



# Our Next KWA Meeting

## March 20

**Watermark Books & Cafe**  
**4701 E. Douglas, Wichita**

**2-2:45 p.m.**

**Pre-Meeting Mini-Workshop: *Subplots and Parallel Plots***

In March, we are going to follow up on January’s great discussion of plotting. Our January focus was on an overview of plot and the difference between the plot and story outlines. For March we will be looking at subplots and parallel plots. Are they the same or different? What purpose do they serve? How are they woven into the story? these are just some of the areas we will explore. Come and share your experiences and questions. I will be facilitating the discussion and providing you with another handout which will include an outline of the subject, an exercise to do at home, and a reading list for further investigation. See you there.

**3-4 p.m.**

**Teleconference with Tess Gerritsen**

Our March meeting will be highlighted by a teleconference with NY Times Bestselling thriller author Tess Gerritsen. See article about Gerritsen on page 3.

**5-? p.m.**

**Kansas Authors Appreciation Day**  
**Roni’s Diner — 6825 E. 21st**

This is your chance to meet and talk with your favorite Kansas Author, get autographs, browse their books, and you can even get a Coke and burger while you’re there. If you’re an author and would like to participate, or a fan and would like more information, please contact Gordon at 685-0098 or email [gordon@gordonkessler.com](mailto:gordon@gordonkessler.com).

## Our Mission Statement

To inform, support, encourage, and promote the writer.

## New & Renewing Members

### New

Lynn Shannon                      Victoria J. Venskus

### Renewals

Arlene Rains Graber      Joann Swearingen  
Hazel Hart                      Barbara Williams  
Dorothy Jones                      James Wright  
Jeanette Shepler

## Mark Your Calendar

**March 17, April 7**— GK Brainstormers, Gordon’s novel-writing support group will meet at 7:00 p.m. in the “History” section at Borders eastside bookstore. Open to all. For details contact Gordon at 685-0098 or email at [gordon@gordonkessler.com](mailto:gordon@gordonkessler.com).

**March 20** — KWA Pre-Meeting Mini-Workshop on Subplots and Parallel Plots, 2-2:45 p.m. Regular KWA meeting, 3-5 p.m., Watermark Books & Cafe.

**March 20**—Kansas Authors Appreciation Day, 5 p.m., Roni’s Diner, 6825 E. 21st.

**March 25** — KWA Board meeting, 7 p.m., 1459 Homestead.

**March 26** — Newsletter deadline for April.

**April 7**— The “Scene of the Crime” seminar committee will meet at 6:00 p.m., in the cafe at Borders eastside bookstore. All interested in helping make this year’s “Scene” the best one yet, please attend. For details contact Gordon at 685-0098 or email at [gordon@gordonkessler.com](mailto:gordon@gordonkessler.com).

# Market Place

## Market News

**Ballantine Books** is looking for big romances with lots of plot and great characters. They prefer agented submissions, but will look at one-page query letters from unagented authors. Send query to Linda Marrow, VP, Editorial Director; Charlotte Herscher, Editorial Director or Arielle Zibrak, Editorial Assistant at Ballantine/Ivy 1745 Broadway, 18th Floor, New York, NY 10019.

**Bloodlust-UK** is looking for vampire fiction (romance, erotica, horror, or mystery) stories up to 6,000 words. They do pay. Detailed guidelines at <http://www.bloodlust-uk.com/submissionguidelines.htm>.

**Hand Held Crime** is accepting mystery stories 1,200 words and up for the hand-held computer market. Pay: \$15 for first world electronic rights only. Guidelines at <http://www.handheldcrime.com/authors/submission-guidelines.html>.

**Futures** is a quarterly magazine looking for a variety of mystery fiction up to 10,000 words. Guidelines at [http://www.futuresforstorylovers.com/guidelines\\_story.html](http://www.futuresforstorylovers.com/guidelines_story.html).

**Harlequin Intrigue** is launching a new miniseries in August with a contemporary Gothic feel and light paranormal elements. Guidelines at <http://www.eharlequin.com/cms/learntowrite/ltwArticle.jhtml?pageID=021101wu08001>.

**Tin House** is looking for fiction, essays, and poetry. Pay \$50 minimum for poetry, \$200 minimum for fiction and non-fiction. Guidelines at [http://www.tinhouse.com/General\\_Info/submission.html](http://www.tinhouse.com/General_Info/submission.html).

## Contests

**ByLine Magazine Contests.** For more information on all of their contests, see [www.bylinemag.com/contests.asp](http://www.bylinemag.com/contests.asp).

**New-Talent Poetry:** Deadline: March 10. Entry Fee: \$3. Prizes: \$40 first, \$30 second, \$20 third, \$10 fourth. Submission: Any style, subject or length. Open to anyone who never has won a cash prize in a ByLine poetry category.

**Character Sketch:** Deadline: March 20. Entry Fee: \$4. Prizes: \$40 first, \$25 second, \$15 third. Submission: Practice creating believable characters in 500 words or fewer. Show your character in a scene, doing something typical of him.

**Reason to Rhyme!** Deadline: March 31. Entry Fee: \$3. Prizes: \$40 first, \$25 second, \$15 third. Submission: Rhymed poems of any length, on any topic.

**Flash Fiction:** Deadline: April 5. Entry Fee: \$5. Prizes: \$60 first, \$30 second, \$20 third. Submission: A quick fiction which feels complete in less than a thousand words. These stories often depend on atmosphere, technique, and a sense of immediacy.

**Fifteenth Annual Kansas Voices Contest for Writers Living in Kansas:** Deadline: March 15. Entry Fee: \$3 for each poem or prose submission. Prizes: \$275 best poem, \$275 best short story, honorable mentions. Winners will be honored and invited to a special presentation/reading in Winfield's Kanza Days, May 1, 2004, and may be published by the Kansas Voices. Submission: unpublished poetry or short stories up to 20 pages. Guidelines at [www.iwinfield.net/~wahc](http://www.iwinfield.net/~wahc).

**1st Sara Ann Freed Memorial Award** for a first mystery novel. Deadline: Materials accepted April 1 to July 1. Entry Fee: None. Prize: Contract with a \$10,000 advance for hard/soft publication through Mysterious Press/Warner Books. Submission: A story involving a male or female protagonist who is an amateur or professional detective. Guidelines at <http://www.twbookmark.com/mystery/saraannfreed.html>.

**Beginnings Spring Contest.** Deadline: March 30th. Entry Fee: \$10 for each submission whether a short story or poem. Prizes: \$100 first, \$75 second, \$50 third; includes publication on the website. Prizes are the same for both short story and poetry categories. Submission: Short stories up to 2,500 words. Poetry up to 30 lines. *Only beginning writers can enter. If you have a list of credits and awards, do not enter this contest.* Guidelines at <http://scbeginnings.com/contest.htm>.

**Free VoicesNet Poetry Contest.** Deadline: June 1. Entry Fee: None. Prizes: \$100 first, \$50 second, \$25 third. All winners receive certificates and may be published in the VoicesNet Anthologies. Guidelines and submission at <http://www.voicesnet.org/NewEntry.aspx>.

**Stephanie Diepenbrock  
Typing/Editing Services**  
Fees: Typing \$1.75/page, proofreading \$2/page, typing and proofreading \$2.75/page.  
Phone: (316) 685-6303

## Tess Gerritsen

Our March meeting will be highlighted by a teleconference with NY Times Bestselling thriller author Tess Gerritsen.

Tess took an unusual route to a writing career. A Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Stanford University, Tess went on to medical school at the University of California, San Francisco, and was awarded her M.D. in 1979. After completing her internal medicine residency, Tess worked as a physician in Honolulu, Hawaii.

While on maternity leave, she began to write fiction. On a whim, she submitted a literary short to *Honolulu Magazine's* statewide fiction contest—and won first place!

In 1987, Tess's first novel was published. *Call After Midnight*, a romantic thriller, was soon followed by eight more romantic suspense novels. She also wrote a screenplay, "Adrift," which aired as a 1993 CBS Movie of the Week starring Kate Jackson.

It was a chance dinner conversation that inspired Tess to write her first medical thriller. The man sitting beside her at the restaurant was an ex-cop who ran a security service protecting American businessmen in Russia. On his last trip abroad, Moscow cops had told him that Russian orphans were vanishing from the streets. They believed the children were being kidnapped by the Russian mafia and shipped abroad as organ donors.

The story so horrified Tess, she immediately called her brother-in-law, a reporter for *Newsweek*, suggesting he investigate. *Newsweek* was unable to track down any proof.

Weeks later, Tess was still unable to forget those missing Russian orphans. They became the inspiration for the plot of her first medical thriller, *Harvest*.

*Harvest* was released in hardcover in 1996, and marked Tess's debut on the *New York Times* bestseller list. Film rights were sold to Paramount/Dreamworks, and the book was translated into twenty foreign languages.

Since then, Tess has written the medical thrillers, *Life Support* (1997), *Bloodstream* (1998), *Gravity* (1999), *The Surgeon* (2001), *The Apprentice* (2002), and *The Sinner* (2003). Critics around the world have praised her novels as "Pulse-pounding fun" (*Philadelphia Inquirer*), "Weirdly terrific stuff with a steel grip" (*Kirkus Reviews*), "Scary and brilliant" (*Toronto Globe and Mail*), "Like Michael Crichton in medical mode" (*London Guardian*), "Polished, riveting prose" (*Chicago Tribune*), and "Delightfully scary" (*People Magazine*). *USA Today* says Tess is "tops in her genre" and the *San Jose Mercury* has declared her "The reigning champion of the medical thriller."

Now retired from medicine, Tess writes full time. She and her family live in Maine. In her free time she enjoys gardening and playing the fiddle.

## Literary Agent Warning

It was recently reported by RWA® (Romance Writers of America) that at least one major literary agency has taken a step potentially detrimental to authors. A clause has been inserted in publisher/author contracts that deviates from the norm.

The clause appoints the agency as the author's sole and exclusive agent with respect to the particular work for the life of the copyright, including all renewals and extensions. Additionally, the agent is irrevocably authorized and empowered by the author to act on the author's behalf in all matters arising from and pertaining to the agreement.

Previously, this clause only appointed the agent as the sole and exclusive agent for the *life of the agreement*, not the life of the copyright.

What this means is that even if the author leaves that particular agent and gets his/her rights to the book back from the publisher, the author must still pay that agent a commission for as long as the copyright lasts. This commission would also apply to foreign sales, movie sales, and a resale of the book. And the agreement would apply to the author's heirs.

It was discovered that this clause was being inserted into some contracts without notification to the authors already involved with the agent in fiduciary relationships.

At this time, RWA, among others, is investigating the situation and attempting to get this clause removed.

A situation of this type serves as a reminder of just how important it is for authors to scrutinize their contracts, and, in particular, agency clauses. This news is taken from a message sent to RWA members January 23, 2004.

## Guidelines for Story Lengths

### Micro-Fiction (up to 100 words)

This is a very abbreviated story length and can be difficult to write. It is becoming popular with certain publishers because of the limited space taken in their publications, and the low pay rate based on a rate-per-word scale.

### Flash Fiction (100-1,000 words)

This is a very popular type of short-short story in magazines these days. It is quick and simple to write, and if well written, easy to sell.

### Short Story (1,000-7,500 words)

This is the more regular size for a short story and the type normally found in periodicals or anthology collections.

### Novelette (7,500-20,000 words)

This can be a difficult size story to get published. Most publishers consider it too long for magazines and too short for novels. It is common for authors of such length stories to piece three or four of them together for a compilation novel.

### Novella (20,000-50,000 words)

Most print publishers don't want to print novels this short, but electronic publishers will work with this length. This is also an acceptable length for a short work of non-fiction.

### Novel (50,000-110,000 words)

Most print publishers prefer a minimum word count of around 70,000 words. They also balk at stories over 110,000 words because of the expense to print the book.

### Epics and Sequels (Over 110,000 words)

This size of work is very hard to publish and might be better rewritten into a book with a sequel, or maybe made into a trilogy.

## Fiction Genres and Subgenres

By Starla Criser

### Mainstream Fiction

This type of book is usually set in the 20th or 21st century and depicts a daily reality familiar to most people. They tend to deal with topics such as family relationships, coming of age situations, courtroom dramas, physical and mental disabilities, social issues, political intrigue, and career matters.

### Historical Fiction

These are stories basically of two types. They can be stories of imaginary people based upon historical events. Or they can be fictional stories based upon real people. There are historical fiction stories in various of the subgenres, particularly within the mystery and romance lines.

### Romance

This type of fictional writing has a romance as the main plot line with elements of fantasy, love, extravagance, adventure, and the heroic lover overcoming impossible odds to be with his true love. Subgenres include:

- Gothic romance
- Regency
- Historical or Contemporary
- Paranormal and fantasy
- Ethnic
- Inspirational

### Women's Fiction

This is a fairly new category developed because women are the biggest book-buying segment of readers. These stories have a focus on relationships, strong female protagonists, women triumphing over unbearable circumstances, and experiences that unify women in some way.

### Western

These are stories about life on America's post Civil War western frontier and usually involve conflicts between cowboys and outlaws, cowboys and Native Americans, or Easterners and Westerners. Currently this is not as popular a genre as it was in the past.

### Mystery

Another popular genre with a huge established audience. Mysteries focus on a crime, usually murder. The plot generally follows some kind of detective-type who works to solve the crime. Subgenres include:

- Spy
- Detective
- Crime stories

There are also four main types:

- Hard-boiled—tough and gritty with violence and graphic descriptions
- Soft-boiled—gentle, some violence, no explicit descriptions of violence
- Cozy—light, no blood and gore, involves a reluctant amateur sleuth
- Police procedurals—detailed looks at personnel and methods of investigation

### Thriller

This type of story is faster paced than most mysteries and is dominated by action in which physical threat is a constant companion. A hero is pitted against a nefarious villain. Currently very popular, these books are often sensational works with ingenious plotting, swift action, and continuous suspense. There are three basic formats:

- High concept—A concept plays a dominant role in the story, often science thrillers
- Social concept—Human consequences of a new idea, often medical thrillers
- Action—Feature chase scenes and battles, conflict of ideology, often military stories

### Science Fiction

This is a form of fiction which deals mainly with the impact of actual or imagined science and/or technology upon society or individuals. Often the characters are not even human, but some kind of imagined aliens or products of Earth evolution. Plausibility based on science is a requisite. There are two main subgenres:

- Hard science fiction—Characterized by an interest in scientific detail or accuracy with focus on the natural sciences and technological developments
- Soft science fiction—Plots and themes tend to focus on philosophy, psychology, politics and sociology more than details of technology and physical laws

There are a number of subcategories:

- Space opera
- Science fantasy
- Cyberpunk
- Apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic
- New Wave
- Alternate history
- Utopian and dystopian
- Comic science fiction
- Space-rock
- Xenofiction
- Time travel

### Horror

This is another popular genre of stories filled with gut-wrenching fear. These books are intended to frighten readers on both conscious and subconscious levels. They may involve fears of supernatural forces, alien visitations, madness, death, dismemberment, and other terrifying ideas.

### Young Adult

This genre includes any type of novel with a protagonist in the 12 to 16 age range, and speaks to the concerns of teenagers. J. K. Rowling is currently the most popular writer in this genre with her Harry Potter series.

## Web Sites

Borrowed from Gordon Kessler's *Novel Writing Made Simple*

### Agent Research and Evaluation

<http://www.agentresearch.com/index.shtml>

### Association of Authors' Representatives

<http://www.aar-online.org>

### Directory of Literary Agents

<http://nt9.nyic.com/literaryagent/sch-page.html>

### Writers' Free Reference List of Agents

<http://www.writers-free-reference.com/pageagt.htm>

### Everyone Who's Anyone in Trade Publishing

<http://everyonewhosanyone.com/index.html>

### Writers Market

<http://www.writersmarket.com>

### Midwest Book Reviews

<http://www.midwestbookreview.com/bookbiz/writers.htm>

### Publishers' Marketplace

<http://www.publishersmarketplace.com>

### Writers Digest

<http://www.writersdigest.com>

### Ingram (book distributor)

<http://www.ingrambook.com/new/publishers.asp>

### R.R. Bowker Company (for ISBN)

<http://www.isbn.org>

### Library of Congress

<http://pcn.loc.gov/pcn>

### U.S. Copyright Office

<http://www.copyright.gov>

## Member News

**Starla Criser**, writing as Starla Kaye, took part in the Valentine's Day Book Signing at B. Dalton Bookseller, Town West on February 14. Under another pseudonym, she has sold the beginning two chapters of a continuing novella to an on-line publisher.

**James P. Johnston**, co-author of *Flight From Dallas* will be the speaker at the March 13 Kansas Authors Club meeting.

**James Wright** won honorable mention in the ByLine Magazine "New-Talent Short Story Competition for 2003." In addition, his first published short story will come out this spring in *Mikrokosmos*.

## KWA Upcoming Meetings

We have some first-rate programs coming up you don't want to miss. Would you like to know how to be a poet, build the characters in your novel, be a mystery writer, find out about crime? How about sitting by the pool and eating and talking with other writers? These are just some of the opportunities you have to look forward to. Watch for more information.

## KWA Help Wanted!

Help! We need a secretary. We're a relaxed group, no great demands, no pressures, no fancy, detailed minutes required. We need YOU.

## KWA February Meeting

By Starla Criser

Hazel Hart started our afternoon off with a subject near and dear to our hearts this time of year: Taxes. Okay, maybe the subject isn't *dear* to our hearts, but it is something we all must deal with. She explained to those present the three main options for reporting writing income, and how to decide if your current writing level is really a business, or a hobby. This can be a real touchy point with the IRS. You must be sure to work and project yourself professionally—and keep good records—if you choose to take any writing-related deductions.

Following Hazel's presentation, Colleen Kelly Johnston, Gordon Kessler and I (Starla) took the subject of writing as a business a step further. The small panel discussed the highlights of "Steps in Getting Published & Publicity," one of the handouts available to anyone interested in contacting a board member. Other handouts included "Details for the Finished Book," "Successful Booksignings," and "Book Promotion Schedule."

There were nearly 40 members and guests in attendance, and most of them joined in the industry discussion at one point or another. Being a part of a writers group is important for writers of all levels and genres. Sessions such as this one are valuable in that you have the opportunity to learn from others with actual experience in various facets of working in a writing career. What you can read about in some writing-specific book or article is helpful, but first-hand experience can bring the information into reality sometimes.

Speaking of "reality," many of us have heard of the medical thriller author Tess Gerritsen. But Gordon provided those at the meeting with a long-distance touch of reality with Ms. Gerritsen via a brief phone call with her. The March meeting will feature a teleconference with the well known author. This will be a chance to, again, get first-hand experience about working in the industry from someone very much involved in it.

## Historian Needs Your Help!

By Arlene Rains Graber

Board members and leaders of KWA are in the process of creating and implementing a number of new organizational projects for members. I have volunteered to start one of the projects — a scrapbook.

Plans are to make the book not only a timeline of the progress of KWA, but to also trace the personal journey of member news, with an integration of words and visuals. Our goal is to make this book an inspiration for perspective members, and a heart-warming recompense for current members.

Now, I have a favor to ask. If any of you have newspaper articles or pictures of KWA events or workshops from past years, I would be very grateful if you would send them my way. You may either bring them to a monthly meeting, or mail them to 110 S. Oakwood, Wichita, KS 67218.

## Bio: Suzann Robinson

by Suzann Robinson

It all started in grade school when Suzann began writing in a journal, then wrote a play she and her friends performed in her parent's living room. She continued writing as a teenager. As an adult, in her various careers, she wrote and implemented grants.

Writing in a journal was a part of Suzann's life, through raising two children, and the long illness and eventual death of her husband. Her journal writing helped her work through the grief of his death. A year later she realized she wanted to do more than write in a journal, and began attending workshops and seminars on writing.

Another year went by, and she told her friend, Deanna Dahlem, about her dream of writing and Deanna took her to a KWA meeting. Suzann knew, after attending that first meeting, she needed to be a part of this group in order to fulfill her writing goals. Now, four years later, she is serving as KWA president.

Suzann writes memoirs and short stories. The women in the KWA Women Writers Working group have helped her to see the strengths and weaknesses of her writing and have given her the support to keep on writing.

She enjoys walking, movies, playing with her grandchildren, reading and traveling with her companion, Gary. They are currently on a 10-day car trip to Arizona.

## Novel Writing Class

Gordon Kessler is conducting a class called "Advanced Novel Writing—the Bestseller," an in-depth examination of what makes a bestseller and how beginning novelists can improve their skills to the standards of brand-name authors. The class is offered at Butler County Community College, Andover campus and runs for five weeks on Tuesday evenings from 6:30-9:00 p.m. starting March 30. To enroll, call 733-3193.

## Kessler's Novel Writing Made Simple

Gordon Kessler's easy-to-understand manual for the beginning novelist and a comprehensive reference/review for the experience fictionist is now available. The book will soon be available in the local bookstores. Copies are now available for a KWA member price of \$12.00 from his web site at [www.gordonkessler.com](http://www.gordonkessler.com) or email him at [gordon@gordonkessler.com](mailto:gordon@gordonkessler.com).

## KWA Members' Web Sites

<http://www.doncoldsmith.com/>

**Don Coldsmith**, author of many Westerns available as books and audios.

<http://www.sktc.net/~beaton>

**Bonnie Eaton**, aka **B. J. Myrick**, author of *Dark Side of the Rainbow*, a short story collection of dark fiction, available as an e-book. Her site features book reviews and interviews of KWA members, writing articles, poetry, and excerpts from her book.

<http://www.flightfromdallas.com>

**James P. Johnston & Jon Roe**, author of *Flight from Dallas* from 1st Books Library.

<http://www.gordonkessler.com>

**Gordon A. Kessler**, author of *JEZEBEL*, *DEAD RECKONING* and *Novel Writing Made Simple*.

<http://www.LeapDontSleep.com>

**John Madden**, author of numerous seminars and new book *LEAP, DON'T SLEEP!*

<http://www.sherilmcgathy.com>

**Sheri L. McGathy**, author of *ELFEN GOLD*, a fantasy available as an e-book or paperback.

<http://www.loisruby.com>

**Lois Ruby**, author of literature for children and young adults.

<http://scheerdelightpub.com>

**Ruth Scheer**, author of literature for children: *Hippopotamus*, *My Friend*, *Giraffe at the Zoo*, *Elephant's Trunk*, and *The Mouse and the Angel*.

<http://members.cox.net/bdtharp/>

**Bonnie Tharp**, has authored several short stories, articles, and the novel, *Feisty Fossils*. She's currently scouring the US for an agent and has begun work on her second novel, *Grace*.

<http://www.yoderbooks.com>

**James D. Yoder**, author of *The Yoder Outsiders*, *Song In a Nazi Night*, *Lucy of the Trail of Tears*, *A Branson Love*, *Sarah of the Border Wards*, *Barbara: Sarah's Legacy*, and *Simone: A Saint for Outsiders*.

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**Newsletter**

Please send all newsletter submissions of articles, member news, or encouraging quotes by the 20th of each month prior to publication to starlakaye@earthlink.net or by snail mail to Starla Criser, 9415 E. Harry, Ste. 603, Wichita, KS 67207. All email attachments should have "KWA" in the subject line and can be submitted in Word, WordPerfect, Works, or rtf format.

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**KANSAS WRITERS ASSOCIATION**

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ADDRESS CORRECTION  
REQUESTED

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