

SouthWest Sage

The Voice of SouthWest Writers

Writing Contest Opens April 8



The 2023 SouthWest Writers Writing Contest opens on Saturday, April 8. This year's contest includes 20 writing categories and two art categories with cash prizes in all of them and the opportunity to be published.

The theme of this year's contest is **Woven Pathways**. SWW members' love of all things writing weaves us together into an inclusive, supportive community regardless of our culture or background. We would like entries and participants that reflect our inclusiveness.

While the contest includes categories for artwork, poetry,

nonfiction and opening pages of a published work, the majority of the categories focus on unpublished writing in a number of specific genres of certain lengths with the hope of encouraging aspiring authors to participate. Contestants do not have to be a member of SouthWest Writers to enter.

Overall categories include the following:

- Cover and Interior Artwork
- Fiction Opening Pages of both published and unpublished works (3000 words or less)
- Flash Fiction (1000 words or less)
- Short Story (3000 words or less)
- Nonfiction Memoir (General, Pets, or Travel; 3000 words or less)
- Poetry Free Verse (Nature, Spiritual, or Relationships; 1500 words or less)
- Limericks

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Military Anthology Accepting Submissions NOW

March 1 - April 1, Submit Online.

SouthWest Writers in partnership with New Mexico Arts & the Military is creating an anthology of short stories, art, essays and poetry. These will be perspectives of military life in general, and/or insights into the broad scope of events, feelings and viewpoints of veterans and their families.

New Mexico Arts (NMA) [part of the State of New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs] has approved a grant of \$2,000 to SouthWest Writers to sponsor publishing this anthology that supports healing through the



arts, creates more opportunities for military and veteran audiences, and builds capacity among New Mexico organizations to offer art programs for military-connected participants.

Eligibility: Authors must be active-duty service members, reservists, National Guard members, veterans, their families, and live-in caregivers who live in New Mexico. Active duty service members currently stationed outside the state are eligible if their home of record is New Mexico.

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SouthWest Sage

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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.



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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.

Social Media Follows SWW!

January's Numbers

Twitter - 4,876 followers, up from 4,833

Facebook Feed - 1,393

Facebook Group - 681 members, up from 663

Meetup Group - 573 members, up from 565

LinkedIn - 764 connections, up from 761

Instagram - 61 followers, up from 54

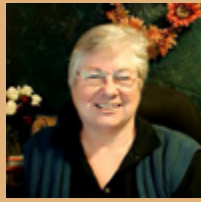
President's Corner

Doesn't it seem as though every time we turn around there is some new catastrophe about to descend upon us? Covid, windstorms that rip through New Mexico, wars in Europe, global warming, ridiculously divisive politics, doom, despair and agony. Deep dark depression, excessive misery... Wasn't there a country western song like that?

Where have gone the halcyon days of yore: peaceful stretches of time illumined by calm weather and golden harvests, swimming in a clean, clear lake or ocean, playing baseball or hide and seek in the backyard?

As writers, all we have to do is activate an app on our cellphones to find an abundance of inspiration. Can't think what to write? Just open up Facebook or Twitter, every other post throws heartache or victory into the ether. And I am continuously surprised and amazed at the profusion of new writing groups that show up—to be honest I am also perturbed.

Mind you, I love that people want to be dynamically engaged with the written language and that there are a plethora of ways available for them to successfully share their stories and views. What concerns me is that most of what I see in these groups are people who are so wrapped up in being published



that they don't seem to be concerned about the quality of their work.

I see so many of them assume that just because they have finished their stories, it should immediately be snapped up by whatever publishing house they deign to send it to—and of course it will automatically be a best seller. Or, they may self-publish... and are disappointed when they only get a few sales, mostly to friends and relatives.

Writing is so much more than placing random words on paper and calling yourself an author. If someone does not take the time and do the work to truly understand both the art of writing as well as the business of writing, they might as well just admit that the only person they are writing for is themselves.

The members here at SWW range from rank beginners to national best sellers. The beauty of this group lies in our willingness to share what we've learned with each other. I love that we have the writing challenges in the SAGE each month and opportunities for our members to participate in contests or submitting to anthologies.

This month, with the help of the State of New Mexico Arts department, we've flung wide the doors to being published in a new anthology, and next month begins our annual writing contest. We have loads of drama occurring all around the world, in big ways and in small ones, and we also have memories of brighter, calmer times. Which ones will you write about this year?

Look Who JOINED SWW in January!

Welcome!

Jennifer Wise
Wes Brummer
Peter Schuyler
Rebecca Guevara
Neal Holtschulte
Melanie Peak
Catherine Bergen
Mylee Khristoforov

Welcome!

Now with 410
members
WORLDWIDE!

Join at
SouthWestWriters.com.



The Writing Life: MACRO VERSUS MICRO VIEWS OF A LIFE

by Sherri L. Burr

On a drive to give a speech at Eastern New Mexico University, I listened to the audio version of a book I had read. When I initially perused *Tony Hillerman: A Life* by biographer James McGrath Morris, I became upset about aspects that I felt were unfair to someone I viewed as a friend and mentor. I tend to read with a pen, highlighting and making comments as I actively engage with the writer's words. Listening to the audio version of a book permits me to relax and enjoy the story.

Part of my disenchantment with reading the book was my concern that McGrath Morris had not recommended Tony Hillerman's memoir *Seldom Disappointed*. When I asked him about this missing recommendation, he said Tony had made some factual errors. As I relaxed and listened to the audio version of the book, his criticisms made more sense in the context of the overall story.

One of the main differences between memoir and biography is viewpoint. Memoirists take the micro view and focus on their own lives. Since memoirs are based on memory, a few factual errors are to be expected. I consider *Seldom Disappointed* to be one of the best memoirs penned by an author.

A biographer takes a macro view, telling a story in the context of the circumstances that created and formed their subject. Thus, it makes sense that the biographer would point out errors that the memoirist missed. Each type of work must be appreciated for what it brings to the table.

Listening to the audio version gave me permission to sit back and enjoy Tony's life in the context of his times. McGrath Morris examines Tony's rise from Oklahoma farm boy to World War II soldier to New Mexico journalist, professor, and author. I met Tony when he was a fully-realized author who had just made it to the *New York Times* best-seller's list. This shifted how many of his books were sold and how they were promoted. McGrath Morris tells how Tony was not acquainted with The List and unaware of the change that was about to happen when he went from Tony Hillerman, author, to TONY HILLERMAN, AUTHOR.

Because McGrath Morris had full access to the Tony Hillerman archives, he read all the "fan" letters that came in criticizing his errors of fact. Having received

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.



some of those types of letters myself (like most authors), I can imagine how Tony shifted in his mindset from first responding to them and then to stopping. Once they became too many, he took the important criticism, corrected errors, and moved on. Life is too short to wallow in the negativity of folks who delight in finding mistakes in your work even though they never publish.

While I found it disturbing to read McGrath Morris's criticisms that accused Tony of cultural appropriation for writing about the Navajos, as a listener I understood why he took that approach. He endeavored to contextualize Tony Hillerman as public perspectives about who could write a culture's story were shifting. Tony Hillerman was a white man writing about Navajos. There was bound to be criticism, including some people who said he knew nothing about Navajo culture. As I listened to their complaints, I formulated my own response, which would have been to query whether they had ever read his books.

McGrath Morris adeptly handles such criticism by pointing out that the Navajos had proclaimed Tony "A Friend of the Diné." His books are read in Navajo schools and many Navajos, particularly those who grow up off the Rez, have reported learning about their culture from his books. The culture should determine whether it has experienced appropriation, and these facts indicate that it did not happen.

McGrath Morris, who had only met Tony once, aimed to present a "balanced" portrait of his subject. As a biographer he expertly shares a macro view of Tony Hillerman's life.

The Search for a Publisher

by Cornelia Gamlem

You have a great story idea and are working on a manuscript. But how will you get it out into the world? There are a number of paths, and options within those paths, but determining which ones are right for you requires research and investigation.

The first path is to use a traditional publisher—a full service firm that gets books to market. Their services can include all phases of editing, cover design, interior design, printing, marketing support, obtaining copyright, ISBN numbers, and barcodes, and distribution. Traditional publishers pay all the costs and royalties to authors after sales.

Traditional publishers come in many sizes, from the big five—HarperCollins, Simon Schuster, Penguin Random House, Wiley, and McMillan—to smaller, often regional or specialized niche publishers like mine, Career Press, as well as university presses. Many require authors to be represented by an agent, but that's a different discussion.

If you want to self-publish, you can engage a publishing service firm (an assisted or hybrid publisher) that provides or offers many of the same services as traditional publishers. Authors pay the costs upfront, but retain a higher percentage of sales. One example is BookBaby, who I refer to as my publishing partner. Publishing industry expert, Jane Friedman, has an excellent guide you can consult for more information: <https://www.janefriedman.com/key-book-publishing-path/>

Once you've decided on a path, how do you find the right fit for you? First, curate a list of potential publishers or publishing services. Since there are so many, consider narrowing your search. For example, searching for publishers who specialize in mystery ensures that a traditional publisher you're seeking works in your genre if you write mystery.

With a manageable list, your research can begin, starting with each organization's website. You may find much information there, but don't hesitate to contact them for more. Whether you're looking for a publisher or publishing service, you should be asking:

- Do they provide editing, or access to editors? If so, what types of editing?
- Do they provide interior design and set up?
- In what format will you need to submit your manuscript? (It will usually be an MS Word file.)
- Will they convert your manuscript to multiple formats for eBook sellers, such as .mobi or .epub?
- What about cover design? Are there examples that you can review? Do the designs render well for both print

and eBooks?

- Do they distribute to resellers, such as Amazon and Barnes & Noble? If so, which ones? For self-published authors, it's often more difficult, but not impossible, to get into brick and mortar stores.
- What about printing on demand or POD? POD is an efficient, small-run printing process that distributes books directly to buyers—even just one copy—without authors having to store and ship their books.
- On this note, do they have a bookshop where readers can buy your book directly? If they provide POD, a bookshop won't involve stocking inventory for the service or for you.
- Will they secure ISBN numbers for your book? And remember there is a unique one for each format, printed book, eBook, or audiobook.
- Speaking of audiobooks, traditional publishers may sell audio rights for your book. Ask if they do or if they give authors access to services that convert books to audio.
- Do they provide any marketing support? If so, what do they provide or make available to authors?
- Are there any other services they provide? If they do, what are they?

Now comes the important part—costs and revenue sharing. When you're looking for a publishing service, many offer a package of the services they provide. These can include eBook conversion and distribution, POD distribution, ISBN numbers and barcodes, cover design, and printed book and eBook interior formatting and design. So ask:

- Do you offer any publication packages, and if so, what is included in each? How much does each package cost?
- If a service you are looking for is offered but not included in the package, such as editing, ask about the additional, add-on costs. In many cases, additional services, such as audiobooks, are offered through a partner firm. Find out about these firms.
- If no package is offered, then ask about the cost of each of the services you want or need.
- How much of the sales price do resellers such as Amazon take?
- If books can be purchased directly from the firm, how much of the sales price do they retain and how much can you expect? They will usually look to recoup the cost of printing.
- How often will you receive royalties and sales reports?

Your due diligence process isn't done until you've asked for references. Talk to other authors who have used the publisher or the service, and ask about their experiences. Ask if their authors have formed on-line groups, such as Facebook groups, that you can either view or join to learn more. There are many options available, so be sure you investigate before engaging any organization or paying them any money.

MEETINGS IN MARCH



Saturday, March 11

10 am – noon

In Person & Zoom

Newsletter Basics

with Geoff Habiger

Geoff will discuss the basics of newsletter formats and content, sites to use to send newsletters, and how to grow your contact lists. Visit Artemesia Publishing at <http://apbooks.net>.

Geoff Habiger is an author and managing editor at Artemesia Publishing. He's authored 6 novels, 1 activity book, and several short stories and has managed Artemesia since 2004 with over 50 books published in that time. Geoff lives in the East Mountains near Albuquerque.

Details, directions and Zoom login information on the [SouthWestWriters.com Meetings Page](#).

Wednesday, March 22

6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Via Zoom

Be the Star of Your Online or Radio Interview

with Jim and Bobbi Jean Bell



You've been invited to discuss your book with a live radio, online broadcast, or podcast host. Congratulations, this is a unique opportunity to be the STAR of your own story! Have you considered all the benefits of this opportunity? Are you fully prepared? How will you promote the interview?

Bobbi Jean and Jim Bell, hosts of the online broadcast Rendezvous With A Writer on LA Talk Radio, have firsthand experience interviewing authors across all genres. As "interviewers" they share their unique insight into the interview experience.

More details and Zoom login on the [SouthWestWriters.com Meetings Page](#).

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

Creating a Book Tour

with E. Joe Brown

Saturday: March 11, 2023

12:30 – 2:30 pm

Via Zoom

SWW members: \$20

Non-members: \$30



Joe will cover reasons an author should create book signing tours and describe successful methods to do so. Attendees will leave with knowledge of proven ways to develop local and distant tours and understand why both are important. Visit Joe's website at E.Joe-Brown.com.

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 for more information.

UPCOMING CLASSES

Liars, Lovers, and Criminals: Character as Story, Story as Character

Class Instructor: Lisa C. Taylor, MFA

3-week Class

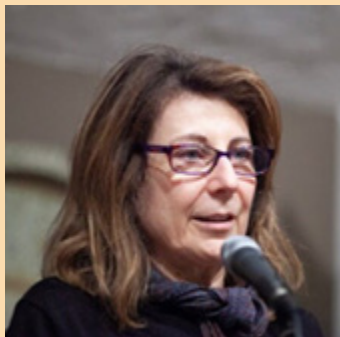
Saturdays: April 15, 22, and 29

1:00 – 3:00 pm MT (3:00 – 5:00 pm ET)

Platform: Zoom

\$120 SWW members

\$150 Nonmembers



Long after you finish a story, a compelling character stays with you. Think of Daisy Buchanan from *The Great Gatsby* or Atticus Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Join Lisa C. Taylor for three Saturday generative online workshops to guide you as you craft fully developed characters, the kind that will make a reader cheer, rage, or cry.

Lisa C. Taylor is the author of five poetry collections including the recently published collection *Interrogation of Morning*, and two short story collections, most recently *Impossibly Small Spaces*. Her honors include Best of the Net nominations, the Hugo House New Works Fiction Award, and Pushcart nominations in fiction and poetry. Lisa was awarded a Colorado Creative Industries/National Endowment for the Arts Grant in 2022 to run a youth art and writing program. Lisa's work has appeared in numerous magazines and anthologies, most recently *North Dakota Quarterly*, *Tahoma Literary Review*, *Lily Poetry Review*, and *Crannog*. She has been awarded residencies at the Tyrone Guthrie Centre in Ireland, Vermont Studio Center, and Willowtail Springs in Colorado. Visit LisaCTaylor.com.

To register call the SWW office at 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.)

Zoom Meeting: The Zoom invitation link and the password will be emailed to those who register for this class. For more information, please contact the class/workshop coordinator at Info@SWWriters.com.

*Isn't It Time To Take
This Popular Class?*

Revising Fiction: Making Sense of the Madness



Class Instructor: Kirt Hickman

Eight-Week Course

Saturdays: Jul 15, 22, 29 and
Aug 5, 12, 19, 26 and Sep 2
3:00–5:00 pm Mountain Time

Check the [SouthWest Writers.com Classes page](http://SouthWestWriters.com/Classes) for registration and details as they become available.

*Sign Up Before
It Fills up!*

The Challenge for publication in the March SAGE was to write a story that included both March (the month) and march (the verb).

The Promise

by Ruth Vogel Mast

At noon on its last day, I got rid of February. I tore the page off the calendar, wishing it were that easy to tear it from my memory. How could a truncated month have held so much misery? I wadded the paper into a ball, throw it in the fireplace and watch the flames take hold, crinkling and twisting the numbers in a parody of the pain no longer felt by the one who's gone, but near unbearable to the one left behind.

The new month awaits, March. I stare at the numbers set in straight columns and rows in their inevitable march to tomorrows. Flowery designs border the page—promises of spring with its beauty and warmth to ease the winter in my mind. Promises—the word itself has wings in its sound.

And yet I have promised.

Leaving February to the embers and March to tomorrow, I force myself to walk outside and survey my promise. Denuded tree branches sprout birds wanting to be fed, judging by the empty feeders hanging from the lower limbs. I hear the brown grass crackle under my feet from layers of untended dry leaves. Bushes, unrecognizable to me in their nudity, scratch my arms, wanting something. What? I don't know. I touch them back gingerly like unwanted pets and mumble promises. I smile when I recognize a plant by its location and rush to tell him, "It's the white lilac bush I helped you plant years ago. Remember? Well, I handed you the shovel, didn't I?"

I keep walking along the edges of curving beds filled with frozen soil beginning to thaw; notice greenish shoots poking through and know from before they will bloom again in a profusion of color. I must try to remember the names. I like the ones you called daffodils. I say the musical name aloud and see the bloom unfold in my mind.

Why didn't I pay more attention to your gardening, seeming effortless to me, and the results so beautiful.

You created this dormant Eden, and I have no idea how to wake it up.

An idea takes hold. What if I look through your books. You must have loads of gardening ones to have learned so much. I go back inside, get a pot of piñon

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The Sage Writing Challenge

APRIL

It's finally here: POETRY MONTH! Send in your poetry of no more than 300 words in any poetic form by March 15.

Read and follow the submission guidelines on page 13.

Send submissions or questions to:

Kathy Schuit

SouthWest SAGE Editor

sage@swwriters.com

My Raccoon

by Carol Kreis

Iwondered what caused the loud scratching noises. They stopped for a few minutes. Then a sudden, eerie, high-pitched sound shrieked from inside my chimney. Was it about to blow up?

Our gas log didn't work so the gas burners were off. The damper was closed. Our neighbor Steve was backing his car out of his driveway. Part of me wanted to run out to stop him. Maybe he would know what to do. But what would he think if I told him that a poltergeist might be inside my fireplace? The racket stopped.

I thought maybe an enormous hawk had been weighed down by its prey, and both of them were stuck inside the chimney. I looked online for a wildlife relocation service in our area and decided to call their number in the morning.

When I went out to get the newspaper the next day, I looked up and saw what appeared to be a bear cub resting outside the top of my chimney. I quietly went inside and grabbed my phone camera. After I took a picture, the dark-gray, furry mass raised its head. Its beady, masked raccoon eyes stared down at me.

I went indoors, and the raccoon went back inside my fireplace. I heard occasional soft, scratching sounds.

Larry, the wildlife inspector I called, was with a popular wildlife control company. He checked out my situation that afternoon. He walked around the outside of the house to make sure there were no holes where raccoons could enter. Seems that those sly, wild creatures have been found living inside the walls of houses.

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coffee going, and head for the multifunction room we call office. A couple of tall cases lean against a wall, their shelves heavy with books organized by subject, bless your tidy soul! I find the gardening section and check the titles on the spines, pull out *New Mexico Gardener's Guide*, with a subtitle only a committed writer would dare to dish out, *The What, Where, When, How & Why of Gardening in New Mexico* by Judith Phillips. It's a lot of book, but it promises—oh, that word again—over a hundred pictures inside. I check the print date, 1998. Well, plants are still the same then and now, I should think.

To counteract the weight of the first book, I pick another one, much thinner and newer with the intriguing title *Creating Microclimates for High Desert Gardening*, written by a local master gardener with the felicitous first name Rose.

An empty coffee pot later, with my brain at melting point, not to mention my bladder, I realize that cramming general information about gardening will get me nowhere. I better wait for the plants to dress up; then find their names in the guidebook and the care I must give them.

Good neighbors assure me the garden will wake up by itself, and they give me advice until I beg for mercy. A friend from Texas, learning of my promise, sends me a box filled with small round objects like shaggy onions, dug up from her yard, she says, and called bulbs that I need to plant now, so they'll bloom in the Fall. She adds a picture of how they'll look. Beautiful to behold if she had just sent instructions.

Well into March I rake the leaves off the grass and watch the plants end their slumber. I read mastery lessons about spaces in shade and in sunlight. Learn about weather patterns and when to water and how much. Take the gardening tools out of the shed and figure out what they do. I bury the Texan bulbs.

I keep my promise. I care for your garden and in doing it I am gifted with the feel of your presence. I am happy.



Red Spider Lily – Bulbs from Texas

Scale the Scar, Heal the Mountain

by Dan Wetmore

In winter, the evergreen hills surrounding Pike's Peak showcase that massif like a necklace of emeralds complements a diamond tiara. And the front range's irregular undulations are made more arresting still by a single slope at their northern end; camouflaged in matching color, but unnaturally planed and smooth; a single, faceted gem thrown in among the uncut.

That anomaly drew me at first sight, so when a pamphlet exhorting, "Scale the Scar, Heal the Mountain" caught my eye in a local sporting goods store, I resolved to do so.

And so, on spring's edge, I find myself trudging up the slope of a former quarry in Queen's Canyon. Several hundred people have gathered for this march in March, converging on curiosity and a cause. We Lilliputians are traversing a tilted Gulliverian tabletop to raise funds to dress it with seedlings, in hopes of returning this chiseled bald to a semblance of its neighbors. But turning my eyes from the incline before to the plains of the city behind (a syrupy pool of glass, concrete and asphalt oozing towards Kansas), I have my doubts. An ounce of prevention beats a pound of cure, but could any amount of pounding drive that

point home for those bent on the doubly dubious pursuit of burying a garden spot's scenery under buildings to accommodate its thronging admirers, while chewing up any remaining to generate the construction materials?

Joni Mitchell comes to mind, beguiling and condemning. "Don't it always seem to go, that you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone? They paved paradise, put up a parking lot." The horizon's distance from this height stretches my perspective likewise. Considering the litany of "oops-es", "uh-ohs" and "next times" trailing into history's echoing depths, I realize Joni's letting us off too easy. For a species graced with memory and will, consequences are not only foreseeable, but avoidable. So I shake my head, not just to fling sweat from my eyes, wondering, "In the face of so little mitigation, why so little litigation?"

And yes, in the grand scheme of things, this could be viewed/construed a cycle of nature, a rhythm of an amplitude beyond our ability to impact, even were we willing. There is a dizzyingly cyclic wonder in considering the shellfish of the ancient inland sea drawing from those calcium-rich waters to fashion their mobile homes . . . and those in turn being pulverized and fuzed under the press of water and eons of their fellows blanketing . . . and the limestone formed by—and gravestone for—their collective corpus being subsequently exhumed and crushed by the neighborhood's newest residents . . . and that dust returned by them

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They can chew a hole in the eaves and take up residence in attics.

When I showed Larry the photos of my raccoon, he said he could tell from the shape of her face that she was a female. He figured she must be pregnant. He assumed that she chose my chimney as a home for herself and her babies-to-be, often called kits or cubs. Before settling in, she scratched and banged on the chimney walls to make sure they were sturdy. After all, she wanted to hunker down for the duration of her pregnancy and the first few months of her kits' lives.

Over the weekend, the wildlife company doesn't do animal removals. I stopped hearing noises in the chimney. I wondered if I acted too hastily, paying a large down payment to get someone to remove my raccoon. It seemed like she had exited on her own. Larry thought she was still inside my chimney.

Mating season for raccoons started in January so Larry assured me that I was fortunate. The gestation period is 63 to 65 days for raccoons so she wouldn't be giving birth before March. They would get her out before she turned my chimney into a nursery for her family of kits.

Meanwhile, I had become like a proud new parent showing off the two photos of my raccoon to friends and family. I was pleased that she had strong maternal instincts, and I figured her kits would be adorable. Yet, I knew raccoons could be bad news.

One had recently reached its long, front paws into a wire cage and did away with my friend's three chickens. It feasted on their fresh meat. In addition, those varmints and their droppings often carry diseases.

Jason, from the wildlife control business, showed up on Tuesday to remove my raccoon. He peered inside the chimney with his flashlight. I heard him talking to her in a soft voice. He attached mesh with a hole in the center to the top of the chimney so she could escape. With the wiring pointing upward, she could not re-enter the hole. Jason put out two traps, and then he poured a liquid with the scent of male raccoons into the chimney. The last thing a pregnant raccoon wants around is a male. Those carnivorous beasts love baby raccoons to death, literally.

Less than an hour later, I noticed my raccoon carefully put one long, furry, skinny paw in front of the other as she crawled down a Japanese Maple near the roof onto the patio. She realized she had been given marching orders. When she hit the ground, she barely tilted her head toward the trap as if to say, "You've got to be kidding." She silently skedaddled to the back of our property and disappeared.

Jason provided my chimney with a new hood and screening, so another raccoon won't mistake it as a housing opportunity. Is my raccoon curled up in a secure spot where she can welcome her kits when they arrive in March? I wonder.

SCALE THE SCAR, cont'd. from previous page

to water and reconstituted as the concrete from which those successors' own dwellings are formed, as well as laid down in the valleys as selective, striped strips of new capstone, in partial recompense for the prize prized from the hills.

But it's a not-so-grand scheme, the rationalization sought by turning the telescope wrong-way-'round. With the semblance of sufficient remove, even the most tragic takes on trivial dimensions. Owing, I guess, to the cunning with which we're also graced, able to deceive even ourselves, to forcefully forget we can remember, and thereby commit formal logic's most egregious fallacy, assuming "As it must be, so it will always be," therefore, "As it has always been, so must it always be."

That saves us from second-guessing our dabbling in double-think: allowing impavements to pass as improvements; seeing all progression as progress; hearing growth as a synonym for good (despite growth's poster-child—for efficiency, rapidity, robustness—being cancer); elevating the unquestioned to the status of unquestionable; and refusing to recognize development—which never occurs in a vacuum—as the conjoined twin of demolition.

As we near the summit, a benevolent cloud rewards our rigor with a cooling sprinkle. I watch the drops fall, wondering—on this slippery slope—if the steep grade will have them running into rivulets, carrying away still more earth, reversing our efforts to reverse our efforts.

And here in the heights, where the air has clarity, I wonder if we all are like those drops; small, individually ineffectual, scattered, and carried most by momentum, primarily passengers of our fate. Stanislaw Jerzy Lec—paraphrased—elegantly observed, "No single raindrop ever thinks itself responsible for the flood". Unbidden, unwanted, a sister thought insists: "Neither does any single raindrop give itself credit for ending the drought." And I wonder, here on this knife-edge of a summit, if that yin-yanging of refusals to accept blame or credit, that cancelling of agency, indicates the too-perfect balance which is not stasis, but static.

CONTESTS and OPPORTUNITIES for WRITERS

MILITARY ANTHOLOGY, cont'd. from page one

Family members include significant others and children of military or veterans. Membership in SWW is not required, but a current tie to New Mexico is.

Timeline: Submissions are due between March 1 – April 1, 2023. Submissions may not be sent early since the State mandates project work cannot start before March 1st. Authors, photographers, or artists whose work is accepted will be notified by mid-April 2023. Publication of the anthology is expected in July 2023 or shortly after that. There is no entry fee.

Submission Information, read and understand the full details at southwestwriters.com:

- Each author is allowed up to 2,000 words. Authors may submit multiple pieces in English in multiple genres as long as the total words submitted does not exceed 2,000.
- Submissions should be fully edited and ready for publication. Anything which has been previously edited and published is allowed as long as the author has the right to republish the work.
- Submissions do not need to be about the military.
- Examples of writing done as a part of healing are encouraged.
- Submissions can exemplify what goes on inside the minds of military members, veterans, or their families.
- Suggested topics include: Articles and stories based on military life in general, life on a military base, things people learn and incorporate in their lives through association with the military. Insights into training or relationships that endure long after service ends or how a person's experiences in the military carry beyond their service.
- Photographs or artwork that are the author's property or in the public domain are encouraged if they illustrate the author's poetry, prose, or essay submitted or are candidates for the cover. All artwork must be titled.
- Writing, photography, or artwork that disparages our country or military or primarily focuses on violence and/or sexual situations will not be acceptable. SWW reserves the right to decline any writing or photo/artwork it deems inappropriate. Submissions are to be made exclusively through this website — the link to submit is at the bottom of the webpage.

WRITING CONTEST, cont'd. from page one

Specific genres within Unpublished Opening Pages and Short Story include the following:

- General/Literary
- Mystery/Crime/Thrillers
- Romance/Rom-Com
- SciFi/Fantasy
- Westerns
- Humor

In addition to cash prizes, the winning entries will be included in the SouthWest Writers 2023 Anthology to be released in the fall of 2023. Winners will be announced at the same time the anthology becomes available.

Contestants may enter submissions between April 8 and May 20 but the entry fees increase moving toward May 20. From April 8-21, the entry fee is \$20 per submission. From April 22-May 5, the entry fee is \$25 per submission. And from May 6-20, the entry fee is \$45 per submission.

Look for more details and specific instructions coming soon to the SouthWest Writers website: southwestwriters.com.

All entries will be submitted digitally through the portal on the website after April 8.

Austin Film Festival's Script Competition is open for entries!



At Austin Film Festival, story comes first. We fully acknowledge the hard work and passion you put into your script, and rest assured, your story is in good hands. Regardless of placement, all entrants receive free reader comments so, at the very least, you get feedback on your script from seasoned readers.

Submission Deadlines:

Early Deadline: March 23, 2023

Regular Deadline: April 18, 2023

Late Deadline: May 25, 2023

SWW members may apply the following discount code! AFFWG23

In addition to feature screenplays and teleplay pilots and specs, we also accept short screenplays, digital series scripts, stage plays, and fiction podcast scripts.

More information on all script competitions can be found at [Austin Film Festival Script Competitions](https://austinfilmfestival.com/script-competitions).



Best selling author Joseph Badal (above, left) spoke at the February meeting. It was one of the most well-attended meeting (in-person and Zoom) since the start of the pandemic. Above, right: Your SWW Board of Directors meeting on Zoom.



Signing in on Zoom and filling the room at UNM/CE, more than 100 members attended the February meeting.



Author and past SWW Vice President, Joe Brown speaks at one of his many signing/singings. Joe will be the Workshop host Saturday, March 18, after the meeting. His topic is *Creating a Book Tour*.

**SouthWest Writers Workshop
Statement of Financial Position
As of December 31, 2022**

| Assets | |
|--|---------------------|
| Current Assets | |
| Nusenda - Checking | \$ 17,693.94 |
| Nusenda - Savings | \$ 37,737.03 |
| Paypal \$ - | |
| Office - Petty Cash | \$ 100.00 |
| Total Current Assets | \$ 55,530.97 |
| Other Assets | |
| Inventory (Books) | \$ 145.00 |
| Total Other Assets | \$ 145.00 |
| Total Assets | \$ 55,675.97 |
| Liabilities | |
| December rent - Carlisle Ex. Office | \$ 650.00 |
| Nusenda Credit Card - 205 | \$ 59.50 |
| Nusenda Credit Card - 206 | \$ 45.48 |
| December 2022 Workshop - Instructor fees | \$ 234.00 |
| Total Liabilities | \$ 988.98 |
| Net Worth | \$ 54,686.99 |
| Total Liabilities & Net Worth | \$ 55,675.97 |

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.

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

SWW Board Meeting Minutes Summarized February 2023

- The board is working to improve the Zoom sound quality of the Saturday morning meetings: checking with the UNM/CE contact about the ceiling mic quality, and perhaps getting a lapel mic for meeting presenters.
- Having secured an NM Arts' grant, preparations for an anthology of veterans' writings, spearheaded by Jim Tritten, is proceeding. A dedicated page on the SWW website will go live Mar. 1, at which time a one-month submissions window will open.
- Details of the 2023 writing contest are being finalized. Cash awards will be offered again this year, and the submission period will run Apr. 8 - May 20.
- With board approval, Rose is building a proposal for an ABQ Arts grant to sponsor a conference in early 2024 with a focus on accurate representation of diverse populations in literature. Pending its drafting, the board will vote on the recommended panels and cost.

SWW Office:

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website: southwestwriters.com

