



Volume 1 Issue 6

Let Freedom Ring!

June 2009

If you cannot read this newsletter, please try these alternatives:

LINK TO WEB VERSION:

<http://www.libertystatesfictionwriters.com/articles-workshops/newsletters/>

(requires login to Members Only area of Liberty States Fiction Writers Website)

LINK TO PDF VERSION in Files Section:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/LSFWritersAnnouncements/files/>

(requires login to Liberty Announcements Yahoogroups)

Table of Contents:

[President's Column](#) – Gail Freeman Dishes on What's Happening

[Articles in this Issue](#)

[Next Meeting](#) – Information for the July Meeting

[Author Spotlight](#) – No Author Spotlights at the July Meeting

[Meeting Review](#) – Taking Advantage of the Short Story Market

[Member News](#)

[Upcoming Member Releases](#) – Exciting New Releases from our SPA Members

[Spotlight](#) – Meet Your Fellow LSF Writers Members

[Road Story](#) – Members Share Tales of Their Road to Publication

[Contests, Conferences and Online Courses](#)

[Contests](#)

[Conferences](#)

[Online Courses](#)

[Market News](#)

[New and Noteworthy Publishing News](#)

[Current Bestsellers](#)

President's Column:



Gail Freeman, President

Liberty States Fiction Writers has now been official for six months. Hardly seems possible, doesn't it? It was less than a year ago that the founders sat around a table and had a "what if" discussion on our dream of an ideal writing group. Oh, we had so many lofty ideas and dreams, so many things that we were going to accomplish, so much that we wanted to share with like-minded friends and associates. So much doubt that we would be able to pull it off and create our

dream. But hey, we're writers and dreaming is what we do best.

[Read more . . .](#)

Next Month's Meeting:

July Meeting: The next meeting of the Liberty States Fiction Writers is on July 11th at the Edison Public Library on Plainfield Avenue.

***The July workshop will be
Law Enforcement Basics***

by Detective Peter McMahon

In this workshop, Detective McMahon will explain basic police procedures, including how police handle crime scenes, investigate cases, interrogate witnesses, cooperate with other law enforcement agencies as well as answer any questions you may have about law enforcement operations. If we're lucky, he may also regale us about some of his more interesting cases!

About Detective McMahon: New York City Police Department Detective Peter McMahon is a 28 year veteran of the NYPD. Detective McMahon is a First Grade Detective currently assigned to the Brooklyn South Homicide Squad. He is the most senior Homicide Investigator in the department with over 20 years investigating murders in all five boroughs. Detective McMahon has participated in hundreds of investigations, including a number of high profile investigations. Detective McMahon has trained with the FBI in various advanced investigative tactics, has engaged in hundreds of investigations and conducted thousands of related interviews and interrogations. Detective McMahon has appeared on behalf of the New York City Police Department on various news shows as well as America's Most Wanted.

Roundtable Sessions

There will be no Roundtable Sessions at the July meeting as the library will be closing early due to summer hours. If you are a published author and would like to assist with the roundtable sessions in the future, please contact Lois Winston, our Program Chair.

Networking and Snacks

We will not be having Networking and Snacks due to the summer hours at the library. Networking and Snacks will return at the September meeting. Please remember the August meeting will be a Hero's Journey Movie day at Anne Walradt's home.

[Return to top of Newsletter . . .](#)

Articles in this Issue:

The Plot Thickens Part 3

By Jenna Kernan

[Read more . . .](#)

What is Plot?

By Georgia Woods

[Read more . . .](#)

Taking Hello for Granted

By Lois Winston

[Read more . . .](#)

He Said, She Said and Other Elements of Effective Dialogue, Part 2

By Caridad Pineiro

[Read more . . .](#)

Author Spotlight:

Due to the shorter summer hours at the library, we will not have any Author Spotlights at the July meeting.

[Return to top of Newsletter . . .](#)

Meeting Review:



**June's meeting featured:
Writing for the Short Story Market
by Patt Mihailoff and Jeanine McAdam**

In this workshop, Patt Mihailoff and Jeanine McAdam, both successful short story market authors, will discuss how to use the short story market to build a writing platform and earn income.

About Patt Mihailoff: Patt Mihailoff, who was recently honored as Author of the Month by RWA/NYC, was raised and educated in New York City before moving to New Jersey over 15 years ago. Her first two short stories were published in THE STAR magazine, and she has had over 100 True Confession stories published. She is the author of Three E-novels, Ring Dancer's Destiny, a medieval fantasy loosely based on Guinevere as a child; Baby Papers, a contemporary comedy; and the western romance Single Heart, Single Love. She is also featured in A Dream Deferred, A Joy Achieved, a non-fiction novella about foster care. Patt is one half of the writing duo P.K. Eden (along with Kathye Quick) authors of Firebrand, a five star Affaire de Couer Reviewer's Choice Award. She will write until her fingers fall off.

About Jeanine McAdam: Jeanine McAdam has published fifteen romantic short stories with the Dorchester Media True Confession line of magazines this past year. Her latest being, Romance in the Sky, in the May 2009 issue of True Romance. Working as a reference librarian for seven years, Jeanine always loved books. In her profession as a technology trainer she wrote instructional manuals and contributed to technology newsletters. Jeanine currently lives in Washington Heights with her husband and two children and is working on her next "confession" story.

Meeting Recap by Caridad Pineiro

It would be difficult to encompass in a short summary the wonderful tips presented by Patt and Jeanine, much less the amazing humor and life in our two presenters. But I will attempt to offer some of the points raised and would also direct you to visit the Members Only section of the website to listen to the podcast and download the handouts. The podcast and handouts will be available by July 7th.

Main Points:

1. Writing for the True market allows you to have a steady source of income.
2. The turn-around time between submission of a proposal and a response is generally reasonable.
3. The stories are short and so it is possible to write stories on a regular basis for submission.
4. Short stories are more immediate in terms of the developments of the story.
5. Even though the stories are short, you are still honing your craft by writing and interacting with editors.
6. Anyone interested in writing for the True market should join the True Writers Yahoo group at <http://groups.yahoo.com>
7. There are five True magazines:
 - a. True Romance: Stories about romance, love and relationships. Generally have rural feel and are told by a woman (usually working class).
 - b. True Experience: Stories pertaining to women's lives.
 - c. True Love: From light romances to more passionate romances or ones with a twist. A chick lit voice.

- d. True Confessions: True-to-life stories about working class women and their families.
- e. True Story: From light romances to passion to tear-jerkers and happily-ever-afters.

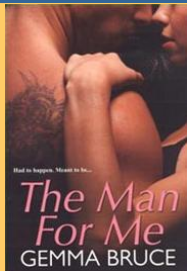
Thank you Patt and Jeanine for an amazing workshop!

If you wish to volunteer to do the Meeting Review section, please contact Anne Walradt.

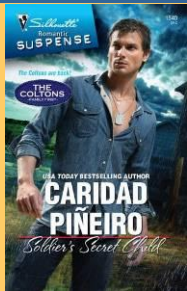
[Return to top of Newsletter. . .](#)

Member News:

LSF Writers members Kathy Kulig, Tara Nina and Cris Anson signed books at the Ellora's Cave booth at this year's BEA.



Shelley Freydon't's THE MAN FOR ME won second place in the More Than Magic contest.



Caridad Pineiro and the various authors of the Colton Continuity series from Silhouette Romantic Suspense were featured in Barbara Vey's Publishers Weekly blog. For more information, please visit <http://www.publishersweekly.com/blog/880000288/post/1570045757.html>



Kathy Kulig's article "Twittering on Twitter: Viral Marketing in Small Tweets" will appear in the August issue of RT Bookclub. Kathy will also presenting a workshop on the same topic at the 2010 RT Convention.



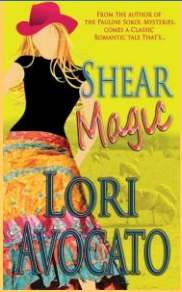
Joanna Timrum, writing as Joanna Aislinn, received word that her debut novel, NO MATTER WHY, will be released by The Wild Rose Press on January 15, 2010.



Tina Gabrielle's (aka Tina Sickler) first Regency-set historical romance, LADY OF SCANDAL, is being released on September 1, 2009 by Kensington/Zebra Books. Tina is hard at work on the second book of the series, A PERFECT SCANDAL.

[Return to top of Newsletter. . .](#)

Upcoming & Recent Member Releases:



Shear Magic by Lori Avocato

The Wild Rose Press

June 3, 2009

ISBN: 1-60154-529-0—PRINT BOOK

ISBN 13: 9781601545299— E-Book In this classic romance story, a conservative rancher and a free-spirited photographer are forced to share more than a common lake in the steamy New Mexico desert. There they must decide—are wealth and property worth more than love? Becky Chambers becomes a fish out of water when she and Slate Lawson learn they have both inherited half of the same ranch in New Mexico—now they must learn what is really important in life.



In Two Weeks by Jenni Holbrook

The Wild Rose Press

Available June 26, 2009

ISBN# 1-601154-542-8

NY State Trooper Jared Blake has exactly two weeks to find out who is stalking his neighbor. And in two weeks, he will lose his heart forever. Ryan O'Connor has everything she has ever wanted, except the right man. Jared represents everything Ryan doesn't want. He's controlling, overbearing and now he's moving. But when her life is on the line, she realizes Jared might not be perfect, but he's the perfect man for her.

To see additional upcoming Member Releases, [please click here!](#)

[Return to top of Newsletter. . .](#)

Spotlight on:



Hello! My name is Christine Clemetson and I'm finally, *finally* a published author! As I start this new leg of my writing journey, the one question I've received many times is "How did you accomplish your dream?" With each time I've been asked, I realize that my journey has been inspired and supported by so many different people—from my parents bringing me to the library as a child all the way through to the man that works at my local gas station asking me when my book is coming out (he found out I was writing a book when he'd see me jotting notes down. From then on, he's asked me every time I go in there—for the last five years—when he can see my first book).

As a child, my favorite books were the Nancy Drew series and Little House books. While spending hours reading, I think that's when my dream of writing stories started to emerge. I wanted to write the kind of story that leaves the reader not wanting to turn off the light at night. From then on, I realized I had many stories of my own to tell. And did I ever! I wrote through college, where I earned a BA in Literature/Language. I grew a career in Technical Writing so I could support myself as I kept writing.

Along the way, I realized that I had to submit my stories to get published! I had a growing family as well as a full time job, but I couldn't let my dream go. Without writing, I didn't feel whole, so I learned how to juggle putting words on the paper and putting dinner on the table—all at the same time! I started attending writing conferences, subscribed to writer's magazines, joined RWA and met my critique group. Also, when I learned about the new writing group Liberty State Fiction Writing Group, I was hooked. At my first meeting, the buzz in the meeting room was electric and I knew I found the exact spot I had been looking for. From all of these outlets, I learned how to submit and how to deal with rejection.

Finally, I got the "call" that my first book, "A Daughter's Promise", a historical romance set in the 1940's, was offered a contract from The Wild Rose Press. I ran out to my kids' bus stop with the contract flying in my hands! As I gripped that piece of paper, I felt as if I conquered the world. So many things have helped bring me to this point. All of you reading this are part of my support system. I've found that the writing world is a network of writers that help each other achieve dreams! It's that kind of interest and caring that keeps us going as writers.

Currently, I'm marketing a contemporary suspense set in the Florida Everglades, along with a contemporary romance set in New Jersey. Please visit me at www.christineclemetson.com or www.christineclemetson.blogspot.com.

[Return to top of Newsletter. . .](#)

Road Story:



, No, Not the Flea Market!
By Sam Love

Let me be candid with you: I've never been a flea market person. I'm not really into surrounding myself with stuff, but of course in this culture stuff is attracted to you like a magnet and there has to be somewhere to move it along to others.

In this Road Story I will share with you how I ended up peddling my novel, *Electric Honey*, at a flea market in New York state.

But first, let me share a little background. I'm one of those beaten down 60s idealists from the South. After college, I worked for a local paper in Mississippi, until one night I got a call from someone

who knew about my interest in environmental issues. They wanted to know if I might be interested in joining the national staff of a group in Washington organizing a series of environmental teach-ins in 1970. I jumped at the opportunity and it turned into the first big Earth Day. That led me to edit an environmental magazine and freelance non-fiction articles on energy and the environment for major magazines like *Smithsonian*.

In the 70s I had some success with major book publishers with non-fiction books on energy and environmental topics. But increasingly I believed television and video had more potential for changing the consciousness of America, so I drifted away from printed work to producing film, slide shows (damn, this really dates me), and later video. Video turned into a career that still feeds me, but I couldn't suppress my enjoyment of the cerebral explosions that happen when a nice phrase comes together. As far as I am concerned, it is one of the best legal highs in the world. So I started cultivating my love of writing fiction. I produced a number of short stories and two novels that, after numerous rejections, moved to notebooks on the bottom shelf of my bookcase.

After I took a job in New Jersey for a major building materials manufacturer about six years ago, I needed a creative break from producing industrial videos. (I know you're thinking, "But what could be more exciting than explaining the nailing pattern of a roofing shingle?") I started going to a writer's group at the local library and dusted off chapters of *Electric Honey* for work shopping. Of course, I was a little reluctant to take it in to the group because the novel was set in 1968 in Mississippi. How would they react to my story of a cultural clash between a group of student prankster activists and a conservative right wing group? Would they be embarrassed by my attempt to undermine the right wing leader by creating a problem with his "big gun." Or would they buy the premise that bees were flying through the chain link fence at the only government sponsored marijuana farm and bringing THC back to their hives to make "electric honey," a product with some rather magical properties? To my pleasant surprise, I got enough encouragement from the group to re-write the story.

Then I started reading about the new "publish on demand" technology and I realized even if the publishing industry is so concentrated now that no major publisher would go for my offbeat book, I could still get it "out there." The new POD technology, viral networking, and on-line book stores like Amazon seemed like a revolutionary new publishing model that gave me a fall back position from the psychologically crippling rejection letters.

So after a couple of rejections I signed up with BookSurge, which is owned by Amazon, and produced a book. I've always thought the cover art was critical so I reached out to an old cartoonist friend who used to draw cartoons at my environmental magazine and asked him to do a cover. It turned out Tom Chalkley had gone from drawing for underground rags to selling cartoons to the *New Yorker*. So I got a *New Yorker* cartoonist to create a beautiful cover (you can see it at www.samlove.net) featuring a right wing and left wing bee arguing with each other in a marijuana field.

Now that I had an actual book, I had to market it. I knew I had to find some Internet communities that could get excited about the subject. I had to target my marketing to someone who might want a good laugh about the cultural war that started in the 60s so I decided to frequent these newsgroups and blogs: literary reviewers, southern misfits, and 60s oriented sites. One site of old "Southern freaks" actually got excited about the book and spread the word, which led to some real orders.

Then I started looking for real communities that might like it and I thought, "Aha, Woodstock, it's like a retirement community for old hippies." After scouting it out, I found a great flea market selling everything from tie-dyed tee shirts to drums blessed by Indian spiritual healers. In one corner there was actually someone selling his self-published novel, so I decided to try it even though they required

me to get a New York State sales tax certificate.

On Saturdays when I didn't have other things to do I would get up early and drive up to Woodstock and peddle my book at the flea market. I made a large blow up of the cover to attract attention and a sign that said "Book Signing Today." I even had a T-shirt made up with the hippy bee from the cover on it. My motivation was very simple: I don't need to sell a lot of books. I really just want to get it in the hands of some people who might take it to the next level. Maybe buy the movie rights because the characters and subject are so intriguing or network it for me.

Did my flea marketing pay off? I actually sold a few books (usually, 6-10 a day plus a few T-shirts). I met some really interesting people who enjoyed the 60s so much most of them don't remember it. I got invited to do a reading at the local library where an old friend from the 1970s showed up and invited me to some amazing parties. I had my son tape the library reading and I put a clip on YouTube (the link is on www.samlove.net) and it has received over 2,000 hits and even generated a few book sales. A local musician, Tom Pacheco, wrote a song, "Big Jim's Honey," based on the story of the bees.

I also found out about the Woodstock Library Fair where I set up my table and actually had a good day selling books.

Most importantly I learned that nothing will sharpen your pitch like trying to get the public's attention in the 30 seconds they are walking by your table. "Hey kids, this is the book your parents don't want you to read."

What else have I learned from my publishing venture? It is possible to sell a novel without the marketing infrastructure of the big publishers, but it's hard work. Reviewers are hard to find and most reject POD books, so they do not review them. Many of the review copies I sent them ended up as used books on Amazon which cuts into sales. I also learned you have to try a lot of promotion options because you cannot guess who will network your book. For example, I sent a copy to a guy in Mississippi who organizes book club readings. I knew he was a published poet, but I didn't know he also wrote reviews for the largest paper in the state and he favorably reviewed my book and did an interview with me for his internet radio book show.

I also learned that one problem with *Electric Honey* is that it doesn't fit neatly into a category, which creates a problem for publishers. So now I am working on a novel that is a classic "whodunit." Maybe one day I'll visit a flea market and see copies of it on a used book table sitting next to *Electric Honey*.

[Return to top of Newsletter. . .](#)

Contests and Online Courses:

Contests:

\$30,000 FICTION PRIZE

Deadline: July 15

Bard College offers \$30,000 and a one-semester appointment as writer-in-residence to a U.S. fiction writer under the age of 40. For

more information, visit <http://www.bard.edu/bfp/>

Courtesy Latinidad®. For more information please visit <http://www.marcelalandres.com/>

NARRATIVE MAGAZINE CONTEST

Deadline: July 31

Seeking short shorts, short stories, essays, memoirs, photo essays, graphic stories, all forms of literary nonfiction, and excerpts from longer works of both fiction and nonfiction. For more information, visit

<http://narrativemagazine.com/>

Courtesy Latinidad®. For more information please visit <http://www.marcelalandres.com/>

THE 2009 DAWN THOMPSON MEMORIAL HAUNTED HEARTS CONTEST

Sponsor: RWA Gothic Romance Writers

Fee: \$15 for Goth Rom Members
\$25 for Non-Goth Rom entrants

Postmarked Deadline: August 1, 2009

E-Mail Receipt: Midnight, August 1, 2009

Paper Entries: Lise Horton, 321 Lansdowne Ave., Carle Place, NY 11514 *

E-Mail Entries: Lise Horton, LHORTON@FKKS.COM (Word or RTF format)

Enter: First Chapter (25 pages max), Synopsis (one page max);
Must include Gothic elements**

Eligibility: Not published in last 5 years by an RWA approved publisher;
Not contracted by deadline

Categories: Historical Gothic and Contemporary Gothic***

Final Judges: Historical: Chris Keeclar, Dorchester Publishing; Contemporary: To Be Announced

For more information: <http://gothrom.net/contest.html> or Lise Horton.

Top Prize: Certificate

* include SASE for return of Judge's comments

** you may enter as many submissions as you wish; each submission requires the appropriate entry fee

*** in the event insufficient entries in either category are received, the categories will be merged into a single category

WOW! Women On Writing Flash Fiction Contest

Deadline: MONTHLY

Entry Fee: \$5.00

Prize: Cash: \$200, \$150, \$100, Plus over \$2,000 in Prizes + publication + \$50 gift certificates

WOW! Women On Writing hosts a quarterly flash fiction contest open to English-speaking contestants across the globe. For more information, please visit www.wow-womenonwriting.com.

NEW! **Simon & Schuster** and **Cheerios Cereal** is sponsoring its third annual **New Author Contest** for previously unpublished authors of children's books. Entries are being accepted through **July 15, 2009** and the winner will be announced in March 2010. There is no cost to enter. The Grand Prize is \$5000, with two first prizes of \$1000 each. . Submit an original story for children ages 3-8. The contest is open to any United States resident who is age 18 or older who has never received payment for a work of fiction in any format. Find the complete rules and enter online at [_http://www.spoonfulsofstoriescontest.com_](http://www.spoonfulsofstoriescontest.com) (<http://www.spoonfulsofstoriescontest.com/>). *Courtesy Cynthia Sterling.*

Mainly Murder Press is an independent, Connecticut-based publisher whose niche is New England-based mystery novels. (Adult and juvenile mystery novels written by New England authors, even if set outside the region, will also be considered.)

Publisher Judith K. Ivie plans to publish in both trade paperback and hardcover formats, with authors retaining e-publishing rights. "We offer strong discounts and other attractive terms to retailers and libraries," Ms. Ivie writes.

"Authors will receive generous royalties -- and of course, we charge no fees of any kind to authors." Complete information and a sample contract are

available at <http://www.mainlymurderpress.com>. *Courtesy Cynthia Sterling.*

Sapphire Blue Publishing (<http://www.sapphirebluepublishing.com>) is buying a number of new authors. This e-book publisher is particularly interested in erotica or erotic romance 10,000 - 25,000 words. The books must have "an engaging story line that happens in the now." They are also interested in all sub-genres of romance, including multi-cultural stories, and all types of paranormal romance, of all lengths. The editors are also interested in young adult books, mystery and suspense, fantasy, and even non-fiction. Royalty rates begin at 45%. All submission information is available at <http://www.sapphirebluepublishing.com/info/index.php?id=5> *Courtesy Cynthia Sterling.*

Over My Dead Body (<http://www.overmydeadbody.com>) is a mystery ezine that publishes mystery short stories "from cozies to hard-boiled and everything in between." Stories should be 750-4000 words. Payment is one cent a word for first North American Serial Rights. Find their writer's guidelines at <http://www.overmydeadbody.com/wguide09.htm> . *Courtesy Cynthia Sterling.*

Please note that we do not endorse any of these contests and/or publications ask that you check the fine print regarding the contest rules, publication terms and also confirm the deadlines in question. Thank you.

[Return to top of Newsletter. . .](#)

Online Courses:

"Writing Cozy Mysteries"

With Cheryl Arguile w/a Emily Brightwell

July 13, 2009 – August 8, 2009

COST: \$20 for OCC members, \$30 for non-members

Enrollment deadline: July 12, 2009

Enrollment Information at <http://www.occrwa.org/onlineclassJul09.html>

If you have specific questions, email occrwaonlineclass@yahoo.com

ABOUT THE CLASS: In Cozy Writing 101, Emily Brightwell will share the method she uses to plot her "Inspector and Mrs. Jeffries" Victorian mystery series. In this class, Emily will cover everything from how to come up with a real killer of an idea to how to get to the solution of the crime.

Topics covered will include: coming up with your protagonist, how to find the very best suspects, the kind of setting needed for a cozy, how to plant clues and red herrings and finally, the final resolution.

This is the same great class Emily taught here in 2006!

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR: Emily Brightwell is the author of the best-selling Victorian London Murder Mysteries featuring the detective team of Mrs. Jeffries and Inspector Witherspoon. She has written twenty-five novels in this cozy mystery series and is busy working on the next.

Born in West Virginia, her family moved to Los Angeles when she was ten. After high school, she attended California State University at Fullerton and earned a Degree in American Studies.

In addition to writing the Mrs. Jeffries' series, she has also written six Young Adult novels for Berkley under her maiden name, Cheryl Lanham. Emily and her family live in Southern California.

Enrollment Information at <http://www.occrwa.org/onlineclassJul09.html>

RWA's Mystery/Suspense Chapter is pleased to announce our COFFIN College of Felony and Intrigue KILLER INSTINCT online workshop for the month of July 2009.

WORKSHOP: Writing Romantic Suspense That Works

It's twice - not half - as hard to write good romantic suspense as it is to write "just" a romance or thriller. Or maybe make that three times tougher. Your suspense plotting has to be impeccable, your romantic development an emotional grabber - and they've both got to work together on pretty much

every page. And on top of that, you're writing in a genre that's already full of bestselling authors, talented newcomers and everyone in between. So how do you not only get the basics right but find a way to stand out in a crowded marketplace? If you're looking for tips and advice, not to mention answers, this could be the course you've been waiting for.

INSTRUCTOR: Leslie Wainger leads dual but complementary careers as a freelance book doctor and editor-at-large for Harlequin Single Titles, with a hand in series romance, as well. Authors she works with include Heather Graham, Linda Howard, Maggie Shayne, Sharon Sala, Emilie Richards and many more. She's also the author of "Writing a Romance Novel for Dummies" (Wiley Publishing, Inc., 2004) and the 2005 recipient of Romance Writers of America's industry award.

KILLER INSTINCT workshops encompass writing and craft topics.

PAYMENT MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE 27TH day of the month **PRIOR** to the start of the **COFFIN** class. Cost of each Workshop is (Currently) \$15.00 US for KOD Members, \$30.00 US for non-KOD Members. (RWA membership **NOT** required to take the course).

For more information check out our website at <http://www.rwamysterysuspense.Org>

RWA's Mystery/Suspense Chapter is pleased to announce our COFFIN College of Felony and Intrigue MURDER ONE online Workshop for the month of July 2009.

WORKSHOP: Crime Scene Investigations and Fingerprints: The Two Part Class

PART ONE: Crime Scene Investigations: Okay, you got the call -- Now, what?

What to expect at a crime scene. This will be an interactive workshop giving scenarios of crimes and how you would/should/ could handle it. I plan to make this fun and answer plenty of questions along the way to help your story read like the real thing. From the cop's point of view to the writers, be sure to join in.

PART TWO: Fingerprints: Fact or Fiction.

I will explain the correct terms and preferred procedure information on fingerprint evidence from crime scene to lab. I will then guide us on how to take the facts we've been given and work them into your fictional masterpieces.

You won't want to miss this workshop!

Instructor: Phyllis Middleton. While employed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation at the tender age of nineteen, Phyllis Middleton was trained in the Science of Fingerprints. This training included the classification, comparison and search methods used by FBI and known throughout the USA.

Returning to her home in Colorado, she became a Deputy Sheriff for the Pueblo County Sheriff's Department and specialized in crime scene investigation and evidence processing. Certified in Pueblo District and County Courts, Phyllis testified in a number of cases as an expert in the field of fingerprints. While with the Sheriff's Department, she branched out in Patrol and Investigations as well as becoming a member of the Search and Rescue Squad and the State Disaster Team. She added becoming an Emergency Medical Technician and Certified Police Instructor to her service.

MURDER ONE workshops encompass the technical aspects of murder and mayhem.

PAYMENT MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE 27TH day of the month **PRIOR** to the start of the **COFFIN** class. Cost of each workshop is (Currently) \$15.00 US for KOD Members, \$30.00 US for non-KOD Members (RWA membership **NOT** required to take the course).

For more information check out our website at <http://www.rwamysterysuspense.Org>

Please note that we do not endorse any of these online courses and ask that you check the fine print regarding the online course rules and also confirm the deadlines in question. Thank you.

[Return to top of Newsletter. . .](#)

Conferences:

Thrillerfest

July 7-8 • NYC

Featured speakers include: authors Jon Land, Lisa Gardner, David Morrell, Hank Phillippi Ryan, James Scott Bell, William Bernhardt, Steve Berry, Gary Braver, Lee Child, Barry Eisler, Heather

Graham, Andrew Gross, David Hewson, Joan Johnston, Eric Van Lustbader, Dr. D.P. Lyle, Steve Martini, James Rollins, Kathleen Sharp, R.L. Stine, and Gayle Lynds; examining forensic psychiatrist Dr. Michael Welner; and agents Peter Rubie and Donald Maas
FMI: <http://www.thrillerwriters.org/thrillerfest/>

RWA Annual Conference

July 15-18 • Washington, DC

Featured speakers include: Featured speakers include authors Linda Howard, Eloisa James, Anne Stuart, Stella Cameron plus many more as well as agents, editors, and other publishing professionals.
FMI: http://www.rwanational.org/cs/conferences_and_events

Southampton Writers Conference

July 15-16 • Southampton, NY

Featuring Alan Alda, Melissa Bank, Jules Feiffer, Frank McCourt, Gary Trudeau, and many more.
FMI: <http://www.stonybrook.edu/writers/>

16th Annual Book Passage Mystery Writers Conference

7/16 - 7/19/09 • Corte Madera, CA

Featuring authors Hallie Ephron, David Hewson, and more, including publishing professionals, editors, agents and crime fighting professionals.
FMI: <http://www.bookpassage.com/content.php?id=44>

Green Mountain Writers Conference

7/28 - 8/1/09 • Tinmouth, VT

Featuring Yvonne Daley, William Powers, Philip Baruth, Jim Schley, Ursula Smith, Linda Peavy, Geof Hewitt, Verandah Porche, and Chuck Clarino. FMI: <http://www.vermontwriters.com/>

The Pacific Northwest Writers Association Conference

7/30- 8/2/09 • Seattle, WA

Keynote speaker: Terry Brooks. Featuring editors Maria Gagliano, Penguin Putnam; Katie Gilligan, Thomas Dunne Books; Celia Johnson, Grand Central Publishing; Kate Kennedy, Crown Books; Brooke Warner, Seal Press; and Rose Hilliard, St. Martin's Press. Agents: Michelle Brower, Wendy Sherman Associates; Minju Chang, BookStop Literary Agency; Ginger Clark, Curtis Brown LTD; Verna Dreisbach, Dreisbach Literary Management; Sorche Elizabeth Fairbank, Fairbank Literary Representation; Paul Fedorko, Trident Media Group; Sally Harding, The Harding Agency; Alexandra H Machinist, Linda Chester & Associates Literary Agency; and Matthew Mahoney, Ralph M. Vicinanza, Ltd.

FMI: <http://www.pnwa.org/>

The Mississippi Writers Guild

August 14-15 • Vicksburg, MS

**Riverwalk Casino Hotel and Conference Facility
Vicksburg, MS**

Join Mississippi Writers Guild for its third annual writers conference. This conference facility overlooks the Mighty Mississippi and, as its name promises, has a breathtaking art riverwalk adorned with metal sculptures. For more information please [visit http://www.mississippiwritersguild.com/](http://www.mississippiwritersguild.com/).

Killer Nashville Mystery Writers Conference

8/14 - 8/16/09 • Nashville, TN

3 days of authors, forensics, contacts, & publishing. Over 40 panels & discussions available on mysteries, thrillers, and general writing and promotion techniques applicable to any genre

FMI: <http://www.killernashville.com/>

Please note that we do not endorse any of these conferences and ask that you check the fine print regarding the conference and also confirm the deadlines in question. Thank you.

If you wish to volunteer to do the Contests, Conferences and Online Courses section, please contact Anne Walradt.

[Return to top of Newsletter. . .](#)

Market News:

Editor News:

At St. Martin's, **Hilary Rubin Teeman** has been promoted to editor. *Courtesy Publisher's Marketplace.*

At Sourcebooks, **Rebecca Frazer** has joined the company's New York office as acquisitions editor for Jabberwocky. She has acquired and edited children's books for HarperCollins, Simon & Schuster, and Random House/Golden Books. *Courtesy Publisher's Marketplace.*

Agent News:

Evan Goldfried has joined Jill Grinberg Literary Management as an agent after five years at William Morris. He is representing genre fiction and graphic novels for all ages, as well as nonfiction including food, health, humor and pop culture. *Courtesy Publisher's Marketplace.*

Publisher News:

MAGAZINE SEEKS TEEN WRITERS/ARTISTS

RIP (Revitalize, Inspire, Perform) magazine, a quarterly publication for urban youth ages 13-19, is seeking youth correspondents, artists and photographers to submit their art, poems, and pictures and articles. For more information, visit <http://www.revitalizeinspireperform.com/>

Courtesy Latinidad®. For more information please visit <http://www.marcelalandres.com/>

If you wish to volunteer to do the Market News section, please contact Anne Walradt.

[Return to top of Newsletter. . .](#)

New and Noteworthy Publishing News:

Please click on the text to access the link:

[Declining Book Sales Cast Gloom at an Expo](#)

[Erotica on Hold for Black Lace and Nexus](#)

[EU Takes Closer Look at GOOGLE Settlement](#)

[Judge Blocks Publication of Salinger Spin Off Book](#)

[Justice Department Opens Google Anti-Trust Investigation](#)

[Radical Business Plan: Free Books](#)

[Romance Still Outpace Sluggish Sales](#)

[What kind of web-presence is good for an author?](#)

[Return to top of Newsletter. . .](#)

Current Bestsellers:

Please click on the text to access the link:

[Booksense Indie Bestsellers](#)

[NY Times Bestsellers](#)

[Publishers Weekly](#)

[USA Today Bestsellers](#)

[Washington Post Bestsellers](#)

[Return to top of Newsletter. . .](#)

www.libertystateswriters.com

[Become a Friend on Facebook!](#)

www.lsfwriters.com

[Become a Fan on Facebook!](#)

President's Column

by Gail Freeman

Liberty States Fiction Writers has now been official for six months. Hardly seems possible, doesn't it? It was less than a year ago that the founders sat around a table and had a "what if" discussion on our dream of an ideal writing group. Oh, we had so many lofty ideas and dreams, so many things that we were going to accomplish, so much that we wanted to share with like-minded friends and associates. So much doubt that we would be able to pull it off and create our dream. But hey, we're writers and dreaming is what we do best.

And you know, we haven't done too badly. In fact, it is rather amazes us that we have done as well as we have. I mean, we thought that our membership would be around fifty by the end of the year and in only six months we have almost 140 (and I did win my dollar bet that we would have over 100 <G>). We created and launched a kick-ass website and I hope everyone is getting benefit from the members only page. One of our goals was to incorporate as much technology as possible and personally, I think those podcasts of the programs is top of the line. But we're not stopping there. Plans are in the works to introduce "live" interviews on the home page to promote our members.

When we started, one of our long-term goals was to do a conference. That's a huge undertaking and requires a lot of time and money to get a project like that up and running and our estimate was that it would take place in three to five years. Well, we're taking a baby step and doing a mini-con in March, just over a year after our first meeting. As I write this, the plans are being formulated to pack as much into a one day event as humanly possible. Right now it looks like we'll have a jam packed day with something for everyone including editors and agent appointments and panels and a bookfair for the attending members.

We wanted to do something to spur our members to complete a manuscript and came up with the "Mayke It Happen Challenge." Well, May is over and we had seven hardy members who completed the challenge and a number who made a darn good start on their next project. As promised, we drew three names from the list of people who finished the 60,000-page marathon and have arranged for editors and agents to critique the projects that those members completed.

But we're not done yet. We've signed up do several street fairs around the state to promote LSF Writers and our authors. In the works is a promotional mailing for our published members. We're getting the final pieces in place to do an introduction mailing to publishers and agents to let them know that we exist and have members who are ready to be published and we want them to be familiar with us so the invitation to attend the mini-con doesn't come as a big surprise.

Now, one of our biggest strengths is our members. We want to serve you and give you what you need. We want to incorporate all genres. But we can't do that if we don't know the minds and thoughts of our members so please, please, please, if you have an idea, let any Board member know. Each idea will be given serious thought. We can't promise to do everything but we sure as heck can promise to try. And we'll never just flat out say no. If project can't be undertaken, you'll be given valid reason why not and you better believe that there will be in depth discussion on each idea before a decision is made.

July 4th is Our holiday. My wish to each of you on this day is that you have the Liberty to write what is

closest to your heart and the Freedom to pursue your dreams.

Happy Fourth of July!!

Gail Freeman
President, LSF Writers

Gail Freeman, President

Gail has been writing for twelve years and is a yet to be published author. Ms. Freeman served as President of another writing organization for two years and has also served as Vice President, Treasurer, Special Events Chair, and Hospitality and Critique Chair in that organization. On a national level, Gail was one of the founding staff members of the Romance Writers of America's electronic newsletter, eNotes and served as editor of that publication for a number of years. In 2005, she was awarded the RWA's prestigious Service Award for her commitment and volunteer efforts. She also chaired the RWA's 2007 Chapter Newsletter Contest and the 2008 ad hoc committee for reform recommendations and changes to that contest. For the past eight years she has been a member of the RWA Communication Committee. After being out of high school for twenty years, Gail went back to college and obtained her associate degree in accounting. A lifelong resident of the Jersey Shore, Ms. Freeman believes in happy endings and working towards your goals, no matter how long it takes.

[Return to top of Newsletter. . .](#)

The Plot Thickens Part 3
by Jenna Kernan

Part III - Crisis, Climax, Resolution

In my last two articles, I looked at a screenwriter's perspective on story, including the setup, inciting incident in Part I and continuing with a series of escalating conflicts known to screenwriters as progressive complications in Part II. In this final article, I turn to the crisis, climax and resolution as seen in films. These terms, now common screenwriters' jargon, come from the book *STORY* written by screenwriting teacher, Robert McKee.

So, you are watching a movie that has you on the edge of your seat because the story has reached the **CRISIS**. This is also called the Big Black Moment by writers and referred to as the Major Setback by Michael Hauge. This marks the end of Act II and comes at approximately threequarters of the way through most films.

The **Crisis** is the final turning point when the hero is faced with the most difficult of situations, the most taxing of decisions or full-out failure. We are accustomed to regarding this as the very darkest of times, but this is not always the case, as we will see.

The Crisis forces the hero to again make a choice under pressure. The results are usually surprising and, just like the first turning point (Inciting Incident), the Crisis hurdles the story off in a new direction, changing the film's course.

In most instances, the Crisis is a very bad moment for the protagonist, when the worst possible thing does indeed happen. This comes in sharp contrast to the approaching Climax. The Crisis is a very bad moment and the Climax is the happy ending that is the most common final scene in movies and books. However not all endings are happy. In a tragedy, the Crisis is the upbeat moment, the glimpse of what might be—the false hope that all might be well, before the crushing defeat happens. Some endings are both good and bad. In this case, the Crisis and Climax moment can be up, down or mixed.

The **Climax** is not a turning point but the result of the action taken by the protagonist in reaction

to the Crisis. This is where the story question, posed back at the inciting incident, is finally answered in a satisfying, but unexpected way. Stories that end exactly as expected can fall flat. Audiences prefer an ending that is both satisfying and unforeseen.

The final scene in a film is the **Resolution**. Here is where we see the protagonist has restored the balance in her life. Some stories come full circle, others end in a new place, but all express the controlling idea discussed in the second article. In the resolution, screenwriters include *how* the story ends and *why* it ended the way it did. For instance, HARRY POTTER AND THE SOCERERS STONE ends by coming full circle. The story begins with Harry leaving Privet Drive for Hogwards. In the Resolution portion of the movie, Harry recovers in the hospital surrounded by his friends and overseen by the headmaster. The scene is kept short. Then another short scene shows the school celebrating/acknowledging the victory of Harry and his friends. Their success wins Gryffindor the house cup. And the final scene shows Harry coming full circle, as he returns to Privet Drive, but instead of being miserable, as he was in the beginning, he is now happy because he knows he is a wizard, who has wonderful loyal friends and that, though he is not allowed to do magic outside of school, the Dursleys do not know this, swinging the balance of power to him for the first time in his life.

The resolution scenes in film are the payoff for the audience who have seen the protagonist change under pressure because of what they have learned from their journey and now watches the protagonist reap their just rewards. In the case of tragedies, the protagonist, who failed to grow and change, is punished. The third possibility is for a movie to have a mixed ending, neither happy, nor sad, but a mixture of both. The resolution also expresses the controlling idea.

Once this is done, the screenwriter does not linger but rolls the credits. This final portion of film generally occupies about ten percent of the total time and is a transition, easing the audience away from the protagonist by showing that all is well or at least resolved to a satisfying conclusion, allowing the audience to leave the theater with a sense of contentment over the film's ending.

The screenwriters do not overstay their welcome. The resolution is kept as short as possible to achieve its purpose.

Let's take some examples of the Crisis, Climax and Resolutions in some films.

EXAMPLES OF MOVIES WITH HAPPY ENDINGS

MY COUSIN VINNY

Crisis: The prosecution introduces a surprise witness who clinches the case and all seems lost for Vinny and the two defendants. Vinny gains a short recess where he scrambles for something he has missed that might save the boys' lives' and in the process insults and alienates his girlfriend, Lisa. It now looks like he will lose the case, lose his love and the defendants will lose their lives. Black enough for you? And this is a comedy.

Climax: Vinny figures out that the photo that girlfriend, Lisa, took of the crime scene actually makes their case, but he needs Lisa help and the sheriff's help to prove he is right.

Resolution: Vinny wins the case because he was willing to ask for needed help. The boys are released. A friend in NY verifies Vinny's identity, getting the judge off his back. Lisa and Vinny drive off in triumph arguing about wedding plans. This resolution event is on the long side because of all the subplots that need to be tied up. The controlling idea is expressed by Lisa who reacts to Vinny's disappointment over not winning the case by himself, because he needed to ask for help. She points out to him that he will be a success because of his willingness to ask for help.

THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA

Crisis: Fashion assistant, Andrea Sachs, discovers she will be going to Paris for fashion week. This news comes while she is with her parents, who are visiting from out of town forcing her to leave them at the restaurant to jump to her boss's call. This trip causes her to hurt her coworker badly as she takes her place, anger her old friends and also precipitates the breakup with her boyfriend as she chooses her career over them.

Climax: Andrea goes to Paris with her employer and discovers her dragon-lady boss crying as her latest marriage breaks up. This catalyst convinces Andrea that she does not want this job/life and she abandons her responsibilities and her boss to run home.

Resolution: Her boyfriend takes her back because she has made a choice about her priorities, putting their love first. Once Andrea makes her decision, the story moves quickly in the credits.

JAWS

Crisis: Hooper appears to be eaten by the shark. Brody sees Quinn eaten by the shark and, oh, yes, the boat is sinking and Brody can't swim. Yikes!

Climax: The shark chomps on a scuba tank that Brody throws into its mouth. On the next pass, Brody gets a shot at the tank with his high powered rifle turning Jaws into sushi.

Resolution: Hooper emerges from the deep where he has been hiding, providing an unexpected ending. The next shot shows the friends kicking toward shore on a makeshift raft. Spielberg does not overstay his welcome.

EXAMPLES OF A MOVIE WITH SAD ENDING

FINAL CUT

Crisis: Protagonist, Alan Hackman, learns that he has a chip in his brain that has recorded his entire life including the terrible death of a childhood acquaintance, an event that shaped his life. As a 'Cutter', he is not permitted to have such a chip because it would record all the footage of the lives he views and edits for clients' memorial services and so jeopardize their privacy. This discovery harkens the end of a career that he is very good at. It also provides him an opportunity to watch the horrible childhood memory as it actually happened.

Climax: The protagonist watches in agony as the recording of his darkest memory rolls. We see that the blood that covered the floor was actually paint and that his comrade did fall, but not to his death. Alan has a moment of joy and relief and seems willing to give up his career in exchange for this new peace of mind. He leaves the viewing happy for the first time in the film.

Resolution: His respite is brief, as the revelation that all his memories are recorded on the disk makes him a target for an extremist group desperate to find damaging material on his last client, whose memory chip Alan intentionally destroyed, and unintentionally recorded on his own chip. The very thing that brought him peace has also signaled his death.

EXAMPLES OF MOVIES WITH MIXED ENDINGS

THE NOTEBOOK

Crisis: This movie has a mixed climax to match its mixed ending. Noah has spent the entire film reading from a notebook, the story of his love affair with his wife, Allie, in an effort to make her recall, even for a few moments, their love. His efforts are rewarded and his wife, suffering from Alzheimer's disease, recalls everything. This is a joyful moment that is all too brief as her confusion returns and she ends up screaming for help to escape the stranger who is 'attacking' her. His efforts have caused his wife to be badly frightened and this triggers a heart attack in Noah.

Climax: Noah leaves his hospital bed to seek his wife and finds her lucid. They share a tender moment and then she asks if he thinks the strength of their love could deliver something more precious than temporary clarity. She wants them to leave this world together. He agrees that it

might be possible.

Resolution: The couple lies together in the narrow hospital bed, clasp hands and dies quietly, side by side. The final scene shows a kindly nurse discovering them together and rushing away for help. The audience has their satisfying ending. True they long for the unattainable, that his wife's memory would return permanently and that his heart condition would disappear. But this is not possible, so instead the writers reunite the separated lovers in death.

TITANIC

Crisis: I guess that would be the ship sinking and Rose's lover, Jack, dying in the freezing water of the North Atlantic Sea in order to save her.

Climax: Rose risks everything by leaving the temporary safety of her raft and is rescued. On the *Carpathia*, she discovers her fiancé's blue diamond, 'The Heart of the Ocean' secreted in the pocket of the overcoat he draped about her shoulders on *Titanic*. Her overbearing fiancé soon appears, searching the ship for Rose and possibly the stone. Rose intentionally eludes her fiancé, escaping the prison of her old life by having the courage to go on alone.

Resolution: The final scenes show old Rose, at the end of her life, on the research vessel over the sight of the wreck of the *Titanic*. She drops the stone in the ocean, showing the audience that she made her own way in life and that her heart is still with Jack. The final sequence is Rose falling to sleep (her death) as the camera pans past all the photos of Rose living life to the fullest. As she drifts off, she is again on the *Titanic* meeting Jack beside the clock.

SUMMARY

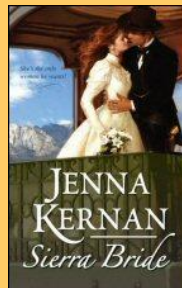
Screenwriter's have an interesting perspective on story and much can be learned about pacing and plotting from studying this art form.

Try plotting some of your favorite movies, breaking them into their distinct elements: Inciting Incident, Progressive Complications, Crisis, Climax and Resolution. Pay attention to how far into the picture turning points occur and count the number of complications included in the second act. Note how the complications escalate and how, in movies written in classic form, they occur in sequence and not presented as a series random events. Notice that these elements occur in a pattern regardless of the movie genre and that the timing is consistent in most.

This exercise will be a very thought-provoking and a great excuse to enjoy a large tub of popcorn and a carbonated beverage.

Don't worry—its research!

About the Author: Jenna Kernan writes fast-paced romantic adventures that will capture your heart. Romantic Times BookClub said her stories made, "Tip-top reading." Her next release, *SIERRA BRIDE*, arrives in August 2009 and involves the young widow, of a notorious man, who is determined to keep her freedom and a railroad baron set on making her his mistress. When she is implicated in a plot to destroy him, he must decide if he should listen to reason or follow his heart. Jenna keeps her website current with excerpts, articles and monthly contests. Please visit her anytime at www.jennakernan.com.



What Is Plot?

By Georgia Woods

As a senior editor for an e-publisher, I see a lot of manuscripts. Some of them I start reading and I'm caught up from the first few lines. Others I am unable to stay interested enough to finish the first chapter. And sometimes both authors started out with equally great ideas, good characters, interesting situations. What makes the difference?

What do you think plot is? The standard definition is that it's whatever happens in a story...but does that mean every scene is part of the plot?

Plot is the significant events that build a given story. Notice I said "significant" events... For example, if your character is washing her kitchen windows, that can be a scene, but it's not part of the plot necessarily. But if your character's house is about to be burglarized and the fingerprints which catch the suspect are left on those clean kitchen windows, then washing them could be part of the plot.

In the best books, every single scene moves the plot forward. If you have scenes that don't move the plot, it slows down the momentum. For example, our window washing scene from the prior paragraph would, if not making an important point, possibly end up fodder for the editor's knife. Some people will argue and say well, in print or longer single title works, you can have scenes that are descriptive, part of setting the scene or character or world building. But if you think about it, those things are part of the plot - you can't have a story without a world and characters, so they have a significant place in the plot. However, it is my belief that no matter what type of work it is, every scene should be of concern to you as a writer, and you should make sure each and every scene keeps the reader's attention while it gives information. If you bore the reader with too much information, even information you feel important, they might lose interest and even quit reading.

Think of it this way...when you go to a party and become involved in the conversations and happenings there, if something occurs in front of you, say a fight or a romance or any significant event, do you, as an observer, need to know what shaving lotion the man is wearing? Do you need to know his parents' names? Do you need to know she bought three dresses before she could decide which one to wear? When we meet people in real life, we take them at face value, and we can come to care about them without knowing everything about them. You should give just enough to build a character sketch, but not their life's history, enough to hook the reader into caring about them or what happens to them, but you want to keep the action moving and the reader interested.

Action will keep the reader engaged more effectively than anything else. And action can be a dinner out, a fight scene, whatever, but things have to be happening, and the reader should be learning what's going on from those things that are happening, not things they are being told by narrative. And be careful—new writers sometimes use the dinner scene to have a dinner conversation and introduce information they want the reader to have which isn't necessary. The reader isn't interested in learning why a character acts the way they do by hearing them tell their life's story over dinner. They are interested in learning what makes a character tick by how they react when things happen to them. Action, action, action.

Also try to keep the idea in the back of your mind that a reader is always looking for a good place to stop, where they can be satisfied to go to bed or go make dinner or go do laundry or whatever, and you don't want to give them one. You want them to be so embroiled in the action of your story, so hooked into what is happening to your characters, that they don't dare stop.

Now, you can use the dinner table to impart important information. In a book I just finished editing,

there's a scene over a dinner table at Denny's, well actually over coffee...and it's terrific. But it's terrific because of the information imparted, not because of the setting. On one side of the table, you have two vampires, male and female lovers, and on the other side of the table are two vampire slayers, male and female. The vampires are trying to convince the vampire slayers to help them rescue someone instead of completing their slayer duties. The conversation, the way the two males glower at each other while the women try to keep the peace, meanwhile a truce is being set up and they almost come to blows several times as the conversation goes back and forth. It's a great scene for both illustrating out the characters are working out the power hierarchy and showing character traits, so it can be done.

It is my opinion and preference as a reader that every scene teach me something about where the story is going and how it's going to get there, and if it doesn't do that, I skim and keep moving until the next scene where I start reading again. I know as authors you find yourselves skimming on occasion, and it's frustrating. Scenes shouldn't be random, they should all have reasons, something to show the reader that is important to the story, either to the internal conflict, or the external one, or to the story arc, the character arc, a logical reason for being in that place at that time. Don't add scenes that encourage your reader to skim.

So, what makes a scene or story worth caring about to your reader? For the reader to care, there has to be something at stake, something of value to be gained or lost. And there should actually be at least two things at stake, an external one, like a bad guy to be defeated, and an internal one, like too much pride to be overcome. And the biggest attribute, I believe, you can use to make your story more interesting is to make sure the matter at stake is extremely important, and the battle to win it isn't fair. If you think about it, when you get something without having to fight for it, you don't value it as much.

Think back over the lessons you've learned in life and when you've learned the most important lessons. When you do everything right, you don't learn a lot. We learn the most by fighting against very high odds and making lots of mistakes. That's what makes life and a good story interesting. When you make mistakes, you are putting yourself out there knowing you don't know it all and willing to take the chance because something you want is more important and you are willing to go after it even knowing you might fail. That is what makes a story.

Do you ever plot, then have your story take off in another direction? What do you do? Redirect or go with the flow? I think learning to be flexible when you are writing is part of having "living" characters—they learn something that changes their choices, or changes their minds, and you have to allow for that, I think, for the story and character to stay true to life. You can plot all day long, but when you sit down and write the story, something can happen that makes your plot not work, you may find a flaw in the logic, or something the character does that doesn't seem "human," and you have to allow for that. I think if the plot/story is forced into its twists and turns, it feels forced. Things happen and if you try to remain too rigid, you lose the spontaneous emotion and reaction that elicits amazing, and true, things to the writing.

For plotting, I'm a mix of pantster and plotter. I make what I call my outline, but it's basically a list of scenes I've planned to get my characters from here to there, but how the scenes hook together is up in the air and allowed to just happen. I do number them, and I'll do "a. b. c." under them if I have specific points I want to make sure the scene includes. But I allow for my characters to be human, to make mistakes and have to go back and fix them, to inject their personalities and take the story in a bit of a different direction than I'd planned.

So plot your story, then feel free to allow your characters to grow, to learn, to be real, and let them drive the story, not the story drive them. In this way, your story will be real, will read as if it is true and

real, and your characters and scenes will come to life in the minds of your readers..

About the Author: Georgia Woods is a senior editor and Editor for Author Development at Loose Id. She will be happy to answer questions—GeorgiaWoods@loose-id.com

[Return to top of Newsletter. . .](#)

Taking Hello for Granted by Lois Winston

On a recent Saturday morning, I found myself at the Edison Museum in Menlo Park, NJ. When you're married to a man who holds degrees in both architecture and engineering, you often wind up at such places on those Saturdays when you can't escape to an RWA chapter meeting. Unfortunately, we arrived at the extremely small, extremely cramped building at exactly the same time as a group of hyperactive cub scouts. (Note to all scout leaders reading this: When DO NOT TOUCH fails, handcuffs are a viable solution.) Fortunately, the cubs soon departed, leaving both the museum and the curator shaken but still standing.

You may be wondering what this has to do with writing. Several years ago I read a mainstream quasi-romance with a subplot concerning Nikola Tesla. I have always been fascinated by books that incorporate historical figures and events into fiction. Sometimes the author takes tremendous liberties; other times he or she has unearthed little-known facts and woven an intriguing plot around them. Knowing that Tesla and Edison shared a history, I asked the curator to corroborate some of the information in the book.

Curators love to share their knowledge, and after twenty excruciating minutes with the cub scouts from hell, this curator was ready for some intellectual discourse. One thing led to another until at one point he asked, "Did you know that Thomas Edison invented the word "hello"?"

Say what?

Around 1877, Edison was working with Alexander Graham Bell to perfect the telephone. When the phone rang, Bell would answer by saying, "Hoi, hoi!" For some reason this bugged the heck out of Thomas Alva, who had the reputation of being a foul-mouthed prankster. So Edison began answering the phone with hell-o, a made-up word that he knew would shock Victorian sensibilities. Amazingly, the word caught on even though some dictionaries during the early years of its use defined it as a vulgar greeting.

I was so fascinated by this story, that I did a bit of research when I returned home. Shakespeare used aloo in King Lear and hollo in Titus Andronicus. Halloo, dating back to about 1700, was a cry used to urge on hunting dogs and is likely the basis of hallo, a cry of surprise dating to 1840. However the first recorded use of hello was in 1883. Since Edison takes credit for much he didn't actually invent (he merely perfected the light bulb and bought motion picture technology), it's not surprising, given his personality, that he would take something Old World, "Edisonfy" it, and have himself a good laugh over its acceptance by the general populace.

So keep this little piece of trivia in mind the next time you're tempted to have your 17th century hero greet his true love's father with a handshake and a hearty, "Hello, sir."



About the Author: Award-winning author and literary agent Lois Winston has published humorous, cross-genre, contemporary novels, romantic suspense and non-fiction essays. She also writes mysteries, women's fiction, and middle grade books, often drawing upon her extensive experience as an artist and crafts designer for her source material. When not writing or designing, she can be found

trudging through stacks of manuscripts as she hunts for diamonds in the slush piles for the Ashley Grayson Literary Agency. Visit Lois at www.loiswinston.com.

[Return to top of Newsletter. . .](#)

He Said, She Said and Other Effective Elements of Dialogue Part 2 by Caridad Pineiro

Dialogue Should Fit the Characters:

Consider what your character is like and have what they say be in synch with their nature. You wouldn't expect a rough and tumble, hard drinkin' detective to say, "Pardon me, Miss" if he accidentally bumped a young woman in a bar. He probably would just eyeball her and say nothing, which speaks volumes about his character without a word being spoken.

More importantly, men and women just do not communicate in the same way. What one says and the other hears is sometimes totally at odds with the actual language spoken.

Why is that? Deborah Tannen analyzes various reasons for this in her book, *You Just Don't Understand*. I highly recommend that you read that book so that you will be able to create realistic dialogue for your characters.

"What we have here is a failure to communicate."
A memorable quote from the film Cool Hand Luke

What is being said and by whom? What Happens next? The Miscommunication and the Why?
Here are some examples of Male/Female Miscommunication:

She said: Would you like to take a break?

He says: No, I'm fine. Let's finish this.

Whether by nature or nurture, the fact is that men tend to work alone while women work in teams. A woman wants "the team" to agree on taking a course of action. By asking if he wants to take a break, she is saying "I'm tired. I'd like to take a break and I want you to agree with me." He is thinking that she is wondering whether he is tired and since he is not, he sees no problem with his response.

He says: "But I am listening."

She sees that he is not facing her directly. She knows that the next thing he says will be about something totally different than what they are currently discussing.

Bonds between men are based less on talking and more on doing ("Boys night"). Because of this men don't know the kind of talk women want. Men with other men fight to avoid being at the "bottom" of the group. Being a listener makes some men feel like they are being talked down to. Men also jump around to lots of different topics during a conversation whereas women have a tendency to be more focused.

She says: "I'm having this problem at work. I don't know what to do. My boss screamed at me like a lunatic."

Another woman says: "Hmm. That happened to me. I felt bad."

He says: "Well, tell him not to do that. Or quit if it's that bad."

Men do and take action. They worry about being the top dog. They are problem solvers and when asked what to do, understand that a solution is needed for a problem.

Women are team players. They listen. They commiserate. If they sense that the other woman truly does want a solution, they will provide instruction by example because this maintains the dynamic of equality between all the team players.

When writing the dialogue between male and female characters, keep the above forms of miscommunication in mind. They will serve you well in not only crafting believable dialogue, but in learning how to create dialogue that enhances the conflicts between the characters due to this male/female miscommunication.



Caridad Piñero, Secretary

Caridad is a *NY Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of over 20 novels. When not writing, Caridad is a wife, mom and partner in a Manhattan law firm. For more info on Caridad, please visit www.caridad.com or www.thecallingvampirenovels.com.

FURY CALLS, Available March 2009

Silhouette Nocturne

Praise for THE CALLING Vampire Novels:

Top Fantasy 2005 and 2006, Catalina Magazine

Best Nocturne 2006, Cataromance

SINS OF THE FLESH November 2009 Grand Central Publishing

[Return to top of Newsletter. . .](#)

www.libertystateswriters.com

www.lsfwriters.com

[Become a Friend on Facebook!](#)

[Become a Fan on Facebook!](#)