

The Gabriel Writer

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

May 2013

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By Joan Hall **Murders solved . . .**

May's speaker, **Captain Roland Waits** of the Georgetown Police Department, will be giving us the real deal when he talks to us about "**Murders solved in 60 minutes or less...the reality of crime fighting.**" which will help us to write about more realistically about police activities in our stories and books.

Roland Waits has been in Law Enforcement for more than 24 years and during that time he has had the opportunity to travel and teach to members of the military, citizens of numerous states, the Japanese National Police, police officers, students and civic organizations. His current employment is with the Georgetown Police Department, where he serves as the Field Operations Bureau Commander.

Through the years, Roland has taught a wide range of subjects that include: Domestic Violence Prevention, Sexual Assault Investigation, Child Abuse Prevention and Investigation, Conflict Resolution, Mediation, Problem Solving, Organizational Design, Community Policing, Teamwork, Effective Communications, Customer Service, Domestic Terrorism, Homeland Security, Personal Protection and Fraud Prevention, and Conversational English for Japanese Police Officers. He is very passionate and serious about the subjects he instructs, but ensures every person enjoys the time spent in class.

Roland is a graduate of St. Edward's University in Austin, TX with a Bachelor's Degree in Business and Management, is currently working on his Master's Degree in Organizational Leadership and holds a Master Peace Officer License. He is also a graduate of numerous professional development courses including: Leadership and Management in Policing, The Law Enforcement Management Institute, Leadership Georgetown, the Dr. Howard Prince School of Leadership through the University of Texas and the West Point Military Academy.



**Early Warning - because first Tuesday is July 4th,
there will NOT be a July meeting**



April 2013 Minutes

The general meeting was called to order at 7:00

Treasure's Report:

Beginning balance: \$2314.15, Ending balance: \$2672.47

Old Business:

Dave Ciabrone reported that the curriculum of the Writer's college is set. Exact scheduling is taking shape, but dependent on the library's schedule and availability.

New Business:

Janet Kilgore asked if anyone had a portable kiosk that could be used at the Poppy Fest for SGWL writers to sign and sell books. Sylvia Dickie Smith volunteered her unit. Authors interested in staffing the SGWL booth were asked to contact

Janet Kilgore.

New Members Introduced:

Dorothy Feathering, Patricia Payne, Kathryn Egbert, and Lisbeth Franklin.

Program:

Jeanell Bolton and Carol Menchu proved poetry is the shortest emotional distance between two points with an evening of original and published recitations.

Adjournment: 8:00 PM

Respectfully submitted

William Russeth, Secretary



send me your words

THIRDGATE@AOL.COM

Deadline is

ONE WEEK

after a meeting.

Contributions are published in the order I receive them.

Excess is carried over until the next month where they are at head of the procession.

Upcoming Meetings

June	Walter Coffee (author) "Writing Historicals: Fact and Fiction"
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July	MEETING CANCELLED BECAUSE OF HOLIDAY !!!
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August	Glenda Dickey and Bob Parr "Writing Life Stories / Memoirs"
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September	Julia and Van Tracy "Actors Show How To Bring Characters To Life"
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October	
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Gary Clark has **NEW** email address
gl55clark@gmail.com



April's meeting was full of surprises, which is what I expected. (Can you expect to be surprised?)

Thanks to Carol Menchu and Jeanell Bolton for a fun evening of poetry. Even though I am missing all taste buds for poetry, but I thoroughly enjoyed their presentation. As a matter of fact, it was a hoot.

Our program in May will feature a Georgetown police cap-

tain who will tell us how to get down to the grit with accurate portrayals of police activities. Sounds fascinating.

I'd like to put in a plug for my blog this time. (<http://janetkilgore.com>) I've written about this "crazy little thing called writing," to paraphrase Freddie Mercury and Queen. I hope you'll check it out and comment. It's my take on how writing chooses us, regardless of whether we choose it.

Use Your Kindle to Help Edit your New Book

By Sidney W. Frost

I've spent the day listening to my latest book, *Love Lives On*. No, it's not an audible edition. I'm using Kindle's text to speech option. Here's how it works.

First, I edited the book in the traditional fashion by working with a professional editor and making the changes she suggested. After that I used Microsoft Word's Find capability to search for overused and miss-used words. That took about a week. The word "was", for example, appeared more than two thousand times in the 66,000 word novel. I checked each instance to see if I could rewrite the sentence using the active voice instead of the passive. I probably changed half of them. I have a list of about twenty words and phrases I check. I'll provide the list if anyone is interested, but today, I wanted to tell you about how the Kindle helped me find missing words and wrong words.

I saved the Word document as a TXT file and sent it to my Kindle. There are instructions in your Kindle User's Manual telling you how. It only took a few minutes to get it done. There is a fee, but it is small. I'll be glad to send details to anyone who needs it.

Next, I listened to the book, stopping to highlight changes needed and leaving notes about the corrections. Missing words popped out so easily I couldn't believe it. I think when we read our own work, our eyes and brains fill in the missing word for us. When you hear the Kindle read a sentence with a missing word, the word is still missing and you can tell immediately.

I've only listened to half the book so far. Here are a few of the sentences I found with missing words or letters which are shown in parentheses:

1. Karen('s) stomach knotted up.
2. Karen had grown up on (a) farm in Iowa and, after moving to Austin, ...
3. He moved through those trees at (a) fast pace.
4. ...may have come into the room while we (were) gone.
5. The(y) joined the boat tour...
6. Probably because he (looked) like most of the college-aged ...
7. Before Brian had a chase (chance) to agree...
8. She managed to say (it) with love in her voice.
9. What are (you) talking about?

Another benefit of the Kindle speech capability was to catch misused words. I found these:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. litter instead of little | 3. wild instead of wide |
| 2. slide instead of slid | 4. diner instead of dinner |

It was also easier to catch words and phrases used repeatedly. I marked them for change.

Are Manuscripts Obsolete?

By Sidney W. Frost

Originally, a manuscript was a document written by hand. However, the meaning of the word has changed to mean the text sent to the publisher for publication in a newspaper, magazine, or book. The format of the manuscript has changed over the years, too. From handwritten to typed (i.e. on a typewriter) to computer generated. My first book was typed into an Alpha Micro computer and printed in the standard double-spaced format that we see today. My publisher retyped it all for publication. Then they printed it out and sent me a copy on 60-pound paper and I made corrections by hand. After several iterations, the book was published. That was in 1983. Today, I doubt if a publisher would take anything other than digital manuscripts.

As an author who publishes his own books, I tried a new approach with my latest novel. Instead of the standard manuscript format, I typed my book directly into a document formatted for paperback printing. There are several advantages to this approach. One is that you can see what the book will look like as you go. Another advantage is that when you're done the book is finished and there are no surprises related to layout.

I still printed it out a few times during the writing process, and made handwritten edits. The fact that it wasn't double-spaced didn't hinder the effort since the margins were extra-large. The book size I use is 5.25 in. by 8 in.

One problem I had was when I sent the near-complete book to an editor. For some reason the first thing she did was change the format to the standard layout for a manuscript. I'm not sure if she did that for printing or not. It wasn't a major problem since I easily got it back into the publishing format when she was finished. Just seemed like an unnecessary step to me.

The only real problem I had was when I got ready to print a proof copy. I uploaded the text to CreateSpace and was told it was the wrong size. I was given a couple of options to continue, neither were what I wanted, but I went ahead since the initial five books were for beta readers only.

I scoffed when CreateSpace said I wouldn't have had the problem if I had used the Microsoft Word templates they provide—because I had used their templates. But, after checking closer, it turns out I had used the wrong one. After changing to the correct template, the book was longer (in pages) and looked more like what I had in mind.

See <https://wwwcreatespace.com/en/community/docs/DOC-1323> to get a template.

The Bay of Pigs © by S. Martin Shelton

The letter's return address was International Sales, Inc., with a Post Office Box in Abilene, Texas. Never heard of this outfit—even though I'm from Fort Worth. Not that I know everything about Texas. I'd returned to my room after I'd completed my mid-watch in the ship's Intelligence Center—ready for a long, and well-deserved sleep—“sack time” in Naval parlance. Working 12 to 15 hours every day these past two weeks on various targeting options. I was the target analyst on the World War II aircraft carrier *USS Essex, CV9*. Found the letter on my bunk. Unusual. ‘Cause most of our mail is distributed at our work stations. Probably just more junk mail. Not interested. Tossed it on my desk.

After my shower, collapsed into my bunk—dead tired, body and mind. Clicked on my overhead light to read for a few minutes—helps clear my mind. Picked up on my left-off place on Dashiell Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon*. The gentle rolling of the ship began to relax me. After a few minutes of reading about Caspar Gutman's, (the “fat man”) famous quip, “...but we were talking then. *This is actual money, genuine coin of the realm, sir. With a dollar of this you can buy more than with ten dollars of talk.*” As I continued to read something began stewing in the back my mind. The “something” gradually came into clear focus. That letter. The stamp was the four-cent commemorative stamp honoring Simon Bolivar. That's peculiar. Junk mail does not have a first-class stamp and most don't have a return address.

Rolled out of my bunk. Slit open the letter. I'll not relay all the contents here. Rather here are the highlights. “Dear Lt. Sanderson, USNR. We understand that in a few weeks you will be released to inactive duty and will continue in the Naval Reserve as a Special Duty Intelligence Officer. We understand that you graduated first in your class at the Armed Forces Air Intelligence School at Lowry Air Force Base in Denver. Congratulations.” (How the Hell did this outfit know that?) Continuing, “We deal in international trade and are interested in talking with you about long-term employment. On return to Fort Worth please give us a telephone call. Our representative will contact you for a preliminary interview.”

To cut to the chase, as it were; International Sales is a proprietary company for the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)—the “outfit,” the “company” the “agency.” In the intelligence business, a proprietary company is a wholly owned subsidiary of the CIA. Such an enterprise engages in a for-profit business. On the black side, well you can guess.

Three interviews later, one almost all-day with a several agency types, a two-day physical exam, and completion of a 24-page application (wanting to know my genealogy for past hundred years, it seemed); every thing about my past life. Information needed to grant me the Special Compartment Intelligence clearance I must have. In a couple of months I got the call to come to Langley, Virginia for processing. I was hired.

My first assignment with “The Company” was to the Directorate of Science and Technology (DS&T). After a few weeks of orientation, I was detailed to the National Photographic Interpretation Center—the “NPIC”—located in the Navy Yard in Washington, DC. After a six-week intensive training program, I was ready to tackle my first assignment—photographs of the Soviet's Baikonur Cosmodrome launch site in central Asia—Kazakhstan, to be specific. As I developed professionally, I found the work challenging, demanding, and wholly satisfying.

At NPIC we examine at all manner of photographic imagery—airial, motion picture, and ground-based still photographs; and photographs from our satellites in the CORONA and SAMOS programs. With state-of-the-art instruments, we see images in stereo—giving us the ability to measure depth and to get a detailed perspective of the objects in the photographs. Additionally, we

supplemented our black and white photography with infrared and radar imagery.

Significantly, when we compare photographs of the same area that are taken on different days, we garner important intelligence: oftentimes it's the change in activities that offer the best clues as to what's happening and why it's happening. Signal source intelligence, signals intelligence (SIGINT) for example, we produced imagery interpretation reports for The Company, the Executive, the Defense Intelligence Agency, and other intelligence agencies of our country. And, from time-to-time we share reports with our military allies.

But, I digress. Ever since Fidel Castro overthrew President Fulgencio Batista on 23 February 1959, rumors swirled that we, the US of A, would do something about it—not tolerate a communist Cuba at our back door. Of course “something” was not defined. But we guessed it was an invasion. As the Eisenhower presidency wound down in 1959, the scuttlebutt became more intense.

After Kennedy took office in 1961, the invasion crystallized into a definitive Operation Plan—dubbed “Puma.” President Kennedy tasked The Company as the lead agency to plan and execute Puma. The Company would train and arm some 1,500 Cuban expatriates to form a military brigade for an invasion of Cuba—Brigade 2506. The Company's 20 Douglas B26 attack bombers provided air support. The B-26s were based in secret bases in Nicaragua, and at Dill Air Force Base in Florida. Pilots and crew were former members of Batista's air force, and CIA contract members of the Alabama Air National Guard. The Navy was scheduled to use A4 and AD attack aircraft operating from the carriers *USS Essex* and *USS Shangri-la*. All Navy aircraft markings to be obliterated—pirate aircraft, no less.

Our first task was to get high-definition photographs of Cuba with emphasis on beaches, lines of communications, military installations, air fields, radar and anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) emplacements. Within days, our U-2 high-altitude reconnaissance aircraft were criss-crossing Cuba with their high-resolution image systems capturing on film and other sensors every geographic, military, and economic characteristic of the island. Of particular import was the Cuban order-of-battle—what military equipment, where, condition? At the tactical level Navy F8U-2P photoreconnaissance aircraft took low-level aerial photographs of tactical targets that NPIC designated and incorporated into the Bombing Encyclopedia and in the target list in Puma Operation's Order.

The U2 aircraft is an amazing product of creative thinking and engineering—half airplane and half glider. Altitude capability is in excess of 70K feet. Cruising speed about 500 mph. Its nickname is “Dragon Lady,” after the exotic female-pirate in the comic strip “Terry and the Pirates” of the mid-1930s. Built by Lockheed Aircraft of Burbank, at their “Skunk Works.” Chief design engineer was Clarence “Kelly” Johnson. Flight testing was done at the Groom Lake Test Site (Area 51) in Nye County, Nevada. Its first flight was on the first of August 1955.

At the time, the U2s flying at 70,000 feet was out of the range of Soviet interceptor aircraft and Soviet surface-to-air missiles (SAMs). The primary Soviet SAM was the SA-2, NATO name “Guideline.” Soviet radars tracked the U2 flights but were impotent to intercept. In May 1960, Gary Powers piloting a U2 over the Soviet Union had engine trouble and lost altitude. A surface-to-air missile, an SA-2; NATO name “Guideline shot down Power's U2.

The sensor suite on the U2 consisted of an array of high-definition cameras arranged for horizon-to-horizon coverage, panoramic coverage, and other sensor “stuff.” To complement the sensor suite a contract was let to Eastman Kodak Company to develop an extremely high resolution black-and-white film with an acutance that would resolve with great clarity a razor-thin straight line. This new high-resolution was dubbed “T-grain.” This film in the U2's camera suite had a resolution of 12 inches at 70,000 feet.

Continued

Immediately, we had trouble—lots of trouble. The film from the U2s and the F8U-2Ps was processed at the Fleet Air Photographic Laboratory (FAPL) at the Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville. All too frequently, the processed negatives were unacceptable—too opaque or too light, laced with dirt particles; wrinkled, ripped, and stretched. We could not discern the tactical targeting and strategic information we needed for the Agency to properly plan the invasion scenario. No matter our communication with the Photographic Laboratory at Jacksonville, film processing did not improve. Time was pressing and we had no solution in sight.

One Friday afternoon, during Happy Hour at the Officer's Club at the Naval Air Station, Anacostia, after a couple of martinis, I recalled a brief conversation with the Photographic Officer on-board the *USS Essex*, Lieutenant Michael Ryan—a consummate rascal. Lt. Ryan had the reputation, well deserved, that he knew more about naval photography than any sailor in the fleet. Ryan is a mustang—rising through the photographer's mate rates to Chief Petty Officer—the highest enlisted rate. Then commissioned Ensign as a Limited Duty Officer (LDO), Photography. Red is a stocky fellow with flaming red hair. A rebel with a salty tongue and singular dedication to the photographic task at hand. Some months ago, in a passing comment, I'd heard that Lt. Ryan now was stationed at the Naval Photographic Center, just across the Anacostia River, as Division Head of film processing.

Next morning I contacted Capt. Norman Leman, USN, the Commanding Officer of the Naval Photographic Center, and laid out our problem. He knew exactly what to do. Within the hour the Personnel Officer had prepared Temporary Additional Duty (TAD) orders for Lt. Michael (Red) Ryan, to report to the Fleet Air Photographic Laboratory at Naval Air Station, Jacksonville. His task: do whatever is necessary to get those aerial-film processing machines "fixed."

At the Naval Air Station, Anacostia, DC, a Beech SNB utility aircraft with its right engine ticking over was standing by. Ryan and I boarded. Take off was smooth. No matter my attempts to engage Ryan in conversation, he remained stoically silent. Three hours later we landed at NAS Jacksonville. A waiting sedan took us to the photographic laboratory.

"Red", energized, charged the lab's front door. Yanked it open. He tore off his service dress blue jacket, festooned with more medal and campaign ribbons than I've ever seen on one sailor. Ripped off his tie. Tossed both on the Duty Officer's desk and bellowed, "Where's are those fucking aerial processing machine?"

Red worked 48 hours straight. We kept him functioning with a sandwich now and then and gallons of hot coffee, some spiked with medicinal brandy—courtesy of the duty Chief Corpsman. With the help of photographer mates at the lab, "Red" first dumped all the chemicals. Ran a diluted acid solution through the processing machines. Disassembled the machines, cleaned and polished every roller, tine, rod, and interior wall to a spotless sheen. Mixed new chemistry to precise specifications. Checked their ph [a measure of their acidity] and they were on specifications to two decimal points. Filled the tanks with filtered chemistry and wash water, set the temperature precisely, and ran a test strip. Results: perfect. Ran three rolls of yesterday's U2 film through the processing machine. Film was clean and beautiful. Shadow areas showed extraordinary detail. Highlights were not blocked. I scanned several of the 12" by 9" frames over a light box and was absolutely amazed at the clarity and resolution of the images. Problem solved.

"Red" got his tie and jacket, stomped out of the lab, and demanded to know where was the fucking Officer's Club, "It's happy

hour. If not, I'll make it so."

A couple of months later, in a private ceremony at CIA Headquarters, Director John McCone awarded the Agency's Distinguished Intelligence Medal to Lt. Michael Ryan, USN. "Red" stood at perfect attention in his Dress Blues, festooned with his array of awards. As Director John McCone read the Citation I detected an ever so slight smile on "Red"—first ever, I suspect. Next day at the Naval Photographic, Captain Leman pinned the Navy's Meritorious Service Medal on Lt. Ryan. Don't know how he remained erect with all that metal on his chest. Last I heard of "Red" he was attached to the Marines 5th Regiment as a combat photographer in Viet Nam.

At NPIC we viewed thousands of feet of superb aerial photography. Using all-source intelligence we decided that the optimum landing site was near the town of Trinidad on the south-central coast of the island. Within a few days Navy frogmen clandestinely had taken beach samples. The Trinidad site had many of the desirable properties required for a successful landing and the push inland. For example, a wide solid beach with hard sand and no obstructions. A few hundred yards behind the beach there is an excellent road that runs parallel to the beach. And, there are several roads that branched off this parallel road that led to the interior and to major highways. And, there was a fine seaport. Additionally, the rugged mountains a few miles southeast of the city afforded an operations area where the members of Brigade 2506 could fall back and establish a guerilla campaign were the landing to falter. The clincher was that several Cuban expatriates convinced us that the population of Trinidad was generally opposed to Castro—not true, in hindsight. Invasion date was set for 17 April 1961.

In mid-march, the CIA changed plans and recommended that the invasion site be the Bay of Pigs instead of Trinidad. Reason: Nearby was a first-class airfield for the B26s, and other considerations. President John Kennedy agreed. What a slam! We had not focused our intelligence activities in this area. Now, we had only a few weeks to prepare a new Operations Order; and to garner, evaluate, and disseminate tactical intelligence. We did not complete the task.

Starting on 15 April, the Company's B26s attacked Cuban airfields, including Antonio Maceo International Airport at Havana. Such attacks continued for the next three-days. Unfortunately, most of the B26s were shot down by Castro's Air Force and anti-aircraft fire (AAA). The remaining few, most with serious damage and wounded airmen landed at Key West or ditched in the ocean. President Kennedy, at the last second, issued orders for the Navy to stand down: do not launch aircraft. Without air superiority, the invasion had little chance to succeed. Actually the invasion was doomed. Castro's intelligence organization [Revolutionary Armed Forces Intelligence] knew exactly where and when the invasion was scheduled. Such was the case because of Brigade member's loose talk in Miami, and at Dill; Castro's agents in the Brigade. And perhaps more importantly, the Soviet's KBG had all the details which they relayed to Castro.

Starting at midnight on 17 April, Brigade 2506 went ashore at the Bay of Pigs and other beaches nearby. I reckon you know the rest. Castro's armed forces defeated the Brigade in three days. About 110 Brigade members were killed and 1,200 captured. [For a myriad of reasons, a few did not make it to the beach.]

I stayed in the Directorate of Science and Technology for the next thirty years. Retired to my family ranch near Fort Worth. Raise cattle. Grow roses. Teach a course in intelligence at Texas Christian University (TCU). End of story.

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T-grain Film

Technical Data

Sensors on the U2 are:

- Total of 2.5 tons of reconnaissance equipment.
 - Perkin Elmer Corporation developed the optical camera system. The Hycon model A-2 camera system, consisting of three K-38 framing cameras rigged in a trimetrogon arrangement: two 24-inch (lens focal length), f8.0, side-looking cameras (right and left) with 9.5" wide film; and one 24-inch vertical camera.
 - 9.5" is the actual width of the film. The image area is 9 inches square.
 - The trimetrogon camera arrangement provided continuous horizon-to-horizon coverage.
 - Resolution of the vertical camera system is about 12" at 70,000 feet.
 - Length of a roll of 9.5 inch film is 2,000 feet, and weighs 270 pounds.
 - One K-38, 3" panoramic camera with 2" wide film
- Other sensor "stuff."

The process of producing film is to sensitize an acetate base by extruding silver-halide crystals onto this base. In this process the crystals group into a myriad of various sizes and odd configurations. Accordingly, such film does not have a uniform layer or arrangement of the crystals. For ordinary photography the sharp resolution and fine granularity of such film was satisfactory—served us well for many years. However, its resolution, granularity, and other sensitometric properties do not meet the precision needed from the photographs taken at U2 altitudes and speed.

In a brilliant breakthrough, Kodak engineers and chemist developed a process that forced the individual silver-halide cubic crystals, suspended in a layer of gelatin, to form in a three-dimensional trapezoidal "T." Fitting together like identical pieces of a jig-saw puzzle, the dense assembly of these tabular grains produce a near uniform film emulsion. Some wags contend that on the film exposed in the U2's cameras we could read the printing on a golf ball. I'm not convinced. It was sharp, but not quite that sharp

Do Your Characters Talk to You?

from David Ciambrone

Writers sometimes get intimately involved with their characters. We will be addressing the topic of author-character communication. The "experts" tell you that you must know your characters when writing. That's true, but how do you interact with them and do you talk to them? (There are doctors that treat people like us). There are a number of character trait forms to help you in most writing books, and there is also the back of an envelope. To be successful with your story you need interesting characters the reader can relate to and get behind. The characters must be believable, do things that are "in-character", and right for that particular character, even if outlandish. It is a very good idea to really know your characters, especially the hero or protagonist. You need to "get into that characters head and live and see things through his / her eyes. Next, your characters need to talk to you as well. Have a dialog with your main characters to help drive your story. (I wouldn't mention this conversation to too many people—they might outfit you with a new white padded jacket). Below is a series of questions for consideration when working with your characters. I hope they make you think and consider how well you know your characters before you try and write them into situations they have to get out of.

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 this?

Remember, your characters work for you and they don't cost much in pay and benefits, so treat them nice.

Remember: There are meds for this condition and doctors who treat people like us.

My mother had all these names. It was confusing when I was little. To us kids, she was "Mother." To her St. Louis and Texas family, she was "Susie" because her father nicknamed her that when she was a baby and it stuck. [She had these sky-blue eyes and he called her his "black-eyed Susan" as a joke.] My father and his family and all her Oklahoma City friends called her "Midge" because her nickname in college was "Midget." She was only 4 feet 10 inches tall and looked even shorter next to my father's skinny 6 foot, 2 inch frame. And to the nuns at school and the government she answered to "Mary Agnes." It took me a while to straighten all that out and I can remember being glad that I only had one name. That suited me just fine. I couldn't imagine what it would be like to have a bunch of names to have to answer to.

Her only ambition in life was to be a wife and mother and she excelled at it. She had five children and ran a household deftly, managing it and us and a mercurial husband without any signs of stress, happily cooking and cleaning and keeping us all content. She chauffeured and shopped and laundered and got great meals on the table and made it all look easy

Even though there were fourteen children in both of the families, she cared for her mother-in-law for thirty years. She and Grandma Thompson got along great, modeling the ideal relationship of mother-in-law, daughter-in-law. They managed to share a house without getting in each other's way and were obviously fond of one another

After Grandma Thompson's death, mother's St. Louis family called to tell her, "Susie, we just can't manage mother anymore, so we put her on a bus. Please pick her up." As it turned out, grandma had Alzheimer's Disease, so mother cared for her, without complaint, until her mother died. Susie was always the one they turned to when there was a problem.

Even though it sounds unlikely, I don't believe that anyone who met her disliked her. She made friends instantly and kept them for life, and her hundreds of friends ran the gamut from the African-American lady who helped with the ironing when the kids were small to Carol Channing, the Broadway star. She was always there for friends and family, and it was always "Call Midge, she'll know what to do." I wouldn't begin to guess how many funerals she helped arrange.

As each child left home for college, Mother took in a foster child. She said she couldn't stand having an empty bed, knowing that there were kids out there without homes. She insisted on keeping the house full of kids who needed her. She also started taking on part time jobs, mostly to expand her horizons. She made it all look effortless, and insisted she was having fun.

She accepted her sons-in-law into the family, and joyously greeted her grandchildren. Our divorces made her unhappy, but

she felt that we were the ones who had to live our lives, not her, and tried to accept our decisions. She said that she was happy as long as we were.

In her seventies, she had a nasty cancer scare, but when she survived, she reacted in her usual way by volunteering to help other cancer patients deal with their diagnoses and the outcomes of their illness. She spent hours in the hospital talking with people who had the same diagnosis as she had, showing them that life goes on and they could make it too.

I wish I could say that after her long and giving life, she died with her children around her, happy in the knowledge that she was loved. But, no, she died alone in a nursing home, not even cognizant of her own identity because she had Alzheimer's Disease, too. But she was certainly not any less loved.

She was Mary Agnes when she worked on PTA committees or went to parent-teacher meetings. She was Susie when she stood vigil by Uncle John's death bed and listened to Uncle Peter's problems with his divorce, and helped Aunt Helen through her terminal illness, but she was Midge when she played bridge with the girls or held Uncle Earl's hand when he suffered with radiation poisoning, let Aunt Cleda cry on her shoulder, laughed with Aunt

Charlene, or drove Aunt Gertrude on those interminable errands. She slipped in and out of her roles seamlessly. Maybe she needed a lot of names because she was so many things to so many people.



My sisters and brother have a startled reaction when they see us from a distance, I look so much like her.



"After being Turned Down by numerous Publishers, he had decided to write for Posterity."

By Any Other aka (why they go by #s)

By Carol Menchu

Jane Thompson's story brings a smile to my face connected to now and a giggle at memory, too.

My Grandmother is Kathryn, my mother is Kathryn, my daughter is Kathryn. When read by later generations, I can hear the eternal question "Which Kathryn is That – Lehman, MacDonald, or Menchu/Becker? So I solved the problem by making the original Kathryn, Kathryn. The second Kathryn, Kay [which is what her co-workers called her [and maybe my Dad—but I honestly don't remember him ever using her "name" although I'm sure he must have] and when I called her at work, I always said Kathryn and they knew who I was talking about because she was the only one with that name in that particular office. My calling her by her name raised a ruckus too, because I was a child, I was supposed to call and ask for Mom. Now, really, in an office with innumerable women in it, how sensible was that?]. But back to the three K's. The third Kathryn became Kat, because that is what the family calls her as in "Don't mess with Kat!!!"

As a result of all this, I have a disclaimer (?) in the front of the family history/stories/whatever-it-is explaining this for whom-ever in the future decides to read it.

To make "name" life even more complicated there is only one child out of my seven, who went by the name he started with. But let me preface this – my children's father told the story that the only children in his family who lived were the ones with an A-middle name and who were called by that name, so it was important that all of our children have a middle name beginning with an A. We broke the spell though . . .

So, #1, Jose Andres jr became and stayed Andy. He even forgot what his birth name really was and had to call me and ask every time he needed to use it.

2, Lancia Alexander, started out as Alex, but because the "Lancia" came from a good friend and he was called that when we were with this friend, he grew up being Lancia. As a teenager, however, he decided that sounded too girlish, so Alex nee Lancia became Lance. To complicate this one a little further, his oldest son is Lancia Alexander jr, who grew up being Alex (and still is in the family) but became Lancia as he got older and now, when mail comes to his parent's house they don't know

who it's for Big Lancia aka Lance or young Lancia aka Alex. He's Lancia to his fiancé and friends.

3, Jorge Arturo, started out as Tuckess (I don't want to hear a word about this, not one !!) so called because he was a restless, fussy little squirming baby and I was continually 'tucking his toes" into his blanket. This became Tuck-ee-toes which, of course became Tuckess. When he started school and the teacher asked his name, he said "Tuckess" and that is what everyone called/calls him. At some point in high school the Arturo came to the forefront because I remember someone calling for Arturo to which I replied there is no one here by that name. When Tuckess started his business he became Jorge (pronounced George) to everyone but family members—except me, of course, since I work for him, when I'm on computer/ phone/ working booths at expos/ anything for AES, it's Jorge and I'm Carol. Otherwise it's Tuckess and Mom.

#4, Luis Armando, started out as Mando, and moved on to Luis (pronounced Lewis) when he went college and on to Boeing. The first Christmas he was home after starting to date Shirley (his now wife) she called to talk to him, asking for Luis, and got told in no uncertain terms by one of his brothers, that there was no one there named Luis—which we all laughed about when Mando told us who he was/is..

#5, Kathryn Ann, started out as Kathryn simply because that's what I called someone with my favorite name. The Ann is my middle name and I figure we used it because it started with an "A" and it was the closest I would ever come to having a child named (even partly) for me.

#6, Carlos Augusto, started out as Fussy Gussy because he was and Gus was his diminutive and has stuck in the family. However as my other boss at AES he's Carlos and I'm Carol with Gus and Mom — same as # 3 above.

#7, Cadoc Artemio, started life a Temi (that is Tem as in Hem and i as in ee) which has been mispronounced Tim by all his friends all his life, and this is what his contemporaries know him as (he is, however, adamant that in the family he is "Temi" and heaven help . . .)

And now you know why, when I talk about my kids, I refer to their # instead of their name—after all, I'm not sure who I'm talking about anyway.

Add to that the two 'dutch daughters'—my kids two younger sisters (who, by the way, go by their own names), nine grandchildren and three great grandchildren if you count the new baby of the son of my daughter's (that's Kat) new boyfriend.



Given a Choice by Jeanell Bolton



This world is, yes, an awful place—
I'd rather it present
A sweeter, gentler, fairer face,
A kindlier intent

Yet I ignore the flaming sword
The hate, the pain strife
As recklessly I leap aboard
The carousel of life



George Ade . . .
 (1866 - 1944), "Fables in Slang",
 1899 . . . was an American writer,
 newspaper columnist, and playwright.

In 1890 Ade joined the *Chicago Morning News*, which later became the *Chicago Record*, where McCutcheon was working. He wrote the column, *Stories of the Streets and of the Town*. In the column, which McCutcheon illustrated, George Ade illustrated [Chicago](#)-life. It featured characters like Artie, an office boy; Doc Horne, a gentlemanly liar; and Pink Marsh, a black shoeshine boy. Ade's well-known "fables in slang" also made their first appearance in this popular column.

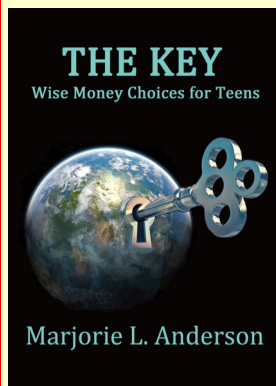
Ade's fiction dealt consistently with the "little man," the common, undistinguished, average American, usually a farmer or lower middle class citizen. (He sometimes skewered women, too, especially women with laughable social pretensions.)

Ade followed in the footsteps of his idol [Mark Twain](#) by making expert use of the American language. In his unique "Fables in Slang," which purveyed not so much slang as the American colloquial vernacular, Ade pursued an effectively genial satire notable for its scrupulous objectivity. Ade's regular practice in the best fables is to present a little drama incorporating concrete, specific evidence with which he implicitly indicts the object of his satire—always a type (e.g., the social climber). The fable's actual moral is nearly always implicit, though he liked to tack on a mock, often ironic moral (e.g., "Industry and perseverance bring a sure reward").

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Marjorie L. Anderson /5/6

You may purchase her book at [Challenge4teens.com](#); [Xlibris.com](#); [Amazon.com](#) and [Barnesandnoble.com](#)].

by Lizabeth Franklin, new member **RE: SGWL-Send me your words**

The e-mail was titled, "SGWL-Send me your words for the Gabriel Writer"

Did she mean me?

There was no "Dear Lizabeth", attached to the body of this e-mail so maybe I wasn't the intended target of this message.

The first line was nonthreatening. "If you've already done so, thanks.

The second line screamed out at me. "If you are SUPPOSED TO and haven't DO!!! -- you know who you are".

I looked behind me. Nobody but me in the room. I wasn't aware that I was expected to do anything at all.

The third line had "me" written all over it. "If you want to, but haven't, then do it!!"

One benign, yet very powerful four letter word, "want".

Oh how I do want to be counted among those of you who are published. To be good enough not to be a "lousy" writer. This is all so very intimidating and I can hear my mother's voice telling me to put aside this foolishness, to grow up and to tend to the reality of my life. Doubt begins to stalk me. I am tempted to tear these pages from this notepad and toss them into the box with all

the others. A lifetime of written words. My written words in the farthest corner of my closet. NO! Not this time.

I get up, march to my room and take my mother's ashes off the shelf and take her into the farthest corner of my closet with the ashes of all my dogs who have gone before her. Maybe the barking of the dogs will drown her out!

If you're reading this I have been successful in drowning out the voice of doubt long enough to submit my words for the first time.



Ask the Book Doctor: Business vs Busy-ness by Joan Upton Hall

[late] Writers' Resolutions for the New Year

I'm not a fast writer. You probably guessed it by my not launching New Years' Resolutions until now. Right? Another sign was my failure get the third book of my novel series, *Excalibur Regained*, into the publisher's queue on time for last year. Perfectionism slows me down further, but at least, when one of my commas shows up in the wrong place of a published piece, I've learned not to slash my wrists.

More importantly, I do get things done at my own iceberg-melting speed, but I refuse to turn a manuscript in until I feel I can be proud of it. In fact the chances are good that I'll finish all three of my current book projects this year. It just works out that way sometimes.

Time is a precious commodity though, and I plan to spend it where it will do the most good. So I've made up a set of resolutions I can live with. Feel free to adopt them for yourself if you like. Here they are:

DO set aside time for writing and use it only for that (whether it's rough-drafting or editing/revising. [The more faithfully you stick with this promise to yourself, the more likely your muse will keep you company next time.]

DON'T let the busy-ness of social networking, blogging, projects, etc. out-weigh productive writing time. If you could weigh the hours/minutes of each on a scale, how well would it balance? [This includes doing your fair share to help fellow writers.]

DO enter ambitious but not impossible competitions. If you've won prizes in one contest, move on to a more challenging one that can furnish greater recognition and/or rewards. Remember that submission for commercial publication is also a contest. Winners get published and paid.

DON'T compete only with the same people in your own little corner of the world. How can you reach your potential that way? You'll become complacent—while also standing in the way of novices who deserve the same chance you had to win these little contests.

DO pass along what you've learned to less experienced writers. Volunteer to judge small contests where you've won before. Surprisingly, the more you exercise your skill in this way, the more you grow in finding better ways to express yourself—and, in the process, you make allies for mutual benefits. Be-

sides, it's fun to share new writers' excitement.

DON'T be jealous of people who "beat" you at something. Negative emotions only keep you from seeing what skills they have that you can develop in yourself. (Besides, friends are much more fun than enemies.)

DO set reasonable goals for your writing. Strive for the highest *quality* you can write rather than any outward recognition that may result from that quality. If you don't "win" or get a publishing contract, consider that this requires someone else's judgment. Lick your wounds and move on without dwelling on the "failure."

DON'T say, "This year I'll win the Pulitzer Prize." Old adages about "carrots before horses" and "tails wagging dogs" apply here. And you certainly won't win a prize or get a publishing contract if you don't finish anything.

AND DON'T turn bitter if greatness eludes you. You won't have failed. You may simply run out of time.

DO honor thy critique group. Deliver your sections to them in a timely fashion with as few errors as possible. Something short is at least progress. Something too long and/or something with errors you know better than to make, burdens them unfairly.

DON'T defend your work when critique partners point out problems. Listen. You won't be looking over every reader's shoulder to explain once this goes into publication. Like your children, your writing must be able to stand on its own once it's "out there."

DO spend a reasonable amount of time learning to manage technology. (This one's especially tough for me.)

DON'T give up on it. Like me, you may have to ask for help from the tech-gifted.

DO enjoy the gift of being able to string words together effectively. Develop this talent. Have fun with it. Keep submitting until your manuscript(s) find a publisher.

DON'T mistake BUSY-NESS for the BUSINESS of writing so that it interferes with productivity.

— *Doc Joan*

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.

Special Interest Groups

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: JmuHall@aol.com

Novel Crafters is Full right now, welcomes a Waiting List Meets every other Thursday on the second floor of the Georgetown Library in a private room. Contact is Mary Stafford at marylynn@mstafford.net

Quixotic Quills critique group represents varied interests. Our group writes historical novels, short stories and memoirs. Meetings are usually on the second and fourth Thursday of each month unless we reschedule because of holidays. We meet at 7:00 p.m. at the Monument Café. Contact is Sharon Lyle, 512-639-1162, iwritcozies@gmail.com. Currently, we are **full**.

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

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

The Coroners, is open to 2 new members. They meet Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m. in the stacks at the Georgetown Library. Contact Dave Ciambone, mysterywriter5@msn.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©

PUNCTUATION—Commas in introductory phrases, "iffy"

A beginning phrase having three or more words usually needs a comma to make meaning clear, but fewer words can also cause momentary stumbling. Try reading the following example two ways, first with and then without pauses shown as [.,]:

With comma left out[.,] sentences like this may miscue the reader. [Keep comma]

In writing[.,] one should avoid setting up speed bumps for readers. [Keep comma]

In 1861[.,] the Civil War broke out. [Comma not needed but optional]

Editor's choice - The old adage, "When in doubt[.,] leave out," doesn't work with all editors. Without argument[.,] go with the style your editor or teacher wants.

Regarding this matter[.,] *Texas Highways* magazine required me to use commas whereas my newspaper editor and one of my book editors preferred none.

Not a choice - In modern usage, no comma should separate a phrase from a verb immediately following—a common practice before the twentieth century.

Examples:

In no situation [no,] are commas more often erroneously inserted than before verbs.

Whether to insert a comma here [no,] needs no consideration.

The Gabriel Writer



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the
May 2
SGWL Meeting
is at the
Georgetown Public Library
Gather at 6:30
Meeting at 7:00
See you there!!

The Write place for the writer in you!