

# Saturday Writers Newsletter

August • 2021

Saturday  
Writers



Writers Encouraging Writers Since 2002

A Chapter of the Missouri Writers Guild

A Nonprofit Organization / Corporation

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## Learn to Say More with Character Body Language at SW August Meeting



On August 28, Saturday Writers will welcome speaker and bestselling author Mary Buckham, who will help us take a deep dive into the elements of

body language. The best writers understand that over eighty percent of communication is non-verbal. We will explore how to put that knowledge to work on the page and move beyond talking heads to bring our characters to life by powering up emotion, ramping up conflict, and also avoiding the most overused body language elements.

USA Today bestselling author, Mary Buckham writes the *Writing Active* series for writers, including

*Writing Active Setting* and *Writing Active Hooks*. She is also the co-author of *Break into Fiction* with NYT author Dianna Love. Mary is nationally recognized for her online and live writing workshops for writers of all genres around the US and Canada, including the *Power Plotting Webinars*. Mary doesn't just teach writers though. She practices what she preaches, writing Urban Fantasy with attitude. Do you love romance, danger and kick-ass heroines? Find them in her Alex Noziak or Kelly McAllister series! She also writes YA sci-fi/adventure as Micah Caida in the Red Moon series. Find her at [www.MaryBuckhamOnWriting.com](http://www.MaryBuckhamOnWriting.com) and connect with her on Facebook and Twitter [@MaryBuckham](https://twitter.com/MaryBuckham).

—Sarah Angleton, Secretary

## Perilous Pauline Baird Jones

*If your characters aren't twisting in the wind, if they aren't dealing with a steady rise in stakes, then you're not mining your story to its mayhem depths.*

—Pauline Baird Jones

In 1914, William Randolph Hearst produced a film called *The Perils of Pauline* about an intrepid young woman who wanted to experience a year of adventures before settling down with her fiancé, Harry. The film entered the lexicon of Western culture and was the impetus for similar cliff-

hanging stories, such as *The Hazards of Helen*. Is it any wonder then, that an author named Pauline Baird Jones, should make tales of peril and mayhem her trademark?

When Pauline began her career in writing, she fully embraced her namesake's reputation and made it her mission to generate as much made-up mayhem as she could.

Continued on p. 4—See Baird Jones



Welcome to

*Saturday Writers*

Due to social distancing, until further notice all meetings and events will be held via Zoom and recorded. Recordings will be provided to members via email.

Join us on the last Saturday of each month, January through September, to hear speakers share their knowledge of all things writing. Membership is \$35.00 per year. **Guests are welcome to attend our virtual meetings for free.**

**Zoom Instructions:** You can join an online video meeting via Zoom from your smartphone, computer, or tablet. Follow the prompts and allow your device to access your camera and microphone. Click on this link for the meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84805532643>

When the box requesting the password pops up, type in 561472

The meeting ID is 848 0553 2643 if needed.

**August 28 Meeting**

• 10:00-10:45 a.m.—Members only workshop VIA ZOOM. Topic: TK

• 11:00-1:00 p.m.—Regular meeting VIA ZOOM for business items and our guest speaker.

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# Lie, Lay, Lain... Oh, My!

(For clarification in this article, Lie, Lay, and Lain are capitalized.)

Back in college, I majored in English. Now, before you assume that makes me an expert, let me stop you there. The program focused on analyzing literature, not writing, and definitely *not* grammar—though 101 was a required class.

On the first day of grammar class, the professor asked, “Raise your hand if you’re majoring in English to avoid calculus.”

Up went my hand...along with most of my classmates’.

She grinned. If we were animated in a Disney movie, tongues of fire would have licked up along the white board behind her as she laughed maniacally before cackling, “Well, buckle up, Sweeties. You’re in for the ride of your life. This class is the calculus of English.”

And she wasn’t wrong.

If, like me, your high school English class conflicted with your napping schedule, you were in trouble. We skipped past the basics and dove right into advanced sentence structure and mechanics. Like in high school, I laid my head on the desk. Unlike those days, instead of napping, my mind spun like trash in a tornado. I spent the following months in a state of mental chaos.

These days, my mind doesn’t spin as much. While still not an expert, I’m comfortable using resources and somewhat humbled when I still “don’t get it.” Certain words in sentence parts are simply confusing, and few are more so than that of the verbs Lie and Lay.

## Why are Lie and Lay confusing?

These two words are so often switched in what we hear, see, and read that when we want to use them, we question ourselves. And, of course, this is English. Nothing is as straightforward as it seems. To add to that, one word is part of the other’s tense structure.

## How each is used

Two-bit words like transitive, conjugation, or infinitive could be bandied about, but let’s make this



Rose Callahan

as easy as possible. Using Lay or Lie properly depends on their definitions and remembering a few tips.

## Definitions

**Lay:** to place or set a thing in a position (usually down). Lay is followed by an object.

Turtles **lay eggs**.

Jimmy **lays paper** on the tables.

I **lay** the **book** on a nightstand.

The subjects (above nouns “turtle,” “Jimmy,” and “I”) act *with* an object.

**Lie:** to recline. Lie is followed by a preposition (a word indicating the relationship—direction, location, time—to an object).

Turtles **lie in** the sand when they lay eggs.

Jimmy **lies on** the floor for a nap.

I **lie down** on the bed.

## Bonus: Remember this tip

Britannica.com suggests this tip when remembering which to use when: Listen to and match the stressed vowels in each word/definition pairing.

Lay and Place both have the long “a” sound.

Lie and Recline both have the long “i” sound.

## Tenses

Tense structures add to the confusion, especially since the past tense of Lie is Lay. Ugh. Consider creating a chart that breaks down the tenses of each word and have it handy. Print it out, save it to your phone, jot it on a sticky note—whatever works best for you. Below is a table of basic tenses:

	Definition	Present	Past	Past Participle
Lay	To place or set an item (followed by a noun)	Lay	Laid	(had) Laid
Lie	To recline (followed by a preposition)	Lie	Lay	(had) Lain

Note: Using Lain will stop most readers in their tracks. Consider rewriting the sentence.

## Final word

One last mention. If at night during your prayers you stumble at “Now I lay me down to sleep,” you can rest easy. It’s correct. “Me” is the item you’re setting down.

—Rose Callahan, SW Board of Directors

*What's the Big Idea?*

## One of a Kind

Each month, SW writers are challenged to submit prose or poetry based on a given prompt. The resulting entries are as distinctively different as the diverse members who create them. It was apropos that our theme for June was unique shapes. I enjoyed the creative suggestions noted in the June issue of the SW Newsletter, especially “light the shape-shifting flame of a candle by your laptop.” Inspiring words.

Our winning prose entry, “The Perfect Plan” was submitted by Jeffrey Czuchna and focused on a bell used by a bed-ridden spouse to get the attention of her husband. After seven years of answering the “infernal bell of hers,” the husband decides to commit the perfect murder. As we all know, there is no such thing, but Jeffrey managed to pique the interest of the judge and I’m sure others will enjoy reading his entertaining ending in the next anthology.

Jeffrey enjoys writing science fiction, but also likes other genres. “I am always looking to improve my writing and learn from other successful authors. In this particular case, I wanted to write something based on Poe’s classic, ‘The Tell-Tale Heart.’ My challenge was to change the story enough so I could call it my own but not lose the tension and suspense that makes Poe’s work so great. I sent an earlier version to the Saturday Writers email critique group and got some very good suggestions. I also submitted the story to the SW April contest and got more good feedback from the judge. This story is an example of how a story can improve through the critiquing process. I am very thankful that Saturday Writers offers a platform for new writers to learn the craft of writing.”

With our meetings limited to Zoom this year, I wondered if it helps or hinders Jeffrey’s writing habits. “Saturday Writers has been invaluable in my writing education. Every month I learn something new. Of course meeting in person is preferable, but Zoom meetings are a better option than not meeting at all. The monthly meetings and contests keep me motivated to write. If it wasn’t for Saturday Writers, I probably would have stopped writing long ago.”

I think many of our members would agree, Jeffrey. Keep writing and submitting, we need your energy and creativity.

Heather Hartmann won first place in the Anything Children’s contest for her entry, “Powers.” This intriguing story is about five close-knit friends who were all born in the same hospital, on the same day, and at the same time, 11:11. Each year on their



*Diane How*

birthday, they receive a new power. The unusual gifts are a blessing and a burden. You’ll want to read the unexpected challenge they face on their sixteenth birthday.

I asked Heather what inspired her to write a children’s fantasy story. Her answer was simple and honest. “I don’t know. Lol. I

have always been intrigued by the genre and I had a story idea brewing. So, I thought this contest was a good place to try it out!”

Busy raising two active boys, Heather still makes time in her schedule to write. When I asked what works she has in progress, she replied, “I have a romantic suspense manuscript three-fourths done that is my work . . . but is it in progress? Not Currently.” Personally, I hope she decides to finish it soon. I need a good romantic suspense to read.

In reference to our current meeting situation, Heather shared, “It helps keep me tied into the writing community, but it hurts my creativity to be separated from my fellow writers by a screen with limited conversation time. I crave the meetings where I can physically stand near someone and hear about their writing and share mine.” Until we can meet together, Heather says writers should “Keep at it! The story won’t write itself!”

She’s so right. So write! You and your stories are one of a kind and we want to read them.

—*Diane How*

## Opportunities To Learn and Grow

The last two meetings of the **Children’s Critique Group** for this year are Thursday, August 26th, and Thursday, September, 23rd. Both meetings are at Barnes and Noble in St. Peters at 7:00 pm. Whether you write picture books, middle grade, or young adult, our group is for you. Please join us!! Contact Sue Fritz, coordinator at: [suefritzauthor@gmail.com](mailto:suefritzauthor@gmail.com).

The Thursday evening novel critique group is looking to add an additional member. They currently meet via Zoom starting at 7 p.m. on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays. (When in person, they start at 6:30 at Spencer library). Being part of a novel critique group could be the single most important factor in moving your writing forward (with the exception of actually writing)—highly recommend joining one if you’re serious about your craft.

If you’re interested, email Bob Crandall at: [r2crandall@charter.net](mailto:r2crandall@charter.net).

*Baird Jones—Continued from p. 1*

She's been leaving a trail of thrills and chills in her wake ever since.

Along the way, Pauline has learned a lot about how to raise the stakes in a story and build in suspense. She's turned that experience into a handbook designed to help new authors or provide a refresher for more experienced ones—*Perilous Pauline's Quickstart Guide to Writing Made-Up Mayhem*.

The way to start writing mayhem is to read in the genre you want to write. This will educate you on the structure and form of the stories so that your subconscious will become a partner in creating story elements and making connections.

Any story needs idea, plot, characters, setting, theme, and solid research. Each of these can be wielded to add suspense or conflict to a story. Pauline has four classic go-to books she used to learn to write and that still provide guidance today. As to the peril itself, she asks questions, beginning with, *What is at stake?*

Mayhem novels need the following.

1. Peril
2. Ticking Clock (*urgency*)
3. Big Bad (*causing the peril*)
4. Good Guy or Gal or Other (*to stop the bad stuff*)

Layered characters have the depth to carry a story and its mayhem. Each of them must have a stake in the outcome and cannot be merely inconvenienced. Pauline's blog post, "Getting the Wood Out," provides more details on this topic. (See link at the end of this article.)

### Questions to Consider

As you plan your story allow the question, *What can go wrong now?*, to guide you. Make the question specific to your story.

- What are the stakes? Are they high enough?
- Can I make the stakes higher? Can they be expanded to the community, the world?
- Can I boost the level of intensity? Are the perils both emotional and physical?
- Does the story have enough urgency to sustain the whole novel?

- Are there enough problems for your character to overcome?
- What is something my character would never do? What would make them do it?

Events should move the plot and the characters steadily in a direction of increasing peril, deepening risk, and higher stakes at a pace right for your story.

Excellent examples of escalating mayhem can be found in the TV series, *24*.

There are times when a character is backed into a corner or it's a challenge to puzzle through a conflict. Pauline uses a bracketing exercise to work out the solution or move past the rough spot.

### Bracketing Exercise

Write this list on paper, then ask, *What can go wrong now?*

Use the list to guide your thinking. Write something down for each of them. Finish the list even if you think you've found your answer—something else may come along.

Automatic	Inventive
Obvious	Creative
Commonplace	Magical
Literal	Amusing
Labored	Outrageous
Interesting	Ridiculous
Unusual	Obscene
Obscure	Preposterous
Odd	Over-the-top
Opposite	

While working on your first draft, add as much drama, suspense, intensity and suffering as you can. Push it over the top. You'll refine it in the second round. You'll find ways to add intensity, locate missed connections, and spot themes, symbols and through lines.

In the end, the goal is to find the way that works best for you.

To continue your perilous journey with Pauline, visit her website: <https://paulinebjones.com/getting-the-wood-out/> or at <https://linktr.ee/paulinebjones>.

—Cheri Remington

## How To Join Saturday Writers

Joining Saturday Writers is quite simple. All that is required is a love of writing and an annual membership fee of \$35. Publishing credits are not required, (but feel free to brag about them on your Member Bio if you have them).

Not ready to join? Visit our virtual meetings for free until we are able to gather together again. Please email [Jeanne.F@saturdaywriters.org](mailto:Jeanne.F@saturdaywriters.org) for access information. We host special youth events from time to time; otherwise our group is intended for writers 18 years or older. (16 + with special approval.)

Contact us at: [membership@saturdaywriters.org](mailto:membership@saturdaywriters.org).

# June Contest Winners

## June Prose Contest

**First Place:** Jeffrey Czuchna for  
“The Perfect Plan”

**Second Place:** Donna Mork Reed for  
“Inking a New Chapter”

**Third Place:** Susan Gore Zahra for  
“The Enduring Imprint of a Hand”

**Honorable Mention:** Cheri Remington for  
“Of Magic and Stars”

**Honorable Mention:** Christine Anthony for “Blue  
Teardrops”

**Honorable Mention:** Heather Hartmann for  
“Fixer Upper”

## Everything Children’s Contest

**First Place:** Heather Hartmann for  
“Powers”

**Second Place:** Robert Walton for  
“The Greatest Tree Ever”

**Third Place:** Sue Fritz for  
“A Frog Story”

**Honorable Mention:** Shirley Anderson for  
“Squeeze”

**Honorable Mention:** Sue Fritz for  
“Ellie’s Tree”

## Upcoming Events

Watch your email for instructions about how to participate, whether as reader at an Open Mic or as attentive audience in the comfort of your own home.

### August

#### *Open Mic:*

Monday, August 16, 7 p.m.

#### *Children’s Critique Group*

Thursday, August 26, 7 p.m. at Barnes and Noble, St. Peters

#### *Mini-Workshop:*

Saturday, August 28, 10:00-10:45 a.m.

#### *General Meeting:*

Saturday, August 28, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

### September

#### *Open Mic:*

TBA

#### *Children’s Critique Group*

Thursday, September 23, 7 p.m. at Barnes and Noble, St. Peters

#### *Mini-Workshop:*

Saturday, September 25, 10:00-10:45 a.m.

#### *General Meeting:*

Saturday, September 25, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

## DEADLINE

## SATURDAY August 28

*2021 Contest Theme: Shapes*

*Prose: 2021-word limit*

*Poetry: 50-line limit*

*Begins: 7/31/21*

*Prose Deadline: 8/28/21*

*Poetry Deadline: 8/28/21*

### August Theme

**Any Shape Goes:** Let your imagination run around in circles and soar like a kite. Use your acute observation powers to triangulate your plot twists. Go wild with -agons having any number and configuration of sides you desire. Shoot your poetic arrow over moon and stars or at the heart of the matter. Give your writing a solid foundation for your last shapely entry of 2021.

## Bluebottle Koan

Aerial acrobatics / life’s a ball  
It’s apparent that flies are into Zen because  
They must think our frantic slapping  
Are the sounds of one hand clapping  
Always returning for more applause  
Until that final curtain call

—R.R.J.Sebacher©

“These poems speak my truth. What you hear  
is your truth.”

## Silence in Bronze

She was an anachronism. Her bonnet at a jaunty tilt above ringlets framing her face, hands folded where waistcoat met flowing skirt, eyes cast down, she stood between the Chihuly Glass Museum and the Seattle Space Needle: a Gay 90s lady frozen between sleek brilliant-colored swirls and balls sprouting in the garden and sleek glass crowning steel.

The bronze statue caught my attention briefly while I tried to keep track of my souvenir-hunting travel companions. When I looked back, she was looking up toward her right hand, raised as though releasing a bird into the air. My first thought was that my Central Daylight brain was muddled by Pacific Daylight Time, and I misremembered her position.

I noticed my grandchildren and their aunt and uncle heading outside, and I stood to follow them. Approaching the door, I caught a glimpse of bronze in motion. Animatronics?

As she turned toward me, I saw her pale blue eyes. She winked at me. Not a statue, but a mime!

The bronze lady communicated with passersby without saying a word. When several athletic young men approached, she swiveled her hips, threw a kiss, and beckoned them toward her tip jar. When they laughed and kept walking, she stomped her foot, put her hands on her hips, and turned away, her nose in the air. The last fellow in the pack pulled out a buck or two for the jar, which she rewarded by blowing a kiss.

Children, eyes wide, froze with confusion and fear. The anachronism entered the twenty-first century with “heart hands” and smiles. Fear turned into grins as they ran to have their pictures taken beside her.

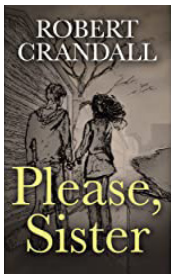
The mime’s artistic voice broke through her silence. When writers speak of “voice,” we focus on distinctive qualities or style that are unique to each writer. We associate Emily Dickinson with poetry, not prose. Even people who have never read works by Jane Austen and Ernest Hemingway would be likely to recognize that passages from their books were written by different people.

Literary voice is the outcome of writers listening to their creative voices—following where curiosity leads them. The statue mime’s curiosity led her to explore women’s fashions of the Gay 90s and how they carried themselves in public places. She (or he—hard to tell) had to learn techniques of costume and makeup design to become bronzed from head to toe. She had to explore some questions: What if small children get scared? How do I get people to drop some cash in my basket? Or respond to ridicule as a proper lady of the era would?

In the next couple of newsletters, I hope to explore ways of developing our creative voices through interviews with an actor/playwright and a sign interpreter. And yes, I am following where my curiosity leads me. Maybe I’ll find my own voice along the way.

—Susan Gore Zahra, Editor

## SW Members New Releases



**Robert Crandall’s** recently released novel, *Please, Sister*, is a book of secrets. He doesn’t waste much time drawing a reader into the story. Four friends meet in a bar and decide to get their palms read. By the end of the second chapter, one sends the palm reader into a panic. She tells him never to come back, but he doesn’t know why. There’s one way to

learn his secret—read the book, now available from Amazon in both paperback and Kindle versions.

If romantic comedy is your read of choice, check out **Tammy Lough’s** novel, *Lacey’s Deception*, released this month on Amazon. Set in Montana in 1873, tomboy Lacey meets a wickedly handsome rancher, and sparks fly—in more ways than one. Tammy clues us in on the foundation for building her novel in this month’s column, “Let’s Construct a Novel” on page 7. Check out her column here and her book in paperback or on Kindle.



## California Burns

This Halloween a dragon rides the Santa Ana winds  
Spitting smoke and flaming embers, as sirens scream  
One half million who did not flee  
Huddled in churches and stadiums  
Politicians and preachers to president and lord implore  
No child of Satan, they cannot affect her  
She is Nature’s wrath for her laws ignored  
Her work will release other elemental force  
After she has scorched the earth  
Her sister Water and Earth’s mud golems  
Will tumble and slide in her wake  
Though they will slay her  
Quench her fiery breath  
Her revenge has just begun  
They will rebuild on the same steep slopes  
Amidst thick brush and pine  
Child of Fire and Wind she will be reborn

—R.R.J. Sebacher ©

## Let's Construct Your Novel

Writing a novel is much the same as building a house. You must have a solid foundation for your story to stand on, lest it crumble to the ground. What if I told you, by following a list of set guidelines, you could construct a sturdy, well-developed novel? You'd jump up and slap your pappy, right? Let's go for it!

**Killer concept:** After brainstorming ideas for your book, you'll need to flesh it out—after all, even a killer idea doesn't have enough "guts" to be a killer concept. A killer concept is the meat and potatoes, the reason your book is an important story that must be told. First off, to qualify as a killer concept and a page-turner rather than a yawner, you must have memorable characters who jump off the page with a passion to belong in your story. Now, if you're writing romance, you have a hero and a heroine. So, choose your minor characters and never, ever treat these folks like paper cutouts. Each character you introduce must be vibrant with a reason to come on stage. The more detailed you write character profiles, the more real they become. If you plan to write a killer novel, make certain you fill out a profile/bio for each major character and a shorter profile for the minor ones.

Here is a formula I like to use: Premise→Protagonist→Goal→Situation→Conflict

The **premise** meets the **protagonist** with a **goal** and must deal with a **situation** amid **conflict**. As an example, for my romantic comedy (RomCom), *Lacey's Deception* (newly published August 10, 2021), here is how I filled



Tammy Lough

in my formula: Premise: Hellcat tomboy, Lacey Autumn Kendall, must transform herself into a lady to snatch the wickedly

handsome, big-hearted rancher, Brandon Chandler, and ultimately inherit a beloved homestead. (Protagonist) Lacey Autumn Kendall (Goal) must transform herself into a lady (Situation). Lacey must snatch a man, and marry, to inherit the land she loves (Conflict). Deep down she is backwoods, hellcat tomboy without a clue how to be a proper lady.

**What If?** Ask yourself this all-important question for each of the above fill-ins. Must transform herself into a lady: What if I send Lacey to live with an aunt who retired from teaching at a lady's school in London? What if she arrives and finds out auntie's kicked the oxygen habit and is takin' a dirt nap? What if she lives in her aunt's cabin and uses the textbooks under the bed to teach herself how to become a lady? See how using "What If?" can lead your ideas into a concept and a full story? Keep asking yourself, "What If?" all the way to the end of your planning stage.

**Add a killer conflict** and crank it up three notches. Make it appear there is no way your protagonist will get herself out of the next pickle, and your reader will adore you. The harder your heroine must claw her way through the pages, the more endearing she becomes to your reader. She *wants* to root for your character.

**Get creative** and iron out a plot, place the story in an interesting setting and write realistic dialogue. The internet is full of information, as are your friends at Saturday Writers. You got this!

**Turn out your first draft.** Type until you run out of ideas for the day. Write another complete draft before even thinking about editing. Read the final draft aloud for cadence and clarity. If this puzzles you, trust me, when you read your manuscript aloud the changes you need to make will become clear.

Good Luck and Remember: Writers Write!!!

—Tammy Lough

### Saturday Writers Officers

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Ryan Cort

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Creative Writing Salon:

R.R.J. Sebacher

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Our meetings will be conducted using Zoom until further notice.  
For access information, visit [SaturdayWriters.org](http://SaturdayWriters.org) and look under the Meetings tab.