


SouthWest Sage

The Voice of SouthWest Writers

Judging Is Underway For Writing Contest Entries

With the submissions window closed (as of May 20), full-scale judging is now the top priority for 2023 writing contest chair Debbie White and her crew of expert judges. Her report on the final entry numbers was presented to the membership at the May 24 meeting. Along with the chart of entries (**below**), it was explained that authors in under-represented categories may choose to slide their entry to a different category. Members should also gear up to vote for their favorite Limericks and Interior Artwork. These entries will be posted on the SWW Website by the June 10 meeting.

Total Submissions 177			
Section A: Art/Photography			
• A1: Interior Pages Artwork.	8		
• A2: Cover Artwork	6		
Section B: Fiction			
• B1: Opening Pages of a Previously Published Book	7		
• B2: Opening Pages of an Unpublished Book.			
1. General Fiction	6		
2. Mystery/Crime/Thrillers	12		
3. Romance/Rom-Com	3		
4. SciFi/Fantasy	7		
5. Westerns	2		
• B3: Flash Fiction. (1,000 words or less, any genre)	16		
• B4: Short Story. (3,000 word limit)			
1. General Fiction	9		
2. Mystery/Crime/Thrillers	1		
3. Romance/Rom-Com	1		
4. SciFi/Fantasy	7		
5. Westerns	1		
6. Humor	12		
		Section C: NonFiction and Memoir	
		•C1: General	20
		•C2: Pets	7
		•C3: Travel.	6
		Section D: Poetry Free Verse	
		(Limit 1,500 words)	
		• D1: Nature.	7
		• D2: Spiritual.	3
		• D3: Relationships.	10
		Section E: Limericks	
		6	



Available Soon!

Copies of the *Holes in Our Hearts* military anthology will be released to the public June 30, 2023, and will be available at the July 8 SWW meeting.

Each contributing author receives one free copy of the book. Jim Tritten, the project chair, will send an email asking each author to inform the office

whether they want their free copy shipped to the address they provided with the submission or whether they will pick up their copies at the July 8 in-person meeting.

Jim also has been in email contact with the authors to suggest they organize regional book launches/readings in their local area, and Tom Neiman is putting together a promotional video for the book.

Read more great news about the anthology and the grant that made it possible in president Rose Marie Kern's message on **page 3**.

INSIDE

- 4** *Time-Snoокered*
by Sherri L. Burr
- 5** *Build a Network,
Build Enthusiasm*
by Elaine Carson Montague
- 8** *The History of SouthWest Writers*
by Kay Lewis "Happy" Shaw, Paula Paul,
and Rose Marie Kern
- 10** **SWW Members Share Their
Writing Successes**
- 11** **Website Decoder
Architecture**
by Lynne Sturtevant



DEPARTMENTS

From the President.....	3
Meetings/Workshops/Classes.....	7
Look Who Joined.....	3
Contests and Opportunities.....	12
Board Minutes Summary.....	13

SouthWest Sage

*Published monthly by the Board of Directors of
SouthWest Writers,
a nonprofit, tax-exempt 501 (c) (3) organization.*

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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.

Critique Groups

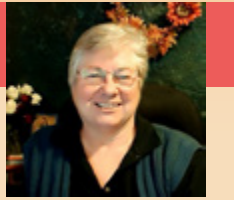
Southwest Writers supports a process for assisting writers in establishing new critique groups and/or in connecting with existing critique groups.

[The Critique Group Program page](#) on the [SouthWest Writers website](#) provides a lot of information for writers 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.

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.

THE PREZ SAYS

What direction should we go? How do we create an audience?



June is bustin' out all over the world and SouthWest Writers is along for the ride. We have been showering opportunities on our members with writing challenges, and the offspring of those challenges are beginning to burst outward like a field of corn after a spring rain.

Early this year New Mexico Arts, part of the State of New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs, gifted SWW with a grant of \$2000 to create an anthology focusing on military veterans. Jim Tritten took the lead on this project and, with the help of Dan Wetmore and Joe Badal, he set up the entry and judging processes and is now shepherding the publication into its final stages. NM Arts is so pleased with the anthology that they are preparing to increase its funding so that copies can be ordered and distributed to a number of libraries around the state!

The SWW annual writing contest entry period has now closed. Debbie White and her committee have been working feverishly to keep up with the hundreds of entries they've received. She is blessed with a talented group of successful authors who've agreed to review and score the entries according to industry

standards.

The SAGE offers challenges every month and we are looking to comb through all the stories from the last few years to create an anthology highlighting our extraordinary newsletter. This will probably be set up to come out early in 2024. For the rest of this year, SWW members (only) have the opportunity to be published twice...once in the SAGE, and once in the anthology. We will be forming a committee to go through all the SAGE newsletters that have come out since the last SAGE Anthology was published and find the best stories and poetry.

Don't forget to keep honing your skills. Amazon #1 Best Selling author Joseph Badal is offering SWW members valuable insights and advice during his one day intensive and interactive Master Class happening Saturday, June 17. Check out the details at www.southwestwriters.com/classes.

Question for you from the SWW President:

We love to write, yet it is alarming to see that kids these days don't tend to read anything more challenging than a tweet, and half the time they only use contractions like LOL, TUVN and hundreds I've never heard of. So how can we ignite a passion for the written word in our future audience?

This is a topic of importance to us all so I'd like to hear your ideas and suggestions. I'd also like to know if any of you are interested in working towards that goal. Please send your ideas and suggestions to me at president@swwriters.com

Look Who JOINED SWW in APRIL!

Charmayne Samuelson

Bryan Weaver

Dorajane Grummer

Hiddekel Burks

Gerald Carlin

Rebecca Fairfax Clay

Louise Lenahan Wallace

Rheba Hysell

Pat Wetzel

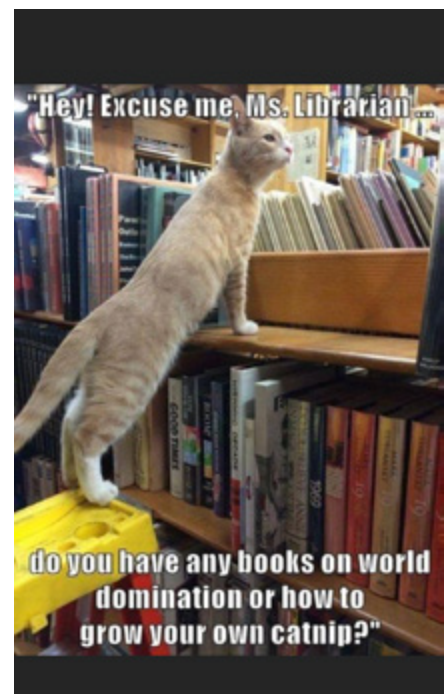
Christina Sultan

Welcome!

Welcome!



With 405 members
WORLDWIDE!



The Writing Life: Time-Snookered

by Sherri L. Burr

"Did you get the email I sent you last week?" the caller asked. I first met her when she and her family moved to Albuquerque decades ago. From our shared alma mater, she obtained the names and contact information of all alumni living in New Mexico. We had lunch, and afterwards she invited me to her home to meet her family.

Now, I felt startled. "I don't think so, but I have been under a lot of stress taking care of Mom since she got out of the hospital while resolving other crises and honoring commitments. What's up?"

"I wrote you that [our] Society needs a letter of support for our project," the caller said.

"When's the letter due?"

"Today. It goes directly to Congresswoman..."

"You've got to be kidding," I exclaimed. "The only way I might be able to pull that off is you have to send a first draft by 11:00 AM. I might be able to work on it between my mother's home health appointments."

"I can do that. What email do you want me to send the draft to?"

I gave her my New Mexico Press Women email address and went to open the door for my mother's physical therapist. After she left, I opened my NMPW email account. This message had arrived from the caller:

Sherri,

Here is the funding that we applied for. That is the email address to send the letter. Submissions@mail.house.gov. It is due today.

Thanks for your help.

Immediately following that email came her second one.

Hi,

As we discussed, here is what I drafted for you. You could email it to Submissions@mail.house.gov. Please email me a signed copy.

I did not call to check to see if you received my email from March 13. My landline has been out of order for 8 days, and I was slammed working on this application. We had the deed signing ceremony on March 14. The donation of the real property is worth at least \$100,000.

I worked quickly from her basic (who, what, when, where, and how much) draft. I added several personal touches, including that this Society was a partner of New Mexico Press Women, and we supported their application for \$900,000 to remodel a donated house into their headquarters. An hour later and right before my mother's second home health aide arrived, I emailed the caller, "I sent my letter from my other account to reduce the chances that it would go into their spam folder. ...Attached is the PDF of the letter. I hope you succeed in your goal."

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.



The caller immediately thanked me.

I replied, "You're welcome. Glad to help. I hope I can count on you for a donation to the New Mexico Press Women scholarships later this year."

No response.

After the last of my mother's home health aides had left for the day, I researched whether caller had indeed sent an email last week. I wrote her, "Before today, this was the last email I received from you. It was over a year ago." I attached the email, and continued, "I checked all my email accounts, and there was no email message sent from you to me during the last week. Did you make your deadline yesterday to complete the submission of the package request and its accompanying letters?"

Her response was, "Yes, we made our deadline. Thanks for the great letter." She then gave me another email address, from which she said she sent me her request. "But perhaps it did not go through."

I responded, "There was no such email address in any of my inboxes. You didn't send it."

No response.

Then, I realized I'd been time snookered. The caller never sent an email request the week before. Could I have avoided being time snookered? Perhaps I should have checked all my emails to confirm that she had sent something. I could have said "No" from the beginning because the request required me to drop everything to concentrate on writing the letter she needed.

When people time-snook you, they are not grateful that you dropped what you were doing to help them, nor are they willing to help you with your causes. What transpired became another notch on their manipulation belt. The caller gambled that I would not turn down her request because it was urgent. She didn't count on my subsequent investigation and that's why she stopped responding. Game Over as far as the caller was concerned. It would have been better for me to not engage in the game at all.

Build a Network, Build Enthusiasm

by Elaine Carson Montague

Most people understand the value of networking in business. For authors, networking is indispensable. In this article, I'll share tips and use the book that my late husband and I wrote to illustrate points. The book's title is long, so I'll call it *Victory* instead of *Victory from the Shadows, Growing Up in a New Mexico School for the Blind and Beyond*.

Networking helped make *Victory* successful, starting with the day my first critique group told me that my writing was okay for a journal but not for a publishable memoir. *What's the difference?* I wondered.

Networking with individual writers through membership in SouthWest Writers (SWW) has since brought editors, word-of-mouth endorsements, blurbs from well-known authors, and an e-book. Networking with groups of writers, such as New Mexico Press Women, The New Mexico Book Co-op, and SWW, introduced me to contests and opportunities to get my work into anthologies. I received career advice and appreciation that kept me making incremental improvements along the journey from writer-wanna-be to author-for-real. Networking at conferences brought interviews for a podcast and magazine.

Networking through long-time associations—50 years or more—brought encouragement, honest opinions, and celebrations. Networking through social media brought visibility.

Networking with a man whose son I had taught 30 years earlier brought excellent guidance on gathering oral history through video. The video that was finally produced was shown at a state history conference and

it opened the door to *Victory's* entry into book clubs and the public library system. It was the forerunner to presentations at church and civic groups and historical organizations. I attended a tea party (pictured below) with historians, was offered more writing opportunities, and *Victory* is now part of New Mexico's historical archives.

Along this journey, I learned that these elements foster networking:

- Open your mind to new perspectives and fresh ideas.
- Meet people.
- Ask for help.
- Listen.
- Follow through.
- Thank your sources.
- Recognize that networking can be formal or informal, planned or unplanned.
- Believe in what you are writing and be your best self.
- Networking is beneficial to both parties. Reciprocate by sharing a good story told in your best writing, especially if you are asking for an endorsement.
- Networking contributes to social wellbeing by improving quality of life or what is intrinsically valuable to a person through meaningful interactions with others and a sense of purpose.
- Networking builds confidence.
- Networking helps develop long-lasting personal relationships.
- Social media increases networking through visibility.
- People with whom you are barely acquainted are ready to help if you ask.



Networking at afternoon tea. (L-R) Mary Ruddy; Elaine Carson Montague; Ann Carson; Lynne Peckinpugh; and Diane Schaller, video producer and President Historic Albuquerque, Inc.

So, what does the pictured tea party have to do with the point of this article, which is the value and how-to of networking? More than five years after making the oral history video mentioned above, the producer, Diane Schaller, invited the five pictured women to meet for the first time. Diane is the woman on the far right in the photo. She heads up Historic Albuquerque, Inc., of which we are all members, and is a History Accolade of the Albuquerque Historical Society. Lynne Peckinpugh, in black and white, is an expert on the contributions of Italians to the area. In the Victorian costume with a red hat

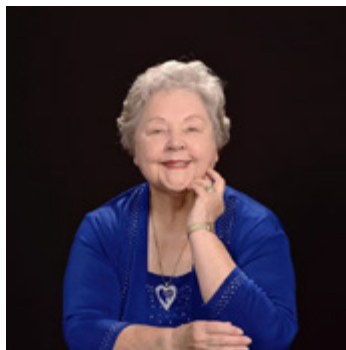
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NETWORKING, continued from previous page

festooned with feathers is Ann Carson. She is associated with “It’s a Dickens of a Dinner” and is writing her biography. I’m Elaine Carson Montague, wearing a purple cap, and I sit beside Ann Carson but am not related to her. I write non-fiction and poetry. On my other side is Mary Ruddy, who remembers me from our days as residents in the University of New Mexico’s Hokona Hall and whose book club read *Victory*. Hokona was the site of a famous panty raid the year we lived there, the same year I met my husband.

We are interested in people and architectural structures and work to preserve the history and culture of the southwestern region of the United States. We met in a historic building at Los Poblanos in the north valley of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque, New Mexico. We love hearing and sharing stories of the past, especially accompanied by sweet and savory treats. Through this networking tea, all of us expanded our personal support systems, found commonalities, and learned something new. We plan to meet again and to reinforce one another.

Networking is likened to a tea party when I think about serving a pot of good tea. People are particular about how it’s done. They begin with high quality tea and water in correct proportions. They heat the water to the perfect temperature for full leaf expansion and taste. Teapots come to the table at the right time to stop the steep and pour. Each pot has a distinctive design. A tea party contributes to self-care and relaxation and should be satisfying. Like a pot of good-tasting tea and treats, networking requires specific steps taken with care.



ELAINE MONTAGUE writes poetry and non-fiction. She has been a member of SWW for about a dozen years and is a regular contributor to SAGE Challenges. Her goal for *Victory from the Shadows, Growing Up in a New Mexico School for the Blind and Beyond* by Gary and Elaine Montague is that teacher-training programs in the English-speaking world use it. She supports the proposed H.R. 3733 Essential Caregivers Act. See her blog, “Musings of a Locked-Out Wife” [HERE](#), about COVID-19 and democracy. It was published May 1, 2023, in the New Mexico Humanities Council Newsletter.

facebook.com/victoryfromtheshadows

If you know the benefits of networking but still have questions about how to be effective, consider these points:

- Prepare for appointments with questions in mind.
- Always be ready to give your pitch.
- Improve verbal and non-verbal communication skills.
- Flavor your conversation with humor.
- Meet in person and take notes.
- Be respectful of others’ time and opinions.
- Be willing to rewrite, rewrite, rewrite but know changes are your decision.
- Help others.
- End conversations gracefully.
- Pace yourself.
- Volunteer.
- Obtain written permission to quote sources.

Networking—give-and-take, reciprocation, and teamwork with your community—is a critical skill that you can develop. If you’d like to expand or start your network, I’m happy to provide you an opportunity to visit with some of mine. Mark your calendar for December 9, 2023 at 10:30 a.m. This will be a time to network with readers and writers as I present *Victory* through a PowerPoint and a display of objects at Albuquerque’s Edith and Central Special Collections Library, a branch of the public library system. This presentation is a part of the Ever Changing, Ever Growing series about our region. More information is available [HERE](#).

I will not serve tea, but promise an opportunity to network with your community through discussion and audience participation.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

SWW is a volunteer-driven organization and there are a plethora of ways that both those who live far away and those who live close by can help keep us moving forward. Here are some of the exciting and interesting ways you can choose to participate and facilitate our mission to become a literary inspiration:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Meeting Zoom Hosts | • Writing Contest Committee |
| • Sage Anthology Committee | • Fundraising Committee |
| • PR and Media Committee | • Meeting video editing |
| • Newsletter and Website Help | • YouTube Assistants |
| • Professional Directory Updates | • Volunteer Committee Lead |
| • SWW Office Support and Assistants | |

For questions call (505) 830-6034
or email info@swwriters.com.



The Sage Writing Challenge

JULY

For a chance to be published in the July SAGE, write up to 800 words of poetry or prose from the POV of a well-known “villain.” Find your antagonist turned protagonist in literature, history or current times, but keep it clean, **DON'T PREACH** and follow the guidelines and submission instructions on page 13.

Send questions or submissions to:
Kathy Schuit
SouthWest SAGE Editor
sage@swwriters.com

Links To Upcoming SWW Events

MEETINGS in June

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

Speaker: Dan Wetmore
Poetry: Focus and Form



Wednesday, June 28
6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Via Zoom

Speaker:
Stephen Kurkjian
The Greatest Art Theft in World History (and still unsolved!)



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

June WORKSHOP

Writing a Ten-Minute Play
With Andrew Mayo

Saturday: June 10, 2023
12:30 – 2:30 pm (MST)
In Person & Zoom
SWW members: \$20
Non-members: \$30



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

CLASSES Starting Soon

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
9:00 am–4:00 pm (MST)



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)



Class Instructor: Kathy Louise Schuit
Don't Make Your Friends and Family Read Bad Stuff

3-week Class
Saturdays: September 16, 23, 30
Platform: In Person & Zoom
10:00–noon (MST)



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

The History of SouthWest Writers

by Kay Lewis "Happy" Shaw, Paula Paul, Larry Greenly, and Rose Marie Kern

SouthWest Writers (SWW) is rich with the experience of many outstanding authors, but at one time the organization's office was accidentally flooded, destroying many documents. Partly due to this incident, and partly because most of what the current leaders only know through information passed verbally, the origins of SouthWest Writers Workshop have often been misrepresented.

Luckily, we have charter members who can attest to the dynamics of how SWW was created. Below is part one of a four-part historical report compiled by SWW Charter Members Paula Paul and Happy Shaw with further contributions by long-time SWW office manager Larry Greenly and current SWW President, Rose Marie Kern.

Part One

Blast from the Past: Metamorphosis

In 1983, the *Romantic Times* magazine hosted a Book-lovers' Convention on the East Coast. A group of well-known romance writers hopped aboard a "Love Train" on the West Coast and made a cross-country trek to NYC. This was a PR stunt to gain readership for the romance market, which had started blossoming into full-length contemporary and historical novels produced by New York publishers. Their arrival in NYC generated a large splash of publicity from national magazines and newspapers.

Albuquerque author Elsie Kreischer greeted the train. Romance author Jude Deveraux had invited Kreischer to ride to Santa Fe with them to have tea and to discuss writing. Unfortunately, she had to demur because she had no transportation back to Albuquerque.

When an article about this came out in the Albuquerque Journal, local artist Poteet (aka Georgia McKinney) and author Michele Lommasson, invited Elsie to join their writing group. [Georgia McKinney, *SWW Historical Perspective: A Room Full of Books*, SWW Newsletter, July 1988, alludes to this 1983 three-person meeting.] Shortly thereafter, two other writers, La Vonne Hampton and Eileen Stanton, also joined the group. The five writers met at McKinney's house, calling themselves the **New Mexico Romance Writers (NMRW)**.

After that, a notice appeared at a bookstore (most likely the Little Professor Bookstore owned by Norman Zollinger, located on Lomas and San Pedro Boulevards in 1983) about a writers' group forming in Albuquerque. After Happy Shaw asked about the group, the bookstore cashier gave her a phone number to call for more information.

The purpose of the first gathering at Eileen Stanton's house was to decide whether to form a critique group for those interested in the romance genre. As well as Georgia, Happy, Elsie and Michele, the first attendees

included: Paula Paul, Madge Harrah, Jude White (aka Jude Deveraux, a *NY Times* Best Selling author), and Lavonne Hampton. (Various recollection stories of this gathering were published in the SAGE, December 1997 by some of the attendees.)

At the time, Georgia and Michele were in contact with author Parris Afton Bonds, a co-founder of **Romance Writers of America (RWA)**. Parris, who lived in Hobbs, NM at that time, had already planned to visit Albuquerque. This prompted the first NMRW's conference at the Albuquerque Marriott Hotel, on Louisiana Boulevard, which attracted 30 attendees. This first conference was held in a single room at the Marriott. Parris Afton Bonds and Jude Deveraux were the only two speakers.

The original group of women then decided to become a chapter of RWA. Georgia McKinney was the first president of the NMRA chapter (1983-84). After the group met in private homes for a time to read their work, Happy Shaw, then a member of New Life Presbyterian Church on Eubank Boulevard, arranged for the group to meet there, instead. In the new venue, the group began to expand, because no other established writer organization in Albuquerque would allow unpublished people to attend.

However, multi-published authors, such as Lois Duncan, also wanted to meet with the NMRA group, along with other female and male unpublished people who weren't

continued on next page



Happy Shaw and Parris Afton Bonds at the 1989 SouthWest Writers Workshop Seventh Annual Writers Conference.

HISTORY, continued from previous page

necessarily interested in writing romance.

Multi-published author Mary E. Lynn became the second president of NMRA (September 1984 to September 1985). The 1984 NMRA conference held at the Albuquerque Civic Center was even more successful, attracting almost 100 writers.

A writing contest was also held in conjunction with the conference—the first contest in a long line of contests that still continue today. LaVryle Spencer (*NY Times* best-selling author) helped judge that contest and was the main conference speaker. The list of contest winners was published in *The Albuquerque Journal* on Monday, October 8, 1984.

By 1985, membership had risen to about 150 members. NMRW then voted to change its name to **Southwest Writers Workshop** (SWW) and to include writers of all genres, not just romance. But a problem arose. SWW was broke.

The \$15 dues paid mostly for paper and stamps for a two-page newsletter. Then someone suggested an all-day workshop. A member phoned a New York romance editor to see if she would agree to teach the workshop. She not only agreed, but her company agreed to pay her way to Albuquerque. To save money, SWW members held a potluck at the workshop, which cost only \$15 to attend. At the workshop, attendees learned about writing and selling romances. And 65 new members joined, earning SWW more than \$1,500 to use as seed money.

At the two regular monthly meetings, guest speakers were scheduled for the first Saturday morning of the month, and the critique session was moved to the third Tuesday night. Later on, guest speakers were also scheduled for the Tuesday night meeting, and individual critique groups focusing on different genres met at other places. The “Successes” column for members appeared in the NMRW newsletter as early as July 1985.

The nation-wide organization, RWA, began to insist that chapter members pay their local dues plus annual dues to the national RWA. The approximately 35 charter members of NMRW then met and decided not to force anyone

to join both the local chapter of NMRW and the national membership of RWA. It was felt no writer should be turned away from its local meetings. Thus, the charter members of NMRW voted that anyone who wished to join NMRW would pay its required dues, but people who did not want to become romance writers could attend its meetings under the flag of SWW and not pay dues to the RWA. However, there would be only one president and board, elected annually, for both local organizations.

The combination of NMRW/SWW was printed on the conference brochure that year (and possibly one more year). Eileen Stanton was president from September 1985 to September 1986. Elana Willey succeeded her from September 1986 to September 1987.

Finally, the charter members of New Mexico Romance Writers voted to dissolve its charter and end any affiliation with Romance Writers of America. From that point on, the organization operated solely as **Southwest Writers Workshop**, keeping all dues in house. In 1989, SWW incorporated as a nonprofit 501c3 corporation. Its mission statement was to teach people how to write and get published. A larger monthly newsletter, *The Southwest Sage*, started printing member successes and marketing news. SWW’s original non-profit status documents were likely destroyed in the flood, for the current IRS papers list SWW’s origin as 1989—even though Eileen Stanton’s and Elana Willey’s administrations existed before Happy Shaw became president of SWW (September 1987 to September 1988).

During Happy Shaw’s administration the Board passed a declaration that no person could claim or be designated as “founder” or “co-founder” of SWW. The 1987-88 Board also declared that original members would be referred to as “charter members” of SWW.

Note: A different chapter of Romance Writers of America was formed years later under the name *Land of Enchantment Romance Authors* (LERA), with no connection or legal ties to SWW.

Look for Part Two: *From the Ashes* in next month’s SAGE.

Zoom Team Members Wanted!

Can live anywhere in the country!

If you can donate some time to help us host the online meetings, workshops and classes, we will train you!

(This is a great way to earn your way into classes you really want to take.)

Requirements: General computer literacy and dependability.

Contact: zoom@swwriters.com or info@swwriters.com

Be a Part of the Team!

Winning!

SWW Members Share Their Writing Success

Sometimes, when you volunteer for a vibrant organization like SWW, it's easy to disregard the taking of your own bows and enjoying the applause when it starts to build. Even though we've known about these awards (below) for months, we only recently realized that, though they were facilitated by individuals, they represent success for all SWW members.

A Diversity of Expression, the 2022 SWW writing contest anthology, won two, second place awards in the 2023 New Mexico Press Women's Communications Contest—in the Anthologies category and in the Graphics Design category.

The anthology was edited, compiled and formatted by **ROSE MARIE KERN**. In their comments, the contest judges praised the book: "A prolific and varied collection of all genres of writing. The overall editor has taken her time to put together chapters based on different topics and genres. The book lives up to its name by being diverse. The editing is tight, the layout is easy to read and the overall book is well done."

In Graphics Design, the cover of *A Diversity of Expression* was cited as a "Catchy graphic giving an air of mystery to what is inside." The cover design was created by SAGE editor **KATHY LOUISE SCHUIT**, whose original digital art image was select-

ed as the winner in the SWW 2022 writing contest's Cover Art category



Amazon #1 Best-selling author and SWW member, **JOSEPH BADAL** has asked the SAGE to convey his thanks to readers who took the time to review his newest book, *Borderline*, on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). "We just passed 4,200 reviews. Your reviews make a difference."

Buy and review the book [HERE](#).

On June 17, be sure to join Joe for a full day of intensive, interactive instruction brought to you by SWW—**From Inspiration to Publication: How to Turn Experiences into Publishable Works**.

Students will be asked to bring to the class one example of each of the following that could inspire a work (fiction, non-fiction, biography, autobiography): 1) A personal experience; 2) An historical or current event; 3) A story/experience related to them by someone else. Joe will provide examples of his published novels which were based upon just those three sources of inspiration. Students will interact with one another about each student's three sources of inspiration, after which each student will decide which one source will form the basis for a manuscript.

Finally, students will have 30 minutes to draft an outline or narrative description of the work he/she will construct and will present said description to the class for feedback. Students will be given the opportunity to email Joe after the class their outline/narrative for his feedback.

This class is offered in person and via Zoom. Click [HERE](#) to go to the SWW website for more information and registration.

An "Amen!" to the "Kudos for the Sage" (May 2023).

It is rare to get such a well-balanced newsletter such that I can enjoy a glass of wine with Lynne Sturtevant while learning important lessons (looking forward to "the next time", Lynne).

Balance those "Lessons Learned" with the vision of Rose sliding under the table, Barb Simmons' wild hands blowing kisses to strangers and, finally, resolving the mystery that my wife and I have carried, wondering about that farm-fitting lady (Chris Allen) at the Corrales Bistro. Blush.

"Good job!" to all playing a part in getting the SAGE out!

Fil A. Chavez

FIRESIDE CHATS

After the Wednesday evening meetings

- Would you like to talk to someone who understands the ins and outs of writing in general or the career of writing?
- Do you have questions or suggestions about SouthWest Writers?
- Are you wanting to talk to someone about your own writing?

These half hour sessions take place after the general meetings which occur via zoom on the 4th Wednesday of every month.

Just stay on the zoom link to participate!



website Decoder Architecture

by Lynne Sturtevant

Back in the days of yore, you had to hire a systems engineer to design and code your website from scratch. Thankfully, that's no longer necessary. Remember our house-building analogy from last time? Today, that would be like asking a famous architect to design your three-bedroom ranch. Anyone can obtain the software to create a beautiful website and you don't need to know a thing about coding.

There are three main approaches to site building, each with its own plusses and minuses.

The DIY Project

You've probably heard of WordPress. More than a third of the sites on the Internet are built on WordPress platforms. There are two versions of WordPress, however: WordPress.org and WordPress.com. Although they have confusingly similar names, they are not the same thing.

WordPress.org is a software that provides a framework on which to build your website. It is the ultimate DIY project. You obtain and assemble all the necessary components. The challenge with WordPress.org is its steep learning curve, not to mention the ongoing tweaking it requires. Although the basic software is free, most of the upgrades you'll need to add are not.

You start by buying a domain and setting up hosting, topics we discussed last time. Then you download and install WordPress.org onto the host site and link it to your domain. Most hosting companies and domain registrars make this easy. With some, however, it can be a tedious chore.

The next step is to choose and install a template that will define how your site looks and operates. In the WordPress ecosystem, templates are called themes. There are more than 30,000 themes. Many are free, but you'll get better quality and reliability with a premium theme. The average price is around \$100.

Your theme will contain many sophisticated functions, but it may not have everything you want or need. You fill the gaps by installing plugins, which are like apps. There are thousands upon thousands of them. Some plugins are free, and many are indispensable. Others are so buggy and vulnerable to hacking they will break your site in ways you can't even imagine. When

things go wrong, you not only must determine what's causing the problem, but you also have to figure out how to fix it. There is no customer support for WordPress.org. Some hosting companies have staff that can help, but that's not always the case.

If you're comfortable working online and enjoy design and tinkering, this is an option you'd probably enjoy. There is no doubt that you can build a fantastic website with WordPress.org.

The Done-for-You Approach

In many ways, WordPress.com is the opposite of WordPress.org. WordPress.com is easy. You can launch a website in less than an hour. Hosting, maintenance, and updates are taken care of. And it's all free. Sounds great, doesn't it? Let's look at the small print.

Your theme choices and customization options are limited. This may be fine depending on what you want to do. There are two other issues, however, that are a bit thornier.

You cannot use a custom domain such as LynneSturtevant.com. All free WordPress.com sites have a subdomain that looks like this: LynneSturtevant.WordPress.com. We discussed why this may not be a good choice last time.

WordPress.com sites include advertising for hotels, banks, Viagra, whatever. You have no control over which ads pop up on your site, where they appear, how often they run, etc.

WordPress.com does provide customer support and offers paid options with more design flexibility and without third-party advertising. However, if you're going to upgrade to a paid plan, there is another possibility.

The Middle Road

Website builders such as Wix, Showit, Shopify, and Squarespace offer all-inclusive, one-stop shopping. They secure your custom domain and provide hosting, backups, and security. They offer a wide range of beautiful, fully functional, screaming-fast templates you can customize to your heart's content. And customer service and support are included.

For many of us, website builders are the answer we've been waiting for. They allow us to have sophisticated, professional sites that we can update ourselves for a reasonable price. They free us to focus on writing and selling our work rather than fiddling with glitchy plugins or trying to figure out why our phone number won't show up on our contact page. I encourage you to take a closer look.

Next time we'll dig into content, the words and images that give your site personality, and bring it to life.

CONTESTS and OPPORTUNITIES for WRITERS

Write to the Finish 2023



- Starts Early June
- Final registrations NOW
- DISCOUNT for SAGE readers

Do you want to write a book? Do you want to stop putting it off and actually make it happen? Whether you're starting out with just an idea or trying to finish a book you've been plugging away at for years, our Write to the Finish online course supports you with craft, community, focus & feedback.

This is a live, via Zoom, masterclasses, plus an easy online learning platform for feedback, lessons and all the resources you need to write your book. We give you feedback on your entire manuscript once you've finished a draft.

In its 18th year, many prior Write to the Finish participants have published their first books, won awards, or launched writing careers.

We start in a couple of weeks and we're offering a subscriber discount just for SAGE friends like you for our four remaining spaces, so be sure to mention that you saw it in the SAGE when you email us for info. We also have one space remaining for a low-income writer.

Email [HERE](#) for course outline, dates and details, and remember to mention the SAGE newsletter.

Info and testimonials at www.WriteToTheFinish.com

SWW 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. Unveiling at the June 10 meeting!

3-6-9 Poem

POETRY CONTEST

This poem has three stanzas. Each stanza has three lines that follows the 3-6-9 syllable count. The first line has 3 syllables, the second line has 6 syllables and the last line 9 syllables. The subject can be anything.



The winner takes away a \$100 cash prize. All writers will receive feedback for their submission.

Deadline: Jun 18th

Enter on fanstory.com.

Looking For Places to Publish Your Short Stories, Articles or Poetry?

Courtesy of [Authors Publish](#) and the magazine's regular contributor, S. Kalekar, check out this list of publishing opportunities— [35 Print Magazines that Publish Fiction, Nonfiction, and Poetry](#).

Here are a few samples gleaned from the article list:

Spaceports & Spidersilk

This is "a print magazine for younger readers [8-9 on up through 89]. It features short stories, poems, and art, as well as brief essays on science and the environment, interviews, quizzes, contests, [and, quite frankly, anything else that is genre-oriented and will help encourage the younger generation to read...and to dream, especially about going to the stars]. We at Spaceports & Spidersilk hope that younger writers and artists, as well as adults, will submit their work." Send fiction up to 3,000 words, nonfiction up to 800 words, and poetry up to 25 lines. They publish thrice yearly.

Gray's Sporting Journal

This is a magazine about hunting and fishing, and they publish articles on those topics. They also have a feature called Yarns, which is campfire tales – fact or fiction, of 750-1,500 words. They also publish some poetry. Pay is an average of \$600 for Yarns, and poems pay \$100. Features for the magazine pay more.

Access links to all 35 publishers through the [Authors Publish](#) site.

Authors Publish

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

MAY
2023

- The Collegium calendar (meetings, workshops, classes) is complete for 2023, with eight speakers already lined up for 2024.
- Proofs of the Military Anthology, *Holes in Our Hearts*, made possible by a grant from New Mexico Arts council, and edited by Jim Tritten, are out for review, and will be available for purchase no later than July.
- With two weeks left in the submission period, the 2023 writing contest has received 148 total entries so far. As a reminder, submitters can receive copies of their critique sheets, including judges' comments, simply by requesting them - contact the office at info@swwriters.com.
- The Bylaws are being revamped (shifting Procedural content to the Policies and Procedures Manual, and eliminating redundancies in the Governance material which remains). The proposed changes will be made available to the membership for review the month before the October business meeting, at which the suggested changes will be voted on.
- Mike Hays has had great success as SWW's Critique Group Coordinator. Four additional people have expressed interest in joining/establishing groups, and this will be the fifth SWW has shepherded.
- Silver Vanus is working to increase our social media footprint through engagement with Chat GPT—a new force on the horizon.

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