

Liberty States Fiction Writers

New York ~ New Jersey ~ Pennsylvania



Volume 2 Issue 1

Let Freedom Ring!

December 2009/January 2010

Anne Walradt, Newsletter Editor

If anyone would like to volunteer to assist with the newsletter, please contact Anne Walradt:
awalradt@aol.com

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

LINK TO WEB VERSION:

[Liberty States Fiction Writers Newsletter](#)

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

LINK TO PDF VERSION in Files Section:

[LSFW Announcements](#)

(requires login to Liberty Announcements Yahoogroups)

★Membership Renewals are due for 2010! ★

Don't forget that January is the month to renew your membership.

If you haven't already done so, please click [HERE](#) to review the honor code, then click on the link on that page to proceed to the application.

If you joined after October 1, 2009, you do not need to pay a renewal fee for the 2010 year.

Also, if you are an author published in fiction*, please send your head shot and short bio to contact@lsfwriters.com.

If you have a 2010 release, please send a short blurb, cover, publisher name, link to video (if any) and ISBN to contact@lsfwriters.com.

***Please note that self-published, vanity or subsidy published authors are not "published in fiction".**

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New and Noteworthy Publishing News

Current Bestsellers

President's Column:

Gail Freeman, President

I do this flakey thing each year. On January 1st I write out what I want to accomplish for the upcoming year and then seal it away until after Christmas of that year. Before I think about what I want to put on the list for the upcoming year, I do one of these reflection type of things. You know, how close did I come to reaching my goals? Is it worth listing them again, or is it in the realm of Never Never Land so why do I bother to try each year? And the big one, did I actually achieve any of my goals?

Read more . . .

Next Month's Meeting:



January Meeting: The next meeting of the Liberty States Fiction Writers is on January 9th at the Edison Public Library on Plainfield Avenue.

“Creative Deleting” by Lisa Dale

What exactly does it mean when a reader says the writing is not “tight”? What are we to make of vague comments that writing doesn’t “sparkle” or “grab”? Often, these complaints are inspired by a weak word count-to-meaning ratio. Using the backspace button isn’t failure—it’s a creative act that empowers your word choices and energizes your prose. Learn a simple “equation” that evaluates the power and effectiveness of your sentences. Then, learn techniques of creative deleting that show how less is more.

About Lisa Dale: A lifelong bookworm, Lisa Dale is a firm believer that there are few things in life better than curling up with a novel and a cup of tea. Lisa grew up in rural Northwestern New Jersey before attending McDaniel College in Westminster, Maryland. She worked briefly in publishing before going back to school to get an MFA in fiction at Fairleigh Dickinson University. Over the years, Lisa has had a number of jobs to subsidize her love of writing. She has worked as a tomato-picker, a babysitter, a college writing professor, a hardware store clerk, a title searcher, an SAT tutor, a barista, a junior literary agent, a handywoman, a real estate acquisitions agent, a public relations intern, a freelance editor, a waitress (twice), a clerk at a bakery, an assistant editor of a literary magazine, and she can’t remember what else. A former assistant editor of *The Literary Review* and nominee for Best New American Voices and the Pushcart Prize, her writing appears in many literary magazines, such as *Fourth Genre*, *Flyway*, *Fugue*, *Sou’wester*, *The Southeast Review*, *The MacGuffin*, *Many Mountains Moving*, and more. She currently lives with her boyfriend in Northern New Jersey (exit 16W—as the joke goes). Lisa writes for Grand Central Publishing. *SIMPLE WISHES* was released last January. *IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT* was a November 2009 release.

Roundtable Sessions

Our Roundtable Sessions will be on **Introduction to Social Networking Sites** and **Critiques**. For the Critique Roundtable Session, please bring 10 (ten) copies of 5 (five) pages from the work you wish to discuss, as well as any pitch you would like to try out. If you are a published author and would like to assist with the pitches and critique sessions, please contact Lois Winston, our Program Chair.

Networking and Snacks

During and after the Roundtable Sessions, members may network and either brown bag lunch or share snacks with fellow members.

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Articles in this Issue:

“Lost Your Muse?”

by **Patt Mihailoff**

Read more . . .

“Theme as Dialectic”

by Alicia Rasley

Read more . . .

“Homonyms, AKA Confused Words”

by **Pattie Giordani**

Read more . . .

“Those Pesky Lines: Hyphens and Em & En Dashes”

by **Tess Lamont**

Read more . . .

“5 Ways to Use Your Free Nightly Uploads (Dreams) to Catalyze Your Writing”

by **Paula Chafee Scardamalia**

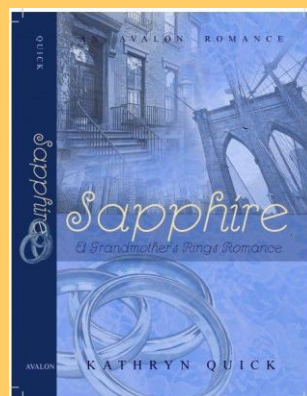
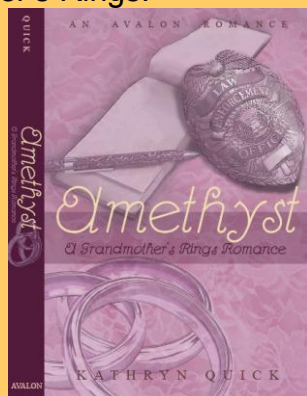
Read more . . .

Author Spotlight:

Every month the Liberty States Fiction Writers will feature published authors who will share with you one of their latest releases and offer you the opportunity to purchase a signed copy of the featured release. Published authors will also have the opportunity to provide podcast interviews about their latest releases.

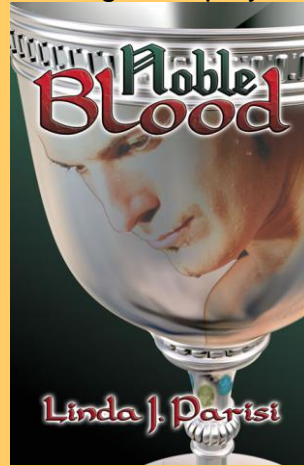
January's Author Spotlights are on **Kathye Quick** and **Linda Parisi**

Kathye Quick has been writing since the sisters of St. Casmir's School in Shenandoah, PA gave her a #2 pencil, ruled paper, and taught her what vowels and consonants were. Now she is the author of thirteen books with a lot more stories still stuck inside her head. She has been an editor for a regional non-fiction publishing house, a newspaper columnist, and pays the bills until she gets a Pulitzer as Deputy Clerk of the Board for Somerset County, where she writes press releases, speeches, and the boring minutes of every meeting. Kathye will be signing two books from her Contemporary Romance series for Avalon books—*Amethyst* and *Sapphire*. This series follows the Archer family siblings in their quest to find their soul mates using their Grandmother's Rings.



Linda J. Parisi found her calling when as a scientist, she discovered romance. Her idea of the perfect hero is a cross between Frank Langella's Dracula and his Zorro—tall, dark, handsome, and untamable. Her heroines will never give up or give in, so the sparks continue to fly through her books until her characters reach their happy ending. The road might not be easy, but the fun is in the travel. She's been a member of New Jersey Romance Writers and Romance Writers of America since 1993 and is now a member of Liberty States Fiction Writers. During the day she's a research scientist and project manager for a diagnostic

technologies company. But at night? At night, she gets to play with vampires.



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Meeting Review:

November's featured podcast:

The November workshop was an editor agent panel with literary agent Stephany Evans from Fine Print Literary Agency and NAL editor Jessica Wade.

Ms. Evans and Ms. Wade discussed what they're looking for in both authors and their manuscripts, and the discussion was followed by a Q&A session.

Stephany Evans is with Fine Print Literary and has been agenting for 20 years. In fiction, her core interest is in stories with a strong female protagonist, both literary and up-market commercial—including chick lit, romance, mystery, and light suspense. She also represents non-fiction in the areas of health and wellness, spirituality, personal growth/self-help, lifestyle, and narrative nonfiction. She likes to laugh and has a somewhat dark sense of humor.

Jessica Wade is an Associate Editor at New American Library, an imprint of Penguin Group USA. She acquires science fiction, fantasy, mystery, romance, women's fiction, historical fiction, and young adult fiction. She's a graduate of Georgetown University and a New York City resident (but a New Jersey native.)

Guest speaker podcast info:

The podcast for November is now available.

To listen to any of the monthly meeting podcats, login to LSFW's Motionbox account with the following information:

User Name: podcasts@lsfwriters.com

Password: liberty

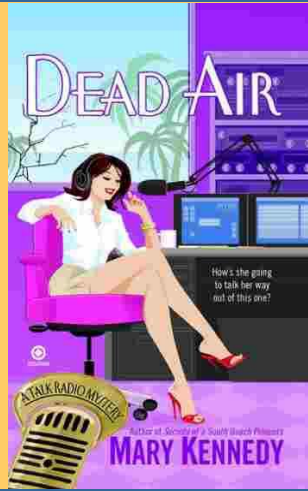
To access Motionbox, please click on this link:

<http://www.motionbox.com/user/login>

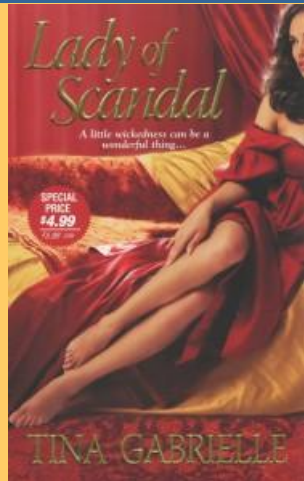
Please note that Motionbox will only display the most recent podcasts on the first page. To see more podcasts, click on FAVORITES.

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Member News:



Mary Kennedy is pleased to report that she'll be reviewing books for *Book Page*, the publication that goes out to every public library in the country. Her first Book Page review will appear in October. She continues to review crime fiction for the *Examiner*.



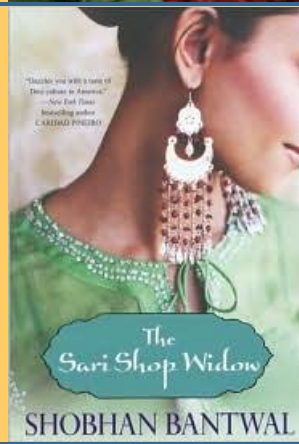
Tina Sickler, aka Tina Gabrielle, is thrilled to announce that her Regency historical, *LADY OF SCANDAL*, received 4 stars from *Romantic Times* BOOKreviews: "Debuting with a tantalizing tale, Gabrielle employs themes of revenge, secrets, and misunderstandings, blending them with sizzle and characters that engage readers' emotions. Gabrielle has the opportunity to garner a strong fan base eager for her next novel." *LADY OF SCANDAL* was also nominated by the *RT* Book Reviews Choice Awards as one of the best first historical romances of 2009!



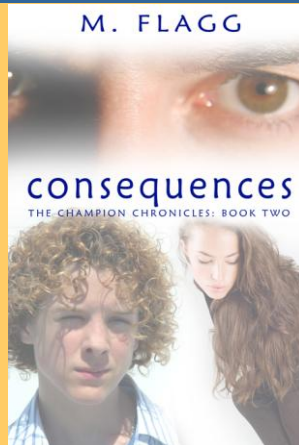
Joanna Aislinn's aka **Joanne Timrum's** debut novel *NO MATTER WHY* was released as an Early Bird Special by The Wild Rose Press.



Cris Anson is happy to announce that *FIRST TO DIE*, released digitally last year, is now available in print from Cerridwen Press, the mainstream imprint of Ellora's Cave. *FIRST TO DIE* received an "Outstanding Read" from Simply Romance Reviews and a "Golden Blush Recommended Read" along with a 5-Nymph rating from Literary Nymphs.



Shobhan Bantwal is excited to see her latest release, *THE SARI SHOP WIDOW* featured on the *Publisher's Weekly* blog, "Beyond her Book" Wednesday, Nov. 25, run by Barbara Vey. It's there with several other books and it's got a really nice review, too. "Never thought I'd make it on the PW blog, but one never knows.... "



Mickey Flagg announces her second sale to editor Callie Lynn Wolfe of The Wild Rose Press. *CONSEQUENCES—THE CHAMPION CHRONICLES: BOOK 2* will be a 2010 release. Every action has a consequence, but some are more difficult to face than others. Visit Flagg at www.Mflagg-author.com



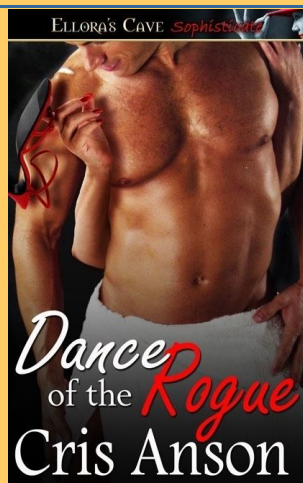
Anne Frazier Walradt spoke on www.coffeefolk.com on December 6 on using humor to survive in your life. If you want to catch the show, the Archives link is alive in the Program Menu (on LH side) at <http://holisticglobe.webs.com/>. The link will take you to a page where you'll see that the Archives is a "Members Only Area," below which is a "form" to "Join Our Community," a free subscribe, where you'll submit your name and email, and then be asked to select a password, which you'll use to Log In thereafter.



Penelope Marzec reports that Coffee time Reviews has given her Four Coffee Cups for *THE COMPANY YOU KEEP* and a lovely review.



Caridad Pineiro's March release, *FURY CALLS*, is one of the nominees for Best Nocturne for the 2009 *RT BookReview* Reviewers' Choice Awards.



Cris Anson is pleased to announce that Fallen Angel Reviews has given 5 Angels to her latest release, *DANCE OF THE ROGUE*.



Registration for the 2010 Create Something Magical Conference is now open! Please visit our conference page:

<http://www.libertystatesfictionwriters.com/lsf-writers-conference/>

On this page you can find information about our speakers, see the list of attending editors and agents, sign up to receive conference email updates and, of course, register to attend the conference. Over the coming months we will be posting information on the workshops, any additional speakers/editors/agents that will be attending, when editor/agent appointment sign up will open, as well as the conference schedule to this page, so stop back often.

We've tried to streamline the process of members adding events to the Liberty Calendar of Events (<http://www.libertystatesfictionwriters.com/calendar/>) (Just click on an event to expand it for additional details).

To do this streamlining, we've created a public Google Calendar!

If you have an upcoming event that you wish to publicize, please cut and paste this link into your browser: http://www.google.com/calendar/embed?src=contact%40lsfwriters.com&ctz=America/New_York

You will be taken to the Google Calendar program where you can enter your information. Click on the small "Google Calendar" icon in the bottom right corner of the calendar. The user name and password are as follows:

User Name: contact@lsfwriters.com

Password: Isfwmember

Please edit only your own events. Please list only those events in which you are personally participating. All members, whether SPA or not, may enter their writing-related events in the Liberty States Fiction Writers' Calendar of Events.

In case you forget this information, you may find the links and passwords in the Members Only section as well.

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Upcoming & Recent Member Releases:



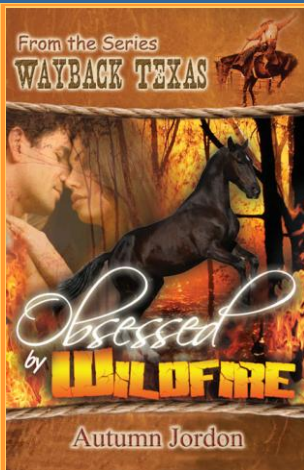
NO MATTER WHY

by Joanna Aislinn

ISBN 1-60151-609-2

Wild Rose Press

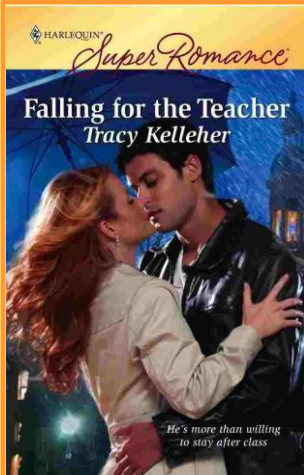
Trust and stability became empty words the day motherless, sixteen-year-old Carrie Norwell's brothers were murdered and her father's heart gave out at the scene. Five years later, her barricaded heart remains virtually impenetrable to anyone willing to get close and offer what she wants more than anything: a loving family of her own. That's exactly what Billy Jay Eldridge wants to offer the right girl. Operating on a heart and spirit rivaled only by his looks, he's two years out of college, managing a store and on his way up the corporate ladder. Still, he toys daily with nobler—yet dangerous—career aspirations. Then shy, quiet Carrie joins his crew. Intrigued by her haunted eyes, he sets out to know her better, unaware his life's calling will be the greatest obstacle to getting her to accept from him what she wants and needs most.



OBSESSED BY WILDFIRE

by Autumn Jordan
The Wild Rose Press.

Isabelle Trinidad is her own woman. She vows no man will rope her into the humdrum life of a housewife and take away her dreams of becoming the National Barrel Champion like her father had done to her mother. Her mind is set—until a handsome Yankee comes to town and upsets all her dreams. Arson brings State Fire Marshal Warner Keyson to Wayback, but a wildfire of a woman stops him in his tracks. Intrigued by Issy's fire, he contrives ways to keep her close while conducting his investigation. What they create, which neither of them bargained for, is the blaze of a lifetime.

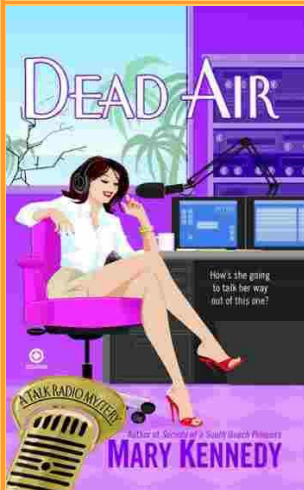


FALLING FOR THE TEACHER

by Tracy Kelleher
ISBN 978-0-373-78358-8

Harlequin (Super Romance)

Getting shot in a robbery shattered more than Katarina Zemanova's knee. Once an up-and-coming executive she's realizing that recuperating her confidence, and her trust in people, is a lot harder than she expected. Teaching night school in a sleepy town seems like a good first step. George Benjamin Brown is no star student. He's a recovering cynic with a new-found teenage son, Matt, and trust issues of his own. Matt sneaks off to enroll in Katarina's class, and Ben storms in to teach him a lesson, but is instead captured by Katarina. It's the start of a learning experience neither of them ever saw coming. This novel is the first installment in Tracy's Adult Education series for Harlequin Super Romance.

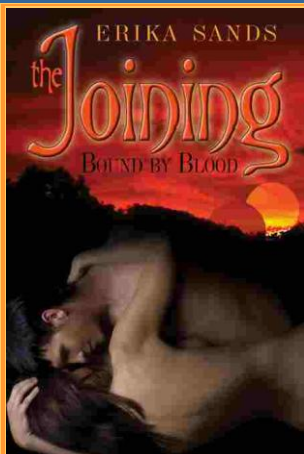


DEAD AIR

by Mary Kennedy
ISBN: 0451228774

Penguin Obsidian

Psychologist Maggie Walsh left her clinical practice in Manhattan and moved to sunny Cypress Grove, Florida, to host a talk radio show. When one of her guests turns up dead, Maggie's new roommate, Lark, is the prime suspect. Maggie has to prove Lark innocent while dealing with a killer who needs more than just therapy. *Frasier* meets *Murder She Wrote* in this entertaining new series by a real life psychologist.



BOUND BY BLOOD
by Erika Sands
ISBN 9781601547637
Wild Rose Press

His gaze haunts her like no other. Her beauty leaves him speechless. One caress, one kiss, one taste of the enigmatic Ariel and a maelstrom engulfs D’Nar. One touch of the dark, virile vampyr and her secret passion ignites—a forbidden craving to be taken and overcome by this superior race. Before long, they are bound not only by her blood and his need for it, but by her humanity as their desire swells in time to the desert wind that whirls around them. When Ariel agrees to become D’Nar’s concubine, she has no idea their mutual attraction will explode into a fury of ecstasy. But can this irresistible passion survive the growing distrust between human and vampyr? Can it survive an ancient evil bent on revenge? And knowing all the odds stacked against them, could it ever blossom into love? In order for their world to survive, Ariel and D’Nar learn that desire alone will not carry them to the end of their quest. Only when they trust each other enough to love unconditionally can they save their civilization—and themselves.

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

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Spotlight on:

SPOTLIGHT:

Your story COULD be here!
If you’d like to share be featured in the member spotlight,
please contact Anne Walradt: <mailto:awalradt@aol.com>



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Road Story:

How I Became a Writer or Ignorance Is Bliss
by Shelley Freydot

One day a decade ago, a friend and I were in the Guggenheim, slowly winding our way down to the first floor and discussing what we were going to do with the rest of our lives. I had been a professional dancer, and she ran a school for autistic children. I was getting old, and she was burned out.

In the middle of a video installation that was mildly reminiscent of many things we’d seen before, my friend said, “You’re always reading mysteries. You should write one.”

I had a good laugh because for the life of me, I could never figure out who dunnit, couldn’t distinguish

between a red herring and Sole Meuniere. She said, "There are books." We left the museum and went to Barnes and Noble where I bought three How-to-Write-a-Mystery books.

I studied. I studied the agents list, the publishers list, studied the *how-tos* and took the plunge. I wrote a mystery about an ex-dancer. I know, how original. My friend found a contest for unpublished authors run by St. Martin's Press. I sent off my manuscript, duly formatted (learned that from a book, too). And waited. While I was waiting I studied some more, read some more, made a short list of agents and publishers, made a long list of same. And waited.

The contest took several months before they announced the winner. It was just the beginning of a lot of waiting. I made the short list but didn't win. I was pretty impressed with myself. For a minute. Then I sent the manuscript out to two agents. They were big agents, friends of friends of friends. They wrote me lovely letters saying the book was nice but not a best seller.

And then one day I was talking to another friend and telling him about my experience. And he said. "Oh, I'm a reader for several publishers. Send it to me, and I'll tell you what I think.

I did. He said, (Now hold onto your seats, because you've heard this before.) "Start with chapter three and feed all the stuff from chapter one and two in later in the book. Then send it to several agents at a time."

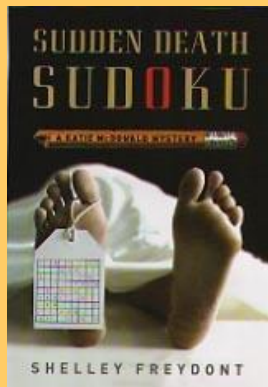
I did and I sent it to seven agents. I had a dynamite query letter, and they all requested three chapters. They all responded. One wasn't impressed, one thought it wasn't highly marketable, another one said he preferred police procedurals." Trust me this manuscript had "cozy" written all over it. So who knows. I can't remember what the other four wrote.

In the meantime I wrote another mystery, the second in the series. It hadn't occurred to me yet that I might not get published. After all, I was a professional, I had been semi-hemi-demi famous in the dance world.

When the final round of rejections came back, I got serious and sent it out to a sixteen agents. Two days later, one of them called and said he would like to represent me. Two weeks later he sold my series to Kensington. (Yes, I did write to all those other agents to tell them to withdraw my work from consideration.)

I'd like to say the rest is history. But every time you send out a new work, it's just like the first time. Waiting and worrying. Sometimes, it just isn't what they want. Sometimes they don't even like it. On occasion they actually buy it.

It's nerve wracking. And ego busting. And stomach churning. But it's also an avocation. And so we keep doing it. And doing it. And doing it. Until the next one sells and then we do it again.



Shelley Freydon is the author of the *Katie McDonald Sudoku* mystery series and *Lindy Haggerty* mystery series as well as several romance novels under the pseudonym **Gemma Bruce**. A former professional

dancer and choreographer, she most recently worked on the films, *Mona Lisa Smile* and *The Game Plan*. Shelley is past president of *Sisters-in-Crime*, NY, NJ, CN and a member of *Mystery Writers of America*, *Liberty States Fiction Writers*, and *Romance Writers of America*.

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Contests and Online Courses:

Contests:

DEADLY INK SHORT STORY CONTEST 2010

All stories must be no more than 5,000 words, take place in New Jersey, and include a "Deadly Incident." Winners will be announced at the Deadly Ink Mystery Conference luncheon. NO ENTRY FEE. You may submit more than one story, but please send each one separately.

Prizes:

First Place: \$100.00

Second Place: \$50.00

Third Place: \$25.00

In addition, winning entries and selected non-winning entries will be published in the *2010 Deadly Ink Anthology*, which will be available for sale at the 2010 conference. Profits from the sale of the anthology will be donated to Literacy Volunteers and The Christopher Reed Foundation. Contest Rules: Not open to employees or family members of Deadly Ink. Entries may not be more than 5,000 words in length, must take place in New Jersey, and include a "Deadly Incident" (murder, mayhem) that needs to be solved. Entries must be original work of the entrant and may not have been previously published. You do not need to attend the conference to enter the contest. Entries must be postmarked between June 1, 2009, and February 15, 2010. For more information, please visit <http://www.deadlyink.com/short.html>.

LILAC CITY-ROCHESTER WRITERS ANNOUNCES

1st & 10 in 2010

Are you a new writer, looking to see if you're headed in the right direction? Are you published, wanting to reinvent yourself or considering a new genre? Are you tired of hearing 'the story begins in the wrong place'? Need a fresh fix? We can help! Give us the first 10 pages of your unpublished work, **any fiction genre**; show us how you plan to hook an editor or an agent. With more than ten years experience sponsoring the Barclay Gold and Sterling Contests, LCRW has earned a reputation for providing detailed and personalized comments on our score sheets. No entrant goes away scratching their head, wondering what the scores actually mean!!!

Why come to us?

We're cheap—\$10.00 for 10 pages

We're green—all entries are submitted electronically [including payment if you want]. Score sheets and the entry, with comments directly on the manuscript pages, are returned via email.

Judging: our first round judges have been trained via the RWA model; many are published in different fiction genres, alternate formats and length. Second round judges: An acquiring agent and an award winning, multi-published Harlequin and Berkley author.

Let us help you to return that opening kick-off into a run for the end zone!!

FMI: www.lcrw.org for rules & regs, entry form, and sample score sheet.

For further questions, contact: Contest Coordinator at: www.lcrw.org

2010 Great Beginnings Contest Sponsored by the Utah Romance Writers of America

March 1, 2010—Deadline for all submissions *Contest Fee \$10*

Enter the opening five (5) pages of romance novels of all sub-genres (projected length of at least 50,000 words). Contest is open to published and unpublished authors. Unpublished authors are ranked

separately from published authors. Published authors may submit only unpublished, uncontracted manuscripts. NOTE: If you have a romance novel published by a non-recognized RWA publisher, Utah RWA Considers you to be published. For more information email Jennifer Beckstrand jbeckstrand@gmail.com or see Great Beginnings Contest details on <http://www.utahrwa.com>

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 .

Suspense Magazine's SECOND Annual Writing Contest / Sweepstakes

Winners will receive the following:

1. **Grand Prize** - 12 books (some autographed) from each of the 12 authors of the month for 2009. To keep updated on the authors of the month, click on the author link above. Right now we have John Saul, John Lesocrat, John Sandford, Charlotte Hughes, and Steve Berry. The images on the left might not be necessarily the exact book from that author that you will receive. All books are in brand new condition, many coming from the author directly.

2. **Second Place** - \$50.00 gift card to Amazon.com

3. **Third Place** - \$25.00 gift card to Amazon.com

For more information, please visit <http://www.suspensemagazine.com/contest.html>

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.

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Online Courses:

BEGINNING WRITER WORKSHOPS

Beginning Writer Workshops offers online writing workshops for writers of all fiction genres, as well as non-fiction and memoir writing. These monthly online workshops, taught by experts with a proven track record, and are designed to help all writers build successful careers in their chosen area. Courses begin in September and are \$25 per course. Check out this year's selection at <http://www.BeginningWriterWorkshops.com>.

Orange County Chapter of RWA!

"The Purpose Driven Scene"

with Lynn Kerstan

January 11 to February 6, 2010

Enrollment Information at <http://www.occrwa.org/onlineclassJan10.html>

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

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

ABOUT THE CLASS: Scenes are the building blocks of a novel. But while a scene is advancing the book's story question, each scene is, in itself, a story in miniature. This workshop focuses on how to develop a scene that is chock-full of character development, conflict, emotion, and—for the reader—a vivid sense of "being there." We begin with establishing the scene goal of the focal character, along with levels of motivation, emotional stakes, and expectations. Then we consider the opposition, because there can never be a straight line from wanting to getting. How does the focal character deal with the antagonist, which might even be her own inadequacy or fear? We explore why the character must meet with disaster in every scene. Failure means a new plan, or a change of goals. Success is worse, because it always leads to unexpected consequences. We'll examine the initiating incident, scene openings, working with scene and sequel,

character intimacy through focused POV, ways to create exciting scenes and settings, and how to draw the reader into the next chapter. Above all, we'll never lose sight of the most important element: translating events into feelings. Every scene, every "beat" in a scene, must evoke an emotion in the character that resonates in the emotions of the reader.

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR: Lynn Kerstan, former college professor, folksinger, professional bridge player, and nun, is the author of nine Regency romances, seven historical romances, and three novellas. She is presently developing a paranormal series. A five-time RITA® Finalist (one win), she is regularly featured on awards lists. Since Romantic Times launched its "Top Picks" feature, every Kerstan novel has been a Top Pick. Two have been selected by Library Journal for its "Best Books of the Year" list (2002 and 2003), and *DANGEROUS PASSIONS* was named to Booklist's Top Ten Romances of 2005 list. For many years a teacher of English literature and writing at the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and the University of San Diego, Kerstan now conducts popular-fiction workshops for writers groups and conferences. An Internet junkie, she can be found online at www.StoryBroads.com, blogging with Anne Stuart, Maggie Shayne, Patricia Potter, Tara Taylor Quinn, and Suzanne Forster. Kerstan lives an exemplary life Coronado, California, where she plots her stories while riding her boogie board, walking on the beach, and watching Navy SEALs jog by. Enrollment Information at <http://www.occrwa.org/onlineclassJan10.html>. Coming in February 2010—

"Fast Draft and Revision Hell" with Candace Havens

In the first two weeks you will learn a step-by-step process to help you finish your work in progress and in the second two weeks you learn how to polish your manuscript.

<http://www.occrwa.org/onlineclasses.html>. Check out our full list of workshops.

RWA® Online Chapter presents

PERSONALITY PLUS: MAKING YOUR CHARACTERS REAL

Instructors: Sue Vidars and Becky Martinez

Jan 10th 2010 – Feb 6th 2010

Registration Opens: December 27th, 2009

Registration Deadline: January 9th, 2010

Fee: \$15 Non-Chapter members. RWAOL Chapter #136 members; free.

Payment method: PAYPAL is recommended! It's safe and fast! Check and money orders also accepted.

FMI & Registration: <http://www.rwaonlinechapter.org/campus.htm>

Email: workshops AT rwaonlinechapter.org

NOTE: Use your real First and Last Name & Choose Pay Option. Chapter #136 members DO NOT need to register for workshops.

CLASS DESCRIPTION: Personality is a critical part of any character's make-up. It can mean the difference between a great character, one you remember forever, or a mediocre one you forget as soon as the book is read. This class looks at how to build and define a character's personality and how to add those little details that make that character more realistic in his/her actions.

BIO: Sue and Becky have been teaching on-classes for many years, as a team and individually. They have presented at numerous conferences together and separately. Both have given sessions at the national Romance Writers of America Conference. Sue has taught dozens of classes, both online and in person. Sue has published the following books and games for writers: *Heroes and Heroines*, *Sixteen Master Archetypes*, *Ten Steps to Creating Memorable Characters*, Deal a Story—a card game for writers. Becky is also one of the co-authors of *Ten Steps to Creating Memorable Characters*. She is multi-published in full length romance novels and romance short stories under the pseudonym of Rebecca Grace. Her most recent short story, "The Problem," was published by The Wild Rose Press, which will also publish her next book, DEADLY MESSAGES, a romantic suspense coming in February 2010. She is currently working on her next romantic mystery. Becky and Sue are also working on their next nonfiction book for writers, *Ten Ways to Plot a Great Story*. This will be a companion book to the Character book.

FORMAT: Course is conducted via online discussion (bulletin) board on the RWA® Online website. Chapter members DO NOT need to register for workshops. Non-chapter members MUST complete both the workshop registration AND the discussion board login registration for access. Instructions for login are

presented after the registration pages (or to return to the login instructions, go to <http://www.rwaonlinechapter.org/WorkshopAppTY.html> . The workshop is available for up to one week after the end date and a downloadable archive of the workshop will be available the week following the workshop.

The Red River Romance Writers of Wichita Falls, Texas

"The Xtremely Productive Writer" with Kara Lennox

Join us for a two-week intensive workshop Feb. 1-14.

Price: RRRW Members - \$15; Non-members - \$20

Do you wish you could write more? Does life get in the way? Do you frequently miss deadlines? Does your manuscript languish for weeks at a time, withering from lack of attention? Do you look at writers who write three, four, five or more books a year and figure they must be superhuman? In this two-week intensive class, you will learn how to identify the things that interfere with your productivity and keep you from writing. Then we'll discuss strategies for writing more without compromising quality or neglecting the rest of your life. This workshop includes some hands-on homework and exercises to get your hands onto that keyboard right away, and keep you writing on into the rest of the year. In addition to presenting ten "lectures," Kara Lennox will address students' individual questions and unique situations and provide as much feedback as time allows. A lively give-and-take among students is also encouraged.

Bio: Kara Lennox (a.k.a. Karen Leabo) has written more than 50 contemporary romance novels for Harlequin/Silhouette and Bantam Loveswept. Since her first novel was released in 1989, her books frequently appear on romance bestseller lists. She is currently working on a romantic suspense trilogy, "Project Justice," for Harlequin Superromance, to be published in 2011. Kara's books have finaled in several romance industry contests including the National Readers' Choice Awards, the Holt Medallion competition, and the RITA®. Her Harlequin American Romance PLAIN JANE'S PLAN won a *Romantic Times* Reviewers' Choice award. For more information visit: <http://redriverromancewriters.com/workshops.php>

The Black Diamond Chapter of RWA Presents

You CAN Write a Synopsis! by Camy Tang

Class takes place February 1-28, 2010

\$25 BDRWA members/\$30 non-members

Whether you've got a complete manuscript or you've just started one, this class will help you write a complete synopsis for your story. I will take you step by step so that by the end of the class you will have written a one-page synopsis, a 4-6 page synopsis, and also a more organic "character" synopsis. I will give you tips and tricks to ensure you have all the structural and character elements an editor is looking for: Inciting Incident, external goal, internal conflict, romantic conflict, major obstacles, epiphany, climax, and resolution. Never fear synopsis writing again—this class will make you synopsis savvy!

Bio: Camy Tang writes romance with a kick of wasabi. She has published a humorous contemporary romance series called the Sushi series, a romantic suspense titled *Deadly Intent* with Love Inspired Suspense, and this year she'll release a new humorous contemporary romance in May. Originally from Hawaii, she worked as a biologist for 9 years, but now she is a staff worker for her San Jose church youth group and leads a worship team for Sunday service. She also runs the Story Sensei fiction critique service, which specializes in book doctoring. On her blog, she gives away Christian novels and ponders frivolous things. Visit her website at <http://www.camytang.com/> and sign up for her newsletter YahooGroup for monthly giveaways! FMI: email treasurer@bdrwa.com or go to our website: www.bdrwa.com check out online classes.

RWA's Mystery/Suspense Chapter is pleased to announce our COFFIN College of Felony and Intrigue KILLER INSTINCT online workshop for the month of February 2010.

WORKSHOP: Deep POV: Myths, Methods, and Madness

CLASS DESCRIPTION: Deep POV is not for every author or every story, but when you get it right, it's a very contemporary way of connecting your readers closely to your characters.

But Alicia Rasley (author of the Writer's Digest book, *The Power of Point of View*) cautions that Deep POV isn't about character names or stream-of-conscious mental texting, but about getting into your character and

presenting the totality of the experience so that the reader can participate. In this interactive workshop, Rasley will discuss the myths of Deep POV, the methods of getting into character and presenting the story, and the madness you might need to experience to truly get into someone else's mind and body. If you are challenging yourself to create a more interactive story experience and a more character-intensive voice, this is the class for you.

INSTRUCTOR: Alicia Rasley is a nationally known workshop leader and the author of *The Story Within Plotting Guide* and *The Power of Point of View*. She teaches at two state colleges and online. Her free writing articles are archived at www.rasley.com.

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>

Mythic Elements Presented by Marcy Weydemuller

February 15, 2010 - March 14, 2010

\$15 for FFnP Members; \$25 for Non-members

Click here to register <<http://www.romance-ffp.com/event.cfm?EventID=112>>

Add Depth to Your Novel with Mythic Elements

Because they encompass timeless motifs, mythic elements can add an extra layer of depth to a novel, whether contemporary, historical, paranormal, or fantasy. Mythic elements have contributed to the success of many stories from *Star Wars* and *The Princess Bride* to *O Brother, Where Art Thou*, *Troy*, and *Raiders of the Lost Ark* trilogy. During this four week course we'll examine some metaphoric functions that help build emotional resonance and memory.

This workshop will be conducted via a Yahoo! email loop. Email invitations will be sent 48 hours prior to the beginning of the workshop.

Just register for the workshop and complete the payment process via PayPal. The cost is \$15.00 for FFnP members and \$25.00 for non-FFnP members. Payment is expected when registering and your registration will not be complete until you've paid. Unpaid registrations will be deleted 48 hours before the class.

BIO: Marcy Weydemuller received a B.A. in history and sociology from Concordia University in Montreal, Canada and an M.F.A. in writing from Norwich University in Vermont with a special focus on YA fantasy and poetry. In addition to teaching creative writing classes she taught college freshman for five years and is a member of SCBWI. Currently she is pursuing her own writing projects and is a freelance editing.

The Art of Rewriting Presented by Martha Engber

February 1, 2010 - February 14, 2010

\$10 for FFnP Members; \$20 for Non-members

Click here to register <<http://www.romance-ffp.com/event.cfm?EventID=127>>

As Dorothy Parker once said, "I can't write five words but that I change seven." While writing anything can be an arduous task, rewriting can be ten times as difficult and as bewildering. Yet rewriting also allows you the fantastic opportunity to not only improve the story you're currently working on, but your future writing, as well. In this class we'll discuss how to structure and employ various strategies that we'll then practice in class.

We'll also talk about: adopting the right expectations; estimating the time necessary for completion; understanding the three levels of editing; breaking the job into manageable pieces; and seeking feedback as part of the process. This workshop will be conducted via a Yahoo! email loop. Email invitations will be sent 48 hours prior to the beginning of the workshop. Just register for the workshop and complete the payment process via PayPal. The cost is \$10.00 for FFnP members and \$20.00 for non-FFnP members. Payment is expected when registering and your registration will not be complete until you've paid. Unpaid registrations will be deleted 48 hours before the class.

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SLEUTHFEST 2010

02/26/-02/28/10 – Boca Raton, FL

The Florida Chapter of the Mystery Writers of America presents SLEUTHFEST 2010 featuring David Morrell and Stephen Cannell. For more information, please visit www.sleuthfest.com.

[EPIC](#) Con- Electronically Published Internet Connection

March 4-7th, 2010

Sheraton New Orleans in New Orleans, LA

The Electronically Published Internet Connection, is the gathering place for authors, publishers and other industry professionals to celebrate the best of the best with the EPPIE Awards, to share newest information and ideas, to hone their writing skills, and to explore new markets. For more information please visit

<http://www.epic-conference.com/>.

Valley Forge Romance Writers Conference

March 12, 2010

12-4 pm

\$15 VFRW Member, \$20 Non-VFRW Member

For more information, please visit www.VFRW.com

Want to know what editors/agents think when they see YOUR query in their in-bin?

Submit a one-page query letter with your registration fee. VFRW cannot guarantee all queries will be discussed at the meeting, but will be provided to the panel beforehand, so the editor/agents will have the opportunity to read them and perhaps contact you after the panel if they are interested in seeing more.

Registration will remain open until Friday, February 19, 2010. All registrations must be received by midnight EST on February 19, 2010. No queries will be accepted after that date, as they will be forwarded to the panel on the 20th.

Liberty States Fiction Writers

Create Something Magical Conference

March 13, 2010

Featuring *F. Paul Wilson, Virginia Kantra, Sarah Langan, Caridad Piñeiro, Mary Kennedy, Jonathan Maberry, Sarah Wendell, Lois Winston, Laura Anne Gilman, Anna DeStefano, Judi Fennell, Stephanie Julian, Erin Galloway, Erienne Rojas, Judy Spagnola, Nisha Sharma, and more . . .*

Plus: Editor/Agent Appointments, Luncheon, and a Networking Reception

Registration Opens October 1, 2009

Registration Fees:

Members: \$95 - Non-Members: \$115

For more information, please visit <http://www.lsfwriters.com>.

When: March 13, 2010

Where: Renaissance Woodbridge Hotel

515 Route 1 South & Gill Lane

Iselin, New Jersey 08830

Phone: 732-634-3600 732-634-3600 Fax: 732-634-0258

The 2010 Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop at the University of Dayton

Thurs., April 15 to Sat., April 17, 2010

The Erma Bombeck Writers' Workshop is a one-of-a-kind national resource for humor and human interest writing. No other organization has targeted humor and human interest writers as its primary educational focus.

The workshop registration fee is \$375 and includes all workshop sessions as well as two continental

breakfasts, two lunches, and three dinners. Registration is now open. To register, follow this link:

<https://www.regonline.com/bombeck2010>

Emerald Coast Writers Writers' Conference

April 8th through 10th

Our keynote speaker is bestselling author, P.J. Parrish. (Actually, one half of the sister team of Kristy Montee and Kelly Nichols) P.J. Parrish | *New York Times* Bestselling Author

Their books in the Louis Kincaid series have been on both the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestseller lists and have been nominated for a total of ten major mystery novel writing awards including the Edgar, Shamus, Anthony, and Thriller Award. The books have been published in Japan, Sweden, Thailand, and Canada, and the UK, in addition to the U.S.

Attending agents:

Emmanuelle Alspaugh—Judith Ehrlich Literary

Suzie Townsend—FinePrint Literary Management

Michelle Brower—Folio Literary Management

The event takes place at the beautiful Ramada Plaza Beach Resort, located directly on the Gulf of Mexico. We expect to attract over 150 people this year. Emerald Coast Writers is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping writers of all genres. We regularly hold critique sessions, workshops, and conferences designed to aid the beginning and published writers in our area. I think you will be pleasantly surprised by the level of enthusiasm and professionalism ECW members bring to the occasion. Our conference is fast becoming one of the most popular in the South. All sessions are taught by individual instructors who are published authors, agents, editors or experts in the publishing industry. We invite you to be one of them.

As with most conferences, we do not pay the expenses of speakers, except for the keynote, agents, and editors. We feel the invitation provides a promotional opportunity for authors and professionals in the writing field. During the conference we will provide book signings and coverage on Talk Radio. The local newspaper also covers the event, so the publicity the speakers receive is twofold, conference and community wide. If you can't attend this year, we invite you to send us your promotional material to be distributed in the goodie bags we hand out at registration. Send all material to me, Joyce Holland, at: 434 Cardinal Avenue, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548. Email: Boatdolly@aol.com

Check us out at www.EmeraldCoastWriters.org

Please note that LSFW does not endorse any of these conferences and asks 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.

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Market News:

Agent/Editor News:

Rappaport Agency has closed its doors. <http://litsoup.blogspot.com/2009/12/closing-agency.html>

Grand Central Publishing senior editor **Natalie Kaire** will move over to Stewart, Tabori & Chang as a senior editor on December 15, acquiring cookbooks and food narratives. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Soho Press associate publisher **Bronwen Hruska** will move up to publisher on January 1. Co-founder and current publisher Laura Hruska will remain editor-in-chief. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

At Dystel & Goderich Literary Management, agent **Stacey Glick** has been named vice president. **Rachel Oakley** has joined the agency as Jane Dystel's assistant. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

At Orbit Books, **DongWon Song** has been promoted to Editor, as **Jennifer Flax** moves up to assistant

editor. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

At Scholastic Press, **Jody Corbett** has been promoted to associate editor and **Erin Black** has been promoted to assistant editor. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

At Little, Brown Children's, **Nancy Conescu** has moved up to senior editor and **Julie Scheina** is associate editor. *Courtesy Publishers Marketplace.*

Publisher News:

Harlequin launches new digital only press—Carina Press. For submission guidelines go to <http://bit.ly/2lgEhR>

Phaze Publishing is celebrating its 5th Anniversary with a number of free Erotic reads at the site: <http://www.phaze.com/>

Putnam Books for Young Readers president and publisher Nancy Paulsen is launching an eponymous imprint, Nancy Paulsen Books, with the first titles landing in 2011. Paulsen, who has led the division for 15 years, plans to publish 12 to 15 picture books, middle grade, and young adult novels annually. She will continue at the helm of Putnam Books for Young Readers until the company finds a successor—a process that has already begun. *Courtesy Publishers Weekly.*

Romance Writers of America and Mystery Writers of America boot Harlequin from approved publishers list.

If you wish to volunteer to do the Market News section, please contact Anne Walradt at AWalradt@aol.com

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New and Noteworthy Publishing News:

Please click on the text to access the link:

[Kindle Numbers: Traditional Publishing v. Self-publishing](#)

[Agents Are Grumbling: Editors Turning Into Agents](#)

[Amended Google Book Settlement Submitted and Supplemental Notice has been provided](#)

[CBS News Review of E-book Readers](#)

[Kindle Sales Half of Sales as E-Book Sales Surge](#)

[Macmillan and Penguin May Delay from Time to Time](#)

[HarperCollins Joins Ranks Of Those Delaying E-Books](#)

[US Book sales down 3% for the Year](#)

[Historical romance author Kathleen Givens recently passed away](#)

[Introducing GalleyCat Reviews](#)

[KIRKUS REVIEWS Sale and Revival is Imminent](#)

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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

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www.lsfwriters.com

[Become a Fan on](#)

President's Column by Gail Freeman

I do this flakey thing each year. On January 1st I write out what I want to accomplish for the upcoming year and then seal it away until after Christmas of that year. Before I think about what I want to put on the list for the upcoming year, I do one of these reflection type of things. You know, how close did I come to reaching my goals? Is it worth listing them again, or is it in the realm of Never Never Land so why do I bother to try each year? And the big one, did I actually achieve any of my goals?

The old stand-bys will be on the list again this year. It seems that they make the list almost every year, and while I'm not ready to put them in the "Never Never" category, some of them are getting close. I mean, I am going to lose weight, eventually. I will stop smoking. I will learn to be more forgiving. And then there are the goals that I think have a good chance if I just buckle down and get to it. Those closets will be cleaned out and the basement will be put in some type of order. Oh, and the big one, I will get published this year. I'm not nearly ready to put that one on the "Never Never" list.

But what really thrills me are the goals I put on the list in January and realize I actually did get to put a check mark next to them and say, "DONE!" One of the biggies on the list was "Retire." Well, as of December 28th, I'm no longer one of the gainfully employed, by choice. I'm now waiting eagerly for my first Social Security check. Here's hoping that will make it easier to accomplish some of the other goals—like finish the book and get published. Oh, and clean those bloody closets.

What does all this rambling have to do with Liberty States Fiction Writers? Well, on the top of last year's list was this little item that said, "Start a new writing group." Not that I accomplished this one on my own, mind you. I had a hell of a lot of help from some very dedicated people. And it was a group goal, a dream that was shared by the other founders, Charity, Rayna, Melinda, Michelle, Kathye, Anne, and Lois. But after a year, I think it's safe to say that working together, we have created something good, dare I say, "Magical." So good, in fact, that I created a separate list just for LSFW that I think has an excellent chance of getting one of those rare check marks come the end of December.

Here are some of my personal goals for the upcoming year. First, I want to see everyone rejoin because they like what we have done. How's that for a hint that it's time to renew your membership? Next, I want to get more ideas from the members on what they'd like to see accomplished for the upcoming year. The group was never meant to be a dictatorship, and it can only prosper if we know what others need and want. You can talk to any of the Board members about your ideas and wants. We really do listen.

Oh, and I want to see a successful conference this year. The list of speakers has grown, as has the list of editors and agents. Be sure to check out the changes on the website. And if you haven't signed up, put that one on your own personal list for the upcoming year.

There is one other item on that list. I know that at the end of the year my term as President will be over. The Board signed on for two years. I would dearly like to see some of our members step up to take on some of the volunteer positions. Help is always needed on the newsletter. We need someone to coordinate the SPA events. Another need is the website. The web goddess is looking for someone to help with updates that shouldn't take a lot of time, like updating the Amazon store. All I ask is that you give it some thought, and if you can devote an hour or two a month to help us run the organization, it would be much appreciated.

Here's hoping that all of you reach your own goals for the upcoming year.

Gail Freeman, President

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.



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Lost Your Muse? by Patt Mihailoff

Greek legend has it that Zeus (whoremonger that he was) stepped out on Hera, his long suffering queen and decided to spend *nine nights* with [Mnemosyne](#) the goddess of memory. I'll bet you anything she wished she could forget that night especially when she found herself pregnant with nine babies—all girls. There's simply no way she could be happy about having to push out all those little divine beings through an opening the size of a skirt zipper—but I digress.

So being the product two deities, these little ones weren't your everyday run-of-the-mill tear-up-a-mall in 1.5 seconds little kids—they were **The Muses**. Now I'm sure you know, or can look up, the names of them all, but the ones that concern us literary creative types might be Calliope—(Epic Poetry), Clio—(History), Erato—(Love Poetry), Melpomene—(Tragedy), and Thaleia—(Comedy).

You have to understand these girls; they were used to the good life. They lived on a sacred mountain with other gods for goodness's sake, and, according to Wikipedia, they had that lazy and **uber-vain Apollo** as their teacher, and spent a great deal of the time frolicking in the woods while he played his Lyre, or THEY played his Lyre for you erotica writers. (Okay! that was my bad).

As time went on, humans stopped believing in the gods and like everything else that no longer holds interest, they ceased to exist as a reality. So I figure before the big mental heave-ho really took hold, Zeus told his nine little moochers(The Muses) that they had to stop counting on him and go out and get a job. *"You are inspirations of fine arts, writing, music, dancing, so go out and motivate, damn it."*

So down to earth their essences came. At first, they were so happy to be of help that they went crazy and inspired their diaphanous little togas off as they sprinkled all kinds of creative joy juice onto the likes of Nora Roberts, Stephen King, and James Patterson, to name a few.

This went on for a while, and suddenly ordinary people (that would be you and me), decided we wanted to write as well. So The Muses sat around talking and said, “*Oh, what the hell!*” And soon regular people started getting published too. Oh Joy! Juices began flowing like wine out of a magical endless bottle as computer keys tapped and words filled the screen like bugs on a sticky bun.

If you're anything like me, you probably get writing jags so severe that you sit for hours and just pound those keys like you were making pizza dough for an army. Then out of nowhere—all of a sudden, WHAM! You stop! There's nothing except the blank portion of your screen and the cursor blinking at you like an annoying little gnat that won't go away. You wonder what the hell happened; after all, you were doing fine a minute ago, a day ago. But now there's just fuzz in your brain where words should be. ***Well, fear not, I have good news. It's not you. It's those Muses.***

First, you have to understand why they wander in the first place. They're women, they like to shop, they like men, and so off they go in search of both, just not necessarily in that order.

The thing is, sometimes their absences can have a detrimental effect on your writing psyche. You start doubting. ***Is it good enough? Should I re-write the first chapter? The second chapter—the whole book? Can I in fact even finish the darn book.***

So while you wait for your missing Muse to return, you go back and edit and re-edit and then edit some more. You take out, put in, change and (thankfully correct words like ***form*** when it should be ***from***), all the time wondering if your novel will *ever* be good enough.

I'm here to tell you not to fret. The muses are playful, egotistical deities that like to be stroked, coddled, and worshiped, so forget about them for a while. I guarantee they will be back because you know the Olympian gods never like to be ignored.

Okay, so what do you do in the meantime? Take a walk. You'll be surprised how fresh air will relax your overtaxed brain cells. Yoga is good, (but then stay away from the lotus pose thingy; most thighs are not made to be in the shape of a pretzel). Write something else. Start another book, a story, a poem or just write ***about the little brown dog and the boy that jumped over him***—anything, but do it *every single* day. Trust me, your muse will come running back like her butt was on fire and you have the last water hose in the world. Before you know it you will be back to writing like you never left.

However, if none of that works, email me, (pattkal@yahoo.com). I promise to get you back on track, and besides, I know where those heifers hang out.

Happy writing.



Photo by Anne Walradt, 7/12/1995, Nine muses in mosaic floor removed from island of Kos, now in Palace of the Grand Master, Old City, Rhodes, Greece.



Patt Mihailoff, a sixteen year former *New Yorker* and the author of *Four digital novels*, and one half of the *P.K. Eden* writing team, authors of *FIREBRAND*. In addition to fantasy romance, she has written and published mainstream fiction, erotica in a *NY Times* best selling author's anthology, romance and over a hundred short stories, and recently awarded Author of Year by the RWA New York Chapter.

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Theme as Dialectic by Alicia Rasley

Remember from Philosophy 101 the concept of "dialectic"? Okay, so you don't remember that, or maybe (like me) you barely escaped that class with a C. Probably you are not married (like me) to a former phil major who has a bad habit of quoting Hegel. (I asked him—the husband, not Hegel—whether he thought this formulation of theme as dialectic was supportable, and he said, "Well, as long as you aren't talking to a Hegelian stickler." So any Hegelian sticklers out there, this is your warning to stop reading!)

What is a dialectic? Well, to show a dialectic, you take a thesis—something believed—and then present the antithesis—an alternate or opposing belief, and together they form a new proposition, the synthesis, something that didn't exist until the debate created it. So you have

- Crime doesn't pay—thesis
- Crime does pay—antithesis
- Good police work can keep crime a risky proposition for a payday—synthesis.

The synthesis isn't just a combination of the thesis and antithesis, but something new that is understood only because we worked through the two alternatives—through conflict.

This dialectical construction is useful in revising your plot to develop your theme.

The beginning of your story can start the process of "theme-making." So the first part might show a cop arresting a criminal and thinking that she just taught him a lesson—crime doesn't pay. She might even say that out loud: "Hey, you jerk, get a real job. Haven't you heard crime doesn't pay?" You might show her telling the victim, "Don't worry. He's being punished for what he did to you."

But that is likely to be kind of a naïve story, don't you think? If that's all there is? So that's why the second part of the story might show the antithesis of the theme. With "crime doesn't pay" as the thesis in the first part, you might show your cop heroine leaving the courthouse angry because the defendant got off on a technicality—crime paying off. That's the antithesis.

But after that antithesis, you might explore why that crime paid (great defense attorney? Cops screwing up?) and then show how that changes. Maybe the heroine cop realizes what went wrong and decides it won't go wrong that way next time—she'll be more careful about reading the rights, or she'll wait for the search warrant, or she'll get the corrupt lieutenant out of the department. In the third part of the story is the presentation of the synthesis, where we—through the process of reading the whole story—get the theme. Something changes, so at the end, we learn that crime doesn't pay... if cops do copping the right way. :)

That is, you aren't just trying to prove a point. You're trying to show the importance of the story events, the uniqueness of the events. "Sometimes crime pays, but a good cop can make sure crime doesn't pay." It's not a universal truth... but rather true because the characters have learned something or changed their behavior or their approach. That actually makes your story more important, because it's through this combination of events that the theme is created.

Let's think of another dialectic that can be useful in developing a story theme. Here's one very common in romance:

Thesis: You can escape your past.

Antithesis: You can never escape your past.

Synthesis: Only by confronting and accepting your past can you transcend it.

So let's see how that can work in a story. Notice how effectively this works within a three-act structure.

Thesis: As the story opens, Hero has successfully overcome his past and no one in his present knows that he was sent to reform school for a crime or is the son of the town drunk or whatever. You might have a couple scenes that show him in his new persona as the perfect FBI agent or the high school principal, something respectable that no one from his old life would have predicted. He hardly even thinks about those old days and that old self. Until....

Antithesis: Something happens. He is assigned a case that will take him back to the old hometown, or an old friend comes to his school needing help. So what does he do? Does he try to hide the truth, conceal the past? Does he accept the assignment or help the friend, assuming that he can successfully keep the past at bay? Then what? Rising conflict, huh?

Synthesis: Some imperative in the external plot (or in a romance, maybe in the romantic plot) makes him decide to come clean about his past, or use his past, or understand his past (for example, he might realize why his father was a drunk, or realize who framed him for the crime). This helps him in some way resolve the external conflict (maybe the one who framed him is the one he determines is the criminal sought by the FBI). Now that he has accepted his past and described it honestly and accepted who he was, he can go on to become who he is without doubt or anxiety. (And in a romance, now that he is honest about the past, he can find true love.)

Notice that if you want this to be a tragedy, you might have the synthesis happen only in negation—that is, because Hamlet cannot balance his needs for both certainty and revenge, he ends up slaughtered. (That means the reader will get that he SHOULD have balanced those needs.)

Okay, very pretty, and Hegel ought to be proud! But what use is this to you the writer?

1) First, keep in mind that you want to DEVELOP theme. That is, you want to use the story as a process to get to the theme in the end. You don't want to start with the theme and just repeat it over and over—that's propaganda, not story. So if your theme is "Crime doesn't pay," you don't want to have the plot be a series of episodes of criminals screwing up and getting caught, because that just pounds a message home instead of allowing the story to develop the message. The reader should arrive at the theme by reading the whole story, and not "get" the theme until the very end.

2) Theme is usually developed by the story and is secondary to the story. That is, write your story and have fun with that. Make it a good story with interesting characters who change because of the plot and also change the plot by their actions and reactions. Then go back and see if you can understand what message the reader will get (or you want the reader to get) through reading this. Try to formulate a dialectic that

shows the process of making this theme.

3) Now look at the events of the plot. (This is NOT the way all plots need to be—just if you want to make the theme work this way.) See if there are events that seem out of place, like there's a "crime doesn't pay" event near the end of the second act, when the conflict ought to be rising in antithesis. Maybe that's an event you should move to the first act, or maybe you want it in the second act but make it more ambiguous or ambivalent—the criminal seems to get away with it, but in fact this time his escape leads to the cop finding an important clue. Or the criminal seems to get away with it, but he's injured. That is, if the events don't fall into this schema, they might be fine (plot and character are more important than theme!). But it might be a sign that you've reverted to a simple event when you actually need a complex one.

4) Look at that ending. If all it does is affirm the thesis (the cops don't change, but they win anyway) or the antithesis (the criminal is acquitted and walks out of the courthouse smirking), you might not have created a new synthesis, and so the theme is not going to really evolve (but rather just circle back). See if you can come up with a climactic event that shows a change from the earlier two propositions. You might also read over the ending and make sure this expresses a theme that you want. (You might not want a theme of "crime pays a lot better than police work," exemplified when the cop heroine, inspired by the master criminal's success, uses her inside knowledge to break into the bank and steal a million dollars.)

5) Two traditional techniques that help develop theme:

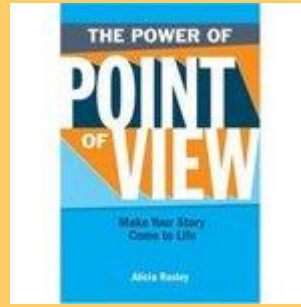
Parallel scenes: This means having a pair of scenes that center on the same sort of event, one early in the story, one later. In the early part of the story, the event develops in a way that might show the "before" situation. But the second of the pair, in the end, shows the same sort of event developing differently because something has changed.

Foil: A similar "paired" technique is the use of a **foil**. The foil is much like the protagonist in some ways, but is un-alike in some important aspect, and it's the difference between the two that leads to their separate fates. Used correctly, the foil can support the theme by showing what happens when the main character chooses the "thematic way" and the foil chooses another way. Usually the foil's different fate supports the theme by showing the difference between his fate and the protagonist's—the protagonist usually succeeds by changing his actions, by doing the right thing.

Notice that both parallel scenes and foils use the similarity/difference dynamic. You might not want to be quite so dualistic, but it's good to keep in mind that the reader is going to figure the theme out from your scenes—the actions and reactions of characters and plot events. So you never want two scenes to evolve the same way, even if they involve the same basic event. (For example, I had a story where the heroine's son had 4 "grief scenes" where he reacted to his father's death. I realized that I had to make each different to show the progression of grief for him—he starts out being open about his sorrow, and then gradually denies it, and then finally acts out with anger... this all supporting the theme that keeping secrets is destructive of the family.)

You don't have to change the whole trajectory of the plot to develop the theme. Look at the scenes you already have and think about how you can modify them to better express whatever point in the theme-creation you're at right then. But keep in mind, this is probably a revision task—not for the drafting stage. You don't want the theme to direct the story, but rather derive from it.

RITA-award-winner Alicia Rasley is the author of THE POWER OF POINT OF VIEW and THE STORY WITHIN PLOTBOOK. She is a writing instructor at a state college and a writing tutor at another, and a nationally known writing workshop leader. She has also been a line editor at a small print press, and she advises writers at www.edittorrent.blogspot.com. Her writing articles are archived at www.rasley.com.



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Homonyms, AKA Confused Words by Patti Giordani

This article illustrates words that are often confused and gives examples of how to use them correctly. Almost every day, I still see the same mistakes—in the newspaper, advertisements, books, e-mails, letters, and more.

To successfully practice the craft of writing, we must have command of the language, including knowing the difference between words that sound the same or almost the same as each other.

A **homonym** is a word with the same pronunciation as another but with a different meaning, origin and, usually, spelling.

Its, it's: ***Its* is the possessive of *it* (Has your dog had its shots this year?). *It's* is a contraction for either *it is* (It's going to rain today) or *it has* (It's been a long day).**

Their, they're, there: *Their* is the possessive of *they* (Is that their cat?). *They're* is a contraction for *they are* (They're going to Italy.) *There* means *at or in that place* (Put the table over *there*.)

To, too, two: *To* means *in the direction of* (Go to the end of the street). *Too* means *in addition* (She has a cat too). *Two* is the *number between one and three* (She has two cats).

Whose, who's: *Whose* is the possessive of *who* (Whose car is that?). *Who's* is a contraction for either *who is* (Who's going with me?) or *who has* (Anyone who's finished may leave now.)

Your, you're: *Your* is the possessive of *you* (Here's your hat). *You're* is a contraction of *you are* (You're very welcome).

Remember: An apostrophe is standing in for the missing letters in a contraction.

The following words are similar-sounding but have different meanings:

Accept: allow
Except: not including

Access: entry to
Excess: too much

Adverse: difficult
Averse: opposed to

Advice: (noun) counsel
Advise: (verb) to give counsel

Affect: (verb) to influence
Effect: (noun) consequence, (verb) to cause

Allude: to refer to
Elude: to escape

Allusion: a reference
Illusion: a false impression

Are: form of the verb *to be*
Our: possessive pronoun

Breath: (noun) an inhalation
Breathe: (verb) to inhale

Conscience: moral guide
Conscious: aware of

Device: a thing, plan, scheme
Devise: to fashion, to invent

Elicit: to evoke
Illicit: illegal

Eminent: famous
Imminent: about to occur

Faith: belief, confidence
Fate: destiny

Loose: not fastened
Lose: to misplace

Moral: virtuous
Morale: spirit, feeling

Personal: private
Personnel: work force

Quiet: not noisy
Quite: very

Than: compared with
Then: at that time

Through: across
Thorough: complete, entire

Wear: to have on

Were: past tense of the verb *to be*

If you're not sure of the meaning, look it up. Editors know the difference.

Questions? Grammar gripes? Send them to me at pattieq1@ptd.net

Pattie Giordani is an editor at a national nonprofit association and freelances for newspapers and magazines. Previously she was assistant features editor at a daily newspaper, and has taught noncredit courses in grammar and writing at a local community college. She is president and publicity chair for the Pocono-Lehigh Romance Writers (this article originally appeared in the group's newsletter in May and June 2004) and writes a grammar column for the monthly newsletter.



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Those Pesky Lines: Hyphens and Em & En Dashes by Tess Lamont

I could never keep the en dash, the em dash, and the hyphen straight and chose to avoid using them. Did avoidance help my writing? No. In fact, when used correctly, these tiny little lines can make quite a difference. For instance, the em dash helps a reader “hear” your story with the pacing you intend—almost as if you are telling the story in your own cadence. What a wonderful tool for an author to have! Interested in hearing more?

The En Dash and the Em Dash

The en dash and the em dash are named according to their lengths. The en dash is the length of an *N*; the em dash is the length of an *M*.

En Dash

The en dash means “through.” It is used to indicate inclusive dates and numbers: July 9–August 17; pp. 37–59.

Em Dash

The em dash is commonly referred to as, simply, “the dash.” It

- indicates sudden breaks (in thought, sentence structure, or interruption in dialogue)
“I will never—,” Emma began.
“I won’t be long”—her voice lowered to a husky whisper—“stay right here.”
- amplifies or explains
The sisters—Charlotte, Emily, and Anne—all loved to write.
He could not bear it. His wife—the love of his life—was missing.
- separates a parenthetical or digressive element
Women—nothing scared him more.

For clarity, it is best never to use more than two em dashes per sentence.

What about the 2-em and 3-em dashes?

There are other uses to the em dash. The 2-em (twice the length of the regular em dash) is used to show a missing word or part of a word, to disguise an expletive or to disguise a name. When a part of word is missing, no space appears between the part of the word and the 2-em dash, but a space follows the 2-em dash (representing the end of the word) “Lady A— was seen in a compromising position.”

The 3-em dash is used in a bibliography to show that the same author or editor in preceding entry is being referenced.

Hyphens

Guidelines for the use of hyphens are many, with some usage coming down to a matter of personal taste. In general, hyphens

- break words that do not fit on a justified line of type
He promised to be with her al-ways.
- separate compound words
Emma looked down on her middle-class neighbors.
- separate characters in number sequences
The book’s ISBN number is 0-226-10403-6
- show spelling or pronunciation
“My name is Anne; that’s A-n-n-e, not A-n-n.
The title is pronounced Vi-count, not Vis-count.
- spell out ages or join numbers
Calliope’s three-year period of writer’s block ended when she turned fifty-five.
- combine words that include a prepositional phrase
Sometimes you can be such a stick-in-the-mud.

When a hyphen is used to connect compound words or phrasal adjectives, its purpose is to avoid ambiguity. Generally, when an adjective and noun (or adjective and a participle) are used **together** to describe a noun, they should be hyphenated, **unless** they appear after the noun they describe.

*You have created a very open-hearted heroine. **BUT** Your heroine comes across as very open hearted.*

*She liked to create free-form sculpture. **BUT** The sculpture she created was free form.*

A hyphen is never used with words ending with -ly.

She was one intensely excited debutante.

The most common usage of the hyphen, breaking words that do not fit on a justified line of type, is done automatically by most word processors. However, if the word is not in the dictionary of your word processor, the program will hyphenate according to mathematical rules. To be safe, you should always check the words automatically hyphenated by your word processor.

Typing

There are no individual keys that display the en dash or the em dash. *The Chicago Manual of Style* advises, unless otherwise instructed by an editor, “Use a single hyphen both for a hyphen or for an en dash, two hyphens for an em dash, four hyphens for a 2 em dash and six hyphens for a 3 em dash.” In Microsoft Word, en and em dashes can be created by pulling down the “Insert” menu, clicking on “Symbol,” and going to the “special characters” window. The en and em dashes appear on the list. Recent Word programs (2003 or later) form an em dash by typing two hypens and hitting the space bar following whatever letter or word follows the double hyphen: hyphen, hyphen, letter (or word), space bar. Note that no space appears preceding or following the double hyphen.

With only two exceptions, there should be no space on either side of the em dash, the en dash or the hyphen. The first exception, stated earlier in this article, is when the 2-em dash is substituted for a missing (or partially missing) name or word. The second exception is with a hanging hyphen (for example, the word “eighteenth” in the phrase “eighteenth- and nineteenth-century reference books”). In both exceptions, the symbol used will have a space after—but not before unless otherwise instructed by their editors.

The en dash, em dash, and hyphen have become less of a mystery for me and, I hope, for you as well. Next, armed with my well-worn *Chicago Manual of Style*, I’m off to tackle colons and semi-colons. Wish me luck...

Tess Lamont used this article to self-educate. She hopes you will find it useful—not-to-mention interesting. Her erotic short, **BOUND TO BE MINE**, will be released by *The Wild Rose Press* in February of 2010. Updates can be found at www.tesslamont.com.



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5 Ways to Use Your Free Nightly Uploads (Dreams) to Catalyze Your Writing by Paula Chafee Scardamalia

If you are looking for a new source of inspiration or even some fresh ideas for your current manuscript, have you thought of mining your sleep dreams for the wealth of material available there?

Yes, you may have used some of your dreams for character dreams, or even made up dreams for your characters in order to serve the story line or character development, but have you ever used the material in your dreams as a jumping off place for story ideas, characters, and even setting?

Before you begin to use your dreams this way, it is helpful to know how to record your dreams so you don't forget them.

First, when you waken from a dream, don't move until you've captured the dream in your mind as completely as possible. Gravity plays tricks on the brain so play it forward, rewind, and play it again until you have it before you move.

Second, give the dream a title and date it. If you keep a journal of your dreams, both the title and the date come in handy if you want to refer back to it, especially if you also list the dream by date and title at the front of the journal. Also, titling the dream is good practice for our writing.

Third, record the dream in present tense. Writing in present tense helps us to recall more of the details and action of the dream. You might also make note of how the dream makes you feel.

Then you can use all this free material that is uploaded nightly in your fiction in five ways.

NARRATIVE IDEA—A writer's most common use of dreams is as the initial creative impulse for story, plot, or character. Naomi Epel in her book, *Writers Dreaming*, writes about William Styron's dream of "a woman he had known in his early twenties. He could see her standing in a hallway, her arms full of books, the blue numbers of a tattoo visible beneath her sleeve." From the dream, Styron decides to abandon his current project and, going directly to his studio, writes the opening paragraphs of *Sophie's Choice*.

We all have dreams that seem more like someone else's story rather than our own. If we are recording our dreams, especially the more story-like dreams, then we always have ideas at hand for future work.

MOOD AND METAPHOR—If you want to use a particular dream for metaphor or mood, go back through the dream and underline any words or phrases that you respond to strongly or any images that strike your fancy. For instance, I had a dream of a tree silhouetted against a night sky and in the tree were eight screech owls! I might use that image as a particularly potent setting for a scene in a fantasy or murder mystery, or even as a dream image within a character's dream, making use of the symbolism of eight and owls to convey a feeling of warning or foreboding.

V.I.D.P.S (VERY IMPORTANT DREAM PEOPLE!)—Just as the people sitting next to us on the bus are grist for our creative mills, so too are our dream characters. And they will fade into the ether never to return if we don't capture them in our dream journal.

When dream characters demand your attention or make you curious, first record their names. If you have no name, then give the character a name according to her role in the dream, for example, "mother," "scary old man," "benevolent guide." Write a description of the character, including her clothing. Does the person remind you of someone from waking reality? Is there something about this person's character that plays into your current project? Or, like Styron's Sophie, gives you an idea for a new work?

Even more intriguing, does the character act as a messenger rather than a performer, bringing you information about your writing? What does he or she have to say to you if you dialogue with that character

DREAMSCAPES—How many times have you had a dream where the setting looks like no place you've ever been before? How many of those dreamscapes would make a wonderful setting for story?

If you want to make the most of a dreamscape, record the setting, describing it in as much detail as possible. Does this place have a name? A time period? Is this place to be found in waking reality, for example, Pittsburgh? Or is it in another realm such as Sleeping Beauty's castle covered with nettles? Are there people in this dreamscape and, if so, what are they doing? What emotion does this place evoke? Why?

CHARACTER'S DREAMS—You may already use this technique. Recorded dreams can serve as dreams for your own characters when they may be experiencing similar challenges or opportunities such as relationships, changes in career, or illness. Using your own dreams or modifying them to suit the story will give the character's dream sequence a ring of truth—and originality.

Fortunately for us, these free nightly uploads are never ending. With practice recording your dreams and playing with the material in them, you never have to worry about running out of ideas or inspiration for your writing. And think of all the creative work you are doing while you are sleeping. What a time-saver!

Happy dreaming!

Paula Chaffee Scardamalia is a creativity coach, tarot and dream intuitive, a speaker, writer and the award-winning author of *WEAVING A WOMAN'S LIFE: SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM THE LOOM*. Using dreams, tarot, and rituals, she works to help her clients uncover the hidden creative vision, and create a step-by-step plan for developing and manifesting that vision while staying connected to the Muse, and living an inspired, gutsy and productive creative life. You can learn more about her at www.diviningthemuse.com, and sign up for her free weekly newsletter, *Divine Muse-ings*, for women who want to live inspired, gutsy, and productive creative lives, at <http://www.diviningthemuse.com/landing/signupland.php>.



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