

Editor's Say



Here are at my favorite time of year. Spring and Fall are both seasons of change. I enjoy watching for the first tree leaves to move from the summer green to a yellow or gold of fall. How quickly they flutter to the ground. I don't want to miss it.

This issue we will focus on how some writers broke into the business and for a side trip from Marcella Meeks on Why I (she) Writes. Marcella's reason for writing is a unique one but resonates with any writer who wants to communicate with other people on a personal level. I hope everyone who reads it will enjoy knowing about another writer's journey.

Currently, I am in the middle of co-authoring a small book. It is hard to accept a criticism from someone after 43 years but my co-author sat down last week and declared "this is too linear." Ouch!

After studying the manuscript I decided he was right but it was a difficult statement to accept. Even old writers need to pay attention to what they write. I went back to his suggestion for the hook and started again. It was difficult to think there would be another way to write this book but he was right. Where he pointed to an outstanding hook, there it was and it will make a better book, even if it means trashing part of what I have written. Moral of that story? Listen to the critique no matter how hard it may be to hear, Stop clutching that manuscript and shouting "My words."

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Why Do I Write



Fifty-something years ago, there was a quiet little girl about eight or nine years old. She was somewhat of a loner, so to speak or maybe she was just shy. She was an ordinary girl in some ways but different in others. She kept to herself a lot but enjoyed playing when the opportunity arose. She was also an abused child – hurt by an older brother who had been abusing her for as long as she could remember. It happened regularly until he finally found a steady girlfriend and moved away from home.

This same little girl turned to books and to writing as a means of escape from the world she knew well. She had good parents but they never understood her and shushed her if she tried to tell them what was happening to her. She carried this in her heart for many years until she finally grew up, had children of her own and banned that brother from her life once and for all.

That little girl started writing when she was in the third grade. It was mostly in journals, but she also kept a notebook that she'd write poems, short stories and plays in. Somewhere along the way she lost all of her childhood musings... It was just as well. Some things were better forgotten.

That little girl was none other than myself.

Now, fifty-something years later, I still write. I write every day. Mostly, I write in my journal on a regular basis but several times a month, I write children's stories for various publications, mainly for three different magazines owned by Pacific Press.

After I grew up, I started writing for newspapers and spent twenty something years writing front page news, feature stories, obituaries, advertisements and many other things needed. But when I retired, I returned to my passion of writing for children and travel writing. And I love writing about writing, another passion of mine.

I am retired now and spend most of my days writing. It keeps me busy and keeps me from letting life of yesterday bring me down. My abuser is dead now, and that's one less thing I have to worry about. After I banned him from my life many years ago, when my daughters got to be teens, he

by Marcella Meeks

came after them and I had to threaten him with the law to keep him away. My daughters knew that if he showed up to call 911 regardless if he got out of the way or not. He was a monster and not welcome in our home. The abuse of long ago would not start here.

Seven years ago I came down with stage 4 mouth cancer. I had it removed and took 6 weeks of radiation. It came back in the upper part of my mouth three years later and I had to have surgery again and another round of radiation for six weeks. It marred my face to some extent and the once beautiful woman that I once was on the outside no longer exists.

I carry with me battle scars both on the inside and on the outside. I am not as shy as I used to be (but I am very self-conscious these days!) but in some ways I am still a loner. I have a sprinkle of friends but truthfully being alone and writing is my preference.

(continued on page 4)



Let me start by saying, humor that is hurtful or at the expense of other writers has no place in the writing industry. This should be about writing. Online writing communities have become a cutthroat, often uncaring part of cyber world.

In order to succeed in writing, I've always believed that we must come together and help each other. I do not understand the attitude many writers have adopted of stabbing their fellow writer in the back. I've always looked at the other writing communities and other writers out there as a part of my community, rather than competitors. I don't pretend to know everything and though I run a writing community; I'm still learning like many of you. It is sad though that many writers don't share the same opinions as me. They would rather compete than bridge together. Am I the only voice saying," As a writers it is

time we bridge together as one?" "It is time that we helped one another."

Some may be looking at our community of writers and thinking," I'm not going to join Today's Woman because it's too cutthroat and it won't be a community." "It will be like the rest that I have joined." Well you are wrong because we are a community. The more I look at the bickering and flame wars on some of the other writing communities, I have found Today's Woman writing community to be very supportive. We're like a big happy family as opposed to some of the other communities, which are cutthroat and competitive or filled with trolls and writers insulting their fellow writers.

Don't ever let anyone tell you that we don't have some exceptionally warm, caring, and professional people who choose to submit their content to Today's-Woman.net. Most importantly don't let anyone tell you that you can not write. I've enjoyed working with and getting to know the members within my community , as well as so many others in the writing industry. Over the past two months I have met more authors and writers with simply no values or no morals. I have seen writing communities that were suppose to be there to help writers become infested with bickering, name calling and flame wars.

Don't let your career go down in flames. The reason is that your reputation speaks for you and you never have to bad-mouth anyone in order to make yourself look better. The way you carry yourself speaks volumes. Don't put your reputation on the line by getting into flame wars. I have learned that in writing your credibility is everything. I also want to thank my husband who gave me an important bit of advice he said, "They are critiquing you not because there was anything wrong with your writing but it was because you wrote it." As a writer we should never second guess our writing because of what someone said. Professional writers will help you improve your writing not make fun of your writing.

Also don't ever belittle another writer to save your own behind. Recently I had the members of a well known writing community email another website, regarding one of my articles . They sent 43 complaints so that the editor of the website would remove it. One of the letters stated," The article contained many typos, and I didn't feel the author communicated her ideas very clearly." When I received wind of this I contacted the editor of the website and she replied, "But I did receive no less than forty-three (43) emails complaining about the spelling errors and the grammatical problems. That's much higher than we are used to dealing with." "We generally don't receive complaint emails."

(continued from page 2)

I write because it defines me. It gives me strength to carry on when the going gets rough and rocky. I can express my emotions and feelings in my writing like there's no tomorrow and I can overcome obstacles and fears through writing. I can find inner strength and healing in my writing. I can count on my writing in many ways. It's my therapy. It consoles me in times of grief. It enables me to express my emotions without ever opening my mouth to anyone. I can make it private or write for an audience from one end of the United States to the other end.

I am still that same little girl that I used to be in a lot of ways (minus the abuse) yet I've grown up, I have learned to forgive and forget, I have learned to love and be loved. And through years of writing, I learned more about myself than any psychiatrist could ever help me with. I still shed a few tears once in awhile, but my writing can dry my tears better than any man could ever do. And wipe away my fears. No psychiatrist can do that and it's way cheaper!

This is why I write. How about you, why do you write?

(continued from page 3)

"The members in the forum you pointed me to are now criticizing me and the quality of my sites." That should have been her first clue that this was nothing more than a witch hunt to get my article removed. Therefore she fed me to the witches instead of supporting me as a writer.

One of my own members recently submitted an article to me that had a few spelling and grammar errors. He and I worked together to improve the errors in his article. The article was very well written I might add. However that is what we do as writers, we help one another. Would it not of been better for that editor to point out that I had errors in my article and they would need to be fixed before she could publish it on her website?

To be a successful writer you need three things: Belief in yourself, a strong backbone and a good reputation. You can be the greatest writer ever but if you are in the market for backstabbing and getting into flame wars on message boards, then you might as well put up your notebook and pen and join a chat room. There you can let your fingers run aimlessly over the keyboard as much as you like.

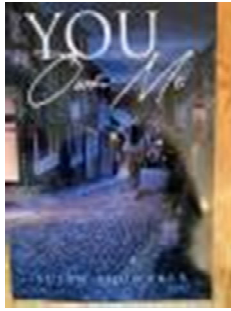
I have gotten into enough flame wars on message boards defending my website reputation and my writing I shouldn't need to defend my writing to anyone and neither should you. I realize that spelling and grammar may not be one of my best however that is why we have editors. I appreciate nothing more than someone coming to me and pointing out in a polite manner that I have a spelling or grammar mistake.

This way I may improve on the quality of my next article. This is a cutthroat world and there are going to be those that tell you that you can't write and that your publishing company is a joke and they will take your most compassionate poem and make it resembles something they would wipe their butt with. I have learned you need one tough back bone in this cutthroat industry. I also have learned that the ones doing the insulting have no more of a reputation than you in this industry. They have gone with pod publishers or have never been published outside of the web or made some bad career choices regarding who they published with.

In closing some advice, you need to tell yourself "I am a writer first and foremost and I'll be damned if I ever let anyone tell me different." To the 43 writers who felt it necessary to poke fun at some serious articles that I wrote all I can say is poke away. Some of those articles were on some serious issues, like keeping your child safe on the internet. While you are only questioning my grammar, spelling and the structure of my sentences; someone is reading my article and taking my important advice to heart. That same advice might just save their child's life. Belittle away if it makes you feel better. I write because I love to write and I have something to say. If you don't like what I have to say, don't read it.



Good News and Books by Members



BOOKS BY MEMBERS

You Own Me
By Susan Sue Shumaker

\$23.95

ISBN 979-8-88851-990-5
(paperback)

ISBN 979-8-88851-991-2 (digital)

Available online through Amazon
and Barnes & Noble

Katie--a lonely young woman without a past, seeks seclusion; timid yet explosive.

David--a family man without a family; insecure with something to prove.

Duncan--a man's man; happily married but in love with his best mate's girl.

Sydney Crane--a lost soul.

Running from a traumatic past, twenty-four-year-old Katie Nelson leaves America to start over in small-town England. She purchases a used bookshop and intends to disappear into the countryside. She is determined to make a new life in a new place with a new name. Who is the real Katie? What is she hiding?

Plagued by paranoia, fear, and memory issues, Katie is satisfied with her self-imposed isolation until her calm is broken when two very different men notice her. One is infatuated. One is obsessed.

Do YOU have a new book that has been released? We would love to share your joy with other NWA Members! Simply e-mail us at: natlwritersassn@hotmail.com

FYI

If you're considering working with an agent or a publisher, please contact us for current information. Please contact us on our website at www.nationalwriters.com, or email us at Natlwritersassn@hotmail.com

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

“Everybody walks past a thousand story ideas every day. The good writers are the ones who see five or six of them. Most people don't see any.”

-Orson Scott



NWA BOOKSTORE

NWA GUIDE TO WRITING FOR BEGINNERS

Basics for every writer by Sandy Whelchel

Rowman and Littlefield publishers \$24.95 + \$2.20 p&h (retail \$25.95)

THE FREELANCE WRITER'S BIBLE

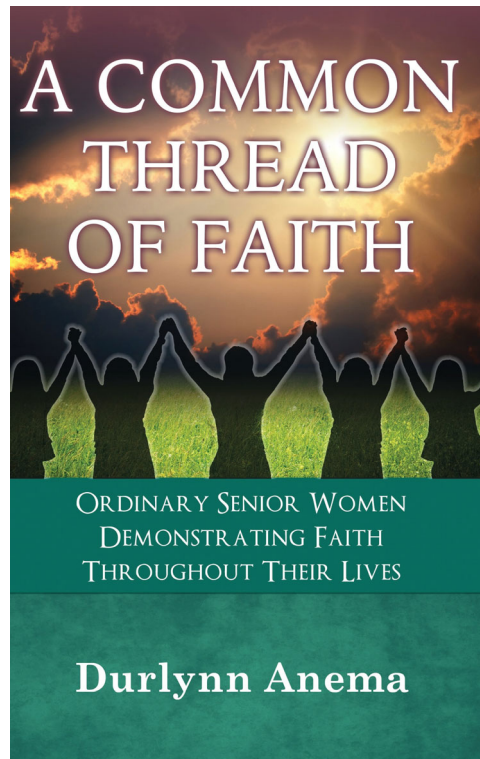
by Dave Trottier

Don't miss this book. \$18.15 + 2.50 p&h

ALL THE ABOVE BOOKS MAY BE ORDERED THROUGH NWA.

Foundation News

We are still accepting scholarship applications, so if you know an outstanding young writer please have them apply. Applications are available on the NWA website under the 'Contests' link.



A Common Thread of Faith
By Durlynn Anema
\$14.95
ISBN: 978-0-88100-186-0

Meet twelve women who discovered aging has given them additional opportunities to be of use in the world through their lives of faith with a higher power guiding their path. These women find themselves in an interesting time. Faith moves them as it did for others over the centuries, and they refuse to have it replaced with fear and anxiety—words which have taken root and bloomed during the pandemic and afterward. Fear and anxiety are not in the vocabularies of these women.

These women differ widely in their early lives as well as in their varying attitudes and approaches to life. Some have often wondered if their lives were going in the right direction; some found their deep faith as a result of the life paths they took; some always believed they were guided by a higher power. Others were guided by parents; some by dreams; some by searching to find the truth; and others by circumstances beyond their control. All survived and became stronger women.

They have used their faith to help people in all walks of life, and have discovered that by caring for others their own lives change. Their talents range from music to crafts, from nurturing to organizing, plus using their physical difficulties to bring strength to others in the same circumstance. Two women describe a little-known disease called Meniere's in the hope that anyone suffering from it will be encouraged to find help.

All proclaim “victory” through the lives they have lived entirely through their faith.

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Be sure to ask about Penny Wise's special Welcome Kit offer—\$75.00 worth of office supplies for \$24.99.

NWA POETRY CONTEST

OPENS JULY 1 annually

PURPOSE OF THE CONTEST

The purpose of the National Writers Assn. Poetry Contest is to encourage the writing of poetry, an important form of individual expression which has a limited commercial market.

CONTEST RULES

All entries must be postmarked by October 1. Only unpublished poems are eligible. All poetry forms and styles are eligible as long as they do not exceed 40 lines. Authors retain all rights and may submit their entries to publishers while the contest is in progress. Anthology rights will be requested for the first through third place winners. The entry must be accompanied by entry form (photocopies are acceptable), entry fee of \$10 per poem, and return SASE if you wish the poem and rating sheets returned. **POEMS WILL NOT BE RETURNED WITHOUT SASE.** The U.S. Postal Service will not allow us to use your metered postage unless it is undated. Receipt of entry will not be acknowledged without a return postcard. Author's name and address must appear on the first page.

JUDGING AND PRIZES

Judging will be based on originality, technique, adherence to poetic style, and emotional value. Copies of the judges evaluation sheets will be sent to entrants furnishing an SASE with their entry. Winners will be notified by January 31. 1st Prize -- \$100; 2nd Prize -- \$50; 3rd Prize -- \$25; 4th through 10th Places will receive a book of the winner's choice. Honorable Mentions receive a certificate.

ENTRY FEE AND CRITIQUES

The entry fee per poem is \$10. If you wish to have your poem critiqued, please request this on the entry form. Entry fees are used to pay judges and prize money.

NWA POETRY CONTEST FORM

To: NWA Poetry Contest
National Writers Assn.

10940 South Parker Road, #508
Parker, CO 80134

Entry # _____

Date _____

Amt _____

Please enter the enclosed poem (title) _____ in the NWA Poetry Contest.

_____ My entry fee \$10 is enclosed.

_____ Please charge my _____ Mastercard _____ Visa # _____ Exp. date _____

CVV# _____

NAME (PLEASE PRINT) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

TELEPHONE # _____

_____ You may retain my poem for a critique after judging. I am enclosing an additional \$16 for evaluation.

NWA NOVEL CONTEST

OPENS December annually

PURPOSE OF THE CONTEST:

The purpose of the National Writers Assn. Novel Contest is to encourage the development of creative skills, recognize and reward outstanding ability in the area of novel writing.

CONTEST RULES:

Any genre or category of novel manuscript may be entered. All entries must be postmarked by April 1. Only unpublished works may be submitted. All manuscripts must be typed, double-spaced, in the English language. Maximum length is 100,000 words. Those unsure of proper manuscript format should request Research Report #35.

The entry must be accompanied by entry form (photocopies are acceptable), entry fee of \$35 per submission, and return SASE if you wish the material and rating sheets returned. **SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE RETURNED WITHOUT SASE.** The U.S. Postal Service will not allow us to use your metered postage unless it is undated. Receipt of entry will not be acknowledged without a return postcard. Author's name and address must appear on the first page. Entries remain the property of the author and may be submitted during the contest as long as they are not published before the final announcement of winners.

JUDGING AND PRIZES

Judging will be based on originality, marketability, research, and reader interest. Copies of the judges evaluation sheets will be sent to entrants furnishing an SASE with their entry. First through fifth place awards will be presented at the annual NWA Conference. 1st Prize -- \$500 and possible representation; 2nd Prize -- \$250; 3rd Prize -- \$150; 4th through 10th places will receive a book of the winner's choice. Honorable Mentions receive a certificate.

ENTRY FEE AND CRITIQUES

The entry fee per submission is \$35. If you wish to have your submission critiqued, please request this on the entry form. Entry fees are used to pay judges and prize money.

NWA NOVEL CONTEST FORM

To: NWA NOVEL Contest

National Writers Assn.

10940 S. Parker Rd. #508

Parker, CO 80134

Please enter the enclosed entry (title) _____ in the NWA Novel Contest.

_____ My entry fee \$35 is enclosed.

_____ Please charge my _____ MasterCard _____ Visa # _____ Exp. date _____

NAME (PLEASE PRINT) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

TELEPHONE # _____

_____ You may retain my submission for a critique after judging. I am enclosing an additional \$1 per page for a critique.

Entry # _____ Date _____ Amt _____ RP _____ Y _____ N	For completion by NWA Staff—leave empty
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AUTHORSHIP GUIDELINES

PURPOSE: Authorship magazine is the “in-house” publication for the National Writers Assn. It is read by thousands of members on a quarterly basis. Currently the magazine is a 10 to 241 page publication with a four color cover.

SCOPE: Articles submitted for consideration to Authorship should have a writing slant. Material should deal with writing “how-to’s” or current market trends. We are overstocked on inspirational “How I became a successful writer...” type material and will not be interested in any of these articles. Articles slanted toward aspects of fiction—creating characters, setting scenes, etc. are of interest and will be our primary interest. Humor is a plus — writing is serious enough without a totally serious article.

We do not accept fiction. Poetry is published in our winter issue, if it has a writing theme.

SUBMISSIONS: All submissions should be in standard manuscript format, approximately 1,250 to 1,500 words, accompanied by an SASE if the material is to be returned. Authorship uses AP style with the exception of state abbreviations. If the author is not aware of proper manuscript format, they should request NWA RR#35 prior to submitting. Manuscripts accepted for publication will be requested via e-mail in Microsoft Word format in text files with line breaks. NO tabs, fancy fonts, bullets, charts, or tables. If charts or tables are necessary, submit them like art work. Electronic files will be given preferred treatment as this prevents typos in final copy.

Sharp clear photos of article authors will be requested if material is accepted.

PAYMENT: We are currently paying \$10 honorarium per article or a \$10 reduction on membership dues.

