

Saturday Writers Newsletter

Saturday
Writers



Writers Encouraging Writers Since 2002
A Chapter of the Missouri Writers Guild
A Nonprofit Organization / Corporation
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August 2023

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Join us on the last Saturday of every month at the Spencer Road Library Branch from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in room L.

- ◆ Doors open at 10:30 a.m.
- ◆ Creative Salon is from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. in room 0 (Previously 265)
- ◆ Members are invited to participate via Zoom. The link will be sent out separately.

August 2023 Speaker: Allie Pleiter, Dynamic Dialogue

Sure, dialogue records conversation. But it can do so much more—if you know how to wield it. Dialogue can provide subtle backstory, vivid characterization, or shoot a plot forward at high speed. Great dialogue is memorable and effective. Bad dialogue is cumbersome and can turn your reader (or potential editor) off quickly. Multi-published author Allie Pleiter leads you through all the ways you can use dialogue within your story to pack a far bigger punch than “she said.” Elements include:

- Showing stress
- Establishing a character
- Launching a scene

- Lying
- Blurting the truth
- Surprising your reader
- Ending well
- Quick Tips for better dialogue

An avid knitter, coffee junkie, and firm believer that “pie makes everything better,” Allie Pleiter writes both fiction and non-fiction working on as many as four novels at a time. The bestselling author of over sixty books, Allie has enjoyed a twenty-three-year career with over 1.6 million books sold. In addition to writing, Allie maintains an active writing productivity coaching practice and



speaks regularly on the creative process, publishing, and her very favorite topic—The Chunky Method of time management for writers. Visit her website at www.alliepleiter.com to learn more.

If you want to know more about Allie's upcoming session, see the short video she created just for us [here](#).



From the President's Desk

Success in Writing

We write because we enjoy it. Some may even have a passion for the art. One must have passion to put the time and effort into any project that takes years to complete, like a novel. We justify the struggle by telling ourselves it will be worth it in the end.

What is the end we are all striving to achieve? Of course, we all know, it's book sales. All authors want to sell books, make money, and become rich and famous. At least that's what I've been told. Successful writers sell a lot of books and make a lot of money.

While selling books and making money is certainly a worthy goal, I'm sorry to say, it may not be a practical goal. The ugly truth is, statistically you're not going to make it. I know that hurts, but we all must face the truth sooner or later. For every professional athlete that gets a multi-million-dollar contract there are a thousand hopefuls that got cut. For every rock star up on the stage performing in front of a stadium of screaming fans, there are ten thousand hopefuls that failed

the audition. And for every Stephen King, James Patterson, or J. K. Rowling there are a hundred thousand hopefuls who didn't get published.

The reality is that most writers don't make much money. Only about one percent of all authors make a living by writing. The average self-published book sells about 250 copies, and the average traditionally published book sells about 3,000 copies. Ninety percent of self-published books sell less than 100 copies. Writing a book is a tough way to make money.

Why do so few succeed? Primarily because the supply of writers far exceeds the demand, and therefore, the competition amongst writers is incredibly intense. Rejection is often not a reflection of a writer's talent but a mathematical probability.

Why do some succeed, and others don't? There are many reasons, but it usually boils down to a mixture of talent, hard work, and luck. It's true, some people have a natural talent for telling stories. There's not much us less talented writers can do about that. Except to work harder. I believe a lack of natural talent can be overcome by spending more time learning and practicing. I believe in the idea that good writing can be learned. What about luck? Some authors are just in the right place at the right time and get noticed above others. The best way to improve your luck is to be persistent. You will eventually get lucky if you submit your work often enough. The only way to truly fail is to quit.

What can be done about the statistical probability of a writer's

unhappiness? You've probably guessed already: redefine success. There are a million ways to enjoy writing that don't involve selling books. Mike Rowe, of Dirty Jobs fame, says, "Don't pursue your passion, chase opportunity instead." Identify an opportunity, get good at it, and learn to love it. Find a niche in the writing world that is compatible with your natural talents? Here are a few options: write a blog, freelance, write a column for a newsletter, submit to anthologies, write memoir, submit to magazines, or create a website.

Other suggestions: join a

"I believe a lack of natural talent can be overcome by spending more time learning and practicing. I believe in the idea that good writing can be learned."

critique group, attend a conference, go on a writer's retreat, volunteer at the library, or offer to be a beta reader.

Success in writing does not have to be defined by the number of books sold. Redefine success in a way that brings you joy. Find what you were born to do, and do that.

This article was inspired by Nikki Hannah and her book *The Path to Authorship, Listen Up, Writer, How Not to Write Like an Amateur*.

Until next month, keep writing, writing, writing.

Jeffrey Czuchna – 2023 President

What's the Big Idea: Sharing is Caring



Greetings Fellow Writers!

The Writing Buffet theme for June, Specialty Recipe/Meal, enticed a large number of entries. I was particularly excited with all of the critiques requested!

Grandma to Mom to Me, submitted by Marilyn O'Neill, took first place in poetry. This delightful verse shared memories of "a notebook of handwritten riches spiral-bound with blue ink smudges." I bet many of us can visualize exactly what she's referring to.

Marilyn shared this about her poem: "My inspiration was, of course, the Saturday Writers monthly contest. For May/June, the poetry contest revolved around ethnic food. I decided to write about my Italian heritage and a gift my mother left for me when she passed. She collected her favorite recipes in a notebook, some of which had been given to her by her mother. I eventually made copies for the next generation - my son, nieces, and nephews - and many of them have now made traditional Italian/Sicilian food using her directions. It's a way to honor her memory and keep her in our hearts."

I asked Marilyn to tell us a little about herself. "I'm a professional musician and retired music teacher. Music is my main outlet as it has been nearly my entire life, but I also enjoy photography. If I can work up the self-confidence to do it, I'd like to learn to draw and paint."

I imagine you would do well in that too, Marilyn. Give it a try. It excites and inspires me when I hear about the creativity of our members that extend beyond their writing interests.

Marilyn's advice for other writers is simple. "Keep writing, no matter what, and find a good critique group. The Wednesday group I attend has been wonderful to me, very helpful and kind. I am most grateful for their feedback."

Our prose winning entry, *Recipe for Justice*, written by Jeanne Felfe, explored a different view of our prompt. Fortunately for us, not all creative minds always think alike. From the first few lines, this chilling short story stood the hairs up on my neck.

Inspiration comes when a writer opens his or her mind to wider possibilities, and Jeanne did just that. "I'm not a great cook so at first I brushed off even attempting to write a story about a recipe. Then I thought, "Hmmm...how could I create a recipe containing a thriller element?" And I remembered that it didn't need to be a literal recipe about food. That broke the logjam, and the idea of using someone's favorite wine to kill them jumped into my head and became a story."

I asked Jeanne about her writing process. "For short stories, I look for a flash of inspiration. There's almost always a "what if" involved. With this story, the "what if" was inspired by the wine itself. My husband actually does have a couple of shelves with bottles of Beaujolais vintages going back many years. Another short I wrote several years ago was based on my emotions surrounding a long-passed gay cousin. It was triggered when I saw a teen girl leaving a deeply religious neighbor's house. I asked myself, "What if the daughter is gay and her parents reject her?" My short *The Silent Lie*, published in the 2016 SW anthology, was the result of that exploration."

Jeanne offered very specific advice for fellow writers.

--Get the words on the page. Don't worry with that first draft whether it's any good, or too short/long, or any of a number of other thoughts destined to keep our pens off the page.

-- Be daring. Don't tiptoe around the hard stuff of life.

-- Get feedback. This is especially true for newer writers. The purpose of feedback is to gain an understanding of what is working. Does the reader "get it" or are they left wondering what you're trying to say? However, with feedback, only you can decide whether a suggestion is right for *your* story. You don't have to--nor should you--use everything you receive from critique partners. Also, know when to stop seeking advice. At some point you have to say it's done and move on."

That's helpful suggestions for all writers. Thanks, Jeanne.

That's all for now! See you next month.

In Case You Missed It: Kizzi Roberts, Publish Like a Pro

“I’ve been a member of this organization for ten years and this was the best presentation I’ve seen.” Those were the words of Les Thompson after hearing last month’s speaker Kizzi Roberts talk about self-publishing. I’m sure others agreed with you, Les. Her energetic and thorough presentation was well received and appreciated.

Mrs. Roberts runs her own publishing firm called Elemental Ink and believes that in these days of easy access to internet services, authors should consider alternative independent publishing strategies.

With traditional publishing, authors sell their work to publishers who then own the product. All financial risk is taken by the publishers including payment to the author in advance. There is no risk to the author although since the publishers own the work, they may edit or change it as they feel necessary. However, if the book does well, royalties are low and the profits belong mainly to the publisher.

In the Hybrid publishing arrangement, the author pays to have his work published. The company prints copies, stores them, and tries to place them in libraries and bookstores, but the author retains full rights to the work. Financial risk is shared and profits benefit both.

With Independent publishing, authors take on all financial risks and reap full benefits. They must

pay to have the book printed and stored, and they become their own agent, contacting bookstores to sell the work. Marketing and advertisement are also the author’s responsibility. It is recommended that authors have their work edited and formatted by a professional and make sure their cover is unique and attractive to potential readers. The author maintains complete rights to the work and may reprint or re-publish at will. However, that is both an advantage and an obstacle. The time required for Independent publication is shortened, but getting one’s work seen is a real problem. All of the profits go to the author, but they also assume all costs.

In other words, there is no right way to get your work published, but there are more options for literary entrepreneurs than in previous years. Here are a few questions you will need to ask yourself before publishing your completed manuscript. How much time can I afford to spend on this project? What is my ultimate goal, artistic or financial? How much money can I afford to invest in my publishing? Am I going to approach my writing as a hobby, sideline or new profession?

Every new published book must have an ISBN number. These identify your work and are available for purchase.

Amazon (KDP) makes ISBNs free to its publishers and there are other places you can find them for free, but they are not optional. eBooks are the only exception to that rule.

GetCovers.com is an app that helps authors design their own book covers. KDP also provides that service with both its paperback and eBook publishing. However, people most certainly do “judge a book by its cover” so spending a little to get a pro to help you is money well spent.

Draft2Digital offers free software to help you do your own formatting if you’re computer savvy. KDP also offers help for those publishing eBooks. There are many other apps available to do the same, but since I am *computer impaired* their names escaped me as I took notes.

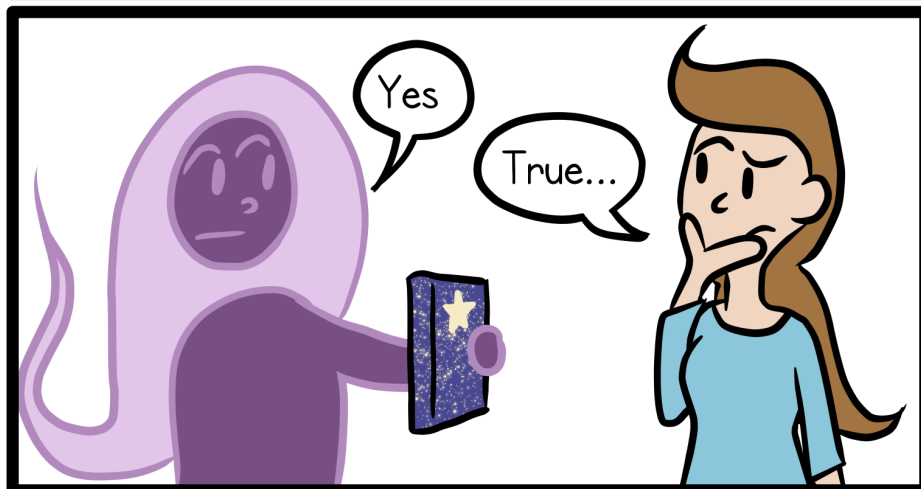
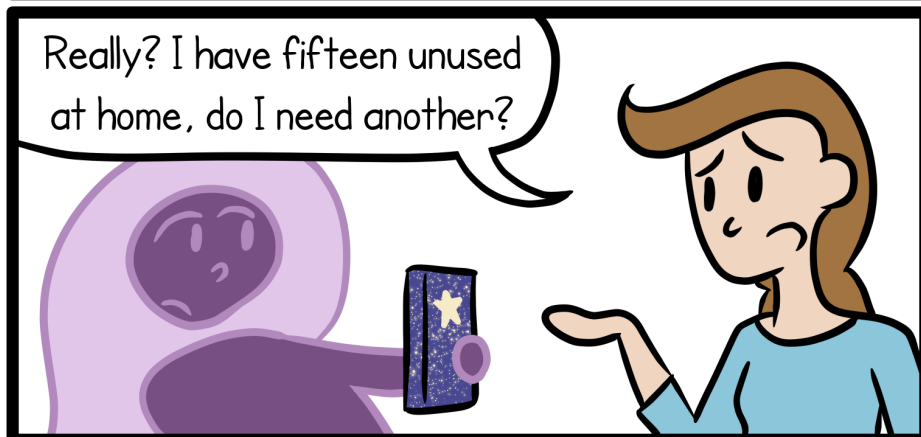
Mrs. Roberts listed a great number of resources in her PowerPoint slides which are available on our website as well as the video of her whole presentation. Saturday Writers is blessed with a number of authors who have found interesting ways to get their works published and several professional editors/formatters. For recommendations or advice, just ask any of our officers. They are eager to help. Happy publishing!

—Ken Lee

Poet & Muse by Emma Howard

Writer and Muse: Notebooks

by Emma Vogt



Our October Workshops



MELISSA RIDLEY
ELMES

Enter the
Line
October
5th
6 to 9 p.m.



NIKKI
JACOBSMEYER

Kid-Lit Boot
Camp
October
11th
6 to 9 p.m.



NIKKI HANNAH

Capture Life
Through
Memoir
October 17th
6 to 9 p.m.
Zoom Only



MARY BUCKHAM

Mastering the 10
Universal Hooks
October 23rd
6 to 9 p.m.
Zoom Only

We hope to see you there!

Local Author Event

Mark your calendar for Wednesday, September 6, 2023, from 6 to 8 p.m. The first *Local Books and Brew Book Signing* will feature authors Sarah Angleton, Pat Wahler, Tara Pedroley, Jack Zerr, Tammy Lough, and Diane How.

Stop by Third Wheel Brewing, 4008 N. Service Road, St. Peters, MO 63376 to support these authors and to learn more about the newly formed *Local Books and Brew Book Club* scheduled to start on Wednesday, September 27.

Holiday Party Help

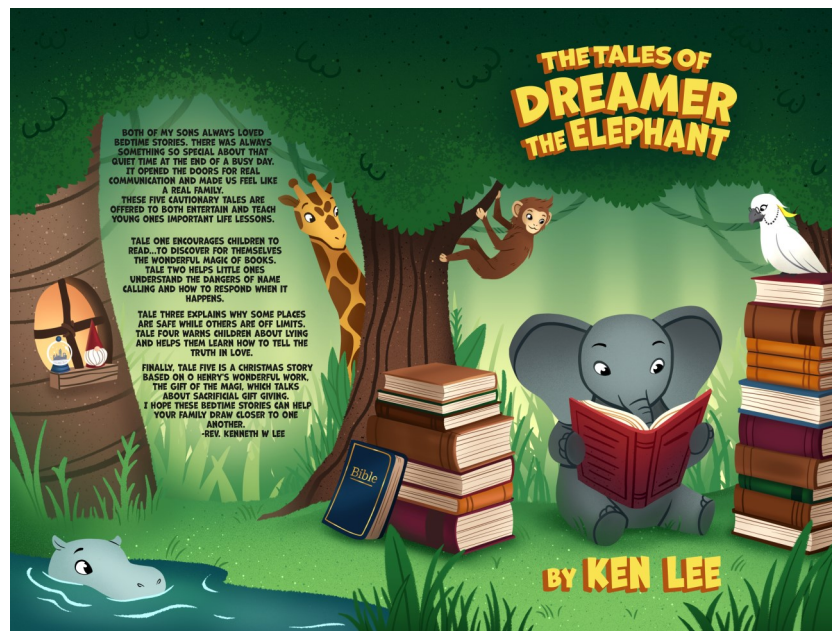
It's never too early for Christmas. Unless you are WalMart and you are putting out décor in June...that's too early. But I'm talking about the Saturday Writer's Holiday Party. Every year we have gift baskets donated by members and/or critique groups. If your group would like to contribute a basket or if you want to make and donate one of your own, let me know! We will have more information and basket theme suggestions in the near future. Another way you can help is if you have any items to donate for the silent auction. Last year we had everything from wine to restaurant gift card to art to small appliances. Did you receive a gift that you can't use but is brand new. If you donate it to Saturday Writers, we can even give you a tax receipt for it! Got a friend who runs a restaurant? Hit them up for gift card donations.

Another way you can contribute, volunteer your time. We need volunteers to spend 15 to 30 minutes during the party walking around and selling 50/50 tickets as well as raffle tickets for the baskets. You won't have to do it the whole party, just a small time bracket during the party. If we each pitch in, everyone can enjoy the party and have a wonderful time and no one is stuck working the whole time.

So, start thinking now and contact me (Donna Reed at donnamorkreed@gmail.com) if you have any questions.

Book Releases

Ken Lee has released his first children's book, *The Tales of Dreamer the Elephant*. You can find it on Amazon [here](#) or you can order it directly from Ken by emailing him at kenlee1950@hotmail.com



June Contest Winners

POETRY (May & June):

First Place: Marilyn O'Neill for *Grandma to Mom to Me*
Second Place: Kenneth Lee for *Still the Lilacs*
Third Place: Heather Hartmann for *Sunday Dinner*
Honorable Mention: Donna Mork Reed for *First Date*
Honorable Mention: Diane How for *The Price of Change*

PROSE:

First Place: Jeanne Felfe for *Recipe for Justice*
Second Place: Sherry Copeland for *Rewind*
Third Place: Diane How for *Mom's Secret Recipe*
Third Place: Robert Cerrano for *Mom's Helper*
Honorable Mention: R. G. Weismiller for *Jimmy McGee's Quest*
Honorable Mention: Mark Vago for *Turning a Silk Purse into a Cow's Ear*

August Contest Rules

Theme: Any Food Item

Prose: 2023-word limit

Poetry: 50-line limit

Begins: 7/29/23

Prose Deadline: 8/26/23

Poetry Deadline: 8/26/23

For more information, visit our website [here](#).

For submissions, visit this [page](#).

Upcoming Events

August Monthly Meeting: Saturday, August 26th, Spencer Road Branch Library

September Open Mic: September 12, 7:00-9:00 p.m. via Zoom

October Workshops:

October 5th: Melissa Ridley Elmes, Enter the Line, [St. Peters Cultural Arts Centre](#)

October 11th: Nikki Jacobsmeyer, Kid-Lit Boot Camp, [St. Peters Cultural Arts Centre](#)

October 17th: Nikki Hannah, Capture Life Through Memoir, Zoom only

October 23rd: Mary Buckham, Mastering the 10 Universal Hooks, Zoom

December 2nd: 2023 Holiday Party, more details to follow

Officers and Volunteers

President: Jeffrey Czuchna
 president@saturdaywriters.org

Vice President: Donna Mork Reed
 vicepresident@saturdaywriters.org

Secretary: Holly Elliott
 secretary@saturdaywriters.org

Treasurer: Diane How
 diane.h@saturdaywriters.org

Assistant Treasurer: Alice Vierck

Volunteers/Chair Positions

Directors: Brad Watson, Jennifer Hasheider

Speaker/Workshop Chair: Jeffrey Czuchna

Contest Chair: Heather Hartmann

Newsletter Editor: Beatrice Underwood-Sweet

Website Chair: Mark Vago

Membership Chair: Diane How

Membership Assistant: Denise Wilson

Anthology Chair: Brad Watson

Social Media Chair: Pat Wahler

Publicity Chairs: Pat Wahler

Hospitality Chair: Bob Weismiller

Hospitality Assistant: David Reed

Holiday Party Chair: Donna Mork Reed

Poet Laureate: Robert Sebacher

Writing/Critique Groups

Members Online Critique: Susan Moreland

Tuesday Round-Table: Tammy Lough

Wednesday Novel Group: Brad Watson

Wednesday WIP Cafe: Jim Ladendecker

Thursday Novel Group: Bob Crandall

Children's/YA Critique: Heather Hartmann

Pre-Meeting Saturday WIP Cafe & Creative Writing Salon: Robert Sebacher

Write-In Chair: Brad Watson