



Enter By May 20
Only a Few Weeks Left



ENTER
[HERE](#)

The 2023 SouthWest Writers Writing Contest is taking submissions for only a few more weeks, until May 20. Contestants can enter for \$25 per submission until midnight May 5, then the cost goes up to \$45 per submission for the last two weeks.

This year's contest includes 20 writing categories and two art categories with cash prizes in all and the opportunity to be included in the *Woven Pathways* anthology.

SouthWest Writers Writing Contest Chair Debbie White reported having received 94 paid submissions to date but is hoping for at least 160 more. So far, the most popular categories are poetry, flash fiction, and nonfiction memoir general. Categories with plenty of room for more submissions include opening pages of a novel and short story fiction, as well as artwork and photography.

The SouthWest Writers 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, but all stories and poems are welcome! See the SouthWest Writers website (link below) for more details and the entry portal.

Contestants do not have to be members of SouthWest Writers to enter.

<https://www.southwestwriters.com/annual-writing-contest/>

Holes in Our Hearts NM Arts & the Military Anthology Nearing Completion

The New Mexico Arts & the Military anthology, a project of SouthWest Writers through a grant from New Mexico Arts (part of the State of New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs), is in the final stages of editing and formatting prior to publication. The title, *Holes in Our Hearts*, was taken from a sculpture that was funded by the City of Albuquerque and stands at the New Mexico Veterans Memorial. The sculptor, Steve Borbas, made a prose submission to the anthology.

Anthology Committee Chair Jim Tritten provided participation statistics to the SWW board at its April meeting:

Word count prose	60258	Number of prose entries	45
Word count poetry	9373	Number of poetry entries	46
Word count mixed	3298	Number of mixed entries	3
Total word count	72929	Total number of entries	94

Number of persons entering 54

Active duty	1
Veterans	28
Army	14
Navy	3
Air Force	8
Marine	2
Coast Guard	1
Family members	22
Caregivers	3

Not everyone who submitted was accepted. We received submissions from multiple states in the U.S. and Nepal.



This image, which will form the foundation for the *Holes in Our Hearts* cover, depicts a work by sculptor Steve Borbas that stands at the New Mexico Veterans Memorial.

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SouthWest Sage

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ATTEND SouthWest Writers MEETINGS IN-PERSON or ONLINE

Directions and information at
SouthWestWriters.com.



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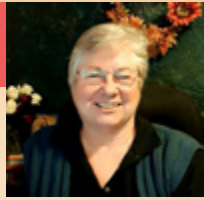
The SWW Board of Directors meets on the second Tuesday of each month from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Meetings are conducted in person and via Zoom.

SWW Anthology Now at BOOKWORKS

If you're looking for some great reading, the Bookworks store on Rio Grande Blvd. in Albuquerque has our 2022 Writing Contest Anthology, *A Diversity of Expression*, in stock! If you are considering entering the 2023 contest, now in progress, looking through *A Diversity of Expression* will give you a flavor of the quality of work SouthWest Writers promotes.

Bookworks was recently remodeled and it hosts a variety of author events. It is a great place to go hang out and conveniently located in the same building as a Flying Star Café. So get a copy of the Anthology, then have a great lunch or dinner!

THE PREZ SAYS



It always delights me to hear our members proudly announce their latest literary achievements at our meetings, and also to see their names among the lists of winners of various writing contests. Whether it is a small publication, a contest, or a blog...participating in these events means that YOU are dynamically engaged in perfecting your art and achieving your goal.

SWW strives to give its members information and experiences relevant to their evolution as an author. Some of us chose a literary life early on, striving for college degrees in journalism or the literary arts. Many of us focused the educational and practical opportunities of our younger days on a different path related to our financial well-being, but as the initial struggles for independence morphed into stability, we discovered a hunger to express ourselves through the written word.

All of our members come from different backgrounds and ways of life. When you undertake a new goal the biggest challenge is learning first how the game is played; what is the vocabulary, how is it structured, what are the rules and to what extent can they be bent?

The best way to learn is from those who already understand what is going on. That is why SWW exists. We are blessed with a large number of experienced authors who are willing to donate hundreds of hours a year to helping each other succeed. The critique groups fostered through SWW can help you hone your skills and allow you to share your own expertise. You can become part of that cycle by going to the Critique Group tab of the SWW website under the membership tab.

Currently, we have only three groups listed. We need more. If you are an experienced writer, please consider forming another group. Ideally, it should be 4-6 people who commit a few hours each week to reading each other's work. The website has information relevant to forming a new group. If you are interested contact Mike Hays at critique@swwriters.com.

In the meantime, there is still time to enter the SouthWest Writers annual writing contest where you will get a free, objective analysis of your writing strengths and weaknesses and might just win a prize!

Rose

Look Who JOINED SWW in March!

Lisa McCoy
Pete Christensen
M. Ernst McMillan
Paul Lisko
Paul Bolduc



Welcome!

**With more than
400 members
WORLDWIDE!**

KUDOS to ALLEN HERRING

Allen became a lifetime member in March. We appreciate this high-level of support and commitment to SWW!

A lifetime membership is a smart way to save money over the long run. To become a lifetime member contact the SWW office, Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. - noon.

3200 Carlisle Blvd NE, Suite 114
Albuquerque, NM 87110
phone (505) 830-6034
email: info@swwriters.com

Praise For the SAGE

Hi Kathy,

I am a member in Arizona. I just wanted to take a minute to tell you how much I enjoy the SAGE. I just read another newsletter from a writing/marketing group in Canada and it had mistakes and the format was awkward. Then I logged into the SAGE... what a difference. Thank you for your hard work. You do a great job!

Patricia Gable

The Writing Life: GRACE

by Sherri L. Burr

One of my daily affirmations is, “I am open to the power of grace and ask to be shown clear examples of how grace manifests in my life.” Sometimes, grace unfolds in an unclear manner and only reveals itself after the immediate crisis has subsided.

An example occurred the weekend of March 11-12 when I sought help as the 2023 New Mexico Press Women’s annual conference approached. I chaired a committee to create an action plan to flesh out the theme of “Telling the Untold Story.” A few weeks before the conference, my mother’s primary care physician (PCP) sent her to the hospital in an ambulance from his office. She openly wept as we tried to comfort her. I followed her in the ambulance to the emergency room. Once she was admitted into the hospital, I stayed nights with her. From my cell phone, I managed the final conference details. After Mom was released into my care, I had a dilemma as to whether I should take her with me to the Isleta Resort for the conference and have her stay in my hotel room or whether I should ask her sister, Aunt Liz, to come stay with Mom.

During the post-hospital follow-up visit with Mom’s PCP, I explained the choices and he voted for Aunt Liz. I called her and she agreed to fly to Albuquerque. The day before the conference began, I picked her up from the airport, fed her and Mom a hearty supper, and finished final conference preparations. Aunt Liz laid down for a nap and slept for sixteen hours.

At ten o’clock the following morning, Aunt Liz appeared from the guest room. I showed her the house key and left to arrive at Isleta barely 30 minutes before I was due to lead the quarterly board meeting. At 11:30 a.m. the treasurer’s phone rang, and she said this was a reminder to silence her phone. I immediately silenced mine as well.

I didn’t look at it again until after the board meeting and a zoom panel concluded. I noticed a weird text message had come in around noon that said, “We will be taking Elizabeth to Presbyterian downtown not Kaseman.” I immediately called Aunt Liz’s cell phone, Mom’s cell phone, and my home phone. No answer. Sensing an emergency, I ran to my car and dialed the phone number connected to the text message. A paramedic answered the phone. She had helped transport Aunt Liz to the hospital after she swallowed her teeth.

“She did what?” I exclaimed.

“She said she swallowed her teeth.”

As I looked in the distance, I saw Presbyterian hos-

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. West Academic published *Wills & Trusts in a Nutshell* 6th Ed., her 31st book, on October 31, 2022. 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.

pital. I told the paramedic I planned to check in on Aunt Liz. After being escorted to her room, Aunt Liz said she had vomited up her partial denture with two upper front teeth and was ready to go. Her doctor arrived and said, “Not so fast. We want to keep you overnight because tests reveal some abnormal proteins related to your heart.” Aunt Liz protested that she had to take care of my mother. I told Aunt Liz that she must stay put. “It would be worse if they released you and you had a heart attack in front of Mom.”

I arrived home to find the alarms blazing as Mom calmly watched the free western channel, Grit. After we discussed Aunt Liz, she asked, “Can I get a warm meal?” I drove back to the conference just in time to interview the new Navajo President and take him to dinner. As dinner wrapped up, I received a call from Aunt Liz. She’d tested positive for Covid.

At home, twenty-five minutes later, I immediately tested Mom and me for Covid. Fortunately, we were both negative, so I knew Aunt Liz hadn’t caught it from us. I put on gloves and a mask, retrieved bleach wipes, a vacuum and mop, and began to sterilize my home. Instead of returning to my Isleta hotel room, I stumbled into my own bed after midnight.

The next morning, I was back at Isleta by 7:30 a.m. to lead the Annual Meeting and the morning conference events. During the afternoon break, I drove home to check on Mom who wanted another warm meal. The conference wrapped up that evening with a rousing speech by New Mexico Congresswoman Melanie Stansbury. I felt privileged to hear her words of inspiration.

On Sunday, Aunt Liz’s hospital PCP called. The earliest Aunt Liz could be released was Wednesday

cont’d on next page

GRACE, continued

according to CDC guidelines for COVID. Also, the PCP recommended Aunt Liz fly with supplemental oxygen. A case manager followed-up. Insurance refused to cover the portable unit, but I could purchase one for \$3000. I inquired about rentals for the flight to Las Vegas.

The case manager found an oxygen rental unit for \$375 a week. As we discussed it with Aunt Liz, she refused, even after I offered to pay for it. She was convinced that since she got herself to Albuquerque without supplemental oxygen, she could return home without it. The case manager said she must wear an N-95 or equivalent mask on the plane. Recognizing Aunt Liz wasn't going to budge, I agreed to return the next day with her boarding pass, several appropriate masks, and a new oximeter so she could track her oxygen level on the plane. The morning of her flight, Aunt Liz checked herself out

against medical advice, or AMA, and safely flew home.

I contemplated the situation's grace. If Aunt Liz hadn't swallowed her teeth, Mom and I would have never learned she had Covid and would have been exposed longer. Had Aunt Liz not been confined to the hospital, we would not have learned the true state of her health, which she insisted she had a right to keep secret. Had the conference been on the East Coast, and not 25 miles away, I could not have overseen the immediate care of my mother and her sister.

Perhaps grace can be defined as those life events to which we initially react, *why did this happen to me*, only to later conclude, *Thank God, or the Universe, that happened to me in that way*. After Aunt Liz read a draft of this article, she called laughing. "Not too many people swallow their teeth," she said. I joined her laughter.

Links To Upcoming SWW Events

MEETINGS in May

Saturday, May 13
10:00 am – noon
In Person & Zoom



Speaker: Sherri Burr
Wills and Trusts for Writers and Authors

Wednesday, May 24
6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Via Zoom



Speaker: Robert D. Kidera
The Writer's Tool-Kit

<https://www.southwestwriters.com/meetings/>

May WORKSHOP

"Who, What, When, Where, and How" of Copyright Compliance
With C. Daniel Miller

Saturday: May 13, 2023
12:30 – 2:30 pm (MST)
Via Zoom
SWW members: \$20
Non-members: \$30



<https://www.southwestwriters.com/workshops/>

CLASSES starting soon

Class Instructor: Rose Kern



Success with Self-Publishing

4-week Class
Sundays: May 7, 14, 21, 28
5:00-7:00 pm (MST)

Class Instructor: Joseph Badal



From Inspiration to Publication: How to Turn Experiences into Publishable Works

1 Session (7 hours)
Saturday, June 17
Platform: In Person & Zoom

Class Instructor: Kirt Hickman



Revising Fiction: Making Sense of the Madness

8-week Class
Saturdays: July 15, 22, 29, August 5, 12, 19, 26, and September 2
Platform: In Person & Zoom
3:00 – 5:00 pm (MST)

<https://www.southwestwriters.com/classes/>



Website Decoder

Hosting and Domains

by Lynne Sturtevant

Writers need websites. We've heard it over and over. Why have so many of us still not taken the plunge?

Maybe talking about tech seems overwhelming, not to mention drop dead dull. How can you make rational decisions when you don't understand the jargon? What if you spend a fortune and end up with something you hate?

Take a deep breath.

In this three-part series we're going to cut through the digital mumbo jumbo, demystify the process, and make it easier to stick your toe in the water.

You only need four components to build a website: hosting, a domain, a theme or template, and content, which is your text and images.

Building a website is a little like building a house. The analogy isn't perfect but will work for our purposes. Hosting is your lot and utility hook-ups. The domain is your new address. The theme or template is the blueprint the builder uses to construct your new home. Content is your furniture, art, paint colors, carpeting, etc.

Let's break it down.

Hosting is a service that makes your website's content available on the Internet. Without a web host, your files would exist on your computer but no one else would be able to access them. When you set up a hosting account, you are basically renting space on the host company's computers. We'll discuss how and where to get hosting in our next issue. Hint: It's easy.

Just like your new home must have a physical address, your website needs an online address so people can find it. That address is called a domain.

The address of my author site is www.LynneSturtevant.com. The www stands for World Wide Web. It's ubiquitous and is not part of the domain. The domain portion is LynneSturtevant.com. I use capital letters because they make it easier to read. Beyond that, they have no significance.

LynneSturtevant.com is a custom domain. There is another type of address called a subdomain. Here's an example: www.LynneSturtevant.WordPress.com.

A site with a subdomain is not a free-standing website. It's part of a site owned by someone else, in this case WordPress.com. We'll examine the pros and cons of WordPress next time.

Although subdomains are long and unwieldy, there's nothing wrong with them technically. The downside of using one is it's clear you're piggybacking on someone else's site, that you don't have a site of your own. Not the best look if you're seeking an agent or a traditional publishing contract.

You buy domains from a domain registrar company. There are more than 2400 domain registrars. They all have access to the full list of available domains. The cost of domains is all over the ballpark. Some are thousands of dollars. Others are less than \$10 a year.

I use the term "buy" because that is how people describe getting a domain. It's a misnomer though. You don't buy domains; you rent them, usually on an annual basis. If you fail to pay your rent, your domain will be tossed back into the available names pool. Although your website will still be floating around in the ether, no one—including you—will be able to access it.

You've undoubtedly noticed that not all domains end with .com. Some end with .org, .gov, .edu, or .net, to name just a few. People tend to want a web address that ends with .com because it's so much easier to remember. Unfortunately, that's not always possible.

Flexibility is key. You may find that your perfect domain is already taken or out of reach financially as a .com but is dirt cheap as a .net. Rather than JaneDoe.com, try JaneDoeAuthor.com or TheJaneDoe.net or JaneDoeWrites.com. Avoid using dashes, numbers, plus signs, or other symbols in your web address. They just confuse people.

Don't choose a domain based on your book or series title unless you are absolutely, positively, 100% sure you will never write another book or series. It's much better to select a domain associated with your name. That way your site can evolve and accommodate all your work, even titles and topics you haven't imagined yet.

Brainstorming domain names can be fun, especially after a few glasses of wine. You may come up with something fabulous. But be careful. Write it out and make sure you're not selecting an unintentionally hilarious or wildly inappropriate domain, such as:

www.doctorsexchange.com

www.teacherstalking.org

www.americanscrap.com

Next time, we'll cover how to choose the best blueprints for your new site.

The Challenge for publication in the May SAGE was to write about a time when you laughed till you cried.

Blowing Kisses

by Barb Simmons

A while back, I'd headed out to the grocery store for my usual Saturday morning shop. My husband Charlie and our black Lab, Bella, had already taken off for a walk up the bike path, about a half hour before.

I'm driving along, and way up ahead I see a fellow with a black dog walking toward me on the path. *They sure made good time*, I mused. As I drew closer, I started feverishly blowing kisses to them. When I got right up to them, I realized that was not my husband, nor my dog.

The look on the man's face was priceless, a mixture of surprise and dread.

I laughed all the way to the store.

Multitasking

by Chris Allen

When you live a life as busy as mine, it pays to multitask. In fact, it is essential, and I have become quite good at it.

It was a bitter cold morning in February, three degrees registering on the thermometer. Yet, the noises from the livestock pens told me they were in no mood to wait for the warming rays of the sun. I snuggled on long underwear, rarely used in the desert, and braved the chill.

Amid a cacophony of horse nickers and sheep belching frantic baas, I pitched flakes of hay, noticing I only had a few bales left, with a heavily scheduled weekend coming up. I glanced over at my truck. When I cleaned my pens a few days prior, I had filled the bed to the brim. "Oh damn. That needs to be emptied before I go to the feed store."

After breakfast, I attended a Zoom call about a project I was working on for my community. A hint of a crisis filtered through the conversation. Heading back outdoors, I emptied the truck, pausing between shovelfuls of frozen chunks of manure to make and receive calls to clear the crisis.

Checking the time, I realized I was close to when I was to meet my co-author, Pat Walkow, at a local restaurant where we would be proofing our manuscript prior to submission to publishers. I abandoned my shovel and

continued on next page

The Sage Writing Challenge

JUNE

Write up to 600 words of poetry or prose that includes the phrase "a Camaro at full throttle." Follow the guidelines and submission instructions on page 12.

Killer Canasta

by Rose Marie Kern

In my family, Canasta is way more than just a card game...it's an obsession. Even today, when the Kern Kids get together, out come the cards...and THEIR kids are just as bad or worse. I'm proud to say my daughters are right up there with the best!

So, when my mom flew to visit us in Albuquerque some time back it was the most natural thing in the world to finish dinner, whisk off the tablecloth and pull out the cards. Melissa and I were paired up against Mom and Carolyn.

Both my daughters were in high school. Melissa, the sophomore, was getting into that phase of development where she enjoyed the twinkle in a boy's eyes. Carolyn, a senior, played on a softball team. She'd recently had a ball slip past her glove and break the tip of her pert little nose.

Our card games were always rife with jokes and jesting, but the actual playing was very serious. Cards flew from practiced fingers—eleven to each player (cards, not fingers). We were on the fifth deal and both teams were within striking distance of the magic 5,000 points needed to win the game.

Tensions rising, Melissa "froze" the discard pile. No one could pick it up without a pair in their hands. The game was on.

The prized pile grew larger with each discard. Players stared intently at the next person waiting eagerly, trying to read their minds so they wouldn't give away the wrong thing. The pile grew huge.

On my left, Carolyn sighed and leaned over to pick from the deck. She looked at her hand, then at Melissa, then back at her hand. The sisters glared at each other

continued on next page

MULTITASKING, continued

raced to the house to change from barn clothes to restaurant clothes. After grabbing my laptop, I drove to the Corrales Bistro.

We spent two hours doing final edits, and when we were done, I sat back, satisfied with our progress, and rested my hand on my knee. Something didn't feel right. I looked down and laughed.

"What's wrong?" Pat asked.

I opened my mouth, but nothing came out...except giggles.

"Are you OK?"

I laughed harder.

"What's going on?" she asked, in a voice rising above the din of the lingering lunch crowd.

I waved a hand at her, gasping, and then wiped tears from my cheeks. I was breathless and fell forward, my hands clutching at the table.

"Chris, tell me what's so funny," Pat demanded.

I straightened, took some deep breaths, and then leaned forward to whisper, "Pat, I don't have any pants on. I have been sitting here all this time in my long underwear."

Pat dissolved into laughter, which set me off again. At this point, we had commanded the attention of everyone, including a mayoral candidate pressing the crowd for votes.

They say laughter is the best medicine. Certainly, it was terrific aerobic exercise for Pat and me sitting in that restaurant, and I suppose, in the end, I should be grateful I was, on that day, a complete failure at multitasking.

CANASTA, continued

until Mom chimed in, "Just do it, Carolyn."

Carolyn slowly pulled a card from her hand and without taking her eyes from Melissa's face she flashed it upwards then lowered it towards the pile, stopping just short. Melissa held her gaze, not even looking at the card.

Carolyn took a breath and let go. Melissa looked at it and said, "Thank you" as she reached for the pile.

"AARRRGHH!" Carolyn wound herself up and slammed her forehead down on the table, but when she rose up, her eyes wide, she very softly said, "Big Mistake."

She'd hit her broken nose and was momentarily frozen in pain. We all busted out laughing...and laughing...and even more laughing as we saw her begin to smile with her eyes watering in pain. Soon, she was laughing too, and each chortle twisted her face, making all of us howl louder. We all started leaking tears and, at one point, I slid off my chair onto the floor.

We didn't bother to count the points...the pile Melissa picked up definitively took us over the top so it was our win. After we finally calmed down we just gathered the cards to start the next game...but to this day all we have to do is calmly utter the words "Big Mistake" to lighten up our day.

Did IngramSpark Hear Our Pleas?

In an email to account holders on April 27, Ingram Spark announced the end of book setup fees when using their self-publishing platform.

"We believe that all authors should be able to successfully print, globally distribute and *Share Their Story With the World!* In our tenth anniversary year, we're announcing exciting changes that will make publishing your book with IngramSpark even easier," stated the message touting the policy changes, which include:

- **No more book setup fees** (Coming May 1)
All books must meet the requirements set forth in the [User Guide](#). Free title setup not valid on previously submitted titles. View the [Pricing and Services Guide](#).
- **FREE revisions on new books** (Coming May 1)
Make a mistake? No problem. Revise your book within 60 days of the book's first production date and you will not be charged a revision fee.



- **NEW print options** (Coming July 1)
Ultra-premium color option that can help you create bright and vibrant books. Also available, groundwood paper, a lightweight, thicker paper that is mostly paired with mass market and trade content.
- **Global distribution fee** (Coming July 1)
Access our global distribution network of over 40,000 retailers, libraries, universities and educators. Books enabled for distribution will be charged a market access fee equivalent to 1% of the local list price at the time of sale. [View more details.](#)

Kindle Vella Opportunity? Or Waste of Time?

by Rose Marie Kern

More than a million authors have taken advantage of KDP Amazon's program, which allows them to self-publish both print and ebooks free of any upfront cost. It allows writers of all skill levels a way to have their written words converted to published ink on paper, or its electronic counterpart.

Whether these books sell one copy or one thousand depends primarily on each author's ability to market. Amazon does have the world's largest market, so if someone is looking to buy a specific book, the odds are it will be available there. The big question is: How do people know the book or the author even exist?

In recent years ebook and audio book sales are outgrowing print books dramatically. Many readers still like the feel and smell of paper, but the convenience of digital entertainment and commercial business options allows much wider appeal to anyone under the age of fifty.

Long gone are the days when kids and adults huddled around a scratchy TV with three channels or a radio to hear a favorite weekly broadcast. Yet, those early "freebies," that only required the purchase of a receiving device, did a fabulous job of creating a strong desire for more. Today, you can watch hundreds of program styles at any time of the day or night on televisions, computers, tablets and, most conveniently, your cell phones.

People have become accustomed to having specific doses of their favorite programming administered at regular intervals. Every week a new episode or podcast or movie and, because these are no longer available ONLY by buying the receiving device, most people don't flinch at purchasing monthly subscriptions to Netflix or Hulu, Direct TV or Verizon.

Amazon's new Vella program capitalizes on all that history by offering authors a way to "sell" their stories one chapter at a time. The premise is that an audience that loves to read will purchase a packet of "tokens." They will then "pay" a set number of tokens per story to be able to access the next chapter as the author releases it.

People reading this may wonder why someone would do this, but I've played games on my cell phone that do the same thing. You can play the game at a snail's pace, or you can purchase some extra abilities that allow you to advance faster into more intricate scenarios. Of course, you soon use them up and have to purchase more to keep the same adrenaline rush.

Vella allows customers to read the first three chapters of a selected story free of charge—hoping to catch your interest. After that, it is a pay-to-read scenario. It usually costs less than \$2 to buy a packet of 200 tokens...or you can buy a bundle of 1,000 tokens at a time for \$10. Each episode of

a story costs about 30 tokens (depending on word count).

Authors get a percentage of the amount, depending on how many chapters someone pays to read. Amazon doesn't promote any books over others unless the author pays for ads, so we are back to the self-published author having to do a lot of self-marketing.

New titles and popular titles on Amazon, whether print, ebook or Vella, will show up more often than ones that have been in the "store" for a longer period of time. That's why your books come up in searches faster when first published—it is when you usually have friends and family purchasing the books and when you do the most marketing yourself.

So, is Vella worth looking into?

It depends on why you are engaging in this manner of sales, and how disciplined a writer you are.

Can you write a chapter (or episode) at a time, and then upload them at regular intervals? Amazon will not allow you to use an already published book and give it new life. It has to be something new and original.

It can be a tool for ongoing personal marketing as, with each chapter's upload, you have a reason to promote your writing in general, which in turn could help your other books.

Amazon's system keeps track of your "followers" and notifies them each time a new episode is uploaded. After the first three episodes, readers are required to purchase the tokens, which is about the same time the author may begin to see some kind of royalty.

Six months after the story is completed and the author has removed it from Vella, they have the option of publishing it as an ebook or print book.

The system is still in its infancy overall, but a lot of authors are taking advantage of the process to dip their toes into publishing. With this system there is always the danger of an author who starts a story then gets bored or busy and just doesn't finish it, so a reader might find themselves having to look around for some other way to spend their tokens.

Amazon envisioned this as primarily oriented to fiction, but I tested it with a series of articles on high desert gardening. I advertised it via email to friends and family and sent information to some gardening organizations. KDP Amazon's system keeps records, which authors can access, showing all purchases of your books, ebooks, and Vella, so I know that my first three episodes attracted about 43 readings, and I got eight five-star reviews...but, when people had to start paying for them it fell off dramatically. My total royalty for the first six episodes was \$17.93.

If you want to learn more about Vella here is a link: <https://www.amazon.com/kindle-vella>.

If you'd like to see my humorous gardening series on Vella, just search "Crazy Mad Gardener" and let me know what you think!

CONTESTS and OPPORTUNITIES for WRITERS

NEWS FROM SWW

Critique Groups

Southwest Writers supports a process for assisting writers in establishing new critique groups and/or in connecting with existing critique groups.

[The Critique Group Program page](#) on the [South-West Writers website](#) has a lot of information for any writer of any skill level interested in joining a critique group. You must be an SWW member with a "Members Only" log in to access the Critique Group page.

- All SWW members are eligible to participate.
- The program supports all types and genres of writing.
- Critique groups can be face-to-face or virtual, or even hybrid if you want, and best of all,
- They're free of charge.

The current SWW Critique Group Coordinator is Mike Hays, and you may email him at critique@swwriters.com if you have any questions or want to submit a questionnaire. Questionnaires are available on the Critique Group Program page, link above.

Professional Services Directory

The SWW Professional Services Directory is getting a makeover.

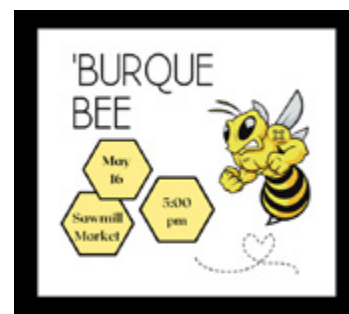
Inclusion in the Directory is one of the perks of membership in SWW. We want the members and the public at large to think of the SWW Professional Directory first when they need writing assistance.

Some existing sections are being condensed, others are expanding, and overall there will be a new and updated look. All listings, which were previously limited to 50 words, will now allow for 100 words. If you currently have a listing in the directory, now is the time to update/revise your information. Send revisions to Directory Chair Lynne Sturtevant at info@swwriters.com by May 15 so your listing is in place for the unveiling on June 10.



'Burque Bee - spelling for literacy

Participate in Etho's Literacy's 3rd Annual 'Burque Bee!



12 teams of 3 will compete for glory in a fast-paced spelling competition emceed by Shelly Ribando from KOAT TV.

Team registration fee: \$100.

All proceeds support literacy programs in Albuquerque and New Mexico.

Pre-registration required.

[Learn More](#)



A Place For Words
In Taos, New Mexico

Are you starting to think about weekend getaways for the warmer days ahead? You might consider a trip to Taos for

one of the many one-day workshops offered by SOMOS, a multi-faceted writers group and bookshop in Taos.

Local, regional and nationally talented writers and instructors regularly offer one-day and multi-week workshops at SOMOS in poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, memoir, screenwriting and nature writing among others.

Coming in May/June

Self Publishing, with Micheal Blevins, May 13

This is a three-hour workshop to run on Saturday, May 13, 2023. 10:00 am to 1:00 pm.

Cost: \$75 for SOMOS members, \$85 for non-members.

Poetry & Mathematics, with E.R. Lutken, June 3

In this workshop, participants will read, discuss, and write poems that involve mathematics. Special attention will be given to structure and to metaphor in poems incorporating mathematical concepts. Handouts with examples and templates will be provided. The workshop is FREE and open to anyone who has survived high school math class!

Date and time: Saturday, June 3rd, 10 am to 12 pm

Cost: FREE, suggested donations to cover venue utilities, etc.

[Info, full calendar of events and registration HERE](#)

Call 575-758-0081,

or visit the SOMOS website, somostaos.org.

Honoring Valencia County Veterans & Their Stories in the Memorial Month of May

Hearty HeArts for Healthy Veterans: Folding, Feeling & Laughing Our Way to Well-Being - May 7, 14, 21, 28, 2-3:30 pm
Oasis Room, First United Methodist Church, 75 Manzano Expy,
Rio Communities. Attending all 4 events recommended.



Laugh your way to good
cheer with limericks:
A little salty, a lot of fun
with Shirley Blackwell
New Mexico State Poetry Society



Feel your way to positive communication
with Peace Poetry & Puppets
with Kuan Tikkun
Rio Communities Action Network



Fold your way to focus, flexible
fingers & a relaxing form of fun with
origami "wish cranes". Double your
fun: Bring your grandkids to make
cranes & wishes with you!
with JC Wayne
Creative for Good



Share your life stories, limericks, peace poems &
origami cranes with your community & write out
a limerick or peace poem as a PoemGram to
hang on a public community "Poet-Tree"

For more information, contact:
JC Wayne
jc@jcwayne.com
(832) 928-8837



Made possible by a grant from New Mexico Arts
Department of Cultural Affairs

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

APRIL 2023

- The Bylaws are being revisited to eliminate ambiguities, and excise job-related activities more at home in the Policies and Procedures manual. The membership will vote on the proposed changes at October's annual business meeting.
- We have a full slate of meeting speakers for 2023, and 4-5 penciled in for 2024.
- Joe Badal is planning a 7-hour master class for Saturday, June 17, entitled "Inspiration to Publication." See the Classes page on the website for details.
- The military anthology, "Holes in Our Hearts" is being formatted. Its 200+ pages include 95 entries by 54 contributors, and will be available for purchase in July. All contributors will receive a complimentary copy. SWW appears to be trend-setting, as a group in Los Lunas is now pursuing a similar grant.
- Bookworks will soon be stocking copies of SWW anthologies.
- Some links were temporarily down during recent updates to the SWW website, but the site is being reviewed page by page to ensure that full functionality has been restored.
- The board is considering making Zoomed workshop recordings available on-line to generate residuals as future interest arises.
- Walmart hosts a fundraiser for which any 501(c)(3) charity is eligible. SWW is looking into it as a possible revenue stream.

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website: southwestwriters.com

