

The Florida Writer

February 2017 | Volume 11, Number 1



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Four Ways to Protect Yourself Online

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Bok Tower, Lake Wales FL



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The Florida Writer

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

GUIDELINES

Step 1: 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 April 2017 issue:

Open with a character saying he or she is the world's greatest _____. You fill in the blank with something the character brags about or something said in a self-deprecating way. Then have the character tell an anecdote that supports the claim.

Prompt for the June 2017 issue:

Two people who haven't seen each other in a long time bump into each other (figuratively) on the street. What happens next?

Step 2: How to Submit

- Deadline for the April 2017 issue is 3/1/2017
- Deadline for June 2017 issue is 5/1/2017
- 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

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Editor's Notes

Front Matter Matters

Mary Ann de Stefano
Editor

Authors should understand standards for book design—especially those who self-publish. While it's great to do it yourself, you want to achieve a result that meets professional standards.

In publishing lingo, a book usually contains three major sections: front matter (also called preliminary matter or “prelims” for short), the text, and back matter (or end matter). There are long-standing conventions for content, sequence, and numbering within each section.

The Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS), now in its 16th edition, is the industry source of authority for manuscript preparation and book anatomy conventions. CMOS provides a level of detail I won't even try to match in a short article, but authors should familiarize themselves with what those conventions are. (I use both the print and online versions of CMOS.)

For example, go to CMOS to find out what a half title page is and where in the front matter it should appear. What information should appear on the copyright page? Why are some pages numbered with lower case Roman numerals and others numbered with Arabic while some pages don't show numbers at all? Be sure to refer to CMOS if you're a self-publisher and didn't realize you need to know the answers to such questions.

The foreword, preface, and introduction are three components of front matter. Many writers appear to believe these terms are interchangeable. They're not. Each has a specific function within a book.

Foreword

A foreword is a short piece written by someone other than the author of the book. It is usually provided by an expert in a field directly related to the book's content—someone whose status will lend credibility to the book.

The author of the foreword addresses their connection to the book's subject matter and author, explains the importance of the book's content, and tells the reader why the author is the best person to write the book.

Preface

A preface is written by the author of the book and establishes credibility.

In two to three pages, your preface should explain who you are and indicate your experience with the subject matter. You might write about your research for the book or what you learned and how you changed during the process of writing it. Explain how the book came into being and why.

Introduction

The introduction, written by the book's author, sets the stage for readers by describing the book's content.

The introduction explains what to expect in upcoming chapters and how the book is organized and gives any other information that will help the reader understand the text. For example, it might explain that features (such as exercises) appear at the end of each chapter or include suggestions about how to read the book if there is a special structure.

The introduction is an opportunity to grab readers and pique their curiosity about what will be revealed when they continue reading.

Learn and employ the conventions of front matter, and you will impress publishers with your professionalism when you submit your manuscript and as you communicate with your editor during the publishing process. If you are a self-publisher, learn these conventions and others if you want to produce a work that meets professional standards.

As always, you are welcome to break the “rules” of publishing if you want to, but do it purposefully and consciously, not out of ignorance. ✎

Mary Ann de Stefano is the editor of *The Florida Writer* and the *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.





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Networking: fwanetwork.ning.com
Questions: ContactUs@floridawriters.net

Mark Your Calendar

February 1, 2017

Florida Writers Association Collection, Volume 9
Opens to submissions

March 1, 2017

Royal Palm Literary Awards Competition
Entry fee increases

April 1, 2017

Royal Palm Literary Awards Competition
Entry fee increases

April 29, 2017

Focus on Character-Driven Stories
Hilton Orlando/Altamonte Springs

April 30, 2017

Royal Palm Literary Awards Competition
Florida Writers Association Collection Competition
Closes for submissions

May 20, 2017

Focus on E-Books
Lakeside Terrace, Boca Raton

May 20, 2017

Focus on Youth
Hilton Boca Raton Suites

May 21, 2017

2nd Annual I ♥ Books
Lakeside Terrace, Boca Raton

June 24, 2017

Focus on Marketing
Hilton Orlando/Altamonte Springs

July 22, 2017

Focus on Conflict-Driven Stories
Crown Plaza at Bell Tower Shops, Fort Myers

October 19 – 22, 2017

16th Annual Florida Writers Conference
Hilton Orlando/Altamonte Springs

October 19, 2017

Florida Writers Foundation Celebrity Workshop
Hilton Orlando/Altamonte Springs

For more information visit floridawriters.net



President's Notes

Happy New Year!

Cheyenne Knopf Williams
President

I hope each of you enjoyed a wonderful holiday season and have kicked off 2017 in a grand fashion. I'm happy to say the volunteers behind the scenes were working hard at the close of 2016 and kicked off 2017 the same way, making sure each member has a wonderful experience. Our Royal Palm Literary team has worked hard in the past few months to ensure their I's are dotted and T's are crossed on every form, email, and website page you will encounter submitting your manuscript. The conference planning team had a full day of wrap up and planning. The 2017 conference is already shaping up to be one of the most exciting we've had to date! The Board of Directors also had their first meeting. I write this letter prior to the actual meeting but know we have wonderful items on the agenda for our meeting in January and look forward to good changes in the new year.

One of my projects in 2016 that will make changes for our organization in 2017, was to do a process review on our merchant service provider, the company who processes our credit cards. During the review your Board of Directors voted to change the processor to Retailers Processing Network (RPN), a division of nationally acclaimed Michigan Retailers Association, the largest state retail association in America. RPN is a robust network of state membership organizations that want the best processing services for their members. In addition to offering a great program to the association RPN is also offering a credit card processing program to our members.

Our new service enables you to keep the most dollars from every sale. As writers, we all have more important things to do than worry about whether our payments processor is charging us too much.

With FWA's new processing service, you know up front you are getting the best processing available. Our solution provides:

- Low rates and no hidden fees. We don't put out misleading teaser rates or tack on extra costs.
- Many free services, including free supplies, free customer service and voice authorization calls, and free set-up and programming.

- No chargeback fees, no monthly minimums to meet, and no "handcuff contracts" that penalize you for leaving.
- Automatic \$100,000 coverage against a data breach involving customer information.
- Personal customer service that is tops in the industry.

Our service stands out from the competition because it begins with a free, no-obligation analysis of your recent processing statements. You'll see, in writing, exactly how much you can expect to save and why.

In addition to offering members a great offer the association has teamed with the Florida Writers Foundation (FWF) to create Charge on for Children's Literacy, profit-sharing program where RPN donates a percentage of the money they already receive to our foundation. This means for each credit card you process through RPN you would also be making a contribution to the foundation. This does not cost you anything additional. RPN provides this donation out of the proceeds they already receive and do not charge you anything additional. It's a win-win for all! The writer saves in processing credit card sales and the foundations receives a contribution to help fight illiteracy.

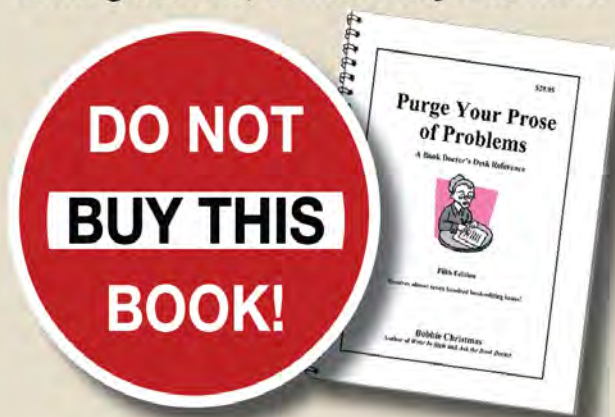
If you would like to receive a quote simply contact Retailers Processing Network's Chris Smith at 800-366-3699, extension 372, or ccsmith@retailers.com.

I also urge you to check out our upcoming Focus Days. Our marketing guru, Shannon Bell, put together a wonderful lineup this year for each of the Focus Days. The first one kicks off in April at the Hilton Altamonte Springs where we host the annual conference and will focus on Character-Driven Stories. For more information check out our website: floridawriters.net/conferences/focus-character-driven-stories/. I hope to see each of you there! 🐾

Cheyenne Knopf Williams is a lifetime member and President of FWA. She also sits on the board of the Florida Writers Foundation. Her full-time job is as the Marketing Manager for OnLineBinding where she helps authors realize their dreams of indie-publishing their books.



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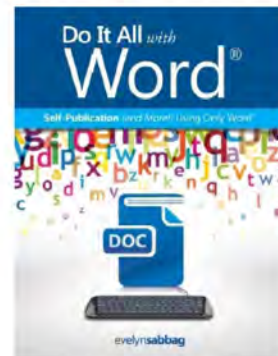
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The Royal Palm Literary Awards Competition: Open for Entries

by Chris Coward

Greetings, and welcome to the 2017 Royal Palm Literary Awards (RPLA) competition! I'm Chris Coward, 2017 RPLA chairperson, and I've had the privilege of chairing this program for five of the past eight years.

For those of you new to FWA, RPLA is our flagship writing competition, a service that recognizes excellence in its members' published and unpublished works and provides objective and candid feedback to ALL entrants.

You may ask, "How do I win?" Or, "Do I really want the feedback?"

Regarding the first question, obviously, winning requires submitting your best work, as the 112 winners in 2016 will attest. But there are a couple of strategies that can give you a leg up, and they have application beyond RPLA. More on this in a minute.

From an admin standpoint, the second question is a biggie. Do RPLA entrants really want the feedback? Inquiring minds want to know! It takes tens of thousands of hours for volunteer judges to fill out the scoresheets, called rubrics, where they score and comment in detail against a predetermined set of criteria. There's no sense throwing precious volunteer resources into a service that's not wanted.

So we asked the last year's entrants to weigh in. The answers surprised us.

In the 2016 anonymous entrant survey, we asked respondents why they entered. We offered four available responses: a chance to win an award, the experience of sending work out for review, to receive professional feedback, and "other." Guess which choice was number one? Fifty-four percent of respondents said "receiving professional feedback" was "very important," compared to 45% who checked off "chance to win an award."

Now here's where things get interesting. Remember when we said RPLA has two goals, which raise two questions? We deferred part of the answer to the first question—"How do I win?"—because with one statistic, the two merge.

Of the 479 total entries in 2016, 72 (15%) had been entered in RPLA in prior years. Of these, 23 (32%) won awards.

This means that entries that had already been through the RPLA process won more than twice as often as entries submitted the first time. Keep in mind that judges did not know these were resubmissions (we send resubmissions to judges other than they've had in the past).

So why the higher win-rate? We suggest a combination of factors: resubmitters, having already undergone the process, are more seasoned; they have more time to polish their work; and they have the advantage of feedback from previous years.

Bottom line: perseverance pays.

And by extrapolation, this kind of perseverance should work with literary agents and publishers, as well. Perhaps Stephen King, Richard Hooker, Madeleine L'Engle, and Robert Pirsig would agree. Reportedly, they submitted *Carrie*, *M*A*S*H*, *A Wrinkle in Time*, and *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* to publishers 30, 21, 26, and 121 times, respectively, before their works were published.

That's a lot of submitting. (Then again, they didn't have the benefit of RPLA rubrics.)

So to you, FWA member, whether your work-in-progress has been previously submitted or not, RPLA welcomes you. You may be a winner. You'll certainly get invaluable feedback. RPLA is now accepting submissions. Check floridawriters.net for details.

The Royal Palm Literary Awards competition is open for entries. How do you win? A good place to start is by entering!

Enjoy the process! And the feedback. 🌸

Chris Coward is the chairperson for the 2017 Royal Palm Literary Awards competition, a member of the FWA Board of Directors, past FWA president, and leader of FWA's Oxford Writers critique group.



Four Ways to Protect Yourself Online

by Erik Deckers



Twitter was down for a lot of the Northeast during the Florida Writing Conference this past October. In fact, a lot of streaming and Internet sites were down, including Spotify, Netflix, and even The New York Times.

That's because a major Internet hub was hit with a DDOS attack—a dedicated denial of service, pronounced DEE-doss—which tied up a major portion of the Internet on the East Coast. In short, some “bad actors” (what Internet security people call the bad guys) were sending massive amounts of data to that one particular hub. Imagine the Three Stooges all trying to go through a door at the same time.

It coincided with a question I got during my personal branding talk that same weekend.

“How do you protect yourself online?” a woman asked. Unfortunately, we didn't have time to discuss it—I could have spent an entire hour on that subject—so I thought it was worth an article here instead. Here are four ways you can protect your blog, your social media accounts, and even your personal safety online.

1. Use a Password Vault to Generate Random Passwords

A lot of people use simple, easy-to-remember passwords, which can be broken by a hacker's software in a few hundredths of a second. That means you need complex passwords that are difficult to figure out, but those are hard to remember, especially if you use a different password for each account (which you absolutely should do).

That's why there are apps that will not only store your passwords, they'll automatically log you into your

accounts. That means you can use complex, nearly-impossible-to-crack passwords without ever having to remember them.

I use 1Password, although LastPass and KeePass are also options. I like 1Password because it operates on Mac and Windows, and works on multiple devices, including my laptop, mobile phone, and tablet, and on every web browser. And I can generate 20-character passwords that use lowercase and capital letters, numbers, and special characters, which look like `*8)R83CRD[$3cuZGq`.

I can also use it to string together four random words instead, which is easier to retype, should the need arise. I generated *manpower-lite-feather-pacific* for this example, and checked it on a password strength calculator.

According to grc.com, *manpower-lite-feather-pacific* would take “7.32 hundred trillion, trillion, trillion centuries,” at 1,000 guesses per second, to crack. (Most hackers can only guess a few hundred times per second.) And `*8)R83CRD[$3cuZGq` would take “1.34 billion trillion centuries.” (Check out grc.com/haystack.htm if you'd like to test your own passwords.)

2. Turn on Two-Factor Authentication Everywhere

You can also ask for additional protection on certain websites, in case someone ever actually does hack into them. That additional protection is a 6-digit numeric code that is texted to you when you log in to that website. It's a random number, and is only used once for that particular login. It will even expire after a few minutes.

Services like Gmail, LinkedIn, Twitter, Evernote, Apple's iCloud, iTunes, and even GoDaddy all use two-factor authentication.



When I log in to my Gmail, I'm immediately presented with a dialog box that asks for my 6-digit code. I grab my mobile phone, and within seconds, the 6-digit code has been sent. I enter it into the dialog box, and I'm finally allowed in to my Gmail. That means if someone ever does guess my password, they can't get past the second factor. This is important, because if someone were to control my Gmail, they could use the "Forgot My Password" feature on every service I belong to, and dismantle my entire life.

3. Never Share Deeply Personal Information

We all like to tell our friends when we're having fun, so we can rub their noses in it. We share photos of ourselves on vacation, at dinner, at the beach. But you may want to consider who else can see your updates, photos, and personal information.

Just by looking at your social profile and your various photos, people can tell when you're away on vacation, as well as where you live, while other people are just concerned for their personal safety and people finding out their whereabouts.

To that end, I always recommend the following:

1. Never share photos while you're on vacation, only afterward. Don't tell people when you're not at home for an extended period of time.
2. If you live in a smaller city, and don't want people to know where you live, list a bigger nearby city as your hometown in social bios. For example, if you live in an Orlando suburb, just put down that you live in Orlando.
3. Don't share photos of fancy or expensive gifts you received. You don't want to give thieves a shopping list.

4. Keep Your WordPress Blog Secure

If you host your own WordPress blog on a third-party server, pay careful attention to your security. Your host will manage their server's security, but you're responsible for your own blog. (If you use WordPress.com, they'll manage all security for you. Just make sure you have a solid password!)

There are hundreds of security plugins to keep your WordPress blog secure. I prefer Limit Login Attempts, which will block IP addresses that try unsuccessfully to log into my account eight times, and they'll email me about the attempted break ins.

Next, I'll copy that IP address, and then add it to the list of blocked IP addresses in WP-Ban. This permanently

bans future login attempts from that IP address, which shuts out any "zombie attacks"—infected computers that are programmed to attack other computers.

Finally, delete the Admin account on your WordPress blog. When you first create a WordPress blog, the default account is called Admin, and it's usually the account hackers try to break into.

When you first set up your WordPress blog on your server, create a new administrator account with your name. Then, go back and delete the Admin account. That way, hackers can try and try for "7.32 hundred trillion trillion trillion centuries," but they'll be knocking on a door that doesn't even exist.

Protecting yourself online can be easy, thanks to the available tools and best practices. The hard part is remembering to stick to them and make them a habit. But if you can follow these steps, you can greatly increase your personal protection and online security. 🦋

Erik Deckers is the president of Pro Blog Service, a content marketing agency with clients throughout the United States. He is also the co-author of *Branding Yourself*, *No Bullshit Social Media*, and *The Owned Media Doctrine*. Erik has been a newspaper humor columnist for over 20 years, and was the Spring 2016 writer-in-residence at the Jack Kerouac House in Orlando, FL. He now serves on their board of directors.



Resources

Check your password's security:
grc.com/haystack.htm

WordPress Plugins:
wordpress.org/plugins-wp

Learn more about password managers:

1Password 1password.com

LastPass lastpass.com

KeePass keepass.info

Building a Great Author Website

by M.J. Carlson

Every author needs a website. This article isn't as much a "how-to" as a "why-to" and a "what-to" list. Why-to is the reason for your website, and what-to are the elements each page should include. The colors and font are up to your (or your web designer's) personal aesthetic.

Your goal is to build an affordable author website to assist you in finding and connecting with readers who will become fans. Remember, your career as an author isn't about selling anything. It's about providing a level of entertainment that encourages others to keep coming back for more, in exchange for their hard-earned money.

Most authors make the mistake of viewing their website as a portal for information, either about their books or career. While this is true to a degree, a fully functional website does much more. Your website is a working member of your marketing team. Its goal is to provide a way for your potential readers to find you and for you to collect contact information about your readers who are interested in your other work.

Your website isn't just a billboard on the information superhighway. It's (or should be) a rest area, offering road-weary travelers a place to stop, look at interesting things, and be exposed to your unique thoughts. They should receive something of value for the mere price of an email address and, perhaps, a way to continue the relationship, sometimes for years.

Your website should get your work out to readers who want it and introduce your unique style and voice to new readers who may not know who you are (yet).

If you don't think this is the case, look up the sales figures for any popular author, in any genre, with more than twenty novels available. These folks have maintained a relationship with their readers, sometimes for decades, by offering them value.

Your Website Needs a Name

This is a domain name, such as *yourauthorname.com* (or .net, .org, or many others).

Many authors register their book title as their domain name. This is a mistake. You have a long writing career ahead. You may change your genre or focus of your writing. Don't become tied to a domain name that may not reflect who you are or where your career has led you in five or ten years. If you've already set up your site under a book title or series, I recommend changing it as soon as possible.

If you decide to use a pen name, use that name consistently. It'll feel schizophrenic for a while, but it'll get better. There are lots of good reasons to use a pen name, and if you're using one, you must fully become that person when engaged in your career pursuits. Pretend you're in witness protection or a spy if it helps. If you make up facts about your alter ego, make sure they're consistent. Your fans will notice if your birthday is different on Facebook and Wikipedia.

If your name is taken, try adding something to it for your domain, and register something like *yournameauthor* or *yournamebooks*. You might want to add your middle name.

If your real name happens to be Steven King, you're hosed. Pick a pen name and move on. Choose a real-sounding name, though. Writing under the byline Bilbo Baggins or Anwynn Snippledorfer will get old fast. Unless, of course, your name really is Anwynn Snippledorfer, in which case, did your mom not like you? You want something fairly easy to spell and remember.

Do a search on your proposed pen name to find one that isn't overused or has bad press associated with it. You probably won't want Mark David Chapman or Lee H. Oswald, no matter how strange your sense of humor.

Be careful about .net, .org, .me, and other non-traditional domains since .com is the default for most people, and that's what they'll type, often without thinking. You want new visitors to find you, not some bongo player who happened to get your domain name first.

There are several high-quality domain registration services. All domain names are registered through ICANN, but the service you deal with makes a difference. Most will let you search on the fly and immediately show you what's available and what isn't. I use Namecheap, but there are several that work similarly, including *iwantmyname.com*. I don't use Godaddy, because I'm not a fan of some of their marketing practices. Spring for whois privacy protection, unless you want your home address on the net.

You Need a Hosting Service

Once you have your domain name, you'll need a hosting service. I use Hostgator. Their customer support has been great, my site hasn't had any downtime, and they run regular price deals. Bluehost is also affordable with a simple, straightforward setup process. Shop around.

Some authors use a free-ish website (no cost to them). I don't recommend this. First, it looks amateurish.



Second, your control over themes is limited. Third, you don't own the domain, and Wix, or Webs, and others can place any ad they like on your page, close you down, or change the agreement anytime they like.

Choose a Platform

Unless you're planning on hand-coding HTML, PHP, CSS, and Java, you'll want an existing platform. Choose one that's well known and offers themes, plugins, and customer service. WordPress is the most popular platform on the Internet. There are thousands of plugins, many free, and a gazillion themes available, allowing your website almost unlimited customizability.

Choose a Theme

A theme is simply what your website looks like when viewed on a computer, or more commonly, a smartphone or tablet. It includes design elements such as colors, fonts, and layout. Do yourself a favor and choose a theme that's optimized for mobile devices. Your site will rank higher on Google's search engines if it is.

Installing a theme is fairly easy. There are numerous step-by-step how-to videos on YouTube.

Determine Your Site's Content

Your site may employ static pages that show the same content until changed by you, the site owner; blog post pages with changing content that you'll have to keep feeding; or a combination of both. Your choice. Many sites

Minimally, every author website needs a home page, about page, books page, and contact page.

Some authors may want events, resources, and blog pages.

Your Web Pages Should Have a Goal

That goal is to further your career. Your website should identify readers who want your work and let them know how to get it. Every page should have an email subscription graphic, such as a book cover, that links to a service that provides something your reader will value—perhaps a free novella, a free book, a video, or an alternate ending to your book. I like MailChimp because the first 2,000 subscribers are free and Book Funnel for actual delivery.

Home Page

Your home page is the face your website presents to the world. You'll want that face to be less the tipsy, scary neighbor lady with lipstick smeared on one cheek inviting kids to come in at Halloween, and more the well-designed, organized portal into a place your readers will want to return to and send their friends to. Your home page should contain the following elements:

- Your latest book should have center stage. Make it easy for your fans to buy your latest book and know they've come to the right place.
- A graphic email subscription link (see above). Invite visitors onto your email list. Give them something of value they can't get anywhere else in return.
- Headshot and short bio. I don't use a headshot for personal reasons, but it's a good idea for branding. Hint: use the same headshot everywhere; Facebook, LinkedIn, Amazon, Kobo, SmashWords, etc. Do NOT use a selfie you shot at the beach during a tequila-fueled weekend. Get a good headshot done by a professional with a decent camera. Dress appropriately and comb your hair (assuming you have hair).
- Other content and excerpts. If you have short stories, guest blog posts, videos, or any other content available online, put links to them here.
- Ways for visitors to connect with you. Social media, etc.

About You Page

Your about page allows readers to learn about who you are as a person and an author. This can be the Wikipedia version of just the facts or you can wax eloquent. You're a writer, do something creative.

Use the same headshot you use on your home page. If you do media interviews, make it hi-res. You may want to put your downloadable media kit here, too.

This page should contain two versions of your bio. The first should be a simple, straightforward telling of the facts while the second could give the reader more information, possibly including what led you to be a writer and any significant, relevant history that qualifies you to write about the subject (pertinent advanced degrees, experience as a submarine captain, etc.).

Email subscription graphic. Yes, include your email subscription graphic on this page, too.

Books Page

This is as important as your about page. This page showcases your books and short stories offered for sale.

Cover images draw the reader into your world(s). Never skimp on your covers. Next to your editing, this is the single thing that will make or break your career.

A short description will entice potential readers to buy your books. Be sure to include links to where your books can be purchased. (You are using distributors other than just Amazon, right?).

And include your email subscription graphic. Are you getting the common thread yet?



Your main books page should have links to individual book pages where you'll showcase each book, individually. There should be a fairly large, high resolution Cover Image with a full synopsis on the side (usually on the right, sorry other lefties, it's a right-handed world). Your Blurbs and testimonials, Links to buy the book, and, of course, your email subscription graphic.

If you don't have a book available yet, start with the book you're currently writing. Add as much information as you can and continue to update until you have everything listed above. This is your debut book page.

Contact Page

Make it easy for visitors to contact you with any questions or comments.

Including your mailing address is optional. If you're uncomfortable with this as I am, consider a post office box.

Include links to your social media, Facebook, Twitter, Google+, etc., so your fans can connect with you. Not a huge social media butterfly? Don't worry. You're supposed to be writing books, remember?

A contact form sends an email to your inbox. It saves a step for visitors. Gmail can send even responses through your website.

Email subscription graphic. Because every page should have this.

Things You May Not Need Now, But May Want Eventually

Events or speaking engagements. Not every author will need this page. But if you maintain an active speaking

schedule, as I do, or you have any upcoming events (real or virtual), this would be the place to include those.

Blog. Entirely at your discretion and outside the scope of this article. I've seen no convincing data in at least five years that blogs help author visibility. Remember, if you start a blog, you'll have to constantly feed the machine new content (using time you should spend writing your next blockbuster novel for your adoring fans) while competing with The Huffington Post.

A resource page is a good place to direct your readers to the people who've helped you in your career, like your editor(s), cover artist(s), or friends in the business you would recommend without hesitation.

So, there it is. I hope this clears up some of the misconceptions about why you want an author website and what you want it to do. The chartreuse font on the fuchsia background is on you. ✨

M.J. Carlson is an FWA member and speculative science fiction author. He has three novels in print and his short stories appear in several anthologies. Four of his short stories have received honorable mentions in the Writers of the Future science fiction contest, and a novel and short story were finalists in the 2010 RPLA contest.

He currently lives in Brevard County, Florida, with Sparkle, his Wise Reader and Muse, and more computers than any sane person should have. For more information, please check out mjcarlson.com.



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A red velvet curtain hangs on the left side of the page, tied with a gold rope and tassel. A string of small, glowing white lights is draped across the curtain. The title is in large, bold, black font on the right.

Your Novel's First Scene: How to Start Right

by Paula Munier

There are a number of tricks to making sure that you get your story off to a hot, hotter, hottest start, no matter what your genre. I know, I know, all of you people out there who are writing literary fiction are thinking, “I don’t need a hot start to my story.” Well, think again. Even beginnings for literary stories must aim for, at minimum, a slow burn.

I live in the Northeast, where winters can be brutal. (As I’m writing this, New York City is digging out of some two feet of snow.) When I moved here a dozen years ago after nearly twenty years in balmy California, I learned that the secret to staying warm as the thermometer plunges is to keep the fires burning on all fronts. I discovered the cozy beauty of cashmere sweaters, fingerless gloves, and glowing woodstoves.

But I also learned that sometimes you have to break down and leave the house. Go begin a journey, even if it’s only to the grocery store—which means venturing out into sub-zero temperatures to a frigid vehicle that may or may not start. It was a cold prospect I dreaded, until I happened upon two spectacular tools: remote car starters and heated car seats.

With a remote car starter, you can start your car from inside your warm house, wait until your automobile is revved up and ready to go, and then slip into a warm seat in a warm vehicle with a warm engine and hit the road. This is a beautiful thing.

You want to do the same thing with your story. Every reader starts a story cold, and you want to warm the reader up to your story as quickly as possible. You want the reader to slip into a warm seat in a hot story with a blazing beginning and take off for parts known only to you, the writer.

The good news: There are literary equivalents to remote car starters and heated car seats. Let’s take a look at these, one by one.

Start With the Scene that Introduces Your Story Idea

This is the easiest and most efficient way to get your story off to its hottest start. So if it's at all possible to begin this way, you should, just as Peter Benchley did in the first scene of his classic horror novel, *Jaws*. Yes, the terrifying film was based on the equally terrifying New York Times bestseller by Benchley. The details of the novel's opening scene and the film's opening scene differ—the couple in the book are a man and a woman sharing a beach house rather than a couple of teenagers at a beach party—but the action is the same: The woman goes for her last swim in the sea while her drunken companion passes out. And there we have it, the big story idea of *Jaws*: a monster great white shark terrorizes a seaside resort town.

Start With the Scene that Foreshadows the Story Idea

If you believe that it is not possible to start your story by introducing the story idea, then you can do the next best thing: Start with a scene that foreshadows the story idea. For our purposes, a foreshadowing is an opening scene that prefigures your story idea.

The most famous example of this might be the opening of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, in which the three witches appear as a bad omen, especially for Macbeth. Many fairy tales begin this way as well. In Charles Perrault's *Sleeping Beauty*, a king and queen who'd waited years for a child celebrate their new baby princess's christening with a celebration. They invite the seven fairies of the kingdom to the feast. But an eighth fairy shows up, one long thought dead, and she curses the baby. This is the scene that foreshadows the day when, years later, the princess pricks her finger and falls into a long sleep ... and, well, you know the rest.

To use a more contemporary example, consider the tender and funny New York Times bestseller *The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry*. In the opening scene, thirty-one-year-old book saleswoman Amelia Loman is stepping off the ferry to Alice Island, on her way to her first meeting with A.J. Fikry, owner of Island Books. She takes a call from Boyd, her latest "online dating failure," determined to let him down gently, only he's insulting, apologetic, and finally, weepy. Finally, she tells him that it would never work out because he's "not much of a reader." She hangs up and remembers her mother's warning that "novels have ruined Amelia for real men." And as she nearly walks right past the purple Victorian cottage that is Island Books, Amelia worries that her mother might be right.

In this scene, the foreshadowing is subtle but clear: Amelia needs a man who reads, and she's about to meet

one who may seem unsuitable in nearly every other way save that one...but still, the possibility for romance is there.

Start With the Scene that Sets Up the Story Idea

We've seen this one a million times. Think of the opening scene of the original *Star Wars*, in which Princess Leia hides the plans for the Death Star in R2-D2, setting up the story idea.

Jeannette Walls's shattering memoir *The Glass Castle* opens with a scene that begins with the unforgettable line, "I was sitting in a taxi, wondering if I had overdressed for the evening, when I looked out the window and saw Mom rooting through a dumpster." She goes on to describe this encounter with her mother, setting up the rest of the novel, which tells the unsettling story of her harrowing childhood, beginning at the age of three.

Beware of Too Much, Too Soon

Even when you've got an opening scene that either sets up, foreshadows, or introduces your big story idea, that scene can still fail to capture the reader's attention. One of the main reasons so many opening scenes fail is because the writer tries to tell too much about the story too soon.

"Tell" is the critical word here. The writer is telling—rather than showing—us the story. Many scenes are overburdened with backstory, description, and the characters' inner monologue, which leaves little room for the action that should be driving the story forward.

Remember: What the readers need to know to read the story is not what you needed to know to write it. Because the beginning is usually the first part of the story that you commit to paper, you are just getting to know your characters, setting, plot, and themes. You're exploring your characters' voices and histories, your setting's idiosyncrasies, your plot's twists and turns and detours and dead ends, your themes' nuances and expressions. You're thinking on paper, stretching your way into your story, and that stretching is a critical part of the writing process, but just as stretching before you run is paramount, it's not part of the run itself. It's preparation.

So you need to go through and trim the parts of your opening that are obscuring the action so you can get to your big story idea sooner. You need to prune back your writing so that the inherent drama of your story idea is highlighted.

If you're finding it difficult to edit your work, then try this trick. Print out your opening pages, and go through them, marking up the text in different colors to distinguish between backstory, description, and inner monologue.



- **Backstory:** This is wherever you talk about what happened in the past, before the present action of your opening scene began—childhood memories, past relationships, etc. Mark these lines/paragraphs/sections in blue.
- **Description:** These are the lines/paragraphs/sections where you describe your setting, expound on theme, detail backstory, etc. Mark these lines in pink.
- **Inner monologue:** These are the parts where you record your character's thoughts and feelings. Mark them in yellow, and underline the sections in which your character is alone as well.

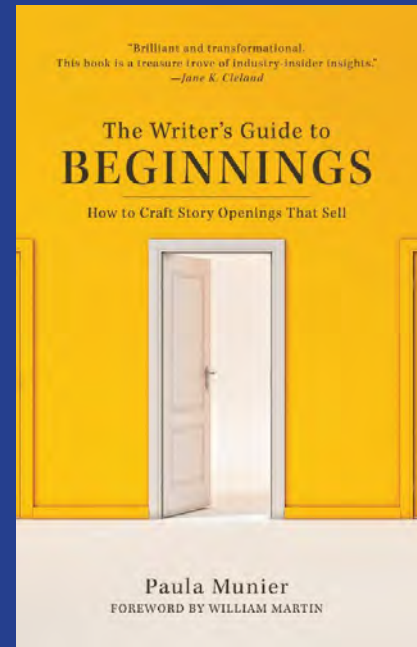
I know that you're tempted to skip this exercise. But don't. You only have to flip or scroll through it to know where you should edit your opening scene. This is one of the most useful exercises you'll ever do and the one my students, clients, and writing friends always most applaud me for.

Turn to Page 50

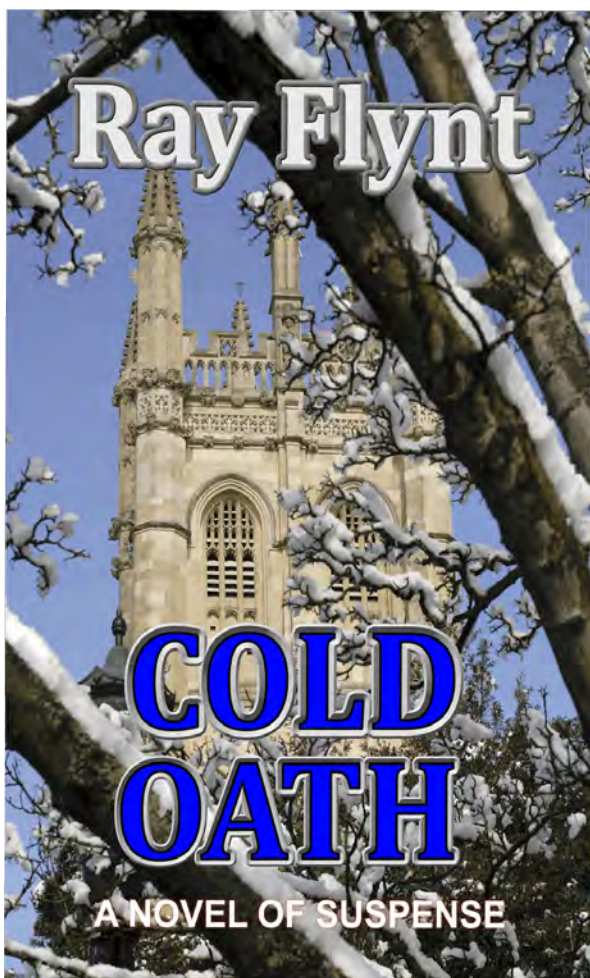
For many writers, their story's warm-up lasts about fifty pages (or around the 15,000-word mark). That's why I say to writers whose openings are slow, boring, obtuse, or otherwise unengaging: What happens on page fifty of your story?

Page fifty is where many stories truly begin. Turn to page fifty in your story, and see what's happening there. What's your protagonist up to? How does that relate to your story idea? Don't be surprised if this is where your story really begins. And don't be reluctant to toss out those first forty-nine pages of stretching if that's what it takes to get your run off to a good start. 🦋

Paula Munier is Senior Literary Agent and Content Strategist at Talcott Notch Literary Services. She began her career as a journalist, and along the way added editor, acquisitions specialist, digital content manager, publishing executive, author, and writing teacher to her repertoire. Paula is the author of several books, including *Plot Perfect: How to Build Unforgettable Stories Scene by Scene*. Her first mystery series debuts with *Spare These Stones* in 2018 (St. Martin's Press).



In *The Writer's Guide to Beginnings*, Paula Munier shows you how to craft flawless beginnings that impress agents, engage editors, and captivate readers. You'll learn how to develop the big idea of your story and introduce it on page one, structure opening scenes that encompass their own story arc, kickstart your writing with effective brainstorming techniques, and introduce a compelling cast of characters that drive the plot. You'll also examine best-selling novels from different genres to learn the secrets that experienced writers use to dive straight into a story.




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Ashes to Ashes, Dust to Dust? Phantoms and Their Copyright Legacies

by Anne Dalton, Esquire

Are you part of a collaborative writer's group? Do you have an editor, either a friend or a professional? Did you or your partner put away the works you jointly created to mellow for a while in a drawer? Did you then lose track of your creative partner until you ran across an obituary while doing that Google search for him or her? Or has your creative partner died unexpectedly? In short, do you like to plan for unexpected events?

As set out in detail in a previous column entitled "Holy Cow, How Did That Happen? The Mystery of Joint Copyrights" in the Fall 2014 issue of *The Florida Writer*,* by operation of law, you both own equal shares in that copyright.

If one of you dies, the survivor may be dealing with the heirs of the deceased person. They may be very difficult. They may be willing to sell or license the copyright to you. But if their valuation of the joint copyright is unrealistically high, there is not much you can do to shake that copyright interest loose. Worse, if the estate is bogged down in other problems between the heirs, or the taxing authorities, or a bankruptcy, your desire to own the joint copyright may be a very low priority to them.

Worst of all, if you can't find the estate, or none exists, you will be jointly owning a copyright with a phantom.

At that point, you will be weighing some bad options. You don't want to falsify the copyright ownership facts to a publisher. That would create awkward situations later, not to mention it being bad karma. Conversely, if you are honest, it would be difficult to sell or market the joint work, even with a heavy-duty indemnity. Your other option is to hire a professional to do a worldwide search for your partner or their heirs. Sounds expensive.

What's the alternative? Do a simple contract with your collaborators when you first start that collaboration. The contract should spell out what happens to ownership of that joint creation when any of you pass on. While that may sound heavy-handed, it could prevent a heavy heart down the road. ✍

Anne Dalton, Esquire, has provided business and personal legal services to writers and other creatives in all phases of their creative development for nearly 40 years. She proudly serves as the General Counsel to the Florida Writers Association and is licensed in Florida, New York and Pennsylvania. Her credentials can be viewed at www.daltonlegal.com. Contact Anne at adalton@daltonlegal.com.

Comments contained in this article are informational only and do not constitute legal advice. Please seek the advice of an attorney of your choice regarding specific factual issues.

* "Holy Cow, How Did That Happen? The Mystery of Joint Copyrights" was recently re-published on the Florida Writers Association blog. floridawriters.net/mystery-joint-copyrights/

"When a writer first begins to write, he or she feels the same first thrill of achievement that the young gambler or oboe player feels: winning a little, losing some, the gambler sees the glorious possibilities, exactly as the young oboist feels an indescribable thrill when he gets a few phrases to sound like real music, phrases implying an infinite possibility for satisfaction and self-expression. As long as the gambler or oboist is only playing at being a gambler or oboist, everything seems possible. But when the day comes that he sets his mind on becoming a professional, suddenly he realizes how much there is to learn, how little he knows."

John Gardner, *On Becoming a Novelist*

Going Audio: 3 Key Decisions for Your Audio Book

by Penny Sansevieri

We hear so much about e-books these days that's it's almost easy to forget that long before the e-book, there was another form of reading: audio. When you talk with audiobook lovers, they are passionate about their books, and most can't recall the last time they actually read a physical book. But they listen to them all the time! I have spoken with some cross-country truck drivers who go through as many as five books a month. What do they read? Anything. From world history to self-help to fiction.

Audible has been around for a long time. We see their deals everywhere—"Get three months free"—that try to coax people into the system. Now, however, Audible's technology has made some great advancements. Whispersync allows people to both read and listen to books, making it a popular option. This type of book delivery is quickly becoming unstoppable.

Additionally, about three years ago, Amazon launched ACX, which is a means for authors to turn their books into audio products.

Any Indie author that has the budget can turn their book into an audio product. And, perhaps surprisingly, it takes very little effort. If you're considering turning your book into an audiobook, here are three of the most important decisions you'll make.

The Importance of a Good Narrator

If you've ever listened to an audiobook, you know that the narrator can make or break a story. I was listening to a book recently, and though I liked the story, I had to stop the audio because the narrator was just not right for the book and read in a way that distracted from the story. This is why you want a professional narrator. You should never, ever read your own book, even if you do voiceover. Having taken voiceover classes and done some voiceover work myself, I can tell you first hand that having a "voice" and being able to do an audiobook are not the same thing.



For audio to work in a book format, the narrator needs to have some acting experience, because you'll want inflection, emphasis, and drama—even if it's nonfiction. These are things you just can't get if you just have voiceover experience or merely "have a good voice." You may save some money on production, but it'll be a waste of time and effort and it could ultimately taint your book. Imagine a bunch of reviews on your book page complaining about the narrator? Not a good scenario. So if you're going to do this, spring for some good talent. Talent isn't terribly pricey, especially when you consider how much work is involved to produce a finished hour, which often requires several retakes. Typically, six hours of work are needed to create one hour of audio, and most narrators will want \$300 per finished hour. Typically, books take eight to ten hours to complete.

When hiring a narrator, it's important to make sure you like them. If you're doing a series or have more than one book, you'll want the same narrator for all of these books. When I spoke to readers, they told me it was a major pet peeve when an author swaps out a narrator, and this is because audiobooks create a very personal environment. The listener is inviting the reader into their car and their world, so it's important to respect that connection.

Setting Your Production Timeline

Once you've hired your narrator, the process from start to finish moves along quickly. Once you decide on who you want to hire, you'll make them an offer and give them a chance to respond and accept it. From there the experience is now between you (the author) and the narrator.

They'll record a 15-minute session and upload it to ACX for your approval. Sometimes, though I don't know how often, your narrator will request the entire

book right off the bat to read it through, and go over any difficult names to ensure flawless pronunciation. I think those two things are key and will, in the long-term, speak to the integrity of the book.

Once you approve the 15-minute sample, the actual recording process will begin. Keep in mind that you'll define the dates for production, meaning you need to tell the narrator how much time they have. Most narrators will tell you right off the bat when they can start so there are no misunderstandings around timing.

Deciding If You Want To Go Exclusive

Should you go exclusive with ACX? While the royalties may be higher, it may not make sense to sign over your book sales rights for a year, which is the duration of their exclusivity. Once you go exclusive you're kind of stuck, and new audiobook sites are popping up all the time. While a lot of people do default to Audible because of Amazon, these other audiobook sites are giving supremely great deals to get new customers.

Audiobooks.com is a great example of this. They have a great selection, a thirty-day free trial, and their monthly membership rates are slightly lower than Audible's. Audible is, however, adding in more free stuff for users who are also part of their Prime membership. They know the competition is growing out there for audiobooks.

If you want your book listed on *audiobooks.com*, you first have to sign up with Author's Republic (*authorsrepublic.com*),

and once you do, you'll need to decide where you'll let them put your book. If you let Author's Republic sell through all channels, your book will be featured on sites like *reado.com*, *audiobooksnow.com*, *talkingbookz.com*, and about twenty others. If you aren't going through ACX, if you're doing the audiobook on your own, they'll also list you with Audible/Amazon, too.

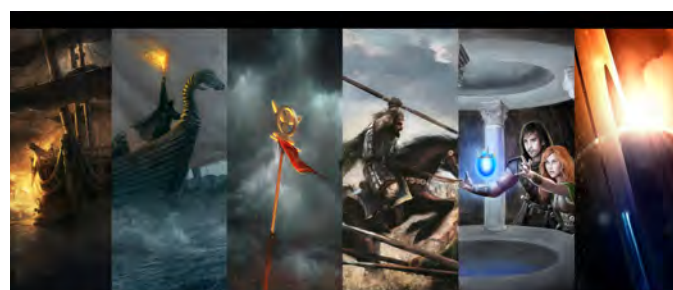
Ultimately, audiobooks make a great companion to your print or e-book so consider audio as a potential component for your launch, or perhaps do the audiobook later, when your book has been out for awhile. I know a lot of authors who will often do different "editions" of the book, which is then considered a new release and keeps the book and publication date fresh. 🦋

Penny C. Sansevieri, CEO and founder of Author Marketing Experts, Inc. (AME) and adjunct professor at NYU, is a best-selling author and internationally recognized book marketing and media relations expert. Her company is one of the leaders in the publishing industry and has developed some of the most cutting-edge book marketing campaigns. Visit amarketingexpert.com.



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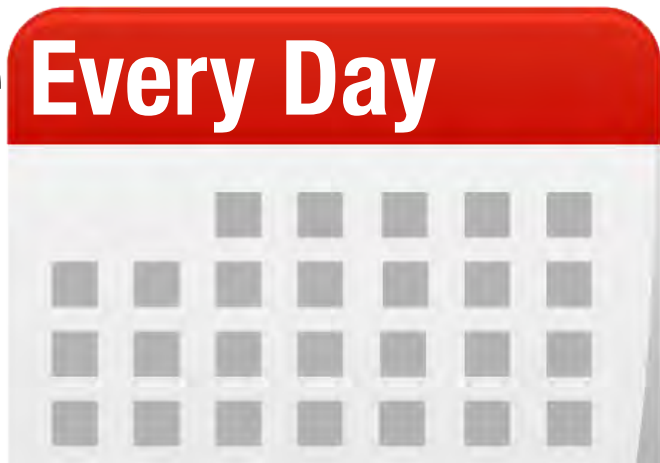
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How to Write Every Day

by Leo Babauta



I write every single day. I do it for a living, of course, but I think writing daily has allowed me to do it for a living.

I journal, I write blog posts, courses for my Sea Change program, books, and e-books. For fun, I've written 50,000 words of a novel for NaNoWriMo, and another year I wrote 110,000. For years, I wrote newspaper articles and opinion columns. None of this is to brag, but to show the kind of writing I do when I write daily.

The Benefits

Writing every day has helped me in so many ways.

Just to name a few:

- My writing skills have improved with the years.
- I'm able to write faster, type faster, with so much practice.
- I can clarify my thinking better because of writing regularly.
- I'm able to think from the reader's perspective, which helps me in lots of life situations.
- I am forced to reflect on my life, which deepens my learning.
- I am forced to figure out how to motivate myself to write regularly.
- I learn to create a regular practice, as I do with meditation, exercise and eating healthily.
- I learn to overcome perfection and put things out there to be judged, which helps me to embrace failure and messiness.
- I learn to overcome distraction and procrastination.

There are many more benefits too, from embracing uncertainty to find a way to express the soul of my being. Not small feats, I think.

So how can you write daily? I'll share a few ideas that work for me.

How to Write Daily

What works for you will be different than what I do, but I thought I'd share what has helped me:

1. **Most important: Have a great reason.** The rest of this doesn't matter if you skip this step. Answer this question: Why do you want to write every day? If it's because it sounds fun, sounds cool, sounds nice ... you'll abandon it when you face discomfort. If you want to do it to help someone else, to make the world a better place, to lift someone's spirits, to reduce your pain, to find a way to express your deeper self ... then you can call on this deeper reason when things get difficult.
2. **Block off undistracted time.** All you need is ten minutes a day. But you have to block off those ten minutes, and treat them as an unmissable appointment. You wouldn't tell your doctor that you'll get to your appointment with her "after checking your email and Facebook just one more time" would you? Then don't do that to your writing appointment. This is undistracted time, so shut everything down, and treat this space as sacred. Have a place you write, treat it like your daily prayers, and be ready before the appointment starts.
3. **Don't let yourself forget.** What would you do if you absolutely couldn't forget an appointment? You might write it on your calendar, set an alarm, even put up a note where you couldn't miss it. You might ask someone else to remind you. Do all those things.
4. **Do it in a sprint.** Some people think they need to write for an hour or two to make it count. But a task that big will seem daunting. Instead, write for five minutes. Or ten. Something small and doable. Then put your full focus and write for those ten minutes like you're running to the love of your life after a long separation.
5. **Practice mindfulness.** You can treat writing as a meditation. It's a way to put everything aside but you and the writing, to let your thoughts become



words on the page, to set your urges free to write the stories you're telling yourself about yourself and your life. Don't simply rush through the writing process and treat it as a chore. Notice when your mind is complaining, notice the texture of the room around you, notice how your body feels as you sit and write, and embrace the moment.

6. **Practice gratitude.** As you practice mindfulness, notice the awesomeness of this moment of self-expression. It's so easy to take this for granted and want to go do something else. But instead, pause and see what you can appreciate about this writing time. What is beautiful? What are you taking for granted? For me, I am grateful just to have the opportunity to write, to help others, to share what I am learning about this world. And having a roof over my head, not starving and not being in incredible pain, being able to see light and colors and hear the music of the world ... these are simply incredible!
7. **Embrace imperfection.** Writing is about letting go of our ideals, and just doing anyway, even if we can't have perfection. If we only wanted to write amazing things, instead of sucky first drafts, we'd never write. So we have to be messy, allow ourselves not be good at something, put it out anyway, and embrace the imperfection of life.

8. **Don't let your mind run away (for a little while).** Your mind will want to run from the writing. This is normal. The mind doesn't like uncertainty and discomfort. You'll want to go check email, check blogs, check social media, check news, go clean your kitchen. Notice this urge, and then sit with it. Don't run.

So that might seem like a lot, but in truth it's pretty simple. Have a big reason, block off the time, set unforgettable reminders, do it in short bursts, and be mindful, grateful, and focused.

Practicing this on a daily basis helps you form some incredibly useful skills of staying with something and not running to distractions, learning to express yourself, sticking to a regular habit, and being mindful and grateful. These help in all areas of life, and I highly recommend you start today.

Leo Babauta is a simplicity blogger and author. He created *zenhabits.net*, a Top 25 blog with a million readers. He's also a best-selling author, a husband, father of six children, and a vegan. In 2010 he moved from Guam to the San Francisco Bay Area, where he leads a simple life.



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Details and registration available on *floridawriters.net* soon.





Doing the Right Thing by Diane M. Boilard

On a beautiful fall day in 1987, I finished my shopping and walked back to my car. I noticed a wide black mark and an indentation on the right side of the back bumper.

Under the driver's side windshield wiper, I found a note. I thought it would read, "I'm writing this because people are watching."

To my surprise the person left her name, telephone number, and requested we let her know the cost of the repair.

At home, my husband expressed his frustration, "Someone damaged our brand new car!"

"She left a note. Her name is Maria," I said. "She wants to know the cost of the repair."

The next day, we asked the body shop repairman to evaluate the damage.

Then we drove to Maria's home. A man in his fifties dressed in pajamas, a bathrobe, and slippers answered the door.

"Hello. Is Maria home? I asked."

"No, she isn't."

"Her note indicates she hit our car. The damage isn't severe, but the cost to repair the bumper is \$435." I handed him the note and the estimated bill.

"Come in. Have a seat. I apologize for the way I'm dressed. I'm resting today from chemotherapy. I have lung cancer. Let me get my checkbook. Is a check okay?"

"Yes, that will be fine," I said.

"My daughter told me how she hit your car backing out of the parking spot. She cried because I'm sick and my wife is supporting all three of us. I'm not saying that to make you feel bad."

After he wrote the check, we talked about his daughter and how the family coped with his cancer.

"Maria's a good girl. I'm proud of her. She'll be a teacher and will help my wife with the income."

After a few words, we wished him better health and left. On the way home, I said, "I feel guilty taking the check from this kind man when he's so sick." My husband agreed.

At home, I placed the check on the counter. "Let's wait a while before we cash it."

Before taking the car for repairs, my husband said, "Let's see what I can do. Maybe I can fix it." He used car polish and the mark came off. With a rubber hammer, he hit the back of the bumper. The dent almost disappeared.

"Honey, the man at the garage is taking advantage of us. We can't keep this check," I said. "His family can use the money. His medical bills must be outrageous and he's too sick to work."

"I sure hope he's not fooling us."

We returned to the man's house and rang the doorbell. After many minutes, we heard him say, "I'll be right there. Wait. Don't leave."

When he answered the door, again in pajamas and bathrobe, his face drawn and pale, he didn't look well. He asked, "Is something wrong?"

"No, nothing's wrong," I said.

"Come in." He walked with a cane and held on to everything on the way to the kitchen. "Please, sit down." His pain obvious, he forced a smile. He asked, "Did you have your car fixed?"

"No, we didn't."

"Do you need more money? I don't have any. The check I gave you was all we had left for the month." The expression on his face let us know of the family's desperate situation.

"We want to return the check."

"Why? Is something wrong with it?"

"No. We didn't try to cash it," I said.

My husband explained, "I fixed the damage myself the best I could. The bumper's almost good as new."

"With your illness, we decided you needed this money," I said.

"My daughter has classes this morning. I'll let her know about the check. It'll make her feel better."

After a few words, we shook hands. On the way to the door, I said, "We'll pray for you and your family. Take care of yourself."

"Thank you," he said as he held on to the door.

On the way to our car, I turned around. I don't know why, but I'll remember his smile as he waved goodbye. ❧

Diane M. Boilard lives in Port Orange, FL.





Here for a Purpose

by Bonnie Pierpoint Herrick

I was leaving the grocery store one day and found someone had put a note on my windshield. It read:

Are you here for a purpose?

I thought about that. If what I had encountered inside the store was any indication, I had been put on earth for the sole purpose of getting in everybody's way.

But if I were not here, my ex-husband would have no one to care for him in his infirmity. If I were not here, my current husband would not have a best friend. If I were not here, my granddaughter would not have an adult in her life. And she would not be restoring the child in mine.

If I were not here, who would put flowers on my son's grave? 🌸

Bonnie Pierpoint Herrick lives in Panama City Beach, FL.



Someone Has Left a Note on the Car Windshield

by Regina M Russell

I was walking to harp practice and saw the keys on the sidewalk. Honest person that I am, I took them into the OFFICE OF THE ART DEPARTMENT. I gave them to the secretary, identifying the car they belonged to.

I left a note on the car windshield directing the person the office and to ask for them and signed my name on the not—as if the person would know who I was. But they don't know me. I am not famous, I am just another person who would want her keys returned to her. Give and it will be given to you.

But I did want my existence acknowledged. Maybe those were the keys to the kingdom that Matthew 16:19 talks about in the bible. So I could bind my demons of not feeling worthy and therefore had to prove my right to exist. Or perhaps I wanted to lose some prosperity and kindness into the world.

Whatever. Maybe it was just to return the keys to the rightful owner. Simple act. Kind act. I was able to validate my existence. 🌸

Regina M. Russell lives in Orlando, FL.



A Few Nice Things

by Peggy Lambert

Shopping bags littered the living room floor as Marcy and her mother plopped wearily on the sofa. “We need to have all this put away before your father gets home. You know how he is.”

Marcy knew, because this happened frequently. Having everything out of sight was paramount to a peaceful evening.

“Mom, do we really need all this stuff? Daddy says we can’t afford it.”

“Let me worry about that, honey. It isn’t all for me this time. Don’t you love your new sweater?”

Marcy held the cream-colored sweater in front of her and stepped out to the hall mirror. “I like it, but I don’t need it. How many sweaters does a kid need? That skateboard T-shirt is all I really wanted.”

“There’s nothing wrong with us having a few nice things. Now, hurry and take these up to your closet while I start dinner. I’ll sort it out tomorrow.”

Later that night, Marcy overheard the identical argument from her parents’ bedroom that she’d heard many times before. Her dad said the bills were stacking up. Her mother said if he could afford that car, she could certainly have a few nice things. Knowing nothing about finances, Marcy had little doubt that her mother’s spending had long ago surpassed the amount he’d spent on his prize 1965 Mustang.

Her father moved out the next day, and the divorce followed soon after. For the next few years, Marcy saw him often. His generous contribution to her wellbeing continued until, after a brief illness, he died a week before her thirtieth birthday.

A few weeks later, her mother arrived for the reading of the will. Marcy could not fathom a reason why her dad would have mentioned his ex-wife of twenty years in his will. That question was answered when the attorney began to read aloud. “To my former wife, who spent money like water through a sieve, I leave this wedding ring. It’s the same one she wanted me to pawn when she decided she needed a better one.”

Marcy covered a smile as her mother snatched the ring from the attorney’s hand and stormed out of the office. The attorney watched her go, cleared his throat and continued. “To my daughter, whom I love with all my heart, I leave the 1965 Mustang. It’s parked at Fred’s garage. The keys are in it.”

After the reading ended, Marcy made her way to Fred’s Garage where she and her father had spent countless hours hanging out with Fred and his classic car club buddies. She’d always felt special there, the only girl in a group of older men who doted on her freely. When she pulled up in front, Fred stepped outside and met her with a warm embrace.

“Sorry about your dad, kid.”

“Thanks, Fred. He left me the Mustang.”

“I know. It was his pride and joy, after you, of course. He asked me to give it a spin around the block occasionally, so it’s all fueled up and ready to drive if you have a mind to.”

“Maybe I will. But I’d just like to be alone with it for a while. Is that okay?”

“You know where it is.”

She turned down the alley beside the garage and walked directly to bay six. The combination lock was easy, her birthday. As she lifted the door, an envelope wedged between the wiper blade and the windshield caught her eye. The note inside held a simple message: “I Love you.” Taped to it was a key.

On a hunch, she walked to the rear of the car and used the key to open the trunk. Inside was another note that said, “Don’t tell your mother” and a suitcase full of twenty-dollar bills. ✎

Peggy Lambert lives in Daytona Beach, FL.





Fear

by Micki Morency

The olive green envelope beacons from under the wiper blade. I pulled the sheet of paper and read.

"I will kidnap your son. Prepare \$100,000 for his release. Don't involve the police."

I reached for my cell. "Harry is Evan with you?" I yelled.

"He's right here. You're okay, honey?"

"Don't let him out of your sight."

I burst through the front door. I grabbed my two-year-old son as I plopped down on the sofa. I handed the envelope to Harry.

"What ... I'm calling the police." He stood.

"No! We shouldn't ... umm ..."

When the doorbell rang, I ran to the door. I stared through the darkness for the danger that had suddenly become a new member of our family. The police officer took notes as I spoke. "Keep your son close ma'am. Don't tell anyone."

I made a copy of the note before the officer slipped everything into an evidence bag. Harry made a fire. It was a chilly November evening in Tampa. "Honey, do you think it might be from a recently released convict?" I asked Harry after the detective left.

"Well, the cop's coming to my office tomorrow." Harry enveloped me in his strong arms. I inhaled his Polo aftershave and my heart slowed down.

The next day I withdrew Evan from the daycare. I checked all the doors and windows and called my childhood friend at work.

"Annie, I can't make it in today. I have a ... bad cold." I sniffled. "Will probably be out the rest of the week."

"What? Em, you have an interview today with the president of the company."

"I know." My voice quivered from the fifth cup of coffee I'd consumed. It was only noon. I couldn't afford to sleep. Not yet.

"You work so hard for that promotion, sweetie. I'll come by later."

"No! Annie, I'll call you." I hung up and called my boss.

The following day, Harry stayed home so I could meet with Bill. "Emily, I recommended you for my position as project manager. The board's meeting in two days. They'll want an answer."

"Bill, I appreciate your confidence in me, but you need to consider someone else. I can't come to work now."

"I don't understand. Irritation tinged his words."

"I'm sorry, Bill. Thank you."

I walked into Annie's office across the hall.

"Em, what the hell's going on?"

I looked into her brown eyes and mouthed. "Not here." She blinked like a shorted bulb. "Just under the weather. I'll call you, Annie."

Annie hugged me hard and mouthed, "Call soon."

We entwined our pinkies the way we did when we were in the fifth grade twenty-five years ago. "Sisters forever," we whispered in unison.

After supper, I drove to Annie's condo five miles away in Carrollwood.

"Oh, Em, I wasn't expecting you. I..."

"Is it a bad time?"

Annie pulled me into her marble foyer. "Don't be silly. I'm glad you're here. The place's messy though. My cleaning lady didn't come today. So, what—"

I placed the note in front of her. "Wha ... what the hell?" She looked up. "Em, is it from one of Harry's clients? But why your car?"

"To take the focus off Harry. I don't know, Annie. The police have a person of interest. He was released last week." I gulped air. "At least I'm glad you'll get the promotion."

"But, Em ..."

We talked until Annie opened a second bottle of wine.

"Girl, my bladder's going to blow. Be right back." Annie ran to the nearest bathroom in the hallway.

I stood and my bladder complained. I walked down further into the master bathroom and flipped the switch. A crumpled olive green envelope peeked through the white mesh wastebasket under the sink. My heart thudded. I fished it out. A squiggly line bisected Emily on the front. Inside was an identical note that said \$50,000.

I stuffed both in my pocket and walked out. "Want more wine, Em?"

"No, Annie. I should go home."

"I'll stop tomorrow since we can't talk on the phone."

She planted a kiss on my cheek.

I ran to my car. I pulled the detective's card out of my bag. I dialed. 📞

Micki Morency lives in Hudson, FL.



PARAGRAPHS

A magazine within a magazine. A showcase for creative writing.



Firebird

by Hal Palmer

The glassine finish of the cornflower-blue, 1967 Firebird stimulated my craving to have the car as my own.

I suppose I believed it was some kind of status symbol for a young man just out of college to drive around in a new sports car. It was the first car I had ever purchased. The growl of its powerful engine when I took it for a test drive seemed to say “buy me, buy me, buy me.”

After driving it a while, I noticed a few things that irritated me though. Its rear-end had a mind of its own and would fish-tail any time I took a corner too fast or the roads were slippery. It took an Indy car driver to keep the car going straight on snow. Its trunk was big enough to hold an overnight bag, which was okay at first, but after our family started to grow the trunk became useless, and the back seat couldn't be called roomy.

I don't know why I kept the car all these years, just as I don't know why I held onto my red and green wool sweater until the elbows gave out, and moths had devoured just about all of it. I wonder where that sweater has gone to.

Recently I began to take the Firebird out for short drives in town, if the weather was dry. One day in 2007 I drove the car over to the local barbershop. I went in to get my haircut and when I returned to my beauty I noticed a crinkled rear fender. After storming around the car uttering a flurry of epithets, I saw a piece of paper under the windshield wipers. I retrieved the note. All it said was, “sorry about your car.” It was anonymous. I suspected that the culprit who hit my car was a new teen-age driver concerned about keeping his license.

It took me a week to get over my frustration. The insurance company informed me that they would pay for the repair but my rate would go up, so I decided to pay for it out of my own pocket. I had to admit that other than regular maintenance the Firebird hadn't cost me much over the years. I waxed it regularly and kept it in the garage when I wasn't driving it. Since it was just a few years from being considered an antique, I knew I would have to get it repaired. Besides, I had grown accustomed to seeing it sitting in the garage, sparkling like a blue crystal. It brought back a lot of memories also, like my first date with my wife at the local drive-in theatre.

My wife, a true Pollyanna, told me I should make lemonade out of the lemon I just received. After some thought, I took the Firebird down to the body-shop and got an estimate on the cost of repairs. Getting over the initial shock of the expense, I told the appraiser that I wanted fifty pounds of lead put on top of the wheel-wells of each rear tire. The trunk was useless anyway. The quizzical expression on his face said it all, but he agreed to do it, with additional charges, naturally.

I now have a Firebird that holds the road just fine, no more skidding around corners. I wondered if a hundred pounds of lead could fix my own stability problems. I had recently observed some imbalance on my own rear end, as I would take my daily walk around the neighborhood.

I hope the person that left me the note doesn't feel too guilty about his actions. He was courteous enough to leave the note, but why didn't he sign it? Perhaps he did me a favor. ✍️

Hal Palmer lives in Ponte Vedra, FL.

“Start writing. I don't mean to sound dismissive, but start writing. There is no such thing as ‘too late’ in the arts. Trust me. Start.”

Patton Oswalt





One More Nightmare

by Mary Kay Pyles

Shivering from the bitter cold, I picked my way slowly across the icy parking lot using the grocery cart to stabilize my steps. I put the groceries into the trunk, returned the cart to the storage area, and inched gingerly back toward my car. Just a few steps from it, I hit a patch of ice. Panicked, I grabbed the door handle and pulled the door open as my feet slipped out from under me. The door slammed me in the face as I slid under the car.

A tall, gangly teenager hovered over me. “Are you all right, Ma’am?”

“I ...I think I’ll be okay,” I stuttered.

“But Ma’am, your face is all bloody. Do you want me to call 911?”

“No, but would you help me up?”

“Sure thing,” he answered.

Gratefully, I accepted his help as he seated me in the car, grabbed a tissue, and wiped the blood from my forehead as best he could. Head wounds are nasty and it’s almost impossible to stop the bleeding, but bless his teenage heart, he tried.

Before starting the engine, I took a deep breath. This trial winter had turned into a nightmare. Normally, I’d be back in sunny San Diego this time of year, but with the death of my husband and my two best friends, I had decided to try the Minnesota winter because that’s where my children and siblings live. They wanted me to come back to my summer home. I wasn’t sure that’s where I wanted to be, but I agreed to try it for one winter.

So far, it had been a disastrous trial. When I arrived, the heater in my home was on the fritz; the pilot light on the gas fireplace didn’t work; water pipes had frozen and burst; and now this—blood seeping down my face while I tried to navigate the icy roads in the dark.

It wasn’t until I stopped at a light that I noticed a paper flapping under the windshield wiper. Just what I needed—another distraction on this treacherous drive. It was probably from some religious group inviting me to a program or telling me that Jesus saves and would help me through the darkest night. Oh well, it’s a piece of trash that I can get rid of when I get home, I thought.

Only it wasn’t. It was a note that added to my

nightmare. It said, “Hi, I’ve been asked to leave the place where I’m staying, so I guess you could call me homeless. Can I come live with you? Call me at 555-0199. Your brother, Tim.”

My brother who hadn’t spoken to me in twenty years—until he needed money.

My brother who hadn’t paid a penny’s rent to our sister with whom he’s been living for a quarter of a century.

My brother who came to see me only when he needed my help.

My brother who instead of talking to me left a note on my windshield.

How did he have the nerve, the unmitigated gall, to ask this of me?

If I say he can stay, half our siblings will be angry with me for enabling him to sponge off yet another person. If I say he can’t stay, the others will be angry with me for not helping him in his hour of need.

The dilemma is that he is my brother and I do love him—from a distance.

Sitting in my warm kitchen, with a towel pressed tightly against my head, I stared at the crumpled note on the table in front of me. I thought about the long winter ahead—shoveling snow to clear the driveway and possibly the roof; running errands in the frigid cold; and paying massive heating bills.

I dialed his number. “Tim? Three months max. And it’s going to cost you.” ❄️

Mary Kay Pyles lives in Port Orange, FL.



Get the Message?

by Don (“Doc”) Sanborn

I finished the kid’s basic karate class and crossed the carpeted floor of the dojo’s training area to the tiny office in the rear. I settled into the arm-less chair behind the desk and picked up the phone to return calls when the door banged open and in strode a tall, red-faced woman. She marched across the dojo on open-toed, spike heels—either oblivious to or in disregard of posted requests to remove shoes. Metallic pea-green nail polish with matching eye shadow clamored for attention. She towed a sullen-faced adolescent in her wake.

“Are you the chief honcho around here?” she demanded in a raspy voice.

“I’m one of the instructors,” I replied. “The school’s director will be here for the evening classes.”

“Well, I want to enroll my kid here. He needs some discipline.” She jerked her head to indicate her son, but he’d already left his designated spot and gone to the weapons rack on the wall and taken down a wooden training sword, a bokken, and was viciously slashing the air.

“Ma’am, you need to have your son put the weapon back where it belongs.”

“He’s not hurting anything,” she said in a querulous tone.

“It doesn’t belong to him. He doesn’t have permission to use it. He has no training in Kendo, and you’re right—he needs discipline.” I motioned to her son to put the bokken back. He did so with a scowl.

She stared at me for a moment, then arched an eyebrow and said, “I have another appointment to go to, so I need to leave. Normally I wouldn’t leave him, but I’ll be back in an hour. Well, he’s all yours to straighten out now.” She turned and walked out, leaving her son behind.

I looked at Chad. At thirteen, he appeared the quintessence of average—average build, mouse-brown, floppy hair, a face that blended into a crowd, and an unremarkable monotone voice. “Do you want to do this?” I asked.

Chad looked away, shrugged, and muttered, “Whatever.”

I knew she hadn’t told me the whole story because the social worker attached to the Family Court had called me yesterday, asking if our martial arts school would be willing to take him as a student. We’d had some success with two previous court referrals and the word was out—at least within

the local court system. Chad and his family were well known to the court. His latest infraction was smashing a neighbor’s car windshield with a rock following an argument. If his mother didn’t make an effort to enroll him and monitor his activities, he’d be removed from her custody.

And so it began—Chad would arrive for his class with his mother. Instead of dropping him off, as most parents did, she would stay, observe, and make comments from the side. She commented on her son’s efforts, on other students, and the instructors. Her comments were invariably negative and demeaning. After a while, we asked her to refrain from talking. She complied, but substituted facial expressions and gestures. Soon, the school posted signage declaring no visitors allowed during class hours.

Chad’s mother said she wanted us to give him private lessons. We said there was no time available. Chad wanted to learn weapons, in particular, the nunchucks, and his mother demanded we do so. We said weapons training was available to advanced students only. She said we should make an exception. We declined. She wanted different instructors for her son. We refused to alter the schedule. She wanted us to write a report to the court saying he’d made significant progress. We agreed to a letter, but pointed out he’d made little to no progress. That was a particularly rancorous confrontation, ending with her storming out of the office and slamming the door.

A couple hours later, I left the dojo, and as I approached my car I saw a fist-sized rock on the bottom of my windshield. I took a fluttering paper from under the rock. In crude, block letters, it read, “Get the message?” ❧

Don (“Doc”) Sanborn lives in Bradenton, FL.





The Note

by Ruth Senftleber

“I saw what you did & I’m gonna tell.”

I dropped the note like the handle of my cast-iron pan left on a hot burner. Looking up and down the street, I saw no one watching me. The person could be inside Halloran’s Café, looking through the plate glass window, drinking coffee and waiting for me to return to my car. Someone who knew me and saw what I did last week. They could have put the note under my windshield wiper any time during the past two hours while I was downtown. I retrieved it from the street and shoved it into my purse. What should I do?

Sliding into my car and dropping my purse onto the passenger seat, I drove to the old frame house Arnie and I were renting until we could get ahead on bills. In our bedroom I felt under my side of the mattress, drawing out a deposit envelope and laying its contents on the bed. Nine Ben Franklins stared up at me. Taking a hundred dollar bill out of my purse, I laid it beside the others. My mouth felt dry and fuzzy. The vision of that beautiful blue dress, Arnie’s favorite color, wavered. What had I almost done this morning?

Every day since I found the money outside the bank, I imagined what Arnie and I could do with extra cash. Pay off one of the credit cards. Take a vacation to Nashville. Buy new clothes for me and a new circular saw for Arnie, maybe even a better router. His carpentry business was not doing well. Our town was too small to support two cabinet makers and old Mr. Grindel was well known, though not well liked. We were struggling, even with my job at Wal-Mart. I never told Arnie about the money, knowing he would march me right to the bank. Maybe it was a gift from God, a helping hand.

Taking the note out of my purse, I smoothed it out on the bed. “I saw what you did & I’m gonna tell.” Somebody saw me pick up the envelope from the sidewalk outside the bank. A lot of people know Arnie and me; that’s the problem with little towns. I didn’t turn and go into the bank. I walked on. They assumed I kept the money and now they were prepared to tell the bank or the police or both. I would be disgraced, talked about all over town, maybe arrested. What would Pastor Wright say? The

church ladies would never understand.

Old Ben looked up accusingly, as if saying, “Honesty is the best policy.” I sighed, my dreams disintegrating. So much for finders, keepers. I would have to tell Arnie, but first I had to make this right.

Tucking the bills back into the envelope, I took it out to our car, a twelve-year-old Honda that took three tries to start. How much longer would it run? Can’t think about that. Cross that bridge when we come to it. Did Franklin write that in his almanac?

At the bank I could barely stammer out my story while pushing the envelope across the manager’s desk in the privacy of his office. Luckily, he knew me and moderated his displeasure, especially when I burst into tears. He told me the loss had been reported but would not tell me who owned the money. He stared at me for long, uncomfortable moments before assuring me that I was doing the honorable thing and that he would return the money without identifying me. I apologized many times and left, relieved, regretful, and definitely not looking forward to telling Arnie.

The mechanic looked up from the engine as his young nephew entered the garage. “Did you do what I told you?” he asked.

“Yep, put that note right under the wiper on the driver’s side. Jed can’t miss it.”

“Good. Scare him a little. Serves him right for sideswiping that old guy’s car yesterday. No trouble?”

“You said leave it on the old black Honda near the café and leave quick, so I did.”

The mechanic looked up, startled. “You blockhead! His car’s a Hyundai!”

Ruth Senftleber lives in Jacksonville, FL.

Celebrations!

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

Two-time historical fiction RPLA winner **Nancy Blanton** has won a silver medal from the Florida Authors and Publishers Association for her nonfiction book, *Brand Yourself Royally in 8 Simple Steps*. This handbook combines historical successes with modern corporate techniques to help authors, artists, and business consultants create compelling personal brands that outshine the competition. The book has become a basis for workshops and personal brand coaching. Ken Johnson, CEO of Johnson Institute, said, "Your book was a delight to read! I wish business schools would use it as a text for marketing and brand development."



Melange Books, LLC, announces the release of Book 3 in series Ladies of Mischief. Purchasing info is available at karendeanbenson.com. *Mulberry Bend, Aisling's Story*, by **Karen Dean Benson** is a stunning, vivid tale of a young woman who has dressed as a lad while living in the notorious slum, Five Points Manhattan in the mid 1800s. Her courage and determination to care for her ill máthair results in disaster. Aisling's birth aboard a "coffin ship" sailing from Co. Cork Ireland, and living in a rag-picker and hoodlum infested tenement has crippled her with fear of what the future holds.



Barbara Cairns had her first novel published in 2016. *Nettie's Dream* is set in Maine with a 60-year-old widow who buys a lobster boat and becomes a tour boat captain. Nettie names her boat Nettie's Dream but her real dream is to locate the daughter she gave up for adoption 43 years ago. Barbara has just completed her second novel. Prior to her novels, Barbara's publications included *Cracker Cow*, *A Narrative of Florida History* and four children's books. *Nettie's Dream* was published by Taylor and Seale Publishing. Barbara can be reached at wordpainter@tampabay.rr.com.



J. Jeff Cochran has published his second novel about the Blanchards trapped in the 18th century: *Catharine, Now & Then*. Catharine Blanchard is a 19-year-old who lives in the countryside near Charlottesville, Virginia. On one February afternoon, riding her horse in a nearby pine forest, they crash through a mysterious "mirror." The land features are not familiar and Catharine learns she has been thrust back in time to 1794 and is trapped in the past. An inspiring story of a young woman adjusting to post-colonial life, falling in love, and surviving against the odds in America's past.



David Harp would like to announce the release of his first novel, *Ancient Island*. The family-friendly mystery is set in central Florida. It revolves around an adopted Hopi Indian girl who is curious about her blonde hair, pale skin, and yellow eyes. When five local boys join her in a search for answers, they discover a hidden city in a jungle near the Archbold Biological Station; a man who appears forty years younger than his age; and a shadowy organization that has been manipulating mankind for ten thousand years. The e-book is available at Amazon.



Little Miss Chaos, the debut novel by Fleming Island author **Paula R. Hilton**, has been named to Kirkus Reviews' Best Books of 2016.



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Watch for the upcoming audiobook release of **Russel Lazega's** memoir *Managing Bubbie*. Lazega's braided story of his cantankerous grandmother's incredible escape from the Nazis tackles the perplexing question: How do you manage an aging, immutably stubborn Holocaust survivor who has risen above the squalor of Poland's ghettos; fled across the war-torn German wilderness; and survived the winter-ravaged Pyrenees alone on foot with three children? You probably don't. The all-star cast includes: Linda Lavin ("Alice"); Gavin McLeod ("The Love Boat"); Lainie Kazan ("My Big Fat Greek Wedding"); Renee Taylor ("The Nanny"); J.J. Crowne ("Graceland"); and Judy Tenuta (MTV host).

Award-winning author **William Speir** is pleased to announce the publication of his 12th book and first science fiction novel, *The Olympium of Bacchus 12*. His third historical novel, *Nicaea - The Rise of the Imperial Church*, will be released in January 2017. William's publisher, Progressive Rising Phoenix Press, has also announced that William Speir has accepted the position of Production Manager, starting on January 1, 2017. In his new position, William will be responsible for the production of all new titles for publication, updates and new additions for existing titles, and maintaining the publisher's catalogue of books.

Carol J. Perry has her third three-book contract from Kensington Publishing for Books #7, 8 and 9 in her Witch City Mystery series. Book #4, *Murder Go Round* will be released in February, 2017.



Correction Notice: We listed the wrong name as the winner of the Candice Coghill Award in our previous issue. We regret our error and apologize. Here is the correct information:

The Candice Coghill Award
is given to the highest-scoring youth entry
in the Royal Palm Literary Award competition.

The 2016 winner is **Sarina Patel**
for her poem "She Comes Home."

Sarina Patel wrote her first poem at the age of five and her love of writing hasn't stopped since then. When not writing, Sarina can be found buried nose-deep in a good book, curled melodramatically around a cup of coffee, or just playing the piano.

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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.





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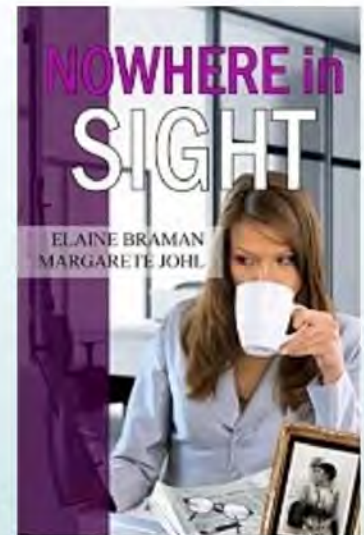
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It's the perfect collaboration!

Elaine and Margarete have a unique writing collaboration. They share the passion for writing witty mysteries and thought provoking sci-fi

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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In 2017, we make the switch from mini conferences to **FOCUS DAYS**, where there will be a full day focused on one topic. Multiple speakers...and a panel at the end!

4/29 - Focus on Character Driven Stories

Orlando/Altamonte Springs

5/20 - Focus on eBooks

Boca Raton

6/24 - Focus on Marketing

Orlando/Altamonte Springs

7/22 - Focus on Plot Driven Stories

Fort Myers

See FloridaWriters.net for more information

Your eNews will also have details as we get closer to 2017!