

Saturday Writers Newsletter

September • 2020

Saturday
Writers



Writers Encouraging Writers Since 2002

A Chapter of the Missouri Writers Guild

A Nonprofit Organization / Corporation

www.saturdaywriters.org • info@saturdaywriters.org

Post Office Box 2093 • Saint Peters • Missouri • 63376

Mary Troy Explores Writing in Bewilderment with SW on September 26

In September, Saturday Writers will welcome award-winning author and University of Missouri-St. Louis writing instructor Mary Troy to discuss writing in bewilderment and stumbling toward truth.

So many of our experiences and observations leave us bewildered. We don't understand the actions and reactions of others. At times we



don't understand our own behaviors. But it is in these gaps between what we say and what we wish we had the guts to say, between what we do and what we want to do, and between who we are and who people think we are that writers stumble across truth in the human condition, and in the characters we create and the stories we tell.

Troy will use a myriad of

Continued on page 5—see Troy

Sign Up Now for 2020 Fall Workshops

Now that we know we won't be meeting in person, the Speaker Committee has finalized our Fall Workshop schedule with four offerings. These will be recorded and the recordings provided to paid attendees of each workshop. Pricing is lower than in the past because we aren't paying for a physical meeting venue—we're only paying speakers.

To attend, payment must be **received** prior to each event, either via Paypal, mailed check, or credit card over the phone (email Diane.H@SaturdayWriters.org for credit card option). Use the signup form at: <http://saturdaywriters.org/membership-form.html>

See pages 8-9 for descriptions of workshops offered. See page 9 for current workshop pricing.

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.

Members 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.



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The Pandemic Pudge

Have you grown flabby during the pandemic? Sort of like the freshman fifteen, the pandemic pudge has visited many of our homes, invading and taking up way more space than we'd prefer. You might ask, "Well, what else is there to do but eat?" Reasonable question, but I'm not talking about pudgy poundage around your middle. I'm talking about pudgy writing.

Just as we might need to loosen ours belt a bit after basking over home-baked bread dripping with decadence, our writing can bulge with flabby words. When you're first setting out on a new story, write with abandon. Slather on the butter (aka creativity), pull it out of the oven (aka your brain) and savor the delightful rush of rich aromas.

Then one day you look down and thousands of words look back—probably way more of them than you need to tell the story. Now it's time to go on a word diet. There are relatively painless ways to go about the first round of cuts and rewrites because there are certain filler words we all fall back on. Everyone has some "crutch" words. Here are several to add to your list as you self-edit. Do a search for each word and evaluate whether it's one you can afford to keep or whether it dilutes and takes away from the story.

That—you'll notice in my article to this point, the word "that" doesn't appear, although there might be plenty of places our brains might tell us to write it during a first draft. **That** is pernicious and usually unnecessary. Editor's trick? Read the sentence out loud, removing "that" as you do. If it still makes sense, cut the word.

Very (also applies to sort of, almost, rather, quite)—this word can ruin your diet in the same



Jeanne Felfe

way all that yeasty goodness does. It not only adds pudge, but is a good indicator of weak writing. If something is "**very**" anything, you can always write it better. Example—"The tree stood very close to the fence," *vs.* "The gnarly oak towered over the fence with only the width of a picket between them."

Began to/Started to—unless the action is interrupted, it's stronger writing to go straight to the verb. Example—"The baby began to cry," *vs.* "The baby cried." Or if the action starts and is then interrupted, show the interruption: "The baby began to wail, but stopped when the jack-in-the-box popped out."

Just—this used to be my anti-word-diet word, sprinkled liberally throughout as if serving up a plate of truffles. Using **just** is often *just* covering up a weak line (see how I did that?). Now if I use it, it's specific to a particular character and usually only in dialogue. "He just stood there," *vs.* "He stood silently, his expression blank." Go deeper and find a more creative way to express your idea.

Then—used judiciously, **then** is useful for showing the next in order of time. Example: "Suze ran past the corner, glanced over her shoulder, and then ducked into the alley." In the example, the sentence works fine without **then**. Avoid beginning too many sentences with then—it's almost never needed. Readers know intuitively that whatever is written next is what happens next. They don't need a guide like, "Then this happened. Then that happened." (And yes, I've seen it done that way.) As an editor, I will cut almost every single one used in this manner.

As with everything related to writing, there are exceptions to every rule. But keep in mind that writing tight, succinct, and savory stories can come down to word choice. Throw in random, pudgy words, and before you know it, you need to head back to the treadmill.

—Jeanne Felfe, President

Upcoming Events

Watch your email for Zoom information

September

Open Mic:

Tuesday, September 22, 7-9 p.m.

General Meeting:

Saturday, September 26, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.

October

Monday, October 5, 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Ryan Dalton Workshop: Build a Story Live and Creating a Sustainable Work Routine

Saturday, October 10, 9 a.m.-noon

Catherine Rankovic Workshop: Go Global—A Hands-on Exploration of Cultures

Saturday, October 24, 9 a.m.-noon

Ines Johnson Workshop: Serializing: Using the Structure of Episodic

Television to Craft Your Serialized Novel

Saturday, October 29, 6:30-9:30 p.m. Claire Taylor Workshop:

Nailing Character Motivation—Fiction and the Eneagram

October 22 thru December 13

Pen & Paint I Viewing: winning writing and the paintings they inspired on display at St. Peters Cultural Arts Centre. No reception, check Arts Centre website for hours.

DEADLINE: **Saturday, October 31!**

Pen & Paint Contest II

Theme: Anything Goes

Prose: 1000 Word Limit

Poetry: 50 Line Limit

Begins: 9/26/2020

Prose & Poetry Deadline:

midnight, 10/31/2020

Cost: Free to members.

You may enter only one entry per painting

The St. Peters Arts Council will provide 10 paintings to inspire Saturday Writers prose and poetry muses. Up to ten writers will be rewarded for their efforts by inclusion in Saturday Writers 2020 anthology. Watch SW website for details and to view paintings toward the end of September.

The Pearl

by Carol Roberson

We have all been fed a story
From birth for many girls
Of how a simple grain of sand
Can become a shiny pearl
While oysters may be forced
To do what oysters can
Nature's way is special
And has not to do with sand
Real beauty, rare and wild
Is built with layers over time
It exists in many colors
Many shapes, any size
People aren't different
Shallow beauty is all around
Perfection on the outside
With no substance to be found
But that kid who was on the sidelines
Always outside looking in
Has been quietly building layers
Around a treasure deep within.

June Prose Contest Winners

Reminder: All certificates will be held until the contest season ends and be mailed or handed out together.

First Place:

Denise Scott for "Slow Awakening"

Second Place:

Susan Gore Zahra for "Last Vintage"

Third Place:

Heather Hartmann for "Footloose"

Honorable Mention:

Diane How for "Shattered"

Honorable Mention:

Cathleen Callahan for "Broken Open"

Honorable Mention:

Donna Mork Reed for "Reach for the Stars"

Everything Children's Contest Winners

First Place:

Robert Walton for "Sockdolgizer"

Second Place:

Jeffrey Czuchna for "The Hickory Dickory Clock"

Third Place:

Heather Hartmann for "Summer Break"

Honorable Mention:

Billie Holladay Skelley
for "Food for Thought (Or Idiom Schmidium)"

May, June, July Poetry Contest Winners

First Place:

Cathleen Callahan for "This Rock"

Second Place:

Cathleen Callahan for "Surrender"

Third Place:

Joan Leotta for "Was he Talking to Me?"

Honorable Mention:

Nick Sweet for "Garage Band Rehearsal, 1966"

Honorable Mention:

Cathleen Callahan for "Healing Place"

Honorable Mention:

Heather Hartmann for "Life"

July Prose Contest Winners

First Place:

Susan Gore Zahra for "Resolutions"

Second Place:

James Ladendecker for "Unexpected Hero"

Third Place:

Susan Gore Zahra for "Anonymous K"

Honorable Mention:

Donna Mork Reed for "Hope"

Honorable Mention:

John Marcum for "2019—The Good Old Days"

Honorable Mention:

Kenneth Lee for "The Man Who Would Fly"

What Are the Big Ideas?

(Due to unexpected difficulties, we were unable to produce a newsletter in August. But, contests continued and Saturday Writers produced winning stories and poems. Here are some big ideas for both June and July.)

History Making Sense

I'm back again to introduce a couple of talented and successful writers. As always, they offer some helpful and interesting tips sure to tap into your right brain and stir a writing muse.

The theme for the SW June Decades Contest included 1980s and 1990s.

Rising to the top was Denise Scott with her winning entry, "Slow Awakening." Recent events involving George Floyd's horrific death and the protests that followed stirred Denise to write about a personal experience she encountered in 1992 when Rodney King suffered severe injuries at the hands of four officers. Her accounting invites the reader to "linger and look beneath the surface" in order to see "the weariness of addressing inequality and injustice."

Writing about sensitive subjects can be difficult. I asked Denise if she hesitated approaching the subject of racism. "I didn't have any hesitations at first because it was just my story. But as events unfolded with George Floyd and the protests, I did wonder whether I was qualified to speak about the situation, and I did get a feel for how carefully journalists have to choose their words. Do you ever wonder how your writing is going to read ten or twenty years from now? One of my biggest fears is that I will look back and realize that my writing sounded like I wrote it in seventh grade. Writing 'Slow Awakening' helped me process current events."

It was evident Denise did a great deal of research. I asked her to talk about her writing process and she shared some information that might be helpful to other writers. "I enjoy the researching of a topic—gathering facts, making discoveries. I start with an idea and notes on a napkin. Then I talk myself into sitting down and writing, doing the work. I like to call that the 'ugh' stage. As I continue, a funny thing happens, the synapses of my brain start firing like spark plugs, enabling me to come up with more ideas and word choices. I like to call this the 'stimulating' stage. I am now far enough into the writing to enjoy it and see it through to the end."

Denise enjoys being a part of a community of writers and closed our interview with a great piece of advice: "Commit to submit!"



Diane How

Robert Walton also won first place in the Everything Children Contest for his entry, "Sockdologizer." (I admit I'm relieved not to be expected to pronounce the title.) As a former history teacher, Robert strove to incorporate primary documents such as letters, diaries, and autobiographies

into his lessons.

When he retired, he began writing a novel about the Civil War. "Lincoln stepped to the front of the line and demanded to be a speaking character. He, along with Clara Barton, Frederick Douglas and fictional voices—including women and freed slaves—told my story. The assassination loomed at the end of the book, as it looms in every American's mind. Everyone, aside from the characters in my novel, knows that it is coming. I used that fact to heighten tension without actually dealing with the terrible event."

Robert became a member of SW this year. Because of his location and our virtual meetings, his in-person participation is limited, but he became acquainted with SW through our contests. "I write short stories in many genres and have a novel going. I write poetry when something smacks me between the eyes. My big project now is an SF screenplay."

Robert offered some advice to other writers. "Listen to your characters. They'll talk to you when you're writing well and when they speak, listen. In fact, stop everything and write down what they say. Also, keep it simple and never hesitate to cut words, sentences, or paragraphs—however precious—if they impede your story's flow."

§§§

Rocks and Resolutions

The July contest theme, 2000s & 2010s, stirred some interesting memories from many of our writers. Rising to the top to claim first place was Susan Gore Zahra's short story, "Resolutions." The title of this well-written and thought-provoking story captured my attention.

I asked Susan how she decides on the titles for

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Troy—Continued from page 1

examples to explore Joseph Conrad's assertion that the point of writing is to make us see the world, to create it, a tiny piece of it, our perspective of it, so that others can see from our point of view, at least for a time. Truth is contained here, is in the details in the world created.

Mary Troy is the author of five books of fiction—three collections of short stories and two novels: *Swimming on Hwy N*, *Beauties*, *Cookie Lily*, *The Alibi Cafe and other stories*, and *Joe Baker Is Dead*. She has won the USA Book award for literary fiction, the Devil's Kitchen Reading Award, a Nelson Algren award, a William Rockhill Nelson

award, and more. Her sixth book (as yet untitled) of new and selected stories will be published early in 2021. For more than twenty years, Mary taught in and helped mold the MFA Program at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. For ten years she was the editor of *Natural Bridge*, a journal of contemporary literature. Mary has won the University of Missouri system award for leadership, and the MO Governor's award for excellence in teaching.

Please Note: This meeting will be held virtually on Zoom. Watch your email for the meeting link.

—Sarah Angleton

Big Idea—Continued from page 4

her stories. "Titles are stuff of nightmares! I stick on some sort of working title. I pace and yell a lot. Sometimes, the title pops into mind when I get to the end of a story. 'Resolutions' was obvious from the beginning. The story takes place on New Years Day, 2000. A time of making resolutions, perhaps for a new century and new millennium."

Susan's wonderful sense of humor surfaced again when I asked how critique groups influence her final product. "Critiques always let me see where I have failed to communicate exactly what I intended." Feedback from the groups "often keeps me from totally trashing a story that needs a little stitching and bandaging instead of total plot or character transplant surgery. However, I do have a couple of stories sent back to pre-op to get them ready for major surgery."

Her two favorite writing resources are critique groups and Merriam-Webster dictionaries. Some of her advice for new writers is to attend meetings, even when not interested in the topic, attend poetry sessions to improve your prose writing, and take advantage of judges' critiques.

Congratulations, Susan, on another first place win and for your third place winning entry, "Anonymous K."

The Poetry contest included themes from May, June, and July. Congratulations to Cathleen Callahan for submitting the first place entry, "This Rock."

In fifteen lines and less than sixty words, she brought me to tears as I envisioned two lovers being separated "on the other side of earth...this rock." Cathleen shared more about her touching poem. "'The Rock' is a scene from the 60s when my first love left for Vietnam. I wrote to him every week while he was there, (with my toddler son playing

under the kitchen table) describing life on this side of the earth, 'This Rock,' in all its details to keep my beloved friend connected to his homeland and hopefulness. He did return. We've remained friends our whole lives."

Cathleen's master degree in Creative Writing focused on poetry. She believes it is important to study poetry and added some insightful thoughts. "I think poetry is like any art form—learn the basics and then let go, open to your own vision, your own voice. Let the poetry become the breath of the poet, which is different for each of us. I wouldn't any longer be able to name many of the poetic forms I learned long ago. The reality is that whatever opened me to receive the poetry that comes through me is now simply woven into my being. For me, poetry is a mystic experience. It writes itself through me. I simply open to its arrival."

I wondered about her process for writing poetry, and she said, "My process is to sit on my Mystic Deck, pay attention to the bees and butterflies, the hummingbirds, the hawks, the sky (I love the sky!), read books on any and everything that interests me, and, when a poem taps me on the shoulder, pick up my pen and journal and let it flow onto the page. A friend said to me yesterday that I don't just do poetry, 'You are poetry.'"

Her advice to others was as eloquent as her lovely poems. "Learn the basics. Then let go. Live life. Pay attention. Breathe! Open to the wonders of being alive. Write. You'll find your voice if you get out of your own way and let yourself be amazed by ALL! Joy, sorrow, laughter, tears, tragedy, rejoicing, light, dark...all of it."

Congratulations and thank you, Cathleen, for sharing your gift with Saturday Writers.

—Diane How

(Due to unexpected difficulties, we were unable to produce a newsletter in August, but we continued meetings via Zoom. Highlights from SW July and August meetings follow. You can now access recordings of meetings on the SW website.

Karen Cavalli Offered Insights on Writing about Extraordinary Encounters at SW July Meeting

We were privileged to have guest speaker Karen Cavalli. Her topic was, “How to Write Encounters with the Extraordinary.” In her own words, Karen offered, “guidance into a third realm” that we can access with our imagination. Has your character had an encounter with an extraterrestrial, a UFO, or perhaps an angel sent from Heaven?

Using examples from her own life, Karen explained what we as writers can be up against when tackling extraordinary encounters. When she began having experiences, Karen was ten years old. She wrote about them in a way that was natural to her—in her diary. One page would discuss a black and red entity who transported her to another place, while the next page would be about her teen idol crush, Donny Osmond. Writing was a release because she knew that speaking of these experiences would be taboo in her household.

Karen’s mother was from Missouri, and her father was in the military. As they moved from place to place, her family attended church more for a sense of community than for the biblical teachings. When she tried to talk about her experiences, she got, “the look.” Her family referred to her as the girl with “the alien trouble.” Sadly, when she began to write professionally, her pragmatic father asked her not to publish anything in his lifetime. Karen suggests that you approach these subjects in a light-hearted manner, expecting a bit of ribbing.

During the noon break, members got into a rousing discussion. Isn’t that what writing is all about, sharing our different ideas and perspectives with each other?

Part two provided practical considerations when writing and suggestions for sending your work out into the world. Karen tried to give us the words and language to describe the indescribable and make the topic consumable.

First, you have to identify whether you are writing about the extraordinary or the paranormal. What’s the difference? It is the human experience. The

extraordinary happens to you or to your character, changing you/them in some way. You might find this in a memoir or journal. You might write about an encounter with a spirit, angel, or even a demon. Maybe it was an encounter with a being from another world.

The paranormal changes the environment, although your character may be surprised or stunned. This writing is primarily found in fiction, stories about vampires, werewolves and other shapeshifters, monsters, or men in black.

Once you know what you are dealing with, you must determine the attitude of your narrator. Is he going to be open or close minded? Are they an observer or the experienter?

Now is a perfect time for this type of writing. Science and spirituality are closer together than they have ever been, media treatment being a major factor. Karen pointed out that since 2017, the New Yorker and the New York Times have printed stories about encounters with the extraordinary without ridicule.

Karen has an MFA in creative writing from the University of Alabama, where she studied with Margaret Atwood. Her awards include Outstanding Secondary Science Book for Young Adults. She has also been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. She lives in Savage, MN, and has taught classes at the University of Minnesota, as well as the Metamorphosis Center in MN. She helps students explore contemporary themes in mind-body-spirit and personal development.

Karen has short story fiction on Akashicbooks.com. She can be found on Youtube.com. Her newest book, *Undercover Goddess*, was released in July and is available on Amazon.com, along with two previous titles. You can reach out to her at kcgoodguide@gmail.com.

—Carol Roberson

Many Thanks
to the many
volunteers
who keep
Saturday Writers
encouraging
writers!



Writing Effective Dialogue

Engaged SW at August Meeting

Our August 29 speaker, Ryan Dalton, addressed Writing Effective Dialogue.

Great dialogue perfectly mirrors how people actually speak. This is FALSE. Great dialogue is a hybrid of realistic and stylized speech. Real speech includes *ums*, and *skips*, and *whisker tugs*. Written dialogue rarely includes any of those. It would be exhausting for your reader to include all the things people actually do when speaking, especially across the whole book. So include just enough to create a realistic and comfortable back and forth. Include scene direction to help create breaks and pauses.

Remember that people breathe. No one just spits out huge lines of speech. This impacts pacing and pausing. If a character speaks in a continuous flow, it won't ring true. Remember that during an action scene, your character is not going to be delivering a monologue.

Give readers something to see. Characters don't just stand there spewing a wall of words—at least not in most genres. Balance the action with the dialogue. This helps with pacing. Keep the senses in mind—visual, sound, smell—as well as setting. When done well, readers forget they are reading. Give them enough so they can fill in the rest. An occasional onomatopoeia (such as *Pop!* or *Bam!*) is fine, just don't overuse. With body language, less is more.

Consider over-writing in the first draft, then carve away. Make sure the action beats don't detract from the scene or slow it down. Read them aloud looking for too long of a pause. Keep point of view in mind and avoid head hopping. Your POV character can see a facial cue and make an assumption as to what it means, but doesn't really know. Misinterpretations can make for an interesting scene.

Great dialogue reveals character. The way a character speaks is part of their identity through the words they choose and the manner in which they use them. If you really know your characters, you can use dialogue to help the reader know them. Keep in mind that trying to differentiate between them too much can make them all seem like caricatures.

Characters reveal each other. Put two very different characters together and let them play off each other, provoking reactions. The reaction to the provocation shows who they are.

Dialogue style should be rooted in the story you're telling. Setting and genre create an expectation, so be creative within those bounds. You can certainly do unique things within a genre, just keep in mind how genre and setting affect each other.

What works in a sci-fi fantasy, may not work in a romantic comedy.

Ryan solicited a few pieces for attendees to critique before opening a Q&A session.

What kind of punctuation do you use for pauses? There isn't one rule; it depends on the pace you're trying to set. An ellipsis might work for a verbal pause, an em dash to cut someone off. However, don't overuse any of the different styles.

Does the dialogue create the story or does the story create the dialogue? This is a symbiotic relationship and depends a lot on the genre and whether it's plot-driven or character-driven. But dialogue and story fuel each other.

Does an author know the direction of a story at the start? Depends on whether you're a pantser or a plotter. Ryan defined a plotter as someone who plots the story in advance, and a pantser as someone who plots as they go, "by the seat of their pants." Neither is superior to the other—each is simply a personal choice. Keep in mind that everyone does the same amount of work, it's just whether it's done on the front end or the back end.

—Jeanne Felfe

What Does It Take . . .

to keep Saturday Writers going? Well, yes, it does take dues. But this is not a fundraising appeal.

To keep SW functioning requires a team of volunteers. Some work front and center. President Jeanne Felfe, project manager extraordinaire, emcees meetings, lines up speakers, and tags people to share their talents. Pat Wahler, vice president, plans open mics and other social events. Heather Hartmann keeps the website up and functioning, as well as coordinating contests and now recording our online meetings. Sarah Angleton, secretary, sends out emails for events, including links to online meetings. Treasurer Diane How not only manages our money—this year she took care of distributing our 2019 anthologies from her home. Membership chair, Denise Wilson, keeps our rolls up-to-date. Rose Callahan manages publicity.

When we meet live, Bob Weismiller and crew see that we have refreshments. Tammy Lough sets up our information table.

Behind the scenes, work-in-progress hosts have met extra challenges this year in finding ways to keep critique groups functioning during a pandemic. Susan Moreland distributes the email critiques. Bradley Watson produces our anthologies with the help of a team of proofreaders.

My special thanks go to newsletter contributors, photographers, and proofreaders.

By encouraging each other, we add words of joy, understanding and wisdom to our corner of the world.

—Susan Gore Zahra, Editor

It's Time to Zoom into SW Fall Workshops!

All 2020 Fall Workshops will be conducted via Zoom and recorded (recordings provided to paid attendees). If you don't have access to the internet at home, many cafes are now open, and the Spencer Road Library offers free WiFi in the parking lot. Since there won't be a "door" for night-of payments, workshops must be ***paid in advance*** either via the online form and Paypal, mailed check, or credit card over the phone (email Diane.H@SaturdayWriters.org for credit card option). Please make note of times as they may be different for each workshop. (See next page for current pricing.)

Monday, October 5, 6:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

Ryan Dalton: Build a Story Live combined with Creating a Sustainable Writing Routine

Workshop Description: Join Ryan Dalton for Build a Story Live, in which the author will use crowdsourced suggestions from you, the audience, to guide the creation and outlining of a brand new story live and in (virtual) person. A highly interactive workshop with lots of audience participation, Build a Story Live provides a snapshot of the story creation process. After which, author and audience will discuss the process and break it down into usable tips for story creation. The discussion will also include tips for establishing and maintaining a sustainable writing routine.

Presenter Bio: Ryan Dalton is author of *Remember Me*, *Archie* (Lerner, 2021) and the Time Shift Trilogy (North Star Editions, available now). He splits his time between writing books, fighting crime at night, and hanging out in his awesome underground lair. Please don't tell anyone he's Batman. It's a secret.

Saturday, October 10, 9 a.m.-noon

Catherine Rankovic: Go Global—A Hands-on Exploration of Poetry and Cultures

Workshop Description: For this unique Saturday Writers workshop, Catherine will provide the English-language frameworks from selected poets and cultures. She will write alongside you and encourage an exchange of ideas. Everyone translates uniquely, so there is no right or wrong—but the differing results will be multi-faceted and fascinating. We hope you will share. We will also profile the original poets or sources, or view existing English translations.

Presenter Bio: Catherine Rankovic, M.F.A. Washington University, studied poetry writing with Tess Gallagher, Stephen Dobyns, John N. Morris, Eric Pankey, and Donald Finkel, and taught numerous creative-writing courses and workshops at Washington University, UMSL and on the master's level at Lindenwood University, as well as community workshops. She's published a lot of her poetry and is a full-time freelance writer and pre-media manager.

Saturday, October 24, 9 a.m.-noon

Ines Johnson: Serializing: Using the Structure of Episodic Television to Craft Your Serialized Novel

Workshop Description: Shows like *Scandal* and *The Walking Dead* pride themselves on the jaw dropping final few seconds of the show, which have viewers eager to tune in the next week. Never hear another complaint about a cliffhanger ending again when you learn to plot your serialized novel like a season of a television show. Let veteran television writer, Ines Johnson, teach you her twelve-point method to structure each episode of your serial. Then go further by planning the six to twelve episodes of the season of your story.

Presenter Bio: 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.

Thursday, October 29, 6:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

Claire Taylor: Nailing Character Motivations—Fiction and the Enneagram

Workshop Description: The trick to three-dimensional characters that you and your readers "just click with" is all in the motivations. But establishing clear core motivations for your characters can seem overwhelming. Not with the power of the Enneagram to help, though.

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Workshops—Continued from page 8

This workshop covers the basic nine types of the Enneagram, along with their core fears and desires, to help you pick the right ones and know how to use them in your fiction! **NOTE:** This workshop has homework. Prior to the workshop, please take an Enneagram test and jot down your top three scores. Read up on those and pick ONE that seems the most like you. If you're unsure which best fits you, Claire is happy to help you ask the right questions to settle on one. You can take either the Enneagram test (\$12): www.enneagraminstitute.com or a free but less accurate test at <https://enneagram.bz>

Presenter Bio: Claire Taylor is a fiction strategist and a full-time indie author of 30 novels across multiple pen names and genres. Using her BA in English and a decade of professional writing and editing experience, she has created courses and consulting services that supercharge fiction authors who want to take their storytelling skills to the next level. She's a true believer that creative writing should be exciting and energizing, or else you're doing it wrong. She spends her free time reading, going on walks with her husband and dogs, and creating as much silly comedy as she can.

You can read more about the services she offers at www.ffs.media.

Special Pricing for 2020 Workshops!

As eager as we may be to gather in person, there is one benefit to virtual workshops: lower prices! Be sure to get your payment made in advance—you can't pay at the door if you're Zooming from home.

SW Member Pricing

- All 4 for \$40.00, when purchased together (\$10 each)
- Any 3 for \$33.00, when purchased together (\$11 each)
- Any 2 for \$25.00, when purchased together (\$12.50 each)
- \$15.00 each when purchased separately

Non-Member Pricing

- All 4 workshops for \$50.00, when purchased together (\$12.5 each)
- Any 3 for \$43.00, when purchased together (\$14.33 each)
- Any 2 for \$35.00, when purchased together (\$17.50 each)
- \$25.00 each when purchased separately

—Jeanne Felfe

SW Members-Only Experience Page Is Now Live!

Have you ever been creating a character and need to know more about something in the character's life than you already know? Want to write authentically about that topic? Want to ask a Saturday Writers member—someone you may already know? Have life experiences you would be willing to share with other members? Look no further!

All current members have been provided password-protected access to our “secret” page, where they'll be able to search quickly to find a member with the experience they are looking for. For example, if you search on “Project Management” or “Plants” you'll find Jeanne Felfe along with her contact information. Instructions for searching can be found on the page, but it's easy peasy. If you know how to do a search using the “find” feature on your browser, you already know how.

If you are willing to have other members contact you about your own experiences, please write a brief paragraph and email it to: Website@saturdaywriters.org

If you're not a current member, you can join (or renew) at: <http://saturdaywriters.org/membership-form.html>. If you think you're a current member, but didn't get the emailed announcement, contact: membership@saturdaywriters.org to

Heather Hartmann

Things I might have some knowledge in 😊: Candy kitchen(store) clerk; candy basket maker; bookstore clerk; nanny; mailroom clerk-for a small business; paraprofessional for special needs(mostly behavior); stay at home mom; long distance relationships; moving to a new state; amateur photography; practicing gratitude; KC Chiefs fan!

Contact email: hnhartmann@hotmail.com

[Heather Hartmann Membership Page](#)

Jeanne Felfe

Jeanne Felfe is willing to provide input on the following topics (in no particular order): crate training puppies; volunteering at an animal rescue; growing tropical plants; project management in IT; working for a giant corporation; being female in a male dominated field; daughter of a mentally ill mother; mother to a child with bipolar; life in a long-term, hetero, live-in, non-married relationship; energy medicine (Reiki, Pranic Healing, Medical Intuition); blended family; familial suicide and suicidal ideation; familial substance abuse; growing up in Texas; living near the beach; divorce; death of ex-spouse who is co-parent (this is a weird one since there is no word in the English language for it).

Contact email: health4u@swbell.net

[Jeanne Felfe Membership Page](#)

Join or Renew SW Membership Now for Special Pricing!

Saying that 2020 has not gone as expected for anyone is the understatement of the century. We worked hard to secure a beautiful venue and then were only able to meet there twice. We recognize that you, our members, have been unable to attend face-to-face meetings and events that you thought you'd be able to participate in.

While our Zoom meetings are well-attended and have proven to be valuable, they aren't quite the same as meeting in person.

We've heard the library plans to open meeting rooms in January 2021, but we don't know yet what restrictions there might be or when we'll be able to accommodate them.

Given this, and the fact that our meeting expenses are down since we aren't paying for a room, the board has decided to pass on some of the savings to you. The first way is on the membership renewal fee itself. Until midnight October 31, 2020, we will offer the following reductions:

- 2020 paid members who renew prior to October 31, 2020, can do so at \$25 (usually \$30)
- New members can join until October 31, 2020, for \$30 (usually \$35)
- Anyone who joined after August 1, 2020, is automatically renewed for 2021 at no charge (the cutoff for a new membership to apply to the following year is usually after September 30)
- Same Household Discount of \$5 off the total fee for two people living in the same household who join or renew at the same time remains

The second way is that everyone who either renews or joins by October 31 will receive an **extra free contest entry** (in addition to the one all virtual Holiday Party attendees will receive). And all renewal/new memberships will be **entered to win a \$50 gift certificate** to Amazon or a local bookstore—winner's choice.

Payment must be received or postmarked by October 31, 2020.

The new form is now up on the website at <http://saturdaywriters.org/pay-membership-dues.html>.

Complete Price List for 2021 Membership

- **Special** Renewed Memberships paid before midnight October 31, 2020—\$25
- Renewed Memberships paid from November 1, 2020 to February 28, 2021—\$30
- Renewed Memberships paid after March 1, 2021—\$35
- **Special** New Memberships paid before October 31, 2020—\$30
- New Memberships paid after October 31, 2020—\$35
- Don't forget the Same Household Discount of \$5 off total membership for two members of same household

You may complete the Membership Form on page 11 to update your information and mail it in with payment, if desired. Forms also may be completed online at: <http://saturdaywriters.org/membership-form.html>

Pay via Paypal, or via credit card by contacting diane.h@saturdaywriters.org to make arrangements, or mail a check.

Advantages of Becoming a Member of Saturday Writers

- Network with our 100+ members covering all genres
- Attend regular **monthly meetings** with guest speakers at no charge
- Participate in our **members-only** discussion/critique groups and events
- Enjoy **discounts** on
 - * Saturday Writers Fall workshops
 - * Saturday Writers contests
 - * Members-only writing-related services (coming in late 2020)
 - * Missouri Writers' Guild events
- Access to members-only
 - * Expertise database (LIVE Now!)
 - * Special events
 - * Write-ins
 - * Open Mic Nights
 - * Meet and Greet



Saturday Writers
PO Box 2093
St. Peters, MO 63376

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: _____ Date: _____

- ☐ I am a new member
☐ I am a current member renewing and updating information (only complete if updating information)

Email Address: _____
Keep email address current with our membership staff—all communications are emailed

Phone Number (s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Types of Membership & Renewal:

NEW MEMBERSHIP (any membership paid after August 1, 2020 will renew for 2021 at no charge)

- ☐ **SPECIAL New Membership \$30.00**—Paid before October 31, 2020
☐ New Membership \$35.00—Paid after Nov 1, 2020

2020 PAID MEMBER RENEWALS (if you weren't a paid member in 2020, see above for new membership)

- ☐ **SPECIAL Renewal Membership \$25.00**—Paid by October 31, 2020
☐ Renewal Membership \$30.00—Paid between Nov 1, 2020 and February 28, 2021
☐ Renewal Membership \$35.00—Paid after March 1, 2021

- ☐ **Same Household Discount**—\$5 discount off total cost of membership for two or more persons in same household who join/renew at same time.

How will you pay for your membership/renewal today?

(*Membership will not be active until it is paid and current)

- ☐ I want to pay by credit card over the phone (email diane.h@saturdaywriters.org to make arrangements)
☐ I will pay online with PayPal at <http://saturdaywriters.org/pay-membership-dues.html>
☐ I will mail my payment to: Saturday Writers, PO Box 2093, St. Peters, Missouri 63376

Area(s) of writing interest, genre(s): _____

Do you have any publishing credits you would like to share with us? (none required) _____

What are you hoping Saturday Writers can do for you? _____

On the Back Page with Tammy Creating Prose with Pizzazz

I don't know how you put your articles, short stories, novels together, but I am like a ... lasagna. Really. I am an obsessive layer-er. I write a line of crap even a dog editor would frown on and wonder if it can be salvaged or should it be pooper-scooped into a doggie dump bag, flicked with a Bic, and tossed onto my neighbor's stoop.

So, if I decide there's an inkling of a chance to make something out of the scribblings upon my screen, I re-read and attempt to rescue a sentence or two. Then I mark a deletion line through 99% of it and have a salvageable word like "the." Next comes the fun part. Take the recovered word, "the," and turn it into a publishable piece. Kidding.

The real Modus operandum:

First, just write. Have a topic in mind but write fast and furious all of the thoughts about the topic that come into your head. Then walk away and get some exercise. I go for a cookie and maybe some vanilla with fudge something ice-cream, but any exercise will do.

After your workout, re-read your work in progress (WIP) and weed out some of the mess and replace it with a better, more descriptive mess. You're making progress. Trust me. Add another layer, even if it sounds like a 5th-grader version and again, walk away, maybe outside for fresh air, or another healthy snack. Return to your WIP and note the third time back isn't really a charm, rather another layer of prose in an attempt, like Lysol, to cover something up. Finally, after adding the next layer, a touch of magic happens. Your one-time mess takes on the elements of a genuine story.



Tammy Lough

All kidding aside, I really want you to get this. Let's pretend you have a hankering to write a story and one of your scenes takes place at the ocean. The scene "stars" your protagonist and a friend. Before you begin the scene, jot down a list of observational sentences. What would you most likely encounter in this scene?

1. The ocean was blue.
2. A wave crashed down.
3. The tips of the waves were rounded.
4. The waves momentarily blocked the sun.
5. The curl of the wave appeared as silver stardust.
6. The edges of the waves were covered in sparkling tinsel.
7. We saw a surfer ready herself for the next wave.
8. The ocean breeze cooled our faces.
9. We could smell the seaweed from the shore.
10. We tasted seaweed and it was salty.

First, do you notice anything important within each sentence?

Sentence #1 creates the visual of *color*. Sentence #2 creates the *sound*, and then we have the *shape, action, a simile, another image, a sensation, a smell*, and finally a *taste*.

Easy peasy? Nothing about writing is easy, but if you include all or some of the above observations within your paragraphs, you will plant your reader splat-dab in the middle of your story. They may even rub themselves down with sunscreen if you are having a super-creative session.

For your next layer, dress up the words so they aren't basic and boring sentences, but a paragraph of descriptive prose from basic sentences. Then, create a story:

We sat next to each other on bright, cartoon-character beach

towels watching the azure-blue tips of the waves heave themselves to such heights as to momentarily block the sun. Then, a millisecond of near-silence before they crashed back to mother-ocean.

See how fun it is to create magic with words? Start basic and then add layers until you make PIZAZZ!!! (Read more about this writing style in Liam O'Flynn's *Writing with Stardust*.)

Writers Write!!!

—Tammy Lough

Saturday Writers Officers

President:

Jeanne Felfe

jeanne.f@saturdaywriters.org

Vice President:

Pat Wahler

pat.w@saturdaywriters.org

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Sarah Angleton

sarah.a@saturdaywriters.org

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Diane How

diane.h@saturdaywriters.org

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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

Assistant: Tom Klein

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 Jacobsmeier & Sue Fritz

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