

# The Gabriel Writer

For The San Gabriel Writers' League  
www.SGWL.net

June 2011

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## Durwood "DJ" Heinrich to Speak at June Meeting

By DJ Heinrich

**DJ Heinrich** will speak at the SGWL June meeting about several key principles from his book *Attack Out of the Sun*. Specifically, he will address how we can **engage** or **re-engage** using the important elements of action—*aspire, anticipate, attack, appraise, and appreciate*. His discussion will focus on how we can avoid or overcome stagnation, from simple procrastination to writer's block to outright immobility.

Dr. Durwood "DJ" Heinrich is a writer, motivational speaker, trainer, safety consultant, commercial pilot, and Certified Flight Instructor. He spent most of his 41-year aviation career as the Director of Aviation and Chief Pilot for two major corporations. Prior to joining those companies, Dr. Heinrich served in the U.S. Air Force as a T-38 Master Instructor Pilot. As an Airline Transport Pilot, Instructor Pilot, and Pilot Examiner, he has accumulated over 14,000 accident-free flight hours. He also served as the Central Regional Representative for the National Business Aviation Association where he had responsibility for nine states.

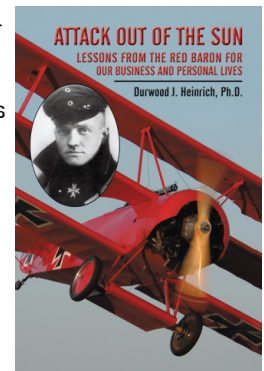


Dr. Heinrich holds a Bachelor's Degree in Aerospace Engineering from Texas A&M, a Master of Science Degree in Management and Administrative Sciences from the University of Texas, and a Ph.D. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from Capella University. He is also a graduate of the University of Southern California's Aviation Safety and Accident Investigation School.

In his book, *Attack Out of the Sun*, Dr. Heinrich explores the life of Manfred von Richthofen (The Red Baron), a man who lived to be only twenty-five years old but who still had a tremendous impact on the lives of many. Heinrich examines the Red Baron's personality, technical skills, management style, leadership ability, strategies, and undaunted determination. Manfred von Richthofen is widely known as the famous pilot who achieved an incredible eighty aerial victories, eclipsing all other aces of World War I. He became a living legend not only to the German people, but also to his opponents, who admired his prowess and affectionately referred to him as the Red Baron. Against the backdrop of Richthofen's positive attributes as a wartime hero, *Attack Out of the Sun* focuses on preparation and planning for success, execution for results, and evaluation and renewal in order to help you improve your business interactions and personal life.

In addition to his book, *Attack Out of the Sun*, Dr. Heinrich has published dozens of papers and conducted numerous presentations, seminars, workshops, and webinars on Manfred von Richthofen and a variety of aviation safety-related issues. Dr. Heinrich's broad education in engineering, business, and psychology coupled with his considerable background in management, leadership, and the stressful environment associated with piloting military and commercial aircraft make him uniquely qualified to write, train, consult, and entertain. He has been conducting presentations before large audiences since 1997 and has been published numerous times since 1998.

Dr. Heinrich is currently writing his second book, *What I Learned at 45,000 Feet*. He is the Secretary/Historian for the San Gabriel Writers League. He writes monthly articles for *The Quiet Birdmen Beam* (The Quiet Birdmen aviation organization publication).



# Minutes for May 2011 meeting

The May 5, 2011 meeting of the **San Gabriel Writers' League** was called to order by **President Sam Holland**.

**Kayla Marnach** read the **Treasurer's Report**.

**Carol Menchu** encouraged the **Membership** to submit their articles for **The Gabriel Writer** newsletter.

## New Business

**Sam Holland** announced that there will be a **Workshop** (open to **SGWL Membership**, aspiring writers, and the general public) in late September, most likely on the 24<sup>th</sup>. He encouraged the **Membership** to sign up for the **Steering Committee** following the meeting.

**Sam Holland** introduced and thanked **SGWL's** new **Publicity Chair and Board member Sharon Lyle**.

**Sam Holland** announced the introduction of a new feature to the monthly **Membership Meeting**: "**Win the President's Stuff**." Following correct responses by two lucky contestants, **Sam** awarded each with a book.

The **Membership** was informed that used books given to **The Caring Place** entitled the donor to deduct one-half of their list prices from his or her income tax.

## Announcements and Successes

**Jeanell Bolton** won **First Place** in the **Single Title Category** of the **Southern Magic** (Birmingham Chapter of **Romance Writers of America**) **2011 Linda Howard Award of Excellence** romance writing contest for her book *Learning Pleasure*. She also won **Honorable Mention** in the **2011 North Texas Romance Writers of America Great Expectations** contest in the **Single Title Category** for *Learning Pleasure*.

**Dave Caimbrone** recently sent his latest mystery novel (*The Trashy Gourmet*) to his publisher.

**C. Wayne Dawson** had two articles accepted by the *History Magazine*. The April/May 2011 issue features his **The 1863 Siege of Vienna**. He has also had two articles recently published in *Focus on Georgetown* magazine (**A Springtime Tradition**, Mar 2011; and **Spiritual Smack Down**, Apr 2011).

**Sylvia Dickey Smith** received an engraved invitation to the inaugural gathering of **Phenomenal Women**, in Mineral Wells, Texas.

**Susan Miller** had two short stories published.

**Jason Minor** announced that he is looking for articles for an upcoming folklore anthology for charity. No deadlines have yet been established.

## Program

**Kayla Marnach** introduced guest speaker, poet, author, and Editor **Scott Wiggerman**, who presented "A Selection of Poems to be Published." Scott delighted the **Membership** by reading several poems and discussed the process of being getting poems published in the *Texas Poetry Calendar* (**Dos Gatos Press**). He indicated that this year's week-long **2011 Summer Writing Retreat** will be held at **Sul Ross State University** in scenic Alpine, deep in the heart of West Texas, July 25-29<sup>th</sup>. Visit <http://writersleague.org/programs/swa.html> for more information.

Respectfully submitted,  
Durwood "DJ" Heinrich, secretary

## 2011 Programs

June.....Attack Out of the Sun.....Durwood Heinrich, author, business consultant

July.....Writing, Editing and the Long Road to Getting Published.....James Parker, author

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## Member(s): New and/or Changes

### New Members:

**Like most writers**, I love to read. Fiction, non-fiction, mystery, business, sports, the classics... I have, some would say, eclectic taste. This can make it hard for me to decide which book I'm going to read next. I usually end up reading 30 to 50 pages of four or five books before I settle on the one I want to see through to the end. Call it literary ADD.

This weekend I finished John Scalzi's *The Android's Dream* and began my search for the book of the moment. *The Chris Farley Show* was the first to pass under my nose only to give way to *Dance on Her Grave* (written by our own Sylvia Dickey Smith) which lasted thirty wonderful pages until my neighbor loaned my wife *The Hunger Games* and I stole it from her when she wasn't looking. For whatever reason it fed a part of me that was wanting. Once I'm finished with *Hunger Games*, both *Chris Farley* and *Dance* will make it back into the rotation, but honestly, I've got my eye on that biography of Dean Koontz that's been sitting on my shelf for six years. It's strange how some books jut start to sing to me from their perch. Because of this, some books will stay in the rotation for a long time, but this is not a statement on the quality of the book. Elizabeth Moon's *Remnant Population* stayed in the book of the moment rotation for almost a year before it made it front and center, and that book is excellent front to back.

Of course, when you're a writer, reading is not just entertainment- its education. Each book is a fascinating journey on how to (and sometimes how *not* to) write. It's also a great way to get fodder for your own stories or give you inspiration and motivation.

For years I put off reading- having kids will put a lot of things on hold- and I was aghast at how much harder it was

to write. I didn't put the two together at the time, but looking back I can see that it's a lot like working out- if I don't hit the treadmill frequently enough, then that flight of stairs becomes a huffing and puffing chore. The more I read, the easier the words flow when I write, and the more I write, the more I'm *able* to write.

So if you're not already, I challenge you to read. More than that, I'm unveiling the President's Book of the Month Selection. That's right, I'm going to foist my opinions on you and because I'm the president you have to listen. Unless you've already stopped reading, of course, in which case I guess I'm foisting nothing on you but you'll miss out on some awfully keen recommendations.

This month's official selection: *On Writing* by Stephen King. Part memoir, part writing how to it's a great read whether or not you're a fan of King (and if you're not read *The Shining* or *The Dead Zone* and you probably will be).

This month's official alternate: *The Accidental Billionaires: The Founding of Facebook* by Ben Mezrich. Regardless of how you feel about Facebook, this is a fascinating character study and a well written account of how the social networking site came to be. The ambitious among you can compare it to the tightly written award winning silver screen adaptation *The Social Network*.



## Historic Event By The Prez

**Those who were** fortunate enough to attend the May 5<sup>th</sup> meeting witnessed a historic event- the first ever opportunity to WIN THE PREZDENT'S STUFF!

Like most of you, I have a fairly large library, but not a very large space to contain it, so from time to time I have to cull the good from the great and make a pilgrimage to Half Price Books. Sometimes, though, there is a treasure that I just can't bear to see go and pine to give it as a gift. I want to give you a gift!

My treasures can be your treasures! All you have to do to be eligible is attend a SGWL meeting, wait for the WIN THE PREZDENT'S STUFF section of the meeting and then answer a simple question. If you answer correctly, the prize is yours!

Don't take my word for it, ask our inaugural winners, C Wayne Dawson and Helen Nardecchia! Wayne won the Writer's Digest book *Magazine Article Writing* and Helen received a copy of *Blood Music*- one of my favorite books written by Hugo and Nebula award winning author Greg Bear.

What treasure will be given away next? Come to the next meeting and find out! Maybe you can

## WIN THE PREZDENT'S STUFF



# Why Corporations Hire Private Military Contractors

## Part One by D. Alan Johnson

**Introduction:** Private Military Contractors are in demand all over the world by governments seeking to augment their military and maintain an edge over their adversaries. Contractors take care of high tech missiles and free up fighting soldiers by managing mess halls. But another facet of this PMC business is the corporate sector. These jobs are never advertized, but contractors play a part in the strategic decision making and vital running of a large multinational.

In Part One we discussed how corporations use Private Military Contractors to boost their security mechanisms, especially in troubled areas. This article will deal with the corporate need for:

### Intelligence

This has been called the Information Age, but we have moved past that and into the Intelligence Age. Information is only a collection of facts. While valuable, the number of facts in the world has multiplied to the point that one can drown in the deluge of new information pouring out every day. No executive can keep up with the reading required, much less think through the implications of that mass of information.

Intelligence, on the other hand is information that has been analyzed by a human brain. Irrelevant facts are thrown out. Significant tidbits are emphasized. Then patterns, intersections, coincidences, and inferences are mixed with human judgment and intuition to bring out a report about the subject at hand. This report will include a recommendation for action.

Governments have used intelligence collection, analysis, and reporting for centuries. Sun Tzu wrote of the need for intelligence. One of the greatest spymasters in history was a general named George Washington. Only in the last two hundred years have corporations started to use these tools to protect and grow their businesses.

The Japanese trading companies were some of the first to use a codified and formal intelligence system. The first recorded use of a corporate intelligence department in the USA is John D. Rockefeller of Standard Oil in 1878. His intelligence department used a massive card file cross-referenced with information on his competitors, customers, suppliers, and financiers. But over 100 years passed before US corporations embraced competitive intelligence. It took several highly publicized corporate espionage cases such as the one where Boeing lost a huge amount of Research and Development data to Airbus to change the American mindset. Since then, almost every corporation in the Fortune 500 has started a competitive intelligence department.

A disclaimer goes here. Intelligence is legal. Espionage is not. The largest association of business intelligence practitioners, the Strategic and Competitive Intelligence Professionals abides by a strict code of conduct. You can read the Code of Conduct at <http://www.scip.org/>.

In this environment, American companies are hiring Private Military Contractors both as permanent employees and on a project by project basis. These men and women have a set of skills that easily transfer into the civilian world such as foreign language, elicitation, agent recruitment and development, and analysis. Their corporate clients usually task them with organization, collection, and counter-intelligence.

### Organization

When a corporation realizes that they need a Competitive Intelligence Department, they often look to the PMC community to find a person or team to organize the unit. Often these groups are hidden within the Security Department. Other times they are an office reporting directly to the CEO and listed on the Organizational Chart as the "Special Studies Task Force" or other such nonsense.

Most often the companies look to retired officers from Military Intelligence, Special Forces, or the CIA. Occasionally, persons are chosen from the law enforcement field such as the FBI or Customs. I have seen an East Texas Sheriff hired to run a large unit in West Africa. These men and women are tasked with "standing up" an intelligence unit from scratch.

This means:

- ♦Hiring collection agents, analysts, researchers, and writers
- ♦Developing written policies and procedures
- ♦Teaching unit personnel how to fit into the intelligence cycle
- ♦Teaching senior corporate officers the uses and limitations of the Unit
- ♦Developing a team that includes senior management, agents, and analysts.

Temporary personnel are often hired to organize for big events. The biggest of these events are the industry's annual trade shows. While most see these extravaganzas as a time to show new wares to potential customers, the wise CEO sees an intelligence opportunity and, concurrently, an intelligence nightmare. Senior management, presenters, salesmen, and booth personnel all need to be briefed on how to elicit information from customers and competitors, who to report to, and how to keep from giving away important information. Senior management is briefed on other senior management, including personal and family data, plus who to seek out and who to avoid.

The temporary personnel may also be used to man the command center, usually a room in the convention hotel. Key corporate officers will report for a morning brief and a daily debrief. Some may even be wired for sound and video.

The number of temps hired could be as low as one for a plumbers' convention, or as high as twenty-five for the Paris Air Show, the Mother of All Trade Shows.

### Collection

Established intelligence units often hire free lance PMC's to assist in collection efforts. When one company is familiar with another's intelligence personnel, a fresh face might just be the ticket. Collection can be drinking beer in a dive known to be a hangout of company scientists to flying an aircraft over the competitor's offices and tracking the movements of the CEO and CFO.

The most sophisticated collection operations take place in war zones where a company may hire a professional to run a string of agents reporting on a guerrilla group, drug cartels, or a hostile warlord. These corporate field agents are careful not to go against US policy, and most share any intelligence gathered with the US intelligence community.

My one experience with this type of operation included a weekly CD-ROM dropped off to a senior US agent. The encrypted CD contained both raw reports and our analysis of information from our agents. The host nation knew of our



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operations. In fact, several times I took their intelligence chief out on missions. Sometimes we shared our finds with the host nation, and sometimes they were company confidential. But we always shared with US intelligence.

### Counter-Intelligence

Often a corporation is so busy trying to find out about their competitors, foreign governments, and criminals in their area of operations that they forget that there are folks trying to get their secrets. Smart corporations hire contractors to survey their own operations and identify weaknesses where R&D, marketing plans, proprietary processes, and pricing structures could be in danger of being snagged by a competing intelligence professional.

The first place that a contractor will look is at the key personnel. Scientists have been known to give out precious R&D data during a phone interview to a person posing as a student researching a graduate dissertation. Others tend to brag at the bar.

So, the consultant gives classes to senior management, executive assistants, scientists, accountants, and technical writers. These classes zero in on how to tell when one is being pumped for confidential data, how to handle sensitive documents, and what the signs are that one is

being surveilled.

Some corporations even hire a consultant to probe their own defenses. In one test like this, a well-known consultant showed up at the CEO's office after just a few days with an almost complete picture of the company's profit and loss, balance sheet, pricing structure, and master marketing plan. It only took a couple of nights at a bar talking with some accountants and a few hours diving in the dumpster where he recovered imperfect copies that had not been shredded.

In order to make strategic decisions, corporate officers and boards must have current intelligence. More organizations are relying upon a formal intelligence unit. As the unit matures, PMC's provide the flex needed to fill in for big trade shows and for expansion to dangerous overseas bases. Finally, the wise company understands counter-intelligence and their own vulnerability. They hire skilled men and women to plug the gaps in their own backyard. Private Military Contractors are often the only ones with the skill sets needed to stand up an intelligence department, oversee a collection effort, and institute a counter-intelligence program.

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## Poetry and Novels Have a Lot in Common by Kayla Marnach

**I have come** to consider poems as short novels in rhythm and rhyme. Our language is in iambic pentameter, just read Shakespeare and Dean Koontz. And during Scott Wiggerman's presentation I realized there is a bit of poetry in all of us.

Editor of *Texas Poetry Calendar*, Scott shared the process of producing a book of poetry. Receiving approximately 670 poems, in a wide variety of styles Scott stressed, which goes to the heart of any submission, the importance of following guidelines. He shared several stories of ineligible submissions due to not following guidelines. Each submission is given a number (guideline: "No name on any pages") and once read, a rating by Scott and his co-editor, Cindy Huyser. Any entry having a wide disparity between ratings is re-evaluated. David Meischen, managing editor, also assists in this process.

Only after a work has been accepted is the author's name revealed, and he shared how difficult it is to tell individuals, especially well established writers, that their entry didn't make it to the final cut. He works with each author, asking some to edit their work, making it cleaner, brighter, more impactful, just as editors of our novels work with us. This year he worked with 91 writers. Of those who will be appearing in the **Texas poetry Calendar**, 35% are 1<sup>st</sup> time authors and for many 1<sup>st</sup> time published (pretty good odds).

Another similarity between poems and novels is the "fish head." In a novel, often the first and possibly the second chapters can be eliminated because they are just set up for the story. In a poem the first line or maybe a whole stanza might be a "starter line" or "starter stanza" and needs to be eliminated. "Fish heads and starter lines" are written because the author does not trust the audience to "get it." With all our works we have to trust our readers to realize where we're coming from...remember RUE! (Resist the Urge to Explain!)

As with all editors, time is precious. He has from February to June to have all works completed and submitted to the

printer. So, just like a novel, if an entry doesn't have an immediate hook, it goes to the slush pile. Therefore it's just as important in poetry as it is in novels, to grab your reader, draw them in and keep their attention wondering what will happen next. If you'd like to submit a poem for the 2013 calendar, send it to: <http://www.dosgatospress.org/submissions.html>.

I talked with Scott after the meeting and he sent the following:

*Copies of 2012 Texas Poetry Calendar should be available by July 1 (if not sooner). Copies are, of course, available directly from us, and they are also available at several area bookstores: BookPeople, BookWoman, and right there in Georgetown at the Hill Country Bookstore (we stopped in there while in G-town to make sure the new owner will continue to carry the calendars--and yes). The Wingbeats exercise book should also be available around that time, though that may need to be ordered directly from us. Neither book is up on the website yet because we're waiting for the covers to be perfected, but hopefully that will be very soon: <http://www.dosgatospress.org>*

*Hey, for being such a great audience, how about if we let y'all in on the special pre-order price of 20% off the new calendar if ordered before June 1? (I don't know if this would work because I'm not sure when your newsletter goes out.) We don't offer this on our website (it's usually reserved for those on our mailing list), but if your members write to me for an order form mentioning SGWL, I'll send them one: [editors@dosgatospress.org](mailto:editors@dosgatospress.org)*

So, Scott left us with a challenge. In your favorite book, find your favorite line. Dissect it, break down the pattern of noun, adjective, subject, verb, etc. in whatever order they're written. Then write a paragraph using that pattern and recreate that rhythm. Hmm....are YOU ready to write some poetry?

**The view from** the mountain was one of beauty – and their land was a large piece of the mountain. June had planted a vegetable garden, growing vegetables to eat fresh, some to can, and some to give away. It was growing well. Fall had come and the leaves on the surrounding trees were turning and drifting slowly earthward to form carpets of rustling multitudes of color – golds, purples, pale greens, yellows, rust and red. They loved their new home. Only –

The stand of bamboo, thick, tall, stretching like an impenetrable wall across one part of the wide yard space was an eyesore. It seemed to multiply its poles as you looked at it – to reach out to spread across the thick green grass aggressively. An enemy – marring the Blue Ridge beauty. How it had come there, who had planted it and why, they did not know. Howie had tried chopping it down with an ax – hopeless, endless task. They had applied a few herbicides recommended by the nurseries – the bamboo added poles! Digging it up would take the rest of their lives – and June and Howie were sure that would never work anyway.

“Chipper! Joey!” she called to her small sons who were trying to play hide and seek by penetrating the thicket of bamboo. “Come out of there! Come on – we have to go in – it’s time for Daddy to come home.”

Howie arrived within a short time and came in to give her a quick hello kiss and rub his sons’ heads.

“I think I have solved our problem,” he said.

“Which one?” replied June with a laugh.

“The bamboo. I got to thinking today about it and was talking to some of the men at the hospital who had fought in the Pacific. They told me that they used to use flame throwers and burn it out around their camps and installations.”

“Did it come back?” June said. “All that we chopped and dug came back already!”

“Well, they were not in one place very long, but they said that while they were there, they didn’t see any come back. Anyway, I decided to buy a flame thrower and –”

“Howie, that’s dangerous!”

“We have to be careful. The boys will have to stay near the house and away from us while we do it. But it should work – and in half the time of all else we have tried.”

After dinner, Howie got the flame thrower out of his truck and showed June how it would work. They agreed to try it out the next day, which was a Sunday, after church.

On Sunday afternoon, Howie lit up the flame thrower and moved on the bamboo, spraying the bamboo with the extremely hot flames. The bamboo soon leaped into a roaring fire in the area where he had aimed the flames. They watched for awhile, then June dragged the hose over and turned water on the flames to put them out. They managed to flame two fair-sized sections as the afternoon drew to a close and to water everything down heavily, so they

could go in and have supper. The sunset was strong and vivid with red-gold lights, as it usually was in the fall of the year. At last, they had a way to get rid of the bamboo forest that marred their land!

Tired, sitting at the supper table and talking of their good luck in using the flame thrower and of the week’s events and the coming week’s plans, they paid little attention to the reddening glow through the windows – it was, they thought, just the sunset...

Suddenly, Chipper cried, “Papa, look!”

“Look at what, Chipper?”

Joey was dancing up and down – “Look at the window, Papa! Lookee! Lookee!”

June and Howie turned to look out the window. Fire! Huge, fiery flames rising and dancing against the darkening sky! The bamboo hedge was blazing, all of it! Wildly, they ran and grabbed the hose to fight the fire. But the water seemed to merely turn to steam and drift away on the cold wind, which had arisen. June could see her house being burned down if they could not stop it. She screamed at Howie that they needed help – they needed to call someone to come help.

There was no fire department close to them, as their mountain home was outside of any town for a small distance – seeming greater tonight as they fought the conflagration they had started. June ran to the house and called near neighbors. Some came running, some had already arrived when she got outside, because they saw the flames from their homes. Suddenly, they heard sirens – and from nowhere, two fire trucks appeared to turn their tank hoses on the fire. Another call, and two other nearby towns sent their trucks. Pails of water, the garden hose, the hoses from the tank fire trucks streamed water onto the fire. Steam boiled up all around them. The flaming bamboo roared its defiance..

The moon came out – but it was hazed by the smoke. The stars winked here and there through the steam, flame and smoke. Finally, shortly after midnight, the fire was out, and the men pulled out shovels to cover the slowly dying ashes of the bamboo stand, stomping it down as tightly as they could around the stubs that were blackened and here and there still sparking. As they rested, some sitting, some lying on the ground, some leaning on or sitting in the trucks, they drank the hot black coffee June and her neighbor ladies had made for them. Waiting, waiting, waiting to see if the flames were truly dying and dead. Weary, nervous laughter sounded now and then over the quiet conversations, and two little boys lay their heads on their mother’s lap where she sat on the ground and peacefully went to sleep.

The moon beamed down at an angle as it had traversed the sky during the battle. The stars winked and blinked like they had been a part of the long battle. Here and there, small clouds of steam floated from the burned bamboo and the sharp acrid smoke-smell filled the night air, riding on the chill of the autumn breeze. At about three o’clock in the morning, the fireman had packed up their trucks and slowly



## Continued . . .

driven away, neighbors drifted back to their homes down the mountain. Howie and June picked up their sleeping sons and made their way to the house, glancing over their shoulders now and then as if expecting to still see the flames.

"I think," said Howie, "that tomorrow, I will return that

blamed flame thrower, and if they won't take it, I'll throw it in the river! Never again!"

June laughed. "The moral to our tale," she said, "is you can't kill bamboo with anything! The main thing is – "and looking at one another, they chorused,

***"Don't ever plant bamboo!"***

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## Growing an Oral History: *Country Store Kid* by Ingrid Lansford

**Our friend** Lucille Barrick, an Austin accountant, brimmed with anecdotes about her parents' store in Liberty Hill during the thirties and early forties. Through my connection with the Williamson Museum, I knew that such stories are valuable and ought to be preserved. When Lucille was nearing eighty and in declining health, I thought that someone should write down her stories, and that I might be the one. With Lucille's help, I could arrange the stories chronologically and write links to make them add up to her life. But before she and I completed the book, several collaborators got involved, for the most part, family members.

Our little oral history project began gradually and informally. In all cases I'd heard of, the information was tape-recorded in a face-to-face setting. This wouldn't have worked for us, as I could no longer drive to Lucille's home in Austin, and she'd sold her car. But we were in the habit of calling each other often, and before I knew it, our talk would remind her of something in the past. She'd launch into one of her stories and often told several. On a trial basis, I began to take notes, transferring Lucille's anecdotes to my computer as soon as we hung up.

Over the months I collected more and more stories. As I'd hoped, the telephone method could indeed substitute for recorded interviews, though it would result in a somewhat different product—more of my words and fewer of hers. I hadn't yet told Lucille about my plan, but did so during one of our family get-togethers. She agreed, saying she had sometimes thought of writing an autobiography, but now it was too late—she no longer had the energy. By this time she'd moved to assisted living.

My sons gave valuable input when they said I should try harder to catch Lucille's manner of speaking. I didn't always capture her cadence, but I quoted her as often as I could. During the project's final year, I asked Lucille if I could tape her over the telephone. She agreed. This allowed me to transcribe her exact words.

The text called for photographs. Lucille said her family pictures were no longer accessible to her since her move to the nursing home. From the Williamson Museum I got five black-and-whites related to her mother's early years. My husband took me to Liberty Hill in March 2010 to take photos I'd missed in 1999 when we visited there with Lucille, who pointed out favorite buildings from her childhood. After Lucille's funeral early this year, her son and daughter-in-law

allowed one of my sons-in-law to scan the pictures they exhibited at the church. Most of these pictures are included in the current edition.

When the manuscript was complete in early 2010, my daughter Linda and I visited Lucille at her nursing home and left a copy for her approval. During that visit I snapped the picture on the front cover. Then my daughter Erica offered to print and bind the book. She hadn't had much experience with this, though she had produced a memory booklet after the death of her in-laws. I agreed for her to try it, believing that the topic would be too local for commercial publishers. After weeks of learning on the job, Erica sent a box with 25 copies late in November 2010. I was astonished that these home-made "Lucille-books" had a spine and hardly looked home-made.

Three days later, I was on my way to Lucille's nursing home. Though our friend didn't seem in worse health, I felt a need to hurry. Lucille kept five of the twenty-five books and signed all the rest for me to take back. She was proud and pleased. The first edition was exhausted by Christmas. Lucille was looking forward to a signing of the second edition at the Williamson Museum when she suddenly died on December 30. I'm glad she knew that our joint efforts had yielded a book of her stories.

### COUNTRY STORE KID:

Lucille Barrick Tells about Old Times  
in Williamson County and Beyond



"A prose writer gets tired of writing prose, and wants to be a poet. So he begins every line with a capital letter, and keeps on writing prose."

Answer on page 10

**When I look at** a book on Amazon.com with few or no reviews, I wonder if the book is worth reading. I know many authors have other sales channels, but Amazon is where many readers turn to research a book even if they don't buy it there. Take advantage of it by getting more reviews posted.

How can you use reviews to sell books?

**Get more reviews.** Even if it is not necessarily true, a higher number of reviews implies a higher number of sales. A potential buyer would think books with more reviews are more popular and therefore, must be good. Karen Kingsbury's *Leaving*, published by Zondervan less than two months ago has 355 reviews.

**Get a balanced rating for your reviews.** Amazon reviews are rated with 1-5 stars, with 5 being the best. If all reviews are fours or fives, a potential buyer might think the reviews are written by the publisher or friends of the author and therefore not as reliable as books with some lower-rated reviews. Of the 355 reviews, Kingsbury's *Leaving* has 302 five stars, 31 four stars, 13 three stars, 5 two stars, and 4 one stars. That's a good mix. Remember, ratings are very subjective. Some readers save their five-star ratings for Pulitzer Prize winning books, while others will give a one star to a book just because the author changed her genre since the last book. You can't control what your reviewers do, but don't worry when the ratings are not all fives.

**Get more helpful review votes.** At the end of each review is this question: **Was this review helpful to you?** This is followed by a **Yes** button and a **No** button. When checked, the results are tallied and presented at the beginning of each review in the form of **x of y people found the following review helpful:** As you might think, even these x and y numbers may affect book sales. What this implies to the potential buyer is that x + y people are so interested in the book they read and commented on the review. Authors should click the Yes and No buttons of reviews for their books to increase the numbers.

How do you get reviews?

To get reviews on Amazon, start with your friends. They're going to buy books anyway, or perhaps you've given them a complimentary copy because they helped you with the book by being an early reader. If your friends are not familiar with writing or posting reviews, teach them. Tell them to rate the book honestly.

Next, find bloggers who write reviews for free copies of books. There are many of them, myself included. Most of us stay busy and will not take on more than we can handle, so you may need to look around to find the right person at the time you need the review. Also, these reviewers tend to specialize in what they review so that the book matches the blog goals. Recent laws have made it necessary for reviewers who receive free books to say so. However, I don't feel this takes away from the review since they are not obligated to give a good review.

Writing book reviews helps publicize your book.

If you haven't already done so, you may want to review books you have read to get a feel for how it works and to get your name out there on the Internet more. If you bought the book through Amazon.com, be sure to go to the edition you purchased before submitting your review. *Why?* Because Amazon will say your review is based on a verified purchase and that will add credibility. I recently reviewed *Already Home* by Susan Mallery and forgot to switch to the Kindle edition before posting my review, so, even though I had paid for the book, the review doesn't include the verified purchase message.

Another benefit of writing reviews for Amazon is that you can post the same review elsewhere. I use Goodreads and Shelfari. This gives you more hits on your name when someone Google's you. That, in turn, leads to more book sales.

You can see sample book reviews and other information about reviews on my blog: <http://christianbookmobile.blogspot.com/>.

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## Poet-At-Large

### **Stranger** by Robert Tucker

Stranger, who I will never speak with  
I perceive you more through my eyes  
Than you will ever realize  
I have not seen you glance my way  
Oh how this would please and sustain me  
I would like to behold all of you  
It is not possible, not now  
We can never even be, introduced  
Possibly, hello when passing  
Or an excuse me, lovely day  
Than I would have your voice  
Along with your impenetrable smile



### **Sideway Smiles** by Robert Tucker

Sideway smiles illuminate through  
The mirror, entering my smile  
The hum of the crowded eatery  
Is a mystery to me, and the  
Conversations at every table  
Are restricted unread books  
I presume of joining each table,  
To be included in the mystery,  
With someone other than me,  
Smiling back from the mirror,  
Wishing to be seated by me now  
I look away and sight my reflection,  
This vision brings me back, I am alone  
I will never be with any in this crowd,  
How could I, unrealistic impossibilities?  
Only through this mirror, reflecting  
Their smiles and entering my smile will  
My Imagination be together with each

**It's there.** Lying peacefully on the coffee table where I had placed it an hour ago. Outwardly so innocent and so simple. Yet it's tempting me, again. Beckoning my return to a world I had just escaped. Yes, escaped! For at times, I feel like a prisoner. A prisoner captivated by words. But I must hold back. I need to finish my work before I can indulge once more into its pages.

I look away from the book and focus on the notepad at my fingertips. "All right, you can do this. Complete two more things on your to-do-list and then you can read the next chapter," I tell myself out loud. I scroll down the list: wash dishes, do laundry, make bed, vacuum bedrooms, mop kitchen, and the list continues.

After I scan the columns, my eyes glance over at the coffee table. I study the novel for the tenth time since I put it down. It's a plain-covered hardback that features only the book's title and the author's name. However the story within its bound pages call to me. Such a foolish thing really. The words are not going anywhere. But still I have a tendency to grab the book. Now.

I continue to stare. I bite my lip in frustration. I could read one more chapter and still have time to tidy the house before my husband returns. My mind made up, I snatch the book and start to read. Soon one more chapter turns into two, and as the clock ticks, two chapters have become eight.

Hi. My name is Joy Nord and I am an addict. The drug of reading has made me a slave to adventure. I've become a time traveler in the *Outlander* series, visited my husband's Swedish kinsmen in *The Girl Who Played With Fire* series, and been bitten by vampires in the *Twilight* saga.

Yes, I am addicted to bestsellers.

My addiction started two years ago when I read *Three Cups of Tea; Eat, Pray, Love;* and *Horse Soldiers*. They were the first non-fiction that I read (other than self-help books) written like a novel. What great reading. I couldn't believe it! Then I read two novels, *The Kite Runner* and *Water for Elephants*.

Without warning my reading interest changed. My love for paperback romance died. I had outgrown the passion, the beauty and, especially, the happily ever after. Besides, in nearly all bestsellers, the main characters usually have some sort of sexual attraction or love interest, which doesn't always have a *Cinderella* ending.

I still needed the shoot'em-up adventure in westerns and the facts of history, so in January 2010, I set monthly reading goals: two westerns, two historicals, and one best-seller taken from the current *New York Times* top 10 list. This totaled sixty books for the year. I met my goal but surpassed the number of bestsellers. Instead of reading twelve books, I read twenty. In fact, I read several books such as *Roses, The Help,* and *Juliet* before they even made the top 10 bestsellers lists.

I choose books from the Sunday edition of the *Austin American-Statesman*. I compared the National Best-Seller lists (fiction, nonfiction, and paperback fiction) to the Local Best-Seller lists (fiction, nonfiction, and children's and young

adult books). If a book appeared on both lists for more than three weeks, then the book went on my "to buy" list. But, I had one stipulation. The author could not be a multi-published novelist such as John Grisham, James Patterson or Tom Clancy. I wanted to read material by the newest authors, not those with an established readership.

My addiction escalated when I upgraded my membership at a local bookstore. I received coupons (up to 47 percent off a single item) twice a week via e-mail. So instead of purchasing just one book at the regular price, I could get two books for about the same amount of money. And my bestseller library began to grow-along with my addiction. But all good things end sooner or later.

My fixation to read started to interfere with family time, household duties, and even with my own writing projects. But it didn't stop me from venturing into someone else's world. Finally, two things prompted a wakeup call to my addiction. In January I was diagnosed with a severe case of carpal tunnel in my right wrist. Who would have thought that turning pages could cause such a thing! And in February, at my weekly Bible Study Fellowship lecture, I realized that books had become an idol in my life. This was not acceptable. I was forced both physically and mentally to get my addiction under control. Since there isn't recovery program for BSS (Best Seller Syndrome), I had to devise my own treatment plan.

First, I switched priorities and I do my domestic responsibilities such as housework and errands in the mornings. Second, I no longer go to my favorite bookstore three times a week. This turned out to be a blessing because my spending was as much out of control as my reading. And third, I've restricted my reading to one-hundred pages per day, and only after 7:00 p.m. However, I do allow myself a few exceptions to the reading rule such as during potty breaks, while stuck in traffic or waiting in the drive through line at McDonalds. I'm sure you avid readers can relate to my problem.

Though I have taken control of my addiction, I can honestly say I'm not showing any signs of recovery (I even read a romance last month). Besides, I can't chew gum or wear a patch to control this habit. After all, establishments like bookstores and libraries encourage such behavior. And I can't wait till my next fix . . . I mean, bestseller.



## Paraprosdokian Sentences

- Ø Some people hear voices. Some see invisible people. Others have no imagination whatsoever.
- Ø If you are supposed to learn from your mistakes, why do some people have more than one child?
- Ø Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.
- Ø Dolphins are so smart that within a few weeks of captivity, they can train people to stand on the very edge of the pool and throw them fish.



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## Ask the Book Doctor: Verb Killer—Noun-izing Verbs

### Dear Doc

I've heard editors and agents preach that strong verbs are what "drive sentences." And in one of your workshops, you suggested that if we've buried our verbs as nouns, "unearthing" them could energize our style. I'd be glad to save my poor little verb zombies if you'll explain what you mean!

Unintentional Verb Killer

### Dear Verb Killer,

Too often writers \*noun-ize (make into nouns) the strongest verb in a sentence. Unfortunately, this tends to...

- dull the reader's involvement by using abstract ideas instead of active voice and vivid verbs.
- weaken style with the need for be-verbs and unnecessary prepositional phrases.

Compare the following examples:

1. weak: Some writers have a compulsion in the transformation of a short word into a longer form.

better: Good writers resist the urge to transform short words into longer forms.

Or: What compels her to transform short words into longer forms?

2. weak: Elimination of too many noun suffixes will be a reinforcement to make your writing tighter.

better: Eliminating too many noun suffixes reinforces tighter writing.

weak: The annual replacement of her whole wardrobe is a reflection of conformity to fashion trends.

better: She conforms to fashion trends by replacing her wardrobe every year.

I don't mean you should never use the noun forms, just avoid excessive use. Try this with your writing: Search for noun endings such as: *-sion, -tion, -ity, -ance, -ence, -ment* to reveal how many times you use them.

Then (to continue the grim metaphor, in your query) you can release your zombies from their undead state and resurrect them as the verbs they want to be. And quit digging graves for them!

\*Nominalization is the technical term, but I resist using a word that practices the very problem I'm advising against.

Have a question to share in this column? Email me at: [jmuHall@aol.com](mailto:jmuHall@aol.com) with "Ask the Book Doctor" as your subject line. If you want to remain anonymous, I'll address you by whatever pseudonym you sign. To see previous issues, go to: <http://www.ioanuptonhall.com/books.htm>. Scroll past the book covers and click "Ask Doc" Q&A's.



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## 10-Minute Fixes to 10 Common Plot Problems

by Elizabeth Sims from [www.writersdigest.com](http://www.writersdigest.com) . . . Continued

Let's look at 10 common plot problems you can tackle in a flash—and then find out how to do it.

### 6. I'VE GOT A COMPLEX PLOT, AND ALL MY FINAL UNRAVELING FEELS FORCED.

You're proud of your plot, and you want to show the reader that you've thought of everything. This one's as tight as a drum! But now it feels as if you're ticking off boxes on a checklist, and the effect is artificial.

#### 10-MINUTE SOLUTION: Choose some loose ends to leave loose.

Readers will know they're in good hands if you pay off your suspense. This is key, and it bears repeating: Suspense is the most important aspect of a book to build and bring to a satisfying climax and conclusion. This holds true in any genre; even the most sedate literary novels are built on a foundation of suspense. In this way, Mrs. Dalloway and her flowers have everything in common with Hannibal Lecter and his fava beans.

It follows, then, that not every loose end needs to be tied up. Granted, some bestselling authors commonly knot theirs meticulously—Harlan Coben comes to mind—but others, like Elizabeth George, make a point of not doing so. Leaving your readers with a little bit of *hmmm* can be a good thing (especially if you're writing a series).

Even if you don't want to keep readers wondering, it's still true that some ends just don't need to be wrapped up. For example, if you have a minor character who served a function early on, but who dropped out halfway through the book, by the end the reader will either have forgotten about her, or will understand that particular loose end is irrelevant.

Challenge your impulse to wrap up everything with a bow, and you might achieve a more natural result.

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## Who "said" Answer ... Samuel McChord Crothers ...

(June 7, 1857–November 1927) was an American Unitarian Universalist minister with The First Parish in Cambridge. He was a popular essayist.

Crothers was well known in his own days as the author of familiar essays, often appearing in the *Atlantic Monthly*, in which he treated human foibles with a gentle, humorous touch. His parishioners saw another side of

him—the religious thinker who knew how to take old dogmas and discover what of value still remained in them; a preacher of singular elevation of thought; the leader of a congregation who encouraged his people in social welfare projects so subtly, that they hardly knew what had moved them; the pastor "who, when a mother was dead, said oh, so very little, but just the right thing".

## Special Interest Groups

**The Williamson County Coroners** is a mystery/suspense group and participants must have novels in progress. The meetings are held at the 10:30 a.m. at the Red Poppy Café in the George-town Library. **And there is room for one more !!**

### Last Writes Critique Group—Full

Meets (usually) at 7 PM, 2nd & 4th Wed. each month, at Oaks at Wildwood Clubhouse. Novels in progress, varied genres. Membership currently full. Contact: JmuHall@aol.com

### Novel Crafters is Full right now, welcomes a Waiting List

Meets every other Thursday on the second floor of the Georgetown Library in a private room. Contact is Mary Stafford at marylynn@mstafford.net

**Quixotic Quills** critique group represents varied interests. Our

group writes historical novels, short stories and memoirs. Meetings are usually on the second and fourth Thursday of each month unless we reschedule because of holidays. We meet at 7:00 p.m. at the Monument Café. Contact is Sharon Lyle, 512-639-1162, iwritcozies@gmail.com. Currently, we are closed to new members.

**Bard Masters Critique Group** The focus of the critique group is historical fiction and fantasy. Meeting Tuesdays, 6:00 PM at the Georgetown Library. Currently open to a new member with a serious work in progress. Contact: Ross Carnes graphicrex@hotmail.com

**If you are interested in joining a critique group**, contact Joan Upton Hall (jmuhall@aol.com) or Sylvia Dickey Smith (sds@suddenlink.com)

## Member websites

### Anna M. Bell

Website: <http://www.annamaebell.com>  
Author Blog: <http://annbell.wordpress.com/>  
Educational Technology Blog: <http://annamaebell.wordpress.com/>

### Ross Carnes

<http://webstarts.com/RHCarnesStoryTeller>

### David Ciambrone

[www.davidciambrone.com](http://www.davidciambrone.com)

### Mary Fenoglio

[www.eggsinmypocket.com](http://www.eggsinmypocket.com)

### Joan Hall:

[www.JoanUptonHall.com](http://www.JoanUptonHall.com)

### Durwood J (DJ) Heinrich:

[www.RedBaronConcepts.com](http://www.RedBaronConcepts.com)

### Sam Holland:

[www.samholland.com](http://www.samholland.com)

### D Alan Johnson

[www.dalanjohnson.com](http://www.dalanjohnson.com)

### Melissa Leedom:

[www.forgive490.com](http://www.forgive490.com)

### Linda Lipscomb:

[www.lblipscomb.com](http://www.lblipscomb.com)

### Jason Minor:

[www.jason-minor.com](http://www.jason-minor.com)

### Helen Nardecchia

[www.helennardecchia.com](http://www.helennardecchia.com)

### Joy Nord:

[www.joynord.com](http://www.joynord.com)

### Jamie Roton aka Lillian Grey blog

<http://lilliangurey.wordpress.com/>

### Sylvia Dickey Smith:

[www.sylviadickeysmitth.com](http://www.sylviadickeysmitth.com)

### SGWL website:

[www.sgw.net](http://www.sgw.net)

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Do demons bedevil your writing? Similar, confusing words? Grammar, punctuation, or capitalization rules? "The Demystifier" will clear up the mystery (primary reference unless otherwise noted: Garner, Bryan A. *Dictionary of Modern American Usage*. N.Y.: Oxford University Press). Address questions and comments to freelance editor, **Joan Upton Hall, PO Box 179, Hutto, TX 78634**, or email: [jmuHall@aol.com](mailto:jmuHall@aol.com). More problems like the one above are demystified in the booklet, *50 Writers' Tips*. Find a few of them at "books, etc." on website: [www.JoanUptonHall.com](http://www.JoanUptonHall.com).

Demystifying Writers' Demons©

### Homophones fool spell-checkers

**Homophones are two or more words that sound alike but have different meanings and spellings.** About the only way you can cope with them is through memory tricks or mnemonic devices—the sillier the better—to help you remember. Here are a few of the most common, and as you think of others, write them here in your own book for future reference. This should help you avoid confusion at other times.

altar – place of worship (Notice the underlined letters.)

alter – change;

capital – a state's main city; upper case letter; also main or referring to resources

capitol—a state building usually has a dome on top

complement—that which completes

compliment—praise; flattering statement (I like a compliment.)

stationary – staying in the same place

stationery – something you write letters on

principal – chief or main as an occupation; principal of a school (be his pal)

principle – a truth; rule; belief

## The Gabriel Writer



the  
June 2  
SGWL meeting  
is at the  
Georgetown Public Library  
N Rock St  
between  
7th and 8th  
gather at 6:30  
meeting  
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