

The Gabriel Writer

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

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Preston Stone, new owner of the Hill Country Book Store to speak in August

By Carol Menchu

Hill country bookstore will be experiencing several new changes in the coming months. That said, as a new owner I realize that for 15 years Margarite Holt was doing a lot of things right to stay successful as an independent bookstore in Georgetown, Texas. But in order to remain successful and vibrant in a new age of bookselling, more creative energy will need to be expended to maintain relevance as a bookstore in an increasingly digital age. I look forward to sharing those ideas with the San Gabriel Writers' League during the upcoming meeting in August. I am eager to hear you feedback, meet those of you that I have not had the chance to yet, and I look forward to a continued strong relationship between the store and SGWL.

A Georgetown resident for seven years, Stone operated the Law Office of Preston Stone until purchasing the bookstore at 719 S. Main St. Stone plans to update the interior of Hill Country Bookstore and open a coffee bar. He said customers can expect to see subtle changes to the inventory.

"We offer a wide range of title for readers of all ages and interests, and are pleased to offer a one-of-a-kind selection of local authors." Hill Country Bookstore has been a notable destination for book lovers throughout the area."

Hill Country Bookstore is a member of the American Booksellers Association, The Georgetown Chamber of Commerce, and the Downtown Georgetown Association.

A short history of HCB:

While visiting college friends in Georgetown, Margarite Holt and her husband noticed a storefront on the square that was empty and immediately took an interest. "We knew we wanted to live here and retire here, but we both still had active careers in New York," Holt said. "So, I went to the American Book Sellers Association and went to a two-week school there. They told me how to set up a store, got me in touch with the wholesalers and everything. I came back and opened up the store. It has been a learning experience ever since."

In 1995, Hill Country Bookstore opened its doors. Her first five years in business, Holt ran the operation from New York with the help of a store manager. It was after the stress of Y2K that she retired from her work at a data processing firm and



Minutes for July 2011 meeting

The July 7, 2011 meeting of the **San Gabriel Writers' League** was called to order by **President Sam Holland**.

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

New Business:

Sam reminded everyone that the **SGWL Christmas Party** will be held on **December 1st**. He explained that because of space limitations at the Oaks at Wildwood that we are looking into possible alternative venues and asked the Membership for suggestions. Meanwhile, **DJ Heinrich** is looking into the Berry Creek Country Club as an option.

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

Sam Holland continued his contest tradition entitled "Win the President's Stuff." Accordingly, he gave away two books from his personal library (Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and an anthology, *The Best Writing on Writing*) to a couple of lucky winners.

Announcements and Successes:

Suzy Miller and **Ann Bell** (president of the Hill County Book Festival) reminded the Membership that registrations are still being accepted for author participation in the Hill Country Book Festival to be held on August 20, 2011, from 10:00 to 3:00, at the Georgetown Community Center in San Gabriel Park. This year's event is an expanded festival for all authors and readers of all genres in all reader age groups. Tables are priced at \$30.00 and

\$15.00 for a full- or half-table respectively. Lunches can also be reserved at \$10.00 each.

Sylvia Dickey-Smith recently won Second Place in the National Federation of Press Women for her historical fiction book set during World War II, *A War of Her Own*. National Press Women of Texas had also selected Sylvia's book as the Award Winning Novel of 2011.

Ross Carnes exclaimed to the Membership that he could now be officially ranked among authors because he had received his first rejection letter! Ross spent 30 years as a commercial illustrator and graphic designer and has only recently begun to write short stories and novels. Ross also introduced his son **Richard Oliver Carnes** who is living in Pflugerville.

Linda Johnson shared that two agents have recently asked to be allowed an exclusive read of her new manuscript.

Jane Thompson said that her book, *Sugar & Salt*, is being sold by Amazon as a collectible.

Program:

Susan Tome and **Sylvia Dickey-Smith** (interim Program Coordinator) introduced guest speaker and author, **James Parker** who spoke about his book, *The Dark Side of the Cross*, but primarily about general challenges many of us face in the writing process.

Respectfully submitted,
Durwood "DJ" Heinrich, secretary

2011 Programs

- September—**Tom Mitchell**— About the Bread Loaf conference and his attendance and acceptance
- October—**Kaye George**—Getting Your Name Out There!
- November—**Earl Staggs**— Setting Up and Selling Your Own E-Book (topic still under development)
- December—**Christmas Party**

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Writing is a lonely endeavor. For days, characters and stories will stay trapped in the mind charting grand destinies only to spill out as a flimsy paper doll version of what was conceived. The light, the inspiration in which these adventures are created dims as it passes through fingertips and onto keyboards. The crux of what was imagined appears on the screen, but the fire of creation is lost. Rewriting sculpts the words to a reasonable facsimile of how it was meant to be, but this is still just shadow and dust. It would be easy to say that the ideas wither in the light of day, that the ideas were not that valuable to begin with; that the dreamer was deluded into thinking that the inspiration had more merit than it deserved. The truth is far more depressing. It is that we, as flawed individuals, sabotage our greatness before it can even be recognized. It is not the fingers on the keyboard, or the light of day that withers our words. Our own self image dilutes our message; our own doubt reins us in. Instead of embracing the light, we succumb to the darkness of the soul.

The great writers write fearlessly, tapped into the light in a way that doesn't get rerouted through fear and doubt. That is why they are the greats, their ability to distill the human condition into manageable portions and yet somehow retain scope and grandeur. Is this a natural ability or a learned skill? If it is only the former then many of us, myself included, are doomed to mediocrity. The words may attain polish and the story may be well told but the words will never jolt another with joy or sadness; they will never inspire as they should. And while writing is a skill that can be learned, the light of creation is passion, is heat, is fire.



Everyone has the passion of youth, the joy of first discovery. Laughter and anger both come easily and unencumbered. As the years pass, practical matters swallow the passion. The roar of duty drowns out the lightning, and without a lens to focus the energy, it is tucked away in darkness. It is here, in the shadows, where hope lies. Passion cannot be transmuted, it cannot be consumed, it can only be forgotten- but what is forgotten can be found.

It takes a promethean effort to pluck the lightning from the dusk. The raw emotions: anger, frustration, despair are the easiest to grasp, and for many that is as far as they get. Never reaching the fire that will fuel their creativity, never touching the strength that will give them the confidence to transcribe the message that has whispered loudest in the most important moments.

It is in the darkness of the soul where the passion lies, and only by touching the despair can the passion be embraced; it is only in the dark that the fire has meaning. This irony most profound, this razor's edge is where the great writers dare to dance with their words and their fear and their fire.

This is why we write, to share the passion we've discovered to touch another. To speak truth without fear. And to spread hope. Knowing that we may never attain that fearlessness makes the darkness that much more profound and the light that much more coveted. But we draw hope from the fact that even after all our trials and false starts, the light is still in sight, and our passion is still within our reach.

Artic Cold by Jane Thompson

The temperature is 101 degrees outside. Not too surprising, since it is July. I've been in shorts for two months, for the most part. I like that—no ironing, don't have any delicate washing, and this goes on for five months.

I grew up in Oklahoma City and we had the same summers as we have in Georgetown, just a little drier and a little shorter. So I am used to this—in fact, I didn't have air conditioning until I moved to Texas, so this is even better.

But not tonight.

Tonight I have a meeting, so I carefully search my winter closet. I choose a pair of leggings and a long-



sleeved blouse. I put on socks and shoes. I will spend two and a half hours in a refrigerator so I must be prepared. I need to be able to pay attention and not look too pained, because there will be a guest there, and I don't want to insult him. I want to be able to hear him and not be distracted by the cold.

I am rather warm as I wait for my ride outside, and during the trip to the meeting place I feel very overdressed. But when I get to the meeting, my clothes are necessary.

By the end of the meeting I am shivering and swearing to myself that I will never come back. But I always do. I wouldn't miss a SGWL meeting.

Letting Your Ego Run Amok from Writers' Digest

Why this is a mistake: Too many people want what they envision being a writer is, as opposed to what being a writer really is. They envision the book racked in the store, the book signing, being at a party and saying "I'm an author." The reality is that 99 percent of an author's life consists of writing. Sitting alone with pad and paper or in front of a computer and creating something out of nothing.

There is very little ego-stroking involved in being a writer, since the majority of a writer's life involves working alone.

The solution: Being a writer is about the writing, not the

end result of writing. Pretty much every published author I know dreads events such as book tours and agent/editor meetings. Focus on the process of being a writer, not the trappings of being a writer. The reality is not all it appears to be. Do not try to take shortcuts to getting published or to misrepresent yourself or to cheat. One thing to remember about getting published in any format: The printed word is out there for anyone to see and double-check, so any shortcuts taken will come back to haunt you.

The art of Elicitation is as old as humanity. One definition of elicitation is:

"The art of gaining information during conversation without the subject being aware that he is giving it."

However, for most of our history it was only taught to royalty and top military leaders. This helped the aristocracy maintain its power. There are records of this in Europe, China, and Japan. In the 1800's the art was formalized into a set of rules and techniques and has been part of an intelligence officer's training ever since.

Wayne Taylor, a retired Strategic Counter-Intelligence officer, offers us an "Elicitation for Dummies" version of this very complex people skill.

Starting with the example of how we have all been puzzled after driving out of a car dealership with a more expensive car than we went there to buy, he explains how business has included these precepts into our purchasing experiences. Classic elicitation can be described as targeting and individual who:

- Probably has the information you desire
- May or may not admit to having the information
- May or may not be willing to share the information

Should not know that you are even interested in the information.

Then, using Human Nature (for example the Desire to Teach) you plant thoughts so that your target can correct your "misconception".

Complex concepts such as the "Onion Theory" of personality are simplified and inserted into Conversation Mapping. Then Mr. Taylor brings out the tactics. The first one is the hardest. Devilishly hard. If you seek to elicit information you must quash your ego and LISTEN. You can't play the "Oh, my story is even better" game that we are all so good at. To gain trust and rapport, we must listen 80% and only talk 20%.

We humans are full of needs and desires. These are levers that a good lis-

tener can use to move the conversation into the funnel leading to that nugget of intel desired. For example, after talking with someone for just a few seconds, one should be able to figure out that this person desires recognition. A small bit of flattery can unleash a flood of information.

Some of the levers Taylor discusses are:

- The Desire to Correct a Mistake.
- The Desire to Teach.
- The Desire for Recognition.
- The Desire to Gossip.
- Curiosity.

Underestimating your listener's Needs.

Then he matches tactics to use with these needs.

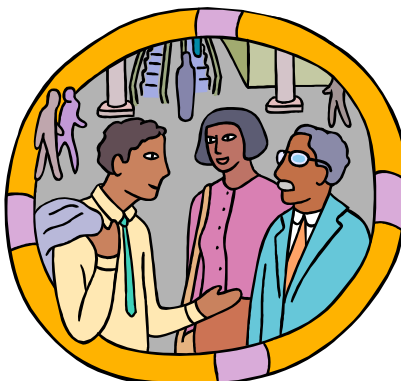
- Flattery
- False Statements
- Secret Knowledge
- A Provocative Statement
- Naïveté
- Repeat-a-word (Active Listening)

The Instinct to Complain.

While this is a simplistic book talking about a topic that agents spend years studying and practicing, it is useful to a business person who may not realize how much information they give out during each day. With better situational awareness, a research engineer, accountant, or executive can tell if they are being manipulated to divulge company confidential information.

For a salesman or CEO, this primer can give the basic understanding to set a goal for conversations, map out the paths, and manage the flow of information to their advantage.

This book is well worth the \$7.95 price for the Kindle version on Amazon.com.



Strange Bedfellows by Pat Morse McNeely

A horse and an ass, side by side,
Friends became – it can't be denied –
And soon the horse enamored was
With the little jenny (said farm yard buzz)

And then one day out of the blue
Three were on hand – it's true, it's true!
A little one – neither horse nor ass
Was gamboling with them In the meadow grass.

What shall we call him? The jenny said.
Mule, said the horse – haven't you read?
So Mule he was, and as he grew
Looking unlike his parents two!

He did not race, could only work
Harnessed to a wagon tall
Even while he still was –small?

Poor Mule – he liked the barn and its fare,
But Man would not let him linger there!
He tried to neigh, he tried to bray,
But naught came out either way –

All he could do was hee and haw,
Not like Mama and not like Paw!
All he could see from where he sat
Was pulling the wagon and wearing a hat

For the rest of his life—just being a fool
And living his life as a faithful mule,
Hee-hawing away at both day and night
To those who would listen to his plight!



Zorro is not a person. He is my 1997 Black Pontiac Grand Prix. His official birthday in my driveway was December 26, 1996. His name relates to the actors who played Zorro on TV and in movies such as: Douglas Fairbanks, Tyrone Power, Clayton Moore (who was also the Lone Ranger), Guy Williams, Antonio Banderas and George Hamilton (The Gay Blade). Their character wore black clothing and rode a black horse. Zorro seemed a perfect name for my beautiful, sleek, black car. *[Trivia note: Zorro's black horse was called Toronado (Tornado in English), although Tempest was another name used. I have read that he sometimes had a white horse which was named Phantom.]*

Zorro is very special to me. My husband and I had been married for almost 30 years when we bought the car. We had owned many vehicles, but Zorro was the first car that I actually got to test drive before we bought it. I did have to plead a little to get a black car while living in the Texas sun. Zorro was ahead of his time. He was one handsome dude in his youth sporting gold wheels and head up display on the windshield. He is still handsome, but his black paint is not as shiny as it was 15 years ago.

He is a good car. That means Zorro has been paid off for over 12 years. We rarely needed to get him repaired. There were a couple of recalls on his transmission mount in the early days and a windshield replacement, but mostly Zorro just did his job running back and forth all over the state.

That is until it rained 15" the first week of September, 2010. This rain caused somewhat of a problem for Zorro. Apparently, the windshield replacement had caused a tiny leak on one of the seals. A couple of days after the rain, I climbed into Zorro to go to an appointment and there, on the passenger's side of the floor, was about 2" of standing water. Great. I got the water cleaned up and dried out the interior. Everything seemed to be back to normal again.

Then on a cold, rainy January day, I drove my faithful car, Zorro, to the bank in Round Rock. When I was two exits from my destination, Zorro decided to start having a series of warning lights go off in his dashboard including his battery light. I immediately exited and drove down the access road to the bank. When I restarted him, the warning lights still glowed. I decided that I needed to go to the other side

of the shopping center and call AAA. Zorro was towed home. His battery was dead. I got it recharged and drove him to the repair shop. His alternator had decided it was time to die. It was fixed overnight and all was well.^{cars} In March, the 'check engine' light came on. I took him to a repair shop where I was told that a cylinder was going bad. I hitched a ride home with a friend and came back the next day to pick up my 'repaired' car. All was fine for about 50 miles. The check engine light came back on. It came on when I put Zorro in reverse after driving it between errands. It shook and sounded like the engine was falling out. So I took the car back and was told that the wiring needed to be fixed. No problem. I left it and asked another friend to take me home. The next day I picked Zorro up at the shop.

He was full of pep. I drove another 50 miles and then the check engine light came back on after running errands, parking, and backing out of a parking place. So I took Zorro back to the car doctor and waited for him to get checked out. His wiring was not staying in place. Well, you guessed it, in another 50 miles his check engine light came on. This time I took him to the GMC dealer.

The dealer said that his engine mount had collapsed and that was why the engine moved around when I put the car in reverse, and, by the way, the wiring was coming loose. I left the car and came

back the next day to pick it up. Zorro felt better. Apparently, the engine shifting was causing the wiring to get pulled out of place.

Another 50 miles later, the check engine light came on. Again, I made the trek to the dealer, who kept Zorro overnight. When I picked Zorro up, I was told that they replaced a fuel injector in the original cylinder that was a problem in March. I have put more than 50 miles on Zorro since the last repair, so I think he is fixed.

Now I have decided it is time for my faithful friend to find a new home. Zorro has over 214,000 miles on him and it is time for him to go live with someone who likes to fix cars. Zorro comes with a 3-volume set of repair manuals. I also need to stop going to the repair shop before I lose all of my friends and it rains again. It will be the end of an era. I hate to say it, but it is time to say "Adios, Zorro."



Empty spaces mean someone didn't contribute something.

Linda Lipscomb announces "the release of my third book in the **Granny Red Shoes** Adventure Series! **A Bird Named Blue** is now available at www.amazon.com along with my two other books. Log on to the site and key in my name to see the new book . You can even look through a few pages while you visit. If you have purchased my previous books, I would really appreciate you leaving feedback on . I

would love to read your comments.



The month of August faithfully brings an event to Austin, Texas, that's unforgettable. Not that it's a celebration, because it isn't. It's a sad event. In fact, at the time it occurred, it was labeled "one of the worse massacres of its time." Those of you reading this will know instantly that I'm referring to the sixteen people who were killed by Charles Whitman, who pumped bullets from the University of Texas Tower. Thirty-one victims were injured. The date was August 1, 1966.

On that day, Ben Nardecchia, my husband's father, punched out of Victor's Restaurant on the Drag, waved goodbye to the cashier and started for the door. His work day at the restaurant was over, but as he opened the door and stepped out, he heard a strange sound which appeared to be a gunshot. He dismissed it, at first, thinking perhaps it was a car backfiring. He saw people running, not just running, but running scared.

Then, more shots until dead people lay all around the Tower.

The rest of the story is in a memoir I wrote in 2001, entitled *Sophie and Ben*.

Ben didn't live to tell the story.

In May of this year, an article appeared in the Austin-American Statesman about an interview a reporter did with Mr. Houston McCoy, the policeman who shot and killed Charles Whitman on the observation tower. Houston McCoy is an older man now in poor health, and his daughter, Monika, is planning to publish a book about the whole incident.

I wrote the reporter, telling him how Ben narrowly escaped being killed himself, and how the whole incident took a toll on his life. I asked if I could get in touch with Houston McCoy, and the reporter passed the information on to Monika. To my delight, she wrote back a few days later, early in June. A copy of *Sophie and Ben* was sent off to her, and she promised to have Houston read it, and then she would read it herself. Her return note after both reading it was rewarding:

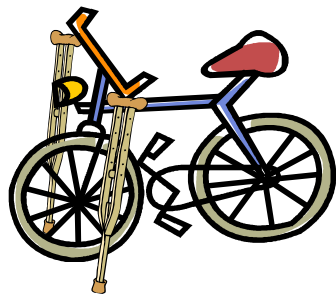
"Thank you for the copy of your book. It was enlightening to say the least.



Once I picked it up, I could not put it down and read it in 2.5 hours. Both my father and I felt it was beautifully written and captures a time in life that much of this younger generation of people could not even begin to comprehend. Chapter 17 was rather gut-wrenching. You did such a wonderful thing in capturing her story."

Ben died the day after Charles Whitman terrorized the UT Tower. He was seventy-five years old with a serious heart condition, and witnessing this horrendous incident was more than he could endure. The Nardecchia family cannot put the deadly day behind them. They are reminded every year of this terror when newspapers and television re-enact the brutal killings again. And, how many more have occurred since 1966? Right now in 2011, we are being informed every day of planned attacks. Senator Gabrielle Giffords is just now returning to health after being attacked by another mentally disturbed murderer. When will it ever end?

For Logophiles



A bicycle can't stand alone—it's too tired!

Would you like your book reviewed?

 By Wayne Dawson

Would you like your book reviewed? Or, would you like to serve on a book review committee? I am currently organizing a possible column in a magazine devoted to Georgetown authors. This is a great opportunity for you to get the word out to those who want to read your book! Contact Wayne Dawson, zgeist7@gmail.com

See this website www.waynedawson.com for my resume, writing samples and blog on the 1683 siege of Vienna



Dear Fellow VIEPs from Lois Parker, founding member

This letter goes to you out of my wish to have been able to meet with you all.

Actually, I had planned to send it to you via Ingrid Lansford; sadly, my call to her was too late. Therefore, the message I would have sent must go here, into this letter, for your perusal.

Mainly, the message is that we remember carefully [those of us who are a 'certain' age] the import of our title: VERY IMPORTANT EX-PEOPLE

Wasn't it Doris Clifford who came up with so descriptive a name? I remember, at the time, we discussed the real cruciality of that hyphen in our name—that, while still closely associated, we were indeed "exes" holding that title together. Therefore, as you [those of you who are not of a certain age] will experience in the ensuing years, our sharing is important and becomes more-so as time goes on.

Also (perhaps especially), I want to say a word or two about how very (VERY) gratifying and sustaining it is, to have retired TO something, instead of "from the job".

Choose something that's your very own. Yes, I know the delight of extra time with ones sons and daughters, and one's grandchildren, but that would happen anyway. Rather, I'm on the subject of something uniquely yours:

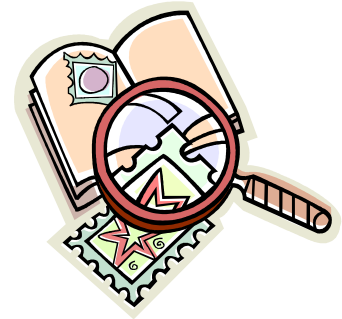
therein lies years of the kind of pleasure that disallows boredom. For instance:

Ingrid Lansford [founding member of SGWL] has translated her language skills into an international translating concern.

I am still trying to learn how to play the harp, practicing the scales every day, and have even composed a few little pieces.

One man I know (a retiree from another University) studies stock tanks out in the countryside, and helps the owners stock them with fish.

Now, off we go to all of you who are "of a certain age" and those of you yet to reach it, Let your imaginations mate with your druthers—*et voila!*



Come Waltz With Me Dear Muse by Carol Menchu

Muse (noun):

Goddess of Art in Greek mythology, one of the nine daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, goddess of memory. The Muses inspired and presided over the creative arts. They were Calliope, Clio, Erato, Euterpe, Melpomene, Polyhymnia, Terpsichore, Thalia, and Urania, responsible for epic poetry, history, love poetry, lyric poetry, tragedy, sacred song, dance, comedy, and astronomy, respectively.

muse (verb)

1. think about something—transitive and intransitive verb to think about something in a deep and serious or dreamy and abstracted way.
2. say something thoughtfully—transitive and intransitive verb to say something in a thoughtful or questioning way
3. gaze thoughtfully—intransitive verb to gaze at somebody or something thoughtfully or abstractedly

For years, I thought my Muse was being head-over-heels in love (and it certainly helped!), when suddenly I realized I could write without the h-o-h condition, especially when particular word-less music played or silence reigned supreme or necessity, like now, caused me to fill empty space.

For some time, now, I've shied away from the music, for it, like love, can be a heady emotional thing and I've not wanted to go there – however . . .

Walking through the Portland air terminal, I followed my ears to haunting music from down the concourse and felt the emerging desire to possess and write.

I now possess and words are now flowing—one-two-three – Come Waltz With Me At Midnight !!!



"Language exerts hidden power, like a moon on the tides."

Answer on page 10

short telling of 'bookseller' history on the news of Borders' closing.

Greek and Roman booksellers

In the book of Jeremiah the prophet is represented as dictating to Baruch the scribe, who described the mode in which his book was written. These scribes were the earliest booksellers, and supplied copies as they were demanded. Aristotle possessed a somewhat extensive library, and Plato is recorded to have paid the large sum of one hundred minae for three small treatises of Philolaus the Pythagorean. When the Alexandrian library was founded about 300 B.C., various expedients were used for the purpose of procuring books, and this appears to have stimulated the energies of the Athenian booksellers. In Rome, toward the end of the republic, it became the fashion to have a library as part of the household furniture. Roman booksellers carried on a flourishing trade. Their shops (*taberna librarii*) were chiefly in the Argiletum, and in the Vicus Sandalarius. On the door, or on the side posts, was a list of the books on sale; and Martial, who mentions this also, says that a copy of his First Book of Epigrams might be purchased for five denarii. In the time of Augustus the great booksellers were the Sosii. According to Justinian, a law was passed granting to the scribes the ownership of the material written; this may be the beginnings of the modern law of copyright.

Islamic bookshops

The high degree of learning and scholarship in the medieval Islamic world, particularly during the Abbasid Caliphate in the east and Caliphate of Córdoba in the west, encouraged the development of bookshops, copyists, and book dealers across the entire Muslim world, in Islāmic cities such as Damascus, Baghdad, and Córdoba. According to Encyclopædia Britannica: "Scholars and students spent many hours in these bookshop schools browsing, examining, and studying available books or purchasing favourite selections for their private libraries. Book dealers traveled to famous bookstores in search of rare manuscripts for purchase and resale to collectors and scholars and thus contributed to the spread of learning. Many such manuscripts found their way to private libraries of famous Muslim scholars such as Avicenna, al-Ghazālī, and al-Fārābī, who in turn made their homes centres of scholarly pursuits for their favourite students

Christianity

The spread of Christianity naturally created a great demand for copies of the Gospels, other sacred books, and later on for missals and other devotional volumes for both church and private use. Before the Reformation and the introduction of printing, scribes and stationers who sold books formed guilds. Some of these stationers had stations built against the walls of cathedrals. Besides the sworn stationers there were many booksellers in Oxford who were not sworn; for one of the statutes passed in 1373, expressly states that, in consequence of their presence

"books of great value are sold and carried away from Oxford, the owners of them are cheated, and the sworn stationers are deprived of their lawful business. It was, therefore, enacted that no bookseller except two sworn stationers or their deputies, should sell any book being either his own property or that of another, exceeding half a mark in

value, under a pain of imprisonment, or, if the offence is repeated, of forfeiting his trade within the university."

The modern system of bookselling dates from soon after the introduction of printing. The earliest printers were also editors and booksellers; but being unable to sell every copy of the works they printed, they had agents at most of the seats of learning, such as Antony Koburger, who introduced the art of printing into Nuremberg in 1470.

The religious dissensions of the continent, and the Reformation in England under Henry VIII and Edward VI, created a great demand for books; but in England neither monarchs of the Tudor nor Stuart dynasties could easily tolerate a free press, and various efforts were made to curb it.

The first patent for the office of king's printer was granted to Thomas Berthelet by Henry VIII in 1529, but only such books as were first licensed were to be printed. At that time even the purchase or possession of an unlicensed book was a punishable offense. In 1556 the Company of Stationers was incorporated, and very extensive powers were granted in order that obnoxious books might be repressed. In the following reigns the Star Chamber exercised a rather effectual censorship; but, in spite of all precaution, such was the demand for books of a polemical nature, that many were printed abroad and surreptitiously introduced into England

Queen Elizabeth interfered little with books except when they emanated from Roman Catholics, or touched upon her royal prerogatives; and towards the end of her reign, and during that of her successor, James, book-selling flourished. So much had bookselling increased during the Protectorate that, in 1658, was published *A Catalogue of the most Vendible Books in England* by W. London. A bad time immediately followed. Although there were provincial booksellers the centre of the trade was St. Paul's Church-

yard. When the Great Fire of London began in 1666 the booksellers put most of their stock in the vaults of the church, where it was destroyed. The Restoration also restored the office of Licensor of the Press, which continued till 1694.

In the first copyright statute, the Statute of Anne (1709), which specially relates to booksellers, it is enacted that, if any person shall think the published price of a book unreasonably high, he may make a complaint to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and to certain other persons named, who shall examine his complaint, and if well founded reduce the price; and any bookseller charging more than the price so fixed shall be fined £5 for every copy sold. Apparently this enactment remained a dead letter

Selling and Publishing

For later times it is necessary to make a gradual distinction between *booksellers*, whose trade consists in selling books, either by retail or wholesale, and *publishers*, whose business involves the production of the books from the author's manuscripts, and who are the intermediaries between author and bookseller, just as the booksellers (in the restricted sense) are intermediaries between the author and publisher and the public. The convenience of this distinction is not impaired by the fact either that a publisher is also a wholesale bookseller, or that a still more recent development in publishing started a reaction to some



Continued

extent in the way of amalgamating the two functions. The scheme of *The Times* Book Club (started in 1905) was, again, a combination of a subscription library with the business of bookselling and it brought the organization of a newspaper, with all its means of achieving publicity, into the work of promoting the sale of books, in a way which practically introduced a new factor into the bookselling business.

During the 19th century it remains the fact that the distinction between publisher and bookseller—literary promoter and shopkeeper—became fundamental. The booksellers, as such, were engaged either in wholesale bookselling, or in the retail, the old or second-hand (now includes rare and very old books trade, called **Antiquarian books**), and the periodicals publishing or retailing trades.

Dialogue As Conversation by Josip Novakovich from www.writersdigest.com

In this excerpt from *Fiction Writer's Workshop*, Second Edition, you'll learn: When to use the interjections and hesitations of real speech in fictional dialogue and How to create distinct voices for each of your characters.

Dialogue is basically conversation. Your characters talk to each other. They should sound like real people. This could mean that all you need to do is transcribe people's conversation. Unfortunately, it's not that simple—or rather, fortunately, it's not that complicated to write dialogue. Real conversation may sound like this:

"Er, Jim, have you heard the latest thing, on, what's his name, you know, er, I mean the guy who's so much like in the news—"

"This coffee sucks. Well, I've been too busy lately, all the job applications and all—"

"Shit, he's a pop singer, oh jeez, why can't I remember his name, like, he's like real famous, I mean, er, you know?—" "Uh huh."

Pause. A cough. "He's hiding, you know who I mean, er, he's got an—damn it!—"

"Sure, it's easy for those guys, they're all millionaires. Well, where's the waitress?"

"Uh huh."

Even in a direct transcription resembling this one, you can't indicate where both characters speak at the same time, where vowels drag, consonants double, and so on. Moreover, in real speech, you get a person's melody of voice, see his body language, and so you might suffer all the hesitations and indirectness and irrelevancies much better than when you read the transcript in print. You can't reproduce real speech. You can approximate it now and then, but your dialogue should be quicker and more direct than real speech.

"Dialogue should convey a sense of spontaneity but eliminate the repetitiveness of real talk," said Elizabeth Bowen. It may be effective to use *or somethings*, *I means*, and *sort o/s* for the sense of realism and spontaneity, especially where hesitations simulate not only the sound of real speech, but psychologically indicative moments. But use these fillers sparingly.

Moreover, your character needn't talk unless there's a point to be conveyed. Eudora Welty said that "only the significant passages of [characters'] talk should be recorded, in high relief against the narrative." So make your talk matter, and find the right balance between realism and economy of speech.

To make realistic dialogue, create a distinct voice for every character. By his diction (word choice) you reveal a character's region, class, education, and style of thinking (logical, impulsive, spiteful, etc.).

Give each character a voice with a distinctive level of diction. Let some speak in fragments, others in complete sentences; some in slang, some in professional jargon, others in standard English; some with fashionable and others with idiosyncratic vocabulary—of course, all within the reason-

able limits of what kind of story you write. Where do you get people's voices? Listen. Remember. If you need to, record. Some people are fortunate because they remember sounds rather than images. The sound more than compensates for the lack of image. Frank O'Connor, for example, said, "I just notice a feeling from people. I notice particularly the cadence of their voices, the sort of phrases they'll use, and that's what I'm all the time trying to hear in my head, how people word things—because everybody speaks an entirely different language. ... I cannot pass a story as finished ... unless I know how everybody in it spoke, which, as I say, can go quite well with the fact that I couldn't tell you in the least what they looked like. If I use the right phrase and the reader hears the phrase in his head, he sees the individual."

If you are primarily a visual person, you may rely on vivid images with great success, but you still need the sounds. Get them any way you can. Record people, study their talk, study dialogue and dialects.

Exercises

1. Two pages. Use a tape recorder and record a dinner conversation. Transcribe the conversation. Then read what you have. Most likely the transcript will be cumbersome to read, with all the pauses, fillers, and so on. Edit it. Take out all the repetitions. Read it again. Perhaps now it's too spare. So put back a few repetitions for the natural sound, and, here and there, describe minimal actions between spoken sentences—slurping the soup, clanking the china—so the dialogue does not appear to be suspended in a vacuum. These little details will turn the dialogue into a scene. Now the conversation should read smoothly, if for no other reason than because you've read thousands of dialogues done in that vein.

Objective: To learn to distinguish between real conversation and written dialogue. In your final dialogue, keep the best parts of the actual conversation, and the best artificial props—if any—you came up with in rewriting.

Check: Since this is an exercise in revision, the check is included in the task description.

2. Two pages. Reproduce a quarrel you've had. Don't edit for diversity of insults, subtlety of word choice, dignity of the scene. Just give it to us, raw.

Objective: A quarrel is a paradigm of dynamic dialogue. Conflicting motives drive word choices. Even if there's no quarrel in your dialogue, use a conflict to propel the conversation.

Check: Is it clear what the quarrel is about? It may be about two issues, one on the surface, another beneath it, but at least let the theme of the surface quarrel be clear. If it's too confusing, it won't work. Anger probably more than any other emotion helps the mind simplify problems into sharp

Ask the Book Doctor: POV Terminology

Dear Doc

Our critique group has a disagreement about those pesky commas. Which sentence in each of the following sets is punctuated correctly? If you can also explain why, we'll give you a gold star.

Set # 1:

- (a) They left early for the concert and arrived there in good time.
- (b) They left early for the concert, and arrived there in good time.

Set #2:

- (a) He missed her so and wrote every day.
- (b) He missed her so, and wrote every day.



Please consider replacing "so" with something like "intensely" or "painfully" or leave it out altogether.

Bottom-line rule: Whenever a COORDINATING CONJUNCTION (and, but, or, nor, so [colloquial for "so that"]) is followed by a subject-verb construction and thus could be a complete sentence, DO use a comma (optional if it's extremely short and no miscue would result). In both your sets below, the conjunction "and" is followed by a verb that uses the same subject:

He left and arrived.
He missed and wrote.

May your commas be less pesky in the future.

Dear Pesky,

In both cases, sentence (a) is correct although the word "so" in Set #2 presents an awkward miscue or "speed bump" to the reader. Here "so" is intended as an adverb, meaning "intensely," but a reader might stutter over it, thinking at first it's a conjunction, meaning "and therefore" or "so that," as in: "He missed her, so he wrote every day."

Have a question to share in this column? Email me at: 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.joanuptonhall.com/books.htm>. Scroll past the book covers and click "Ask Doc" Q&A's.

10-Minute Fixes to 10 Common Plot Problems

by Elizabeth Sims from 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.

8. MY ENDING MADE MY CRITIQUE GROUP GO, "SO WHAT?"

You've written your novel, you're at the point of bravely hearing any and all criticism, and you've just found out that your ending leaves your writing buddies cold. You feel (understandably) frustrated, and maybe a little angry. Now what?

10-MINUTE SOLUTION: Add passion, violence or both.

A weak ending, of course, may signify major problems with the rest of the book. But not necessarily. If you've built convincing characters and worked out a believable, suspenseful story, but things still fall flat at the end, this could be because you haven't gone far enough. Some authors simply take their foot off the accelerator toward the end, either from fatigue or from an unnecessary sense of restraint. Whatever the case, if you discover you're one of them, you've got to ramp up the emotion.

Now, you don't want to be cheap, but be advised that exploitation works. Readers expect to be knocked out of their socks, and it's really OK to give them that.

So try heightening the ending you've already got. A good way to do it is to add passion or violence—or both.

Think of *The Great Gatsby*. It's memorable not only because Jay Gatsby fails to attain the object of his obsession (see plot solution No. 3), but because he gets shot to death in his pool.

When trying to figure out how to amp up your ending, your genre can help you decide. Every romantic story from *Pride and Prejudice* to *Sweet, Savage Love* ends with love, love and more love, so if you're writing a romance, adding passion is a no-brainer.

Who "said" Answer ... Rita Mae Brown, from *Starting From Scratch*, 1988

Rita Mae Brown (1944 to now) is the New York Times bestselling author of the Mrs. Murphy mystery series (which she writes with her tiger cat, Sneaky Pie) and the Sister Jane novels, as well as *Rubyfruit Jungle*, *In Her Day*, *Six of One*, *The Sand Castle*, and the memoirs *Animas Magnetism* and *Rita Will*.

An Emmy-nominated screenwriter and a poet, Brown lives in Afton, Virginia, with cats, hounds, horses, and big red foxes.

Her screenplay *Slumber Party Massacre* (1982) was a



parody of the slasher genre, but the producers of the film decided to play it seriously. Other screenplays and teleplays include: *Murder She Purred: A Mrs. Murphy Mystery* (1998) [TV]; *Mary Pickford: A Life on Film* (1997); *The Woman Who Loved Elvis* (1993) [TV]; *Rich Men, Single Women* (1990) [TV]; *Me and Rubyfruit* (1989); *My Two Loves* (1986); *The Long Hot Summer* (1985); *The Slumber Party Massacre* (1982); *I Love Liberty* (1982). In 1982, Brown was nominated for an Emmy for Outstanding Writing in a Variety or Music Program for *I Love Liberty*.

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, iwritecozies@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 Ciabrone

www.davidciabrone.com

Mary Fenoglio

www.eggsinmypocket.com

Joan Hall:

www.JoanUptonHall.com

Durwood J (DJ) Heinrich:

www.RedBaronConcepts.com

Sam Holland:

www.samholland.com

D Alan Johnson

www.dalanjohnson.com

Melissa Leedom:

www.forgive490.com

Linda Lipscomb:

www.lblipscomb.com

Jason Minor:

www.jason-minor.com

Helen Nardecchia

www.helennardecchia.com

Joy Nord:

www.joynord.com

Jamie Roton aka Lillian Grey blog

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

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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. 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.

Demystifying Writers' Demons©

Acronyms & specialized abbreviations

- **Acronyms** are strings of initials or parts of words that become so commonly used we think of them as words themselves. One early technological term was "radar" (shortened from "radio detecting and ranging"). Unlike that one, acronyms are usually all-cap initials. Some that have become household words are:
ASPCA – American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
NASA – National Aeronautic and Space Administration
FBI – Federal Bureau of Investigation
- **Honorary titles** may combine both caps and lower case letters, as in:
Esq., M.D., Ph.D.

Potential problems:

Acronym-itis – Some writers, apparently to show off, let an overabundance of these initials take over and bog down the message, an irritating habit. Other writers, apparently to help out the rest of us poor, ignorant readers, throw in redundant words (part of the initials) to explain, such as saying: "PIN number," or "HIV virus." Please don't do that.

Initial-itis may be acceptable in certain circles, for whom common initials present no problem in communication.

Examples: anyone in a given field familiar with their own areas of expertise; social networks who invent their own shorthand words. How far this will go in circles of text-messagers remains to be seen. It's just another wrinkle in the slang that every generation invents to show they are part of a closed or "in" group. As long as all involved understand that a bff is a "best friend forever" instead of a "big fat fool," everything should be fine—until the term suddenly becomes something else.

Honorary artifice – Titles don't need to be applied every time you use a person's name or in casual settings. Appropriately used, these earn respect, but overuse makes the honoree appear to be a show-off.



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