

Saturday Writers Newsletter



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

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May 2023 Speaker: Monique Danielle, How to Self-Format a Professional Quality Book to Lower Publishing Costs and Keep More Profit

If you are new to self-publishing, or an old pro, this presentation is for you. You'll learn how to write or import your manuscript, format it beautifully, and export publish ready files in just a few, extremely easy steps. You won't ever have to hire an expensive formatter, or anxiously wait on a designer's schedule again! With Atticus, self-publishing authors can format their

own books exactly as they imagine them.

As a self-published author herself, Monique understands how difficult it can be to relinquish control over your book, not to mention expensive. With a varied background in publishing and design, Monique supports self-publishing authors in using Atticus to its fullest potential.

She can be reached by email at



monique@atticus.io

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 P (Previously 265)
- ◆ Members are invited to participate via Zoom. The link will be sent out separately.



The Value of Unpublished Stories

Do you have a story that you just love? One you started a long time ago. One you believe is simply brilliant, but nobody will publish. I certainly do. I have a story I first wrote in January of 2020. It is a brilliantly clever story of a man who believes he can travel through time. I first submitted this work of genius that same month for a Saturday Writers contest—it didn't win anything. Since then, I have edited and resubmitted the piece a total of eight times—still nothing.

For almost all writers, the goal is to publish. A published story is a huge stroke for our ego. It validates that we really do have something important to say. Not to mention it makes us feel good too. So, to stroke our ego we struggle to write the best story we can. We stay up late, sacrifice time with friends and family, attend seminars, read how-to-write books, listen to podcasts, and attend Saturday

From the President's Desk

Writers meetings. In short, we do everything possible to become better at our craft.

However, all our efforts do not always result in success. Sometimes we just can't get the story published. Why is that? I believe there is an unspoken truth about writing. A truth that we all suspect may be true but never want to admit. It's an ugly truth but one we must stand up to and face. Not every story deserves publication. There, I said it. It hurts, but it's true. Yes, some stories are just not publishable. But that doesn't mean they shouldn't be written. As authors we always intend to write something better than what actually shows up on the page. The size of the gap between our vision and what we write is measured by our current level of skill. Our inability to express ourselves with the written word just means we need more practice. Don't be discouraged. Write what you love and are passionate about. Write to the limit of your skills. Never stop writing.

Should I consider the time spent working on an unpublishable story wasted? I think not. Each time I submit a story I ask for a critique and each time I learn something valuable about the craft of writing from the judges' comments. Nothing is ever wasted. Remember the true worth of creativity is in the journey more than the destination.

Next time you have some

self-doubts about your writing skills think of these six affirmations suggested by K.M. Weiland in her podcast *Helping Writers Become Authors*, from March 2, 2020.

1. The Act of Writing Has Worth in Itself
2. Every Story You Write Teaches You About Yourself
3. Every Story You Write Teaches You How to Write Something Better Next Time
4. Your "Failures" Are Less About Your Lack of Skill and More About Your Great

"Our inability to express ourselves with the written word just means we need more practice. Don't be discouraged. Write what you love and are passionate about. Write to the limit of your skills. Never stop writing."

and Ambitious Potential

5. If You Love Your Story, It Doesn't Matter if Anyone Else Does
6. You Are Writing What You're Supposed to Be Writing

I hope these words will help you in your journey. Until next month, keep writing, writing, writing.
Jeffrey Czuchna – 2023 President

What's the Big Idea: Keep on Trucking



The first-place winning entry for the SW March contest, *Vulpine*, written by Robert (Bob) Weismiller, was the perfect example of how one can suddenly become energized by external forces. Tired and weary from hauling a big load, a truck driver decided to pull off the highway and seek a much-needed rest in a rural town called Vulpine. When he arrives at a motel/diner, two attractive young women shower him with attention. The driver is forced to accelerate his refueling process when faced with an unexpected twist in expectations. Think Hotel California. You'll want to read it in the next anthology!

Bob shared this about his story: "The idea came from last year's Paint to Pen contest, the final contest of the year. I submitted the story for the painting of two foxes in dresses. It didn't place but Bob wasn't discouraged. "That gave me the opportunity to expand the story from a thousand words to two thousand words. More detail was added to the story, giving it more excitement."

Bob went on to add, "Writing thrillers appeal to me. I like the idea of suspense and

conflict in a story, though limiting it to two thousand words can be challenging. I seem to be more successful in this genre than others." That is definitely evident in *Vulpine*.

Besides writing short stories, Bob is working on a novel which takes place in Tripoli. "The tag line is "a spy, who hates to fail, is sent on a mission that is doomed to fail." Working title is "The Tripoli Incident."

Sounds like another winner to me.

His advice to fellow writers? "Never give up and seek the critique of others. rewritten stories based on the critiques received, which have been published. Also, continue to improve yourself. One of my weaknesses is expressing internal struggles." He's using critiques to improve on this challenge. Congratulations and best of luck, Bob. We look forward to your nail-biters.

The Poet Laureate contest entry *Mount Zion* was written by Carol Roberson. This beautifully scripted poem captured my heart with stimulating line such as "Stone testaments Of our

granite pioneers Keep watch from the hilltop"

Where did her idea for the poem originate? "Mount Zion is a mystical place. The cemetery next to the little white church is where my great grandparents and their two-year old son are buried. Many of the graves date back to the early 1800's."

Carol shared her process when writing a poem. "First, I find a topic I care about. Then I begin to write phrases. Finally, I connect them, trying to give them a voice." She makes it sound easy, but it also takes a lot of talent to make every word touch the heart.

She suggested anyone who wants to write poetry needs to do one specific thing. "Read poetry. As a teenager, I loved George Betts. *Visions of You* was my favorite. Today, I probably read more Mary Oliver." There you have it. Another great month of winners. Keep that ink flowing fellow writers.

In Case You Missed It: George Sirois

More and more people today are choosing to read with their ears...rather than their eyes. With modern technology becoming more user-friendly and social media so pervasive, people are turning away from traditional printed texts and seeking Audio books, Podcasts and Audio Dramas. Few people seem to find time to sit quietly and read so audio books offer them an alternative. Plus, children love to read books that are dramatized for them. They can help young children learn to read at an early age and make reading a normal part of their young lives. Audio books, in which the text of a novel is read orally, Podcasts which are blogs for the ears, and audio dramas (which were very popular during the days of radio before television took over the market) are available from a great many resources today and our April Speaker, George Sirois says that this is a great time to think about using media to get your message to more people.

Why should we consider turning our novels into audio books? George had four reasons. First, you need to consider all avenues to get your message out. Traditional self-publishing is easier than ever, but getting people to know about your work is still very difficult and can be quite costly. Second, Audio books offer a brand-new audience for your work. Podcasts can introduce your books to people you cannot otherwise reach. Third, how wonderful would it be to hear your own words "come to life"? Think about

your book being read by James Earl Jones! And finally, the resources to create your own audio books are more available and inexpensive than they have ever been before. He encouraged authors to consider starting their own podcasts, and/or using existing popular podcasts when developing new book release strategies.

There are three websites that can help us develop an audio book; ACX (Audiobook platform), Author's Republic, and Findaway (connected with Spotify). You will want to listen to George's talk for computer specifics and requirements. These sites can put you in touch with people willing and able to creatively read your work. Some readers wish to be paid upon completion of the audio book, and charge per hour of the finished work. Others will accept a royalty share of the sale of the audio book so that they will only profit if the sales go well. George recommended that authors prepare a 5 minute sample of their book which includes dialogue (possibly even for two characters) and notes about overall mood and theme to use as an audition piece. That is, aspiring readers will tape themselves reading the audition cutting and submit it to the author so that he/she can find just the right voice for their audio book. George also encouraged us to consider reading it ourselves. No one knows your material better than

you do and with very little investment in a microphone and suitable recording equipment most authors can do a fine job. Plus, by being your own reader, you save royalties, and your success might even lead to offers to read other people's work. He did caution however, that making a flawless recording is very time consuming.

There are many different types of podcasts. The most common format is interview as if you were on a talk show. There are also solo commentary broadcasts, panel discussions, storytelling podcasts both for fiction and non-fiction, hybrid mixes of all of the others and even repurposed content which uses materials previously broadcast. To promote your book on an existing podcast, first listen to as many as you can find and choose the one you would most wish to join. Then, contact the host by email (Podmatch, Podbroker), fill them in on your experience and previously published works. Then let them know that you would love to be a guest on his/her podcast and provide some times when you would be available.

I would encourage any of you who think you're interested in creating an audiobook to contact George Sirois. He was warm and genuine and certainly has a wealth of information. In fact, I'm going back right now to listen to his presentation all over again. There was way too much good info for my aged brain to assimilate in one session. Many of you might wish to do the same.

Kenneth W Lee

Saturday Write-In

You may have recently seen an email from Saturday Writers about Write-Ins. This is a gathering that SW hosted several years ago, and one we'd like to resurrect. It has previously been located at the Spencer Road Library Branch, but as always, we are open to suggestions. If you have always wanted to submit a story or poem to our SW contests, if you are working on that novel or

chapbook, or just want to share space with other writers while you write, we want to invite you to come to this Saturday event. We just need to know if enough people are interested. So, grab your laptop, your pen and notebook, or whatever else you might use to write and contact Susan Moreland to let her know that you are interested. You can reach her by email at shetlage04@gmail.com. You do not need to be a

Saturday Writers member to participate, so invite all your writing friends as well! While we would get together on a weekly basis, you would not be expected to participate every week. Too much is never a good idea, even if it is too much of a good thing. Please let Susan know ASAP if you are interested, and we will keep you all updated on the time and location. Write on!

A Note from your Editor: Endings

Disclaimer: I promise that the title doesn't mean that I'm resigning my position as SW Newsletter Editor.

I am not good at endings. I have beloved TV shows I have never watched the last episode of. I have been known to stop reading a series toward the end, because it means that I have to say goodbye to my book friends.

I'm not good at endings in my day-to-day life, either. As some of you may know, I teach high school. Every year, I go through the end of the school year. By the time we have our May meeting, I will be finished with this current school year. Every year, I both look forward to this time of year and

dread it. We have teachers who are retiring or moving. Students graduate. I know that everything will change, and nothing will be the same as it was before. This year is especially poignant for me because in my current position, my first group of students who began their high school journey with me are also leaving as graduates.

As it turns out, I am equally as bad at endings in my writing. I currently have 3 books that I began and have not written endings for. I participate in NaNoWriMo every year, and once I hit 50,000 words and November 30, I'm done. It's an

exhausting marathon of writing, but so very worth it in the end.

A quote about endings from Seneca that comes to mind, which I know from a song in the 90s by Semisonic says "Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end." That advice seems particularly apt for me, both in my life and in my writing. Beginnings can only start after something has ended. We are continually making new beginnings, but we need to wrap up those endings first, no matter how painful.

Finish those endings so we can get to the good part: the new beginning.

—Beatrice Underwood-Sweet

Anthology Pre-Orders

The anthology is here! Get it while it's hot! The 2022 Anthology, *A World of Writing* is in production and will be available at the signing on May 31st. Pre-ordered copies of the 16th SW anthology will be distributed at the signing. After that date, you will need to arrange to get them from Diane How by phone (636) 240-6432 or email diane.h@SaturdayWriters.org.

Additional copies of the anthology may be purchased at the signing for \$18 per book.

The release party and book signing will be on Wednesday, May 31st at the Spencer Road Library Branch in St. Peters from 6-8 p.m.



A Word of Support for Open Mic Nights

When I joined Saturday Writers several years ago, I was incredibly insecure about my work. I had very little encouragement of my efforts to become an author and even after being a member for a year, I had attended only one meeting. I knew only one person in the club, and I had no intention of submitting anything to be critiqued...ever. Then, I decided to attend an Open Mic meeting

online. To my joy, Pat assured me that no one would criticize my work, nor would I be called upon to correct anyone else's poem or short story. What a relief! After listening for a few meetings, I finally worked up the courage to read something I was proud of. I found a patient audience of wonderfully supportive people who were like me, intent on improving their work. I not only found approval and acceptance, I found

community. Now I regularly submit my work in monthly competitions...not to win, but to improve my craft. One day soon, I hope to join a critique group now that my self-esteem as a writer has improved. Without the Open Mic Night where I met Pat, Diane, Brad, Donna and so many others, I would still be an insecure mess. Now I'm an insecure mess...with friends!

Rev. Kenneth Lee

March Contest Winners

POET LAUREATE CONTEST:

First Place: Carol Robertson
for *Mount Zion*

Second Place: Holly Elliot
for *A Refined Finish*

Third Place: Donna Mork
Reed for *The Fancy Cheese*

Honorable Mention: Robert
Walton for *Chateau Drowsy
Kitten*

Honorable Mention: Heather
Hartmann for *Morning After*

PROSE:

First Place: R. G.
Weismiller for *Vulpine*

Second Place: R. G.
Weismiller for *Come Monday
Morning*

Third Place: Jeffrey
Czuchna for *The Hating of Mr. Smith*

Honorable Mention: M. L.
Stiehl for *First Big Date*

Honorable Mention: Donna Mork
Reed for *See You Soon*

Honorable Mention: Mark
Vago for *Saturday Shuttle*

May Contest Rules

Theme: Ethnic Food

Prose: 2023-word limit

Poetry: 50-line limit

Begins: 4/29/23

Prose Deadline: 5/27/23

Poetry Deadline: 6/24/23

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

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

Upcoming Events

May Monthly Meeting: May 27th, Monique Danielle

May 31st: Anthology Signing at Spencer Road Library Room L, 6-8 p.m.

June Social Activity: June 10th, Potluck Picnic at Brommelsiek Park

June Open Mic: Wednesday, June 14th, 6:00 pm at Rendezvous Cafe

June Monthly Meeting: June 24th, Michelle Mason

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