

A Conundrum: Historicals Don't Sell?

By Jane Kirkpatrick

“Historical novels just don’t sell.”

Many of us who write them have heard this more than once from agents, editors, publishers. And yet...*Cold Mountain*, a novel set during the Civil War, won the National Book Award and garnered the author, Charles Frasier, a reported eight million dollar advance for his next novel. This past year, the Pulitzer for fiction was a book titled *March* based on the character Mr. March from *Little Women*. Definitely historical and selling well I’m told. One of the finalists was E.L. Doctorow’s *The March*, as fine a piece of historical writing as any of us could find. I just read *Water for Elephants*, a current bestseller. It’s set during the depression. *Gilead* by Marilyn Robinson, also a Pulitzer Prize winner, is set in the 1940s. Still, we’re told “historicals don’t sell.”

One of the biggest market increases in the past few years has been in the inspirational market. In my opinion, inspirational fiction isn’t about winning someone to another’s point of view; it’s about a story weaving its way through a reader’s wilderness places to offer encouragement and insight for the challenges of life. I finish a good book feeling filled up, inspired, with energy to carry on even

if the story has trial and sadness within it. It happens that writing about people who lived in the 1800s inspires me and people who read such novels tell me they’re inspired by those characters, too.

Historical novels and inspirational stories have much in common, especially those set in the American West. Successful novels in both genres explore the human condition. All those award-winning novels I mentioned are stories of what we hold in common, about our mortality, about struggle and how people endure in hard times. They’re about family and who makes up our families and what it takes to make a community and why we should bother. They’re about living with integrity and hope despite sometimes unspeakable horror.

When I began writing fiction in 1995, I didn’t think I wrote historical novels or inspirational fiction. But then I found my books on those shelves at airport bookstores. In libraries I’ve found my titles under “Historical,” sometimes under “Literary Fiction,” or “Women’s Studies” or “Northwest Author” or “New Arrivals,” and once in awhile under “best-selling and award-winning.” (Once a reader said she found my titles by looking for a Steven King novel she hadn’t read and there I was,

next to his books. Location, location, location, as they say. But I digress.) I think my novels fit under all those categories but what I strive for is what Faulkner said when he accepted his Pulitzer in 1954: “The only stories worth a writer’s blood and sweat and tears are stories of the human heart in conflict with itself.”

People reach for stories that give them something. Entertainment, escape, maybe to pick up new information about horse racing or the arms races; solving a good mystery. But underneath, I think people seek meaning in their lives and more specifically, they read to find themselves inside the story. They may not even think of themselves as reading historical novels or something inspirational. They’re reading for the story that taps into the universal needs we have as human beings.

WWW member Elizabeth Lyon in her book, *A Writer’s Guide to Fiction*, writes about finding those universal needs of our characters that a reader will relate to regardless of setting or time. Those needs drive our characters and they become the heart of the story. Carolyn Pearson’s, *Awakening the Heroes Within*, speaks of archetypes to help identify those

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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.

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Historicals

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common human issues that we struggle with. Both these fine authors know that entering the realm of the human spirit and helping a reader discover themselves through that journey is part of what writing is all about.

It's what reading is all about too. The word "read" comes from a Norse word meaning "to unveil a mystery." I don't think it means just to discover what the author wants revealed; but also what we discover about ourselves when we read.

My biggest seller *All Together in One Place* was based on a diary entry from 1852 about a man meeting eleven wagons turned east on the Oregon Trail, all driven by women, their husbands having died and been buried. When I told women about that diary entry they'd say, "Wow. What do you think happened? At what point do you think they knew that they couldn't go home again?" and so on. Men would look at me and say, "How depressing. Who would want to read a book about all the men dying?"

Women buy 85% of the books but men make 85% of the publishing decisions. It didn't take long for me to figure out that I needed to talk about that story not as an Oregon Trail historical novel or about all the men dying. I pitched that story as one about when we get bad news in life we want to turn around and go back. When someone says, "I don't love you anymore" or we get that call in the night or that diagnosis we didn't want to receive, we want yesterday again. We don't get it; and it's a mark of our character how we allow other people to help us find new direction in the wilderness places of our lives.

High school graduates tell me that book helped them gain confidence about leaving home. Women in the military tell me that book reminded them to build friendships

with other women. A hospital in Portland recommends that book for their grief support group. A mom with a daughter in prison says that book gives her and her daughter something positive to talk about, to consider all the ways the women dealt with their losses and how they started again. And yes, even men tell me that book gives them a community and great sense of history, too.

I once had a marketing person comment that I should set my books in some other state besides Oregon. "But these aren't Oregon stories," I told her. "They're stories about finding where we belong in life, about finding family, about discovering who we are. They happen to be set in Oregon." But I knew I had work to do to help "sell" that story to marketing, first of all.

Here's my theory: Good stories transcend the setting and the time period. They engage us – author and reader – and then, they sell. Part of our job when we're pitching our stories to potential publishers, agents, editors, is to identify those core values, those human issues that regardless of the setting, 1850 or 2020, the reader can identify with. Authors involved in *Women Writing the West* are a perfect linkage between stories that leave us feeling filled – inspired; and stories that use a historical setting to engage very contemporary readers to help them find meaning in their lives. That's not being historical revisionists; I think it's what makes books like *To Kill A Mockingbird* classic – it's appealing to what is best in the human spirit. Historical novels like that will inspire and they will sell.

– Jane Kirkpatrick, past WWW President, is the award-winning author of two non-fiction books and thirteen historical/inspirational novels set in the American West. Her 2006 release, *A Clearing in the Wild*, was named a WILLA Literary Award finalist for Best Historical. Her fourteenth novel will be released in April 2008.

From the President: Mustard Seeds, Starfish, and WWW

By Kathleen Ernst
2008 WWW President
2009 WILLA Chair



Kathleen Ernst

When my first published novel appeared in 1996, I was determined to do everything I could to promote it. Some programs at stores, libraries, and other venues went fine. Others...well, let's just say that I quickly learned that book promotion can be a hard, lonely slog.

Still, I kept at it. And over the next decade, I often reminded myself of the mustard seed analogy: from tiny seeds can grow great things. I celebrated the publication of more books, invested my own precious resources on promotional efforts, and oh-so-slowly built a readership. I told myself that every effort helped build name recognition and create personal connections with librarians, booksellers, and readers.

I still struggle with promotion. Most of my books are for children or young adults, and although it is joyful to meet excited young readers, I get frustrated with the *business* of writing. Sometimes it seems that all my hard work—all my mustard seeds—should have grown a bigger garden by now.

Recently, I heard another parable. To paraphrase: one night, residents in a seaside village covered

indoors as a violent storm passed by. At dawn, people walked to the beach and were stunned to see that the winds and waves had cast thousands of starfish ashore. A boy picked up a starfish and hurled it back to the sea. "Don't waste your time," an old man told him. "You are just one small boy. What you can do won't matter." The boy picked up another starfish. "It matters to this one," he said, and tossed it into the water.

That same day I heard from a young girl who had recently won an autographed book in one of my website contests. Now, I had been a bit down because that particular contest had drawn an unusually low response. But the winner wanted me to know that she *loved* my book. And, she confided, she also loved to write. Winning the contest had inspired her to pursue her own writing dreams.

When I think of her, the disappointments that come with a writing career seem insignificant. She also reminded me of other people who have appreciated my stories. These include my grandfather, who read a sprawling, never-published novel of mine before he died. He eagerly looked forward to each new installment. They helped fill lonely hours.

Our stories—and our essays, poems, biographies, etc.—*do* matter. Hungry readers are looking for solace, for entertainment, for information, for the joy of being swept away by the sheer power of well-crafted words.

And that's what makes an organization like Women Writing the West so important. I've learned truckloads about promotion from our members. I also have a circle of

friends ready to commiserate about my setbacks and celebrate my achievements. Those same friends remind me to focus on what matters most: telling my stories as best I can, and finding ways to share them with readers.

I hope you take advantage of all that WWW has to offer! Attend the San Antonio conference. Help out at a trade show. Put a listing in our catalog. Enter the short story contest. Participate in discussions. Collaborate on innovative ways to promote your work. In other words, scatter your mustard seeds.

Most of all, keep writing! It truly does matter.

— Kathleen Ernst is an award-winning author of twelve novels for young readers, an adult nonfiction book, magazine articles and essays, poetry, and instructional video programs for public television.

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Ten Tips For Successful Marketing

By Sherry Monahan
VP Marketing

Before you get into the marketing tips, let me offer some thoughts. As writers, we tend to think about writing and/or researching. Once we have the magical contract from a publisher, we think, "Yeah! It's over, I can rest." If you think that, then you are wrong. Getting the book published is only 50 percent of your job. Once the book comes out, the next 50 percent begins - Marketing.

Unless you are someone really famous, most publishing houses will do very little to market your book. They may take out an ad or two, get your book to bookstores and distributors, but that's where it usually ends. It's now up to you to get your title out there! Remember, you are the most passionate person about your book - hey, you wrote it, remember? Convey that passion to get your book noticed. Good luck, and happy marketing!

1. Find ways to get your writing into print. Contact a newspaper, website, or organizations (like WWW who has a newsletter) and volunteer to write for them. Pro bono work is a great way to expose people to your writing and it builds your resume.
2. Join writing organizations to make contacts, get advice, and support. Volunteer to speak at their conference.
3. Contact local organizations, women's clubs or other groups that have guest speakers. Volunteer to speak and ask if you can bring your books to sell.
4. Look for alternative places to sell your books, such as gift



Sherry Monahan chats with Ron Chrisman, University of North Texas Press, during the 2007 WWW Conference in Colorado Springs, CO.

- shops, tourist spots, and other non-traditional stores.
5. Visit your local bookstores and let them know who you are and that you are willing and ready to entertain their customers.
6. You must have a professional looking website to promote yourself and your books. This doesn't mean you have to hire someone and spend a lot of money. There are several inexpensive ways to create your own.
7. Start a Blog on the Internet and other web-based sites to get your name out there. Link these to your books on Amazon.com.
8. Attend tradeshow if you belong to an organization, which gives you an opportunity to meet publishers and booksellers face-to-face. You also get a chance to promote your book to a very large audience.
9. Find something or someone in your book that the audience can

- connect with. Use that connection to promote your book with the local media, publishers, or at book signings.
10. Create an inexpensive give-away that promotes your book, such as a bookmark.

– Sherry Monahan is an award-winning author of several works, including *Taste of Tombstone*, which is being re-released this Spring by University of New Mexico Press. She is also a contributing editor to *True West* magazine, the historical consultant for the movie, "The Territory," and a History Channel investigator for last year's "Lost Worlds, Sin City of the West." Visit Sherry at www.wildwestinfo.com

Cheap-Skate Marketing Tactics

By Anne Schroeder

Ordinary Aphrodite, my inspirational memoir, was released in January 2008. I knew that the marketing would fall to me. But we managed to sell 3,500 copies of my last memoir, *Branches on the Conejo*, using many techniques.

With *Ordinary Aphrodite*, I wanted a tool to reach women's groups and book clubs. I see my life's work as tender encouragement for shattered women. I use humor and grace to frame the million small steps we all take while we're waiting to get rich, or thin, or famous.

Before the book came out, the publisher set up an account on Amazon. He entered my book in a couple of contests. He compiled a sell-sheet and sent it to his distributors, Baker & Taylor, and Partners West (and an electronic copy to me, which was very helpful.)

In the months before the book came out, I mailed and e-mailed copies of my press kit (sell-sheet with color reproduction of the book cover and all ordering info; author's bio; my professional accomplishments; book synopsis; blurb sheet and a press release) to newspapers, radio stations, reviewers and writing magazines. I updated my website and marketed excerpts to several magazines.

I've made a plan that won't sink me. Here's how it's going so far:

I've reserved tables at three events, far enough in advance to be included as a featured speaker. These are a Valentine wine event, a lavender farm health fair and a fundraiser for our junior high. I connected with several book fairs, but since two local bookstores closed this month, I won't count on them

as my only venue. I sold over \$800 in books at a series of craft fairs that were held October-December, prior to my book release. **(TIP—I wrapped them in raffia and added a small card of my poetry, and an envelope. Gift ready!)** I had Staples make two posters of my book cover, one of which is already on display at a bookstore for my next signing. Cost—\$19 plus optional \$20 laminating fee.

I've booked myself on two radio shows, have a number of interviews pending or accomplished, including a keynote address to a writers club that has resulted an offer to teach three on-line writing classes to RWA (Romance Writers of America) members. **(TIP—I strive to remain visible in my writing community between projects.)** I've introduced myself via press kit to several service groups, and have submitted my books for approval to four library acquisition boards. Once our library system buys eight books, several library book clubs will choose me as their monthly read. I'm scheduled to host a series of brown-bag book discussions at one library.

(TIP—My mailing lists are organized by town, region and state — easy to update.) I purchased 1000 postcards of my book cover. On the backside is a description and ordering info, along with a blank space for an Avery 5160 label. I print up a sheet when I have two or three upcoming events (using 10 font.) I invite my friends to bring a guest—or pass the card along. Bookstore owners love me for it!

Previously I used these cards to invite my neighbor women to a Sunday afternoon Aphrodite Party. I supplied Saucy Snacks and Forbidden Fruits. Their enthusiasm was so

encouraging.

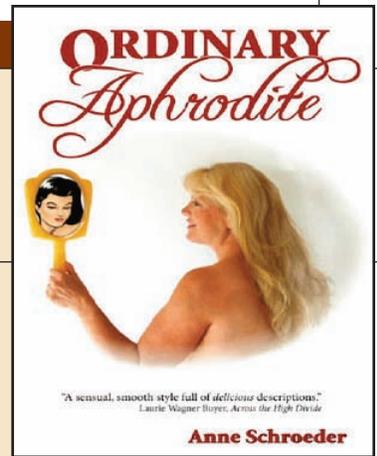
(TIP—I think small so I

don't get overwhelmed.) This week I'll buy more stamps and send cards to all my far-flung friends and relatives. I write a friendly intro letter, with my website address, to several cousins who forward it to their "friends and family e-mail lists," along with a personal recommend. A teenage computer whiz helped me record 45 minutes of excerpts from *Ordinary Aphrodite*. We burned 100 CDs. I can sell them or give as samples. I'll play one on my laptop whenever I sign, (and include one in my press kit.) The \$200 was a bargain. And I learned a lot about my speaking voice.

Cost of my marketing to date? \$125 for the cards and a roll of stamps, a case of CD's, some printing paper and the posters. Value to me? Inestimable. I feel organized, professional and successful.

Next month I'll refine my ideas—an ad in the WWW catalog, copies to the show trunk, also my blog tour, and updating and publicizing my website. I realize that marketing has to be an essential part of the creative equation, and by keeping everything in perspective I can continue to write—the marketing stays fun!

— As a writer, Anne Schroeder has found her authenticity—under her bed with the dust bunnies! Her inspirational memoir, *Ordinary Aphrodite*, was recently released by Russell Dean and Company. She writes, teaches and edits from California's Central Coast.



Blog Book Tours 101

By Donna Druchunas
WWW Web Coordinator

Book tours are great, if you have a big publisher footing the bill or if you've already had a best-selling book and you have a huge fan base waiting for you to come to their town. Otherwise you'll probably spend more money traveling around the country to hawk your books than you'll be able to recoup through sales. I just don't think it's worth the cost of airfare and hotel bills, plus the stress of being away from home for the months following the publication of each of my books, so I've decided to focus on online marketing for my newest book, *Ethnic Knitting Discovery*. Because it's a niche book, there are some things I am doing that are focused on a very specific audience, rather than the larger reading public. But the first item on my launch plan is appropriate for books in any genre. That is the Blog Book Tour.

What is a Blog Book Tour?

A Blog Book Tour is a free way to get your name, book, and website plastered all over the web. The idea is to spread the word about your book (i.e., reviews, interview questions, book photos), and also to provide interesting reading to those who may not be interested in your book at this time. This is very much like writing articles in print publications related to your topic. It does not pay, but it is free publicity.

How do you set up a tour?

As an example, I previously posted an e-mail in an online Yahoo! group I participate in, asking if any bloggers would want to participate. Here's the message I posted:

Because this is my second blog book tour, I also invited everyone

who participated in my first tour. After people signed up, I sent them an email with basic marketing infor-

Hi All! I'm going to be doing a blog book tour this October for my next book, *Ethnic Knitting Discovery*. If you want to participate, please let me know. I'll start working up a schedule later this month.

Here's the skinny on the book:

Don't miss my next book in which I present traditional knitting designs and techniques from across the globe in step-by-step fashion. *Ethnic Knitting Discovery* begins with what ethnic knitting is, what you don't need to know, and color tips. For each location (Norway, Denmark, The Netherlands, The Andes), I offer brief knitting-specific history, key techniques, and a handful of versatile charts (texture or color). An introductory project lets you practice new skills, which are then applied to the knitting of pullover sweaters that you design on your own (with help from me, of course!). *Ethnic Knitting Discovery* is available October 2007. You can pre-order today at Needlearts Book Shop or Amazon.

Below are links to two excerpts: the introduction to the chapter about Norway and the headband project from the same chapter. From this sample, you can see how I've broken each project into three levels.

- 1) For adventurous and advanced knitters, I have a schematic where you can fill in your measurements and stitch counts as you go.
- 2) For those who want more details, I have a spreadsheet to help you do all the calculations you'll need for your project.
- 3) For those who have never designed a sweater, or who want a little more hand-holding until they get comfortable with design, I have step-by-step instructions for working up each project (but you still have to do some arithmetic yourself).

Enjoy:

<http://www.sheeptoshawl.com/2007-07-31p102-105.pdf>

<http://www.sheeptoshawl.com/2007-07-31p108-111.pdf>

Donna Druchunas

mation about the book, a JPG (image) of the cover, and my author photo so they could publicize the

blog tour in advance.

Do you need to be on the "big" blogs?

No. Of course, if you can get on a few huge blogs, that's great. But it's not necessary. Even if the blogs you visit are small, you'll find that there's a big benefit to doing the tour. It gets your book to come up high in search engine hits. Before I

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Blog

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did the *Arctic Lace* book tour, shoelaces were the top hits on google for a search on "Arctic Lace." Now my book is way up there.

How long should my tour be?

Three weeks has worked well for me, but you can go longer if you have the stamina and can find enough blogs to participate.

How do I let people know about my tour?

Tell everyone you know, wherever you are. I found that posting in online groups is a great way to spread the word. Many groups have rules against ads, however, so make sure you are not going to get in trouble (with) your post. You can see an example of the disclosure I put on the bottom of this message that allowed me to post on several "no-ad" groups. If the groups you participate in are stricter, get a friend to post the announcement for you. If you have a website, your own blog, a

myspace page, or other places where you can post announcements, do it.

What happens on each day of the tour?

That's up to you.

I do think, however, that it's best if you do something different every day. Some bloggers send out canned reviews or interviews to blog tour participants. I think this can backfire because it means that readers will only go to one stop on your tour. If you do something different every day, you gain a following for your tour. In addition, it make take 5 or 6 exposures before someone is ready to buy your book, so by giving readers a new posting to read each day of your tour, you'll build momentum and start to see sales increase as the tour moves along. I guess that could happen even if you use the same message on every blog tour stop, but I wouldn't recommend that.

So, it's a lot of work! Here's the message I sent out to tell people what they could do on my tour:

Hi All! I'll be doing a blog tour in October, talking about ethnic knitting techniques, showing how to design a sweater from scratch (including yarns, colors, stitches, and sizing), and talking about how to get started in a freelance career as a writer or designer and how illustrations are created for a book, amongst other things. I will be visiting 21 blogs over a three-week period (plus 4 extra bonus days!), so this is a great chance for you to check out a lot of blogs you may not have discovered yet. A list of the blogs I'll be visiting is here: <http://sheeptoshawl.com/blog/index.php?itemid=118>

For full disclosure, the tour is part of a launch of my next book, *Ethnic Knitting Discovery*, but it's not only for those who might be interested in buying the book. Many of the articles will contain practical information and techniques for knitters. I try to make my blog tours standalone articles that are full of useful information, instead of just a bunch of book reviews. I hope, in that vein, that this message isn't blocked as an advertisement.

Thanks!

Hi All. Here's the initial schedule for *the Ethnic Knitting Discovery* blog book tour. Dates were assigned randomly, except in a few cases where participants requested a specific time. Please check the dates and let me know if you need to reschedule your stop. As you can see, I've got a full three weeks scheduled. But if you know anyone else who might like to participate, I can always extend the tour into a fourth week.

Please send me the following information so I can start posting about the blog tour on my website:

Your name

Your blog name

Your blog's web address

A brief description of your blog, up to 150 words

What do you want to do on the blog tour? Here are some ideas, but if you come up with something different, that would be OK too:

* Write a book review

* Interview Donna

* Have Donna write a guest post on a topic related to the book

* Write a post discussing one of the techniques used in *Ethnic Knitting Discovery*

* Come up with a design based on the ideas in the book, and post a swatch and sketch of your design with a discussion of how you made your choices

Please also send me your mailing address so my publisher can send you a copy of *Ethnic Knitting Discovery*.

(Schedule followed at bottom of message.)

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Creative Nonfiction: The Truth Can Tell A Good Story Too

By Susan J. Tweit

What is creative nonfiction? Here's a three-part definition: Writing derived from facts, and about actual events or issues. (That's the nonfiction part.) Writing that involves personal experience or personal voice in some way – yours or others. Writing that relies on literary techniques including characterization, plot, setting, dialogue, narrative progression and personal reflection. (Those are the creative part.)

- It is closely related to journalism, literary fiction, and narrative poetry. The voice ranges from warmly personal, with examples from the author's own life, to crisply professional, drawing on the voices of others.
- It encompasses memoir, biography and autobiography, oral history, and what some call "inspired reporting" – journalism from a personal point of view (again, told in your own voice or through the voices of others).
- It requires research and unwavering adherence to the facts.
- It conveys a message.

Here are some examples from my own work (to make permissions simple!):

Dawn comes late to Jackson Hole, Wyoming, on winter mornings. When the sun finally edges over the high ridges that crowd the town of Jackson and paints the Tetons pink, the huddled mounds studding the snow-covered meadows along Flat Creek finally come into focus as thousands of sleeping elk. They stir, shaking the hoarfrost from thick pelts with a clatter of antlers and flapping of ears.

Plumes of breath rise from thousands of black nostrils, forming a shimmering cloud in the frigid air as the elk wait for breakfast to be served.

And soon it is: the grow of engines in low gear accompanies the sunlight as rubber-tracked crawler tractors appear, pulling trailers loaded with 20 to 30 tons of alfalfa pellets across the snow. . . .

(From "The Refuge," National Parks magazine, Winter 2007)

This is the journalism end of creative nonfiction: I'm reporting on a story. There are always choices in how to report, and in this case, I choose to bring my readers right into the scene by opening the article with an extended, story-like description of the refuge that is at the heart of the crisis I am reporting on. By opening in a literary style, I hope to hook readers on the story. My opinions may slant the story, but I don't want to lose readers' perception of my objectivity by using the first-person voice. I'm telling the story, but it's not mine.

Here's an example from the other end of the spectrum: memoir. Here, first-person narrative, dramatic tension, action and a journey of transformation drive the story:

I stood breathless atop a narrow ridge hundreds of feet above the Shoshone River, my ski tips precisely perpendicular to the edge. The air was still. The sun threw dazzling sparks from the untracked surface of the snow. My stomach clenched as I surveyed the dizzying drop.

"Go!" said my husband Kent from behind me.

I took a deep breath, flashed a smile over my shoulder, leaned for-

ward and plunged into an explosion of powder. Hours later, snow-crusted and sweaty from repeating the climb to the top of the ridge and the exhilarating ride down, I hauled myself into the truck. If you had asked me, I would have said I was perfectly happy.

But my body knew better. . . .
(From *Following the Stars*, forthcoming from University of Texas Press.)

These are classic fiction techniques: using action to paint a picture of the character and drive the story forward, plus a hint of trouble ahead to inject dramatic tension.

Like all good writing, creative nonfiction relies on storytelling. What separates it from fiction? Reliance on the truth – the best we can know it.

– Susan J. Tweit has authored 10 books, including *Colorado Book Award* finalist *Colorado Less Traveled*, and *The San Luis Valley: San Dunes and Sandhill Cranes*. She writes creative nonfiction for *Audubon*, *Popular Mechanics* and *youngARTS* magazines, as well as the *Los Angeles Times*.

Authorized

By Mara Purl

What does it take to earn the title “author”?

For centuries, the standard measure was to have one’s works in print. In today’s currency, it seems the measure of a “real” author is that our books appear on the appropriate lists: best-sellers, or amazon.com.

These external indicators can be encouraging, and they’re practical. This is the case for most professions. Doctors must be licensed, lawyers must pass the bar. But before this can occur, the would-be licensee must do the hard work of training and practicing.

What might be the internal measures of writerdom? Is authorship judged by amount of pages generated? (Apparently John Milton wrote a specific number of pages per day, even if it meant stopping mid-sentence.) Is it indicated by the fact that we have a special place set aside for our writing? (Louis L’Amour often said he could write anywhere, even in the middle of a freeway.) Some of us have special pens, private offices, or certain times of day devoted to our writing work. All of us do whatever it takes to

make our writing possible. But these are still aspects of process—the process of externalizing what is within.

Living into the possibility of being an author is actually quite a separate matter, and one that is uniquely nurtured within the community of writers so vividly exemplified by *Women Writing the West*.

Those of us who write seem to need to stake a claim, and here a metaphor from the old West seems apt. In staking a gold claim, the miner had to both file appropriate paperwork, which from then on functioned as a certificate of authenticity and ownership, and then find the gold and dig it out of the ground.

As writers, we too need to stake a claim—an internal one—before being utterly free to do our work. By what right do we proclaim ourselves writers? There seems to be a difference between *doing* and *being*.

For some, writing is something they do. Having tried other things, they also choose to try their hand at writing. Perhaps they have a conviction that “anyone can write.” (I remember a magazine editor giving me this excuse for offering to pay me a tenth of what I’d received for a piece at a competing publication.) For some, writing is a professional requirement, even if they have neither skill nor inclination. Scientists

must publish papers; sales people must write projections; doctors must write reports.

But if being a writer is something that we *are*, it is simply the lens through which we look at life.

When did I start writing? It’s hard to remember. I can’t really recall a time when I *wasn’t* writing. My grandmother’s attic was seeded with empty notebooks, and I used to sneak upstairs, pluck one from a hiding place, and fill it with poems and stories. But it’s possible I was an author long before I was capable of putting pen to paper. I understood things in terms of metaphors; noticed the arc of personal stories; saw that a shift in point-of-view changes the universe.

Being an author is like having an inheritance: we have to claim it, or we never enjoy the benefits of having it. When we have created a space within ourselves to BE authors, we have author-ized ourselves. The world then has no choice but to follow with its authorization.

– Mara Purl’s *Milford-Haven Novels* have won the Silver Benjamin Franklin, the Gold Evvy, and the Silver USA BookNews Awards. They’re based on her hit radio drama, “Milford-Haven U.S.A.,” that reached 4.5 million listeners on BBC radio.

WWW New Members

December 2007 thru February 2008 * = joined at the Sustaining Level



Margaret Brownley – Simi Valley, CA – margaretbrownley@sbcglobal.net
Susan Tornga – Oro Valley, AZ – susan.tornga@comcast.net
Carol London – Montrose, CO – chronicle@montrose.net
Marcia Meredith Hensley – Farson, WY – mhensley@wyoming.com
Andrea Hughes – South Wales, UK – axab43@dsl.pipex.com
Judy Wickam – Glendo, WY – jwickam@wildblue.net
Jo-Ann Decker Harkleroad – McDowell, VA – jdhark@mgwnet.com
Hope Morrirt – Point Edward, ONT – hopemorrirt@sympatico.ca
Nancy Harris McLelland – Ukiah, CA – nancymcllland@yahoo.com
Bill Stephens – San Antonio, TX – billstephens@satx.rr.com

The Cemetery That Isn't

By Cynthia Leal Massey

On a windswept hill sits an old mansion with a graveyard that isn't, graves that aren't and tombstones that don't belong. The convoluted story of a cemetery that isn't could only take place in the town that gave birth to—dare I say it?—Mulchie, the gigantic mulch pile that really wasn't.

metal window shades and a black wrought iron fence, has a flat roof upon which fifty or so chimney pots and several gargoyles perch. The roof looks like a chessboard, and so the house is often referred to as Chess House. In front of the house serving as an address marker is a tombstone. That was my first clue.

Other clues about the dubious authenticity of the "graveyard" be-

Another big clue was that the "graves" were situated on slabs of rock, Texas hill country limestone.

After my cursory walk-through, I was certain this was not a cemetery, but a facsimile of one, minus the bodies. Nevertheless, when I got home, I did a census search of all the names on the tombstones, spending a few hours crosschecking and going through several different



The story begins last year as I was sleuthing around Helotes, Texas for a book on the history of the town. When people learned of my project, I began getting emails from residents directing me to various sources. One resident mentioned the cemetery in his neighborhood and asked me to find out about it. He thought it was "strange." Indeed, it was.

I became immediately suspicious about the "cemetery" when I saw that it was in the back of one of the most unusual residences in Helotes. The house, which resembles a rural prison, complete with

came apparent as I explored it: the 10 or so tombstones bore different surnames, only a couple indigenous to Helotes. Rural cemeteries are for the most part family cemeteries and since it was apparent these people were not related, my suspicions continued unabated. Not only were the people not related, they were Hispanic and died before 1960, yet a German family had owned the property on which this "cemetery" was located until the 1960s. The low concrete liners that surrounded each of the "graves" did not match their tombstones. It was apparent that the original tombstones had been larger.

census periods. None of the names appeared.

The next question was "Why would someone have a fake cemetery in his yard?"

Okay, call me crazy, but I was hesitant to go to the front door of this house (which would have been difficult anyway due to the locked iron gate) and question the owner about the "cemetery" in his backyard. I did the next best thing. I questioned a few of his neighbors.

One neighbor who had lived in the area for more than 30 years said she did not notice the graveyard

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Cemetery

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until a few years ago. Another told me that the mother of the man who lived in the house had once told her that her son liked historical things—all the chimney pots on the roof were antiques from England.



(Photos for this article courtesy Cynthia Leal Massey)

About this time, I was hot on the trail for other more pertinent material for my history book on Helotes and I put the “cemetery” on the back burner, where it probably would have stayed had I not been researching at the San Antonio Genealogical and Historical Society (SAGHS) library and discovered the Bar D Trail Cemetery listed in the SAGHS’s *Cemeteries of Bexar County, Texas, Volume 3*.

I was dumbfounded. How could a fake cemetery get into a reputable research entity’s publication?

I emailed the president of the SAGHS, giving her my litany of reasons for concluding that the cemetery was not genuine. I asked her to highlight the error in a subsequent newsletter. “Not so fast” was the gist of her reply. “We need proof

that the cemetery is fake.”

One suggestion was that I might consider hiring someone to use sonar equipment to see if bodies were buried in the graves.

I wondered if sonar could pene-

trate solid rock.

We emailed back and forth several times, until I finally asked, “How did your researchers learn about this cemetery? Did they talk to the owner of the property?”

Turns out they didn’t. It seems a neighbor told someone at SAGHS about the “graveyard” and the intrepid researchers drove over, walked to the “cemetery,” which is visible from the street and not fenced, wrote down the names, took notes, then left. They never spoke to the owner.

Not that I fault them for that. As I mentioned earlier, there’s a certain fear factor regarding this unusual property.

Back to square one. The SAGHS president was reacting de-

fensively at this point. After all, the organization is a purveyor of historical records, which most people would like to think have some veracity. Additionally, the organization’s *Cemeteries of Bexar County, Texas, Vol. 2*, had received the Texas State Genealogy Society’s First Place Writing award in 2000. The organization would be reluctant to acknowledge a faux pas regarding Volume 3.

The onus was on me to prove the cemetery was not what it seemed.

Not long after, while I was interviewing the Helotes police chief for the history book, I mentioned the cemetery and explained that I needed to prove it was fake because it was in an official cemetery book of Bexar County. He knew of the cemetery and he knew the man who owned the property. He promised to follow-up.

About a week later, he called and told me that the owner acknowledged that the cemetery was not genuine and that he had purchased the damaged tombstones from a friend who owned a monument business. “He showed me the receipts,” said the chief. “It’s not illegal to purchase old tombstones.” Nor, apparently, is it illegal to erect a fake cemetery. Boothill Cemetery in Tombstone, Arizona, is a prime example.

“What was his reason for erecting a fake cemetery?” I asked.

“To keep people off his property. Scare them off.”

I laughed. “It’s seems his scheme backfired. His ‘cemetery’ has become an attractive nuisance, drawing people in, rather than keeping them off.”

I asked the chief if I could give his [the chief’s] phone number to the president of the SAGHS so he

Cemetery

Continued from page 10

could verify my claim that the cemetery was fake. He agreed.

When I next spoke to the chief, he told me the SAGHS president had indeed called. He explained everything to her and she was satisfied that the cemetery was not genuine.

Waiting to see an acknowledgment of the error in a subsequent issue of the SAGHS newsletter (I am a dues-paying member of the group), which by early May had not appeared, I was surfing the Web when I stumbled upon the Bar D Trail Cemetery listed on the SAGHS Web site. It seemed the cemetery would not die.

The president informed me that the organization's Web person had resigned, so changes to the Web site were slow in coming, and she had

been very busy for the past several months caring for an ill daughter. She invited me to write the story of the Bar D Trail non-cemetery for the SAGHS newsletter.

I agreed, knowing that I'd have to finally interview the man who owned the house. I not only spoke to him, but also to his mother, who thought the whole thing was a hoot. The owner (who wished not to be identified) turned out to be very nice, if a little reticent to talk about his little "cemetery." He had no idea that his creation—he actually called it a "garden"—was in an official book and was causing so much commotion. "Where can I get it?" he asked.

After I told him, I asked why he had erected this fake cemetery. "I like old cemeteries and I believe in spirits. And who's to say nobody's buried there?"

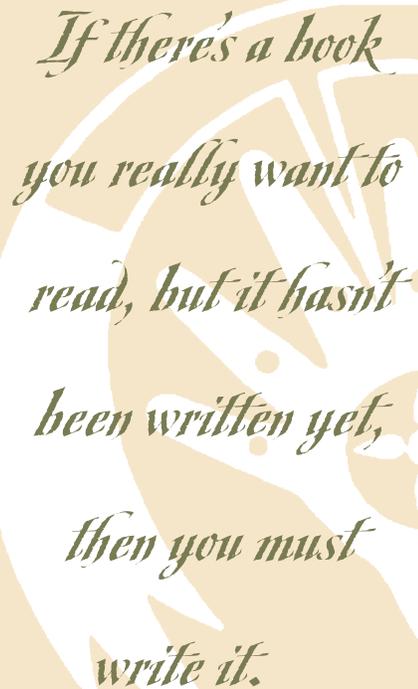
In one respect he is right. In the Helotes hills are many burial grounds, marked and unmarked; however, the Bar D Trail "Cemetery" is not one of them.

Perhaps this article will help hammer the nail in the coffin of a graveyard that isn't, graves that aren't, and tombstones that don't belong.

On the other hand, this is Helotes we're talking about.

Never mind.

— Cynthia Leal Massey's book *Helotes: Where the Texas Hill Country Begins* was released February 2008. There is no mention of the Bar D Trail (non-) Cemetery in the book. This article first appeared in the July 2007 issue of *Scene in SA Monthly*, San Antonio, Texas, and is reprinted with permission from the publisher.



*If there's a book
you really want to
read, but it hasn't
been written yet,
then you must
write it.*

— Toni Morrison

Blog

Continued from page 7

I ended up writing a lot of guest posts this year. Last year I answered a ton of interview questions. On both tours I also had several people write book reviews or other posts about the content of my book, but I did have to write at least 3 or 4 posts per week for the tour.

Each day of the tour, you should also post on your own blog. Write about the tour stop and also give some publicity to the person who was kind enough to host your tour on that day.

You should also watch the blogs where your tour has been during the past few days so you can answer questions that might crop up in the comments.

How do I know if my tour was successful?

I check my Amazon ratings every day, as well as my own blog stats using Google analytics. I also

search for by book's title and various keywords related to the topic every day to see if I'm showing up on the first page of Google's results. I'm probably not as good as I should be about getting metrics for the success of my marketing activities, because by the time one thing is finished, I'm busy working on something else.

Oh, also, at the end of your tour, send a nice thank you message to everyone who participated.

Where can I learn more about blog tours and other online marketing ideas?

Plug Your Book! by Steve Weber and *The Web-Savvy Writer: Book Promotion with a High-Tech Twist* by Patrice-Ann Rutledge.

— Web designer Donna Druchunas manages the *Women Writing the West* website and blog. She also conducts ongoing internet marketing campaigns to promote her award-winning needle art books.

Help Yourself To History On Free Museum Day

By Penny Sidoli

It's been said that a sculptor looks at a block of marble and perceives the object hiding in its center. All the sculptor has to do is carve away the extraneous. Consider a similar idea, that from an object in a history museum, a writer can draw out a lengthy story by imagining the characters who once touched it, their place in time, some resounding poetry within the old thing. Writers bring in the extraneous to highlight the center so the reader learns how we are all connected, past and present.

Recently six historic museums in Santa Ynez Valley, California sponsored a simultaneous free museum Saturday. I invited my ten year-old granddaughter, Anna, along to visit those museums. Her mother will tell you that she and I are on the same wavelength and can finish each other's sentences most of the time.

We started in Buellton, north of Santa Barbara and south of Monterey. In a small room, the museum, in Anderson's Split Pea Soup Restaurant, site of the historic Opening Day of the state's first paved coastal highway, we learned that Buellton was originally a huge dairy owned by R.T. Buell. This pioneer sold off 11,000 acres during a hard times drought in the 1870s and that acreage eventually became the town of Solvang, next on our stop.

We headed first for the Hans Christian Anderson Museum, above a bookstore. Folks, the museum was a mess. At the entrance, we were greeted by the dismal sight of piles of filing on a desk, three feet high and overspilling. The displays were in sorry shape, haphazard and

crammed. In the center of the room there was one shiny glass cabinet displaying Anderson's publications as rare books, collector's items. There was very little to show the author's life, times, family. Marketing had shoved aside the humanity of the author. To be fair, some paper cuts or scissor writing, his hobby, hung in a corner; and cobbler's tools from Denmark were prominently displayed (Anderson's father had been a cobbler). "Disappointing," admitted my granddaughter after we left. "I wanted to see a picture of his desk where he wrote the stories."

Next stop, the Elderhoj Museum in Solvang, which presented the lives of Danish pioneers to the Santa Ynez Valley. Videotapes of oral histories ran nonstop in the same room that held photographic displays of what the elderly interviewees were describing. In the recreated kitchen, a docent explained how to work the porcelain stove. She lifted copper pots out of holes in the top of the stove to show us their rounded bottoms and how the pots were meant to be set into the stove rather than placed atop. The docent pointed out blue and white plates on display that were actually covers for the stovepipe hole high on the wall, when the stove was moved outside in summertime. We loved this museum because it held

so many things for a writer to focus on and imagine the past. The carpenter's hand-hewn plane told us a story, or maybe several, as did the dollhouse and the sea captain's chest.

Anna and I went on to look at ranch stuff, branding irons, stage-coaches, saddles, chaps and rifles on display at the Santa Ynez Valley Historical Society Museum. A dismal one-room clapboard jail dragged in and plopped in the museum courtyard furnished just the contrast we needed. We rounded out our visit to the Santa Ynez Valley by having a sepia-toned photograph taken of the two of us dressed in 1880s garb. I held a book, and Anna a parasol. I like to think that standing behind us, invisible and polite, were present all those people who had owned or were involved with the objects we looked at in the museums. Thankfully, because of writers, their lives continue forever.

— According to WWW member Penny Sidoli's website, she ... "is a fiction writer, biographer and interviewer specializing in cerebral contemporary fiction of the American West." Her e-mail signature line, based on William Shakespeare's The Winters Tale, indicates that she is also... "a snapper up of unconsidered trifles."



2009 WWW Catalog

Affiliate Member Focus

The Affiliate Member Focus is a listing of contact and applicable information. It is available to members who write for periodical/media genre **or** members who have out-of-print books **or** writer-members who are not currently published (especially recommended for members who speak publicly). If you'd like to get your name "out there" and wish to include a listing with a few words about your Work in Progress, that's also permissible.

- WWW Members only
- Affiliate members are featured on special page
- Personal listing cannot exceed **140 characters including spaces**. Should include, name, your choice and type of genre or speaking specialty and contact information.
- (example: count is 117 characters)
Your X. Name, western cookbooks, Imagine Press, 7 My St., Our City, State 00000,
555/555-5555, yourxname@yourxname.com (see WWW Affiliate Member Focus in last year's catalog at www.womenwritingthewest.org)

***Affiliate Listing Form must be received by June 1, 2008**

Return completed form and fees to:

Women Writing the West
c/o Heidi Thomas, Catalog Editor
1314 Harrison St.
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Inquiries: 360-336-5803

* Affiliate Member Focus Listings may be submitted by E-mail: suncat@aceweb.com

AFFILIATE LISTING – \$25

Are you a current WWW member? YES, I am a current WWW member

Fee for this listing is \$25 and is included in my check # _____

E-mail Address _____ Website _____

Keep a copy of this information for your records

2009 WWW Catalog Advertisement Policy and Rates

Complete Advertisement Request Form. Must be received by June 1, 2008.

Return completed applications, submitted items and fees to:

Women Writing the West
c/o Heidi Thomas, Catalog Editor
1314 Harrison St.
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

Inquiries: 360-336-5803
E-mail: suncat@aceweb.com

POLICY – Advertisements must be submitted as follows: Author or Publisher must be current member of WWW. If publishing company is the member they may submit any book by one or more of their authors.

- **Advertisements must be submitted by mail.**
- Submit advertising copy as an electronic file in **GREYSCALE ONLY: NO RGB OR PMS COLORS.** Book covers, photographs, etc. may be included in the camera-ready ads if the entire file is submitted properly.
- Use a CD-R/CD-RW. **NO FLOPPIES.** Ad must be in high-resolution electronic format (300 dpi). Fonts must be Mac compatible; use Mac POSTSCRIPT fonts only. Do not use TRUE TYPE fonts, they can cause printing problems. NO PC fonts - the catalog is built on a Mac and those fonts do not transfer. Embed ALL fonts. If not, then default substitution may occur. **NO faux bold or italic fonts. If a PC file is sent, the file must be a .tif, or .eps AND the fonts MUST be converted to paths or imbedded in the file for the Mac to read it.**
- Do not use gifs. If a jpg or pdf file is used, make SURE it is high resolution (300 dpi). Web site jpg files ARE NOT high resolution and are not suitable for print. The designer will be using Quark 7 to design the catalog.
- Must also submit a Black & White paper printed version (proof) of the ad (for comparison).
- It is the sole responsibility of the sender to check ad copy for correctness of information. WWW reserves the right to refuse any ad. *Ads must be in good taste and in keeping with the mission of the organization, which is to promote the writing of the Women's West.
- Include a self-addressed, stamped CD mailer if you wish your disk to be returned.

Note: No magazine or newspaper clips. Ads will be placed in the catalog as space allows. We will try to place ads in the requested category section in the catalog. However this is dependent upon the number of ads received and layout requirements.

RATES (CIRCLE CORRECT RATE):

	Size (Width x Height)	Cost
FULL PAGE	(7.5" x 9.75").....	\$400
HALF PAGE	(7.5" x 4.75").....	\$275
QUARTER PAGE	(3.625" X 4.75").....	\$175

Category: Fiction: General Middle Grade Biography/Memoir Mystery Nonfiction
 Specialty Nonfiction Romance Young Adult **Juvenile:** Picture Book **Nonfiction:** General
 Anthology Poetry Other: _____

Author's Name _____

Submitted By _____

Contact Info _____

Address _____

Phone & E-mail _____

Fee for this ad \$_____ is included in my check #_____ which totals \$_____.

Total number of listings also purchased but paid with check # _____ is _____.

Keep a copy of this information for your records



14th
Annual

Women Writing the West Conference in Historic San Antonio, Texas! “Marketing Mavericks” October 24-26, 2008

Omni Hotel • 9821 Colonnade Blvd • San Antonio, TX 78230

Start your conference experience with complimentary round-trip transportation to and from the airport on the Omni Hotel courtesy van. Those driving to the conference will find free on-site self-parking. You will arrive at a AAA Four-Diamond hotel in the northwest corridor of San Antonio, with convenient access to all areas of the historic Alamo City. The Bolo's Rotisserie-Grille at the hotel offers an impressive wine list and Texas Hill Country cuisine. (There are also restaurants within walking distance from the hotel.) An elegant lobby bar offers cocktails and live piano music. Our special room rate is \$113, plus tax, for single and double occupancy. Call Central Reservation at 1-800-843-6664, or book your room via the hotel Web site:

<http://www.omnihotels.com/FindAHotel/SanAntonio/MeetingFacilities/WomenWritingtheWest08AnnualConference10.aspx>

Book your room as soon as possible, as they are expected to go fast.

FRIDAY PRE-CONFERENCE TOUR

WWW members Florence Weinberg and Linda Shuler will facilitate our Friday morning (8:30 am- 1:30 pm) tour to these special places:

- The Alamo—In the heart of the city, the 300-year-old Mission San Antonio de Valero was the site of Texans' last stand against the Mexican Army in March 1836. Tour will include a short lecture by a local expert on the history of that battle. On the grounds you will see ancient live oaks and the former barracks with its small museum.
- The Menger Hotel—Next to the Alamo, this historic hotel was built in 1859. It holds the unofficial title of “The Most Haunted Hotel in Texas.” Perhaps you will encounter a ghost on your walk through this famous hotel.
- The Riverwalk—A stroll along the famous river walk will take you to San Antonio's first neighborhood, La Villita.
- La Villita—Look for Spanish, Mexican, German and French-influenced architecture housing shops, art galleries and restaurants in this “little village.” You'll have time to shop and have lunch on your own before the hotel bus picks you up.

NEW! For those conference attendees who are from San Antonio, or choose not to attend the Pre-Conference Tour, we are planning a session on Friday morning from 10:30 – noon: **“Veteran Writers Talk About How They Got Published.”** This session will be repeated (with some new participants) on Sunday morning from 10:15 until 11:30 after the Annual Meeting, which will be from 8:00 -10:00.

FRIDAY AFTERNOON GENERAL SESSIONS INCLUDE:

“Are You Really Ready to Pitch?” A workshop presented by agent Nancy Ellis and author Bill Stephens to discuss the all-important “pitch” and submittal process.

“Walk on the Wild Side.” A workshop by Waynetta Ausmus, Texas storyteller extraordinaire, who will talk about journaling to tell your personal story.

And don't forget the **Networking Buffet** on Friday evening in the hotel's 20th floor Colonnade Ballroom, with a spectacular view of the city. The **WWW Short Story Competition Winner(s)** will be announced during this event. And, some of our **WILLA Winners and Finalists** will read from their award-winning books. This was something we added informally at our last conference. It was so popular we are bringing it back as part of the official program.

SATURDAY SESSIONS

Meet the Agents and Editors – Nancy Ellis, Nancy Ellis Literary Agency; Mike Farris, Farris Literary Agency; Stephanie Von Borstel, Full Circle Literary Agency; Ron Chrisman, University of North Texas Press; Lee Emory, Publisher, Treble Heart Books. (More to come!) Agent and editor appointments will begin Friday afternoon.

Getting Books Made Into TV Shows and Movies – David W. Balsinger, Vice President/Senior Producer, Grizzly Adams Productions, Inc.

Researching and Writing Small Town and Regional Histories – Velda Brotherton, Gail Jenner, Cynthia Massey

What's New in the Children's/Young Adult Market – Diana Lopez and Stephanie Von Borstel

An Update on Electronic Publishing and Publishers – Carol Buchanan

Taking the Mystery Out of Writing Historical Mysteries – Donis Casey, Ann Parker, Florence Weinberg

Putting the Creative in Nonfiction – Julianne Couch and Irma Ned Bailey

Marketing Mavericks – TBA

WILLA Luncheon Speaker – Waynetta Ausmus, Texas Storyteller

WILLA Banquet Speaker – Elizabeth Crook, renowned Texas author, 2007 WILLA Award Winner for Historical Fiction and 2007 Spur award winner for Best Long Novel of the West
The Twig Independent Book Store will handle WILLA and member books.

Conference questions: Cindy Massey, VP Conference, cmassey2@satx.rr.com, or 210-695-5328

NOTE: These panels and speakers are subject to change. Visit the WWW Web site, www.womenwritingthewest.org, for updates.

14th Annual Women Writing the West Conference
San Antonio, Texas

REGISTRATION



First Name _____ Last Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

- Please contact me to schedule an editor/agent appointment: Yes () No ()
- Please contact me about selling my books in the conference bookstore: Yes () No ()
- This will be my first time attending a WWW Conference: Yes () No ()

Make hotel reservations directly with the Omni Hotel. The WWW room rate is \$113/single or double occupancy. Call Central Reservation at 1-800-843-6664, or book your room via the hotel Web site:
<http://www.omnihotels.com/FindAHotel/SanAntonio/MeetingFacilities/WomenWritingtheWest08AnnualConference10.aspx>
 Rate guaranteed until September 23. After that, rooms and rates are "as available." Hotel provides complimentary round-trip transportation and free parking.

CONFERENCE FEES: (Registration includes two breakfasts, one luncheon, and two dinners. You may request vegetarian or vegan meals at the conference registration desk.)

- **Early Registration**
 \$195 – WWW member (postmarked by June 30, 2008)
 \$220 – Non-member (postmarked by June 30, 2008)
- **Registration After June 30, 2008**
 \$215 – WWW member
 \$245 – Non-member
 \$165 – Registration at the door (Saturday only; no meals included)
- **Guest Meals**
 \$50 – per guest Friday evening Networking dinner # guests ____
 \$40 – per guest Saturday WILLA luncheon # guests ____
 \$50 – per guest Saturday evening WILLA banquet # guests ____
- **Friday Morning Tour (NOT included in registration fee)**
 \$25 – per person; guests welcome # persons ____
 (A minimum 20 participants required for tour to take place)

TOTAL
REGISTRATION
\$ _____

TOTAL
GUEST MEALS
\$ _____

TOTAL
TOUR TICKETS
\$ _____

TOTAL
ENCLOSED
\$ _____

Make checks/money orders payable to Women Writing the West.

Copy and send this form to: **Alice Trego**
 2954 W. Abbey Springs Circle
 West Jordan, UT 84084

REGISTRATION REFUND DEADLINE: October 3, 2008
 (No refund after that date for any reason.) You may still register after this date, but you will not receive a refund in the event of cancellation. No meal changes after October 17.

Not Too Late To Send Catalog Submissions

By Heidi Thomas
2009 Catalog Editor

Spring is just around the corner—I promise! (We are seeing signs in the Pacific Northwest already.)

And right on its heels is the **Catalog Deadline: June 1, 2008**. It's not too early to send in your ads and listings right now. See this newsletter, the website or contact me at suncat@acweb.com for the forms. You are welcome to submit electronically.

Don't forget, the catalog is an awesome marketing tool for you as author. We print 5,000 or more catalogs each year, which go to libraries, booksellers and trade shows all over the country. What a great way to get your name and title out there.

Here are some ideas for supporting the cost of the catalog and, at the same time, promoting yourself:

- Consider teaming up with a group of other writers within your genre to purchase a co-op ad. That worked out very nicely for our poets last year. They had a nice full-page splash, it cost each of them less, and it still supported the catalog.
- Ask your publisher to buy an ad, or if they don't have the budget for a full ad, ask if they would split the cost with you.
- Even if you don't have a book published yet, consider an Affiliate Member listing. For only \$25 you can tout your expertise in speaking, editing, historical era, or mention your Work In Progress. That way, you get your name and title out there and you are one step ahead when your book is published. Any questions, please contact me at the above e-mail or 360-336-5803.

First WWW Contest Celebrates Short Stories

By Sheila Wood Foard
2008 WWW President Elect

It's as easy as one, two, three!
Enter. WIN. Publish.

If your short story wins this contest, it will be published in *Women Out West* magazine, formerly *She's Out West* magazine. Judges will choose one Winner and two Finalists. That's three chances to get published!

But that's not the only good news about this Short Story Contest for Women Writing the West members. You have not missed the deadline – which is June 1, 2008.

This short fiction contest celebrates previously unpublished short stories featuring a female protagonist. Stories must be set in the American West (i.e., any location west of the Mississippi River).

WWW members everywhere are drafting, revising, cutting (5000 words or less), and polishing their

short fiction for adult and/or young readers. The contest coordinator is anticipating an onslaught of entries with that June 1 postmark. Her supersized P.O. box, somewhere in the lower Ozarks region west of the Mississippi, is ready and waiting. Send your stories to Sheila Wood Foard, P.O. Box 69, Van Buren, Missouri (that's MO) 63965.

Here's how the contest will be judged. Three preliminary screeners (librarians, creative writing instructors, or authors of published short stories), who are NOT members of WWW, will choose the top ten stories. The rubrics used to evaluate the WILLA fiction submissions will be provided to screeners. The top ten stories will be sent to *Women Out West* magazine editors, who will select and publish the Winner and two Finalists. Certificates will be awarded to the three winning writers at the 2008 WWW conference in October.

Please read and follow the complete contest rules posted on our website, www.womenwritingthewest.org. The entry fee is a mere \$10. No SASE is needed. Follow standard manuscript format. Place the title of the story as a header on each page, but do NOT put your name on the story itself. Number all pages with BOTH an individual page number and the total number of pages. (Example: Go West, Young Woman, page 1/10, Go West, Young Woman, page 2/10). Include a cover page with your name, address, telephone number, e-mail, story title, and word count.

Submit your winning entry now!

– Sheila Wood Foard is the author of *Harvey Girl*, which was a 2007 WILLA Literary Award Winner in the Children's/Young Adult Fiction and Nonfiction category.

Want More Control Over the WWW Listserv?

By Priscilla A. Maine
WWW Listserv Moderator

It isn't as complicated as it may sound. Just go to www.groups.yahoo.com/group/womenwritingthewest/ and sign up for a Yahoo! account, if you don't already have one. Then, fill out a profile for yourself. Be sure to write down the account information because it is needed each time you login at the Yahoo! site.

With a profile you can go to the group site and change your own e-mail settings, go No Mail when on vacation, change your mail format to Traditional, switch from Daily Digest to Individual E-mail. The latter option is nice when a topic is garnering a lot of input/exchange and you want to participate while the topic is hot. You can also switch to only Business Notices from our President without the notes from fellow members. But, you have choices and with a Yahoo! account and a profile you can make them at will.

When I am asked to change an e-mail address or put mail on hold, members probably don't realize that I do not have access to anyone's account, therefore, I cannot make changes. My only option is to "delete" the member then re-add them. In addition, without a profile it's doubly difficult for me to find an individual among all our members. I often don't know their prior e-mail addy, which without a profile, is all there is. Many members only use their e-mail addy without supplying a name.

A reminder: When replying to a post please crop only the portion you're replying to and paste it into a new message. Forwarding the entire daily digest produces a huge file and unnecessary complications for others looking for only the latest posts.

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