

The Gabriel Writer

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

August 2012

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Lemonade Anyone? with Linda Lipscomb

Ah yes, we love nothing better than a cool drink on a hot day and many kids love nothing better than setting up a lemonade stand to sell us that cool drink. From a child's point of view, it is a way to make money and fun doing it. From a parent's point of view, it may be fun, but it takes time to ensure all the right stuff is there for the child to be a success.

Writing for children can be a little like that lemonade stand ... for both the child and the parent. It takes a lot of ingredients to make the story a success. Understanding how to reach your target audience, how to sell to them once you know who they are, and how to beat your competition on product and price. Try having a little fun while trying to decide how to make a profit. Join children's author, Linda Lipscomb, a.k.a. Granny Red Shoes, and share a glass of her 'lemonade' experience.

About Granny Red Shoes, by Linda —

Once upon a time, I worked for a high-tech firm. What a crazy world that was for someone who, in high school, thought she would end up on Broadway as an actor or dancer! Instead, I somehow managed to achieve a very rewarding and successful career in Marketing Communications.

Twenty-one years later, I left that job for a brief jaunt down the road in the printing and publishing business. Then I got the bug to start my own business.

For twelve years I ran a very successful Trade Show Marketing & Special Events Production company. My customers were most of the high-tech businesses you've heard of around the world. The travel was fun, but enough already! I really got tired of keeping my bags packed, and having to deal with overcrowded airports. So, my husband and I decided it was time to retire – sounded great to me.

I spent several years as a volunteer for service organizations and as a mentor for middle-school students. One day, something wonderful happened. As if by magic, stories started running around in my head. They twisted and turned in my brain until I could no longer resist the urge to spill them out. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, this is how Granny Red Shoes was born.

Granny has recently published the third of her Granny Red Shoes Adventure stories, but there are many more to come. Every story has a special little fairy that adds charm and a touch of magic and helps teach a wonderful life lesson.

You'll meet Poppy, Daisy, Iris, Woody, Spike and many other fairies in Granny's stories. They all have special jobs and reside in Whirlywind Forest located near Somewhere, USA.



The Write place for the *writer* in you!

Make plans now

to attend the **San Gabriel Writers' League Workshop**
for beginners and experienced writers
Saturday, October 6, 2012



July 2012 Minutes

The **July 5, 2012** Meeting of the San Gabriel Writers' League was called to order by **President D. J. Heinrich** at 7:00 p.m.

D.J. welcomed attendees and visitors **Jan Van Post** and **Anne Miller**. **Anne** became a new member. **Ginnie Voelker**, a former member, also visited.

Minutes for the June 7, 2012 meeting, taken by **D.J. Heinrich**, were accepted as submitted.

Treasurer's Report was accepted.

WELCOME NEW MEMBER: Anne Miller

OLD BUSINESS: D.J. said 6 volunteers are needed for the workshop in October. Workshop topics were determined by member input on the survey. The cost is \$20 for members, \$25 for the general public, and \$10 for students. The name, **The Write Place for the Writer in You**, was chosen by the board.

NEW BUSINESS:

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND SUCCESSES:

Janelle Bolton announced her facelift and said she loved it.

Sylvia Dickey Smith said her blog had won an award.

Ross Carnes announced his first novel is being published.

Ann Bell's novel, *Rebecca's Journey*, was accepted by the Quaker Women's Group Reading List.

Janet Kilgore announced she had filled in at a mystery writing workshop for **Joan Hall** who has been ill. Anyone who attended and submitted writing to her for critique should be aware she is still ill and has not checked her email.

Tom Mitchell said he had been accepted again at the Breedlove Conference in Vermont.

Program: The speaker was **Louis Fairchild** who spoke about his various books, especially *The Lonesome Plains*, about the therapeutic effect of getting together for funeral and revivals for the isolated pioneers of the Panhandle.

D.J. Heinrich adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
Janet Kilgore, Secretary



**Deadline is
ALWAYS ONE WEEK
after a meeting.**

SEND ME YOUR WORDS

Contributions are published
in order of receipt.
Excess is carried over until the
next month where they are at head
of the procession.

Upcoming Meetings

September	Thom, the World's Poet
October	Workshop- The Write Place for the Writer In You!
November	Mike Kearby on westerns for young adults
December	Party

New Member

Anne Miller
1600 Greenbranch Dr
Georgetown TX 78626
512-868-5511
pipsquek550@gmail.com



Member new address

Suzie Miller
276 Bonham Loop
Georgetown, TX 78633-5030
ibmdg@yahoo.com
512-930-0041

Amelia Earhart

July 4, 2012 was U.S. Independence Day. It also marks the 85th anniversary of the first flight of the Lockheed *Vega* transport category aircraft. Amelia Mary Earhart chose to fly a variant of the *Vega*, the *Vega 5B*, solo across the Atlantic in May 1932—the first woman to do so—to emulate Charles Lindbergh's historic oceanic flight that same month in 1927.

The *Vega* / *Golden Eagle* was a six-passenger monoplane originally intended to serve Lockheed's own airline routes. It was fast (135 mph), rugged, and carried enough fuel to fly long distances. The *Vega 5B* that Earhart piloted was a seven-seat passenger transport version, built for higher gross weight operations with commercial operators. Power for the *Vega 5B* was provided by a Pratt & Whitney R-1340 *Wasp* radial engine which delivered 450 horsepower and allowed the aircraft to fly at a top speed of 165 mph.

On May 20-21, 1932, exactly five years after Lindbergh lifted off from Roosevelt Field on Long Island, NY, Earhart departed Harbour Grace, Newfoundland, in her *Vega 5B* "Little Red Bus." She battled fatigue, strong northerly winds, icy conditions (resulting in an uncontrolled descent to just above the waves), and mechanical problems (leaky fuel tank and a cracked manifold that spewed flames out the side of the engine cowling). Nevertheless, following the successful flight of 14 hours, 56 minutes, she landed in a pasture at Culmore, north of Derry in Northern Ireland.

Earhart was the first woman to receive the U.S. *Distinguished Flying Cross* from Congress, awarded for becoming the first aviator to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. She also received the *Cross of Knight* of the Legion of Honor from the French Government and the *Gold Medal* of the National Geographic Society from President Herbert Hoover. As her fame grew, she developed friendships with numerous individuals in high offices, most notably Eleanor Roosevelt, the First Lady from 1933–1945. Roosevelt shared many of Earhart's interests and passions, especially women's causes. Earhart was also the first woman to fly non-stop across the U.S. and first to fly to the mainland from Hawaii. She set numerous other records, wrote best-selling books about her flying experiences, and was instrumental in the formation of *The Ninety-Nines*, an organization for female pilots. Earhart joined the faculty of the renowned Purdue University aviation department in 1935 as a visiting faculty member to counsel women on careers and inspire others through her love for aviation.

On May 20, 1937, Earhart and her navigator Fred Noonan set off from Oakland, CA, to circumnavigate the globe in a Lockheed Model 10E *Electra* with dual Pratt & Whitney R-1340 *Wasp* S3H1 600-horsepower engines, ultimately planning to land back in Oakland on the 4th of July. On July 2, 1937, at 10:00 AM local time, Earhart and Noonan departed Lae, New Guinea, in their heavily-loaded *Electra*. Their intended destination was Howland Island, a tiny coral atoll 6,500 feet long and 1,600 feet wide—and 2,556 miles away! The U.S. Coast Guard cutter *Itasca* was on station at Howland, assigned to communi-

cate with Earhart's Lockheed *Electra* and guide them to the island once they arrived in the vicinity.

Through an unfortunate series of events—the details of which are still controversial—the final approach to Howland Island using radio navigation was unsuccessful. Earhart and Noonan disappeared over the central Pacific Ocean likely somewhere close to Howland having already completed more than three quarters of their around the world trip. Their last known position report was near the Nukumanu Islands, about 800 miles into the flight. Fred Noonan had earlier written about problems affecting the accuracy of radio direction-finding in navigation. However, he was one of the most experienced celestial navigators in the world, and it is likely that his own observations were no more than 15 miles in error. Further, even though the crew apparently ran out of fuel searching for Howland Island, there is every indication that Earhart had operated the *Electra* correctly and efficiently.

One cause of possible confusion was that the USCG cutter *Itasca* and Earhart planned their communication schedule using time systems a half hour apart—with Earhart using Greenwich Civil Time (GCT) and the *Itasca* a naval time zone designation system. Video evidence from Lae suggests that an antenna mounted underneath the fuselage may have been torn off from the fuel-heavy *Electra* during taxi or takeoff from Lae's turf runway, though no antenna was located at Lae. Further, to save weight, the aviators had apparently decided not to reinstall the trailing wire antenna—destroyed in a Hawaii ground accident on the first global attempt in March—that had been originally installed to transmit Morse Code signals. Neither Earhart nor Noonan knew Morse code well enough to use it effectively.

There is also some evidence that Earhart and Noonan may have landed on the much larger Nikumaroro Island (Gardner Island) in the Republic of Kiribati some 379 miles SSE of Howland Island. Bearings taken of the downed *Electra* by Pan American Airways stations suggested signals originating from several locations, including Gardner. It was argued at the time that if these transmissions were from Earhart and Noonan, they must have been on land with the aircraft because water would have shorted out the aircraft's electrical system.

Yesterday, July 3rd, researchers departed Honolulu on a \$2 million expedition to again search for wreckage of Earhart's *Electra* near Nikumaroro Island where they are convinced the aviator died a castaway. Richard Gillespie and his team believe Earhart's aircraft may rest in waters offshore from where they suspect she survived for weeks or months in 1937 in the atoll's harsh conditions. They theorize Earhart's plane was washed off the reef by surf days after Earhart and Noonan landed on Nikumaroro. Gillespie maintains that circumstantial evidence collected on their previous trips to Nikumaroro supports his theory that Earhart spent her final days on the island. Items they discovered earlier include a jar of a once-popular brand of anti-freckle cream from the 1930s, a clothing (flight suit?) zipper, a bone-handled pocket knife of the type Earhart carried, a size 9 Cat's Paw heel dating from the 1930s resembling Earhart's

continued



... Continued

footwear in world flight photos, an aluminum panel, a piece of clear Plexiglas the same thickness and curvature of an aircraft window, improvised tools, and piles of fish and bird bones which could indicate a Westerner trying to survive. The team found giant clamshells at the campsite positioned concave to catch rainwater. The researchers also found bone fragments, but Gillespie said they were too deteriorated to enable DNA testing. He believes a partial skeleton—along with a sextant box—found by a British colonial officer in 1940 may have been Earhart's. The skeleton was taken to Fiji where in 1941 authorities who measured the bones concluded it belonged to a man. However, a subsequent analysis of the recorded bone dimensions by forensic anthropologists in 1998 indicates that the remains were of a tall Caucasian female. Gillespie traveled with his group to Fiji last summer in an attempt to find the bones that had disappeared but were unsuccessful.

Over 75 years, a number of additional theories concerning the fate of Amelia Earhart have evolved. Some believe that her aircraft crashed in Saipan or that she was captured by the

Japanese and brought to Saipan. But the Japanese have consistently denied having any knowledge of the fate of Earhart. Others theorize that she engaged in espionage for the U.S. at President Franklin Roosevelt's direct request in an attempt to photograph military activities in the Japanese Mandated Islands of Micronesia, specifically in the vicinity of Truk which was believed at the time to be the site of a strategic Japanese naval base. Another theory suggests Earhart turned back mid-flight and tried to reach the airfield at Rabaul, New Britain—NE of mainland Papua New Guinea, some 2,200 miles from Howland—but crashed in the jungle 40 miles southwest of Rabaul. An additional claim holds that Earhart survived the world flight, relocated back to the U.S. northeast, assumed another identity, and remarried. Finally, there are some more bizarre theories, including one that a suicidal Earhart purposely crashed her plane into the Pacific, and another that she was captured by the Japanese and forced to broadcast to America GIs as "Tokyo Rose."

Raquel by Captain S. Martin Shelton, USNR (ret.)

Sailors tell sea stories—a tale of some incident in the sailor's adventures that is memorable, at least to the sailor. By definition, the sailor enhances the tale with fictional events to make it more compelling for his shipmates. The following tale is a tale without the sea story enhancement—at least it is as best as I can remember.

In June 1968, I reported aboard the aircraft carrier *USS Ranger (CVA 61)* as ship's company. I was a Special Duty Officer, Air Intelligence. We deployed to the Tokin Gulf in October 1968 and conducted air interdiction operations primarily in North Vietnam. My primary task was to develop targets for our Air Group to strike.

The ship's routine was to conduct air operations for seven consecutive days, stand down for one day, and then resume flight operations. Because of the nature of my job, planning targets for the next day's operations, I had to work on the stand down day to insure that the next day's targeting was ready for briefing the aviators, ordnance officers to plan appropriate weapons for the targets, and ordnance men to load such weapons on the aircraft.

Most of the ship was air-conditioned, and in the intelligence spaces—necessary to keep our banks of computers from overheating. Unfortunately, the targeting shop was outside the air conditioning boundary. It was in a small vault on the deck just below the flight deck and beside the Admiral's ladder. Inside we had maps of the Top Secret Vietnam air war posted throughout the vault. We had a small fan to circulate the air, and when we were inside we keep the vault door opened to help circulation. We rigged a drape over the vault's door, and posted a large "KEEP OUT" sign in the center of the drape. No unauthorized sailor ever entered my vault.

As luck would have it, the Bob Hope's Christmas USO Tour flew aboard late on 21 December 1968 shortly after we'd completed air operations for the day. Included in his troupe were Les Brown and his Band of Renown, cinematography crew,



staff; and the bimbo of the year, Miss. Raquel Welch—one gorgeous and sexy dame.

Next day was our stand down day and that afternoon Bob Hope put on one terrific show. God love him. I know he and Bing are playing sub-par on that golf course in the celestial sphere. Of course, Raquel was a terrific hit. After the show, I returned to my vault to complete the targeting plan for tomorrow's strikes. I closed the drape over the door and got fully immersed into my targeting tasks. Time slid by.

A soft, throaty female voice snapped me back to reality, "Can you tell me how to get to the enlisted dining hall? I'm supposed to have dinner with Seaman John Jones."

I whirled around and saw Raquel standing a few feet from me. Startled, I was momentarily without voice. She was inside my Top Secret vault—an incredible breach of security. Nonetheless, she was wearing a form-fitting blue micro-mini skirt, three-inch high heels, and a skin-tight,

brown knit blouse over a no-bra, brassière. The visual effect was erotically stunning and mind numbing.

Still without voice, and alarmingly shocked that my air war might possibly be compromised, I rose from my chair, placed my right hand on her left shoulder and turned her around so that she faced the drape. With a gentle nudge, I guided her outside my vault. No words were exchanged.

Fortunately, a sailor was walking down the passageway. I said to him, "Seaman, take Miss. Welch to the enlisted mess." A large smile cracked on his face and without ado, they scrambled down the Admiral's ladder. That's end of my sea story. But it's no sea story. My tale is about as accurate as I can remember some forty-five years later.

I've wondered, from time-to-time, if I should have slammed the vault door shut with Raquel and me inside.

Dream on . . .

Oklahoma Odyssey by Jane Thompson

In 1923 my father was 12 years old and his father pulled him out of school to take part in a campaign that, he said, would be much more educational than the things he could learn in school. Of course, that wasn't the only reason my father joined in the journey. My grandfather was illiterate, but much too proud to let anyone but members of his immediate family know that. He always arranged it so that there would be someone he could trust around if there was reading to be done.

In that year the Ku Klux Klan had reached the apex of its power in Oklahoma. This wasn't the old Klan of the postwar years whose purpose was to keep ex-slaves in their place; this Klan was not just a social movement but also a political one. This Klan not only wanted to keep blacks in their place, but also Jews, Indians, and Catholics and it also made it part of its agenda to police the morals of the populace. It gained a great deal of ground in Oklahoma, which had an overwhelmingly WASP population. One of the pillars of its power was its ability to keep its membership secret and to convene in public, masked and mysterious.

Jack Walton, the mayor of Oklahoma City, decided to run for governor of the state on an anti-Klan platform. The strongest plank of that platform was an anti-mask law, which would make it illegal to appear in public masked 364 days of the year, the exception being, of course, Halloween. This would destroy the mystique of the Klan and turn Klansmen into the ordinary busybodies and tiny tyrants that they were. Jack chose my grandfather, an Oklahoma City cop but a man who had been involved in politics since Territorial days, as his campaign manager.

A campaign for statewide office consisted of visiting every county seat—all 77 of them. This could be an adventure. In those days there were no highways and only a few miles of paved road in the whole state. No highways signs; navigation was done by asking locals for directions and hoping they knew what they were talking about or using guidebooks that gave directions by using local landmarks, which could, of course, be torn down or disappear. It was easier in Oklahoma than in most states because of the grid pattern that even the rural roads were laid down on; but still nothing like today. My father was in charge of navigation; for the rest of his life, he could simply get in the car and drive anywhere in the state without consulting a map. Detours and fancy Interstates didn't confuse him; he knew the state of Oklahoma literally like the back of his hand.

They drove a Model T for weeks through red dust and rain and dark and ice and snow. My father got to where he could fix one in any conditions; darkness or a windstorm, and he could change a tire in no time. Their standard procedure was to drive into a county seat, then tack up posters on poles and trees announcing a rally and speech in the evening. They would repair to the local hotel, rest and freshen up, speak to the crowds in the evening, eat with the locals who supported their campaign, sleep in that town, and start out at dawn for the next county seat. They met with more support than they expected; there was surprising sympathy for turning out the Klan.

They planned the campaign to end up in southeastern part of the state, where the Klan's power was strongest. The deeper they got into the region, the more uncomfortable things got. Finally, one day they pulled into a county seat whose denizens had been warned that they were coming. They went through the usual drill, not realizing that the Klan-dominated city council had met earlier that day to pass a law against posting flyers

within the city limits. Of course they were promptly arrested and jailed for breaking the city ordinance. Since they could not get bail set and men starting loitering around the front of the jail they began to worry about their treatment at the hands of the locals and to try to find a way of the their situation.

My father was always skinny; he was especially lanky as a kid. For the first time, he was grateful for that. Jack and my grandfather gave him careful instructions and shoved him through the bars of the back window of the jail. He got away unobserved and carried out his errand; then he blended into the landscape and waited to see what would happen.

From bushes across the road, he watched the crowd of men in front of the jail grow larger, rowdier, and drunker. Things did not bode well. It looked as though they would be lucky to get away with a tarring and feathering. Then, just as the sun was setting, "just like in the movies," two Highway Patrol cars crammed with deputies sped up to the jail and screeched to stop. The Highway Patrol Officers demanded to know why a candidate for governor was being held in jail and on what charges. Eventually it was sorted out and my father, my grandfather, and Jack pattered out of town, rally forgotten, between two highway patrol cars. They had no more problems in that neighborhood, though they weren't really welcomed.

After the long and exhausting campaign, to everyone's surprise, Jack Walton was elected governor. Since my father was part of it, he used to tell us proudly, "Jack Walton broke the Klan with his anti-mask law." However, the Klan still had some power—within the year, Jack was impeached, convicted, and turned out of office. At least, my father always said that the Klan got him. The history books don't agree, but in this case, I think my father was right.



John Calloway "Jack" Walton
(March 6, 1881 – November 25, 1949) was an American politician and the [fifth Governor of Oklahoma](#). Walton would serve the shortest term of any Governor of Oklahoma, being the first Governor in the state's history to be removed from office.

Farewell To Anonymity

By Sydney Winthrop Cozié

Cowering
isolated
afraid
overcome



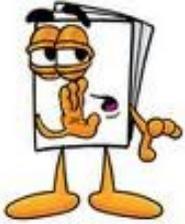
Aware — unsure;



resolute
energized
vitalized
organized

Invigorated—ready!

Do Your Characters Talk to You? From Dave Ciambrone



Writers sometimes get intimately involved with their characters. We will be addressing the topic of author-character communication.

When you write your characters, do you have a character profile and use it.

Do you talk to your characters when writing?

How well do you know your characters before and when you write?

Do your characters talk to you and if so, how?

Do your characters lead you in the story or do you have the story pretty well established and they follow suit?

If you talk to your characters, do you talk to them out loud or just in your mind?

During the writing process, stories sometimes change, do your characters drive this or do you just get other ideas?

Do your characters change during the story or just solve the mystery?

How do you develop your characters? Do they evolve or do you have a plan for them?

Does setting play a part of your characters personality?

Are your characters real people to you when you write?

We want the reader to like our characters, at least the good guys, how do you do that?

Do you think about your story and the characters when doing other things and not writing?

Have you ever been out in public and looking at a place or see something you could use in your story and start to discuss it with your leading character? Do people look at you strangely if you do this?

If your characters talk to you, what do you talk about?

Have you ever had an argument with one of your characters?

Do you take medication for all this?

If you are a fiction writer who is deeply involved with the story being written, the above is normal and you don't need meds—at least not as many.



Submitting a Short Story Manuscript From Writer's Digest

What You Need to Submit

Submitting short stories is relatively simple. Unlike with novels where you typically need to submit a query letter as well as a few sample chapters and a synopsis, with a short story you only need to send a cover letter and the story in its entirety.

Submitting a Short Story Manuscript

Establish yourself as a professional by following the correct short story format. A separate cover or title page is not necessary. Don't submit any materials that have handwritten notes on them. As with all parts of your submission, make sure your work is revised and proofread.

The Specifics of the Short Story Format

- Use a 1" margin on all sides.
- Do not number the first page.
- Put your name and contact information at the top, centered, on the first page.
- Put the word count and rights offered in the top right corner.
- Put the story's title, centered in all caps, approximately one-third of the way down the page from the top margin.
- Skip a line and write "by" in lowercase, then skip another line and put your name in all caps. (If using a pseudonym, put that name in all caps, and then on the next line put your real name in parentheses.)
- Drop four lines, indent, and begin your story.
- Double-space the entire text of the story.
- Put a header at the top of every page (except the first) including the title, your last name, and page number.
- Optional: Type "THE END" in all caps when your story is finished. (Some editors like this because it closes the story; others do not. It's your call.)

More Tips on Submitting Query Letters

- Do use a paper clip in the top left corner to attach pages together (butterfly clamps work well for stories longer than ten pages).
- Do keep an original copy of the story for yourself.
- Don't put your social security number on the manuscript.
- Don't use a separate cover or title page.
- Don't justify the text or align the right margin. Ragged right is fine.
- Don't put a copyright notice on the manuscript. It's copyrighted as soon as you write it.
- Don't include your story on a disk or CD unless the editor asks for it.
- Don't use unusual fonts. A simple Times New Roman, Arial, or Courier is fine.
- Don't email or fax your story to a publication unless you have permission from the editor or if their submission guidelines state it is acceptable.



I have made this [letter] longer, because I have not had the time to make it shorter.

Marketing: What To Do With Your Horrible Reviews

By Randy Ingermansen

Every few weeks, I hear from one or another of my author friends who's in tears over horrifying news:

Somebody out there hates her writing. Somebody out there hates her writing violently. Somebody out there has written a vicious review.

Yes, that hurts. It stings, in fact. It makes you want to retaliate.

Don't.

Just ignore it.

Get on with your writing.

Look, bad reviews are a fact of life. Even if you write your heart out, somebody somewhere is going to think your writing sucks. Somebody somewhere is going to say so right out in public.

There's just no way around that.

I think every writer on the planet secretly fears that her writing really isn't any good.

Almost every writer on the planet, anyway. I've met a very few writers who honestly thought they were brilliant, amazing, inspired by God, and due for millions of dollars as soon as the publishers could quit tripping over each other to write the advance check.

Roughly half of the writers who believe that are stupendously awful. The other half are stupendously brilliant.

The rest of us all privately fear that we're frauds. When we read a horrible, biting, savage review, we believe it.

So don't read your reviews.

Oh, all right, if you really must have an ego boost, go ahead and read your 5-star reviews. You are allowed to believe the least-flattering ten percent of whatever sweet fibs they say about you.

But don't read the other reviews.

A nasty review can leave you fuming all day.

A nasty review can paralyze you.

A nasty review can make you try to change yourself – to be somebody else. That's the worst thing you can do.

So don't try to change yourself.

If you go changing yourself willy-nilly, just to please some slimeball who trashed you in public, then you're an idiot.

Strong words, yes, but true.

Be yourself. Don't be an idiot.

As a writer, all you have is yourself. If that's not good enough, then it's not good enough, and maybe you ought to go into a less risky career.

Blind-folded lion-taming, for instance.

Real life is about taking reasonable risks to do what you love.

If you have fans whom you're pleasing with your writing, then your task is to please them with more of your writing.

Trying to change yourself to please people who hate you is likely to ruin the very thing that your fans love about you.

Don't do that.

Yes, it's fine to always try to improve your writing. Everybody can improve. Everybody should try to improve.

Improvement means making your strengths more amazing and your weaknesses more acceptable.

To improve on your weaknesses, ask a professional editor to point out things you need to work on and ask her to show you techniques that might help you improve.

To improve on your strengths, ask your fans what they love about your writing. Then try to do that better.

It's possible that a professional editor might be able to help you with your strengths, but it's not a sure thing. After all, you're the one with the strength.

Unless the editor also has that same strength, she might only be able to show you how to dilute your strength to be like everybody else. That's not what you want.

Protect the flame that powers your writing.

Don't read negative reviews. They won't help you and they might harm you.

What about when somebody helps you out by sending you a nasty e-mail?

That's a toughie. You have to read your e-mail, right?

Do you? When you get an unsolicited commercial e-mail, how long does it take to realize that this is something you don't want, sent by somebody you don't know?

Once you see that, do you read the whole thing?

When somebody sends you a poison e-mail, you'll get the flavor pretty fast. But no law requires you to read the whole thing.

If it helps you, make an e-mail folder just for these folks and label it "Nasty People."

That makes it clear that they're the one with the problem, not you.

When you get a hate-spewing e-mail, take your revenge by throwing it in with all the other Nasty People.

Leave them to spew bile on each other until the end of time. That's your revenge. Your whole revenge. Nothing could be worse for them.

Then forget about them and get on with your writing.

You have true fans who love your writing. Write for them and only for them.

Award-winning novelist Randy Ingermansen, "the Snowflake Guy," publishes the Advanced Fiction Writing E-zine, with more than 29,000 readers, every month. If you want to learn the craft and marketing of fiction, AND make your writing more valuable to editors, AND have FUN doing it, visit <http://www.AdvancedFictionWriting.com>.

MORE

**WORKSHOP INFORMATION
IN THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE SO**

**Tell your friends,
your friends' friends,
your friends', friends', friends,
all your relatives, and
Y'all plan to come along!**

Pulitzer Prize First Sentences by Sidney W. Frost

Every writer knows the importance of grabbing the reader with the first sentence, but also knows how difficult that sentence can be to construct.

My writer friends seem to like this one from my novel, *Where Love Once Lived*:



To be honest, I like it also. However, I'm not sure why it works. Now that I'm writing a sequel I'm looking for an even better first sentence. This is what I have now, but I'm not tickled with it: *Was there anything more embarrassing than being left standing at the altar?*

This first sentence could be a spoiler for those of you who have not read *Where Love Once Lived* and a question mark for those who have. Either way, let me know how you feel about the sentence.

To get the creative juices working, I have listed below, first sentences from a random selection of the winners of the Pulitzer Prize for fiction.

The Road by Cormac McCarthy – When he woke in the woods in the dark and the cold of the night he'd reach out to touch the child sleeping beside him.

The Known World by Edward P. Jones – The evening his master died he worked again well after he ended the day for the other adults, his own wife among them, and sent them back with hunger and tiredness to their cabins.

Empire Falls by Richard Russo – Compared to the Whiting mansion in town, the house Charles Beaumont Whiting built a decade after his return to Maine was modest.

Humboldt's Gift by Saul Bellow – The book of ballads published by Von Humboldt Fleisher in the Thirties was an immediate hit.

The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck – To the red

country and part of the gray country of Oklahoma, the last rains came gently, and they did not cut the scarred earth.

A Thousand Acres by Jane Smiley – At sixty miles per hour, you could pass our farm in a minute, on County Road 686, which ran due north into the T intersection at Cabot Street Road.

American Pastoral by Philip Roth – The Swede. During the war years, when I was still a grade school boy, this was a magical name in our Newark neighborhood, even to adults just a generation removed from the city's old Prince Street ghetto and not yet so flawlessly Americanized as to be bowled over by the prowess of a high school athlete.

The Confessions of Nat Turner by William Styron – Above the barren, sandy cape where the river joins the sea, there is a promontory or cliff rising straight up hundreds of feet to form the last outpost of land.

Gilead by Marilynne Robinson – I told you last night that I might be gone sometime, and you said, Where, and I said, To be with the Good Lord, and you said, Why, and I said, Because I'm old, and you said, I don't think you're old.

Middlesex by Jeffrey Eugenides – I was born twice: first, as a baby girl, on a remarkably smogless Detroit day in January of 1960; and then again, as a teenage boy, in an emergency room near Petoskey, Michigan in August of 1974.

The Able McLaughlins by Margaret Wilson – The prairie lay that afternoon as it had lain for centuries of September afternoons, vast as an ocean; motionless as an ocean coaxed into very little ripples by languid breezes; silent as an ocean where only very little waves slip back into their element.

The Caine Mutiny by Herman Wouk – He was of medium height, somewhat chubby, and good looking, with curly red hair and an innocent, gay face, more remarkable for a humorous air about the eyes and large mouth than for any strength of chin or nobility of nose.

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee – When he was nearly thirteen, my brother Jem got his arm badly broken at the elbow.

From: <http://christianbookmobile.blogspot.com/2012/05/pulitzer-prize-first-sentences.html>

? Blaise Pascal (1623 - 1662), "*Lettres Provinciales*", letter 16, 1657



Blaise Pascal (French pronunciation: [blɛz paskal]; 19 June 1623 – 19 August 1662), was a French mathematician, physicist, inventor, writer and Catholic philosopher.

In 1646, he and his sister Jacqueline identified with the religious movement within Catholicism known by its detrac-

tors as Jansenism.^[5] His father died in 1651. Following a mystical experience in late 1654, he had his "second conversion", abandoned his scientific work, and devoted himself to philosophy and theology. His two most famous works date from this period: the *Lettres provinciales* and the *Pensées*, the former set in the conflict between Jansenists and Jesuits. In this year, he also wrote an important treatise on the arithmetical triangle. Between 1658 and 1659 he wrote on the cycloid and its use in calculating the volume of solids.

Pascal had poor health especially after his eighteenth year and his death came just two months after his 39th birthday

Writing Flash Fiction By G. W. Thomas

With the advent of the Internet, editors are looking for shorter works, more easily read on a computer screen. The current term is "flash fiction", a tale between 300-1000 words long. Longer than micro-fiction (10-300 words) but shorter than traditional short stories (3000-5000 words preferred by most magazines), flash fiction is usually a story of a single act, sometimes the culmination of several unwritten events.

This article will offer several strategies for writing flash fiction. Used by themselves or in combination, the writer can focus their story to that brief, interesting event.

1) The small idea

Look for the smaller ideas in larger ones. To discuss the complex interrelationship of parents and children you'd need a novel. Go for a smaller piece of that complex issue. How kids feel when they aren't included in a conversation. What kids do when they are bored in the car. Middle child. Bad report card. Find a smaller topic and build on it.

2) Bury the preamble in the opening

When you write your story, don't take two pages to explain all the pre-story. Find a way to set it all in the first paragraph, then get on with the rest of the tale.

3) Start in the middle of the action

Similar to #2, start the story in the middle of the action. A man is running. A bomb is about to go off. A monster is in the house. Don't describe any more than you have to. The reader can fill in some of the blanks.

4) Focus on one powerful image

Find one powerful image to focus your story on. A war-torn street. An alien sunset. They say a picture worth a thousand words. Paint a picture with words. It doesn't hurt to have something happen inside that picture. It is a story after all.

5) Make the reader guess until the end

A little mystery goes a long way. Your reader may have no idea what is going on for the majority of the story. This will lure them on to the end. When they finish, there should be a good pay off or solution.

6) Use allusive references

By using references to a commonly known story you can save yourself all those unnecessary words. Refer to historical events. Use famous situations from literature. If the story takes place on the Titanic you won't have to explain what is going to happen, who is there or much of anything. History and James Cameron have already done it for you. Beware of using material that is too obscure. Your reader should be able to make the inferences.

7) Use a twist

Like #5, the twist ending allows the writer to pack some punch at the end of the story. Flash fiction is often twist-ending fiction because you don't have enough time to build up sympathetic characters and show how a long, devastating plot has affected them. Like a good joke, flash fiction is often streamlined to the punch-line at the end.

Let's look at these techniques in my story "Road Test". I

wanted to write a story about taking my driving exam. I didn't mention the pre-test or practicing. Just the test. (#1 THE SMALL IDEA) This narrows our subject down to a manageable scene.

I didn't have room to describe the driving examiner in detail. I set my main character in two sentences.(#2 BURY THE PREAMBLE) "The man in the government-issued suit sat down without looking at the person across from him. We've established the main character and his chief flaws. (He's mediocre and probably hates his job.)

I started in the middle of the action by having the driver very quickly go from good driving to dangerous driving. Johnson, the driving examiner realizes the driver is not human but goat-headed (#3 START IN THE MIDDLE). "He had changed. The beard was longer, the skin darker and two large curved horns crowned his skull." This creates tension and has created an image: a man trapped in a speeding car with a monster (#4 A POWERFUL IMAGE). It pushes the reader on because they want to know what will happen next, maybe why is it happening? We won't tell them until the end (#5 KEEP THEM GUESSING).

The monster keeps yelling the same word, "Pooka!" Johnson begins to understand. He knows the old fairy stories about the Pooka, about how they pretended to be horses so they could drown their victims. (#6 ALLUSION)

Now is the time for resolution, our great twist ending that no one sees coming (#7 TWIST ENDING). As the monster crashes the car into a pond, Johnson realizes a modern-day Pooka wouldn't look like a horse, but would use a car. The car crashes and we finish with: "They would die, only Johnson would live long enough to feel those large goatish teeth chewing the flesh from his bones. The souped-up V8 hit the slick surface of the pond like a fist into jello. Windshield collapsed under tons of water, washing away the high, shrill laughter of the driver."

"Road Test" clocks in at 634 words. It is essentially a man gets killed by a monster story, but the crux of the idea is "How would mythological creatures adapt to the modern world?" This is really the small idea. The allusions to the Pooka will work for some, but I gave enough explanation to help those that don't know about the old stories.

This example story was chosen because it illustrated all 7 methods. Using only one in a flash story can be enough. Writing flash fiction is a great way for writers to write everyday, even when larger projects seem to daunting or they are pressed for time. Using these short cuts can have you writing in minutes.

Editor's note: G. W. Thomas started writing micro fiction (that's flash fiction in under 100 words) in 1999. He found it a great way to hone editing skills



Ask the Book Doctor: Name Calling by Joan Upton Hall

Dear Doc

My critique group gets way too picky about what to call our characters. For instance, in my Old West novel, can you tell me what's wrong with naming my hero and heroine my favorite names, Chip and Madison?

– Name Caller



offer names from around the world, and...well, you get the picture.

For an old-fashioned approach, there are also baby name books, old yearbooks, and telephone books. The important thing is to pick names that contribute to characterization and setting.

End the name blame – Doc Joan

Dear Name Caller

What's wrong? Those are names popular to a different era. In the Old West, if parents had named their son "Chip" people might have thought that was his middle name to go with the first name of "Cow." If they had named their daughter "Madison," people might have assumed she was the namesake of the fourth U.S. President.

If you don't have a feel for appropriate names by reading in a particular time frame, use your computer. In your web browser, type in "popular baby names," and numerous sites will come up, such as a social security listing by years. Other sites

Have a question to share in this column? Email me at: jmu-hall@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.

Joan Hall thanks GW readers for their interest in "Ask the Book Doctor." She says, "Because some of you have asked where you can look up previous issues, I have posted a few of them at "books, etc." on website: www.JoanUptonHall.com. Scroll past the book covers and click "Ask Doc" Q&A's .

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Last Writes Critique Group—Full right now, welcomes a **Waiting List** Meets (usually) at 7 PM, 2nd & 4th Wed. each month, at Oaks at Wildwood Clubhouse. Novels in progress, varied genres. Membership currently full. Contact: Jmu-Hall@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 **full**.

1 Opening 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 rosscarnes@hotmail.com

Openings Tale Spinners, return with us to the days of yesteryear where we put some novel twists on old stories. Historical fiction's the name, publication's the fame. Join us now with your work in progress. We have an opening for one new member. We meet on alternate Mondays at 2:30 in the Georgetown Library. Contact Randall Best at R_best@yahoo.com

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

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Demystifying Writers' Demons One at a Time by Joan Upton Hall

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** at: jmuHall@aol.com. More problems like the one above are demystified in the booklet, *50 Writers' Tips*.

Find a few of them at <http://www.joanuptonhall.com/books.htm>.

Demystifying Writers' Demons©

USAGE—Indefinite Pronouns (number agreement)

- Pronouns that end in **body** or **one** have traditionally been considered singular (*anybody, anyone, everybody, everyone, somebody, someone, no one, nobody*). This means they require singular pronoun reference and singular verb form.

"*Someone* is coming. Do you see *him*?" (generic *him* not *them*)

"*Anybody* is welcome to ask *his or her* questions." (*his or her*, not *their*)

- Often, however, the sense of the sentence is definitely plural. In recent times, credible media sources have come to use *they* or *them* references.

"*Everyone* in the class understands, so *they* need no further explanation."

"*Everybody* was allowed to park *their* cars in a neighboring lot."

- Even when meaning is clearly singular, the word "they" may take on singular usage if doing otherwise sounds awkward.

"*Somebody* already volunteered, didn't *they*?" ("*they*" sounds smoother than "*he or she*")

"*Anyone* may avoid the issue by changing the word 'Anyone' to 'People.'" (plural)

Note: Garner comments: "Disturbing as these developments may be to purists, they're irreversible, and nothing that a grammarian says will change them."

The Gabriel Writer



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