



Our Next KWA Meeting

March 19

**Main Public Library
211 S. Main, Wichita
Patio Room, ground floor**

Pre-Meeting Mini-Workshop: 2:00-3:00 p.m.

Program: Hazel Hart
“Climbing the Emotional Ladder”

Getting characters from one emotional state to another is what fiction is all about. Joe may begin the story by trusting a dear friend and end believing the friend is the worst liar he’s ever known, but the move from trust to distrust shouldn’t be made in one giant step. Jane may be in a happy, carefree mood when she enters the house, but a series of events move her from happiness to curiosity, then concern, anxiety, fear, and panic. Showing characters moving through a series of emotions deepens their development and prolongs suspense.

For the March mini-workshop, we will use a thesaurus and the emotional ladder Ann Hood describes in her book, *Creating Character Emotions*, to create ladders for some of the major emotions. Bonnie Eaton has volunteered to compile the ladders and send a copy to each participating workshop member to serve as a reference for those times you are tempted to make the leap between strong emotions instead of taking them a rung at a time.

Social Time: 3:00-3:30 p.m.

Meeting: 3:30-4:30 p.m.
Program: Self-Publishing

Chuck Crandal, ADR Publishers, will provide a small presentation on self-publishing. A panel discussion with KWA members on the topic will follow the presentation.

New & Renewing Members

New

Mike Klaassen Dwayne Smither
Courtney L. Ruthven

Renewals

Roy Baker Jeanette Shepler
Deborah Cleveland Nancy Swick
Victoria Hermes Bond James Wright
Theresa Neal James Yoder
Lois Ruby

Mark Your Calendar

March 2 & 16—GK Brainstormers, 7:00 p.m., Borders East in the “History” section.

March 11 & 25—Working Women Writers, 10 a.m. Watermark Books, 4701 E. Douglas.

March 19—KWA Pre-meeting Mini-Workshop, 2:00-3:00 p.m.. Social time, 3:00-3:30 p.m. Regular meeting, 3:30-4:30 p.m., Main Public Library.

March 20—Newsletter deadline for April.

March 24—KWA Board meeting, 5:30-8:00 p.m., Watermark Books.

April 6—First Saturday Group, 12:15 for lunch, 1 to 4 p.m. for critique, Watermark Books, 4701 E. Douglas.

April 10—KWA 2004 Anthology Signing Party, 2:00-4:00 p.m., Watermark Books.

April 16—KWA Workshop on Writing & Selling Poetry, 12:30-5:00 p.m. Collegiate Upper School, 1221 N. Webb Rd.

Market Place

Market News

New York Spirit Magazine for the holistic health community in New York City is looking for ethnic, fantasy or science fiction stories 500-5,000 words. They also publish humorous, mainstream and inspirational short stories 1,000-3,500 words. Guidelines at www.pangaia.com

Balloon Life magazine is looking for short fiction of 800-1,500 words that involves hot air ballooning and humor. Guidelines at www.balloonlife.com

Games Magazine is looking for adventure and mystery stories or 1,500-2,500 words that employ a puzzle theme. They pay really well. Send your manuscript to Kappa Publishing Group, Inc., 7002 W. Butler Pike, Amble, PA 19002. R. Wayne Schmittberger is editor-in-chief.

Lighthouse Digest magazine is looking for short stories up to 2,500 words that involve a maritime theme or features lighthouses. They are interested in adventure, historical, humor, mystery, religious, romance, mystery or suspense stories. Guidelines at www.1hdigest.com.

Kate Harper Designs is looking for "kid quotes" for cards (quotes from a child under age 12). See <http://hometown.aol.com/kateharp/myhomepage/personal.html>.

Comstock Cards is looking for card contest of outrageous or sexual adult humor. Guidelines at www.comstockcards.com/writeguide.html.

Contests

ByLine Magazine Contests. For more information on all of their contests, see www.bylinemag.com/contests.asp.

Filler Deadline: March 5. Entry Fee: \$4. Prizes: \$35 first, \$20 second, \$10 third. Submission: Short prose up to 600 words on any topic from humor to household hints, tips, original anecdotes, etc.

New-Talent Poetry Deadline: March 15. Entry Fee: \$3. Prizes: \$40 first, \$30 second, \$20 third. 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 25. 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.

Saturday Writers 2005 Poetry Contest Deadline: March 15. Entry Fee: \$5 per poem. Prizes: \$100 first, \$50 second, \$25 third. Submission: Any style, any subject, any form unpublished poem that fits single-spaced on one page. Guidelines at www.saturdaywriters.org/contest.htm.

Newburyport Art Association Annual Poetry Contest 2005 Deadline: March 15. Entry Fee: \$3.

Prizes: \$200 first, \$150 second, \$100 third. Submission: Unpublished poems in any style, on any theme up to three pages in length, single or double-spaced. Guidelines at www.newburyportart.org/pages/poetcontest03.html.

2005 Women Writers of the Desert Essay Competition Deadline: March 31. Entry Fee: \$10. Prizes: \$300 grand/first, \$150 second, \$50 third. Submission: Personal essay on the theme "success means..." up to 1,000 words. Guidelines at www.womenwritersofthedesert.org.

the Seattle Review Fiction Contest Deadline: March 31. Entry Fee: \$15. Prizes: \$500 first and publication in *the Seattle Review*. Submission: Short story up to 4,000 words. Guidelines at www.depts.washington.edu/engl/seaview8fiction05.html.

John Gardner Memorial Prize for Fiction Deadline: March 31. Entry Fee: \$15. Prizes: \$500 prize and publication in *Harpur Palate*. Submission: Short story up to 8,000 words. Guidelines at <http://harpurpalate.binghamton.edu/johngardner.html>.

2005 Heartland Authors Contest Deadline: April 1. Entry Fee: \$10. Prizes: \$50 first place in each category and publication in *Voices of the Heartland* anthology. Submission: memoirs to 3,000 words, magazine feature article to 2,500 words, short story (various categories) to 2,500 words, novella to 20,000 words, poetry to 500 words. Guidelines at www.heartlandauthors.com

The Basics of Creating Characters

By Starla Criser

Main Types of Characters

Main Character: This is not necessarily the protagonist of a story, but instead is the person the readers view the story through. Sometimes this main character is the narrator.

Protagonist: This character (male or female) is the key mover of the plot line. The protagonist is often the “hero” of the story, and is often a combination of main character and hero.

Antagonist: This character has a goal of his/her own, a goal that causes negative repercussions for the protagonist and undermines his success. The antagonist is often the villain of the story. Villains need to be credible, logical, and believable. Sometimes they are even likeable.

Sidekick: This character is a faithful supporter, whether he/she supports the protagonist or another character in the story. The sidekick is used for comedy relief, to reinforce the goal or beliefs of the character he supports, or to provide contrast to the antagonist.

Pieces and Parts of Believable Characters

Physical Characteristics: Eye type, shape and color; facial features, including nose type, facial hair, scars, freckles, face shape; body features, including height, build, deformities.

Personality Characteristics: Personality traits, bad habits, mannerisms, speech patterns, weaknesses, strengths, psychological problems, diseases or afflictions, hobby and sport interests, education, occupational interest.

Body Language: Facial expressions for various emotional displays, body posture, type of laugh, type of body movement, common gestures.

Dress Habits: Clothing personality type whether formal, casual, trendsetting; undergarment type whether conventional, simply functional, secretly sexy; glasses or sunglasses; hat types.

Names: Names should be easy for the reader to remember. Each character name should be distinctive from the others, make a specific type of impression, possibly reflect ethnic background, and fit the historical setting of the story. Avoid unpleasant stereotypical names that give bad images. Avoid unisex names that will confuse the reader

Homes/Vehicles/Material Belongings: These should all reflect the character’s personality, his desires, his goals, and where he is at this particular place in his life.

History/Family: This is what had influenced the character in life.

Research Books: Characterization

By Starla Criser

The Writer’s Digest Sourcebook for Building Believable Characters by Marc McCutcheon. A useful thesaurus of human characteristics—physical and psychological.

The Writer’s Guide to Character Traits by Linda N. Edelstein. An exceptional guide to personality types and insights into them, behaviors and influences. The book includes: adult styles, child and adolescent styles, psychological disorders, criminal styles, sexual styles, turn of events in life, physical disorders, career traits, group influences, and nonverbal and verbal communication.

Creating Characters: A Writer’s Reference to the Personality Traits that Bring Fictional People to Life by Howard Lauther. The book looks at character development from internal and external traits, likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses, fears, beliefs, and backgrounds.

Creating Characters Kids Will Love by Elaine Marie Alphin. The book is considered a must have source for children’s writers with excellent insights on children. It concentrates on character development, but also has some useful how-tos on plot structure and conflict.

45 Master Characters: Mythic Models for Creating Original Characters by Victoria Schmidt. The book explores the most common male and female archetypes, how to use them in creating characters, and examples from TV, films, and books.

Winners of the 2004 Bulwer-Lytton Contest

The following are the winning entries in the Dark and Stormy Night Contest, wherein one writes only the first line of a bad novel.

- “As a scientist, Throckmorton knew that if he were ever to break wind in the echo chamber, he would never hear the end of it.”
- “Just beyond the Narrows, the river widens.”
- “With a curvaceous figure that Venus would have envied, a tanned, unblemished oval face framed with lustrous thick brown hair, deep azure-blue eyes fringed with long black lashes, perfect teeth that vied for competition, and a small straight nose, Marilee had a beauty that defied description.”
- “Andre, a simple peasant, had only one thing on his mind as he crept along the East wall: ‘Andre creep... Andre creep... Andre creep.’”
- “Stanislaus Smedley, a man always on the cutting edge of narcissism, was about to give his body and soul to a back alley sex-change surgeon to become the woman he loved.”
- “Although Sarah had an abnormal fear of mice, it did not keep her from eking out a living at a local pet store.”
- “Stanley looked quite bored and somewhat detached, but then penguins often do.”
- “Like an over-ripe beefsteak tomato rimmed with cottage cheese, the corpulent remains of Santa Claus lay dead on the hotel floor.”
- “Mike Hardware was the kind of private eye who didn’t know the meaning of the word ‘fear;’ a man who could laugh in the face of danger and spit in the eye of death — in short, a moron with suicidal tendencies.”

AND THE FIRST PLACE WINNER IS...

(Cont’d pg. 5)

Understanding Conflict Within a Story

By Starla Criser

Conflict of some kind is a part of everyone’s lives. Each of us have dreams of what we want in an ideal world, such as good health, creating wealth, raising perfect children, winning the lottery, etc. We also run into conflicts to keep us from obtaining those dreams. We find out that we have cancer, or get into an accident that leaves us with a disability to face or overcome. The company we have worked for and advanced steadily within suddenly goes bankrupt, and we lose our job. Our children are more influenced by peers of whom we don’t approve, fall in with a gang, or drop out of school. We lose that “winning” lottery ticket.

How we deal with external conflicts over which we have no control, or how we handle internal conflicts that test our emotions are what makes each of us complex, unique and interesting. The characters within a good story also need to encounter strong conflicts to make them feel real and worthy of reading about.

External Conflict

External conflicts are sometimes physical in some manner and can be seen. Sometimes they are situations a character is thrust into that is beyond his control. Sometimes it is opposing goals and obstacles a character must face.

Internal Conflict

Internal conflicts are emotional and often more difficult to overcome. They can be the differences between what a character thinks he wants and what he really needs. They can be about facing self-doubts, dealing with fears, learning about family secrets, and many other things inside the character.

Common Conflicts

- Mismatches
- Deadlines, pressures
- Incompatible goals
- Ethical dilemmas, choosing between two terrible options
- Inner struggles with loyalties to people or ideals
- Love and acceptance
- Good versus evil
- Physiological needs such as air, water, and food
- Philosophy and religion
- Rivalry for something of power or wealth

Conflicts, both external and internal, must be faced and resolved by the characters. As the story progresses, the conflicts change. A potential roadblock to reaching their goal is encountered and somehow dealt with, but not completely. It is modified, creating a new obstacle or conflict. In a strong book, this situation will happen numerous times. The characters will grow stronger, change in some way, and continue determinedly on until all conflicts are resolved.

Inspirational/Christian Market

Information supplied by Pat MacDonald

The Evangelical Christian Publishers Association reports that Christian fiction sales are now worth \$2.6 billion dollars annually. The market for Inspirational romance novels is now growing at an astronomical rate of 25% a year.

These books are no longer found just in the small chains and Mom and Pop bookstores of the Christian Booksellers Association, but in Wal-Mart and K-Mart. Mainstream bookstores like Barnes and Noble have given over entire sections to faith based books including thrillers, historicals, Westerns, fantasy, and romance.

Today's Inspirational romance books deal with the same issues faced by women everywhere. Love, family, parents, jobs, illness, grief, and isolation. They face their problems not only by being smart, funny, sassy, and determined women, but with the added bonus of knowing or discovering that God is there to help no matter what.

Christian Author Resources

Christians Writer's Market Guide

<http://www.stuartmarket.com/indes.html>

A comprehensive list of Christian publishers of novels and magazines.

American Christian Fiction Writers

<http://www.americanchristianfictionwriters.com>

A leading writing group for Christian authors.

Hope, Faith and Love

<http://www.faithhopelove-rwa.org>

Outreach chapter of RWA (Romance Writers of America) for Christian Romance writers.

Steeple Hill

<http://www.steeplehill.com>

They are no longer accepting unsolicited manuscripts.

Barbour Publishing, Inc. & Heartsong Presents

Submissions: info@heartsongpresents.com

They publish four books every four weeks (two contemporaries and two historicals) under the Heartsong Presents line. Guidelines are at www.barbourbooks.com.

Multnomah Publishers

www.multnomahbooks.com

They publish multiple genres including romance and women's fiction. Guidelines are at their website.

The Middle of Somewhere Stories of Life on the High Plains

By James D. Wright

From the war-torn foothills of the Little Big-horns to the tragedy that is modern ranch life, this spellbinding collection of short fiction celebrates ordinary people struggling to do what's right. A cavalry trooper dismisses his premonitions of disaster for the fort, but as winter deepens, he can hardly deny the grisly precision of his dreams. Two brothers separated by circumstance must reconcile the ways they have grown apart. A young bull rider-turned-burglar searches for the courage to face his weaknesses, and earn the respect of a good man . . .

"James D. Wright is extremely adept at creating characters and worlds for them to live in." — Tara Wray, *Land Grant College Review*

"James Wright's stories are compelling—his vision and imagination fresh." — Gordon Kessler, author of *Jezebel* and *Dead Reckoning*.

"Great Stuff!" — W. Steven Hathaway, past National Endowment for the Arts Fellow

"James D. Wright provides wonderful images in his narrative and paints the scene superbly. His characters are real and the reader is right there with them. I anticipate great things from this author." — Steven Law, *ReadWest* Online Magazine (www.readwest.com)

Bulwer-Lytton Contest

(Cont'd from pg. 4)

"The sun oozed over the horizon, shoved aside darkness, crept along the greensward, and, with sickly fingers, pushed through the castle window, revealing the pillaged princess, hand at throat, crown asunder, gaping in frenzied horror at the sated, sodden amphibian lying beside her, disbelieving the magnitude of the frog's deception, screaming madly, 'You lied!'"

President's Letter

By Suzann Robinson

If you didn't attend our meeting in February, you missed a terrific program. It was an opportunity to learn how several published authors write love scenes, and the various ways each of them make their characters' love and lust come alive. The numerous handouts and references were especially helpful for those of us unfamiliar with the romance writing genre.

On the 19th of this month we will find out about the publishing world. During the first half of our program we'll hear from Chuck Crandall who works for a Wichita publishing company. We will learn some of the secrets of the publishing world. It sounds like something we can all use.

During the second half of our program we will listen to the experiences of a panel of authors who have self published their works. This is our chance to pick the brains of those who have "been there," and profit by their mistakes and successes. I'm looking forward to the whole afternoon. Don't miss it.

April is poetry month and we are celebrating with a four-hour workshop by poet Sandi Soli. If you write poetry, here is your chance to learn more about that skill from a published poet.

I don't write poetry. That is, I don't write poetry I let anyone read. Writing poems has always felt like writing in a foreign language to me. But I've pre-registered for the workshop for several reasons. Maybe if I hear how an expert writes poetry I will be more daring in my attempts, and even be willing to let someone else read them. I am in awe of published poets, so I like to see what makes them tick. At the least, I will learn techniques that will help me in my prose writing. Please plan to attend.

Member News

Starla Criser, writing as Kay Starr, has sold the final two chapters of her novella *Hawke's Lady*; a longer short story, "Law and Order;" and the first two chapters of her novel *If You Loved Me* to her editor.

Conrad Jestmore has had two poems, "Fast Food" and "Italian Love Song," accepted for publication in the November 2005 Writers' Haven Press *HA! Magazine*, which is devoted exclusively to humor.

Colleen Kelly Johnston received notice that her short story "Dawn Comes Too Late" has been accepted for publication in a future issue of the literary magazine *Herotica*. In addition, Colleen's poem "Pruning" has been accepted for publication in a forthcoming issue of *HA! Magazine*.

James Wright won an honorable mention in *ByLine* magazine's New-Talent Short Story contest for "Hammerhead." He also has his new book, *The Middle of Somewhere*, now available at Watermark Books, Borders, Barnes and Noble, and Delano in Wichita, as well as Hastings in Hutchinson and Liberal. It may also be purchased from all the major online book-sellers.

****NOTE: Please let the newsletter editor know about whatever writing news you would like to share with other KWA members.**

KWA Newsletter Content Schedule

If you would be interested in writing an article on any of the following monthly focuses, please email Starla at starlakaye@earthlink.net.

Month	Fiction Craft Technique	Market/Genre
April	Plotting basics	Poetry
May	Prologues/Epilogues	Magazine
June	Opening hook	Travel
July	Dialogue	Novels
August	Exposition/Narration	Newspaper
September	Scenes/Cliffhangers	Short Stories
October	Black Moment/Crisis	Crime
November	Climax/Resolution	Screenwriting
December	Editing/Revisions	Memoirs/Family History

Book Kansas!

Book Kansas! a division of ChuziBooks, has a free, e-mailed newsletter. "Book Kansas! News" is a new way to learn about books that are not in their catalog, specials or sales on books, and events they will be attending. They will also have some interesting stories about authors (some famous and some-not-so-famous), authors and readers quotes, Kansas Trivia and, maybe, a contest or two! You may sign up for "Book Kansas! News" by going to their website, www.bookkansas.com. Look for "E-Mail Newsletter" to "Sign-Up!"

Kansas First Poet Laureate Appointed

By Colleen Kelly Johnston

Dr. Jonathan Holden was appointed Kansas first Poet Laureate by Governor Kathleen Sebelius in January. His position will begin on July 1.

Currently Holden is a professor of English and poet-in-residence at Kansas State University. He was chosen over twelve other finalists for the position by an eight member panel made up of members of the Kansas Arts Commission, appointees of Gov. Sebelius and the Kansas Humanities Council and William Kloefkorn who at the time was Poet Laureate of Nebraska.

Dr. Holden hopes to develop a video teleconferencing center for Kansas poets as they read and discuss their work. To be called the Kansas Poets Shoptalk Series, the videos could be accessed by 25 sites spread across the state. As poet laureate, Holden will be placed on a roster of touring Kansas artists compiled by the Kansas Arts Commission and made available as speakers to agencies and groups throughout the state.

He began writing poetry as an undergraduate student at Oberlin College and soon began acquiring awards. In 1972, he received the Devins Award for "Design of a House." The Associated Writing Programs Annual Award in Poetry was granted him for his poem "Leverage" in 1983 and the Uniper Prize for "The Names of the Rapids" was received by Holden in 1985. Since then he has won the Vassar Miller Prize and two National Endowment for the Arts fellowships, a \$5,000 fellowship in poetry and a \$25,000 creative nonfiction writing fellowship. In 2000, he was one of three judges for the Pulitzer Prize in Poetry.

He received his doctorate in 1974 at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

Help Wanted

KWA is in need of a new volunteer to take over the labeling and mailing of our monthly newsletters. The newsletters would be delivered to the volunteer already assembled and folded for mailing. Postage is paid for by the organization. Anyone interested can contact our president, Suzann at srob-inson12@cox.net.

Just some word fun...

READ each word outloud SLOWLY...

Arbitrator: A cook that leaves Arby's to work at McDonald's.

Avoidable: What a bullfighter tries to do.

Bernadette: The act of torching a mortgage.

Burglarize: What a crook sees with.

KWA: The Year Ahead

April 16

POETS, START YOUR ENGINES: The April 16th meeting of KWA will feature a four hour workshop on poetry, headed by Sandy Soli, *ByLine Magazine's* poetry editor. More information will follow, but the essential facts are:

Date: 1:00—5:00 on Sat., April, 16th

Location: Collegiate Upper School,
1221 North Webb Road

Cost: Members and students: \$10.00

Non-members: \$20.00

July 16

MEET THE EDITORS DAY

Thomas Colgan, senior editor Berkley Publishing—in charge of suspense, thrillers, mysteries, adventure, police, espionage, history, business, inspiration and biography

Marcia Preston, executive editor *By-Line Magazine*

Date: 8:30 a.m.—5:00 p.m., Sat., July 16th

Location: Wichita City Arts

Cost: Members: \$35

Non-members: \$45

October 15

SCENE OF THE CRIME Workshop

Three speakers
Terrific Information

Watch for more details in upcoming newsletters and on the website.

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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.

Join KWA For Only \$25.00

This will give you a one-year membership, our monthly newsletter, and a membership card which entitles you to discounts to our various programs and seminars. Send your check to KWA, P.O. Box 2236, Wichita, KS 67201

Visit our Web Site at: www.kwawriters.com

Our Mission Statement

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

KANSAS WRITERS ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 2236
Wichita, KS 67201

ADDRESS CORRECTION
REQUESTED

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