



WOMEN Writing the West

www.womenwritingthewest.org

Volume XI, Issue 3

Fall 2004/Winter 2005

Conference '04 Honors Willa, Marks Our 10th Year

WWW Conference 2004 — Celebrating a Decade of Writing, A Century of Willa Cather — is all over but the shoutin' now, but the memories of Albuquerque linger on. Smiling faces, heartfelt hugs of greeting, poignant farewells. There's never enough time for good friends.

We honored our WILLA winners at the Saturday evening banquet and Keynote Speaker Pam Muñoz Ryan — one of our own — had us hanging on every word. Likewise, we recognized our WILLA finalists at the Saturday luncheon. Shirley Raye Redmond, also one of our own, was our guest speaker. See page 3 for her most welcome writing tips that smack of cowgirl wisdom.

Special guests at the banquet were three librarians from New Mexico who helped judge the 2004 WILLA competition: Daria Labinsky, Nonfiction; Gayle A. Travis, Children's/YA; and Pamela Smith, Historical Fiction.

Our first-ever raffle stole the show, all thanks to our Raffle Queen Extraordinaire, Gwyn Ramsey. That she hustled her bustle for the cause of WWW and the WILLAs is a known quantity. Her efforts, ultimately, garnered \$1155 for the WILLA Fund.

Treasurer Jacque Boyd and her assistants aptly handled registration so that it went off without a hitch. She reports 59 pre-registered, with 3 or 4 walk-ins on Saturday. We had 65 present for the networking dinner on



WILLA winners: Gladys Smith, Linda Lawrence Hunt, Dorothy Allred Solomon, Ann Parker with WILLA Chair Cindy Massey and President Gail Jenner.

Friday night; 70 for lunch on Saturday; and a whopping 85 at the banquet. In our midst were three guest agents, three guest editors, and 12 WWW members who served as speakers or panel presenters. A special thanks to members who served as panel moderators — particularly those who were pressed into service at the last minute, some for the first time. GREAT JOB GALS!

Extra added attraction: member/panelist Tuda Libby Crews served cookies (her own) and milk at her panel AND at the booksigning.

Speaking of the booksigning: We sold a total of 131 books.

Of note from the evaluations:

- The raffle received rave notices!
- Liked the agents & appointments. Do it again.
- More editors.
- More marketing.
- Friday night networking dinner is a plus!
- More space for the Book Sale.

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And much more!

SUSTAINING MEMBERS

These members have chosen to contribute dues beyond the regular annual dues to help WWW sustain its activities for the benefit of all members. We thank them for their generosity.

Waynetta Ausmus
Jacque Boyd
Becky Chavarria-Chairez
Melanie Chrismer
Milt Cunningham
Jennifer Curington
 (writing as Morgan J. Blake)
Sandra Dallas
Lynda K. Freeman
B.J. Harris
Gail L. Jenner
Jane Kirkpatrick

Berneda J. "Bernie" Koller
Bonnie Leon
Suzanne Lyon
Priscilla A. Maine
(B.) Lou Mandler
Cynthia Leal Massey
Jean Henry Mead
Pat Cary Peek
Nell Brown Propst
Dorothy N. "Dottie" Ramsey
Paige Ramsey-Palmer
Sarah Byrn Rickman

Fern Robbins "Eastern Cowgirl Fern"
Janet Robertson
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www.womenwritingthewest.org

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 and Jane Kirkpatrick

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Writing Tips That Smack of Cowgirl Wisdom

By Shirley Raye Redmond

Along the way, I've gleaned a few writing tips that smack of cowgirl wisdom, but it sums up my thoughts on writing so well:

- (1) Making it as a writers is like busting broncos — you're gonna get tossed. A lot. Get up and try again.
- (2) Pursue your writing dream as if it's a critter that's gotta be roped in a hurry before it gets away.



- (3) Nothing you can't spell will ever work.
- (4) When it comes to writing projects, don't worry about biting off more than you can chew. Your mouth is probably bigger than you think it is anyway.
- (5) It's better to have steady royalty income than to be beautiful.
- (6) There are two theories for arguing with an editor back East — neither of them works.

— Shirley Raye Redmond was the luncheon speaker at the 2004 conference and offered these tips during her talk. She was kind enough to copy us on them.

Conference '04 Marks Our 10th Year ...

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- More help at Book Sale checkout.
- More advertisement for the Book Sale at the conference hotel.
- Please return the city tour.

Alice Trego, our VP conference, **THANK YOU FOR A JOB WELL DONE!** And to your significant lugger Jim, otherwise known as Mr. Carryall, our gratitude and appreciative pats on the back.

And giving Alice the last word: "I am as pleased with this year's

conference as the attendees were. My committee and I implemented a few new ideas that garnered positive responses, and these ideas might well be the beginning of new traditions for future Women Writing the West conferences."

We did Willa proud!

— Sarah Byrn Rickman,
2004 Newsletter Editor

See you next
year in
Ft. Worth,
October 21-23

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Shirley Raye Redmond



Alice and Jim Trego



Multicultural panel — moderator Jane Kirkpatrick, Cynthia Leal Massey, Harriet Rochlin and Carolyn Wing Greenlee.



Pam Muñoz Ryan

New Member Inspired By WWW Encounter

By Dawn Wink

Thank you so very much for all of the energy, time, care and hard work you put into making this year's conference so wonderful. I attend many conferences and this one stands out as unique on so many levels.



Dawn Wink

I loved the sense of sisterhood and all being kindred spirits that comes by virtue of the fact that we're all women, writers, and passionate about the West. I was struck after the first evening to recall an earlier conversation I'd had with about five other people in which we covered everything from team penning to writing, to what kind of ranches our families ran. In my life, those conversations usually take place with entirely different groups of people. I loved that we shared a truly unique understanding of trying to be a woman balancing these various complexities and responsibilities in our lives.

I have never before in any other conference experienced such a warm and enthusiastic energy as at WWW. The women in this group are amazing! I came away so inspired by all of the passion of the members toward their individual writing projects, as well as for WWW as an organization.

I was impressed with the attention to detail that helped to create a warm and peaceful environment. The lottery for the gifts was a wonderful way to not only raise money, but create a sense of community. Also, the gifts were beautiful! I drove down from Santa Fe every morning worrying that I'd be late for that morning's raffle! Such a

presence of beauty and fun that brought to our raising money for the organization.

Also, the gorgeous meals served to us that were included in the conference. Perfect. Usually at conferences you either starve or wander around until you find some horrible little sandwich shop in a strange city. I loved that, for once, we women were served a beautiful meal that we could actually sit through the entire meal and enjoy! This helped to make the conference the nurturing experience that we women often won't make time for, yet find so nourishing for the spirit.

I was also quite struck with the formality of the WILLA Award banquet. What an important statement that makes regarding what an honor it is to receive the WILLA Award. I enjoyed just feasting my eyes on all of the colors, textures, stones, and beads of the beautiful clothing. Of course, those paled next to the radiant faces they framed. I loved the pride, passion, and peace that seemed to glow from within in every woman there.

The professionalism of the group awes me. What a group of dedicated and passionate professionals. I was so impressed with the fact that we're placing importance on attending trade shows, and getting the name of our organization and our members' books out into the public.

And the FUN! What a gathering of salty, strong, sassy women! I absolutely reveled in that energy. Not only was I enriched professionally by all of the information and inspiration, but came away brimming with sustenance for the spirit, as well.

I could go on and on, but shall close here for now. Thanks again for all of your hard work, passion,

and vision. I am so very thankful to have found and become a member of this group.

— Dawn Wink was a panelist/presenter at the 2004 WWW Conference and is a new member.

Copper Nickel Potential Market for Writers

The Copper Nickel, sponsored by the University of Colorado at Denver, accepts submissions of short fiction, poetry, essays, short plays, prose poems and other written experiments, and static visual art, especially photographs and slides of paintings and sculptures.

Any written material should be submitted by e-mail, in MSWord or RTF (rich text format) files, to coppernickel@denverpoetry.org. Written submissions will not be accepted by snail mail. Submissions should not exceed five poems or 7,500 words.

Simultaneous submissions are allowed, provided proper notice is given in the event they have been committed elsewhere. Include your name, e-mail address, and phone number on all submissions.

Selections from past issues are available on the web at www.copper-nickel.org.

The reading period for Copper Nickel 4 has begun and runs until May 1, 2005.

New President Takes Flight: Where Are We Going in 2005?

From Sarah Byrn Rickman
WWW President 2005

Amelia Earhart said, "Women must try to do things as men have tried. When they fail, their failure must be but a challenge to others."

Amelia wrote those now immortal words to her husband, George Palmer Putnam, on January 8, 1935, days before she became the **first person, man or woman**, to fly the Pacific Ocean solo from Hawaii to California. Her words reach far beyond aviation, and far beyond womankind's struggle for equality. They speak to risk-taking and the willingness to do so.

I offer to you that Amelia Earhart — born, literally, on the western bank overlooking the Missouri River in Atchison, Kansas — was a woman of the west. And what a pioneer she was, though of airplanes rather than the Great Plains.

On Oct. 24, 2004, I embarked on a journey. Nothing so grand as a solo flight across an ocean. But, metaphorically speaking, a flight somewhere and certainly into the unknown. As your new president, I am — in some respects — flying solo in my personal undertaking. But because I have you — the membership of WWW flying with me — I am not alone. Each new president of this organization brings with her goals and aspirations. Likewise, we bring our own personal strengths, weaknesses and, yes, foibles. You may have to, at times, put up with mine. I have no idea where this year will take us — or me personally — but I am looking forward to the ride.

Gail Jenner, my immediate and MOST able and intuitive predecessor, sent this anonymous quote to last year's board via e-mail — at a time we all needed a lift. We have all copied it and repeated it often.

Life's journey is not to arrive at the grave safely in a well-preserved body, but rather to skid in side-



President Sarah with Gwyn Ramsey

ways, totally worn out, shouting, "Holy shit! What a ride!"

I'd rather like to take that on as my motto — our motto, if you will — for WWW in 2005.

So, where are we going in '05?

To BEA — Book Expo America — in The Big Apple New York City, June 3-5. Cindy Massey, Jane Kirkpatrick and Suzanne Lyon are ably co-chairing that endeavor.

My able successor-to-be, President Elect Jane Kirkpatrick, and I will be looking into other potential venues for this coming year, including the possibility of encouraging some grass roots participation in state Book Fairs, informal regional gatherings of WWW members, etc.

Marketing VP Donna Druchunas is looking into some creative ways that we might "market" WWW — membership in our group, attendance at our conferences, interest in the books we write.

Conference VP Cindy Sandell, of Arlington, Texas, along with former Ft. Worth resident Jacque Boyd (also WWW treasurer) and Jane Kirkpatrick, are already working on the 2005 conference, to be held at the Fort Worth Plaza Hotel and Convention Center in downtown Fort Worth, Texas, October 21-23. Put it on your calendar **NOW!** Those of you who missed our 2004 conference in Albuquerque, missed a really really **GOOD ONE!**

Newsletter editor Alice Trego will be investigating the possible redesign of our newsletter, and what that would entail, as well as other potential changes. And she already has an impressive list of volunteer article contributors and writers willing to take on assignments. If you wish to add your name to that list, please e-mail Assistant Editor Mary Trimble at trimble@camano.net.

Catalog Editor Melanie Chrismer is already at work on the 2006 edition. Look for the application and requisite paper work in the NEXT issue of the WWW newsletter.

The WILLAs! Gail Jenner has taken the reins from '04 chair Cindy Massey and is gathering books for our growing competition. Word of the WILLAs is spreading, ladies. If you have a book published this year — 2004 — featuring a woman's story set in the West, please consider entering it, or having your publisher enter it. Contact Gail at gforini@sisqtel.net with questions.

Our ListServ is thriving. Kudos to Priscilla Maine for that. Our Web site is fantastic! Applause for Doris Eraldi for her efforts. These are two of our unsung heroines. And welcome WWW's new secretary as well, Wendy Baker.

Beginning with this year's

...Continued on page 11

The WILLA Winners and Their Books

By Cynthia Leal Massey

This year's WILLA winning authors and books were honored at the WWW 10th Annual Conference held at the La Posada de Albuquerque, New Mexico, Oct. 22-24.

Winners in each category were awarded a trophy, a cash award of \$100 and gold embossed book emblems. Finalists were awarded a plaque and silver embossed book emblems. Editors of the WILLA Winner books receive a commemorative plaque.

Following are the 2004 honorees with a comment from a librarian judge:

Contemporary Fiction

WINNER: *All Over Creation* by Ruth Ozeki (Penguin Group, USA)

"Ozeki's novel is a beautiful, succulent work, infused with activism and a dose of genetic engineering. Set in the potato fields of Idaho, Ozeki has created a story of family and human foibles. She weaves a compelling drama threaded with controversial topics such as bioengineered foods, abortion, and pesticides."

FINALIST: *Unpaid Dues* by Barbara Seranella (Scribner)
"Seranella provides a story that bites with reality, is suspenseful, yet not derivative. The main character is completely believable as a strong western woman. An engaging and entertaining read."

FINALIST: *Desert Wives* by Betty Webb (Poisoned Pen Press)
"Webb's take on polygamy along the Utah/Arizona border is an absolute page-turner. The desolate



WILLA finalists: Ellen Waterston and Ginger Wadsworth

landscape gives birth to a mystery that is ripe with suspense, intrigue, and fascination for a way of life not often portrayed in works of fiction."

Historical Fiction

WINNER: *Silver Lies* by Ann Parker (Poisoned Pen Press)

"*Silver Lies* is a masterful piece of historical mystery fiction set in the Leadville, Colorado, gold rush. Ms. Parker paints a memorable portrait of the raucous frontier town. The characters are mysterious, scamming the reader as well as each other. This novel is well researched, well written and a good read, too.

FINALIST: *Matchless* by Jane Candia Coleman (Five Star/Gale Publishing)

"*Matchless* paints a sympathetic portrait of the trials and tribulations of the first Mrs. Horace Tabor, Augusta, an easterner transplanted to Colorado. The story reflects not only Augusta's story, but also the stories of other women who followed their husband's pursuit of riches and adventure. The rags to riches story of the Tabors is intertwined effectively with the growth of the West."

FINALIST: *Fireweed: A Woman's Saga in Gold Rush America* by Carolyn Evans Campbell (Georgetown Editions)

"*Fireweed* is a riveting story from

beginning to end about the adventures of a group of families moving out West. Campbell uses the story of Jenna to tell of the California Gold Rush, California's struggle to deal with statehood, and the rights of native peoples against the white man's longing for riches."

Memoir/Essay

WINNER: *Predators, Prey and Other Kinfolk* by Dorothy Allred Solomon (W.W. Norton)

"This book reads like the finest coming of age fiction; I could not put it down. Ms. Solomon chronicles growing up in America in a polygamous family. Solomon, the 28th of 48 children, did not possess a birth certificate, since her parents were not considered married by either the government or the mainline Church of Latter Day Saints. She has transmuted the pain of her childhood secrecy and outsider status into this uniquely perceptive portrait of growing up in 20th century America."

FINALIST: *Then There Was No Mountain: The Parallel Odyssey of a Mother and Daughter Through Addiction* by Ellen Waterston (Roberts Rinehart Books)

"This is such a gripping, heartfelt moving memoir of the struggle of a mother whose unflinching support and love for her daughter helps her daughter through drug addiction. An inspirational affirmation of a mother's love."

FINALIST: *Girl from the Gulches: The Story of Mary Ronan* as told to Margaret Ronan, edited by Ellen Baumler (Montana Historical Society)

"An uncommonly descriptive memoir of a young woman growing up motherless in the 19th century, in the care of a father making his liv-

The WILLA Winners and Their Books

ing where the jobs were, including mining frontier towns in Colorado and Montana.”

Nonfiction

WINNER: *Bold Spirit: Helga Estby's Forgotten Walk Across Victorian America* by Linda Lawrence Hunt (University of Idaho Press)

“Using few primary sources, Hunt tells the little known story of Helga’s walk across America. The book is a fascinating and powerful narrative of a very courageous and determined woman. A memorable book.”

FINALIST: *One Woman's Political Journey* by Lynn Musslewhite and Suzanne Jones Crawford (University of Oklahoma Press)

“A well-balanced book relating Kate Barnard’s successes as well as failures in social reform in Oklahoma. Kate was a progressive dedicated to reform and the first woman in the United States elected to a major political office. A very readable and scholarly biography.”

FINALIST: *A Widow's Tale: The 1884-1896 Diary of Helen Mar Kimball Whitney*, edited by Charles Hatch and Todd Compton (Utah State University Press)

“Helen Mar Whitney’s diary offers a fascinating look into the life of a woman who was a devout Mormon, a struggling writer, and a mother who was devoted to many members of her large, extended family. As a work of scholarship, *A Widow's Tale* is unsurpassed.”

Original Softcover

WINNER: *Deliverance Valley* by Gladys Smith (Stoneydale Press)

“Finely drawn characters, vivid descriptions of horses and the countryside, and a suspense-filled plot intertwine in this story of the widow Jessie Tate who struggles to balance responsibilities with emotions in a harrowing

journey across the wilderness of early day Montana.”

FINALIST: *The Scout* by Lynna Banning (Harlequin Historicals)

“In this atypical wagon train story, Constance Weldon falls in love with Major John Montgomery on their trip along the Oregon Trail, but his past and her selfish sister are obstacles to their love. Events of their journey are depicted in journal entries and a narrative that features colorful conversations, realistic descriptions and complex and engaging characters.”

Poetry

WINNER: *Original Fire* by Louise Erdrich (HarperCollins)

“Erdrich’s precise and vivid poetry reinforces themes in her prose as narrative gathers together emigrants from Europe and Native people. This book is stunning in the immediacy of the language and sharp observation.”

FINALIST: *Time Not Measured By A Clock* by Carole Jarvis (Cowboy Miner Productions)

“Reading Carole Jarvis’ poems may be the next best thing to cowboying on a Western ranch breaking broncs and riding on a round-up. Long after I’d finished the book, haunting stories reverberated in my mind like thunder on ‘The Phantom Trail.’”

Children's/Young Adult

WINNER: *Rodzina* by Karen Cushman (Clarion Books)

“I loved this endearing, determined character who is full of both grit and compassion. Quality writing that displays true understanding of the orphan’s plight and how women were regarded in the late 1800s.”

FINALIST: *Meadow Lark* by Mary Peace Finley (Filter Press)

“This is an original and exciting tale of a brave Mexican girl, Teresita Montoya,

age 13, journeying from Taos to Independence. Its unique perspective from the main character captures the courage, danger and unique political climate of the time.”

FINALIST: *Words West: Voice of Young Pioneers* by Ginger Wadsworth (Clarion Books)

“This book portrays the West in a real and personal perspective through the actual diaries and writings of young pioneers. Every aspect of the trip west is explored through the young, innocent, and honest eyes of the children who were there.”

It is not easy – this process of writing books that enchant readers. It is often lonely and is almost **always** the hardest work for the least money in one’s life. As Willa Cather wrote in *Song of the Lark*,

“Artistic growth is, more than it is anything else, a refining of the sense of truthfulness. The stupid believe that to be truthful is easy; only the artist, the great artist, knows how difficult it is.”

Congratulations to the 2004 WILLA Winners and Finalists!

— Cynthia Leal Massey, a former WWW president, served as chair of the WILLA Literary Awards for 2004.

WWW Captivates Upper Midwest Book Buyers

*Editor's note: The following report from Dianne Gray on the Upper Midwest Booksellers Association trade Fair — held in Minneapolis/St. Paul October 2-3, 2004 — is a complete and detailed account of a book trade show. With Dianne's permission, we are printing it ALMOST in its entirety here — for future reference for ALL trade show chairs. Working with her were **Ida Mae Ireland, Diane Elliott and Linda Lawrence Hunt.***

If success can be measured by numbers, here's how the weekend played out:

- 2005 Catalogs; 141 given out
- Newsletters: 74
- WWW Brochures: 57
- 2004 WILLA Postcards: 33
- 2003 WILLA Postcards: 24
- WWW Business Cards*: 100

*Dianne Gray specifically created the WWW Business Card for UMBA.

The strategy behind the numbers: Everyone on the Trade Show floor wore a color-coded badge: Booksellers – Blue; Exhibitors (publishers, distributors, literary organizations) – Red; Sponsored Authors – Yellow; all others – White. We paid careful attention to the color of the badge and marketed the promotional materials as follows, though there were lots of variations:

1. We promoted the catalog – to **EVERYONE**
2. Our primary focus for **BOOKSELLERS** was the catalog, of course, plus the WILLA Award postcards.
3. If we were talking with **AUTHORS**, and their work was a fit for WWW, we offered

the Newsletter and the WWW Membership Brochure

4. If we were talking with an **EXHIBITOR**, we'd ask what kind of materials they worked with. If they published/distributed/promoted works that might be a fit for WWW, we offered a Newsletter, a WWW Membership Brochure, and a WILLA Award postcard, and then encouraged them to pass this information along to their authors and staff publicists.
5. The WWW Business Card was used exclusively as an insert into the books Diane Elliott signed in her Formal Autographing session.

How We Drew People In:

We didn't just let people stroll by – if they even glanced our way, we'd hold up a catalog and ask, "Would you like to learn about Women Writing the West?" Only a handful of people kept on going.

I think we would have been moderately successful with this strategy alone, but transformed success into Super-Success, through the generosity of Ida Mae Ireland. Almost every "Bookseller" who visited our booth, walked away, not just with a WWW Catalog, but also with a free, autographed copy of Ida Mae's cookbook. And, when Diane Elliott saw how many more people were coming by our booth, specifically to get a "free" book, she broke into the boxes of books her publisher had sent and started handing those out as well. Not to worry, she had enough for both the Formal Autographing and the booth.

Ida Mae, Diane, Linda, and I are in total agreement that the "free" books made all the difference in drawing booksellers to our

booth. Self-promotion – yes, but to the huge benefit of Women Writing the West. The booksellers received a free book only AFTER we'd talked to them about the WWW organization, only AFTER we'd loaded them up with WWW promotional materials. We'd like to recommend this strategy for all trade shows. Volunteer authors could ask their publishers to supply the books, or self-published authors, like Ida Mae, could provide their own books as a way of generating interest and "orders."

Location:

We had a great location. Third aisle from the entrance, just to the right of center. Very "classy" neighbors. One table down was occupied by Harvard/Yale University Presses.



WWW Booth Volunteers: Left to right - Dianne Gray, Linda Hunt, Diane Elliott, and Ida Mae Ireland.

Recruiting New Members:

I'm sure we recruited a half-dozen or so new members. I met one of these gals in the parking ramp, of all places. She just happened to see my badge and started up a conversation. Another author wanted to sign up on the spot, and another is seriously considering the conference in Albuquerque. One was a self-published author from South Dakota – she'd paid for her own booth at UMBA, to market her books, and when she saw our cata-

...Continued on page 9

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

June 15 – November 10, 2004

Dorothy Alexander – Sayre, OK –
dordev@yahoo.com
Alice Blue – Edgerton, WI –
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Pinos Altos, NM –
(no e-mail listed)
Cheryl “Charlie” Romney-Brown –
Santa Fe, NM –
charlieb@earthlink.net
Rebecca Dorward – Aurora, CO –
beckycd@earthlink.net
Doris “Dewey” Woodland – Crooked
River Ranch, OR –
rides3@juno.com

* = joined at sustaining member level

WWW Captivates Upper Midwest Book Buyers

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log, she got very excited. And there were two gals who own a small publishing company in California.

Miscellany:

Two books sprouted feet and walked away – in spite of the fact that we had at least two people in the booth at all times.

There was one question that we were asked several times, for which none of us had an answer – What qualifies as “set in the West?” For lack of a definitive answer, we finally decided on “West of the Mississippi River.”

In Conclusion:

Ida Mae, Diane, and Linda were delightful to work with. And Ida Mae’s husband, Phil — he was charming. He

helped out by stuffing individual author materials inside the catalogs and inserting the WWW business cards into Diane Elliott’s books. Dear man even fetched our box lunches.

We had our ups and downs with this, but the frustrations fell away immediately when I entered the trade show floor. BOOKS and BOOK PEOPLE were EVERYWHERE! Hope heaven is like that!

— Dianne Gray, chair
UMBA Trade Show

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We’re Not Just Whistling ‘Dixie,’ WWW Invades the South

Anne Holt and I tried to pull a Sherman and take Atlanta. But it was strictly friendly fire, because we are both Southerners by birth. Anne was born in Virginia and I, in Tennessee. And here we were, two “Southern belles” of sorts spreading the good word about Women Writing the West at the Southeast Booksellers Trade Show (SEBA) at the Cobb Galleria in Atlanta, Georgia, September 11 and 12, 2004.

Save your Confederate money, ladies, the South’s gonna rise again!

The good news is, booksellers who like westerns or books with unusual twists were MOST interested in what we had to say and show. The bad news is, WWW just wasn’t a good fit for the mostly southern book trade. Honestly, too much “old South and new South” competition.

We took all the bookmarks and postcards that members had sent and stuffed them in the catalog in order to distribute them to booksellers. This got several authors’ names out and the bookmarks didn’t go to waste.

We gave out an estimated 100 catalogs and 66 newsletters! We didn’t do very well recruiting members. I had one woman ask me for an “Ask Me About Women Writing the West” button and I gave her mine — we had a couple of spares.

We enjoyed ourselves and WWW certainly benefited by our presence, even if we don’t choose to return.

— Sarah Rickman, Volunteer, SEBA Trade Show



Sarah Rickman and Anne Holt
took WWW to Atlanta

2005 WILLA Literary Awards

Capturing the Diversity of the Women's West

Entry deadline is February 1, 2005. The application fee is \$50 per entry.

The WILLA Literary Award is a nationally recognized award given to writers annually for books featuring women's stories set in the West. Women Writing the West, a non-profit association of writers and other professionals writing and promoting the Women's West, underwrites and presents the award. Only books **initially** published in 2004 (in any form) are eligible for the WILLA Literary Awards. Books previously released/published in ANY format (hardcover, softcover, e-books, CD, Internet downloads, POD, etc.) prior to 2004 are not eligible. All submissions must be made in bound hard copy form. Professional librarians select winners and finalists. Awards will be presented at the WWW annual conference in October 2005.

Please obtain guidelines before entering. Complete award information and guidelines (including information for books published in electronic formats) are posted for downloading on the WWW Web site: www.womenwritingthewest.org, or may be obtained by writing **Women Writing the West**, 8547 E. Arapahoe Rd., #J-541, Greenwood Village, CO 80112-1436.

Contact Gail Jenner preferably by e-mail at gfiorini@sisqtel.net, or by telephone at (530) 468-5331.

Application for the 2005 WILLA Literary Awards

Honoring Books Published in 2004

10

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone/Fax: _____ E-mail: _____

Title of Submission Published in 2004: _____

Author: _____ E-mail: _____

ISBN: _____ Publisher: _____

Publisher's Address: _____

Editor: _____ E-mail: _____

Please provide as much contact information as possible so that we may make appropriate notifications and/or request further information for promoting our award winners.

Category (Please choose one):

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Contemporary Fiction | <input type="radio"/> Historical fiction | <input type="radio"/> Original softcover (trade or paperback) |
| <input type="radio"/> Memoir/Essay Nonfiction | <input type="radio"/> Poetry | <input type="radio"/> Young Adult/Children |
| <input type="radio"/> Other Nonfiction | | Fiction & Nonfiction |

* WWW reserves the right to add or delete categories or to move entries to other categories, as needed.

Local newspaper/book page editor: _____ E-mail: _____

Please include the following entry form for a submission to be judged:

- A check payable to Women Writing the West for \$50 per entry.
- THREE non-returnable copies of each book entry, postmarked no later than Feb. 1, 2005, to:
 - Contemporary Fiction: Pamela Cosel 18930 Augusta Drive Monument, CO 80132.
 - Historical Fiction: Vella Munn 1223 Poppy Ridge Dr. Eagle Point, OR 97524.
 - Memoir/Essay Nonfiction: Anne Holt 2636 Mission Rd. #146 Tallahassee, FL 32304.
 - Other Nonfiction: Carolyn Niethammer 604 E. 1st Street Tucson, AZ 85705.
 - Poetry: Dawn Wink 19 Mimosa Road Santa Fe, NM 87508.
 - Original Softcover: Sherry Monahan P.O. Box 357 Willow Spring, NC 27592-0357.
 - Young Adult/Children's Fiction & Nonfiction: Kathleen A. Ernst 7307 Vista Court Middleton, WI 53562.

Each book may be entered in only one category.

Please complete one entry form per book entered. THIS APPLICATION MAY BE PHOTOCOPIED.

Catalog Time! Be Thinking About Your Ad, Listing

By Melanie Chrisher

Is it that time again already? Didn't we just turn everything in for the 2005 catalog? You betcha!

The Women Writing the West Catalog of Authors' Books is the crowning glory of almost an entire year's work. This project must begin about the time the previous year's catalog is just coming off the presses. So, here is a thumbnail of what is done to gather the titles and ads, and why.

Every time we start the catalog, the dates seem to be a bit off. But they're not. Think of the catalog term as a school term. It begins in the fall and carries through to the next year. This keeps the listings and the information correct and current with our trade show requirements.

If you read the WWW tradeshow parameters you will discover that our presence at these events is designed to professionally represent our members with newly released titles to publishers, bookstores, vendors, and other professional groups. It is a part of our regular marketing, and helps advertise the WILLA Literary Award, too.

The trade show information is important because your books cannot participate in the trade show unless you meet the requirements. **And one requirement is that each title at the shows must be listed or advertised in the current WWW catalog.** There are other requirements but this is where our catalog comes in.

So as not to miss out on the catalog for the coming year, here are some basic pieces of information to remember:

- Read the Listing Policy
- Fill out a 2005 WWW Catalog of Authors' Books Application for Listing &/or Advertisement
- Check all information—E-mail, Mailing Address, Category, Author's Name, Title, ISBN#, Publisher, Year of Publication, Description, Home State

- Circle New or Same Listing
- Include payment information
- Make a separate copy for each title
- Send form(s) and payment to Women Writing the West, c/o Melanie Chrisher, 9402 Logan Lane, Douglasville, GA 30135 (fax: 678/715-2835, phoebe5@bellsouth.net)
- Keep a copy of your application for your records
- Send application(s) prior to June 15, 2005
- Whether applying for a listing or an ad, check with your publisher to see if they will pay for an ad in the catalog. It never hurts to ask and they get the publicity, too.

If you follow these steps, you will increase your marketing share in the exposure with other WWW authors, and utilize your membership efficiently.

If you wish to have an ad, you must use a separate form from the listing. It is the author's responsibility to have the ad designed. You or your publisher may wish to have a graphic artist create it professionally. To submit an ad:

- Read the Catalog Advertising Policy
- Fill out the Advertisement Request form
- Send a standard ZIP disk or CD with the ad in HIGH-RESOLUTION electronic format (at least 300dpi). NO files off of the Web!
- Make the file as a .tif, .eps or .jpg ONLY - no pdfs or PC programs!
- Send a printed version of the ad for comparison (sharp black & white)
- Include a SAS-CD mailer if you wish to have the disk returned!
- Make sure all fonts are compatible with Mac
- Use good taste in your ad design
- Check your work
- Keep a copy of your ad for your records

- Send your ad, disk and payment to Melanie Chrisher (see address, fax, and E-mail above)

As your new catalog editor, I am excited about working with you and answering any questions you may have about the catalog. Look for the catalog applications in the next issue of the newsletter as well as on the Web site – www.womenwritingthewest.org.

— Melanie Chrisher is the editor of the 2006 WWW catalog.

New President...

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annual meeting, we have Administrator Joyce Lohse on board. Our former WWW secretary, Joyce has literally been doing both jobs for a year. Now, she is staff and will receive well-deserved compensation for her work. Our former administrator, Anne Nelson, continues as our accountant. Division of labor. Joyce knows where all the skeletons are buried and is invaluable keeping your president on track — and the rest of you too, most likely.

So, there it is. We're heading into 2005 and I'm looking forward to it. Climb on board and take the ride with me. It may be bumpy, but I can almost guarantee a good time.

Truth in Fiction

By Jane Kirkpatrick



Jane Kirkpatrick

A museum I belong to recently sent a letter to its membership saying they'd no longer be carrying "fiction" in their gift shop. People come to museums to be educated, they proposed, not entertained and therefore only

truth would be available. I think stories stimulate learning. People visit museums not only to discover what happened to others but to imagine how they might have managed under similar circumstances. As D.H. Lawrence once wrote, "The stories tell us who we are and who we will become." He didn't limit that insight to factual history, but to story mediated by memory and imagination.

As a writer of historical novels, I protested, but the management remained unmoved. Their position gave rise to thinking about what constitutes truth, especially stories based on a woman's truth in the American West.

Virginia Woolf said, "Women's history must be invented...both uncovered and made up." Imagination mixed with fact is essential for stories based on the lives of women. European men wrote down much of what we know about 19th century women. The Hudson's Bay employees observed through the filter of their experiences with mostly Caucasian women, so women of color are even less likely to have facts known about them that all can agree upon.

Oral histories offer accounts of women who lacked the means of

writing things down. But often an oral history cannot be "verified" and so is considered less truthful, less authentic. A reviewer once took issue with my mention in dialogue of pregnancy because "women on the trail didn't write such things in their diaries." That a woman failed to mention her difficult pregnancy is not to say she didn't have the experience. The speculation in story is not less truthful because we have only the delivery date as fact with the trials of the pregnancy left to our imagination.

I love biographies and reading historical accounts and journals. But I'm not alone in wondering not just what did that person do or when, but why and how did that event come about? These latter questions are the beginning of story, a word that comes from root words that mean both "history" and "the accounting of an event well investigated."

The many fine researchers, historians, professional and armchair scholars, genealogists and people passionate about their own family or regional stories, make it possible for novelists to put flesh and blood to the historical spines of our ancestors, to provide the possible answers for why a lone woman with her husband and two young children would be present on a fur trade (not trapping) expedition in 1810 or why in 1852 Ezra Meeker would record meeting eleven wagons turned east on the Oregon Trail, "all driven by women their men having died." At what point did those women know that life as they knew it had ended? How did they find new vision in this wilderness time? Now there's a story.

Stories well researched for "shared knowing," then deepened with speculation, make imagined stories as true as nonfiction.

Through fiction, award-winning authors such as JoAnn Levy have introduced thousands to the story of a Chinese woman in the west who used American courts for the first time to secure justice. Joyce Badgley Hunsaker, a well-respected historian, used fictional techniques in her historical work to help us hear Sacagawea speak and opened the door for children to treasure both ancestral stories and their own. True stories are a blend of fact and imagination.

Imagination appears within many historical accounts despite how much we may like to believe that all historical documentation is pure, annotated fact. One writer of first century Palestinian life, John Crossan, notes "memory reads like a story but it claims us like history." We believe that our version of what happened at the accident on the freeway is the right version despite ten other witnesses who remember it differently. Which account is historical? Which account is imagination? Which account is true?

Even Indian sign language for the word "memory" is "heart knowing," suggesting that we don't always remember the fact of an event, but we remember the experience, what our heart remembers.

In telling Marie Dorion's story, an Iowa Indian woman who had been part of the Astor overland expedition of 1811-12, I found three different men's versions claiming to record her actual words of what happened one winter in the Blue Mountains as she tried to keep her sons alive. They were all recorded as fact. In my story of her life, I tried to honor the "shared knowings" of these historians while speculating about what they'd failed to record: how she might have felt; where she drew her strength from; what she

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Interpreting the Past Through Fiction

By Kathleen Ernst

I dreamed of being a full-time writer for many years before finally achieving that status in 2004 (yippee!). Most of what I write is historical fiction. While working toward full-time status, I worked in environmental and museum education, and spent a decade creating educational programs for public television.

Along the way I met my share of critics. While working at a large historic site that employs a “living history” style of programming, I once was accused of perpetuating a “Disney-like fantasy” of the past. After I completed my lone nonfiction book, a social history for adults called *Too Afraid to Cry: Maryland Civilians and the Civil War*, the editor of a prestigious academic press who wanted to acquire the manuscript took me out to dinner to discuss the deal. His enthusiasm cooled abruptly when I mentioned that I had also written historical novels—and for children at that. (I took the manuscript elsewhere!)

Each to his own, of course. Museum programs and historical novels are not for everyone. I think those who condemn them, however, are forgetting that people have different ways of thinking and learning about history. If researchers and writers produce only nonfiction books, we run the risk of not engaging huge audiences.

When I was in college studying environmental and museum education, one of the classic resources was a slim volume called *Interpreting Our Heritage*, by Freeman Tilden. Among other things, he introduced “Six Principles of Interpretation,” basic guidelines he found helpful to bear in mind while planning any type of interpretive program. Although I don’t work in the museum world anymore, I find that Tilden’s ideas still permeate my writing; I am, after all, interpreting the past for modern readers. I think Tilden’s principles also can address the validity of historical fiction. Let’s consider:

1. Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.

Most novelists, I suspect, would nod their heads at that one. For historical novelists, I think the point is even more critical. When novelists successfully fictionalize the past, they create characters with emotions that resonate with modern readers’ personalities and experiences. That’s how readers who know nothing about the Old West come to care about the characters they’re reading about.

2. Information, as such, is not Interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.

I read nonfiction, and am often fascinated; but when I read historical fiction, I engage on a much deeper and powerful level. All historical fiction contains factual information. The best historical fiction elevates factual information by transporting readers to a time and place long gone. The revelation comes when the reader begins to imagine the experiences happening to them. What was it like? How did it feel? What choices would they have made in the same situation?

3. Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical, or architectural. Any art is in some degree teachable.

Writing historical fiction is an art, as well; combining the historian’s discipline and the novelist’s craft and magic.

4. The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.

My personal favorite. I hope readers enjoy my stories, and learn something along the way. More than that, I hope readers are provoked to truly

wonder about a time and place, to want to learn more, to imagine what it was like. Perhaps they will be provoked to read some nonfiction, or to visit an historic site. Perhaps they will be provoked to get involved with their local historical society, or to help preserve an old building or landscape that’s in jeopardy. That’s the power of a compelling novel!

5. Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part, and must address itself to the whole person rather than any phase.

At first glance, this may seem to have the most relevance to nonfiction. We’ve all read nonfiction that is little more than a collection of facts — valid, and interesting to specialists, but not heart-grabbing or thought-provoking in any way. My favorite nonfiction is written by good storytellers, writers who keep their facts straight but paint a whole picture that resonates on a human scale. When writing historical fiction, I also try to weave in enough of the “big picture” to allow readers to understand the larger historical and social context of my characters.

6. Interpretation addressed to children should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach.

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Children's Writing: An Open Range of Possibilities

By Melanie Chrimer

Writing for children is not child's play. It is sometimes harder than writing for adults. But it is well worth the effort.



Melanie Chrimer

When I started my writing career I had numerous ideas, but the best were based on the storytelling techniques of my grandparents, aunts, and uncles. Looking back I now know that I was blessed with these lovely folks, but as a child I saw it differently.

My maternal grandmother was the best. She could tell you a story at the drop of a hat. Most of the tales were based on our family over the centuries, or the history of where our family had lived, but there were Bible stories and pretend stories thrown into the soup for good measure. As a toddler and elementary age child, I was enthralled. The only thing better than my grandmother, was one TV show, of which she did not approve — *Superman*.

It is funny that she thought this was a waste of time because in a sense she was giving me super heroes every day. Whether it was Jacob and his ladder, or Sam Houston and his Texans, she was filling me with pioneer spirit.

By the time I was a teenager I acquired the nauseating characteristic of taking my storytelling relatives for granted. I'm ashamed to say that after a while I even didn't hide my disdain for a repeated story and could be found rolling my eyes or rudely telling the ending myself out of frustration.

Fortunately, my grandmother was losing her short-term memory by then and while the old stories were just as colorful, she easily forgot how ill mannered I had been.

But by the grace of God the joke's on me. The stories she told over, and over, and over again, now inspire me to write about new characters or research some of the "family history" that she tried to pass on to me. I have found some were told in excellent, accurate detail, and some were embellished with her Presbyterian prejudices, but either way, they were told excitingly and with love.

That is what I try to do with my writing. I love writing fiction and nonfiction for children. I take the common and make it unique. I take the adult world and tell it in the eyes of a child. I take the mundane and tell it like it's the hottest thing since gripper shorts. I take the boring and find the laughter. I take the past and repeat it for the future.

For the children's writer, the West is open range. We have the past, present, and yes, the future, to write about. The children of today may have computers to search the Internet, but there is still no substitute for a story that brings the West to life.

Whether we write about our wonderful heritage in poetry, picture books, middle grade or young adult novels, or nonfiction, the children's writers of the West are not just preserving a culture. They are gathering fans for life. They are inspiring future western writers.

The young minds of our world can learn about the prehistoric past, the native peoples and fauna, the pioneers and geography, the struggles and discoveries. They can learn how much has changed in our American west and how much will always stay the same. While they

learn these things I, a children's writer of the west, learn it too.

No, writing for children is not child's play but the opportunities for childlike joy in the process and the open range of possibilities is worth every effort. If nothing else, the youth who read our words can learn that the storytellers of previous generations have something to say and that women will always be writing the west.

— Melanie Chrimer is the author of the *Phoebe Clappsaddle* picture books for children.

Interpreting Past

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Since I most often write for children, I take this to heart. Young readers deserve our best work! They are capable of reading about and understanding complex historical themes, but they do need us to provide the context to help them do so. Accurately-depicted historical characters often hold beliefs that seem strange to modern children, and writers must take care to explain why those characters thought or acted as they did. Creating fictional girls who are likeable and believable to modern readers, even though those characters were raised in a time of great prejudice and/or restrictions, is particularly challenging.

One of the strengths of Women Writing the West, I think, is that the organization nurtures and celebrates writers who interpret the west through many different genres. We're all richer for it.

— Kathleen Ernst is the author of 2003 WILLA finalist *Whistler In the Dark*.

Profile: Jacque Boyd - Aviation Entrepreneur and Writer

By Joyce Burke Lohse



Joyce Burke Lohse and Jacque Boyd

Jacqueline Breeden Boyd flies airplanes. In itself, that is quite an accomplishment. Then there's the Ph.D., but don't let it fool you.

Although Jacque has a foundation of lofty learning and high-flying adventures, her character contains a wealth of mirth, wisdom, and sensitivity, infectious to those fortunate to share her company. Aviation, her passion and lifeblood, has found its way into her writing, through magazine articles and her efforts to interview and preserve the stories of female pilots from World War II.

When you visit Jacque's home, the first thing you notice are the numerous aviation artifacts and artwork, dealing mainly with women in flight, resulting from thirty-some years of research on the subject. Decor varies widely from somber memorials to fallen flyers, and fragile antique toy aircraft and artifacts, to a formidable and quirky collection of Barbie dolls sporting aviation and astronaut garb. Books line the walls from floor to ceiling, with multi-volume coverage of the likes of Amelia Earhart and Charles Lindbergh.

Jacque's décor is far from one-dimensional as it reflects other interests as well. Additional books deal with Southwestern culture and literature, cooking and wine culture, and a passion for fiber arts and knitting as revealed in magazines on the subject and invitingly tactile skeins of yarn skewered with knitting needles, ready for action.

Flying airplanes came naturally to

a Hastings, Nebraska, girl in the company of three brothers who considered it their duty while babysitting to take her to the airport to watch airplanes. As a result, Jacque learned how to fly in Grand Island, Nebraska, while launching her teaching career there. Her background paid off, along with her family's motto: "Don't be a quitter." As she puts it, "I've spent the majority of my life doing something I love in a male world. Six percent of the population are pilots, and two percent of that very small group are women. I spend my time with those men who believe I can fly an airplane well. If I screw up, it's not because I'm a woman, it's because I'm a pilot who might have screwed up."

As recipient of the Amelia Earhart Career Scholarship from the Ninety-Nines, Inc., an international organization of licensed women pilots of which she is a long-term member, Jacque achieved a M.Ed. in Aerospace Education and Administration at Middle Tennessee State University. After sixteen years of teaching at various levels, Jacque applied her background to start a company in 1989 called Aero Infosearch, a consulting firm for female pilots. Her company investigates maternity policies, concerns about flying while pregnant, and work conditions covered under the Family and Medical Leave Act. She has consulted for major international airlines about various female aviation interests, and she has lectured extensively regarding non-traditional career development.

Her higher education continued. In 1990, Jacque earned a Ph.D. in Education and Administration from the University of North Texas. Four years later, Jacque was awarded the Amelia Earhart Research Scholar Grant, again from the Ninety-Nines, Inc., which allowed her to continue research regarding female pilots who have flown while pregnant.

When asked if women make good pilots, Jacque does not hesitate. "In a VERY controversial article, a fella said

we [women] tend to pay more attention to detail and have a lighter touch with the airplane ... remember the term 'man-handle'? Although I remember Chuck Yeager saying that the airplane doesn't know anything about your plumbing - so a good pilot is a good pilot, no matter what the sex."

With more than 4000 hours of flight time in single-engine aircraft, gliders, and balloons, Jacque has channeled her flying experience into the field of journalism. Her extensive involvement in Women in Aviation, International since its inception in 1990 led to a "Current Issues" column in their *Aviation for Women* magazine. She also writes for the *Ninety-Nine News*, *The Flying Life*, *American Woman Motor Sports*, *British Woman Motor Sports*, and *Air Transport World*. Currently, she is working on interviews with American women who left the United States to fly for the British during WWII, in order to preserve their stories for publication.

When asked if attitudes toward women in the cockpit have changed much since World War II, she says, "The reason this is such a big deal is that we are putting our contemporary attitudes onto the past. There are some women who are terribly bitter about their treatment and the fact that they could find nothing in flying

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Profile: Jacque Boyd

...Continued from page 16

when they returned to the States. Then there are those who kept after it regardless." Some went on to obtain prominent positions with high-profile aviation companies.

Jacque does not consider flying difficult. As she is not "scientific" herself, she says, "I need to make things concrete. I'm a very tactile learner and don't do well with abstractions. Learning to fly made a great many of those abstract theories concrete. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to fly an airplane – as I say, if I could do it, anyone could. If you can land the airplane, you can get your license!"

In 1997, Jacque lost her husband in an aircraft accident. When she recovered sufficiently to move on with her life, she built an unconventionally stylish apartment at an airfield hangar north of Fort Worth, Texas, where she lived until recently. Jacque now lives in her snug woodland townhome in Angel Fire, New Mexico, where she teaches an aviation class at a charter high school. Southwestern small town living in Angel Fire appeals to Jacque. At this point, she does not foresee returning to big city life, at least not anytime soon.

Editor' note: Jacque Boyd serves as WWW treasurer.

— Joyce Burke Lohse, WWW Administrator, is the author of 2003 CIPA winner, First Governor, First Lady and Justina Ford, Medical Pioneer, due to be published in January 2005.

POETS' CORNER

A Horseman's Christmas



By Doris Eraldi

It's the night before Christmas, we're out in the barn
Blanketing horses to keep them all warm
They're eating their dinners, tucked in cozy stalls
Not aware that it's Christmas or any special day at all

They can dream of spring pastures from their pine-scented beds
No visions of sugarplums dance in their heads
But we people are thinking of merry parties and such
Maybe feeling a little sad at missing so much

This season is special but the horses don't know
We've got work to do before we can go
We finish the chores and head on inside
To get ready for dinner and our own yuletide

It's nearly midnight, the carols are sung
I remember a story I was told when I was young
How at midnight on Christmas Eve
The creatures of the barnyard can speak to us with ease

I am called to the barn, I wade through the rain
I know I must go, I can't really explain
I slide open the door, pause for a while
Then slowly walk down that dimly lit aisle

A nicker from Casey, a wink from JD
Sleepy old Alibi waking to see
Tucker rustling his bedding, a snort soft and light
Each horse gave a greeting as I walked through the night

I thought about parties bright lit and warm
The ones we don't go to 'cause we have the barn
And vacations and holidays that we don't get
When we're working long hours for bills to be met

Walking all the way to the end of the aisle
I stop to stroke Bonnie, it brings me a smile
She snuffles my face, hot breath on my skin
It starts me to thinking about my horses, my kin

I could be at parties with laughter and mirth
But where I am right now is the best place on Earth.

— Poet and author Doris Eraldi is WWW's
Web coordinator — better known as the Web Witch.

GOOD READS: We've Got Your Favorites!

Last issue, we were so overwhelmed by your Good Reads suggestions, that we had to cut some of them. Here is "the rest of the list" plus a couple of new ones. Please keep them coming. This is now a standing feature in the newsletter.

Carolyn Niethammer: *The Guaymas Chronicles*, by David Stuart. "The best book I've read this year! The author is currently an anthropology prof at University of New Mexico and this book tells the tale of a summer he spent in the Mexican seaside town of Guaymas on the way back from grad student fieldwork in Ecuador. He interacts with the locals, particularly an orphan girl who teaches him a great deal about life and strength. Read all the rave reviews on Amazon."

Deborah Robson: *The Paradox of Choice: Why More Is Less*, by Barry Schwartz. "Not a perfect read, but fascinating. Basic premise: because we have so many choices, many of us have a hard time believing we've made the right choice and diminish our enjoyment by second-guessing ourselves forever thus lowering our quality of life. Research-backed, but quite readable." Also, *The Spiral Staircase: My Climb Out of Darkness*, by Karen Armstrong. "Wise writer about religion Karen Armstrong writes about finding her true calling



after leaving the convent that she entered at 17. (Her convent experience was recounted in *Through the Narrow Gate*.) Useful as an account of a writer finding her subject and her voice . . . or, rather, recognizing that they have found her. (By the way, she also briefly discusses a flawed book that she wrote "too early" about some of her experiences.) Lovely, quiet look at a woman finding her path."

Pam Muñoz Ryan: *The Devil in the White City: Murder, magic and madness at the fair that changed America*, by Erik Larson. "This is a compelling nonfiction book (finalist for the National Book Award) that reads like a novel! It's about the 1893 World's Fair, the Columbian Exposition. History buffs will relish the information. A truly fascinating read, now in paperback."

Jane Kirkpatrick: *Founding Mothers*, by Coki Roberts. "Robust read about those who stayed behind while their sons, husbands, fathers were waging first the war of words and then the revolutionary war and finally the creation of the Constitution. Amazing women. We are all aligned from sturdy stock." *Bold Spirit, Helga Estby's Walk Across Victorian America* by Linda L. Hunt — "The Pacific Northwest Booksellers book of the year, a terrific story about a remarkable woman and the silencing of family stories, and our WILLA winner this year in nonfiction."

Ann Parker: *So Wild a Dream*, by Win Blevins. "This is the first of the Rendezvous series, and recent winner of the Western Writers of America's Spur Award for Best Novel of the West. I'm looking forward to the rest! Blevins delivers in beautiful style with realistically drawn characters. Sam Morgan learns about life as a river man on the Ohio and as a mountain man among such historical figures such as Jedediah Smith."

Marilyn Kilpatrick: *Two Thousand Minnows*, by Sandra Leigh. "This is her first novel — an autobiography — and it is the best book I've read in several years. I'm trying to get the author to join our writer's group."

And the classics are ALWAYS good reads.

Joyce Lohse: *Roughing It*, by Mark Twain. "Twain is funny and brilliant! This book contains his observations when he came out West, in the 1800s. Great authentic details, wisdom and wit."

Sarah Rickman: *Miss Morissa: Doctor of the Gold Trail*, by Mari Sandoz. "After attending the *Crazy Woman Creek* anthology launch in Mari's country — Chadron, Nebraska — back in May, I made it a point to begin reading Nebraska's OTHER famous woman author — for the first time. I was NOT disappointed. For an authentic feel for life along the Nebraska/South Dakota Gold Trail 1876-1880, this is your source. Fiction, though based on stories of three women doctors of that time and place. A great read."

— Send your future Good Reads to Alice Trego, atreader@aros.net.

New member **Nancy E. Turner** writes that *Sarah's Quilt*, the sequel to her WILLA finalist in 1999, *These Is My Words*, will be released from Thomas Dunne Books, St. Martin's Press in May of 2005. *Sarah's Quilt* has been chosen by the Literary Guild and Doubleday Book Clubs for special edition. Nancy writes, "I've decided not to continue teaching writing at the community college in the spring for the requisite publicity flurry. I love everything about the book tour biz except the airplane time. There, I'm white knuckles all the way."

Joyce B. Lohse's new historical biography, *Justina Ford, Medical Pioneer*, will be published in January. It is the first book in a new series from Filter Press called, *Now You Know Bios*.

Sue Schrems is happy to announce the publication of her book, *Who's Rocking the Cradle? Pioneer Women of Oklahoma Politics, From Socialism to the KKK, 1900-1930*. *Who's Rocking the Cradle?* begins on the left with the activities of Oklahoma women, who organized and promoted the Socialist party to Oklahoma farmers during the economic uncertainty of frontier settlement. But, after the Oklahoma Socialist party started to wane in 1916, and after passage of Woman Suffrage in the state in 1918, Oklahoma women, more ideologically centered, became involved in politics to educate Oklahomans, especially women, to the responsibilities of citizenship and the meaning of good government. As the country turned more to the right after the First World War, so too

women's political culture. By the mid-1920s, many Oklahoma women joined such ultra conservative organizations as the Ku Klux Klan to fight against what they perceived as erosion in values of traditional America.

New member **Judy Culp** and her husband, Ronald, have a western coming out in April 2005 from Avalon Press, a subsidiary of Thomas Bouregy & Co. *The Search For Truth* takes place in Mahonville, Colorado, an 1879 mining town. In 1880, Manhonville became the present day town of Buena Vista, Colorado. This beautiful town with an intriguing past sits nestled in the Arkansas River Valley.

Linda Dockery has just signed contracts on three new books that will be out in 2005. *Renegades, Rebels & Rogues of the Old West* (nonfiction); *Thoughts From The Heart* (poetry); and *Jaded Lady* (fiction). Also, production will start late next summer on the screenplay adapted from her western historical romance, *Trail of No Return*.

Sherie Fox Schmauder writes that her book of short stories, based on the lives of real women in the Colorado mining camps in the 19th and early 20th century, has won second place in the 2004 CIPA Awards fiction category. *Colorado Mountain Women: Tales From The Mining Camps* was published in 2003 by Western Reflections, Montrose, Colorado. Says Sherie, "Since I joined WWW last year, I've been continually inspired by members' tales of achievements. WWW also serves as an important conduit for notices of publishers that don't treat their writers properly, and as a forum for discussions about issues affecting writers. Keep up the good work! And thanks for being here."

Jacque Boyd was named an Outstanding Alumna of Hastings College, Hastings, Nebraska, when she returned for a reunion in September. Modest Jacque says she was "one of many."

...Continued on page 19

Gaydell Collier Governor's Award Winner

Gaydell Collier has won the Governor's Arts Award presented by Wyoming Governor David Freudenthal and administered by the Wyoming Arts Council. Gaydell was nominated by Bear Lodge Writers. The award — a plaque with a bronze buffalo built into it — will be presented at a gala banquet in Cheyenne on February 4 when the legislature meets.

For more than two decades the Governor's Arts Awards have provided a forum to recognize those who dedicate their time, passion and financial support to Wyoming cultural life as well as to the importance of the arts and daily life. In part, the nomination letter states:

"... poet, writer of fiction, nonfiction, and essays, presenter of programs and workshops, champion of women penning their stories and always the endearing mentor, Gaydell Collier is the essence of what we, in the writing world, wish to become."



— Gaydell Collier is one of three WWW member/editors of the *Wind* anthology series including 2004 release *Crazy Woman Creek*.

MEMBER NEWS

...Continued from page 18

Mary Peace Finley won the Colorado Book Award for the third book in her Santa Fe trilogy, *Meadowlark*. This book was also a finalist for our WILLA Awards in the Young Adult category this year. Published by Filter Press.

Send your Member News to:

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mail please. Thanks!

Truth in Fiction cont.

...Continued from page 12

might have learned through her surviving in this wilderness place and what contemporary readers might discover through her journey. It's story, yes, derived from memory and fact. It's also historical. I like to think it's also true.

Robert McKee, author of *Story*, notes that truth for him is when a reader finishes a story and asks, "Do I believe this?" If the answer is yes, then they've found the truth of that story whether it is fiction or not.

Personally, I believe that stories are the sparks that light our ancestor's lives; they are the embers we blow on to illuminate our own. I intend to keep blowing on those embers, to keep telling stories, to find the truth in them, with the hope that others find their truths within the reading. I'll look to my colleagues across the aisle in non-fiction to help me tell authentic stories and hope they'll find in fiction both enlightenment and entertainment inside a novelist's truthful tales.

And I'll still support that museum.

— Jane Kirkpatrick is president elect of *Women Writing the West*.

Special Report From Hurricane Central

By Mary Trimble

September 15, 2004: Special to the *Women Writing the West* newsletter.

"I'm back from Florida. Whew! What a mess down there.

"My own job went well. I was what we call a Service Center Manager, in charge of about 73 workers in several different functions. Anyway, we saw a lot of heartache and hardship, but feel we were doing a good job. I'll tell you though, we didn't need Hurricane Frances on the heels of Hurricane Charlie. Also, as often happens, we had accompanying tornadoes, too. I was beginning to think I would never get out of Florida. I was there 23 days altogether.

"I'm a little wiped out right now, trying to catch up on mail, e-mail, etc., but it sure seems good to be home.

"Several of you have expressed interest in the Red Cross, and my involvement with them following disasters. Here are some interesting statistics Red Cross involvement with Hurricanes Charley and Frances in Florida."

ARC Shelters	645
People ARC has sheltered	283,559
Meals & Snacks served	4,972,951
Bulk Distribution Routes	32
ARC Service Centers	16
(I was Service Center Manager for one of these)	
Cases Opened	11,893
(meaning number of families helped in recovery)	
Health Service contacts	11,931
Mental Health contacts	21,810
ERVs deployed	210
Total Red Cross workers	14,445

"ERVs are the red and white trucks you may have seen with American Red Cross logo on the side. They look a bit like an ambulance and, most often, are used to take meals out to victims, First Responders, and utility workers in areas with no power. ERV stands for



Mary Trimble (right) with Jackie Pugh Kogan and Heidi Thomas at the WWW conference luncheon, Oct. 23.

Emergency Response Vehicle. In a major disaster, ERVs move from all over the US to the disaster area.

"The above statistics were as of Saturday September 11, and grew substantially in the ensuing weeks. There were/are 42 ARC volunteers from Washington State working these hurricanes. Six of those 42 are from Camano Island, a fact I'm personally very proud of."

— Editor's note: And, of course after that came Ivan and Jeanne.

— Mary Trimble, from Camano Island, Washington, has been a Red Cross volunteer for 10 years.



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