

Newsletter

Summer 2007

WOMEN[®] Writing the West

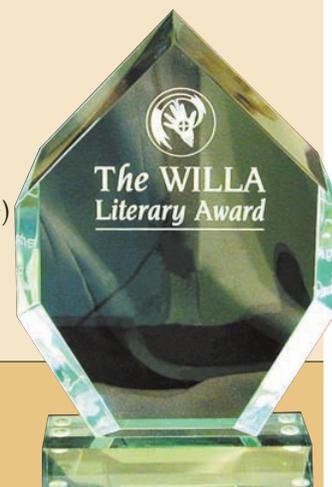
WILLA Winners & Finalists Announced: Celebrating the Finest Books Published About the Women's West

By Jane Kirkpatrick
Chair, 2007 WILLA Literary Awards

Women Writing the West is honored to announce the following Winners and Finalists for the 2007 WILLA Literary Award Competition. We received our highest number of entries this year from a wide range of publishers and authors who recognize the importance of telling stories of the Women's West.

- CONTEMPORARY FICTION:** *The Girl from Charnelle*, **K.L. Cook**, HarperCollins (Winner)
Quarry, **Susan Cummins Miller**, Texas Tech University
Bleeding Hearts, **Susan Wittig Albert**, Berkley Publishing Group
- CREATIVE NONFICTION:** *Montana Women Writers: A Geography of the Heart*, **Caroline Patterson, Editor**, with introduction by Sue Hart, Farcountry Press (Winner)
At Home in the Vineyard, **Susan Sokol Blosser**, University of California Press
Drawing to an Inside Straight: The Legacy of an Absent Father, **Jodi Varon**, University of Missouri Press
- SCHOLARLY NONFICTION:** *Revolutionary Heart: The Life of Clarina Nichols and the Pioneering Crusade for Women's Rights*, **Diane Eickhoff**, Quindaro Press (Winner)
Touching Tomorrow: The Emily Griffith Story, **Debra B. Faulkner**, Filter Press
- HISTORICAL FICTION:** *The Night Journal*, **Elizabeth Crook**, Viking (Winner)
A Clearing in the Wild, **Jane Kirkpatrick**, WaterBrook Press/Random House
Augusta Locke, **William Haywood Henderson**, Viking
- POETRY:** *To Sing Along the Way: Minnesota Women Poets from Pre-Territorial Days to the Present*, **Connie Wanek, Joyce Sutphen, Thom Tamaro, Editors**, New Rivers Press (Winner)
Adobe Odes, **Pat Mora**, University of Arizona Press
Across the High Divide, **Laurie Wagner Buyer**, Ghost Road Press
- ORIGINAL SOFTCOVER FICTION (TRADE OR MASS MARKET):** *Hallowed Ground*, **Lori G. Armstrong**, Medallion Press (Winner)
Rain of Fire, **Linda Jacobs**, Medallion Press
- CHILDREN'S/YOUNG ADULT FICTION & NONFICTION** *Harvey Girl*, **Sheila Wood Foard**, Texas Tech University Press (Winner)
Call Me the Canyon, **Ann Howard Creel**, Brown Barn Books

Continued on page 3



In This Issue:

Volume XV | Issue 2

President's Letter	4
Rewriting Your Life	6
Pen, Publish, Promote Conference Information	10-11
WWW Author Book Reviews	15
Member News	18-19

www.womenwritingthewest.org

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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Catalog:

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 Quarter page \$175
 Contact Heidi Thomas (360) 336-5803

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Full page \$250
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WILLA Winners & Finalists Announced

Continued

Our first-round judges and finalist-librarian judges worked hard to complete their tasks. This year, preliminary judges and librarian judges had the use of rubrics created over the past four years by several WWW members including former WILLA chairs, coordinators and readers. The list of participants creating the rubrics is too long to identify here but writers (and readers) associated with these awards owe a debt of gratitude to them as it is a difficult task to define what elements go into making an award-winning book. The rubrics defined elusive qualities such as "voice," "characterization," "setting," and "narrative," and offered a range of point scores for each element. Judges commented on the quality of these rubrics and their value in identifying exceptional work worthy of the WILLA Literary Award.

This year, the entry criteria also received clarification. The term "West" was defined as "American West" as in west of the Mississippi. We continued the description of "books featuring women's stories" not because other western stories are not important but because the WILLA Literary Award was conceived to bring recognition specifically to women's stories as no other literary competition expressly honors these themes.

The WILLA Literary Competition allows no awards to be given in any category if the judges feel the entered works do not merit this high recognition. Winning and finalist awards were given in each category this year but three categories were awarded only one winner and one finalist rather than two finalists as has happened most often in the past. In several categories, the total

scores by the librarian judges were within single points of a winner or finalist supporting the WILLA Literary Award guidelines that finalists are often very close to being winning works and thus worthy of significant recognition. At the same time, if the final score for a second finalist in any category was substantially (twenty points or more) below the winner and first finalist, a second finalist award was not given in that category.

Another first is that this year the Historical Fiction category was handled by our previous WILLA Chair, Sarah Rickman, because the current WILLA Chair had a work entered in that category. To avoid any semblance of preferential treatment, the current chair received the final results in time for announcement but had no involvement in the judging or scoring.

This year also saw the first competition utilizing our change in categories to Creative Nonfiction and Scholarly Nonfiction. These changes were also a result of several meetings and explorations with former WILLA Chairs, preliminary judges, readers, Winners and Finalists working in ad hoc committees to clarify criteria for those entering works in the competition. The inclusion of Scholarly Nonfiction allowed recognition of academically researched works while also honoring authentically researched but more popularly composed books entered in the "creative nonfiction" category.

Copies of these rubrics will be available at our annual conference October 19-21, 2007, in Colorado Springs where these fine writers will receive their trophies and awards. The rubrics will also be available to members on the website following the conference. Please consider attending, applauding the work of these men and women and their publisher's whose passion for storytelling and the women's West inspires us all.

Acceptance of entries for the 2008 WILLA Literary Competition will begin following the October conference with the deadline of February 1, 2008.

For more information visit www.womenwritingthewest.org.

2007 WILLA Literary Award Winners & Finalists

Contemporary Fiction:
The Girl from Charnelle, K.L. Cook, HarperCollins (Winner)
Quarry, Susan Cummins Miller, Texas Tech University
Wandering Hearts, Susan Witty Albert, Berkley Publishing Group

Creative Nonfiction:
Moxiana Women Writers: A Geography of the Heart, Caroline Fetterson, Editor with introduction by Sue Hart, Farnsworth Press (Winner)
At Home in the Vineyard, Susan Sakal Blosser, University of California Press
Drawing to an Inside Straight: The Legacy of an Absent Father, Josh Varon, University of Missouri Press

Scholarly Nonfiction:
Revolutionary Heart: The Life of Christina Nichols and the Pioneering Crusade for Women's Rights, Doreen Fowler, Quindaro Press (Winner)
Touching Tomorrow: The Emily Griffith Story, Debra B. Faulkner, Fiber Press

Historical Fiction:
The Night Journal, Elizabeth Crook, Viking (Winner)
A Clearing in the Wild, Jane Kirkpatrick, WaterBrook Press/Random House
Augusta Locke, William Hayward Henderson, Viking

Poetry:
To Sing Along the Way: Minnesota Women Poets from Pre-Territorial Days to the Present, Connie Wonek, Joyce Sutphen, Thom Tansmore, Author/Editors, New Rivers Press (Winner)
Adobe Odes, Pat Mora, University of Arizona Press
Across the High Divide, Laurie Wagner Boyer, Ghost Road Press

Original Softcover Fiction:
Hallowed Ground, Lori G. Armstrong, Medallion Press (Winner)
Rain of Fire, Linda Jacobs, Medallion Press

Children's/Young Adult Fiction & Nonfiction
Harvey Girl, Shaila Wood Ford, Texas Tech University Press (Winner)
Call Me the Canyon, Ann Howard Creel, Brown Bear Books

Pen-to-Paper Process Remains Writers' Boon

By *Jacque Boyd*
2007 WWW President
2008 WILLA Chair

President's Letter



Here we are: the Colorado Springs conference is just around the corner; the WILLA Winners and Finalists have been announced, and autumn is soon upon us. We've had a cool rainy summer in the mountains of northern New Mexico and fall is really sneaking up on me this year!

In planning some of the activities for the conference, I said I wanted to create an atmosphere where we could all come and recharge ourselves as writers. In the registration packet there will be something to write with and a special "composition" notebook dedicated specifically for you to come home with a written "piece." I've reached the point where I can compose on the computer - get it down in "print" almost as quickly as it comes from my head. However, I still keep a hand-written journal. Every once in a while the pen-to-paper process is a necessity for me.

When researching the women who flew for the British during

World War II, I always had a feeling of astonishment when I was able to access an original, handwritten journal or packet of letters. I could make a connection with the writer when I could actually *feel* their writing. I was touching the same paper pages that they had and the ink on that page had flowed from their pen. That statement could probably make some of my museum archivist buddies faint dead-away, but you all know what I'm talking about. For as much online researching as I do, there is absolutely nothing more exciting about the research process than having an original document in my hands.

I feel the same way about books. I had a school administrator who kept talking about getting rid of the library in the school and replacing it with a computer lab for research. Needless to say, he and I were at odds with that thought process. This year I've taken on the Director's position at the Charter high school where I've taught part-time for the past few years. One of the larger

projects in the school's life is to build a permanent structure. You can bet there will be a library - with REAL books. Holding the printed word makes a connection. I want to share and instill that feeling in my students.

There will be some time during the conference for you to find a quiet corner. There are some hiking trails around the hotel, although the area has changed a bit with new construction and new housing areas adding to the urban sprawl. The seating area in the lobby is conducive to a quiet moment. So, if I see you sitting and writing in your conference notebook I promise I won't interrupt. Well, I'll make an attempt to not interrupt. Then again, I may just peek over your shoulder!

-Jacque Boyd, a licensed pilot and aviation educator, serves as columnist for Ninety-Nine News, Inc., and writes about current issues pertinent to the aviation field for Aviation for Women magazine.



Wyoming Backroads

By Joyce B. Lohse

You might think when I take a few days off for a road trip adventure, I leave my writing life behind. Not so! My literary friends and interests are welcome companions as they were on a recent jaunt into Wyoming.

Before I left, I e-mailed longtime WWW member Candy Moulton, an expert on Wyoming history, with a question. How could I find Sacajawea's gravesite? I sheepishly admitted driving up and down the highway outside Fort Washakie in the past, looking for the cemetery and not finding it.

Candy responded with directions. She put me at ease by saying she, too, did not find it right away. Further, she encouraged me to ask directions from the friendly folks at the Fort Washakie Trading Post next time I got lost. Good advice.

We had only three days for this journey. My traveling partner was longtime friend, Carol McCloskey. We met years ago while working in Yellowstone National Park, and she illustrated my book, *A Yellowstone Savage: Life in Nature's Wonderland*.

Our first destination was the town of Thermopolis. Now, you must understand that Thermopolis is dangerously close to Yellowstone, which is like a magnet to us. With responsibilities and deadlines, there was no time for Yellowstone this trip, so we pouted, whimpered, and felt terribly sorry for ourselves.

Once in Thermopolis, we stopped at the Wyoming Hot Springs Bath House. Natural hot springs in Thermopolis attract visitors wishing to soak, which would have been appealing had it not been

104 degrees outside. The bank sign read 106 degrees, but I went with the 104 reading in my PT Cruiser; anything to make it seem cooler.

At the bathhouse, we obtained a key, to allow us entrance into the Legend Rock Petroglyph Site. Problems with vandalism require a locked gate and registration process. When the registration clerk casually said, "Watch out for rattlers," we looked at each other, then down at the sandals on our feet. Disregarding the heat, I quickly changed into boots. This made me the designated rattlesnake kicker.



A bronze statue of Sacajawea stands beyond her gravesite outside Fort Washakie. (Photo courtesy Joyce Lohse)

Remote gravel roads led us to the petroglyph site, a sandstone cliff containing over 250 ancient images chiseled by Native Americans. This artwork was created by three prehistoric cultural groups, possibly from 500 A.D. to the 19th century. Lacking a written language, pictures were created using handmade tools to tell stories and record history. No dictionary translates their meanings. Observing them is mesmerizing, unless you are busy swatting mosquitoes

and watching for reptile visitors in nearby sagebrush.

The next day, we drove south through the Wind River Canyon and Reservation, safely increasing our distance from Yellowstone. The Arapahoe and Shoshoni tribes live on the reservation. As we visited St. Stephen's Mission, then the Shoshoni Cultural Center, I thought about author Margaret Coel, a WWW founder. Her mystery series is set on the Wind River Reservation, and I expected to encounter her characters at every turn.

At Fort Washakie, Candy Moulton's directions were right on. A short side trip up a dirt road took us to Sacajawea's Cemetery. The wide-open hillside was a colorful array of flower ornaments, grave gifts, and metal decorations from beds. Sacajawea's grave was located up a dirt path at the top of the hill. A bronze statue of her holding a seashell upon reaching the Pacific Ocean with Lewis and Clark stood beyond it.

One more side trip took us to Medicine Bow, the remote prairie town made famous in the western novel, *The Virginian*, by Owen Wister. Wister's relocated cabin-turned-museum, with a rock monument, is Medicine Bow's shrine to the writer who put them on the literary map.

Our last destination, like dessert after a fine meal, was a rodeo, but not just any rodeo – "The Daddy Of Them All" – Frontier Days in Cheyenne. It was a great end to a fine road trip.

(Note: If you plan to be in Cheyenne on September 15, consider helping us at the WWW booth at the Wyoming Book Festival. It is bound to be a good time and a great opportunity to promote our books while enjoying Wyoming. For more information, contact Alice Trego at aliceretrego@utahbroadband.com)

– Joyce B. Lohse is the award-winning author of several biographies for young adults and is the WWW Administrator.

Rewriting Your Life

© Dorothy Allred Solomon, April 2007

If it weren't for writing, I'd likely be a plural wife living under the thumb of a patriarchal tyrant. As the twenty-eighth of forty-eight children born to polygamist leader Dr. Rulon C. Allred, and the fifth generation of Mormon-based polygamy, I was encouraged to follow in my parents' footsteps. Law enforcement and child protection officers could scoop my father and the mothers into prison and plunk us children in foster homes, leaving our compound barren as a nuclear test site, so I lived in constant terror of the outside world. Early in life, I discovered that language could dissemble and confuse and that it could also protect and separate us from the threat beyond our poplar-lined compound in Salt Lake County, Utah. Ironically, I can also thank words for the relative honesty and freedom of my present existence because writing set me free.

My early discovery that human beings wield enormous power through language led to the realization that we speak things into being continually, sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously. We use language to build or break trust. We declare our independence and change the world; we declare war and change the world. As a "plygie kid," I heard scripture confirm this truth: "In the beginning was the Word..." Tired of huddling in the dark, I pecked away at the hard shell of old ways as I pecked at the keys of my typewriter and later, my computer. The world of my father and grandfathers cracked open and a new life spread its wet wings.

Writers live at the crossroads where words and imagination con-

verge; we play with language and pray over our words until a new thing emerges, whether dream or nightmare, hidden treasure or misanthropic dwarf. This magic moves us to repeatedly confront the terrifying blankness of the page, the stark sands of the computer screen. Although the drive to write has been seen in reductive terms, as a fruitless addiction or the only succor for a lonely heart, in recent years, writing has gained popularity as a means of self-discovery. Based on my own transformation, this trend is more than fad.

People don't have to publish entire books to redefine their lives through writing. By engaging in simple exercises, we can use writing to change our relationships with other people, with the past, and ultimately with ourselves. Some writings may blossom into books, others into stories or essays or poems. But even if they stay in a notebook buried in a bottom drawer, writing that transforms our lives is obviously worth the effort.

Reclaiming the Present by Recovering Memories

When we let words spill onto a page without letting the internal critics block the flow, the stream of language presses our memory banks until we break into lost pools of experience and unacknowledged truths. When we use writing to excavate our own history, we can unearth options we didn't know we had. These possibilities provide choices in the here and now, allowing us to become something more or better or different in the present. For example, when I wrote about the raids or "polygamous round-ups" my family endured, I exhumed a childhood memory of the night we huddled be-

neath blankets on the cement floor of the basement. As I wrote, I remembered my older brother leading us in an alphabet game, his voice light and worry-free, distracting us younger children from our fear. He kept us from crying (which would have alerted the authorities to our presence) and rendered an adventure from that scary and shameful event. Remembering his kindness and courage, I realized that as a child I had been safer than I knew. If it had been true then, it was likely true now. I let go of the unresolved fear, and an old knot in my stomach unraveled and disappeared.

Reinventing Our Lives by Clearing a Space Within

Did you ever have a crowded, cluttered space in your home—a garage or basement or attic—where so much junk had accumulated, the room was no longer functional? It takes courage to tackle the mess, but when you get all the stuff cleaned out, you're surprised to find an accommodating and inviting space, and you remember it was constructed to be useful and pleasing—to house an automobile, for instance, or to be a den or hobby room. When we write we make way for "a clean, well-lighted place." As we pour thoughts, feelings, and memories onto the page, we establish an empty and illuminated arena for our spirits; we can come home and occupy our bodies and shore up a retreat for our imaginative use. In the initial phases of clearing away, the writing doesn't have to be polished; the phrases don't have to make sense, and the spelling doesn't have to be correct for this exercise to work. Journaling opens the floodgates so that the rivers of language flow freely and with it, torrents of creative power.

Using words to pry our way out of a boxed-in consciousness allows life to nudge us in new directions.

Continued on page 12

Let WWW Become a Powerhouse For You

By Jane Kirkpatrick

“You get out what you put into it.”

That’s what my dad always told me. (He taught me how to put rollers in my hair after my mother threw up her hands in despair, so he was a pretty good teacher). His advice of involvement referred to school, music lessons, work, marriage and, hey, life. He was especially adamant about giving to the community and served on lots of boards from hospitals and schools to even artificial breeding programs (we ran a dairy).

His wisdom stayed with me. I joined Women Writing the West as a founding member though there were some there before me. Mostly I “took” in the beginning: participated in a signing when asked; attended the conference; stayed in the background pretty much. Once I gave a presentation but mostly I listened, watched and appreciated what other people did.

I heard through the grapevine that there were a few years in our short history when the board wondered if they could keep the organization going, there were so many of us “watching.” That board revamped and we now have two part-time paid people, Joyce Lohse our administrator and Anne Nelson our accountant, so we move along mostly with volunteers. The WILLA Literary Awards grew after this time and we’ve been taking on new venues to promote women’s stories and women writers ever since.

But it wasn’t until I recovered from my shock and said “Yes” when asked to become President-elect that Women Writing the West became the powerhouse for me that it has become. I have met men and women with such wisdom, approachability and inventiveness that

I’m humbled every time I carry on a conversation with a writer I’ve long admired. My understanding of the publishing world and marketing has grown because of WWW. The first time I attended a trade show as part of WWW, I met a bookseller from a part of the country my latest novel was set in. She introduces me now when I sign at her store as “this is the store that Jane built.” I would never have met her without WWW.

My publisher pays attention to WWW. They’ve seen my involvement on the board as a plus for them, increasing visibility for me and for other authors in the house as well. My publisher sent me to BEA because I had a “place” to be at the WWW booth and I had the pleasure of helping Suzanne Lyon sign her book right next to James Patterson in New York. A double celebrity citing.

WWW is set up so that the immediate past President becomes the chair of the WILLA Literary competition and this year that (position) has enabled me to make connections with publishers, librarian judges and even more fabulous authors. Last year, it was the conference planning with Cyndi Becker that opened publishing doors.

All of this is my way of saying that Women Writing the West can use your help, and I think each of us can use the help of WWW. WWW needs assistance in marketing, in managing trade shows, in finding venues to tell our stories and to promote our works. Maybe you’re a whiz with computers and could assist with the catalog or would like to try your hand at newsletter support. Maybe you manage data well and could be a secretary (who records the phone board meetings and the one face-to-face meeting we have each year). Every year we need coor-

dinators for the WILLA Literary Awards. (Jacque’s all set for 2008, thanks to you!) Every year we hope we’ll have a good web manager especially as internet presence becomes so much more important. (Donna Druchunas has been a gem!) Most of all we appreciate people willing to implement new ideas like the reader’s group and blog that Dani Greer’s championed. Even contributing to the raffle for the WILLA is a way we can be engaged.

Each of us has a dozen irons in our writing fires and I’ve certainly had to decide that I can’t be active in every organization I feel strongly about. But I’ll never regret that I decided to become active in this one. I urge anyone out there wondering what WWW really does to think of what you might want to put in to WWW this year and just see what new things you’ll take out. An email signaling your availability to our president Jacque Boyd Jacqueboyd@yahoo.com or president-elect Kathleen Ernst k.ernst@distaff.net will make their day.

My last duties as a board member will be complete at this year’s conference. But I’m hoping they’ll find a place for me to continue to be inspired by the men and women who have enriched my life through Women Writing the West. I urge you all to give yourself the same great rush of energy by becoming fully engaged in WWW in 2008. Seeing you in Colorado Springs is a great way to get charged!

– Jane Kirkpatrick is the award-winning author of 13 novels and two non-fiction books. She is also known for signing her electronic missives with, “Stories are the sparks that light our ancestor’s lives, the embers we blow on to illuminate our own.”



13th Annual Women Writing the West Conference

Peak Goals: Pen, Publish, Promote

October 19-21, 2007

Colorado Springs Marriott Hotel

5580 Tech Center Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80919

THE PROGRAM: The evaluation forms returned by 60% of 2006 conference participants became the guiding force for all 2007 planning. Your overwhelming request was for more content that will help us all write better, get published, and promote our work more effectively. Thus the 2007 conference theme – *Peak Goals: Pen, Publish, Promote*. Here's what you can expect:

Agents, editors and publishers – the most popular conference feature – will again be available to talk about the marketplace, explain what they are seeking in new work, and participate in pitch sessions.

Workshops will include many of the following “you asked for it” topics:

- Build better writing skills: plot, characterization, voice
- Benefit from critique groups
- Transition from research mode to writing
- Improve productivity with better work habits
- Write for periodicals, websites, and other sources you might not have considered
- Explore contemporary western writing
- Prepare a book proposal, synopsis, and submission letter that will get results
- Learn how to successfully pitch a book to an editor or agent at a conference
- Make sense of contracts, copyrights, and intellectual property issues
- Understand the publishing business; what happens after your manuscript is accepted
- Use the Internet as a promotional tool
- Market ideas from the author's perspective
- Tap the sales and distribution system for libraries and schools
- Present a reading that engages the audience and sells books

Networking with old and new friends begins at the Friday evening buffet in the Aspen Leaf room.

WILLA Awards 2007 Finalists will be honored at the Saturday luncheon and Winners at the evening banquet.

THE PRE-CONFERENCE TOUR: After a guided introduction to **Carnegie Special Collections at Penrose Public Library** you will have time to explore 115 years of regional history. Then, step into early day Colorado Springs at **McAlister House**, an authentically restored 1873 gothic-style cottage. By popular demand we return to the **Garden of the Gods** with time to soak up the ambiance, walk the garden paths, snap photos, and have lunch on your own at the Trading Post snack bar. The \$25 tour fee includes bus transportation and entrance fees.

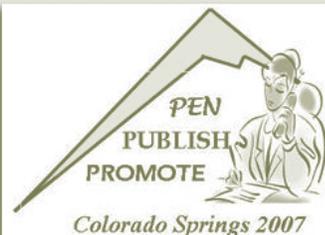
THE HOTEL: The views are the same but wait until you see the new look of the Colorado Springs Marriott Hotel (formerly the Wyndham). Public spaces and guest rooms are newly renovated with elegant colors and furnishings. Beds have plush mattress toppers, down comforters, and lots of pillows. The spacious work area is perfect for writing and you can connect your laptop to the dual screen plasma TV. While Marriott now charges a fee for in-room Internet access, we have negotiated a half price rate of \$4.95 per day. The new chef has upgraded the menu choices and the hotel staff still provides outstanding service.

REGISTRATION: Be sure to read the registration form carefully. If you would like a free appointment with an agent or editor, the coordinator will contact you after all agent and editor participants are confirmed. Similarly, the bookstore coordinator will send ordering forms, if you request to sell your books in the conference bookstore. Make your reservations early. The hotel guarantees our conference rate and room availability only until September 21, 2007. After that date you could pay a higher rate or find the hotel is full.

Watch the website (www.womenwritingthewest.org) for details and make plans to join us as we pursue Peak Goals.

13th Annual Women Writing the West Conference

Peak Goals: Pen, Publish, Promote



Registration

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

- Please contact me to schedule and 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 Colorado Springs Marriott Hotel. The WWW room rate is \$99/single or double. Go to <http://marriott.com/hotels/travel/cosmc-colorado-springs-marriott/?groupCode=weeweea&app=resvlink> . Group Code for our rate is "weeweea." By phone: 1-800-932-2151. Rate guaranteed through September 21st. After that rooms and rates are "as available." Airport transportation \$15 by Colorado Shuttle. Call 1-719-687-3456 for reservations. You must mention Women Writing the West for this rate. Arrivals will be grouped in vans. Transportation for a single arrival is \$35.

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, 2007)
 \$220 – Non-member (postmarked by June 30, 2007)
- **Registration After June 30, 2007**
 \$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: **Jacque Boyd**
P.O. Box 137
Angel Fire, NM 87710

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: September 21, 2007 (no refunds after that date)

Conference questions: Cynthia Becker, VP Conference, cynipid@comcast.net or 719-543-4145

Guidelines for 2008 WILLA Literary Awards

Honoring Books First Published in 2007 • Entry Deadline FEBRUARY 1, 2008

The WILLA Literary Award honors the best in literature featuring women's stories set in the West published each year. Women Writing the West (WWW), a non-profit association of writers and other professionals writing and promoting the Women's West, underwrites and presents the nationally recognized award annually.

The award is named in honor of Pulitzer Prize winner Willa Cather, one of the country's foremost novelists. The awards are presented at the WWW Fall Conference.

- Entries for the WILLA Literary Awards are open to all persons worldwide and are not limited to WWW members or women specifically.
- All authors or publishers of books featuring women's stories set in the West in any time period may enter.
- Professional librarians not affiliated with WWW select winners and finalists.
- Books initially published in 2007 (in any form) are eligible for the WILLA Literary Awards. ONLY books FIRST published in 2007 are eligible – no exceptions.
EXAMPLE: A book originally published as a hardcover and released later as a trade or mass-market paperback is eligible only if the original copyright date is 2007. The book may not be entered in the Original Softcover category if it was originally published as a hardcover. Books previously released/published in ANY format (hardcover, softcover, e-books, CD, Internet downloads, POD, etc.) prior to 2007 are not eligible.
- E-books should be submitted in

the appropriate category. Provide a copy of the actual product and THREE bound, printed forms of the book. Spiral or trade paperback bindings are acceptable. Loose manuscript pages or three-ring binders are NOT acceptable and will neither be acknowledged nor returned.

- A title may only be entered in one category.

EXAMPLE: A contemporary mass-market mystery may be entered in either Contemporary Fiction or Original Softcover, but not both. We strongly suggest that authors of softcover originals (mass market and trade) consider entering the Original Softcover category.

- WWW reserves the right to add or delete categories according to the entries received and to move books to another category as appropriate.
- WWW reserves the right not to name a winner or finalist in a category should the librarian judges feel that no book entered in that category merits a WILLA award.
- Entries received with incomplete submission packages will not be acknowledged nor will the package be returned.

Categories for the 2008 WILLA Literary Awards

Please review previous winners and finalists in each category to get a feel for the types of books that have been honored in past years. A list of previous winners can be found at www.womenwritingthewest.org.

Contemporary Fiction: Books featuring women's stories set in the West in contemporary times. Softcover originals may be entered in this category but the majority of entries are hardbound.

Historical Fiction: Books featuring

women's stories set in the West before contemporary times. Softcover originals may be entered in this category but the majority of entries are hardbound.

Creative Nonfiction: Includes autobiographical works.

Scholarly Nonfiction: Entries in the category are typically academic or educational in nature. Scholarship, research, organization and presentation are some of the judging criteria. Includes edited diaries, also anthologies.

Poetry: Self-explanatory.

Original Softcover Fiction: This category is specifically for fiction novels originally published in a softcover format, trade or mass market. Books previously published in any other format are not eligible for this category. This category draws a variety of genre books, primarily romance and mystery, as well as more mainstream historical and fiction novels.

Children's and Young Adult Fiction and Nonfiction: The divisions in these categories are somewhat blurred and open to interpretation, so this year we are considering this as a single category. Depending upon entries received, the addition of a separate category may be warranted as determined by our panel of preliminary judges. Categories may also be combined as determined by the judges.

If you have questions, please contact **Jacque Boyd** at jacqueboyd@yahoo.com or by telephone at 505-377-3166.

2008 WILLA Literary Awards

Capturing the Diversity of the Women's West

Entry deadline is February 1, 2008. The application fee is \$50 per entry.

The WILLA Literary Award is a nationally recognized award given to writers annually for books featuring stories about a woman/girl or women set in the American 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 2007 (in any form, hardcover, softcover, e-books, CD, Internet downloads, POD, etc.) are eligible for the WILLA Literary Awards. Books previously released/published in ANY format prior to 2007 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 2008.

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 WILLA chair: Jackie Boyd at jacquebboyd@yahoo.com or by telephone at 505-377-3166.

Application for the 2008 WILLA Literary Awards *Honoring Books Published in 2007*

Book Title: _____

ISBN: _____

Author: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax _____ E-mail: _____

Publishing Company: _____

Publisher's Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Editor: _____ E-mail: _____

Necessary Publicity Information (information must be given for at least one)

Name of local newspaper: _____

Book Page Editor: _____

Newspaper Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

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="checkbox"/> Contemporary Fiction | <input type="checkbox"/> Historical Fiction | <input type="checkbox"/> Original Softcover Fiction (trade or mass market) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creative Nonfiction | <input type="checkbox"/> Poetry | <input type="checkbox"/> Children's/Young Adult Fiction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scholarly Nonfiction | | & Nonfiction |

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

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

- A check payable to Women Writing the West of \$50 per entry, sent **directly** to category coordinator.
- THREE** non-returnable copies of each book entry, postmarked **no later than Feb. 1, 2008**, to:
 - Contemporary Fiction: Nancy Curtis, High Plains Press, P.O. Box 123, Glendo, WY 82213
 - Historical Fiction: Jann Arrington Wolcott, 832 Bishop's Lodge Rd., Santa Fe, NM 87501
 - Original Softcover Fiction (trade or mass market): Irene Bennett Brown, PO Box 75, Jefferson, OR 97352
 - Creative Nonfiction: Penny Sidoli, 3340 Cliff Drive, Santa Barbara, CA 93109
 - Scholarly Nonfiction: Harriet Rochlin, Roots West Press, 10750 Wilshire Blvd., #1203, Los Angeles, CA 90024
 - Poetry: Ann Parker, PO Box 1164, Livermore, CA 94551
 - Children's/Young Adult Fiction & Nonfiction: Mary E. Trimble, 155 Woodgrove Lane, Camano Island, WA 98282

Each book may be entered in only one category.

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

Writers Block? Build Scaffold Scenes

By Heidi Thomas

“You just can’t get there from here.”

How many times have you heard that direction-giving joke? But often that line describes a type of writer’s block. You’ve written up to a certain point. You know where you want to go up ahead. But what do you write in between? Personally, I have wasted hours, days, even weeks, trying to figure out what to write next, so I can get to that future scene I already have in my head.

But wait. Who says you have to write in a linear fashion? What if you write out of sequence? Aha! Now, you’ve given yourself permission to write the scene from your head and it flows wonderfully. Another aha! Questions and solutions actually appear about how the character might have arrived here from there. You’re not stuck any more.

As a writing instructor once explained, to build a bridge, one first needs to erect a scaffold. It’s not a lot different in writing. You have several important scaffold scenes in your story or novel that have to take place (there will probably be more than one of each of these scenes in your book):

The Introductory Scene where the reader meets your main character.

A Meeting Scene, where the main character meets another character (maybe the love interest or maybe his nemesis) This is another form of Introductory Scene.

A Conflict Scene where two characters battle it out, whether physically, verbally, or in a match of wits. Or where the character battles himself.

A Realization Scene—the moment the character realizes something

about herself that is a turning point. Or realizes her “enemy” is really her friend.

A Resolution Scene, where a problem is resolved (not necessarily the main one, but a problem, nonetheless).

A Final Scene, which may or may not be your actual ending. An interesting exercise is to write a scene in which your main character(s) are old and looking back at what happened, what he/she/they learned, how they’ve changed, what they would’ve done differently, etc. That can give you an insight to “fill in the blanks.”

Another interesting exercise is to write a letter from your main character to yourself, as if this person has just learned you are writing a book about her, how she feels about that, any advice she might have for you, etc. This can be quite revealing. Sometimes you learn that you have a reluctant character who doesn’t want her story told. So you have to figure out how to win her over.

A recent article in *The Writer* magazine talked about writing out of order. The author made similar suggestions to the ones above, such as:

- Write a scene in which the main character enters a new place.
- Take a minor character you’ve introduced and write a scene where he/she appears later in the story.
- Choose a character other than the main character—someone you’d like to know more about, and write a monologue in which she explores or explains herself.
- Write a scene where your main character has a dream that advances the story.

- Make a list of at least five crucial scenes that you think will be important for the story/novel (see scaffold scenes above.)

Any one or all of these scenes may or may not appear in your final draft, but they will help you keep writing and develop ideas.

Have fun, write on and defeat that Writer’s Block! (Now, I just have to take my own advice.)

— Heidi Thomas has completed three novels, is the 2008 *WWW Catalog* Editor and teaches community adult beginning fiction and memoir writing classes.

Rewriting from page 6

Possibilities that could not penetrate our thickened sensibilities now present themselves for consideration. The here and now becomes an open, playful, joyous space. Not only do we have more room, we have greater order and presence. We can inhabit our own lives more fully as we invest our essence in our characters and in the subject of our writing.

Through these and other writing encounters, we increase our awareness, change our perspectives and broaden our horizons. Whether we publish what we’ve written or not, we’re provoking our own growth on our own terms.

— Dorothy Allred Solomon offers these and other writing exercises through a *work-in-progress*, *Putting Your Life on the Line*. She is the author of *In My Father’s House*, *Predators, Prey and Other Kinfolk: Growing Up in Polygamy*, and the paperback version, *Daughter of the Saints*, which won the *WILLA for Memoir/Essay* in 2004.

Landscape as Character in Western Literature

By Florence Weinberg

Good landscape description sets the scene, determines the mood, and conveys emotions ranging from a sense of dread to one of peace. Narrative passages can paint a backdrop for action to come. A well-drawn landscape *shows* while you simultaneously *tell*. Your narrative comes alive before the reader's eyes, since your protagonist is no longer suspended in abstract space.



Landscape determines the action, since it limits and shapes the movements the protagonists can take within it. Think, for example, of a gunfight in the main street of a western town. The street becomes a shooting range, the surrounding buildings form immovable barriers to each side, and watchers contribute to the mood of tense anticipation and conflicting feelings.

I have called landscape “character,” since, by definition, a character influences the protagonist, limits or enhances action, is harsh (an impassible canyon) or kind (a field of flowers). It can even “speak” with the hero, letting him or her know what is possible or desirable: whether there is a hiding place or not, whether food and shelter is or is not available, comfort or misery.

I provide an extended example drawn from an early book of mine,

where the hero, an 18th century missionary priest, must cross a lava field in order to confer with an Apache chief, in hopes of clearing a colleague of a murder charge. With this passage, I endeavor to create a distinct atmosphere:

“An hour’s ride north of the fort, the trail followed a ridge between two arms of the lava flow. Heat waves shimmered above the black, tumbled stone below. Little vegetation survived amid those for-

bidden rocks, although here and there straggly grass, an elk-horn cactus or an ocotillo found enough soil to put down roots. The lava layer increased in depth the farther into the badlands I rode, and we came to a point where it piled up to cover the ridge. The trail turned sharply left at the base of a ten-foot lava cliff. I paused. The flow had congealed in ripples around the base of the once-liquid rock. Burst bubbles had formed perfect spherical pits with sharply defined edges, ranging from pinholes to craters the size of a man’s head. One of them, half filled with soil blown in over centuries, was as large as a tub. A few tufts of brown grass languished there. We descended to follow the ridge on a footing of pulverized cinders.

I changed mounts after another hour’s ride and examined their hooves. The iron shoes were shiny

and scored by the cinders; the frogs of their feet frayed, but not yet seriously damaged. I pried out wedged cinders with my knife. The lava, heated by the noonday sun, exhaled a scorching breath that recalled its temperature when the parent crater first vomited it forth.

Two more hours and I stopped again to share out the last of the water. In all that time, I’d seen only one movement among the rocks other than our own: a charcoal-gray

lizard scuttled from the shade of a boulder into a crevice.

As the sun reached the western horizon, my lead horse threw up his head and whinnied. He either smelled water or heard another horse. If the latter, the Apaches were near, but more likely he was reacting to the scent of water. Around a bend, we came upon a wide spot where tufts of green grasses made a startling contrast with the black boulders. God be praised! An ebony basin, four yards in diameter, glittered with pure water that reflected the glory of the sky, painted by the setting sun. We rushed to it, arranging ourselves around the basin, and all drank at once.

It became cold after darkness fell. Nights in the desert are cold anywhere. My horses hovered close

Continued on page 14

Landscape from page 13 to me, and we dozed through that dark but starry night, aware of hellish surroundings and the rustling and clicking noises from the small creatures of the lava flow.”

* * *

Here, landscape monopolizes the scene as the protagonist's adversary. Key words like lava flow, heat waves, black, stone, forbidding, badlands, etc. set the mood. Our missionary has encountered an inimical, alien world, potentially deadly, where even the rare desert

plants barely survive, and where mere contact with its surface can wear away iron horseshoes and injure tough hooves. Heat is intense; life-sustaining water gives out. Will the antagonist win? The priest's actions are forced by the landscape. He is stressed, anxious, physically miserable, thirsty and threatened.

The blasting sun wanes. A natural spring reflects the glory of the sunset; its waters sustain a border of living green. Colors other than black brighten the landscape for the first time. The mood shifts from anxiety to relief, even momentary

joy. But relief does not last; unease, even threat is renewed by the chill of the night and by the subtle noises heard in those “hellish surroundings.” The hovering horses echo the protagonist's mood.

I have attempted to show the missionary's feelings rather than tell how he reacts to the landscape “character.” Did I succeed?

– Florence Weinberg is an award-winning author of eight novels, including three historical mysteries with 18th century Jesuit missionary Fr. Ignaz (Ygnacio) Pfefferkorn as her main character.

Conference Tradition: Raffle

Donations Accepted

Once again this year at our annual conference in Colorado Springs, we'll be raffling donations to support Women Writing the West's WILLA fund. This fund allows WWW to be able to provide items associated with the WILLA literary competition, including monetary awards to Winners and Finalists and plaques and trophies to the deserving awardees.

If you would like to send your donations ahead, or if you're unable to attend the conference and would like to contribute to the raffle, please send them directly to Jacque Boyd, 27 San Mateo Drive, Angel Fire, NM 87710. Jacque will make sure these raffle donations are transported to Colorado Springs.

Of course, if you'd like to bring your donation with you, be sure and give them to Jacque when you arrive at the hotel. And thank you for your generosity.

WWW New Members

April 2007 thru August 2007

* = joined at the Sustaining Level

Gabrielle S. Arterburn – Whitewater, CO – garterburn@yahoo.com
Michele Drier – Sacramento, CA – Michele_drier@comcast.net
Brenda Erdkamp – Thornton, CO – blerdkamp@comcast.net
Jamie Lisa Forbes – Greensboro, NC – jlfesq2001@aol.com
Rebecca Guevara – Salt Lake City, UT – rephgu@comcast.net
Audrey Hansen – Albuquerque, NM - ahnmex@hubwest.com
Linda Henk – La Porte, CO – lhenk@frii.com
Tamara Hinton – Canadian, OK – tammyhintonle@hotmail.com
Susan Lowell – Tucson, AZ – susanlowell@rionuevo.com
Wanda Snow Porter – Nipoma, CA – WSSnow@webtv.net
Laurie Powers – San Pedro, CA – Lpowers12@cox.net
*Gaby Pratt – Greenwood, DE – GandPPratt@aol.com
Lauren Small – Baltimore, MD – lsmall@comcast.net
Jan Walker – Gig Harbor, WA – janwalker@earthlink.com
Persia Woolley – Sebastopol, CA – Persia@foothill.net
Christie Wright – Highlands Ranch, CO – cwright672@aol.com

Welcome!



WWW Author Book Reviews

Paint the Wind
Pam Muñoz Ryan
Scholastic Press, Sept. 2007

Reading WWW member Pam Muñoz Ryan's latest young adult novel *Paint the Wind* inevitably took me back to age seven or eight and my discovery of the magic world of horses. I think it was the movie *My Friend Flicka* that started it all. I know for sure that when I read Walter Farley's classic *The Black Stallion*, I was hooked.

I didn't write stories in my childhood — that would come later — rather I created stories and ran them like movies in my head. I created and dreamed them. I "lived" them in my mind's eye, in my soul, and sometimes, I think, my body lived them as well.

Like Maya in *Paint the Wind*, horses changed my life. My desire to ride, to be one with that magnificent animal the horse, led me to attend a Colorado summer camp that specialized in Western riding. It also led me to join a riding club in Denver — these were VERY big in the 1950s — where I learned to ride English style to complement the Western seat I learned at camp. Though I left horses and riding behind when I went to college, the life-blood of the West — horses — had been firmly ingrained in the person I would become.

Talk about life-changing events! That mine spread over ten years just makes it dearer and more vivid.

Paint the Wind is the book I WANTED to read as a young girl. Why? Because it has a HEROINE — a girl protagonist. In all the books I read about horses, a boy was the lead character. I suppose that's why I had to make up my own sto-

ries in order to put the female protagonist — me — into the story. How many of you had similar experiences?

Pam makes the same connection with her own reading as a youngster, but in her author Q&A she adds an element that had not occurred to me.

In those childhood books we both read, the horse in the story wins a race — or some competition — to prove its worth to the owner. Pam's contention is that she wanted the heroine to bring something to the horse — and thus to all humankind. Thus, her story reaches into that magic realm called universality. It becomes more than just a story of a girl and a horse. It becomes an experience that could be told anytime, anywhere, about anyone, and is understood and meaningful to all people. That's no easy task, but Pam has achieved it — all in a simple story of a girl and a horse.

What could be better?

Q&A with Author Pam Muñoz Ryan



Pam Muñoz Ryan and Smokey

Did you ride or spend time around horses when you were a child?

Only vicariously. As a young girl, I was obsessive about books and I still remember reading Marguerite Henry's *King of the Wind*, *Misty of Chincoteague*, and *Justin Morgan Had a Horse*. Many of my friends collected Breyer horses, which I loved but couldn't afford. One of my friends owned a horse and I can still remember going out to the corral behind her house to pet it. The horse world fascinated me. But it was so far removed from my everyday (and beyond my family's financial means), that it never occurred to me to ask for riding lessons. But once, when I was in high school, the Lipizzaner Stallions came to my town on tour. A boy I had no interest in dating asked me to attend the performance. I accepted only because I wanted to see the horses! [Laughing] I still feel a bit guilty about that.

What classic horse stories did you read (or reread) as you prepared to write *Paint the Wind*?

I reread dozens of children's and adult classic horse stories, and contemporary ones as well. I made a list of over thirty titles and to my surprise, discovered that most featured a boy and a horse: *The Red Pony*, *King of the Wind*, *The Black Stallion*, *My Friend Flicka*, *Seabiscuit*, the *Billy and Blaze* series and many others. That fueled my desire to put a girl protagonist in a unique and character-strengthening situation. I also noticed that many horse stories ended with an inevitable race or competition and that the value of the horse was often depicted through its ability to win something

Continued on page 16

Reviews from page 15

for the owner. I wanted more than that. I wanted reciprocity – for the human to “win” something for the horse, too.

How did you become interested in wild horses?

I began researching horses in general, reading nonfiction books about the historical and mythical significance of the species to man. Many world cultures revered the horse and measured a man’s worth by how many horses he owned. That led me to stories about the role of the horse in the development of America: how the country flourished after the advent of horses from Spain via Mexico and the introduction of horses from Europe to the East Coast during Colonial times. Then I read *America’s Last Wild Horses* by Hope Ryden and became fascinated with the social dynamics in wild herds and harem bands. I learned about the stallion’s role as protector and the mare’s role as leader and the alliances made among “sister mares.” I came to appreciate the equine sense of community. Now I understand why people advocate for the protection of wild horses.

How did your heroine, Maya, develop?

After researching the wild horses and going on wilderness rides to see them up close, I began to wonder about a young girl who lived a repressed life: one of confinement and loneliness, with no sense of community, which is the opposite of the wild horse world. Then I imagined what it would be like to thrust Maya into a remote and wild setting similar to that of the wild horses. I questioned how she might grow and change under those circumstances. I wanted Maya to discover a sense of community not only with her new family, but with the horse world, and

with the land.

What affected your decision to learn how to ride, especially now as an adult?

I kept asking myself, “How can I write a book about this character and this horse and not know how to ride?” Besides, here was my chance to live what I thought was a lost dream. I’d been on a horse before, but only a few times. In each of those instances, I sat placidly on a mount that followed a line of horses, nose-to-tail. I needed a different, more hands-on experience. Two years ago, I approached a trainer, Dana Rullo, in Olivenhain, California, and told her what I needed to accomplish in order to research and write this book. I admitted to her that I’d never had one lesson in my life but that I wanted to learn everything the correct way – no shortcuts. And I asked her to be strict with me. She agreed to train me. She was demanding and thorough and exactly the type of teacher I needed. I took hundreds of private riding lessons from her, sometimes riding three days a week to prepare for the two research rides I’d arranged. I still laugh at all the mistakes I made and how many times Dana said the words, “do-over.” Often, if I knew I would be learning a new skill at the next lesson, I’d research it at length beforehand. One day, Dana gave simple, clear instructions on how to side-pass. I struggled and then reiterated the myriad of details I’d read about the technique. She shook her head and said, “Stop thinking so hard and start feeling!” Like my character, Maya, I had to learn that good horsemanship is as much about feeling as it is about thinking.

***Paint the Wind* is a departure from your other novels—it’s still your signature storytelling, but the epic Western landscape feels like exciting new terrain for you. What kind of research did you do to get to**

know your setting?

I needed to go where my story would be set, or somewhere similar, to see the wild horses in their habitat. So I signed up for two research rides. During the first one (in May 2006, in the eastern Sierra Mountains), the weather turned wet and cold, but our group rode anyway, one day for six hours in freezing rain. I will never forget the moment we finally encountered a harem band: That first sighting was awe-inspiring. The horses’ spirits were self-righteous and noble. And I realized how very seldom I have ever seen a large mammal in the wild, living free within its own defined society. That experience also gave me profound respect for the horses’ ability to withstand the elements and the restraints of man.

On the second ride (in August 2006, in southwestern Wyoming, near the Red Desert), we rode for eight days. I slept in a teepee, was caught on horseback in a swarm of “mean bees,” bathed in the Sweetwater River, and spent long days in the saddle. In that part of the country, there is much more sky above than there is earth below, and for me, there was something unsettling and settling about the wide open spaces. At night, the stars came slowly, one by one. The Milky Way emerged as a smear – a giant swipe across the speckled blanket of sky. It was peaceful and comforting. But at the same time, against it, I felt belittled and helpless. I wanted to convey that feeling to the reader.

In alternating chapters throughout much of the novel, you write from the point of view of a wild horse, Artemisia. Did you always know her story would be such a central part of the book?

As the story developed, I knew that I wanted to incorporate the horse world from a perspective other

Continued on page 17

Reviews from page 16

than Maya's. As I researched the herd dynamics of horses in the wild, I became intrigued by the nuances of their society and how it is structured, especially the role of the lead mare. When I needed a horse character to fulfill Maya's unresolved longings about her mother, a lead mare seemed the right choice.

Were there any special challenges in writing from the point of view of an animal?

The biggest challenge was to avoid giving the horses anthropomorphic characteristics. The book would have been much easier to write if I *could* have given them human emotions! But that wouldn't have been true to the animal world. A horse's sensibility is different from a human's and I wanted to portray it correctly. I tried very hard to depict appropriate equine responses, but I still left a little room for some creative license.

The horses in the book are named for famous painters. What was your inspiration for this?

I tried many different approaches to naming the horses. (At one time, I toyed with the idea of naming them after the towns in Wyoming.) While researching, I visited the Gilcrease Museum: The Museum of the Americas, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and was inspired by their collection. There I saw, among others, the works of Frederic Remington, Charles Russell, Olaf Seltzer, Charles Banks Wilson, John Singer Sargent, John Audubon, N.C. Wyeth, and Winslow Homer. The artists and their works stayed with me. I realized that many of them were likely unfamiliar to young people, so I saw an opportunity to subtly introduce them. But most importantly, naming the horses after famous painters fit the story. Many are named for painters of the American Southwest because the story is set

there. I hoped that if readers searched for their work, they might appreciate the landscape, history, and color of a part of this country that is truly unique. Other horses are named for artists whose personal journeys impressed me, and who had to overcome their family's or society's reservations about them becoming artists, such as Mary Cassatt and Artemisia Genteleschi. I also chose a few artists, like N.C. Wyeth, simply because I'm in awe of his work.

To read the Q&A with Pam Muñoz Ryan in its entirety, visit www.womenwritingthewest.org

— Sarah Byrn Rickman is a former WWW president (2005) and author of the forthcoming (March 2008) biography: Nancy Love and the WASP Ferry Pilots of World War II.

Scoundrel's Bargain
Peggy Fielding, from Diva Books, Denton, TX, 2007

Annie Lee Twig had her hands full when she left Arkansas in a hurry. She drove her wagon West loaded down with a pregnant sister, drunken uncle, and two unidentified corpses stashed under sacks of provisions. Tied to the wagon was a hot-headed "guard" mule affectionately named "Lucifer."

Twenty year old Annie, determined to give her family a new start, was in a rush to get to "Oklahoma Territory" in time for the great Land Run of 1889. Full of hope and Ozark gumption, she set to work staking her claim with the help of a newly hired hand called John Wesley Matlock. He is an educated man who holds a secret—and a surprising talent for preaching.

They say good fences make good neighbors, but Annie's next door neighbor, the well-heeled and influential Henry Trent, was definitely

not good and he stirs up as much trouble as an Oklahoma cyclone. Keeping their secrets and an eye on one another, Annie and John Matlock forge a "scoundrels' bargain" in order to ensure safety and happiness for all those living at the Circle Twig.

Peggy Fielding's "Territorial" tale is sure to please readers in search of an amusing historical romance with a touch of Oklahoma flair.

Foxy Statehood Hens and Murder Most Fowl

Jackie King, Peggy Moss Fielding, and Paula Watkins Alfred, from Deadly Niche Press, Denton, TX

Just in time for the Oklahoma Centennial, The Foxy Hens, aka Peggy Fielding, Jackie King and Paula Alfred, have created a delightful anthology of novellas set in the early days of Oklahoma statehood. The "Hens" have hatched three short murder mysteries. "The Spinster, the Pig and the Orphan" by Jackie King tells the tale of a spinster hotel owner with a murder on the premises. "The Raucous Bird and a Felony Tryst" by Paula Watkins Alfred chronicles the life of a young girl masquerading as a boy. Sleuthing is enough adventure for her until she loses her heart to the town banker. The heroine of Peggy Fielding's "Hats, Healing and Homicide in Tulsey Town" solves a murder with the help of a magical horse and his oh-so-romantic owner. This trio of mysteries will please summer readers looking for mystery and history.

Foxy Statehood Hens and Murder Most Fowl and *Scoundrel's Bargain* are both available at your local bookstore or Amazon.com.

— Romney Nesbitt is a writer and creativity coach from Jenks, Oklahoma. She is a guest reviewer for this issue.

Member News



Shannon Applegate

(Photo by michael james photography)

The Governor of Oregon, Ted Kulongoski, presented WWW member **Shannon Applegate** the 2006-2007 Oregon Governor's Arts Award in July at the state capitol. She joins Oregon writers Ursula LeGuin, Barry Lopez, Ken Kesey and Kim Stafford as one of the recipients of an award. Six to eight recipients have received the awards every other year beginning in the late 1970s.

Joyce Lohse had fun stepping back in history in Leadville, CO, for their Boom Days celebration in early August. She signed her award-winning book, *Unsinkable: The Molly Brown Story* at the Book Mine Bookstore. This fall, Joyce will have an "Unsinkable" double-header, signing her book at the Molly Brown House Museum on October 7 and the Molly Brown Summer House on October 14, both in Denver.

WWW VP Marketing **Sherry Monahan** finished filming a *Lost Worlds* episode called, *The Real Deadwood*. She is the lead investigator/host of this one-hour show that will air on the History Channel in September or October of this year (Mondays at 9:00 p.m. E.S.T.). She is also the historical consultant for a new

movie in the works called, *The Territory*.

Sherry also received news that the University of New Mexico press is going to reprint, *Taste of Tombstone*, and will be released in spring 2008, just in time for the 10th anniversary of its original publication in 1998.

In addition, she was a panelist at the Western Writers of America conference in Springfield, MO, with notable historians, Robert Utley and Leon Metz, and discussed researching and writing from diaries and journals. Sherry also has a book called, *Stories and Recipes That Shaped the West*, under review by the University of North Texas Press. She was featured in the August issue of *True West* magazine in the "Author Profile" section.



June Willson Read's biography, *Frontier Madam: The Life of Dell Burke, Lady of Lusk*, is scheduled for publication by Globe Pequot in November. Dell Burke, who operated the Yellow Hotel in Lusk, WY for nearly 60 years, "was an interesting lady to research and write about," June says. "She opened her brothel in Lusk in 1919 and closed it around 1978...quite a feat given that it never was legal."

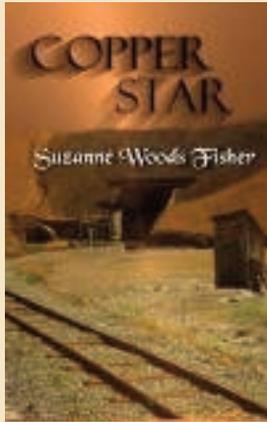
This past spring, June's children's historical fiction set in the late 1880s, *Partner for Papa*, received Third Prize in the Burlington (NC) Writers Contest.



WWW President-Elect **Kathleen Ernst** is happy to report that her novel, *Hearts of Stone*, has won the 2007 Children's Literature Award from the Council of Wisconsin Writers, as well as the best children's literature of 2006 award from the Society of Midland Authors. The book was also named to the New York Public Library's "Books for the Teen Age" list, and was an Editors' Choice selection in the February, 2007, issue of the *Historical Novels Review*, <http://www.historical-novelsociety.org/editors-choice.htm>



Member News



The film rights of newly released historical fiction *Copper Star*, written by critically-acclaimed author **Suzanne Woods Fisher**, are under consideration by a major motion picture studio. A contract for the sequel was offered to her before *Copper Star* released. Pre-release orders have driven the book on Amazon's sales rankings down into low digits.

Copper Star, a World War II love story set in a copper mining town in Arizona, hit the publisher's bestseller list on its release date of June 30th. The debut novel spins the tale of a young Resistance worker who was smuggled out of Germany as the Gestapo closed in. She is sent to "wait out the war" in Copper Springs, Arizona, and finds she can't quite leave her resistance skills behind. Soon, she turns the town upside down by uncovering a mystery that leads back to Germany. Visit Suzanne at www.suzanne-woodsfisher.com.

New WWW member **Leslee Breene** has been on the road marketing her latest Western historical romance, *Leadville Lady*, which is her second published novel from Five Star Expressions - Thomson-Gale (10/2006), for which she received the Rocky Mountain Fiction Writ-



"Four Stars from Five Star": Leslee Breene (*Leadville Lady*) left top of photo, Beth Groundwater, right. Lower photo: WWW member, Joanne Sundell, and Pat Stoltey at a recent booksigning. (Photo courtesy Leslee Breene)

ers PEN Award. Her new promotion team, "Five Stars from Five Star," may be signing in your neighborhood store soon!

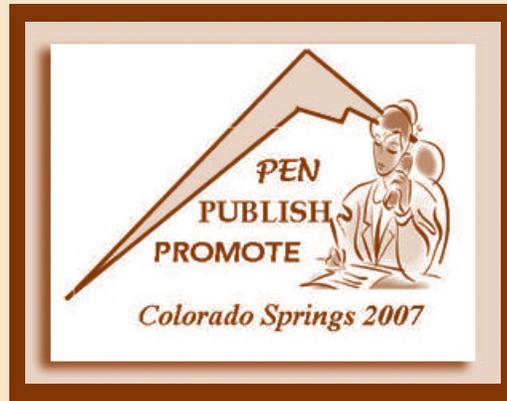
Foxfire, Leslee's second suspenseful tale of romantic pursuit in the Old West, (2001), is still available in trade paperback. She recently signed a contract for a third historical women's fiction novel, *Hearts on the Wind*, with Tekno/Five Star, scheduled for release in October 2008.

Leslee is available for Denver/suburban area book club events. A 40% discount and free shipping (5 or more books) will be provided through Five Star Publishing. Please call: 1-800-877-4253. Visit Leslee at www.lesleebreene.com or Amazon.com.

"Creating Buzz," **Susan J. Tweit's** article on conserving native bees for your garden and the landscape, was featured in the May/June issue of *Audubon* magazine, a finalist for the prestigious Eddie magazine awards. You can read the article online (without all the gorgeous flower and

bee photos) at <http://audubon-magazine.org/audubonliving/audubonliving0705.html>. Her next article for *Audubon*, "Green-up on the Roof," explores the trend to planted roofs and the implications for wildlife habitat in the sky. The summer issue of *National Parks* magazine also features her article, "The Sound of Water," on the history and future of cottonwood forests, those billowing green oases along Plains and southwestern streams and rivers. Susan has been kept so busy by creative non-fiction writing assignments this year that she says, "My deadlines have deadlines!"

Donna Druchunas announced recently that her award-winning knitting book, *Arctic Lace*, is now in its fifth printing and is a finalist for a Colorado Book Award. **Ann Parker** is also excited that her second novel in her Silver Rush mystery series, *Iron Ties*, has been named a finalist for a Colorado Book Award, as well. We have our fingers crossed for you both!



We hope you have enjoyed the first WWW online
 Newsletter! We welcome your comments.
 Thank you for reading.



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