



## Editor's Say



**M**y mind seems to be running on two tracks, so I'll begin my Editor's Say column here and hope the newsletter doesn't drip into it.

One of our articles this issue covers de-cluttering and get writing—sound advice from Marcella Meeks. Marcella has some good suggestions for all of us. But don't forget about writing. I've met numerous writers who got busy de-cluttering and never got around to producing those articles or books.

For several years some NWA services have been on a hiatus. Members didn't request them or seem to need them. I'm not sure why. Recently "BOOM"—all of a sudden everyone seemed to need them. I was caught with no resources. So after swimming through years of mud, here we are. I'll try to rebuild these listings as soon as possible.

Everyone needs an editor. That is a true statement. Until recently no one really NEEDED an editor. Really they always did but no one thought they needed one. I've begun to compile a list of competent editors but it is going to take a while. Don't expect miracles but I have two reliable ones to begin with.

While we are on this subject let me add some sage advice. One, prices for editing are all over the place. Don't pick the cheapest or the most expensive one. Do you need a full edit of content and grammar or do you need an edit for spelling and punctuation?

Getting an editor is much like getting married, have the prospective editor read a page of your work and mark it appropriately. Try not to get hurt feelings especially if they slash your darlings. If you feel you really need a certain statement you can always put it back in.

Second, discuss the edit with the potential editor. While you are discussing, try to get a feeling for this person's views. Are you going to have to rewrite the piece when it is finished? Does the editor insist on writing the piece "their way", if so find a new editor.

I'll try to get this new Research Report finished as soon as possible, in the mean time try out the editors I've found.

Happy Spring!

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**T**he Thanksgiving holiday got here a little too quickly for me, and with it came three unexpected deaths in my family that nearly got the best of me. I had family and friends coming in for the holiday, and grand kids of all ages coming to stay that week. Not only that, I was working on a children's story for Primary Treasure (Pacific Press) that needed edited and rewritten within a certain time frame. I was also working on an article for the Spring edition of Authorship (this publication you're reading today), and my mind was already full of holiday clutter and noise. There's no way I would get either story finished by Thanksgiving.

Spam callers were constantly blowing up my phone every hour on the hour and I dreaded the thought of even hearing the thing ring so I turned off the ringer. It wasn't until late one evening a couple days before Turkey Day when I decided to decipher my calls when I realized my oldest sister had text and asked me to call her right away, it was an emergency.

I had just finished editing the story for Primary Treasure and set aside to send out the day after Thanksgiving. Ideas for an article for the spring edition of Authorship was a million miles away at this point. What the heck, I thought. I have plenty of time before I get this one done.

Just as I was about to return the call to my oldest sister, one of my daughters called and wanted to come over for coffee. She also needed to borrow some seasoning for a pie! We spent the next two hours going over recipes and discussing dinner plans for Turkey Day. I got busy after she left. I put chicken on in a large pot for the dressing and started working on chopping onions, bell pepper, celery and getting things organized for the big day.

The phone rang. It was my oldest sister. She told me to sit down, that she had some shocking news and I needed to be seated. It was at that moment she informed me that one of my younger sisters had passed away and had been dead two days in her apartment before someone made a welfare check and found her lifeless body. The tea kettle was whistling and in walks several grand kids and their families. The next few hours was hard and honestly, I don't even remember how I finished cooking and chopping anything.

For the next few days our house was filled with kids, families, pets, and noise. The funeral was set for a later day because of the autopsy and I was

*by Marcella Meeks*

asked to do the service. Being a pastor's wife/assistant pastor had its moments and believe me, this was one of them.

Shortly after Thanksgiving dinner, when everyone was helping me store food and clean up, and the grands were finally heading out the door, back to their normal routines, I got another call from relatives in Alabama. Two of my cousins had died. My cousin William had died yesterday and his sister Diane died just hours ago from complications due to a long-term illness (cancer). I declined the offer to drive out there and sent my heartfelt thoughts along with flowers. Three deaths in less than a week's time. Uh-uh, this can't be.

The chaos continued as preparations were being made for my sister's funeral. Her son's wife called and texted at least ten times a day making changes to the obituary that wasn't necessary to begin with.

*(continued on page 4)*



**H**ow would you feel if you are able to write the same amount you use to write in just half the time? Well, the answer would be of course “great.”

It is always great to have an amazing writing speed as it will help you in getting your writing task done in much less time than ever before. Moreover, you will be able to complete your work within the given time limit.

Let us look at some tips that help in increasing the writing speed:

- **Outline-** Before you start writing any article; just create an outline with regard to the same. This will work wonders and you may notice the difference as you start following this simple rule to outline before you start writing.

- **Eliminate all the distractions-** Whenever you are about to start writing, just eliminate all the factors that cause distraction. Get yourself away from twitter, face book, e-mail and all other stuff that causes distraction. Getting away from all the distractions will help you in paying complete attention towards your writing task. This will result in efficient writing.

- **Brain storm-** Whenever you start writing, brain storm all the ideas that pop up in your mind. Just keep on jotting down whatever comes to your mind. Brain storming is a great way to get all your ideas out of your mind. Thus, you can choose the best ideas out of all the ideas that have just popped out of your mind.

- **Set a deadline-** Set a deadline or timer for the writing task you are doing. This will help you in increasing your writing speed as well letting you do the work within the given time limit. Through this technique, you will be able to get everything out of your mind as fast as possible.

- **Make writing a routine-** You need to set writing task in your daily routine activities. Doing writing on a daily basis will help you in getting used to it as well as will help you in increasing the writing speed. Thus, get it into your daily activity.

Following above ideas will help you in increasing your writing speed. An increased writing speed will help you in completing all your academic writing tasks within the given time limit. You will be able to complete your homework and assignment tasks within the deadline without any error if you regularly focus on enhancing your writing skills.

Finally funeral day approached and I managed to get my notes together and we got it done. A beautiful send off funeral service for a beautiful sister. Many tears fell again that day but we all made it through and everyone returned home. I didn't fall apart – how I managed to hold everything together was still beyond me. And at the back of my mind, there was still that story that needed to be looked over one last time before going to Pacific Press. And then the article for Authorship was still in there somewhere.

Everyone was finally gone and there was peace in the house but my mind was still cluttered with chaos and noise that I just couldn't shake for several more days. The temperature started dropping a little and cold weather wasn't too far away. One evening I sat on the back porch drinking a cup of coffee and looking out at the woods behind the house. Just days ago, this house was filled with children's laughter, dogs barking and cats trying to hide from the chaos. The phone was driving me crazy with Spam callers wanting to sell me insurance! Now, sitting out here in the coolest part of the evening, with nighttime creeping in, it suddenly started to get a little too quiet for comfort. A lifetime of memories with my little sister came flooding in and I cried again, for the hundredth time but this time, it was my last real tearful out pour. I had made my final peace and it was time to move on.

This article came into being with very little effort. I just needed to let go of all the noise and clutter that held me back the last two weeks.

At some point, the bitter cold evening started to creep up on me and I felt it. I had to go back inside. I poured another cup of coffee and I remembered the story that needed my attention and went to my office to work on that.

My mind was finally quiet and all the clutter and noise of the last few days had disappeared somewhere between dusk and nightfall. I finished the story and sent it to the editor via email. It was time to work on my article for this publication.

By now, I am already weary from days of family and friends and noise and everything that comes with funerals and the holidays, I decide to take a shower and go to bed.

Sometime during the night, I decided to get up. I went to my office and answered several emails and ran across an online publication for writers in one of my emails. I started reading the editor's article and it touched base with some of the things I was going through. Though no one had died in her family, the setbacks from the hurricane (she lives in South Carolina) and her husband suffering from a stroke – it just sucked the energy right out of her just like the last two weeks of family chaos did me. But she got right back up in the midst of all this and wrote a

thousand words a day and got through it, and so must I. I got my inspiration back at that moment and went to work on this article.

Sometimes, in the midst of the storm, in the day-to-day routines of life, we have to unclutter our minds and get rid of the noise and sit down and write. There's no other way.

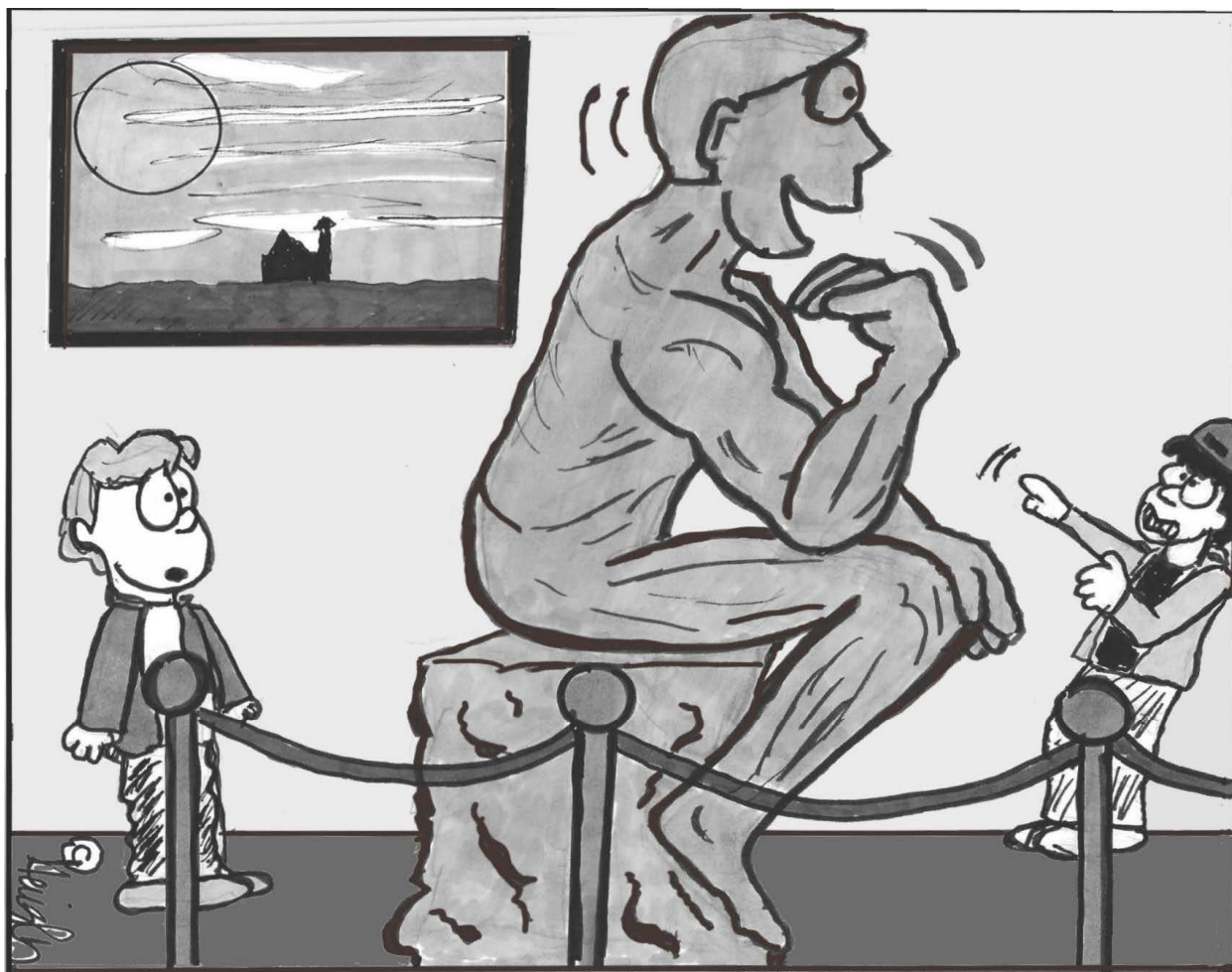
The funeral is over and so far, no one else has died in our family. But Christmas is right around the corner and I'm not sweating it. I went out and bought gift cards for everyone and told everyone that this Mama wasn't cooking this year. I've got stories to write. My daughter said, "but it's Christmas, Mama!"

It doesn't matter what season it is – if you're a writer and have deadlines to meet, then you just have to do what you have to do!

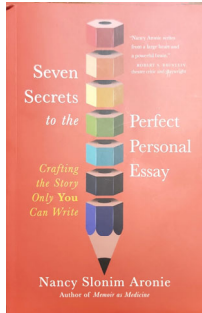
Needless to say, even though I am NOT cooking Christmas dinner this year, we're all getting together and eating at a buffet restaurant and everyone is returning to their own busy schedules and this Mama is getting back to hers.

I don't need the clutter and noise right now. Simple as that.

Happy Spring!!!



"THE THINKER" FINALLY DECIDES WHAT TO WRITE ABOUT.



**BOOK REVIEW**

*Seven Secrets to the Perfect Personal Essay: Crafting the Story Only You Can Write*

By Nancy Slonim Aronie

\$18.95

ISBN 978-1-60868-930-9

After several years of conducting classes as the founder of the Chilmark Writer’s Workshop on Marthas Vineyard personal essayist , Nancy Slonim Aronie has written a book on writing personal essays. She is a frequent contributor to NPR. She uses the best of her students essays to illustrate her seven secrets.

Some secrets to consider:

1. Start with a compelling sentence
2. Introduce a Dramatic Scene
3. Discover and Reveal a New Insight about yourself
4. Be Vulnerable
5. Use direct quotes

There are several others, but you’ll have to read the book for yourself. After reading this book I considered the possibility that I might actually try my hand at the personal essay. Aronie gives the reader the feeling that it might just

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**

**“ORGANIZING IS SOMETHING YOU DO BEFORE YOU DO SOMETHING, SO THAT WHEN YOU DO IT, IT’S NOT ALL MIXED UP.”**

**-A. A. MILNE**



**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

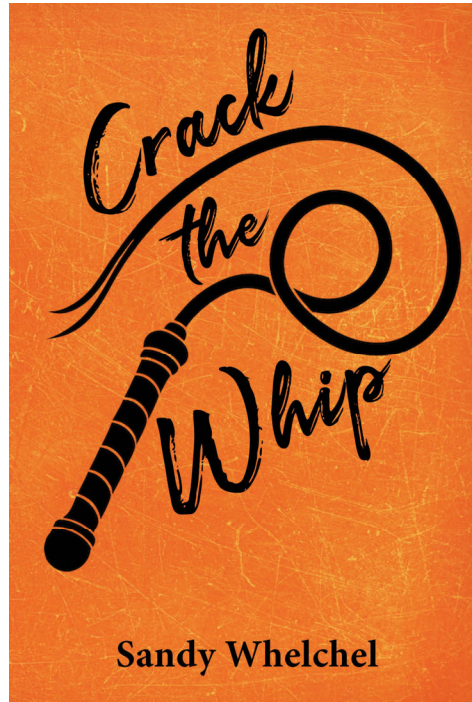
Don’t miss this book. \$18.15 + 2.50 p&h

***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.

*Meet the Press*



Crack the Whip  
PAPERBACK  
By Sandy Whelchel  
\$14.95  
ISBN: 978-0-88100-189-1

Abuse—it is such a small word but carries many gigantic meanings. First grade teacher Stephanie discovers nearly every kind of mistreatment in her California classroom. From desperate poverty to physical and mental abuse, Stephanie tries to combat the horrible problem with caring concern but the more seasoned teachers keep telling her to just teach and stop trying to change the world. To Stephanie the injustice is intolerable even her stressed out law student husband Carl fails to see why she wants to change the status quo. Stephanie feels she is caught at the end of a line in the human equivalent of a massive game of *Crack the Whip*.

Stephanie is excited to move to California to teach and support her student husband. The money is so much better than the rural district where she began her career. But she soon learns her salary is not enough to prevent a problem when her husband is a full-time student who will not work. In addition to money problems, she is confronted with a classroom of abused children. When one of her student aides adds another problem to the mix Stephanie's growing list of dilemmas overwhelms her. Will she continue to fight for downtrodden or run?

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**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

Entry # _____ Date _____ Amt _____ RP _____ Y _____ N	<i>For completion by NWA Staff—leave empty</i>
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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.

# NWA SHORT STORY CONTEST

OPENS April 1 annually

## PURPOSE OF THE CONTEST:

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

## CONTEST RULES:

Any genre of short story manuscript may be entered. All entries must be postmarked by July 1. Only unpublished works may be submitted. All manuscripts must be typed, double-spaced, in the English language. Maximum length is 5,000. 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 \$15 per submission, and return SASE if you wish the material and rating sheets returned. **OTHERWISE SUBMISSIONS WILL BE DESTROYED.** 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 notification of winners. Final prizes will be awarded at the NWA Workshop in June.

## 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 announced in January. 1st Prize -- \$250; 2nd Prize -- \$100; 3rd Prize -- \$50; 4th through 10th places will receive a book. First through third place winners may be asked to grant one-time rights for publication in *AUTHORSHIP* magazine. Honorable Mentions receive a certificate.

## ENTRY FEE AND CRITIQUES

The entry fee per submission is \$15. 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.

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### NWA SHORT STORY CONTEST FORM

To: NWA Short Story Contest  
National Writers Assn.  
10940 S. Parker Rd. #508  
Parker, CO 80134

Entry # _____
Date _____
Amt _____
RP _____ Y _____ N _____

Please enter the enclosed entry (title) \_\_\_\_\_ in the NWA Short Story Contest.

\_\_\_\_\_ My entry fee \$15 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 \$5 per thousand words for critique.

## **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 24 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.

