

Liberty States Fiction Writers

New York - New Jersey - Pennsylvania



July 4, 2010

Volume 2, Number 6

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175

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President's Column



I think I've mentioned that I retired this year. Now, in my delusional mind, I thought that time would slow down to a crawl and that I would have time to do all the things that I had put off for years. Humph! Someone should re-write that brochure. I cannot believe that the Fourth of July is here. Really, six months of the year is gone. The Edison Library has switched to its summer hours. That means that we have to be out of the library by 1:00 pm for the July meeting. There is no official meeting in August but member Anne Walradt will be opening her house once again for us to do our second annual "Movie Day." This year we will be analyzing a video to see how they incorporated back story. It should be interesting.

[Read More . . .](#)

Author Spotlight

As the library closes early on the July 10th meeting day, there will be no Author Spotlight in July.

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President's Column

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Road Story

On the Road Again...and Again...and Again by Andrea S. Mansue

It just never occurred to me to write down the stories in my head. They had been there all my life; sometimes thrashing around, other times just softly flowing through the unused spaces in my mind. I embraced them. I loved them. But the idea of sharing them would have left me a quivering mass huddled in the corner. I was no writer. I was just a daydreamer. I'm sure my mother could dig up some old letters from teachers attesting to that fact. I never kept a journal or a diary for fear that someone might actually read something I thought.

I was, however, an avid reader. My parents loved books and they had always been a part of our home. A good romance or science fiction novel could get me through life's toughest moments, and the best stories of all could always be found in history books. From western civilization to Ancient Greece, they were all nourishment for an overflowing imagination.

One day on a break at work I was reading a science fiction novel where the plot was thin and the dialogue mushy, and I thought, "I can do better than this."

That one thought changed everything. I started jotting down dreams and short stories. Even though I was writing, I wasn't letting anyone read anything.

As a teenager I had worked weekends and summers on a horse farm in Somerset, NJ. That experience and a great deal of poetic license became the backdrop for my first full-length novel, *Distant Thunder*, a very sweet story about love and trust. Three hundred pages later, to my amazement, I loved the process of writing. The research and plotting brought an excitement even better than reading a great book. I would drive to work and carry on dialogues with my characters and then quickly jot them down during lunch.

When I completed it, I showed it to my Great Aunt Ruthie, who worked for Random House before her retirement. Ruthie was no pushover, and she knew good writing. She thought I showed promise, but she also said that my book needed a lot of polishing. Her encouragement was enough of an affirmation to push me to do better. I edited and reworked poor *Distant Thunder* until I had to let someone else read it because I couldn't stand to look at it anymore. By the time I was ready to move ahead with what I thought was a publishable manuscript, my aunt had passed on.

So, what to do? How does one get a book published?

I did what I knew. I read. I bought book after book on writing and publishing:

Christopher Vogler's *The Writer's Journey*, Browne and King's *Self-Editing for Fiction Writers*, Jeff Herman's *Publishers, Editors, and Literary Agents*, and more. I ordered *Writer's Digest* and *Publisher's Weekly*. A friend suggested that there may be organizations that could help. I found Romance Writers of America and joined immediately.

I took the advice of all of these sources and started writing letters and, of course, I started getting rejections. Eventually I gave up on poor, sweet *Distant Thunder*. Next I embarked on a new journey and wrote a fantasy romance that I still believe is a really good story. More letters, more rejections, followed by writing a very complicated story about soulmates who come together in several lifetimes.

I joined the local chapter of RWA and met a group of extraordinary people who amazingly were willing to share knowledge and information. It was astounding the amount of camaraderie that I found among published and pre-published writers—men and women who genuinely wanted me to succeed and were not worried that my success might harm their careers. Having worked in several other industries, I can assure you this is unique.

In December of 2002, Jimmy, my husband of sixteen years, passed away suddenly derailing my journey. Writing about love, or anything else, felt pointless. I had not had a decent night's sleep for nearly a year before I made the decision that I could not handle it on my own. The stories that had been my constant companions all my life became silent, leaving behind a pretty bleak future.

I won't lie to you, this was a terrible process, but after a year of therapy my train was back on track. I met Dave, a wonderful man, whom I eventually married in February 2008. The stories returned. It may have been my despair that had chased them away or my new found love that carried them back. I don't know but miraculously they had returned, and I delighted in seeing my old friends again.

For some reason the manuscripts on my shelf had to remain there. They were from another lifetime, and I needed to move ahead. I wrote a steamy erotica, which came very close to getting picked up by an e-publishing house. The editor I was working with was very enthusiastic about the story but suddenly the lines of communication went dead. I wrote him an email and received a message informing me that my editor no longer worked there. The new editor apologized for the delay in getting back to me, and extended her regrets that she could not promote a work that didn't excite her. <Sigh>

Disheartened, I talked to other writers and found out that my situation was not unique. Many of the published authors that I knew shared stories that are much worse, and they all encouraged me to continue. Each time one of my friends gets "the call," it fills me with hope that I might be next.

Last year, I was riding the train to work in New York one morning after my near miss with the erotica. Do I write another erotica? Should I try another

fantasy? What do I do now?

I looked down at the historical romance in my hand and sighed over how good these books always made me feel. And just like that, a story popped into my head. Not just one story, but three. The first is completed and the second is close. Once again letters are being composed, pitches being made, and hope springs eternal.

The road to publication is not an easy one. In fact it's hard as hell, but writing is essential. It is like sleep; a delightful necessity of life. And I am happily back on the road again.

About the Author and Her Work in Progress: *Andrea Mansue is a member of Liberty State Fiction Writers, Romance Writers of America, New Jersey Romance Writers, and East Texas Romance Writers. Born in New York, she lived in New Jersey until recently when she moved to East Texas to write full time.*

She is currently working on Sophia and Daniel, a historical romance set in the Regency period. In 1801 Sophia Brighton flees her Philadelphia home to escape certain ruin. Daniel Fallon, Earl of Marlton, finds the beautiful and mysterious American captivating and soon falls in love. Alistair Pundington, the man who stole her innocence, still intends to have her for his own or make certain no one else does. When Daniel disappears, Sophia must use all of her wits to trick his captor into revealing his prison. One man offers his life to protect her; the other will stop at nothing to destroy her. Sophia must confront her deepest fears to rescue the man she loves and find happiness.



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★[This Month's Articles](#)★

President's Column Gail Freeman



Gail has been writing for twelve years and is a yet to be a 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.

I think I've mentioned that I retired this year. Now, in my delusional mind, I thought that time would slow down to a crawl and that I would have time to do all the things that I had put off for years. Humph! Someone should re-write that brochure. I cannot believe that the Fourth of July is here. Really, six months of the year is gone. The Edison Library has switched to its summer hours. That means that we have to be out of the library by 1:00 pm for the July meeting. There is no official meeting in August but member Anne Walradt will be opening her house once again for us to do our second annual "Movie Day." This year we will be analyzing a video to see how they incorporated back story. It should be interesting.

As a group, we've made a lot of progress. I hope everyone is enjoying the weekly bulletins. Please drop us a note at contacts@lsfwriters.com and let us know what you think. I would like to thank Eileen Foley for her work on gathering articles for the newsletter/bulletin. Eileen has moved to a different job and has stepped down from her newsletter position. We are looking for someone to take her place on the newsletter staff. If you are interested or would like more information, drop a line to newsletter@lsfwriters.com. As a matter of fact, this email address is good for any information you want to send to the newsletter such as good news, events, promotional information, or articles. We set it up to make things easier for you, the members.

Last year the group did a promotional mailing of our author's releases. We have contacted the publicity company that handled the mailing for us last year, and it will be doing a second one for us in August. This mailing, which will go to 500 booksellers, will be funded in part by Liberty States Fiction Writers. The author cost will be \$15.00 and will feature up to 20 authors. If interested, please contact Charity Scordato at contacts@lsfwriters.com.

I know that I've mentioned that we would be having an election for six Board positions at the end of this year. The current Board has approved electronic voting. One of the "survey" companies that's on line is Zoomerang. We've set up an account with them and will be sending out an opinion survey in the near future to see how it works. If it performs as advertised, we will use them for our election. While we are still working on the details, the tentative election schedule is to accept nominations in September, send ballots in October, and announce winners in November. December will be the transfer month with the new Board taking over in January 2011.

Have a wonderful summer.

Gail

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Editor Panel Recap



Award-winning short story author Nancy Quatrano (www.NLQuatrano.com) has just submitted her first completed mystery, *MURDER IN BLACK AND WHITE* to *Deadly Ink Press*, at their request. *BLACK AND WHITE* is the first of her *Point and Shoot Mystery* series

A crowded dais indeed, with nine editors elbow to elbow and smiling at the standing-room-only crowd who attended the session. From traditional print publishers to the hottest in electronic publications, the venues were well represented by companies such as Dutton, Penguin, RavenousRomance.Com, Harlequin, Crescent Moon, Lyrical Press, and LooseID.

Writers asked the panel if they knew what the next trend was going to be. Although each panelist had input, everyone agreed that writers can't write to trends for the most part. Even though electronic publishing can get a writer published faster than traditional print venues, writing for trends is always a risky business. Better to write something you love to write and write it well, than try to hitch yourself to a trend. Be a trend maker instead of a trend follower.

That being said, some publishers were looking for vampires, others were not. Some said angels and demons were still strong; others felt this sub-genre has fallen off. All agreed that paranormals were still doing very well at their houses. Gay and lesbian romance and erotica are strong with Ravenousromance.com and Lyrical Press, while Harlequin is not interested in angels or vampires right now. Historicals are still steady, and more time periods are opening all the time. According to Angela James of Harlequin E-pub division, people are requesting good fantasy romance novels and things like Regencies set in Austria, or WWII romances, both of which were once taboo.

Heather Alexander of Penguin said she's seen increased sales in urban fantasy, alternate reality, and more archers, spurred by the Harry Potter revolution. Slipstream is a newly emerging genre, which is where the protagonists and antagonists slip in and out of our contemporary world.

Electronic publishing questions were prevalent and, again, the panel was unanimous in their answer: It is here to stay. As reading units come down in price, even children's purchases will increase. YA is experiencing solid sales via electronic means according to both Dutton and Penguin representatives.

Though no one had any hard numbers regarding electronic book sales, most of the e-publishers on the panel felt this was due to the varying formats available, which are not yet uniform. However, Crescent Moon, a publisher of both E and POD books, said their electronic sales increased by 100% after the Kindle (by Amazon) advertisements hit national television.

Another aspect of electronic books is something called Interactive Fiction, according to Angela James of the Harlequin e-pub division. It is currently being written, but the publishers require technical expertise that most don't have. Again, formatting is a big issue as it is not uniform. One editor said her child took an e-reader to school for show and tell and 85% of the kindergarten children knew exactly what it was, so don't be surprised to find entire generations in the future who don't know much about libraries and shelves full

of bound books. Also, no one knows the impact of the iPad right now, and that's the case with each new technology.

When writers asked how e-book shelf-life is changing and how marketing for all books is evolving, all the editors felt that a strong ability to do on-line marketing is important for authors as well as publishers, and not just for electronic books. Paranormal mythology, according to Lori Perkins, is timeless because it is a mythos that is flexible, applies to us as humans/mortals. The good thing about e-publishing is that the publisher can react very quickly to what readers are reading and, therefore, can sell more of a genre in a shorter time. And the books can be kept alive in "mid-list" because e-books don't need to be stored in a physical sense.

Also, Lori pointed out, e-books have to be marketed to people who read on-line. Print readers don't buy e-books as a rule and, therefore, e-publishers don't buy print ads to sell their books. Their customer is almost solely on-line.

Writers wanted to know how YA (Young Adult) is selling and if there is an adult crossover for this genre. Heather Alexander of Penguin told the group that they market their books that way. But since age is not a question asked of consumers when they buy a book, she says it is difficult to capture how many. If writers think of the Twilight and Potter series, this enchantment is clearly demonstrated. Both adults and the 14+ readers are buying and reading these series.

All publishers represented on the panel indicated that their submission guidelines are available at their websites. All representatives expressed that they want great writing, and they want to work with professionals—professionals will follow the guidelines, will submit professionally formatted manuscripts, and will be respectful of the editors and publishers they work with. Although response times will vary, it is acceptable to follow up on a query if no response has been received after three months. If you submit simultaneously to more than one publisher, please be sure to make that clear to all parties involved. Again, that is professional behavior and if writers want to be treated as professionals, they must present themselves that way.

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The Importance of Backups by Caridad Pineiro



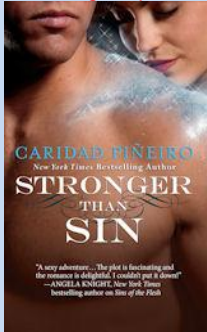
New York Times and USA

The Importance of Backups by Caridad Pineiro

Earlier this week I pulled out the laptop to work after dinner as I am in the middle of multiple writing deadlines.

Imagine my surprise when my three year old Dell refused to start up. Lights blinked, hard drive seemed to be working, etc. but there was no image. I plugged the computer into the monitor for my daughter's PC to see if it was the screen, but still no image or boot. After a couple of hours of trying to get something to happen, I was unable to resolve the problem.

Today bestselling paranormal and romantic suspense author Caridad Piñero wrote her first novel in the fifth grade when her teacher assigned a project—to write a book for a class lending library. Bitten by the writing bug, Caridad continued with her passion for the written word through high school, college, and law school. In 1999, Caridad's first novel was released and a decade later, Caridad is the author of over twenty novels and novellas. When not writing, Caridad is an attorney, wife, and mother to an aspiring writer and fashionista. Caridad's November 2009 release, SINS OF THE FLESH, is the first book in an exciting new paranormal suspense series from Grand Central Publishing. Look for STRONGER THAN SIN in October 2010. For more information on Caridad, please visit www.caridad.com or www.thecallingvampirenovels.com.



Did I freak? Well yes, because I really can't afford to buy a new laptop right now.

Did I worry about the data or my more important programs? No.

If there is one thing that I am, it's a stickler for doing backups and you should be as well in order not to lose valuable data when things go wrong.

How can you do backups in cost and time effective ways? Here are some suggestions for you:

- **Use a thumb drive** and do a SAVE AS of your work-in-progress as soon as you've finished any major changes. Keep that thumb drive in a safe and secure place.
- **Use an external drive** to do daily/weekly/monthly backups of your data. You know best how often you add data to your drive, so that should determine how often you do a backup. Terrabyte drives are now in the \$79 to \$129 range at various locations and will store a mess of data for you.
- **Copy files to an offsite location.** You may really really really need not to lose your data in case there is damage to your home. There are services which let you copy your files and hold them offsite. **Carbonite** is one of the more popular services. If you're an **Optimum Online customer**, they have a backup powered by Carbonite which allows you to store up to 2 gigabytes of data offsite. You can also create a private Yahoo group and upload your documents into the FILES section or open a Google account and use their **Google Docs** area to store your files.

Those are all nice solutions for safeguarding your data, but what about your programs?

- **Make sure you store your CDs in a safe place** and keep the serial numbers handy. I have one of those audio CD library cases with my programs and I write and/or cut out the serial number from the box and keep it with the CD.
- If you've downloaded the program from the Internet, **keep the program files in a DOWNLOAD folder** on your computer and back it up with your data files. Be sure to keep a copy of the serial number information handy, either in a document, address book or other location where you will remember you put it.
- If you can't even bear the thought of reloading all the software, there are programs which will **save images of your hard drive** which can then be restored to avoid such reinstalls. **ACRONIS** has a number of backup programs including one that creates a hard drive image. The cost? Only 39.99 right now.

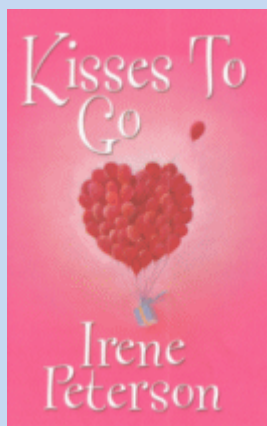
I hope you found these tips for safeguarding your work useful!

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When It Comes to Writing and Writers by Irene Peterson



Glittering teller of tales and gorgeous waith-thin author Irene Peterson has spent the past two years watching television in bed and eating bonbons when she could tolerate the taste of



chocolate. She finds that inspiration is where you least expect it to be.

When It Comes to Writing and Writers . . .
by Irene Peterson

When it comes to writing and writers, time and again one hears the exhortation to “write what you know.” You, being the writer, may have traveled the world, seen unbelievable sights, met incredibly interesting people, perhaps been involved in warfare or other dangerous situations and now have the opportunity to write about these things. How did they affect you? Did they make you a better or worse person? Did they change your attitude and perspective? Did they make you lose or renew your faith in God?

Or, maybe you haven’t done much traveling at all. You’ve stayed at home or nearby your entire life. Gone to college, gone to Disney World, but that’s about it. You’ve worked near home, talked on the phone to people from various parts of the world, but you, alas, have pretty much stayed right where you’ve always been. You go to the grocery store, you visit the mall, you take the train into the city. You get post cards from friends with more money than you have who go places you’d love to visit. Unhappily (or happily if you are agoraphobic) you must content yourself with the Travel Channel and Samantha Brown’s glittering adventures.

You are not alone. Plenty of famous writers have stayed within the confines of their county or village or state and produced fabulous, lasting works. They may dwell in their imaginations and create stories that cover miles and light-years, visiting worlds close to reality or far from anything with which readers could possibly be familiar.

Take, for example, poet Emily Dickinson. She never traveled more than twenty-five miles or so from home. Supposedly she went to Boston once. She walked around her property wearing white, then would retreat to her room and write delicate short poems on tiny bits of paper that she would eventually fold and shove into cracks in the floor or wall. These poems still evoke powerful emotions to this day. Score one for not leaving home.

Dorothy L. Sayers wrote intricate mystery stories. She never left England, which isn’t a vast country to begin with.

Jane Austen occasionally went to Bath.

Lewis Carroll stayed right where he was and took Alice down the rabbit hole into a fantastic world of wonder.

Shakespeare stayed in London for awhile, traveled England with a band of players, but pretty much kept to a certain finite area, yet he wrote about Venice and Rome, Denmark and Greece to name just a few of his mental

trips.

Walt Whitman lived in New York and Camden, though which city is responsible for his poignant words is difficult to tell.

Arthur Conan Doyle never left the British Isles, yet he permitted his famous detective to “die” at an Austrian waterfall.

Jules Verne, father of modern science fiction, once tried to stow away on an India-bound ship. When caught, he was promptly returned to his home where his father beat him and forced him to promise never to leave home again, except in his imagination.

Harper Lee and Oscar Wilde, a mixed duo, stayed pretty much where they were, though Oscar made it to London and jail while Harper got to Hollywood for a few weeks while To Kill a Mockingbird was being filmed.

Those writers who felt compelled to leave their hearth and home, however, may be more numerous, but not more inventive or better written.

Unfortunately, war has forced far too many writers to travel, most of the time where they didn't dream of going in the first place. J R R Tolkien and C S Lewis would never have left England had it not been for patriotic fervor and because every other red-blooded young man was fighting in France at the time. They came home alive and settled into the life of academe at Cambridge. Yet where did they take us? Perhaps the horrors they endured during the war had a great deal to do with some of the themes in their works, but religion influenced them too. Religion and war tend to do that, both negatively and positively.

The famous recluse J D Salinger wasn't really that much of a recluse early on. He served in the army during WWII. Ernest Hemingway gave life to his service in the first war in several of his novels. But, then, there was something missing in his life and he killed himself, despite the adventures, the success, the mountains, and life by the sea.

Emerson went on a European grand tour. Poe lived in five different East Coast cities as an adult though he considered himself a recluse. The grandfather of English literature, Geoffrey Chaucer, managed to travel to France and Spain in his lifetime.

Leo Tolstoy, that rather morose Russian writer, managed to travel throughout Russia in his lifetime, despite the difficulties of travel in that country. Ralph Ellison and Maya Angelou got around, along with Stephen King, Robert Frost, WS Maugham, Eugene O'Neill, William Faulkner, Truman Capote (who even visited the Soviet Union), and the peripatetic Sam Clemens.

Is their work any richer for their travels? Do their characters display more or less emotion than those created by those writers who never managed to get out of their own way?

Does a writer have to be abused, come from a broken home, have piles of family money (or none) or be born on foreign shores then come to their parental homeland as a babe in order to fashion a good tale? Or can a writer simply observe the world around him/her and weave the idiosyncrasies of their family members or employers or friends into viable, fascinating characters and stories that live long after their creators have passed?

Perhaps a vivid imagination serves a writer just as well as world travel. All these writers possessed the ability to travel far, though some didn't move any further than their pads of paper. What is most important is that they wrote and left the legacy of their minds to their readers. The worlds they created are their gifts to those who choose to travel with them. It is the writing that matters.

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