



# SouthWest Sage

*The Voice of SouthWest Writers*



## Congratulations SWW Writing Contest Winners

*The 2023 writing contest team announced the winners of this year's contest at the Oct 14 annual meeting.*

### ART ENTRIES

The winner of the cover art category received \$50 and winners in the interior art category received \$25 each.

This year's cover art winner is "Woven Paths" by Kathy Louise Schuit. Her artwork is on the cover of the *Woven Pathways* anthology (right), which features the winning entries from the contest.

The interior art winners are:

"Princess" by Jasmine Tritten

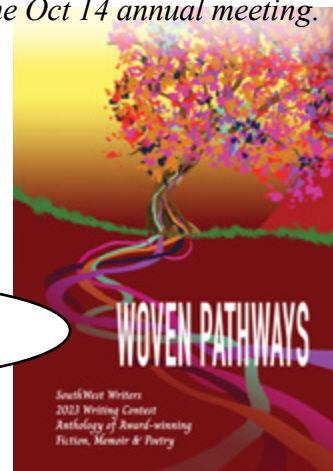
"Birch in Fall" by Brenda Cole

"Romance in 1908" submitted by Rose Marie Kern

Buy copies via this link to

[Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

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## Jim Tritten Is 2023 Parris Award Winner



Jim Tritten has been a member of SouthWest Writers since 2009. He was on the Board of Directors from 2015-2020 and served as Secretary from 2016-2018. He chaired the Joint SouthWest Writers & Military Writers Society of America Conference committee that brought the successful conference to NM in 2019. In 2023, he chaired the Military Mini-Grant committee that obtained a \$2,000 grant to SWW to publish the *Holes in Our Hearts* anthology.

Jim has a long history of mentoring other writers, going back as far as the 1980s when he responded to a request from the Office of the Secretary of Defense/Public Affairs to assist a Boston-based researcher in writing a book on nuclear warfare. Since 2008, he has volunteered and mentored at the Raymond G. Murphy VA Medical Center to their Creative Writing Group, and has guided many groups and individuals in achieving their writing goals. He has initiated and run community critique groups, helping other writers to win awards and get published.

Nominator Jacqueline Loring (L) and SWW President Rose Marie Kern (R) present Jim Tritten (C) with the 2023 Parris Award—the organization's most prestigious award, which recognizes service to SWW and dedication to the craft of writing.

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#### **SouthWest Sage**

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

Directions and information at  
[SouthWestWriters.com](http://SouthWestWriters.com).



## Board of Directors

### — EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE —

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**Léonie Rosenstiel**, Vice President/PR  
**Cornelia Gamlem**, Treasurer  
**Dan Wetmore**, Secretary  
**Brenda Cole**, Past President/Collegium

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Kathy Louise Schuit, SAGE Editor  
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Kathy Wagoner, Web Master  
Debbie White, Writing Contest

ReVaH Loring, Office Manager

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.

### Books Make Great Holiday Gifts!

Books take readers on journeys to places they might only imagine, where they experience events that can have lasting impact. A book is an adventure in the making.

Give a book to someone you care about. It's a gift that keeps on giving.

Every bookstore can order any book in print, or visit Amazon.

Best-selling author, SWW member,  
Joseph Badal

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Season's Change...

Finally...and we can breathe in the cool air we all look forward to after a summer of triple-digit temperatures.

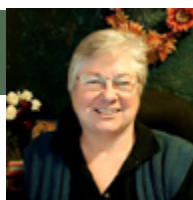
Many writers anticipate the arrival of late fall and winter months. Some participate in the National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) event, or simply take advantage of the general slow-down of activities to hone their skills and finish projects started earlier.

Here at SWW, it is a time when ideas are born. The Board of Directors for 2024 is being formed, and members who want to become more involved have new opportunities to jump in and help determine what happens next year.

- Will we have another writing contest? If so, who could/would run it?
- What topics have not been covered in recent meeting presentations?
- What classes do the members want to see more of?
- Should we pursue new activities? Other types of events?

SWW is governed by a Board of Directors which operates with the assistance and guidance of an Advisory Council. The council members have a single focus area and they report to the specific board member in charge of that function.

The biggest advantage of being involved in either of these groups is the opportunity for interaction with oth-



## Look Who JOINED SWW in September

**Joshua Neitzel**  
**Megan Wyss**

*Welcome!*



**With 410 members  
WORLDWIDE!**

ers whose goals align with your own. We love to write, and, though writing is largely a solitary activity, true inspiration thrives on many levels of interaction.

If you are inspired to help with those mundane tasks that are integral to keeping this wonderful group of literary lunatics on focus, send an email to the office. Let's see what next year can bring.

*Rose Marie*

## Let's Help Each Other!

I'd like to issue a challenge to all of you.

As you know SWW now has several anthologies published through Amazon KDP. One of the big ways an author can get their books to show up closer to the top of Amazon's website is to have people leave good reviews. Anyone who has purchased a book on Amazon or, sometimes, even if they've bought it elsewhere, can leave a review. The review should be relevant to the book and topic.

If you've purchased and read any SWW anthology, please go online to the Amazon listing of that book and click on the reviews—then leave one of your own. Helping us get the SWW books pushed up the ladder helps the organization as a whole.

And while you're at it, leave reviews for any books you've enjoyed from other SWW members.

As president, I promise that if you have a book for sale on Amazon, and you leave a review for our SWW books, I'll make an effort to leave a review for you! My understanding is that sometimes Amazon won't allow a review unless their site "knows" you bought it, but we can try!

If you review either *Woven Pathways* or *Holes in Our Hearts* (or both!) on Amazon, send me a note at [president@swwriters.com](mailto:president@swwriters.com). If you are a member, let me know your latest book title and I will return the favor.

Rose Marie Kern

**Woven Pathways**  
*SouthWest Writers 2023 Writing Contest Anthology of  
Award-winning Fiction, Memoir & Poetry*

Follow this link to buy or review

[Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

# Artificial Intelligence (AI)

## Parishioners, Plagiarism and Pleadings, Oh, My!

*Part Three of our series on AI technology—where it came from, how it can help and where it might get writers into trouble. Originally intended as a three-part series, interest in AI is high with new information available daily, so we are grateful that Leonie continues to write on the subject. If you've missed earlier installments, catch up [HERE](#).*

by Léonie Rosenstiel



People are always asking, “What’s the biggest?” “What’s the best?” and “What’s the most powerful/newest?” Of the known corporate AIs, the five biggest, most powerful and up-to-date are ChatGPT 4.0 (Open AI), AlphaGo (Google’s “DeepMind”), Watson (IBM), Sophia (Hansen Robotics, out of Hong Kong), and Tesla Autopilot (Tesla, Inc.). Yes, that Tesla. Of these, Sophia is a humanoid (no, I’m not insulting her, simply describing her physical appearance). AlphaGo was designed to win the Chinese game *Go*, but now has other applications. Autopilot and its later iterations drive cars. Likely, Elon Musk can also think of other applications for his creation.

According to the September 10, 2023, issue of *The Wall Street Journal*, Zuckerberg’s Meta has now announced that it’s working on a still-super-secret project—its very own AI. Meta hasn’t even “trained” its creation yet. How do you “train” that sort of digital puppy?

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### WRITING CONTEST, continued from page 1

#### WRITING ENTRIES

First place winners received \$50, second place received \$25 and third place received \$15. All finalists received an awards certificate. In addition to the prize money, winners of first, second, third and honorable mention had the option to have their entry published in the *Woven Pathways* anthology. Writing category winners are:

#### Short Stories

##### GENERAL

**1st Place** – “They Only Showed Elvis from the Waist Up” by Joe Cappello

**2nd Place** – “Annabel” by Roger Floyd

**3rd Place** – “The Man in the Truck” by Maralie Waterman

**Honorable Mention** – “Retribution” by Lynne Sebastian

**Honorable Mention** – “A Reunion at Hotel Meurice, 1974” by Terence Cady

##### SCIENCE FICTION/FANTASY

**1st Place** – “Here Be Dragons” by Kimberly Rose

**2nd Place** – “Secret Beach” by Vanessa Foster

**3rd Place** – “Wallflowers” by Allen Herring 3

**Honorable Mention** – “The Man from Jalisco, Mexico” by Kathleen Holmes

##### HUMOR

**1st Place** – “The Gift” by Jeff Otis

**2nd Place** – “Welcome to the Neighborhood” by Lisa Haneberg

**3rd Place** – “The Announcement” by Judy Castleberry

**Honorable Mention** – “The Morality of Nuts is Nuts” by Carla Petree

#### Opening Pages of a Novel

##### PUBLISHED

**1st Place** – “Inspiration from the Ashes: A Christmas Tale” by Maralie Waterman

**2nd Place** – “One Last Cowboy Song” by Lynne Sebastian

**3rd Place** – “Unmasked” by Carol Potenza

**Honorable Mention** – “Rattlesnake Funeral” by Jonathan Miller

##### UNPUBLISHED GENERAL

**1st Place** – “Gyre” by Robert Sheppe

**2nd Place** – “Her Rogue’s Reform” by Louise Bergin

**3rd Place** – “Grizzly Streets” by Lyn Gullette

**Honorable Mention** – “The Great Dying” by Amy Purcell

##### UNPUBLISHED MYSTERY/CRIME/THRILLER

**1st Place** – “Vintage Model” by Tracey Sheffield

**2nd Place** – “The Art of Vengeance” by Rose Marie Kern

**3rd Place** – “Bosque Moon, A Novel” by George McFall

**Honorable Mention** – “Hotel Carrizozo” by Jonathan Miller

##### UNPUBLISHED SCIENCE FICTION/FANTASY

**1st Place** – “Infinity Times Four” by John Crain

**2nd Place** – “Wayward Trail” by Kathryn (K.L.) Wagoner

**3rd Place** – “Finding Earth” by Carol Rawie

**Honorable Mention** – “Ride Into The Night” by Joyce Hertzoff

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## WRITING CONTEST, continued from previous page

### Poetry

#### FREE VERSE – NATURE

**1st Place** – “The Dream” by Kathleen Holmes

**2nd Place** – “The Icicle” by Kathleen Holmes

**3rd Place** – “Always the Cactus Blooms” by Lawrence Kilham

#### FREE VERSE – RELATIONSHIPS

**1st Place** – “In Gratitude to Poetry” by Betty McCreary

**2nd Place** – “Halloween Babies Are Special!” by Melanie Peak

**3rd Place** – “X Memories” by Carla Petree

**Honorable Mention** – “Train Wrecks and Boxcars” by Jennifer Trotter

#### LIMERICKS

**1st Place** – “Just Plain Selfish” by Rose Marie Kern

**2nd Place** – “Garden Gripes” by Rose Marie Kern

**3rd Place** – “Economics 101” by Carol Rawie

### Non-Fiction Memoir

#### GENERAL

**1st Place** – “The Contemporary Car” by Patricia Walkow

**2nd Place** – “Heirloom” by Carolyn Kilgus

**3rd Place** – “The Musty Smell of Books” by Robin Cutler

**Honorable Mention** – “Onslaught 2020” by Elaine Montague

**Honorable Mention** – “Precious Penny” by Kathleen Hessler

### PETS

**1st Place** – “Weightless” by Kathy Louise Schuit

**2nd Place** – “Special Cat” by Sally Rodgers

**3rd Place** – “Requiem For Another Soul” by Ruth Heidi Marshall

### TRAVEL

**1st Place** – “Moroccan Epilogue” by Christopher Frechette

**2nd Place** – “A Castle to Ourselves” by Jennifer Trotter

**3rd Place** – “6AM Christmas Morning at the Grand Canyon” by Charmayne Samuelson

### Flash Fiction

**1st Place** – “Arrivals and Departures” by Amy Purcell

**2nd Place** – “Anonymous Gifts” by Lyn Gullette

**3rd Place** – “A Bicycle Conversation” by Jennifer Trotter

**Honorable Mention** – “Kim’s Luck” by Kathleen Holmes

**Honorable Mention** – “The Dinner Hour” by Charlene Dietz

The contest received 177 submissions, including entries in cover art, interior art, prose and poetry.

A team of 21 writing professionals adjudicated this year’s writing contest. Each entry was scored by at least two judges with a composite score determining the rankings. A team of six served on the writing contest committee and another team of six produced the anthology, *Woven Pathways*, which showcases this year’s winning entries.

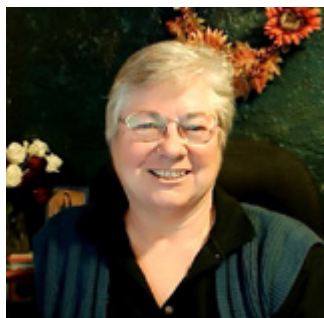
The anthology is now available for purchase in print or digital format on Amazon.

Thank you so much for participating in the 2023 writing contest!

Debbie White, 2023 Writing Contest Chair

## 2024 EXECUTIVE BOARD ELECTED

Voting for SWW Executive Board Members took place online and at the October 14 annual meeting.



**PRESIDENT**  
Rose Marie Kern



**VICE PRESIDENT**  
Dan Wetmore



**SECRETARY**  
Lynn Doxon



**TREASURER**  
Cornelia Gamlem

I'll use the simple model. First, you feed your puppy huge stacks of data, whether piles of X-rays or texts, or whatever, and it starts to make associations. It's a pattern recognition function that works either using statistics or using a "neural network." Neural networks function more the way humans learn—with an "input layer," a "buffering layer," and an "output layer"—so that's where the big excitement is.

Like humans, neural AIs learn by trial and error. In that process, they sometimes produce "bad" output. Input is Stage One. Then humans sit around and tell "neural" AI the equivalent of, "Bad dog! Don't do that!" According to *Time Magazine*, most of those who served during that stage of ChatGPT were in Kenya and other developing countries. They worked under what seemed like abusive conditions. They earned about \$2 per hour for their work in filtering out text and illustrations with violent, sexist, downright sexual, and racist content. Some reported having nightmares. (There is now a question about whether the content excised from ChatGPT ever found its way into another database dedicated to sexist, violent, sexual, and racist content.)

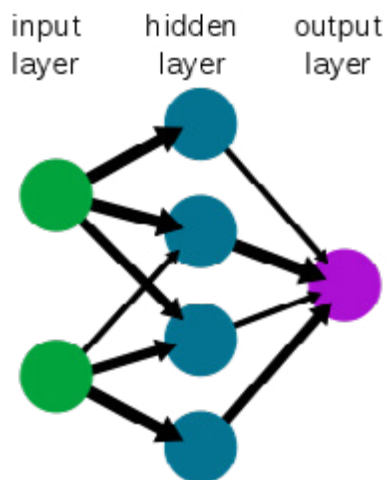
The third phase is what results when you input a prompt into an AI app. If you don't like the answer, you can always tell your AI, "Try again!" You might also consider tweaking your prompt. As you might suspect, hordes of hucksters have suddenly sprung up like mushrooms this spring, each claiming to have created the "best" prompts in specific fields. These include everything from copywriting to creating cover art, to producing children's books. Problems with the books and articles it produced are surfacing now.

Religion has gotten involved. In June 2023, parishioners overflowed a Lutheran church in Austria to watch four AI avatar bots, two "male" and two "female," appear on giant screens to conduct a service written by AI. Parishioners complained that the forty-minute sermon lacked a human touch. On September 17, Pastor Jay Cooper offered his Austin, Texas congregation an entire Methodist service, similarly created by AI, although presented by humans. Criticism was similar: it lacked "heart." Plagiarism, there, was not the issue. Emotional communication was simply absent both times, even though AI had learned enough to speak about the relevant church doctrines with sufficient accuracy to satisfy two preachers.

For anyone who holds a copyright, this is a difficult time. I can instruct any AI, "Write a sonnet in the style of William Shakespeare," and get something in return. Like those sermons, AI's products lack heart, but they otherwise sound a lot like Shakespeare. I take no food off his table if I do that. However, I'm currently also able to instruct AI to write in the style of Erica Jong or T.S. Eliot, or J.D. Salinger. If I write a new novel by "AI J.D. Salinger," I'm likely to hear from his estate that I have no right to create one without their approval. A new poem by T.S. Eliot? Some of his works are now in the public domain. Others will remain under copyright in England until 2028. Erica Jong's works are still under copyright. AI now knows how to write in all those styles, and in thousands of others. Do I have the right to appropriate those styles? "No! not for copyrighted material," is the firm conclusion of many professors, as well as of the Authors Guild in New York that is now joining an increasing number of famous authors who are suing ChatGPT for teaching AI these tricks.

*My next article will include arguments made during the lawsuits and some of the unintended consequences of AI-generated texts.*

### A simple neural network



Source: Wikipedia

**What Can SWW Do For You?**  
**MEMBER RESOURCES**

[SouthWest Writers](#) (Website)

To register for classes or workshops,  
 call the SWW office at 505-830-6034.

- [CLICK HERE](#) to find out about upcoming classes and workshops,
- [CLICK HERE](#) to find out more about upcoming SWW meetings,
- [CLICK HERE](#) to catch up on all the great SWW blog posts,
- [CLICK HERE](#) to learn more about SWW membership.

SWW on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/SouthWest-Writers/156636797742233>

[SouthWest Writers YouTube Channel](#)

# Links To Upcoming SWW Events

## MEETINGS in November

**NOTE:** Due to holiday and scheduling conflicts, both meeting days in November have been changed. Just for November, the Saturday meeting will take place on the **FIRST** Saturday of the month instead of the usual second Saturday, and the Wednesday evening meeting will take place on the **FIFTH** Wednesday instead of the usual fourth Wednesday.

### Saturday, November 4



10:00 am – noon  
In Person & Zoom

### Stories from the Veterans Anthology

In anticipation of Veterans Day, this presentation will feature selected readings from the 2023 SWW publication *Holes in Our Hearts: An Anthology of New Mexican Military Related Stories and Poetry*.

### Wednesday, November 29

6:30 pm – 8:30 pm  
Via Zoom

### Speaker: Ernie Witham Finding Humor in Everyday Situations



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

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

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## November WORKSHOP

### Military Writing Techniques and Tips

#### With Jim Tritten

- Saturday: November 4, 2023
- 12:30 – 2:30 pm (MST)
- In Person & Zoom
- SWW members: \$20 ♦ Non-members: \$30

Jim will review the different genres that can be used in military settings or with military characters and offer suggestions on how to fold the military into those genres. He will provide links to resources that can be used for research and photographs. Hints on how to get past the pesky details will be offered, how to transfer your experiences outside the military into writing that features the military, and where to get published. The workshop will be interactive and participants are encouraged to bring materials they would like help in researching.

**Jim Tritten** retired after a 44-year career with the Department of Defense, including duty as a carrier-based Navy pilot. He holds advanced degrees from the University of Southern California and formerly served as a faculty member and National Security Affairs department chair at the Naval Postgraduate School. Dr. Tritten's publications have won him seventy writing awards, including the Alfred Thayer Mahan Award from the Navy League of the U.S. He has published twelve books and over four hundred chapters, short stories, essays, articles, and government technical reports.



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

# The Sage Writing Challenge

DECEMBER

FOR A CHANCE TO BE PUBLISHED in the December SAGE, let's have some **Holiday Haiku submissions!** Poets, show us what you've got. Other writers, try something new!

Send questions or submissions to:

Kathy Schuit  
SouthWest SAGE Editor  
[sage@swwriters.com](mailto:sage@swwriters.com)

*The challenge for publication in the November SAGE was to write a story about something confiscated by the TSA.*

## Stabbing Myself in the Back

by Rose Marie Kern

I have a love-hate relationship with the TSA.

On the one hand, I truly, deeply appreciate the fact that their mission is to prevent bad guys who have evil intentions from causing harm to airplanes and people in general, and me in particular. On the other hand, it is frustrating that in the process of going through the security gates you can overlook little things on your person or in your carry-on bags that you don't think of as problems.

It's annoying when the x-ray machine finds something hiding at the bottom of your purse and they haul it aside and begin pawing through items like your wallet, airline ticket, a sandwich or snack in a baggie, Kleenex, pill bottles, extra sanitary napkins, etc... Then they haul out a really small, engraved pen knife you forgot was swimming around at the bottom with your glasses case. They hold it up and you have a choice: you can walk it all the way back to the place where you checked your bags or throw it away.

In my case, such discoveries can be really embarrassing because I worked for the FAA. At one point, I was stationed in El Paso. I'd attended a fabulous gem and mineral show in Tucson a few weeks earlier, and found several lovely pieces of azurite, quartz, and various fossils which were destined to be a gift to a friend in Albuquerque. Rather than mailing them, I decided to fly there on Southwest and take advantage of their policy of allowing air traffic controllers to hop a ride in the cockpit. (Obviously this was before 9/11).

I approached the security checkpoint with a black briefcase—the rocks, some as large as my fist—were protectively wrapped. When the case slid through the x-ray machine, I was not surprised that it beeped and

they wanted to examine the contents.

As they opened the case, I was cheerfully pointing out the various stones...but then the guard looked at me and asked, "Do you have anything long and sharp in here?" I was startled because, of course, I only packed the rocks. The guard pulled down the flaps on the top of the briefcase that usually hold folders of paper and slid his hand to the bottom. He extracted a blue satin wrapped bundle that was long and slender.

My eyes opened wide and I am sure I flushed as I realized what he would find when he unwrapped it. I'd totally forgotten that the custom-designed serpentine-bladed dagger given to me a few weeks ago by a blacksmith friend was there. I began babbling about it being an artistic piece, a gift. The guard looked at me and the FAA badge I was wearing and waved someone over. He diplomatically said, "We'd like you to come up to the office to discuss this."

I sat in the security office antechamber with a TSA officer for about 20 minutes when an El Paso police officer walked in. By total chance, it happened to be someone I'd met a few weeks earlier in an almost equally embarrassing situation. His eyebrows raised, he said, "I can't wait to hear this one."

After recounting my story, he excused himself and I waited another ten minutes. I really hoped that I wouldn't be going to jail, and I really did not want to lose my lovely dagger. When he came back, holding the knife, he said, "Miss Kern, we have determined there was no malicious intent involved and have decided to classify this item as a letter opener. However, you will not be allowed to take it onto the aircraft, and an officer will escort you from the airport."

Feeling grateful, but still embarrassed, I drove home—then packaged up the rocks and mailed them to my friend in Albuquerque.

# The Writing Life:

## Shifting Priorities

by Sherri L. Burr

Much has been written about work-life balance, implying that we use scales like Our Lady of Justice to equalize our work and personal life responsibilities. But is it reasonable to think that we can equally measure work and personal life, always prioritizing both? I think not. Rather, I submit that the metaphor should be work-life shifts, acknowledging that the time we give to one or the other can never be exactly the same at the same time.

In my life, this question has arisen as I provide care for my mother. Recently, I had scheduled a six-day professional trip to the East Coast to represent one of my alma maters (Princeton) at the inauguration of the twentieth president of another alma mater (Mount Holyoke College) followed by attending the Authors Guild WIT: Words, Ideas, and Thinkers Festival (WIT), followed by connecting to people in New York who I get to see once a year, if I am lucky. Four days before I was scheduled to fly East, I found my mother almost catatonic. She was sitting down in her rollator walker after having taken a bath and was so weak she could barely speak or move her arms. I immediately called 9-1-1.

I explained the situation and reported her blood pressure was dangerously low at around 64 over 46. The 9-1-1 operator sent Fire and Rescue to assess the situation. The workers immediately started an IV-drip to get some fluids into her. They called for an ambulance to drive her to the emergency room. After tests were run, the conclusion was that she was dehydrated and lacking electrolytes. She was admitted to the hospital.

Initially, it looked like she would only stay for three days and would be released the day before I was scheduled to leave. This provided a work-life dilemma because Mom could not go home alone, and a lot of emails and effort had gone into my representing Princeton at the Mount Holyoke College inauguration. I called Aunt Liz (Mom's sister) and she agreed to fly out and stay with Mom in the hospital until she was released. A friend agreed to pick them up and take them to Mom's house after she was released. I decided to fly out the day before the inauguration and fly back the day after, eliminating WIT and other plans.

Unfortunately, living in the same hospital room together, a throwback to their lives as a sibling group of eight who shared rooms in a four-bedroom home, gave rise to sister conflict. The evening I arrived on the East Coast, Mom called and ordered me to fly back the next day.

Sherri Burr's 27th book, *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 more than 30 years.



"You need to send her home." Further conversation revealed that, according to Mom, Aunt Liz talked too much and wanted to share her hospital food. But the next day was the inauguration and I felt duty bound to go. Fortunately, Aunt Liz called and reassured me that all was well, and I could stay.

I honored my commitment to represent Princeton at the MHC inauguration and flew home the next day. I changed Aunt Liz's flight so she could leave, and Mom paid for the cost difference. Mom was recommended to go to rehab, but declined at the last minute when she found out she would have a roommate. She asked if she could come to my home. What was I to say?

After a brief conversation with hospital staff, the case manager placed doctor's orders for Mom to receive home health during her convalescence. This change of plans left me 45 minutes to go to Mom's house to retrieve her rollator walker and other handicap necessities before she was released. I was grateful for the home health follow-up orders because the hospital released Mom with an IV-drip in her arm. The home health nurse carefully extracted it the next afternoon.

Did I engage in work-life balance or work-life shifts? I submit it was the latter because balance implied I was doing both at the same time, whereas I was shifting between life priorities (taking care of Mom) and work priorities (attending the inauguration). This shift required the sacrifice of some of my scheduled work plans, but there was no way to balance both at the same time.

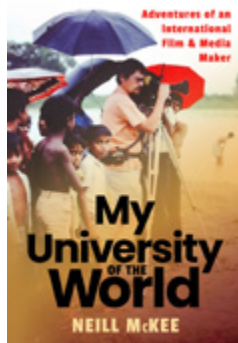
These situations arise in all writers' lives. We do not have to balance conflicting priorities equally, but rather can shift between them. Our overall lives become more manageable when we take a less-pressured approach to resolving diametrically opposed priorities.

# Winning!

SWW Members Share Their Writing Success

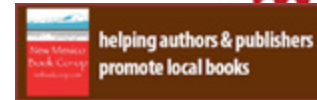
Journey through the developing world from 1970 to 2012 with NEILL MCKEE in his newly released memoir.

*My University of the World: Adventures of an International Film and Media Maker* is the recounting of globe-trotting exploits from Neill's career. See short prepublication reviews, a summary, places to buy, and full reviews [HERE](#).



## SWW Members Among NM/AZ Book Awards Winners

Sponsored By NM Book Co-Op



### NM 1st Book

Evelyn Neil

*Dancing to the End of Our Rainbow*

RMK Publications

### Crime

Joseph Badal

*Everything to Lose*

Suspense Publishing

### Health

Karen Meadows

*It's a Tango Not a War*

Agua Fria Publishing

### Philosophy

Patricia Walkow

*Life Lesson From the Color Yellow*

### Self Help/Guides

Larada Horner

*Coronavirus Reflections*

Horner Publishing

### Young Adult

Jodi Lea Stewart

*Valley of Shadows*

Progressive Rising Phoenix Press

### Young Reader

Sue Houser

*Amelia and the Magic Ponies*

Irie Books

### Cover Design (6x9 or smaller)

Bailey Herrington

*The Girl in the Orange Maillat*

Koehler Books

JOSEPH BADAL announces 2023 awards from the Military Writers Society of America for two of his already acclaimed books. *Payback* won a silver medal, and *Justice* garnered gold.

*Payback* is Joe's fourth stand-alone thriller, and can be purchased [HERE](#). *Justice* is the third book in his Curtis Chronicles series, and can be purchase [HERE](#).



BARBARA J GENOVESE'S chapter book *George Leaves the Lights ON: the importance of being earnest about conservation*, garnered a **2023 bronze Moonbeam Children's Book Award/Environment**.

"Launched in 2007, the awards are intended to bring increased recognition to exemplary children's books and their creators, and to celebrate children's books and life-long reading."

Fourteen years from pen to paper to publication, Barbara continues to write about what she learned as an independent publisher of Merlin's Falcon Press. You can read her weekly blog *How I Built This Book* on Medium.com [@bjgenovese], LinkedIn, and Facebook. Topics include: fonts, contracts, lit searches, awards, grants, Powell's Bookstore, trim sizes, quoting quotes correctly, books that fall off shelves, writing the Wild Bio, the Acknowledgement Page, and the Great Book of Ireland.

## CONTESTS and OPPORTUNITIES for WRITERS



### The annual National Federation of Press Women state affiliate communications contest is now open.

The competition is open to writers, authors, bloggers, copy editors, page designers, public affairs professionals, photographers, publishers and others in the communications field. There are more than 60 categories to choose from.

- All entries must be published by December 31, 2023.
- Early submission deadline (avoid a one-time additional fee of \$25): January 17, 2024.
- Final deadline for books: January 31, 2024.
- Final deadline for all other entries: February 7, 2024.

The contest in NM is sponsored by state affiliate, New Mexico Press Women.

First-place winning entries in the state affiliate are eligible to advance to the national competition. To enter the national contest, the entrants must be NFPW members, or must join by March 15, 2024. National winners will be notified in late April. Contest results will be announced during an awards dinner on June 22, 2024, in St. Louis, Mo.

For more information check out:

[www.newmexicopresswomen.org](http://www.newmexicopresswomen.org), and the NFPW webpage: [www.nfpw.org/professional-contest](http://www.nfpw.org/professional-contest).

### *Thin Air Magazine* is accepting submissions for its fourth annual Bird In Your Hands Prize.

This contest celebrates and centers on BIPOC (Black & Indigenous People of Color) writers. We accept submissions of less than 500 words in fiction, nonfiction, and poetry.



The winner will receive \$500, be published in Issue 30 of *Thin Air*, and interviewed for *Thin Air Online*. The winner and runners-up will also be invited to read their work at the Northern Arizona Book Festival held in April 2024. First and second runners-up will be awarded an honorarium. Entries are limited to BIPOC writers, and will be accepted from September 15th to November 5th [on Submittable](#). This year's judge is National Poetry Series winner Kinsale Drake.

## Heroines Anthology Call For Submissions

### HEROINES



ANTHOLOGY  
OPEN FOR SUBMISSIONS

Women poets are invited to submit poetry that re-imagines women in myth, fairy tale, folklore, or legend, poems that tell women's lost histories, or untold stories, to the *Heroines Anthology* and Women's Writing Prize. This will be the *Heroines Anthology's* fifth volume and it is a **GLOBAL POETRY EDITION**.

Submissions close on DECEMBER 18, 2023.

First prize is \$500 and all short-listed entries will be published in the anthology. Find out more & submit your poetry here: <https://www.theneoperennialpress.com/heroine-anthology-submissions>

## NaNoWriMo

### Prep Party, Write-Ins, & Keynote Address

October 29 - December 3, 2023

Rio Rancho Public Library  
The Hub @ Enchanted Hills  
7845 Enchanted Hills Blvd NE  
Rio Rancho, NM 87144  
505.891.5006  
[www.gov/library/NaNoWriMo](http://www.gov/library/NaNoWriMo)

This is an independent event managed by a community partner. The NaNoWriMo name and logo are used by special permission.

## From Writer to Author

### A NaNoWriMo Keynote Address by Rose Marie Kern

December 3, 2023 at 1:00 pm

Rio Rancho Public Library  
The Hub @ Enchanted Hills  
7845 Enchanted Hills Blvd NE  
Rio Rancho, NM 87144  
505.891.5006  
[www.gov/library/NaNoWriMo](http://www.gov/library/NaNoWriMo)

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## SouthWest SAGE

### SAGE CHALLENGE & ARTICLE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

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

Here are four ways you may be included:

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

Read the following before submitting:

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

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

## SWW Board Meeting Minutes Summarized

## October 2023

In October, the SWW Board of Directors devoted its meeting time to planning the October 14 annual meeting.

### NOTICE OF INCREASE IN MEMBERSHIP DUES

Effective January 1, 2024, SWW membership dues will increase to \$85 annually. Members who renew their membership at least two months in advance of their scheduled renewal date will pay only \$80. SWW membership rates have not increased in more than a decade while costs associated with the management of a large group have continued to rise — it's time, folks.

#### SWW Office:

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phone (505) 830-6034  
email: [info@swwriters.com](mailto:info@swwriters.com)  
website: [southwestwriters.com](http://southwestwriters.com)

