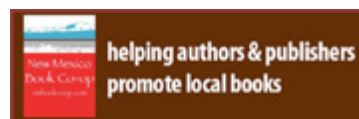
Suggested subjects, guidelines, entry information and additional topics can be found on the Chicken Soup for the Soul website, [HERE](#).

## 2023 NM-AZ Book Awards Open for Entries!

Entries will be accepted until April 28, 2023. There are some new or changed categories this year to reflect the trends in genre so check the entry form carefully. Plus, we have streamlined the entry process with a unified (combined) entry form for all entries, both print and ebook. And best of all we have reduced the price of entries by 10 percent, from \$50 each category to \$45 and reduced the number of copies of print entries needed from three copies to two copies. Information and entry: <http://nmbookcoop.com/BookAwards/BookAwards.html>.

#### **JUDGES NEEDED**

If you want to be a judge or would like more information, email Paul Rhetts at [LPDPress@q.com](mailto:LPDPress@q.com).



MINDSPRING is starting up a monthly publication focusing on New Mexico in general and Albuquerque in particular. Their focus areas center on arts, sports, entertainment and food. The first edition will be published 4/1/2023 with a 3/1/2023 article submittal deadline.

Articles should be 400-500 words (including headline), in the following areas of interest:

- Food and Beverage: restaurant, winery or beer review
- Cultural: museums, galleries, dance, poetry, opera
- Entertainment: movie and play reviews, New Mexico film industry
- Educational: lectures, classes, schools
- Music: Concerts and live music
- Sports: Isotopes, New Mexico United, UNM, high schools, private leagues, athletic clubs

Payment will depend on the writer's experience.

Send your indication of interest to:

Sheryl Brown [shenier@mindspring.com](mailto:shenier@mindspring.com)

Did you miss these SWW Speaker Presentations?  
**CLICK TO WATCH THEM NOW ON  
YouTube!**

[Robin Perini](#)  
[Judith Avila](#)  
[Parris Afton Bonds](#)





## SouthWest SAGE

### SAGE CHALLENGE & ARTICLE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The SouthWest SAGE newsletter is the professional publication of SouthWest Writers. Submissions focusing on all aspects of research, writing, and publishing in any genre are welcome. To familiarize yourself with the types of articles published in the SouthWest SAGE, read past issues at [southwestwriters.com](http://southwestwriters.com).

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.

Read the following before submitting:

- Payment is in bylines and clips.
- Deadline is the 15th of the month prior to the next issue.
- Standard article lengths are from 300-800 words; certain SAGE Challenges may set more specific word count requirements, which will be found on the Challenge page. **Submissions may be edited for accuracy, readability and length.** Submissions must be tasteful; free from profanity, explicit sex or violence, political commentary, etc.
- Send all submissions as either standard text in an email or in a Word document in 12 pt. size. Single spaced. Do not get fancy with formatting or fonts. To ensure proper author credit, your name or pen name must appear within the document you submit. **Submissions with no name will not be considered.**
- Polish your work. Submissions should be professional in appearance and quality of writing, fully edited and ready for publication.
- Accompanying art/photographs are appreciated; proper attribution and permission is required.
- Inclusion in the SAGE is subject to the discretion of the editor.

Send questions or submissions to:  
Kathy Schuit  
SouthWest SAGE Editor  
[sage@swwriters.com](mailto:sage@swwriters.com)

## SWW Board Meeting Minutes Summarized

JANUARY  
2023

- Thanks to a wonderful response to the Rainbow Challenge, SWW had a large net income for December, allowing us to close out 2022 in good form. Thank you, Evelyn Neil, for spear-heading the campaign and to all who rose to the occasion with matching funds.
- The incoming board approved the outgoing board's recommended budget for 2023.
- Debbie White will be heading this year's writing contest. She and the rest of the committee—Trisha Gables, Chris Allen, Evelyn Neil—are finalizing the calendar, categories and criteria, so start prepping your entries.
- Jim Tritten received board approval to pursue a grant from New Mexico Arts to publish a non-competitive anthology of writings by veterans, family members and caregivers of the military, as an avenue to promote healing through the arts.

### SWW Office:

3200 Carlisle Blvd NE, Suite 114  
Albuquerque, NM 87110  
phone (505) 830-6034  
email: [info@swwriters.com](mailto:info@swwriters.com)  
website: [southwestwriters.com](http://southwestwriters.com)

