

Saturday Writers Newsletter

January • 2021

Saturday
Writers



Writers Encouraging Writers Since 2002

A Chapter of the Missouri Writers Guild

A Nonprofit Organization / Corporation

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Ines Johnson to Show SW How to Adapt Your Novel to the Screen on January 30



At our first meeting of 2021 on January 30th, Saturday Writers will welcome veteran television writer and screenwriter

instructor Ines Johnson, who will guide us through a series of steps designed to take a manuscript from the written word to the visual world of the screen and teleplay.

This workshop will demonstrate the process of breaking novels down to their story core of the word and logline, translating their plot points into the beat sheet of the screen, and understanding the rules of adapting books into screenplays. We'll consider the differences between the written, internal story and the visual, external experience and through well known examples will explore the necessity of cutting, changing, or adding scenes and condensing

time and characters. Using the *Save the Cat!* method, we'll learn how these concepts can apply to our work.

A lover of fairytales, folklore, and mythology, Ines Johnson spends her days reimagining the stories of old in a modern world. She writes books where damsels cause the distress, princesses wield swords, and moms save the world. Ines writes books for strong women who suck at love. If you rocked out to the twisted triangle of Jem, Jericha, and Rio as a girl; if you were slayed by vampires with souls alongside Buffy; if you need your scandalous fix from Olivia Pope each week, then you'll love her books! Aside from being a writer, professional reader, and teacher, Ines is a very bad Buddhist. She sits in sangha each week, and while others are meditating and getting their zen on, she's contemplating how to use the teachings to strengthen her plots and character motivations. Ines lives outside Washington, DC, with her two little sidekicks who are growing up way too fast.

—Sarah Angleton

Welcome Back
to Another Year of
Writers Encouraging Writers

Welcome to Saturday Writers

Due to social distancing, until further notice monthly meetings and other 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 craft, writing process, marketing, all things writing in all genres.

Everyone on our email list will receive an email with access information. Guests are welcome to attend our virtual meetings for free. Please email Jeanne.F@saturdaywriters.org for access information. Membership is \$35.00 per year.



- 11:00-1:00 p.m.—Regular meeting **VIA ZOOM** for business items and our guest speaker.
- Doors open at the Zoom room 10:45 a.m.
- Visitors are welcome to attend for free at this time.



Contents

January Speaker 1
From the President's Desk 2
Zoom Critique 2
Contest Deadlines 3
Upcoming Events 3
Contest Winners 4
New Release 4
Back Page with Tammy 5

Is it hard to write a book?



Jeanne Felfe

I've recently joined an online community called Quora where people can ask questions and others answer them. Someone recently asked the question in the title of this article. Here's my response, plus more for our audience.

Yes. No. Maybe.

Yes, writing a book is hard...*work*.

No, writing a book is not hard...*work*.

Maybe, writing a hard is hard...*work*.

Note the repetition of the word *work*. Writing a book is what you make of it. And "hard" is subjective and in the hand of the writer. As a professional author, writer, and editor, there are some writing tasks that are a lot harder than others.

However, writing a book is also magic. Your wonderful, amazing brain creates characters and situations and settings virtually out of thin air. Where does it all come from? Ah, that is the magic. I do not consider the process work, nor do I consider it hard. Instead, it is energizing and mystical. But that is me and my hand. Writing a book involves time and effort to take the tiny smidgen of an idea that comes to us from the ether and turn it into a story that someone else wants to read.

While there are certainly times I'd like to toss my computer across the room (usually because it's decided to fail at a critical plot point), the only time I truly feel as if I possess the power of the universe is when I am creating. Don't ask whether writing a book is hard, because that isn't the right question. Ask whether you wish to spend the time and effort required to turn an idea into magic. If the answer is yes, then go to work.

—Jeanne Felfe, President

**Many thanks to everyone who
contributed to this newsletter!**

Zooming toward Great Writing

When I was young I liked to zoom around the neighborhood on my bike. Who would have guessed that in 2020 at age 72, I would still be zooming? Every week I zoom with my writer friends, and I don't even need a bike. It's not hard, no stretching exercises required.

Seven members of the Wednesday WIP critique group zoom around every week reading stories and poems. We email our stories, then read them on Zoom. Each story is critiqued at our meeting, and a written critique is sent via email. It's easier than you may think and a great way to stay connected. All it



Jim Ladendecker

takes is downloading the Zoom app, an ID, password, and a computer or a phone. That's right, you can call in on your smart phone, although you may not be able to see your fellow writers' pretty faces.

So don't be shy. You can Zoom your way to a better story at any age.

—Jim Ladendecker

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 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.

DEADLINE SATURDAY January 30!

2021 President's Contest

Contest Theme: Shapes

Prose/Fiction: 2021 word limit
Essay/Nonfiction: 2021 word limit

Poetry: 50 line limit

Flash: 500 word limit

Drabble (Fiction, Non-fiction, Poetry): A drabble is a fun way to force yourself to select precise words because they have to be exactly 100 words. Not counting the title. (EXACTLY 100 words! Please be sure of your word count prior to submitting. Under or over 100 words will be disqualified. If you're not sure, email it to a friend and have them check. Any count other than exactly 100 words will be disqualified.)

Cost: Free to members!

To renew or join click here:

membership@saturdaywriters.org.

Our 2021 Contest Theme is Shapes, with each month focusing on specific shapes. The President's Contest will be "The shape of things that don't have physical shape: water, air, love, faith, feelings, light, dark, etc." This lends itself to both fiction and non-fiction/essay, as well as poetry. Jeanne likes stories with emotional depth and unexpected endings. So get creative and surprise her!

*** Note: Do not tell Jeanne you are entering!***

This is a members-only contest—you must have joined or renewed by midnight January 30, 2021. Each member MAY submit ONE entry in EACH of the FIVE categories.

All entries must be submitted electronically.

Up to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners in each category could receive a President's prize. Up to three Honorable Mentions in each category could be selected. Awards are at the President's discretion. Winners will be published in our 2021 anthology. You may choose to have your piece critiqued for \$10 per entry. Jeanne will provide the critiques and donate the funds back to SW.

Find full contest guidelines and the submission form at: <http://saturdaywriters.org/presidents-contest.html>

DEADLINE: SATURDAY, January 30!

Pen & Paint Contest

Contest Theme: Anything Goes!

(Remember artists are looking for a piece that visually speaks to them.)

Prose: 1000 word limit

Poetry: 50 line limit

Cost: FREE for members

Reminder: Members only. Not a member? Let's fix that! Go to membership@saturdaywriters.org.

Prize: Your work featured in the art display at the Arts Centre along with the painting inspired by it and publication in our 2021 anthology.

No maximum entries! Write away! The more you write, the greater your chances to be chosen. There will be ten winning entries. Five Prose. Five Poems. All winning entries will be in our 2021 anthology. You may choose to have your piece critiqued for \$10 per entry. *For this contest a SW board member will be providing the critiques.*

Find full contest guidelines and the submission form at <http://saturdaywriters.org/pen--paint-contest.html>

Upcoming Events

Saturday Writers "Zooms" into 2021

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.

January

Open Mic:

Monday, January 25, 7-9 p.m.

General Meeting:

Saturday, January 30, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

February

Open Mic:

Tuesday, February 16, 7-9 p.m.

General Meeting:

Saturday, February 27, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

March

Open Mic:

Monday, March 22, 7-9 p.m.

General Meeting:

Saturday, March 27, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

Winners for Pen & Paint II Contest: A Collaboration Among Artists

St. Louis:

Cheri Remington for “Bucket List”

Bird Song:

Donna Mork Reed for “Chickadee Sings to Me”

Daydream:

Marilyn O’Neill for “Pas de Deux”

Deep Thought:

Marcia Estep for “Vision of Beauty”

The Immigrant:

Sherry Cerrano for “Unusual Lessons”

Whispers:

Cheri Remington for “The Lightworker”

Goat:

Jane Hamilton for “Being Berniece”

Steer:

Donna Mork Reed for “Copper”

Swans:

Susan Gore Zahra for “Until the Last Dance”

Young Love:

Donna Mork Reed for “Child’s Play”

Congratulations!

SW member Melanie Koch’s new book, *Suddenly Caregiver: Now What?*, already available in Kindle, will soon be released in paperback. “My book is very basic, geared more for people who don’t have any experience with caregiving or medical background. Talking with people about caregiving, I’ve heard comments about having no



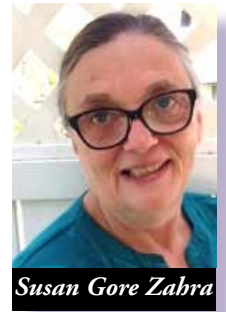
idea how to do this or that. This prompted me to write this book based on my personal experience as a caregiver for a relative with dementia.” After hearing many people talk about how they wish they could go back and say things or do things for people who are deceased, Melanie decided to “love on” her family member as much as possible. Her book

offers pointers on providing loving care even during frustrating times.

Melanie’s first book, *Jesus Never Fails!!*, is also available on Amazon.

Writing Through . . . And Writing

Writing through grief. Writing through depression. Through anger. Trauma. Recovery. There are articles, books, courses on writing through every kind of human experience, and I have done my share of writing through. Many of those words were sent to the recycle bin along with the junk mail. Turns out my handwriting during times of crisis resembles Martian graffiti.



Some of my writing through, however, is legible but so raw and personal that no one will be invited to read it while I am alive.

The past year presented at least 300 days of events triggering a gamut of emotions in need of writing through. While 2021 may have begun with toasts to a better year, it has already exploded with its own challenges to peace and sanity.

So what is the point of writing through when raw terror and rage tend to produce incoherent story arcs or inarticulate rambling? Why bother, especially at the beginning of the year, when our resolution lists overflow with publishing goals?

Somewhere in the spewed ramblings of discontent, a few words are strong enough to sprout stories, poetry, essays or memoirs. Maybe not this week or even this year. Harvesting those seeds in a notebook keeps them at hand when their season to blossom into something beautiful arrives.

Not that all writing must reflect a Disney-perfect, Pollyanna worldview. One of my favorite quotations related to writing is “The pen is mightier than the sword.” The concept had been expressed long before playwright Edward Bulwer-Lytton made it household mantra in his 1839 play about Cardinal Richelieu. The words were quoted both by ordinary citizens confronting authority and by despots fearing the power of the press. The response to the murder of Charlie Hebdo magazine staff in Paris in 2015 produced a wide range of cartoon responses in which pens and pencils defeated attackers (<https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-30729480>).

Writing through tough times purges confusion and focuses creative energy. The seeds harvested from our current unending season of writing through may blossom with hope, peace and love. Or they may grow strong enough to be honed into spears—or pencils—that pierce through lies, hatred and injustice.

Writing through the challenges of today is not avoidance of 2021 goals, but the foundation of meeting those goals. And perhaps shaping a better world for our grandchildren.

—Susan Gore Zahra, Editor

Think Z - Before A

Let's face it folks, the decision to write a book is huge. Talk about an investment of time. Sheesh. Months...years? While there are authors who can write a book in twelve weeks or less, a more realistic time frame is about six months to a year from the time you sit your keister down to the final two words: X#*Bx 7@R3, no not those two... these two: The End.

Because of the long-term commitment, energy, and time investment, make certain of one important detail. When I say to think about Z before A, I mean iron out the big stuff all the way to Z before making the commitment on paper. Make sure the story you are planning is, in fact, sustainable and exciting enough to fulfill you until the very end. You must have a passion or at least a deep, and I'm talking "Tommy fell in the well deep," passion for the genre, characters and plot. Actually, the whole enchilada since you have chosen to devote a good slice of time to this creation. If not, you are not smarter than a 5th grader and possibly, in hushed circles, a certifiable nut job.

You're going to spend how many hours with the peeps you chose as your main characters? You better like them, and like them a lot. Characters, no matter you gave them life-breath in the form of #20 lb. paper, will get on your nerves. Let's face it, we all know we don't write our stories. Our characters, after a mega time-intensive interview, which, by the way, if you are not willing to devote the time necessary to know every nut and bolt about your main character's personalities, you may as well give up writing and shuck corn for a living or buy an old rusted-out truck and sell turnips on Pigtail Alley. When we come to a



Tammy Lough

crossroads and a tug-of-war plays out as to the direction your story must go, don't waste your breath. Your character wins, or the story comes to a screeching halt and your character wins. The bottom line: Multi-faceted, strong leading ladies and gents is what you chose. Trust them to work out the bumps in the road.

Here's a mind game to help make sure of a true interest during the pre-writing stage. Picture yourself in an aisle at Barnes & Noble. Reach out to the bookshelf and choose a paperback. Ask yourself why this book landed in your hand. Was it the color of the cover or maybe the cover art that appealed to you? Why? Did the blurb make you want to lay down cold, hard cash at the register? If so, what did it say? Write it down. Tweak it until you can't wait to read—err, write it.

Next, make sure you are writing with intention. You need a reason to write 50,000-? words for your story. Jot yourself a note why your story is important in the first place and pull this out when you need to refresh the underlying reason you are willing to set aside your precious time. Your reader will know if you are into the story or just writing sentences until you feel you've wrapped it up and gave it a name. Write with enthusiasm or write for a paycheck. They will know. They also know how to slap your book shut.

You don't have to know the ending to your book before starting, but it helps to have a general idea so that your scenes lead to a resolution rather than a train wreck. Even if you brainstorm more than one possible ending, have a clue what ending your scattered self is thinking. Otherwise, you risk never finishing due to not being able to unravel all the silly string and make a sensible, satisfying conclusion.

A timeline is another helpful beyond imagination tool. Draw a horizontal line and notch on it some of the biggest details of your story. A pantsler should be okay with this, since it may be the ticket to keeping the story from breaking into crushed subplots that cannot be remedied at the end.

Figure out the Z before you type the first A, and it will keep you motivated until the end and guarantee a satisfying The End.

Writers Write!

—Tammy Lough

Saturday Writers Officers

President:

Jeanne Felfe
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Secretary:

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Treasurer:

Diane How
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Volunteers/Chair Positions

Assistant Treasurer: Denise Scott

Children's/YA Author Critique:

Sue Fritz

Christmas Party Chair:

TBD

Contest Chair: Heather Hartmann

Hospitality Chair: Bob Weismiller

Assistants: Diane How &

Ryan Cort

Information Table: Tammy Lough

Membership Chair: Denise Wilson

Members Online Critique:

Susan Moreland

Newsletter Editor:

Susan Gore Zahra

Newsletter Assistant:

Sherry Cerrano

Pre-Meeting Saturday

Works-in-Progress Café &

Creative Writing Salon:

R.R.J. Sebacher

Publicity Chairs:

Rose Callahan

Speaker/Workshop Chair:

Jeanne Felfe

Social Media Chair:

Heather Hartmann

Assistant: Rose Callahan

Website Maintenance:

Heather Hartmann

Assistant: Rose Callahan

Wednesday Works-in-Progress Café:

Jim Ladendecker

Write-In Chair: Brad Watson

Youth Outreach Chairs:

Nicki Jacobsmeyer & Sue Fritz

Our meetings will be conducted using Zoom until further notice.
For access information, please contact jeanne.f@saturdaywriters.org.