

# The Florida Writer

April 2016 • Volume 10, Number 2



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Roadmap to Overcoming Insecurities

How to Get/Give the Most from a Critique



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# The Florida Writer

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# CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

## The Florida Writer

### What to Submit

#### Celebrations

Let's celebrate your writing successes together. Marking a milestone in your writing career? Members who have good news to share about their writing-related accomplishments should send announcements for publication.

- Write a one-paragraph announcement in third person
- Type "Celebrations" in the subject line of your submission email
- One entry per issue per person
- Maximum word count: 100

#### Paragraphs

We publish selected creative writing by members who respond to a prompt. Prose, poetry, and excerpts from larger works that can stand alone are all welcome.

- Type "Paragraphs" in the subject line of your submission email
- One entry per person per issue
- Maximum word count for prose: 700
- Maximum line count for poetry: 50

**Prompt for the June 2016 issue:** Start your piece with one of the following:

- "I never told anyone..."
- "I never told anyone, but I'll tell you..."

**Prompt for the August 2016 issue:** Include one of the following as a key ingredient in your piece: a ringing phone; a sealed envelope; an unidentifiable sound; two men in orange sneakers, a rare bird, a broken clock.

Reference: *The Pocket Muse: Ideas and Inspirations for Writing* by Monica Wood. Writers Digest Books, 2002

### How to Submit

- Deadline for the June issue is 5/1/2016
- Deadline for the August issue is 7/1/2016
- Send all submissions in doc format as an email attachment. Please do not embed your submission's text within the email message.
- Include your name and contact information within the attachment
- You may include one headshot or a photo of the front cover of your book to accompany your entry, but it is not required. The image file must be high resolution, 300 ppi, jpg format, and sent as an attachment. Please don't send embedded images.
- To be eligible for publication, you must be a member of the Florida Writers Association
- Before hitting the "send" button, please double check to be sure your entry meets all the requirements and is as free of typos and other errors as possible
- Email your submission to [tfw@floridawriters.net](mailto:tfw@floridawriters.net)

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## Editor's Notes

# The Watcher

**Mary Ann de Stefano**

Editor

In an article I've saved for a long time, Gail Godwin names her inner critic the "Watcher at the Gate." The Watcher is "the intellect that examines too closely the ideas pouring in at the gates ... passionately dedicated to one goal: rejecting too soon and discriminating too severely."

Godwin writes, "It is amazing the lengths a Watcher will go to keep you from pursuing the flow of your imagination. Watchers are notorious pencil sharpeners, ribbon changers, plant waterers, home repairers, and abhorers of messy rooms or messy pages. They are compulsive looker-uppers. They are superstitious scaredy-cats. They cultivate self-important eccentricities they think are suitable for 'writers.' And they'd rather die (and kill your inspiration with them) than risk making a fool of themselves."

My Watcher at the Gate is wily. He tries to get me to abandon whatever I'm working on by making me fall in love with the next great project. My Watcher doesn't trust that I have the imagination and ability to succeed, so he gives me a way to avoid failure. "You don't have to finish," he says, "just start something new."

I've learned this is a pattern with me. Part way into the next project, I'll lose enthusiasm for that one, too, and I'll be lured by yet another new idea.

Experience and attention to my writing process taught me how my Watcher tries to trick me. Now when I feel my enthusiasm waning, I know it's really fear and self-doubt rising up. (My Watcher is so wily, sometimes it takes me a while to figure that out.) While I might wobble a bit, instead of abandoning what I'm working on, I've learned to push through. And guess what? The enthusiasm for the current project? It comes back.

Once I copped to being scared and understood that it's normal to feel anxiety about a work in progress, it got easier to move forward in spite of the Watcher nudging me to abandon what I'm working on. It's never completely easy to deny the Watcher, though. The anxiety lingers.

When you start a new writing project, you can't be sure how it will turn out. No one is, even the pros. You see, uncertainty is inherent in the writing process. Rather than try to avoid it, it's more effective to accept the discomfort of uncertainty, make friends with it, and invite it to sit next to you as you work. But don't let it loom so large that you let fear and anxiety stop you from writing what you are meant to write.



Do you have a Watcher at the Gate who tries to "keep you from pursuing the flow of your imagination?" How does he try to trick you? Once you recognize the tricks, you'll be less likely to fall for them. It takes practice, though. Lots and lots of practice. The Watcher is a clever adversary. 🦋

**Mary Ann de Stefano** is the editor of *The Florida Writer* and *MAD's Monday Muse*. She is an independent editor with 30+ years experience in publishing and consulting. Besides working one-to-one with writers who are developing books, she organizes writing workshops and designs author websites. Mary Ann does business at MAD about Words, named as a play on her initials and love for writing. Visit [madaboutwords.com](http://madaboutwords.com)

Reference: "Watcher at the Gate," by Gail Godwin. New York Times, January 9, 1977





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**Networking:** [fwanetwork.ning.com](http://fwanetwork.ning.com)

**Questions:** [ContactUs@floridawriters.net](mailto:ContactUs@floridawriters.net)

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## Mark Your Calendar

April 30, 2016

Florida Writers Association Collection Competition  
Closes to submissions

April 30, 2016

5th Annual Writers Nest Mini-Conference  
Hilton Orlando/Altamonte Springs

May 1 – October 3, 2016

Submission Period for Annual Conference Bookstore

May 1, 2016

I ♥ Books – Multi-Genre Book Signing Event  
Hilton Orlando/Altamonte Springs

May 7, 2016

2nd Annual Day at the Bay Mini-Conference  
Clarion Inn, Tampa FL

May 14, 2016

New Horizons in Science Fiction: Looking Back &  
Moving Forward  
A webinar with Charles A. Cornell & MJ Carlson

May 15, 2016

Royal Palm Literary Award Competition  
Closes to submissions

June 25, 2016

4th Annual Nonfiction Mini-Conference  
Hilton Orlando/Altamonte Springs

July 9, 2016

What Poetry Can Teach Us About Writing Flash  
A webinar with J. Bradley

October 20 – 23, 2016

15th Annual Florida Writers Conference

For more information visit [floridawriters.net](http://floridawriters.net)





## President's Notes

### Upcoming Events

**Cheyenne Knopf**  
President

**G**reetings Florida Writers! Your eyes do not deceive you. There is a new face on this page. I hope it is not your first interaction with me, but if so, it's nice to meet you, and I look forward to meeting each of you face-to-face at one of the many upcoming FWA events

Some current FWA events are not face-to-face, but I'm just as excited to spread the news.

Our Collections contest is open for entries. This year's theme is "Hide and Seek," and John Gilstrap is our Person of Renown. Did you know that FWA's Editors Helping Writers service offers editing for your collections stories? If you feel you need a professional set of eyes on your story prior to submission, go to: [floridawriters.net/shop/editorial-services/](http://floridawriters.net/shop/editorial-services/). There you'll fill in your information and choose "Collections Entry Editorial Services." The service is provided at a low rate of \$29 for 1,200 words or less of your Collections entry. The cut-off date for submitting your Collection entries to Editors Helping Writers is April 16th. That ensures your story is completed in time for the Collections submission deadline of April 30th.

I also want to bring your attention to the Royal Palm Literary Awards (RPLA). We are currently taking submissions and will do so until May 15, 2016. The competition is open to published and unpublished works, youths and adults, and includes over 40 genre-categories! Time is of the essence. The entry fee is \$45 until April 30th. If you wait until May 1st to submit, the price goes to \$65.

This year we created a new benefit for RPLA winners. FWA decided to shine a spotlight on our winners by creating the RPLA Showcase. Bria Burton crafts interviews with first-place winners into wonderful blog posts that appear on the FWA website. It's a great way to receive more publicity and recognition for your book. We hope to see you spotlighted next year!

Our next in-person function, the Writer's Nest Mini-Conference, takes place April 30th in Altamonte Springs. We have a jam-packed day of workshops about short stories, writing for children, poetry, and business tools. When you register, you have the option to bring a non-member friend for half the non-member price. That means you can bring a guest for only \$54.50! That's a heck of a bargain.

I ♥ Books, our first multi-genre book signing event takes place the day after the mini-conference at the same location. FWA's Marketing Chair, Shannon Bell, pulled together 50 amazing authors and has planned fun activities like Author Bingo and special benefits for VIP Readers who will have brunch with the authors and early entry to the signing. Later, the event is open free to the public.

We hope you make a weekend of it and attend the Writer's Nest Mini Conference as well as I ♥ Books. If so, FWA has a reserved rate of \$99 per night at the Hilton Altamonte Springs. Due to the date of the event getting close we want you to have the best experience with reservations. Kevin Kapke asks that you send your reservation request directly to him with your date of arrival and date of departure. Kevin will then make your reservation for you and send back confirmation. Just send an email to [kevin.kapke@hilton.com](mailto:kevin.kapke@hilton.com) with the needed information.

For more information about FWA competitions and events go to [floridawriters.net](http://floridawriters.net).

I hope to see each of you in Orlando April 30th and May 1st! ✍

**Cheyenne Knopf** is a lifetime member and President of FWA. She also sits on the board of the Florida Writers Foundation. She is currently launching The Authors Academy, a 4-course series on understanding publishing, marketing your book, and social media.



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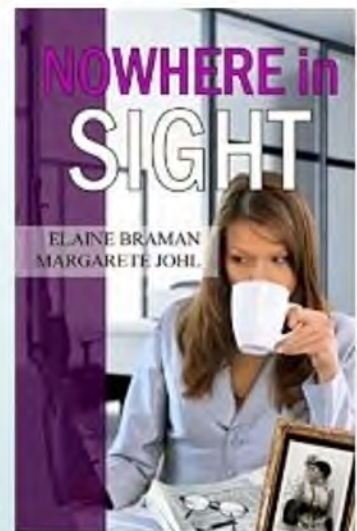
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while plotting through heat waves and hot flashes under balmy palm trees, but they write together 3000 miles apart. Elaine lives in Florida and Margarete lives in California. They met one time by chance—mixed like paper and pen—and have been writing together for the past seven years.



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# The Royal Palm Literary Awards Competition: *Invitation to Possibilities*

by Chris Coward

Sometime back, somewhere deep within the Internet, I stumbled upon a blog post that made a sweeping characterization of aspiring authors. The post was written by a literary agent, and an explosion of comments followed, many by other agents.

The blogger's message resonated.

What was this characterization? The agent observed that many aspiring writers view themselves as "princes" or "princesses."

No, she didn't charge us all with strutting around like royalty (though, she acknowledged, some writers do). Rather, she claimed that writers harbor a Cinderella wish, which I imagine goes something like this: *I pour my heart out onto my hard drive. Oh, fairy agent, please grant my plea and make me rich and famous by midnight.*

Ever have that dream? I know I have. Yet as writers we quickly learn that we need tenacity and a tough skin. We need to work. Hard. We need to get out of our comfort zones and explore every tool, from classes to books to conferences to contests.

Which brings us to our topic. Contests. The Royal Palm Literary Awards competition (RPLA), to be precise. Contests take effort, but then so does every other tool in the writer's belt.

But, oh, the possibilities. If you win RPLA, you get:

- A gorgeous trophy
- An electronic badge
- A foot in the door
- Sales leverage
- Publicity
- Excitement
- Bragging rights
- Even if you don't win, you get:
- Experience
- Professional feedback

By our calculation, everyone reaps the benefit of more than \$1,000 worth of amortized volunteer time per entry.

FWA cordially invites you to explore RPLA. Judges are industry experts, including publishers, literary agents, professors, published authors, teachers, former RPLA winners, journalists, librarians, and editors. Many have advanced degrees. Their rubrics are combed by one of ten rubric coordinators (call it quality control). The feedback is phenomenal, and this year it'll be more detailed than ever. Who knows? A comment on one of your 2016 rubrics could propel you to the next level in your writing journey.

And excitement! Winners are announced at FWA's October 22 Awards Banquet during the annual Florida Writers Conference. On oversized screens, finalists' photos are showcased, and winners are announced for each genre category, along with photos and loglines. Then the publicity begins.

Maybe you'll win.

Cool trophy. Limelight on stage. Publicity.

Who knows? Maybe you'll feel like royalty.

RPLA is a prestigious FWA writing competition, now in its 15th year. Its mission is to recognize excellence in members' published and unpublished works while providing objective and constructive written assessments for all entrants. Entries are accepted in 26 categories for adults, 15 for youth, with published and unpublished entries judged separately. Submission window closes May 15. Details at [floridawriters.net](http://floridawriters.net).

**Chris Coward** is the chairperson for the 2016 Royal Palm Literary Awards competition, a member of the FWA Board of Directors, past FWA president, and co-leader for FWA's Oxford Writers critique group. She has ghostwritten for presidential appointees and CEOs, headed corporate marketing departments, edited national magazines, and taught college English. She has an MA in English (concentration in professional writing and editing) from George Mason University and a BA in philosophy from the College of William and Mary. *Stone Perfect*, her debut novel about two nerds, a girl, and a sexy sociopath who square off in a perpendicular universe, is a 2012 first-place RPLA winner, science fiction.







# Join the FWA Network

## Writers Helping Writers Online

**FWA Network is a private online social networking site available exclusively to Florida Writers Association members**

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# Writing with Others: How Collaboration Can Take Authors To New Levels

by Bria Burton

**H**as the idea of author collaboration ever crossed your mind? Perhaps you're like me. In the past, you've heard of books with co-authors and your creative juices sloshed erratically in exasperation. Who needs that headache? It's hard enough to manage characters on a page, let alone another person who may have vastly different ideas about where to take a story. How to even begin? Where does one find a good collaborator? Wouldn't arguments arise, making the whole thing not worth the hassle?

Consider this: new writers plugging away at their pieces, marketing themselves (by themselves) through whatever social media avenues they can figure out, and searching for ways to get their work published have their work cut out for them. I know. I've been there. Even established authors can get lost in the crowd when it comes to how many writers are putting their books online (even the less-than-stellar projects).

## The Myths about Writing Together

As a member of the Alvarium Experiment, a by-invitation-only author collaboration, I've discovered the myths of author collaboration had actually kept me from understanding the incredible benefits of writing with others.

Myths such as:

- My writing voice might be suppressed
- I'll end up doing all the work
- Other authors might steal my ideas

First of all, ideas are not copyrighted, so there can be no stealing of them. Most writers have so many ideas of their own, they have no desire to try and figure out what to do with yours. If that's a genuine concern, make sure you know who you're working with and that they are as professional and trustworthy as you are. Then you can avoid worrying about doing all the work as well, because you'll all be motivated to do your part. No writer wants their writing voice suppressed, so part of your responsibility is to ensure that all authors understand the collaboration rules, which should be clearly stated, ideally in writing.

## What Exactly is Author Collaboration?

In the most basic sense, author collaboration is two or more authors working together on a writing project.





That project can be any number of things:

- Short story anthology
- Co-authored novel
- Shared story
- Shared premise
- Series
- Serial
- Blog

And there are probably a lot more than that. Endless possibilities arise in terms of where authors can take their ideas when they work together.

## The Benefits of Author Collaboration

Benefits include:

- The strengths other authors bring to the table
- Multiple authors promoting the same work
- Fair trade attitudes
- Expanded audience
- Group dynamic
- Potential for minimal cost

Again, there are probably a lot more than this. When it comes to writing, most of us know that alone and hunkered down feeling, but not many of us know the excitement of a group dynamic. Two or more authors working toward a collective goal can bring fresh excitement, and group members can encourage each other. Each author also brings their own fan base with them, and once the promotion begins, it's possible their fans will become your fans, and vice versa.

"Fair trade attitudes" is my own phrasing in reference to the swapping of skills. As an example, I'll use *The Prometheus Saga*, the first anthology published by the Alvarium Experiment. With twelve authors collaborating, we quickly discovered that some had the ability to create cover art while others knew e-book formatting and still others were experts at social media marketing. One author knew how to create a professional website. Another created a book trailer. All of these elements combined could have equaled a great deal of money. Instead, each author brought a skill to the table and we were able to complete our project at minimal cost.

## Key Questions that Need Answers

Not an exhaustive list, but a great start. These questions will help you make key decisions that will affect the entire project.

- How do I start an author collaboration?
- How do I select author(s) to participate?
- What do we write?
- How do we distribute the work fairly?
- Who will do the layout?
- Who will create the ebook and/or print book?
- Who will create the cover art?
- How will we promote the project?
- How do we budget?

In this case, some of the key questions assume the author collaboration will be an independent publishing project. However, if you and another author (or authors) create a writing project that you want to pitch to a publisher or agent, then you'd simply need to make that one of the key questions:

- Which agents/publishers will we submit our project to?

Even if an agent or publisher accepts your project, keep in mind that many of the other key questions will still need answers or may produce other key questions. A lot of promotion for a book falls on the shoulders of an author, even in traditional publishing. But you'll have multiple authors promoting the work, whether indie or traditionally published. What a benefit!

## Authors Making Collaboration Work

There are many authors who have successful author collaborations, either current or under their belt.

I've mentioned the Alvarium Experiment, my first foray into author collaboration. The experience has been incredibly rewarding and has helped me grow as an author in ways I never could have by myself. That includes an expanded audience that might never have found me before *The Prometheus Saga*.

Each author had final say on their work within the boundaries of our shared premise, and we all worked together to create a professional product. Our first story collection certainly won't be our last, and we're already discussing our next project.

Visit our website: [alvariumexperiment.wix.com/prometheussaga](http://alvariumexperiment.wix.com/prometheussaga).

Jennie Jarvis, the 2015 Faculty Chairperson for the Florida Writers Conference and a writing instructor at Full Sail University, is involved in a collaborative blog



called *5writers.com*. Here's what Jennie says about their collaboration:

"Each month, we chose a topic, and five writers each give their individual take on that topic. I am the resident screenwriter and young adult novelist, but we also have a poet, a playwright, a literary novelist and a short/flash fiction writer as well."

Through Google Hangouts, the group keeps up to date on the "business of the blog" while the distribution of duties prevents any single author from becoming overwhelmed by the workload. Each author involved has built a strong social media platform due to their participation. Several of the blog posts have become assigned readings at online creative writing MFA and BFA programs across the country.

Visit the blog: *5writers.com*

Elaine Senecal, author, FWA Board Member, and co-creator of the FWA website, has what she calls, "a team of two." Writing as Elaine Braman, she and Margarete Johl make up the team of co-authors writing cozy mysteries together through Whimsical Publications.

Elaine says the collaboration first began through a chance meeting at work. "We brought different levels of education, experience and expertise which complement each other's strengths and weaknesses. ... The team plans, plots, and outlines the task together, each writer preparing her part, and as a team we compile the individual parts and revise the whole document as needed."

Now living in different states, the co-authors communicate through email, and that has evolved into Skype calls and making use of Dropbox. Their commitment is still going strong. According to Elaine, "To this day, we meet via Skype Wednesday evenings and Sunday evenings for three-hour sessions."

Together, Elaine and Margarete have published two cozy mysteries, *Right In Sight* and *Nowhere In Sight*, through Whimsical Publications. Their third project in the *In Sight* series is currently in progress.

A huge benefit for Elaine is not only the shared knowledge with Margarete, but she's thrilled to have gained a "best friend forever."

Visit the Whimsical Publications website:  
*whimsicalpublications.com/authors*

At the 2015 Royal Palm Literary Awards, the winner of the Dahrís Clair Memorial Award honoring the top screenwriter was not one, but two authors. First place winners C.J. Godwin and Marie Vernon took Marie's book *Graceland Express* and turned it into a screenplay.

To find out more, visit the RPLA Showcase:  
*floridawriters.net/rpla-showcase-c-j-godwin-marie-vernon-2/*

## Your New Project Awaits

What are you waiting for? Give author collaboration a try, and be sure to establish answers to all your key questions. That can save a lot of time and hassle.

When selecting a partner, or multiple authors, find ways to establish ability and credibility. In the case of the Alvarium Experiment, every author involved was required to have won at least one writing award.

Keep in mind that kinks and setbacks are likely, especially on the first collaborative project, but remain professional. Treat your project and your collaborators with the respect they deserve.

If you're unsure where to begin, start with a story idea. See where it takes you. When you meet like-minded writers at your next FWA meeting or writing conference or coffee shop, don't hesitate to toss the idea at them and see if they take a swing. You never know where it might lead. ✎

Award-winning author **Bria Burton**'s fiction has appeared in over a dozen anthologies and magazines. She has earned two First Place Royal Palm Literary Awards (RPLA) for unpublished manuscripts. Her novella *Little Angel Helper* was a 2015 RPLA Finalist. While she writes, her dog and cat do their best to distract her, which is why they star in her family-friendly short story collection, *Lance & Ringo Tails*. At St. Pete Running Company, she's employed as a blogger and customer service manager. She's also a member of the Alvarium Experiment, a by-invitation-only consortium of outstanding authors.





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*Lifetime Members of the Florida Writers Association are entitled to all the benefits of membership for life, as well as recognition and free ads in this magazine, recognition on our website, and a special pin.*





# Use Your Newsletter to Attract More Readers and Sales

by Penny Sansevieri

**W**e live in a world full of instant feedback and interaction: from updating your Facebook status, to using trending hashtags in a tweet, to sharing pictures on Instagram, so many of our actions online are immediate. In this fast-paced world, do newsletters really have a place? I believe they do. Now I know they don't have the shimmer of the latest social media site. What they do have, however, is visibility. In some cases, more visibility than you're getting on all of your social media sites combined.

What do I mean by that? Well, Facebook has declined in reach; in some cases only 1% of your posts reach your fans. If you're not paying for placement on Facebook, it's very likely your stuff isn't being seen. And this limited visibility isn't just on Facebook. On Pinterest, LinkedIn, and Twitter (which also will start monetizing posts) it's really hard to get your audiences' attention.

If used correctly, newsletters can be a great way to get your message out there, keep people in your marketing funnel, or simply remind them of who you are. We've had our newsletter for sixteen years, and it's been a solid way to stay in front of our audience. Candidly, I would consider getting rid of a lot of things, but never our newsletter. It's not easy, it requires work, but the rewards are tremendous.

Here's how you can make your newsletter work for you:

Good newsletters:

- **Don't have to be long.** Some authors use their newsletter to "check-in" with their audience with a brief 500-word update.
- **Are consistent, professional, and on point.** You should take the same care when crafting your newsletter, as you do when writing your book. Sloppy copy or newsletters that clearly haven't been edited are a huge turn-off.
- **Know your audience.** Whether it's a newsletter, a blog post, or a tweet, ask yourself: "Who cares?" Remember, it's not about you. In fact when it comes to creating great content and newsletters that rock, you don't matter at all. Speak to your readers' interests, their needs and their hot buttons, and most importantly, know exactly who they are before you start cranking out newsletter copy.
- **Address one person.** I don't know about you, but writing "hello everyone" seems very impersonal and kind of spammy. Personalize your email, but remember, not everyone enters their name into your email list when they sign up. If they don't, you want to try and avoid emails addressed to a specific person, because they look a bit odd to the recipient.
- **Give them someone to write to.** When it comes to the "from" line in your email, make sure it has your name, not your book title; make sure that your



readers know who to contact; and invite them to share their opinions, feedback or ideas for future newsletters.

- **Appeal to the “skimmers.”** Most people skim email these days, so appeal to that. Use short paragraphs, bullet points, and strong headlines. That way your reader can glance through the newsletter without having to sift through endless copy and get to the heart of what they are looking for.
- **Have a great subject line.** This is probably the most important part of any newsletter. Subject lines need to grab the reader’s attention, and if you know what your audience wants, the subject lines shouldn’t be hard. Again, they must speak to the needs of your reader.

Don’t have a newsletter? Here are some quick ways to start one and gain followers:

- **Make sure the sign-up is on the home page and every page of your website.** Typically the left hand side is preferred since it’s considered the “power side” of your website.
- **Give a great offer to get folks to sign up.** Keep your reader in mind, and offer something they’ll want. You can offer exclusive content from your book, a gift card (hold a monthly drawing for one gift card), or some other valuable content your readers will want.
- **Have a mail system to manage it like Mail Chimp or Constant Contact.** Both are free up to 1,000 subscribers so you can test this before you launch it.
- **Create an auto-responder.** An auto-responder is a great way to stay in touch with your reader/consumer and remind them of who you are. An auto-responder might go out weekly, or monthly or it might just be a one-time “gift” you send readers for signing up. Our auto-responder is our 52 Ways to Sell More Books which is separated into 52 segments and delivered twice monthly into our readers’ inboxes.
- **Other newsletters.** It’s important to know what other authors are doing with their newsletters. This will help you learn what you like, what you don’t like, and what might work for your market. Also, you want to really understand your space and other experts who share your arena.
- **Colors vs. text.** I’m still a big fan of text-based newsletters. I know that folks will say that color

works best but I still think that color newsletters can be harder to read on your phones and often wind up in spam filters. A lot of people will be reading your newsletter on their iPad or phones so keep it simple.

- **Frequency & consistency.** How often you deliver your newsletter will generally depend on your consumer, but a good rule of thumb is once a month at a minimum and once a week at a maximum. I would not recommend sending your end-user too many announcements and newsletters. Also, it’s a lot of content to create, so keep that in mind. If you build a loyal following you can often create special blasts with more frequency and not lose readers, but remember that we’re all inundated with emails, so many times, less is more. Be consistent. Pick a day and time that works for you and deliver on that promise.
- **Promote or not?** I’m not a fan of a newsletter that’s all heavy promotion. You know the ones I mean. They scream, “Look how fabulous I am” and then contain a lot of sales copy and special offers. Ideally you want to strike a balance. Clearly you are doing this to promote yourself, and you want your readers to know what you do, what your message, book, or product is, and how they can get it. You can and should talk about this in every issue, but a healthy balance is 95% information and 5% sales. You’ll build customer loyalty much faster this way.

Having a solid base and a consistent way to communicate with your audience can really help to optimize and increase your bottom line. I know that being social on social media may seem easier and more effective, but in the end, if it’s done right, spending the time and effort to craft a newsletter to keep in touch with your readers will pay off in some pretty amazing ways.

**Penny C. Sansevieri**, Founder and CEO Author Marketing Experts, Inc., is a bestselling author and internationally recognized book marketing and media relations expert. She is an adjunct professor teaching Self-Publishing for NYU.

Her company is one of the leaders in the publishing industry and has developed some of the most innovative social media/internet book marketing campaigns. She is the author of 14 books, including *How to Sell Your Books by the Truckload on Amazon* and *Red Hot Internet Publicity*, which has been called the “leading guide to everything Internet.” To learn more about Penny’s books or her promotional services, you can visit her website at [amarketingexpert.com](http://amarketingexpert.com).





A stylized 3D map with a red location pin and a blue path. The map is rendered in a perspective view, showing a grid of streets and green spaces. A prominent blue path winds through the map, starting from the bottom left and curving towards the top right. A large red location pin is placed on the map, pointing towards the top left. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern, with a focus on geometric shapes and a limited color palette.

# Roadmap to Overcoming Insecurities

by Leo Babauta

There isn't a person amongst us who doesn't have insecurities—some are just better at dealing with them—or perhaps hiding them.

We worry what other people think about us; we worry if we're good-looking enough; we worry that we're not doing all that we should; we worry that we'll fail; we worry that people will find out we're a fraud. We worry that we're too fat; worry if people will like us; worry that we're not good enough.

Social media, with its culture of getting us to seek approval with likes and retweets, with its showing off amazing bodies and amazing travels and food only exacerbates the problem. But you know all this.

The question is: how do we overcome these insecurities? How do we become okay with ourselves? How do we learn to find contentment and peace?

The answer isn't simple, but it requires one thing to start with: a willingness to face what we usually don't want to face. That means a bit of courage. Just in small doses to start with, but it means a willingness to set aside all the distractions for a little bit, and just focus on what you're struggling with.

Do you have that courage? If so, let's start.

## The Obstacles

What gets in our way with dealing with insecurities? There are obstacles littering the path and old wounds that have never healed.

- **Past criticisms.** If a parent or other relatives criticized us while we were growing up, or if we were bullied, we've probably internalized that. I'm lucky that my mom always seemed to accept me as I was, but my dad didn't. He had his own insecurities, but those would manifest as criticisms

of me. Those criticisms stay in my head but have died down in recent years because of work that I've done (more on this below). Still, they may never completely go away.

- **A negative self-image.** When people criticize you over the years, you start to criticize yourself. All this criticism, along with unfavorable comparisons of yourself to others, result in a self-image that isn't so great. It doesn't matter if the reality doesn't meet this self-image. We can be competent, brilliant, and beautiful, but if we have an image of ourselves that is ugly, dumb, and a failure, we will act according to that image.
- **Needing approval.** When someone gives us approval, that's great! We feel we are worthy and beautiful. But the problem becomes that we need more approval to keep this self-image. We become stuck in a cycle of needing constant approval and fearing disapproval. We read into everything that everyone says and does, in real life and on social media, in terms of approval or disapproval. This becomes a fearful cycle of need.
- **Lack of trust.** We learn not to trust other people to stick with us, to accept us, to see our side of things as understandable. This is trained in us over the years as people do things that we think of as abandonment or rejection. We stop trusting in things to turn out all right.
- **Images in social media and the media.** We compare ourselves to the hot people we see on Instagram or other social media. We compare ourselves with the hot people in movies, TV, and magazines. These images are meant to sell us, but the way they sell us is by making us feel insecure about ourselves. Then we need whatever it is that the celebrities are selling us in order for us to be like them.



- **Not accepting things about ourselves.** In the end, the result is that we reject large parts of ourselves. We don't like that we are overweight, or have pimples, or something about our bodies. It's amazing, because even people you think have amazing bodies—they reject things about their bodies! We also reject parts of our inner selves, the parts that are undisciplined or uncaring or fearful or lazy. We reject the parts of ourselves that are insecure.
- **Those are a lot of obstacles to deal with!** And that highlights why this takes courage, and why the fix isn't simple. But there is a way forward.

## The Road to Dealing with Insecurity

Here's the secret: The obstacles actually show us the path. The obstacles are the path.

We can embrace these obstacles and work with them. In order to do that, we need to develop an awareness of when our insecurities are arising. We can use them as a mindfulness bell, ringing when we are troubled by fears and mistrust, telling us, "Hey! There's some good material to work with here."

And that's the key. All of our insecurities are actually an opportunity to do some good work, to learn about what makes us tick, to develop skills that will help us for life.

So start to pay attention and notice when you're being driven by insecurity. And then do your work.

**Forgive the past.** If your insecurities have been shaped by a relative or authority figure criticizing you, recognize this. Then start to forgive them. Understand that they were driven by their own insecurities, their struggle with their own demons. They behaved imperfectly, but we all do. They weren't right in what they did, but you can understand it nonetheless and forgive them for their bad behavior because holding on to resentment isn't helping you. Let the past go, one step at a time.

**Accept all of yourself.** Pause and take a self-assessment. Notice the parts of yourself, both your body and your inner self, that you don't like. Take a look at these parts of you, and see if you can send them love. See them for the imperfect parts of you that they are, deserving of love as a friend who is imperfect also deserves love. Think about how you'd treat this imperfect friend, and be the same way toward yourself. Give yourself assurance; give yourself compassion. Embrace all the parts of you,

knobbly bits and all, and see the beauty in them. They are what make you who you are, and they are wonderful.

**Practice self-approval.** If you notice yourself wanting someone else's approval, praise, and attention, their likes and retweets, pause, and instead replace that craving with self-approval. You can take away the power of others to approve you if you appropriate that power for yourself. You don't need anyone else's approval but your own. That doesn't mean you don't want connection with others, or love, but you can love others and be loved by them while also being self-approved. Accept yourself completely, love yourself. And that's all you need.

**Embrace non-comparison.** Comparison of yourself with how others look, what they're doing, where they're traveling, how much fun they're having ... it's never a useful comparison, and it actively harms you. Instead, when you see someone else, instead of comparing yourself with them, see them as apples to your oranges. Be happy that they're having fun, be joyful for their successes. They're on a completely different path from you, and they can be happy and have a great time and you can too, on your own path. Wish everyone well, but see their awesomeness as different from yours.

**Develop trust in the moment.** Through all these practices, start to develop a trust in yourself that you'll be OK. Develop a trust in the moment that it will unfold and all will be well. This develops over time, by making small predictions about the moment ("This moment will turn out OK") and then seeing if the prediction comes true.

This is the path. You find the things you're struggling with, and learn to work with them. Learn to shift your perspective. Learn to see what's tripping you up, and turn it into an opportunity to practice new skills.

This is a good path. It has helped me to be more accepting of myself, and trust myself more. And in turn, it has helped me to love myself and others more, one moment at a time.

**Leo Babauta** is a simplicity blogger and author. His blog *zenhabits.net* has a million readers. He's a bestselling author of the books *focus*, *The Power of Less*, and *Zen to Done* and a husband, father of six children, and a vegan. He leads a simple life in San Francisco.



See you at the...

# 15th Annual Florida Writers Conference

October 20 – 23, 2016 in Altamonte Springs FL

As if four days with learning sessions and 50+ agents, editors, filmmakers, authors, and industry experts weren't enough, the Florida Writers Conference offers many more opportunities to support and enhance your writing career—and have fun while you're doing it. *Carpe diem!*

## Bookstore & Signings

If you're a Florida Writers Association member or a speaker at the conference, you can arrange to have your books sold in the conference bookstore, and if you're attending the conference, you can hold a book signing, too. Sign up starting May 1.

## Door Prizes

For every workshop you attend, you'll be asked to fill out a short evaluation form. Bring the completed evaluation to the Silent Auction room and exchange it for a door prize ticket. Door prize drawings will be held every day. If you attend the Sunday morning workshops, each evaluation is worth two door prize tickets. Any ticket you earn stays in the bowl for the entire conference—unless, of course, it wins a prize. The Grand Prize drawing on Sunday includes a free conference registration for 2017 and other spectacular prizes.

## Genre Breakfasts

During breakfast, you can meet and exchange ideas with other conference attendees who write and publish in your genre—or one you're interested in learning more about. Look for table signs that indicate genre, join the discussion, and exchange contact information.

## Interviews

Conference attendees may meet one-to-one with agents, acquisition editors, and film producers to pitch their work or authors and industry experts to discuss writing, publishing, and marketing. Learn more about conference faculty on our website and then sign up. (You must be registered for the conference before you sign up for an interview.) When you arrive at the conference and check

in, you'll find your scheduled meeting times on the back of your badge.

## Open Mic

Bring a favorite piece of your writing to read at the Open Mic on Friday evening after dinner. Participants will read in the order they sign up. The moderator divides the number of minutes available by the number of participants signed up. That way everyone gets a chance to read. Don't want to read? Come to enjoy the camaraderie and cheer the readers on!

## Royal Palm Literary Award Banquet

Join in the red carpet festivities and celebrate the winners of a Royal Palm Literary Award. Maybe you'll be one! If you register for the full conference or Saturday only, the Banquet is included. But if you're not registered and wish to attend and/or bring a guest who is not registered, you must purchase a ticket either online or at the registration desk before 2:00 PM on Saturday, October 22, 2016.

## Silent Auction

The 7th Annual Silent Auction to benefit Florida Writers Foundation happens during the Florida Writers Conference. Items of every type are donated for this worthy cause. The bid sheets are out for two entire days with lively bidding between attendees. It's a great place to do some early holiday shopping, pick up a few things you need, or browse and donate to help literacy.

## Sponsorship & Promotional Opportunities

The Florida Writers Conference offers a variety of promotional opportunities for you to publicize your product or service to a highly motivated audience. From sponsorships and exhibit tables or program ads, to goodie bag and door prize donations, you'll find a promotional opportunity to meet your budget.

Visit the website at [floridawriters.net](http://floridawriters.net) for more information about the annual conference.







CLEARLY LEGAL

## Copyrighting Iconic Literary Genres

by Anne Dalton, Esquire

**H**ow authentic would a novel about World War II Germany be if it lacked references to Nazis and at least one of the Allies? Is it possible to have a medieval Scottish romance without including a castle, a woman in distress, and a handsome Scottish clansman? How could you write a classic Western without locating it in the American frontier and featuring at least one strong-willed pioneer or cowboy?

Literary genres are often defined by their stereotypes, large and small. So what happens when a famous author claims that science fiction/fantasy genre characters and mythic plot points can be copyrighted and therefore used exclusively by her? Best selling author Sherrilyn Kenyon is asking a federal court in Nashville to answer that question.

Ms. Kenyon owns the copyright to the Dark-Hunter Series, described in her lawsuit as “an immortal cadre of warriors who fight to protect mankind from creatures and demons who prey on humans.” She has sued Judith Lewis, writing as Cassandra Clare, for Clare’s creation of the Shadowhunter Series, self-described as a “secret cadre of young half-angel warriors locked in an ancient battle to protect our world from demons.”

While the complaint is too lengthy and complex to summarize here, the Plaintiff cites Defendant’s imbuing of normal objects such as a mirror, a sword, and a cup with magical properties as proof of copyright violation. Conversely, Clare claims that her novels are drawn from ideas (which, by law, cannot be copyrighted) and historical storytelling traditions (which are in the public domain).

There are substantial merchandising, theatrical film, and other platform distribution dollars at stake. All parties hope and expect that the court will set guidelines clarifying the blurred line between copyright infringement and plot, character, and geographic similarities caused by the necessity of working within a particular genre.

**Anne Dalton**, Esquire, has provided business and personal legal services to creatives for 37 years. She is licensed in Florida, New York, and Pennsylvania. Her credentials can be viewed at [daltonlegal.com](http://daltonlegal.com). Contact Anne at [adalton@daltonlegal.com](mailto:adalton@daltonlegal.com).

**Comments contained in this article are informational only and do not constitute legal advice.**

“Be a good steward of your gifts. Protect your time. Feed your inner life. Avoid too much noise. Read good books, have good sentences in your ears. Be by yourself as often as you can. Walk. Take the phone off the hook. Work regular hours.”

”

JANE KENYON

“Everything I Know About Writing Poetry,”  
*A Hundred White Daffodils*



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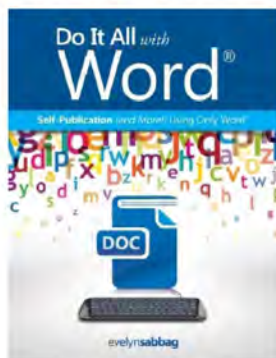
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# How to Get/Give the Most from a Critique

by Chris Coward

Once upon a time, long, long ago, there was a writers group (not affiliated with FWA) we'll call Excellence. Excellence was long established and met in gracious surroundings. Readers passed the mic as other members sipped their Maxwell House, ready to critique.

Some members of Excellence were traditionally published. Many had advanced degrees. There was even a literary agent in the mix. It was a good group, with a single flaw, but a good group, as I said, and the meetings were wonderful ...

... except to those members who bolted after a stinging, *ad hominem* comment.

... except to those who eventually drifted away, discouraged.

What went wrong is something that can happen with any group. The members focused so hard on the craft of writing that they failed to cultivate the art of the critique. Make no mistake: critiquing is an art that involves far more than having a room full of smart people reciting "rules" of writing and passing judgment.

How to get and give the most from a critique—that was the topic we posed to several experienced FWA writers group leaders. Do their suggestions hold the key to Excellence's near-demise? Check out what each has to say and see for yourself.

## ***Alison: Check your ego***

"The best way to give and receive critiques is to remove your ego. It's also the most difficult thing to do. Critiques are not about being right or wrong or how well someone is liked—that's ego. Instead, great critiques are about the craft of writing—about fluency and content. When offering a critique, review the work thoroughly and avoid personal attacks. When accepting a critique, remind yourself that sometimes someone else's ideas are valuable. And whatever you do, check your ego at the door."

—Alison Nissen, Leader,  
Lakeland Writers, established 10+ years ago

## ***Dona: Don't defend***

"You can't just say, 'I don't like it.' You have to know what's wrong with it. We make a great effort not to change a writer's style or voice. Suggestions are welcome, but in the end, each writer is responsible for what he or she chooses to keep or change. I have been in groups where the writer wants to defend their work. Somehow we have gone beyond that. No one wastes their time defending it. They agree or they don't. They don't need to even comment on what they will end up doing. We suggest."

—Dona Lee, Leader,  
Manatee County Group Leader, established 2006



### **Bria: Show restraint**

“When critiquing, don’t focus on every little thing that might be wrong with a piece. If the author hasn’t asked for specific suggestions (such as tension, voice, characterization), then you decide what needs the most work. Let that be the focus of your critique, and leave the rest for the time being. Use constructive criticism in tandem with positive feedback. All authors need positive reinforcement.”

—Bria Burton, Leader,  
SPwrites, St. Pete Writers Group, established 2008

### **Jamie: Open your mind**

“For me, it’s simple. Giving the best critique possible means being honest, yet kind, in your critiques. No one gets anything out of ‘yes man’ comments or ‘this is stupid’ comments. You need to be open-minded and realize that the comments are what will help you make your piece the best it can be.”

—Jamie White, Co-Leader,  
Gulfstream Writers, established 2012

### **Cheri: It’s the writing, not the writer**

“We have found that a writing group needs to be founded on a combination of mutual appreciation, respect, and trust. Partners can’t be afraid to be honest, and they have to be able to trust that critiques are made for the sole purpose of making the work better. If you keep the work as your focus, and not let egos overwhelm the process, you have found writing platinum.”

—Cheri Roman, Co-Leader,  
Serivilous Panerians, established 2012

So back to where we were. What happened to Excellence? I hear the group is alive and well. Clearly they mastered the art of giving and receiving a critique—checking egos at the door, refraining from defending their work, showing restraint, opening their minds, and focusing on the writing.

A happy ending indeed to a story begun once upon a time. Long, long ago. A tale for us all.

As of this writing, FWA has 66 writers groups throughout Florida and 1 in Nevada. See [floridawriters.net](http://floridawriters.net) for information about a group near you.



**Chris Coward** is the co-leader of FWA’s Oxford Writers critique group, chairperson for the 2016 Royal Palm Literary Awards competition, a member of the FWA Board of Directors, and past FWA president. She has ghostwritten for presidential appointees and CEOs, headed corporate marketing departments, edited national magazines, and taught college English. She has an MA in English (concentration in professional writing and editing) from George Mason University and a BA in philosophy from the College of William and Mary. *Stone Perfect*, her debut novel about two nerds, a girl, and a sexy sociopath who square off in a perpendicular universe, is a 2012 first-place RPLA winner, science fiction.

Writers do not live one life, they live two. There is the living and then there is the writing. There is the second tasting, the delayed reaction.

ANAÏS NIN

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## ASK THE BOOK DOCTOR

# Thrillers, Genres, and Prologues

by Bobbie Christmas

**Q: When writing a thriller, should I begin the first chapter of the story with action from the protagonist or antagonist (villain), or does it matter what character I start with?**

**A:** The protagonist (main character, the one who wants something or wants to do something) and the antagonist (the person or thing that attempts to stop the protagonist from getting what he or she wants, also known as the villain) are the two most important characters in any book, but no absolute rule dictates which point of view should begin the first chapter. It seems to me, however, that if you want readers to empathize with the protagonist, it's better to begin with that character. Remember that the first person mentioned in a scene should be the point-of-view character for that scene.

**Q: I understand what "genre fiction" is, but I keep coming across the terms "literary fiction," "popular fiction," and "mainstream fiction" used in opposition to genre as well as to one another. What exactly is meant by these three terms?**

**A:** In literary fiction the story is usually character driven and the language is artistic and often elevated. Literary fiction may have more narrative, more descriptions, than genre fiction. I have joked and said the difference between literary fiction and mainstream fiction is that literary fiction wins awards, whereas mainstream sells.

Mainstream fiction has broad reader interest than literary fiction and is not genre specific. Sometimes it is easiest described as fiction that does not fit into a genre, unlike the breakdown in the next category.

Genre fiction is the current term for what used to be called popular fiction. Genre fiction is formulaic and appeals to a specific audience. Genre fiction includes fantasy, historical, horror, humor, romance, sci-fi and western. Mystery,

suspense, and thrillers are also genre fiction and can include crime, courtroom drama, detective, police procedural, legal thrillers and other thrillers.

Chances are if you cannot classify the genre of what you're writing, you can get away with calling it mainstream, unless it's too far out, in which case you might call it experimental, or as some say, typing. Save it in a drawer and start a book that will fit into a marketable category if you hope to sell your fiction.

**Q: What genre is typically the bestselling?**

**A:** First, you are thinking correctly to think in terms of genre, because books that fit into a specific genre tend to sell better than literary works, short story collections, or poetry. Genre novels drive the publishing industry.

As for what sells best, the information changes often, but according to Simba Information, a division of Market Research Group, a recent report had horror in first place for the most sales. Second in sales figures was the science fiction/fantasy genre. Next came religious/inspirational books, and after that came crime/mystery books. Last in line but still one of the top-selling genres was romance/erotica. It should come as no surprise that many movies have come from those top-selling genres as well, and sadly most authors make more money by selling a book to the movie industry than by selling the book to consumers.

Don't worry about what's selling, though. Write what you love, and you will write what you know best. Several people have been credited with being the originator of the saying, "Write the book you want to read." I won't take credit for it, but it sums up the best way to choose the genre you should probably write.



**Q: I recently read a prologue in a thriller, and chapter one coordinated with the prologue's description of a plane crash. My prologue has nothing to do with my chapter one, though. My prologue reappears at the crisis point, and the same scene is repeated later in the book. Can I use a prologue in that way?**

**A:** By its very nature, a prologue involves a scene that takes place before the main action of a novel begins. For that reason, readers will assume the prologue took place before chapter one. Extracting a scene to use as a prologue and then repeating it later may confuse and bore readers. What will they think when they come across it again, later in the novel? Worse, if readers assume the prologue is a typical prologue, and the prologue scene took place before the story began, they will get the timeline confused. Never confuse readers.

Creative writing does not have immutable rules and regulations, though. You can try anything you want, but many people more astute than I will tell you to stick with the intention of a prologue. Remember the etymology of the word prologue. It comprises two elements: pro-, meaning “before” and logos, meaning “discourse or speech.”

## Easy Editing Tip

### Baby Sit, Baby-sit, or Babysit?

In all likelihood, you have seen all three versions of the same term, baby sit, baby-sit, and babysit. Which one is correct? Your spell checker accepts them all. How is a writer to know what to choose? The answer can be found in a dictionary, but if you write books, you should be using the dictionary recommended by *The Chicago Manual of Style*, which is the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*. If you don't have a copy handy, do not despair. I use the online version, and it's free and fast to check anything. Go to [merriam-webster.com](http://merriam-webster.com), type in the word you want to check, and it will tell you in split seconds. According to Merriam-Webster, the correct form of the verb is one word, with no hyphen: babysit.

## Easy Editing Tip

### All about Exclamations!

In the novels I've been editing recently, more sentences than ever end with exclamation marks, especially sentences in dialogue. Whatever became of the rules of exclamations? Perhaps our casual writing in e-mails and on social media has made us lax about the use of exclamations, because in casual writing, we tend to use exclamation marks for a variety of reasons, including the following:

1. To add emphasis to a word or phrase
2. To show we aren't serious about whatever we just wrote
3. To show our enthusiasm about a subject
4. To indicate an exclamatory statement

Well, fellow writers, only the fourth reason—to indicate an exclamatory statement—follows the rules of grammar, so let's again review the grammar rule that applies to the use of exclamation marks. (Resource: *Purge Your Prose of Problems*, my book doctor's desk reference book)

Exclamation marks belong in exclamatory sentences, which often begin with how, what, why, or are short bursts of words. Examples: What a beautiful sunset! How embarrassing! Oh! Damn!

Do not use exclamation marks as an attempt to show surprise. Follow the rules of correct punctuation. If the words themselves don't convey passion, exclamation marks won't help. William Styron, author of *Sophie's Choice*, said it well: “Every writer should be given just one exclamation mark per career.”

**Bobbie Christmas**, book editor and owner of Zebra Communications, will answer your questions, too. Send them to [bobbie@zebraeditor.com](mailto:bobbie@zebraeditor.com). Read more “Ask the Book Doctor” questions and answers at [zebraeditor.com](http://zebraeditor.com).





Welcome to the Florida Writers Association 2015 Financials. 2015 was a much better year than 2014, from the monetary standpoint, for the following reasons:

- Increase in membership levels and retention
- Significant spike in number of life members
- Increased attendance at the annual conference and the mini-conferences
- Cost control and expense cutting
- Better rates per person at the mini-cons
- Elimination of mini-conferences that were money-pits
- Cost containment on printing the Collection.

Just switching *The Florida Writer* magazine from print to pdf saved over \$12,000. Thank you, Mary Ann de Stefano.

The FWA is a not-for-profit 501(c)(6) entity, is debt-free and is current with all required federal and state compliance filings.

If you would like to discuss the financials in detail, please contact me at [fwa.treasurer@gmail.com](mailto:fwa.treasurer@gmail.com) or call me at 407-432-2714.

—Robyn Weinbaum,  
Vice President, Finance

## Florida Writers Association

### PROFIT AND LOSS

January - December 2015

	TOTAL
<b>Income</b>	
4000 General Income	73,868.34
4020 FWA Collections	2,939.08
4100 Conference Income	118,844.72
4110 Mini-Conf Income	16,200.96
4500 TFW Advertising Income	2,805.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$214,658.10</b>
<b>Cost of Goods Sold</b>	
5020 FWA Collection Costs	2,481.19
5100 Conference Costs	146,387.18
5110 Mini-Conference Costs	20,729.09
<b>Total Cost of Goods Sold</b>	<b>\$169,597.46</b>
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>\$45,060.64</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
6000 General and Administrative Expenses	13,833.15
6200 Florida Writer Magazine Expense	12,000.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$25,833.15</b>
<b>Net Operating Income</b>	<b>\$19,227.49</b>
<b>Other Expenses</b>	
8000 Other Expenses	150.00
9000 Move funds to FWF from 4132	15.00
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	<b>\$165.00</b>
<b>Net Other Income</b>	<b>\$ -165.00</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$19,062.49</b>



# FWA 2015 Financials

## Florida Writers Association

### BALANCE SHEET

As of December 31, 2015

	TOTAL
<b>ASSETS</b>	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
1015 Chase 2916	15,038.05
1045 Insight Financial Ocala	668.76
Total Bank Accounts	<u>\$15,706.81</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>\$15,706.81</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<u><u>\$15,706.81</u></u>
<b>LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Other Current Liabilities	
2030 Sales Tax Payable	410.77
Total Other Current Liabilities	<u>\$410.77</u>
Total Current Liabilities	<u>\$410.77</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>\$410.77</u>
Equity	
3001 Opening Bal Equity	7,451.68
3010 Unrestrict (retained earnings)	-11,218.13
Net Income	19,062.49
Total Equity	<u>\$15,296.04</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>	<u><u>\$15,706.81</u></u>



**For this issue, members were asked to write a piece inspired by a well-known aphorism.**



## **The One Who Hesitates May Not Be Heard of Ever**

by Diane M. Boilard

One day, in February 2003, I read a notice posted on the bulletin board requesting anyone interested in writing to place their name on the sign-up sheet and join Mel at 2:00 the following Tuesday afternoon.

The next day, I checked the board and read Mike's name printed on the first line. I felt glad and thought to myself, here's my chance to find out if someone else thinks I can write. I'll sign my name and maybe others will also. By Tuesday morning, twelve names filled the lines.

That Tuesday, we joined Mel, who waited for us. While we waited for Mel to start, I asked myself: Will I be able to write? How will I compare with the other writers in the group?

Mel introduced himself and mentioned he was writing his fourth book. Three had been published. He started with this question, "Are writers born, or are they made?" I pondered the question. I hadn't thought about it before.

Most likely, as with many writers, I wondered why certain famous authors received accolades, published book after book, and have been famous throughout the years. I saw their books in the library or on bookstore shelves and might have wished they were mine.

Mel said, "You may wonder why famous authors shine and what they did to reach that level of popularity and achievement. They didn't just sit there. They did something. You need to write and rewrite and rewrite. Write and submit your edited work whether short stories, novels, poetry. Submit."

"I've heard famous authors say they worked on their first novel for three, five, ten years before they felt it ready to be published. In the meantime, others said they could wallpaper a room with rejection letters," Mike said.

"It's true, but don't give up. Writers don't know who, one day, will ask you to submit your literary work for

publication. Also save the lines or sections you removed from your novels, short stories, or poems. Some day you might be able to employ those words which wait in files or on disks," Mel said.

If you hesitate because you think your story is not good enough and don't submit, you'll never know if it was good enough or if it needed some adjustments or if the editor might ask you to resubmit. It does happen, but you'll never know.

Many writers stress keeping copies of our work. How many writers wrote pages and pages and placed them in a box with sincere hopes to submit them someday, myself included? Many or most never do.

Your hesitation may cause you to place your manuscripts in a box in the closet. Your work could be lost for years until someone finds all those precious stories and has them published in a collection posthumously, hopefully in your name.

Someone might decide to read and made some adjustments or re-edit and actually submit your precious work. What a shame to have hesitated. You missed on what could have been while alive.

A few months ago, while researching William Faulkner, an American writer and a Nobel Prize laureate, I read how he saved some of his many manuscripts—1,800 pages. He kept them in a box in a closet at Rowan Oak, his home in Oxford, Mississippi. Someone finally discovered the box in 1972, ten years after his death.

Could this be you or me? Or could it be our manuscripts will never be found and will remain lost forever? ✍️

**Diane Boilard** lives in Port Orange, FL.





## The Road to Hell is Paved with Good Intentions

by C. J. Godwin

The young couple held the very best of good intentions, their fingers intertwined as they walked the neighborhood behind the building where he worked which was across from the building where she worked. They dined on each other's company instead of cheap take-out eaten hastily. Thus in their walk, the hour of lunchtime seemed longer, though never long enough.

They strolled the shaded streets where the trees stretched arms across to make a tunnel, and along behind the couple came a dog, as if to complete their scene of contentment. He was a merry, good-natured pet, well-trained to fall in step beside them. He held his head up and tail erect, proud enough never to wander off after a scent. He traveled with them to the next block and the next, and when they turned, they tried to dissuade him, but to no avail. The dog wore a collar and tags which jangled as he walked. There was a telephone number, but the couple had no phone nor pen or paper.

Up ahead, men in coveralls gathered around a utility van parked in front of a house. The men were eating sandwiches, on break from their work as well. The couple approached and tried to explain, but the men didn't speak English. The young woman tried in sloppy Spanish to ask for a pen and paper. One man got up like he understood

and went to the back of the van. The dog's nose came perilously close to the man's unattended sandwich, but the dog was well-behaved and only sniffed without nibbling. The man returned a moment later and gave the young woman a piece of paper with his phone number written on it.

"No, no." She tried to explain, but he only smiled. She asked for a pen in the best Spanish she could, and he plainly said, "No," and smiled at her more.

The young man knew not how to defend her honor against such gross misunderstanding. He led the young woman away. After all, they intended to be married and raise a family, possibly have a house on this street, and maybe even a dog. Yet all their good intentions had led to this little slice of Hell that stabbed them both. Disappointment and humiliation had entered where happiness used to fill the space. The young couple returned to work hungry, but not for each other's company.

The dog, meanwhile, found a worker who was willing to share his sandwich. Since the dog had no plans, he had no intentions good or bad. He was no paver of the road to Hell, and enjoyed his lunch very much. 🐕

C.J. Godwin lives in St. Augustine, FL.

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# Celebrations!

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After publishing *Hazel Eyes*, *Grandma's Treasure*, *Vanilla and Chocolate*, **Maritza Martínez Mejía** received the Virtue Christian Book Award 2015 for Best Poetry for her book *Poems and Thoughts and More*. Acceptance speech available at: [thevcba.com/winners/2015-vcba-acceptance-speeches/](http://thevcba.com/winners/2015-vcba-acceptance-speeches/)



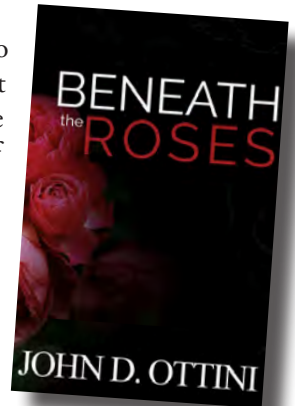
**Wayne McDowell** has just updated his website, [waynemacdowell.com](http://waynemacdowell.com), and has added a new audio book version of *Not Just Another War Story* to the print and Kindle versions. Tom Lennon, an outstanding voice-over, commercial reader, did the audio of *NJAWS*. Wayne says, Be sure you watch the video we did for the overall project. Really neat!!

**Gabriel McMichael**, award-winning artist and author, will be at the Daytona Beach Barnes & Noble May 7, 2016 at 11:00 a.m. for their story time event. She will be reading her children's book, *Goodbye Poonjab*, which has been nominated for eight awards including the Caldecott Medal and the Geisel Award. Gabriel is also well-versed in social media receiving her certifications in Social Media Marketing and Social Media Strategy from Emory University in Atlanta. On May 4, 2016 at 6:00 p.m., she will be speaking to the Orlando FWA writers group about promoting their work on Twitter and YouTube. Learn more: [gabrielmcmichael.com](http://gabrielmcmichael.com).



**Molli Nickell** celebrates the launch of the Agent Shark Tank on YouTube. Writers submit query letters to be evaluated (on video), by the Head Query Shark (Molli) and declared to be ready for prime time, or ... Check out the program at [getpublishednow.biz/agent-shark-tank.html](http://getpublishednow.biz/agent-shark-tank.html).

**John D. Ottini** would like to announce the release of his latest e-book, *Beneath the Roses*. Everyone loves a juicy secret—but what if it's so horrible it could destroy your life? Are there some secrets that are best left secret? *Beneath the Roses* is available on Amazon in e-book format for \$1.99. For more information about John and his writing, please visit his blog at [jdonovels.wordpress.com](http://jdonovels.wordpress.com).



**Tricia Pimental** is pleased to announce her recent release, *A Movable Marriage*, has earned five-star ratings from both Readers' Favorite and Epic Book Quest. The reviews can be found at [readersfavorite.com/book-review/a-movable-marriage](http://readersfavorite.com/book-review/a-movable-marriage) and [bit.ly/1LOSI9P](http://bit.ly/1LOSI9P). She also enjoyed a successful book event at RG Livreiros bookstore in Cascais, Portugal on the same night her husband celebrated his fifty-eighth birthday. It was a perfect time to say thank you to the man whose wanderlust was the impetus to write the book and whose love has kept her sane enough to endure it all.



Award-winning author **Dana Ridenour** released *Behind The Mask* in print and in e-book format on April 5, 2016. A 2014 RPLA Finalist in the Unpublished Thriller/Suspense category, *Behind The Mask* is adult fiction that digs deep into an undercover FBI assignment that is based on Ridenour's personal experiences. Ridenour is a retired FBI agent. She spent most of her twenty year career as an FBI undercover operative infiltrating criminal organizations including the Animal Liberation Front, an organization of domestic terrorists. Available on Amazon. Dana's website: [danaridenour.net](http://danaridenour.net).



# Celebrations!

Where we shine a spotlight on our members & cheer their accomplishments!

**Joan West** has retired from her boutique publishing house leaving it in the capable hands of partner, Lois Bennett. Joan is fulfilling a long held desire: publishing a free newsletter for writers. After a couple of trial issues, *Write! Publish! Sell!* has found its format and all twenty-some pages are filled with tips, publishers, literary agents, Q&A, contests, resources, freebie PR for subscriber's projects, notes from the publishing industry, "odds & ends," and articles for writers from writers. Available free by request from: [writepublishsell@comcast.net](mailto:writepublishsell@comcast.net).

Do you have a writing-related accomplishment to celebrate with us?

Turn to page 2 of the magazine to learn how to submit your item for publication on these pages.

I had learned already never to empty the well of my writing; but always to stop when there was still something there in the deep part of the well, and let it refill at night from the springs that fed it.

**ERNEST HEMINGWAY**



## Submit Your Photo for Publication in The Florida Writer

For the next couple of issues of the magazine we're going to try out a new feature. Each month we'll publish Florida Writers Association members' photos

- For the next issue, please submit one photo of your favorite writing space. Give us a peek at the place where your writing magic happens. Your photo should not include any people, just the place (office? café? park bench?) where you do your best work. We want to see your writing implement(s) (computer? pen & paper? quill?) and the objects you surround yourself with.
- Your photo should be high resolution, 300 ppi in either jpg or png format.
- Send the photo as an attachment, not embedded in the email.
- Along with your photo, send a brief caption that includes your full name. We reserve the right to edit the caption and photo and will limit the number of photos we publish based on space.
- Photo should be sent to [tfw@floridawriters.net](mailto:tfw@floridawriters.net). Type "TFW Photo" in the subject line of your email.
- Deadline for submission is May 1, 2016.







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**[floridawriters.net/conferences/mini-conferences](http://floridawriters.net/conferences/mini-conferences)**