



Kansas Writers Association

Behind the Scenes: The Writing and Publishing of *Nightmare in Wichita* By Robert Beattie

May 21
Rockwell Public Library
5939 E 9th, Wichita

3:00 p.m.
Social hour to follow

Lawyer Robert Beattie assisted the police during the thirty-year search for the BTK Strangler—and was instrumental in the long-awaited arrest of a suspect. In *Nightmare In Wichita: The Hunt for the BTK Strangler*, Beattie shares his inside knowledge of the case, from its terrifying beginnings to its most recent developments possible. As of April 22, the book had been on the *New York Times* “Bestseller List” for three weeks.

Kansas Voices Winners Announced

KWA members **James Wright** and **Myrne Roe** took away honors in the Winfield annual writers competition, Kansas Voices.

James Wright of Bel Aire won first place in the prose competition with his short western, *Hammerhead*, while Myrne Roe of Wichita won an honorable mention in the poetry division for her work about travel with her deaf son, *Vacation Without Sound*.

Roe also won first place in the Heartland Authors poetry competition with her poem, *Primitive Art*.

New & Renewing Members

New

Rebecca Amis
Bill Johnson
Michelle Smith

Renewals

Bonnie Eaton
William Johnson
Cynthia Killion
Ruth Scheer
Steve Swanson

Mark Your Calendar

May 4 & 18—GK Brainstormers, contact Gordon Kessler for information about where to meet, gordon@gordonkessler.com, or 316-685-0098.

May 4 & June 1—First Wednesday Literary Women, 1 p.m. Watermark Books, 4701 E. Douglas.

May 6, 20 & June 3—Working Women Writers, 10 a.m. Watermark Books, 4701 E. Douglas.

May 21—KWA Meeting with Robert Beattie as guest speaker, 3:00 p.m.. Rockwell Public Library, 5939 E 9th, Wichita.

May 20—Newsletter deadline for June

May 19—KWA Board meeting, 9415 E. Harry, Ste. 603 (Criser & Mardis, Chtd), 7 pm

Market Place

Market News

Tor/Forge is seeking chic lit novels of 75,000-90,000 words. They are interested in somewhat humorous, romantic and/or sexy novels about protagonists in their mid-twenties to late thirties. For guidelines write to Natasha Panza, Tor/Forge, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Chicken Soup is looking for stories for the following books: *Chicken Soup for the Soul, Healthy Living Series* (Diabetes, Asthma, Stress, Arthritis), details at www.thehealthysoul.com; *Chicken Soup for the Horse Lover's Soul*, 2nd Edition, details at www.horseloverssoul.com; *Chicken Soup for the Recovering Soul Daily Inspirations*, details at www.recoveringsoul.com; *Chicken Soup for the Soul, People Helping People*, details at www.soulofthepeople.com; and *Chicken Soup for the Shoppers Soul*. There are more Chicken Soup requests at www.chickensoup.com/StorySubmission/UpcomingBooks.asp.

Conference

Heartland Authors Workshop

Date: June 25-26

Location: Marriott-Tulsa Southern Hills, 1902 E. 71st St, Tulsa, OK

Fee: \$125 (before May 20)

Program: "Sell Yourself" to publishers and agents

Information:

www.heartlandauthors.com

Contests

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

New-Talent Short Story Deadline: May 5. Entry Fee: \$5. Prizes: \$50 first, \$35 second, \$25 third, \$15 fourth. Submission: Open to any writer who never has won a cash prize in any ByLine fiction category; 5,000 word maximum.

Stormy or Blue Poem Deadline: May 10. Entry Fee: \$3. Prizes: \$30 first, \$20 second, \$10 third. Submission: A poem in any style, strongly tied to the weather-storms, rain, blue skies, etc.

Personal Memoir Deadline: May 20. Entry Fee: \$5. Prizes: \$60 first, \$30 second, \$20 third. Submission: An incident or reminiscence from your own life that left a lasting impression; written in first person; 1,000 words maximum.

Humorous Poem Deadline: May 31. Entry Fee: \$3. Prizes: \$40 first, \$25 second, \$15 third. Submission: Any length or style, the funnier the better.

Short-Short Story Deadline: June 7. Entry Fee: \$5. Prizes: \$70 first, \$35 second, \$20 third. Submission: General short story up to 2,000 words.

"This I Believe" NPR Essay Project Starting date for submissions: April 4. Entry Fee: None. Prizes: To be considered for broadcast on NPR. Submission: An essay up to 500 words about the principles by which you live and the people and events that have shaped your beliefs. Details at www.npr.org/thisibelieve.

2005 Blodgett Waxwing Literary Prize in Fiction Deadline: May 15. Entry Fee: \$15. Prizes: \$400 first, \$100 second. Submission: Unpublished fiction 11,000-48,000 words.

Details at <http://home.comcast.net/~wapshot1/Winter05/submis.html>.

Mindful Living Productions Essay Contest Deadline: May 31. Entry Fee: None. Prizes: \$500 first and publication in proposed book, six honorable mentions to be considered for publication. Submission: Essays up to 1,000 words by nurses on the diverse topic of spiritual fitness for a balanced nursing practice. Details at www.mindfullivingproductions.com/contest.htm.

The Maize Prize for Poetry Deadline: May 31. Entry Fee: \$10. Prizes: Winner to receive \$1,000 and publication in the journal *Maize*. Submission: Each poet must submit three unpublished poems. Details at www.indianawriters.org/Publications/MaizePoetry.htm.

Five Fingers Review's Poetry and Fiction Awards Deadline: June 1. Entry Fee: \$12. Prizes: \$500 prize for poetry, \$500 prize for fiction. Submission Theme: image, representation and visual writing. Fiction up to 5,000 words; poetry up to 3 poems, 10 page maximum. Details at www.fivefingersreview.org/contest.htm.

2005 Alliance Screenplay Competition Deadline: June 1. Entry Fee: \$45. Prizes: Top three writers will receive cash prizes and have their screenplays read by top Hollywood agents and managers. Submission: All genres, strong characters, well-developed plot lines, and imaginative storytelling. Details at www.alliancescreenplaycompetition.com/wst_page2.html.

Magazine Market Place

Brady Magazine

<http://www.brady magazine.com>

Online literary/writer's trade magazine.

Submission: Articles 500-3,000 words related to the writing field; fiction 500-3,000 words in any genre.

Pay is \$15 for articles, \$10 for short stories (Canadian)

Deep Outside SFFH

<http://www.clocktowerfiction.com>

Professional magazine of SF and dark imaginative fiction.

Submission: Short science fiction, horror and darkly imaginative fiction of 1,500-4,000 words.

Pay is 3 cents/word

Gryphonwood

<http://www.gryphonwoodpress.com>

Quarterly magazine.

Submission: Flash fiction under 1,000 words; short stories to 5,000 words.

Theme is fantasy.

Pay is \$2 for short stories, \$1 for flash fiction.

Leading Edge Magazine

A semi-professional, biannual magazine dedicated to new and upcoming talent.

Submission: Science fiction and fantasy short stories, novelettes, novellas and poetry up to 17,000 words.

Pay is 1 cent/word, \$10 minimum, \$100 maximum.

Orion Magazine

A magazine about the issues of our time: how we live, what we value, what sustains us.

Submission: Feature articles, essays and literary stories about the world as we know it, the art of living, and visionary and groundbreaking individuals and organizations of 1,500-4,500 words.

Pay is \$400-\$1,000 for features.

Other Dimension

<http://www.otherdimension.com>

Electronic magazine for speculative fiction, poetry, art and reviews.

Submission: Short stories up to 4,000 words that are science fiction, fantasy, horror or slipstream.

Pay is 5 cents/word with a \$5 minimum.

Pantarbica

<http://www.pantarbe.com>

Bimonthly webzine of Pantarbe.com for art, myth and alchemy.

Submission: Nonfiction essays, expose, historical/nostalgic, humor, or inspirational up to 20 double-spaced pages. Fiction that is adventure, confession, erotica, ethnic, experimental, historical, horror, humorous, mainstream, mystery, romance, science fiction, suspense, or Western up to 20 double-spaced pages.

Pay is \$25 for either nonfiction or fiction.

Quintessence

<http://quintessence-encouraginggreatwriting.com>

Literary magazine focused on sharing diverse voices and the beauty of the written word.

Submission: Flash fiction under 1,000 words; short stories under 10,000 words; essays under 3,000 words; screenplays, the first 10ish pages.

Pay is \$20 story.

Storyteller Magazine

<http://www.storyteller magazine.com/guidelines.htm>

General fiction magazine for humor, adventure, mystery, drama, suspense, horror, SF and fantasy.

Word Length: 2,000-6,000 words

Pay is 1/2 cent per published word plus two copies.

The Silver Web

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

[sw_guidelines.html](#)

Semi-annual publication featuring fiction, poetry, art, and thought provoking articles.

Submission: Short stories up to 8,000 words, no fantasy or adventures. Submit January 1-August 31.

Pay is 2-3 cents/word for fiction.

Talebones

<http://www.talebones.com/doc.asp?SUBKEY=152>

Quarterly digest-sized magazine that publishes science fiction and dark fantasy.

Submission: Short fiction up to 6,000 words with a supernatural element or science fiction theme.

Pay is 1-2 cents/word.

Thema

<http://members.cox.net/thema/submissions.html>

A magazine published three times a year.

Submission: All types of traditional and experimental short stories based on certain premises for different deadlines, up to 20 double-spaced pages.

July 1 deadline—The Renaissance child; November 1 deadline—Just describe them to me.

Pay is \$25 short story; \$10 for piece up to 1,000 words.

Town & Country

<http://www.townandcountrymag.com>

Monthly lifestyle magazine for a high income, well-educated audience. Submission: Column items 100-300 words, nonfiction articles 800-2,000 words. Looking for articles on travel, personalities, interior design, fashion, beauty, jewelry, health, city news, the arts, and philanthropy.

Pay is \$2 word on acceptance with a byline.

Research Books: Magazine Writing

Complete Idiot's Guide to Publishing Magazine Articles by Sheree Bykofsky. An excellent book that covers many topics about writing for magazines including what a freelance writer does, the basics of writing, and how the periodical industry works.

Writing for Magazines: A Beginner's Guide by Cheryl Sloan Wray. This has been reviewed as a book very motivating and helpful to beginners.

Writer's Digest Handbook of Magazine Article Writing by Michelle Ruberg. Another well-written book from *Writer's Digest* that helps you brainstorm article ideas, find the right magazine for your work, compose a professional query letter, and tips on how to keep editors wanting more of your work.

The Magazine Article: How to Think It, Plan It, Write It by Peter Jacobi. A practical book explaining how to find writing ideas, organize them, and write them in a captivating way.

Feature Writing for Newspapers and Magazines: The Pursuit of Excellence, Fifth Edition by Edward Jay Friedlander, John Lee. The book explains the difference between magazine articles and newspaper features, gives a coverage of writing styles, discusses legal and ethical issues, tells you how to conduct research and do interviews, and much more.

Beyond Intuition: A Guide to Writing and Editing Magazine Nonfiction by Patricia Westfall. The book analyzes magazines, their editors and writers, and how they can understand each other.

Prologues and Epilogues: To Use Or Not To Use

By Starla Criser

Prologues

Many readers and many editors do not like prologues, believing they slow down actually getting to the storyline. An author must always be very careful to weigh the need for using a prologue and possibly losing their reader versus what information needs to be presented before the actual story.

What exactly is a prologue? It is a scene (preferably short) that happens before the real story starts. This type of scene should be relevant to story advancement the same as every other scene in the book. But it must be necessary to set up a specific atmosphere or emotion that will be a subplot threaded through the remainder of the work. Usually it creates questions that the reader will learn bits and pieces about while reading along, and not have fully answered until the final scene.

Prologues often begin in the middle of serious trouble for the protagonist. Sometimes these scenes are necessary to give information that the reader needs to understand the main story. Sometimes these scenes are needed to provide information about something that happened years in the past and would be difficult to give in flashbacks.

Epilogues

Like prologues, many readers and editors do not find them necessary to a book. When the story ends, it ends. However, sometimes the reader wants to go a step beyond the ending point of the storyline.

Most often an epilogue is used to give the reader an emotional satisfaction that all will be well with the main characters in the future. It can be a glimpse into their lives after having confronted and dealt with the conflicts in the story. It shows how the character has changed from the beginning of the story to the conclusion. In a romance, it can be a hint of the happily-ever-after for the hero and heroine.

One of the best ways to learn more about prologues and epilogues is to study them in published works. Go to a library—or scan books in your own library—and analyze any prologues or epilogues you run across. Figure out why the author used them and if they were used well. Which prologues pulled you into the story? Which left you with questions that you wanted to see answered in the main storyline? Which got some of the backstory out of the way in a clever manner? Which ones did not need to be included in the book? Why?

Do the same type of analysis with epilogues.

Pitch Your Writing

by Bonnie Eaton and Hazel Hart

On July 16 KWA is hosting a *Meet The Editor's Day*. One of the speakers will be Tom Colgan, senior editor of Berkley Publishing. Authors who sign up will have ten minutes to pitch their novel to the editor and tell him why they think he should publish their book. Those of you who write short stories, poetry, and articles will have the opportunity to spend ten minutes one on one with Marcia Preston, editor of *Byline* magazine. Much of the following information, which focuses on pitching your novel to Tom Colgan, also applies to pitching shorter works to Ms. Preston.

If you are thinking of passing up this great opportunity because you aren't sure what a pitch line is, much less how to condense your novel into a ten-minute discussion, don't give in to your fear of the unknown. Get prepared instead.

Advance preparation is vital to your success. The future of your manuscript hangs on the ten short minutes you have to convince the editor to request the complete manuscript. Get ready for a great presentation by taking the following steps.

Preparation

- Gear your presentation to “What’s in it for the publishing house?”
- Research the editor and his publishing house to see what kinds of stories they are acquiring and if your novel fits with the kind of books they publish.
- Be prepared to answer questions the editor may ask, such as “What makes your book special or unique?” Compare your story to something similar so the editor has an idea of what you write.
- Give the title, word count and genre (thriller, suspense, romance, etc.,) of your novel.
- Work up a bio of your writing background. List any publishing credits—both traditional and online, and any contests you have won.

The Pitch Line

- First of all, never pitch unfinished work. Editors only buy completed manuscripts, and only those that are appropriate to their publishing line. In addition, there are a lot of books out there, so your book must have a different angle if it is going to sell.
- A pitch line is like a TV Guide logline—a short summary of the story with a hook that grabs you. It is not a good sign if the editor yawns, so make sure you use a come-on teaser. And remember, your book must live

up to the promise made in the teaser. Include the character's goal, motivation, and conflict. Don't forget the setting.

Examples:

Mickey Youngtree by B. J. Myrick

Beth Morris finds love when her half-breed lover, Mickey Youngtree, returns during a deadly ice storm. Deadlier still is his love--Mickey died three months ago.

The Night Before Christmas by Hazel Hart

A woman with three small children reconciles with her husband only to learn that his actions are being guided by messages he receives in visions of Jesus. She learns how dangerous the visions are on Christmas Eve when he holds the children at gunpoint and declares that the only way to save their souls is to send them home to Jesus as angels.

Brainstorm by Gordon Kessler

What if a small American town is secretly replicated, populated with kidnapped scientists and psychically talented civilians, and then used as a proving ground while training psychic assassins? Political and military leaders of the Free World are the targets of these *psychic warriors*, and the only person who can stand in the way of Project Brainstorm's goal of world domination is a man without a past.

- Once you have your logline worked out, add the name of your book, the word count, and what book it is similar to.

Example:

The Night Before Christmas is a 65,000-word psychological suspense about a woman with three small children who reconciles with her husband, only to learn that his actions are being guided by messages he receives in visions of Jesus. She learns how dangerous the visions are on Christmas Eve when he holds the children at gunpoint and declares that the only way to save their souls is to send them home to Jesus as angels

My novel is similar to *The Tarnished Eye* by Judith Guest in which the author explores fragile family dynamics as a woman reconciles with an estranged husband for the sake of her children. While in *The Tarnished Eye*, the entire family is murdered and the local sheriff must find answers as to why the crime has

President's Letter

By Suzann Robinson

On April 17th we had an outstanding Poetry Workshop. The presenter, Sandra Soli, kept us involved and gave us much helpful information. As one who doesn't write much poetry, I learned many writing techniques I can use for both prose and poetry. Her excitement for life and for poetry kept everyone intrigued. No matter what the genre one can learn and grow from listening to successful, published writers.

This month we will hear Robert Beattie tell us about the process of writing his book *Nightmare in Wichita*. After his presentation everyone will have a chance to meet and talk with him personally. We'll meet at Rockwell Library.

In June our theme is "Stories of Wichita." This will give you some ideas of what you might write in this area.

"Meet the Editors Day" at Century II with Marcia Preston and Tom Colgan in July will give you a chance to find out how editors think and make decisions. You'll be able to ask them the questions you've been wondering about.

In August we'll have member readings, writers' exercises, and some plain old fun. You'll want to be there.

A retreat for all members will be held on September 17 to evaluate KWA's past activities. Future programs, seminars and workshops will be discussed, and ways to celebrate our 10th year anniversary, which is September 2006.

Our annual "Scene of the Crime" will be in October and in November we'll have a panel of experts tell us the do's and don'ts of writing short stories. We'll finish the year with our Awards Banquet.

As you can see we have some outstanding programs lined up. These are opportunities to gain fresh ideas for your writing and network with other writers. We look forward to seeing you there.

Pitch Your Writing

(Cont'd from pg. 5)

Tarnished Eye, the entire family is murdered and the local sheriff must find answers as to why the crime has been committed, in my novel the reader is with the characters as each decision they make takes them another step closer to family tragedy. The Night Before Christmas shows that love and good intentions can lead to death.

- Practice your sales pitch in front of the mirror or try role-playing with a family member before July 16th. If you would like to role-play your pitch, bring it to the KWA June pre-meeting workshop.

The Meeting

What should you do once you are face to face with Tom Colgan? Pretty much what you would do when you meet anyone for the first time—be on time and wear something that projects professionalism. Smile, introduce yourself, and shake his hand. You ARE glad to have the opportunity of a lifetime—to pitch your novel directly to the editor. After introductions are exchanged, lead into your pitch. Tell him why you think he should publish your book and why you think your story is unique. Compare your novel to something similar.

Answer any questions he may have about the plot, your publishing credits, or any contests you have won. This is the time to ask Mr. Colgan any questions you may have.

At the end of the meeting, exchange business cards, if you have one, thank him for his time, and say goodbye.

References

You can do a search through Google for in-depth articles on making pitches to editors. My favorites are listed below.

Why Do Editors Reject Books by Tom Colgan
<http://www.authorlink.com/609002in.html>

Make the Perfect Pitch: The Novel Query
www.absolutewrite.com/novels/novel_query.htm

Perfecting Your Editor Pitch
www.paularoe.com/edpitch.html

An excellent article by Kathy Carmichael, Pitch Workshop, Presented at the Clearwater Writers Conference March 6, 2001.
<http://www.kathycarmichael.com/articles.html>

Kathy Carmichael's **pitch generator** is fun to try and helps construct your logline.
<http://www.kathycarmichael.com/generator.html>

Guidelines Judging Poetry

By Colleen Kelly Johnston

Sandi Soli's presentation at the workshop in April covered information regarding preparation of poetry to magazines for publication as well as entering competitions. Poets sending their work off to competitions should be aware of judges' scoring guidelines as well as how to properly prepare their entries. The Oklahoma Writers' Federation annually presents awards for poetry and prose. In each they ask their judges to use specific details in consideration of who the winners will be.

OWFI uses ten detailed guidelines in their poetry categories. Each poem is judged excellent, good, fair or needs work on each detail before the judge decides who will the prizes.

TITLE: Does the title entice the reader? Does it connect to the poem without being a line from the poem?

Soli particularly cautioned workshop attendees against using a line from the poem as a title or letting the poem go without a title. She commented that the reader does not need to read the title, read it again as the first line of the poem or come across it somewhere in the depths of the work.

APPEARANCE: Is it neat, clean? Is it visually pleasing?

Soli said poets should not start their poems halfway down the page as is done in prose. Begin at the top of the page, placing it so that the poem appears in the center as much as possible. Poetry should be single-spaced. If at all possible, the poem should appear on a single page, but not by virtue of crushing it together or merging lines to make this happen. There is not a problem with carrying your work on to a second page. Soli also mentioned she does not agree with beginning each line of poetry with a capital letter. Use capitalization as you would in prose.

CRAFTSMANSHIP: Are there errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar? Does it adhere to accepted rules for construction, syntax?

According to Soli who has judged poetry for ByLine Magazine as well as for competitions, poems which are presented with spelling and grammatical errors should be eliminated immediately. The poems should stand as a credit to its author.

LANGUAGE: Is the language archaic or obsolete? Is it appropriate to this particular poem? If colloquialisms are used, are they appropriate?

STYLE: Does it read like poetry or choppy prose? Does it have cadence, musicality?

IMAGERY: Is the imagery fresh? The symbolism clear? The metaphor sustained? Does the poem appeal to the five senses—sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste? Have color? Is it trite, skillful?

POINT OF VIEW: Is the mood of the poem consistent? If there is more than one point of view, are they appropriate to the poem?

VOICE OF POEM: Is the poem expressing its own individuality, its own emotion? Is the voice strong?

CREATIVITY/ORIGINALITY: Is it fresh? Does the poem evoke an emotional or intellectual response? Does the poem set itself apart from others in a positive way?

Poems which win competitions and are published in good journals have to set themselves apart from the other entries. Diane Wahto, judge for the adult poetry contests in last year's KWA competition, says that "Carol Ann" which won first place in free verse, did so because it stood out from the others. It was one of the first poems she read, but as she went through all of the poems submitted, she kept coming back to Aaron Houdyshell's poem about his mother.

ENDING: Is it fulfilling? Does it satisfy? Does it successfully conclude the development of the poem? If the ending is a surprise, is it logical?

Soli presented one of her poems which won a national contest. While the poem talked about "Gathering Ingredients" for a fruit salad, it gradually merged into a commentary on hope and cosmic points of light. Surprise endings really set a poem apart. She also talked briefly regarding the necessity of sustaining a rational flow from the beginning of a poem to the end. But, most importantly, according to Soli, is the poet's understanding of where the correct ending of the poem is. Too many poems go on after the logical ending line. Learning to understand when this occurs is a necessity to writing publishable poetry.

Even if you get excellent marks on all a judge's guidelines, that may not ensure you will win a prize. But knowing what the guidelines are will help the struggling poet attain a greater degree of quality in their work.

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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

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Our Mission Statement

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

KANSAS WRITERS ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 2236

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ADDRESS CORRECTION
REQUESTED

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

KWA Meeting: May 21, 2005

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ARTICLE—New and Renewing Members

MARKET PLACE—Market News, Contests

ARTICLE—Magazine Market Place

ARTICLE—Research Books: Magazine Writing

ARTICLE—Prologues and Epilogues

ARTICLE—Pitch Your Writing

ARTICLE—President's Letter

ARTICLE—Guidelines Judging Poetry