



SPARREW ONE-YEAR
ANNIVERSARY E-BOOK
2022

Note from the Publisher

This ebook is a collection of one year's worth of my newsletter, the SPARREW Newsletter. Technically, the one-year anniversary was in January 2023, but I decided to do this ebook in May, since it is my birthday month. In this way, I can give a gift of the one-year anniversary ebook to subscribers.

"What exactly is a sparrow?" you might ask. Don't I mean sparrow?

When I was trying to come up with an idea for a newsletter, which my publisher suggested, I kept having the image of the sparrow in my head. However, I couldn't see how a sparrow would make a newsletter work.

I knew I wanted the newsletter to have a writing theme to it, just as my first newsletter, the BTMO Book Zine, did. However, while the BTMO Book Zine was more personal, I wanted my second newsletter to be impersonal. I didn't want it to be about me, the *Midnight Oil* book's authors or about where I was getting published. I wanted it to be impersonal – specifically, an industry newsletter.

And what industry was I more acquainted with than the writing industry!

However, the more I thought about it, the more I realized that I am not just familiar with the writing industry. As a book reviewer, I had a footing in the book industry, as well. As a former editor, I was also familiar with the editing industry. As an author, I was familiar with all things related to being an author. And, finally, I was also a self-publisher, so I wanted the newsletter to cover this industry as well.

It took some time, but I managed to get the word "SPARREW" out of a combination of those industries: Self-publishing, author, reviewer, reader, editor and writer.

And while I know that "sparrew" is an unusual word, and that it may be seen as a typo, I started to like it a lot. It satisfied that sparrow image I had in my head and it gave me just the kind of newsletter which I wanted to create.

And while "sparrew" might be associated with a "sparrow," the newsletter's symbol is not a sparrow, but a wolf. This image was created by my oldest when I asked him to create a logo for me which represented a green wolf. I decided to use this logo for my newsletter since I had originally planned to self-publish under the Greenwolf imprint.

Since then, the newsletter has been getting out there to subscribers every month. It started out as a free monthly newsletter and it will stay a free monthly newsletter. I decided to publish it at the end of every month, instead of the beginning, since each issue contains articles relevant to the industries for the entire month. At first, I tried to get it out on the last weekend of the month, discovered that it was awkward publishing it on the last day of the month, and worked like mad to get it out SOMEHOW somewhere between the last final days of the month and the very last day. I work on this newsletter all month long, gathering material, interviewing people and keeping tabs on new books published.

Along the way, I learned a few lessons as a newsletter publisher.

I learned that when it comes to finding people to interview for the newsletter, I should start early. Sometimes people don't respond to my request for interviews, so I should send out as many requests as possible. There's no such thing as having too many interviews in one month, because if I can't use an interview during that month, I can use it for a future issue.

I have also learned that it's a good idea to set aside the weekends or holidays for posting the newsletter online. I'm the only one doing this work, so it can turn into an all-day event. I literally have to clear my schedule for this task. It's exhausting and time-consuming, but definitely worth it in the end.

I have also learned the importance of checking and double-checking all links. For one newsletter sent to subscribers, an article had the wrong link! So I have to make sure EVERY link in the issue mailed out is the correct link.

I have also learned the importance of keeping ALL of the newsletter files organized. If you publish more than one issue of your newsletter, this is VERY important! I got tired of hunting down everything and just put all relevant material into its own folder. I organize it by month and year, not by type. That way, I have everything for the May 2023 issue right in one folder.

It's also important to create a template of your newsletter. I started out doing this manually every month, but after creating a template, I just copied and pasted everything into its own section of the newsletter. It definitely makes things easier and it saves time!

Aside from picking up those tips along the way, I have also noticed that my little, unknown and nonpaying newsletter still has a long way to go before it gains much respect in the industries it is meant to represent. Some people I have contacted have snubbed my newsletter, probably because it is not so well-known, while others didn't even want to mention it in their own newsletters because it has so very little subscribers (at present, under 50). And, finally, perhaps because it's a nonpaying newsletter, not many people have responded to my call for guest post articles.

This newsletter is a labor of love. I wish I could pay our dear columnist, Carolyn Howard-Johnson, as well as any writers who

submit articles or anyone who wants to take on the role of interviewing people for it, but right now, sadly, that is not a possibility. I do hope to pay writers in the future. Perhaps I can find a way to monetize the newsletter so that I can pay writers! Meanwhile, I use every kind of resource I can to help promote them and their work.

One change I made after the one-year anniversary was selecting books published by small, independent presses to include in the "New Books" section. I also list self-published books. I do this as a way of supporting these businesses and authors, who, I am sure, just might appreciate the free publicity!

This newsletter will continue to grow and evolve. It may stop providing new free ebooks each month altogether, and new subscribers can just select from the many free ebooks which I have to offer on my author site. I was hoping other authors would use the monthly free ebook feature to offer free samples of their new books, but none of the authors I know have volunteered such items.

Publishing this newsletter has been an enjoyable and rewarding experience. It has allowed me to expand my network of fellow self-publishers, authors, book reviewers, editors and writers, something which I am very grateful for. I have met some amazing people and it has been a pleasure to have had the opportunity to interview them and share all about their experience and expertise. Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to be interviewed!

And thank you to Carolyn Howard-Johnson, who has faithfully and generously provided a "tricky editing tip" for her Tricky Edits column month after month. The SPARREW Newsletter has been all the more better for her monthly contribution and I am sure readers have learned a lot from her knowledge of editing!

That said, don't miss the brand new third edition of Carolyn's book, [*The Frugal Editor: Do-It-Yourself Editing Secrets-From Your*](#)

[Query Letters to Final Manuscript to the Marketing of Your New Bestseller](#). If you're serious about polishing your writing and making your work stand out, you would be wise to get your hands on this book and put its advice to good use.

If you are a new reader to SPARREW and would like to subscribe, please visit [this link](#) to sign up!

Finally, thank you to all of the subscribers and readers of the SPARREW Newsletter. This newsletter would not exist without your subscription and support! And don't be shy; I'd love to hear from you, either through email or social media. Thank you for reading and, as I say at the end of every newsletter, see you next month!

Warmly,

Dawn Colclasure
Eugene, Oregon
May 2023

SPARREW Issue One

Welcome to the SPARREW Newsletter!

The newsletter for Self-Publishers, Authors, Readers, Reviewers, Editors and Writers!

Welcome to the very first issue of the newsletter! This newsletter is just for writers, book reviewers, self-publishers, editors and authors. So glad to have you on board!

It's the end of January and what a month it has been! I wrote and self-published an ebook for the first time, got a new writing gig and started up this newsletter! When I sent out the final issue of my other newsletter, I didn't think I'd ever get back into this ever again. But my publisher suggested sending one out again and since her suggestions are usually spot on, I decided to go through with it! After all, there's lots of news to share this year. One other news being, we just got everything done for the new edition of *365 Tips for Writers*, and I'm excited about its forthcoming release next month! Meanwhile, I have been gathering stories to include in the *True Ghost Stories* book (out next month as well!), as well as writing the nonfiction book about my journey recovering from alcoholism. The ghostwriting gigs are going well; despite the tons of research and study they require, they are still coming along smoothly. Finally, I just went back to freelance writing this month, and I'm excited to see if I have a better go at it this time around!

In this issue, you'll get to meet author Ruth J. Burroughs, who has written novels such as *Myth of the Malthians* and *Liminal Key* (both amazing books, by the way!). Ruth has been an author and artist for a long time, and now she's diving into writing a graphic novel for middle grade readers! Check out my interview with Ruth below.

You'll also get to read an article written just for book reviewers. I am subscribed to a newsletter called [Self-Publishing 101](#). In a recent issue, the author shared what to do when getting a bad review of your book. It made me think of being on the opposite side of that situation! I have reviewed over hundreds of books, and of course came across a few books which I didn't really like. In situations where I MUST review the book, I developed a few strategies. You can read about them in the article below.

Meanwhile, check out my latest posts:

Dawn Colclasure's Blog:

["A Weekly Word Count"](#)

Dawn Reviews Books:

["Magicked to Another World: Liminal Key is a story of fantasy, folklore, magick, war and love"](#)

It Got Cut

["Just You and I"](#)

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I welcome submissions from subscribers!

Are you a booklover who wants to have your book blog featured?

Are you a writer with news?

Are you an author looking for reviewers of your latest book?

Are you a book reviewer whose review just went live?

Are you a self-publisher with a new release?

Are you an editor who wants to share your thoughts on editing, complete with a bio advertising your business?

Please feel free to submit any of these notes to me at

DMCWriter@gmail.com for the next issue of the newsletter!

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WRITING CORNER

Articles for Writers

["Want to Be a Writer? Get Your Training as a Wedding Planner"](#)

["The Courage to Write: On the Radical Generosity of Letting Yourself Be Seen"](#)

New Releases!

Author J.S. Francusi has a new book out! If you love dinosaurs as much as I do, please check out Sofi and Strike Book One A Journey of a Thousand Stars [here!](#)

Forthcoming Book Releases

You loved the original 365 Tip for Writers. Now get ready for a NEW, REVISED and EXPANDED edition! A brand new edition of *365 Tips For Writers: Inspiration, Writing Prompts and Beat The Block Tips to Turbocharge Your Creativity* by Dawn Colclasure will release in February 2022! You won't want to miss this new edition – with new tips for writers, space to practice writing the suggested block-busters and a download link to a FREE ebook filled with even more goodies!

Author Interview

Interview with Ruth J Burroughs, writing as J. S. Francusi

1. When did you start writing?

I wrote my first science fiction in seventh grade, and it was about teens going back in time to the age of dinosaurs.

2. What was your journey towards becoming an author like?

My first book was a great struggle to finish. Creatively I was fine, but I just did not have the technical skills to finish it until I did NanoWriMo and finished it. It took 15 years to complete it while I worked full-time.

3. What can you tell me about your latest book?

Sofi is the first in a series of books where I am using my vision of the scenes I see in digital paintings.

4. What sort of methods do you use for book promotion?

I've hired Mike Evan to market my work and Self Publishing Hero group's methods. Getting the word out there and doing interviews.

5. Where do you get your ideas for stories?

I have ideas for stories all the time. This story started with drawings. I had no clue what I was doing or who my market was, but I had this idea I wanted to draw dinosaurs. I've studied and drawn them for a long time. I'm obsessed with them. But my dinosaur drawings were pretty lousy. It didn't matter. I love drawing dinosaurs. I told myself to sit down and draw lousy pictures of dinosaurs because it didn't matter how bad they were if it's what you love to do. So I just drew and drew and drew.

6. What are you working on right now?

More dinosaur drawings. LOL! For Book 2 of Sofi and Strike.

7. Any advice for other authors?

It's okay to be lousy, a lousy writer and artist. It's okay if you're not a "best-selling" author or haven't got any titles sitting next to your favorite authors. Not every book or author will take their books to mid-list or top of the sales charts or get "discovered". Don't let that ruin your sense of self-worth and make you driven to become that at the cost of your happiness. Just relax and keep doing what you love for its own sake. Don't let that ruin your sense of self-worth and make you driven to become that at the cost of your happiness. Just relax and keep doing what you love for its own sake. The sales or lack thereof are unimportant.

SELF-PUBLISHING CORNER

New Releases

I DID IT! I took the plunge into self-publishing an ebook through Kindle Unlimited, and it was a success! YAY!

Thank you to all of the amazing fellow writers and authors out there who have given me their support and encouragement to navigate these strange waters! I look forward to bringing out many more books under the KU plan!

Check out *Self Care Suggestions Book* by Dawn Colclasure, filled with 101 self-care routines spanning a variety of different types of self-care, plus helpful information on how to create your own self-care plan!

Grab a free copy through Kindle Unlimited [here](#)

Coming Soon!

If you love a good ghost story, especially the kind that are TRUE stories of paranormal activity, then don't miss Dawn Colclasure's forthcoming release in February: *True Ghost Stories*. Warning! Don't read this book in the dark!

News in Self-Publishing

["Is Self-Publishing the Future of the Literary Landscape? Startup Founder Lyda Mclallen Thinks So"](#)

["New Online Bookstore Creates Marketplace for Self-Published Authors Struggling to Compete on Amazon"](#)

REVIEWER CORNER

What I'm Reviewing Now

The Bakery Murders: Challenge by Charlotte Holley (Book 2 in The Actor's Guild Paranormal Mystery series)

Other Book Reviews

["Reviewer Jack Evans Weighs in on Joy Lynn Goddard's Contemporary Women's Fiction"](#)

[Tell Me How to Be by Neel Patel: 'The things we most desire are not always what we need'](#)

["Book Review: The Supervillain's Guide to Being a Fat Kid by Matt Wallace"](#)

["Book Review: At the End of Everything by Marieke Nijkamp"](#)

Calls for Reviews

I'd love to find reviewers for my latest release, *The Self-Care Suggestions Book*. Available only as an ebook. Contact me at DMCWriter@gmail.com if interested.

EDITOR CORNER

News in the World of Editing

["Marketing Your Editing Business"](#)

["Copyediting Practices for Multiple Projects"](#)

["Help, citations are killing me!"](#)

READER CORNER

Book Blogs

[Literary Hub](#)

[49th Shelf](#)

[Electric Lit](#)

Book News:

["Tom McCarthy Thinks the Wrong Kurt Vonnegut Book Is Famous"](#)

["The Book That Turned Annie Leibovitz Into a Photographer"](#)

["Girl Power, Book Power"](#)

["Gallup: Americans Surveyed Say They're Reading Fewer Books"](#)

New Books:

[Open: An Uncensored Memoir of Love, Liberation, and Non-Monogamy—A Polyamory Memoir By Rachel Krantz](#)

[Fiona and Jane by Jean Chen Ho](#)

[Olga Dies Dreaming: A Novel By Xochitl Gonzalez](#)

[The School for Good Mothers: A Novel By Jessamine Chan](#)

[To Paradise: A Novel By Hanya Yanagihara](#)

Feature Article

How to Review a Book You Hated

By Dawn Colclasure

If there's one thing I hate, it's being in a position where I MUST write a review for a book and it turns out that I didn't like the book. I recently bought an ebook that I ended up not liking very much, mainly because the writing of the book was so bad that I just could not continue reading. There was actually one sentence in that book I struggled with; I read it several times but I could not understand what the author was trying to say. I ended up writing a negative review of the book saying it needed better editing. However, I was even more livid over the fact that I could not return the ebook for a refund. Why keep a book I can't even read? Part of my review stemmed from that anger.

Even so, I came away from it remembering another time I was in that position. That time, however, I did not post my negative review. I took the high road instead, trashed the negative review, and wrote another review of the book that was a little more kind to that author. This is just one thing you can do when you're in

such a situation. Here a few other things to do when you have to write a review of a book you really didn't care for.

Focus on what you did like. If there is anything in the book that you actually liked, focus your review on this instead. You can start your review by saying "This was an interesting book to read" instead of screaming "I HATED IT!" then write all about what you liked.

Keep your review short. You can write a review of a book you hated without saying anything negative. If you really feel the need to lash out about this book, do so on the privacy of your own computer then delete the file or hide it somewhere. Get all that yucky stuff out of your system first. Then write a short review along the lines of, "This was a unique reading experience for me. I was iffy about this book and it may not be for everyone." If you have to meet a certain amount of words, then focus your review on who might enjoy reading the book or what the book reminds you of.

Forget it for a few days. If possible, try to step away from this dreadful book and focus on other things. Go about your normal routines, spend time with loved ones and do something you enjoy. When the time comes that you must write and turn in your review, don't give the book a reread. Instead, think about your reading experience. Write what you thought about the book in a positive way, such as "reading this book was a great way to kill some time while I was waiting for a doctor appointment!" or mention your experience reading it by saying "I snuggled up with this book to read at night and it helped me have a more restful sleep." After your irritation, anger and annoyance over the book fades, it will be easier to write the review without being so negative.

As a book reviewer, it's hard to be "honest" about what we thought of a book when we really don't want to share what we thought. However, in cases in which we absolutely must press on and read (then review) a book we hated, there is a way to get out

of that mess without hurting anyone. A reviewer who writes a scathing review of an author's book may end up being a reviewer most authors will want to avoid, so try your best to keep your review of a book you hated as non-judgmental and positive as possible.



Thanks for Reading! See you next month.

SPARREW ISSUE TWO

Welcome to the SPARREW Newsletter!

The newsletter for Self-Publishers, Authors, Readers, Reviewers, Editors and Writers!

Welcome to the very first issue of the newsletter! This newsletter is just for writers, book reviewers, self-publishers, editors and authors. So glad to have you on board!

Whenever I get an idea for a nonfiction book, the first thing I ask myself is this question: Am I the right person to write it? As someone who has ghostwritten nonfiction books on a variety of subjects, I don't doubt my abilities to be able to write a book on a topic I am not familiar with. What I doubt is the kind of response it will get from readers. For this reason, when it's my name listed as the author of a nonfiction book, I am more selective with the books I choose to write.

As far as what writers SHOULD be writing about compared to what writers CAN write about, there are mixed signals. One side says to write whatever you want to write, while the other says to just "write what you know." But I feel that limiting ourselves to just writing about what we know will mean that our careers as nonfiction writers will only go so far. We should not have a limit on what we can write about! Broaden your horizons! Learn new things and expose yourself to new ideas. As writers, we are constantly hungry for knowledge. We can incorporate the knowledge we have learned into our writing, thereby making our voice the one of authority which readers demand of a nonfiction author.

But as far as writing about writing is concerned? I feel any writer, no matter their experience, should be able to write about writing. If they feel compelled to write about writing, and their work is something that offers value to readers, then let them write about writing! When I first started writing my book, 365 Tips for Writers, I did not doubt my ability to write the book. I actually had some solid information to share with other writers – in fact, 366+ bits of information. And when I took on the task to revise and update this book, those bits of information have stood the test of time in the 15+ years since the first edition came out.

Now, with the new edition hot off the press, I'm confident I did well in authoring a book for writers, as a writer myself with even more years of experience under my belt. I gave this book my best effort. And if that's what you do the next time you decide to write a nonfiction book, then that's all readers can really ask for.

In this issue, you'll get to meet author Anne Petzer. I was first made aware of Anne's work when I joined the Gypsy Shadow Publishing family. Anne has written numerous books inspired by her cat, Zvonek. Read all about Anne's journey as an author below!

You'll also get to read an article discussing an issue that is hotly debated among several groups of nonfiction authors: Who is the right person to author a nonfiction book? I explore this issue in greater detail below.

Meanwhile, check out my latest posts:

Dawn Colclasure's Blog:

["A Deaf Writer with Hearing Characters"](#)

It Got Cut

["The Pronoun Problem"](#)

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I welcome submissions from subscribers!

Are you a booklover who wants to have your book blog featured?

Are you a writer with news?

Are you an author looking for reviewers of your latest book?

Are you a book reviewer whose review just went live?

Are you a self-publisher with a new release?

Are you an editor who wants to share your thoughts on editing, complete with a bio advertising your business?

Please feel free to submit any of these notes to me at DMCWriter@gmail.com for the next issue of the newsletter!

SELF-PUBLISHING CORNER

New Releases

I almost didn't make it, but thanks to my editor being so fast when things go wrong and KDP being so fast in getting it out there, my February KU ebook, *True Ghost Stories*, is OUT NOW and it is LIVE on Amazon! [Check it out!](#)

Coming Soon!

Got an idea but don't know what to do with it? Or are you chock full of ideas but not sure how to put them to use? My next ebook, THE IDEA WORKBOOK: How to Choose and Use Your Ideas, will help you out in solving that problem, as well as how to come up with more ideas! Available in March on Kindle Unlimited.

News in Self-Publishing

[A Merger in Self-Publishing: Draft2Digital's Acquisition of Smashwords](#) by Porter Anderson

[The Road Less Traveled: The Self-Publishing Option for Equestrian Authors](#) by Anna Sochocky

[Telling your own story: The highs and lows of self-publishing](#) by Sofia Gallus

AUTHOR CORNER

Author Interview

Interview with Anne Petzer

1. When did you start writing?

I have always written something. As a child, it was poems for Father's or Mother's Day. Then essay writing at school. While doing a correspondence writing course during my teen years I really connected with this form of expression. As they say, 'paper is patient.'

2. What was your journey towards becoming an author like?

My high school dream was to live in Europe, have two cats and be a published author. However, it was not something that I actively worked towards. After being retrenched in South Africa I came to the Czech Republic to teach English as foreign language. I 'inherited' a tomcat, Zvonek. He was hit by car a few months after I got him and it took quite a few months for him to recover. During this time Zvonek 08 was conceived. I did try to find a publisher here in Prague but was told my book would never be published. An online friend recommended a publishing company

in Austin and Gypsy Publishing gave me my first chance and the rest is history.

3. What can you tell me about your latest book?

I am very excited by my latest book. It is the fifth in the Zvonek 08 spy series. I have just finished it and currently doing the edits. Zvonek leaves Prague for the first time and goes to the Amalfi Coast to work with the Italian Feline Intel. It was inspired by my recent trip to Positano and fascination with a group of islands off the coast called Li Galli. These islands have a long a rich history covered in mythology.

It also has a little surprise, which I won't spoil here.

4. What sort of methods do you use for book promotion?

Book promotion hasn't been easy for me as I had to learn, still learning, about online promotion. Fortunately, I have precious friends who help me. So, have used Facebook, Twitter and Instagram mostly. I used to write a blog, which I plan to restart. Around Christmas, I will order a bundle of my paperback and sell them as presents.

I use special days such as National Japanese Cat Day. Just recently, a very exciting way of promotion as materialized. Zvonek 08 merchandize! Follow the link. www.annahpetzer.cz

5. Where do you get your ideas for stories?

Well, my cats are my inspiration and are the main characters in the Zvonek 08 series. My ideas kind of come from everywhere and anywhere I guess. For example, Zvonek's accident turned into *Cat on Thin Ice*, which actually had nothing to do with the accident, and led to the series. Purrristano, the latest in the series was inspired while sitting on the terrace of the pension I was staying at while in Positano looking out to sea with the islands in

the distance. Came home and did some research on the islands and it turned into a book.

My other, non-cat, potential books: from films, series, groups of people or my weird imagination.

6. What are you working on right now?

My books so far have been collections of short stories. My next challenge is to write a full-length novel. As it deals with real people, it is quite different from writing where animals are the characters and the entire story is fantasy. With actual people involved there has to be, some reality attached to the fantasy, no?

This story is set in Prague and about a group of close friends that are living in the States and Iran. They come back to Prague to help solve a pressing problem that affects them all.

Of course, the next in Zvonek 08 series is in the works too.

7. Any advice for other authors?

Keep at it. The hardest for me is pushing through writer's block and I haven't found any miracle cure. A friend and fellow author wrote a Facebook profile that has stayed with me, which I have found to be absolutely true, and I quote: "Writing is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration."

For me the best method is to write something every day even if it is one sentence.

Anne's bio: "All my details and profile can be found at [this site](#). Please follow the link for Zvonek 08 merchandize on the website."

REVIEWER CORNER

Other Book Reviews

["A Shipwreck Leads to a Reckoning"](#) by W. Caleb McDaniel

["A Smart, Playful Book About the Underappreciated Index"](#) by Jennifer Szalai

["Books We're Talking About"](#)

"Ambitions and Emotions Run Hot in 'The Founders,' a History of PayPal" by Alexandra Jacobs

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/20/books/review-founders-paypal-jimmy-soni.html?smid=tw-nytbooks&smtyp=cur>

["The Invisible Kingdom' Review: Malady Unknown"](#) by Brandy Schillace

["In Margaret Atwood's Essays and Speeches, Some Hazards of the Trade"](#) by Dwight Garner

["Roddy Doyle's Stories of Life in Lockdown"](#) by Daphne Merkin

Calls for Reviews

I'd love to find reviewers for my latest release, *True Ghost Stories*. Available only as an ebook. Contact me at

DMCWriter@gmail.com if interested.

READER CORNER

Book Blogs

[The Bibliofile](#)

[Readability](#)

[From First Page to Last](#)

Book News:

"[Banned: Books on race and sexuality are disappearing from Texas schools in record numbers](#)" by Mike Hixenbaugh

"[10 New Books We Recommend This Week](#)"

"[How a Book is Made](#)"

"[Best Dyslexia-Friendly Books for Kids](#)" by Rachel Rosenberg

"[Titles Take a Spiritual Account of Social Media](#)" by Ann Byle

"[The Problem With the Pandemic Plot](#)" by Alexandra Alter

New Books:

[Black Cloud Rising](#) by David Wright Falade
Historical Novel

[Life Without Children: Stories](#) by Roddy Doyle

Short Stories

[The Verifiers](#) by Jane Pek
Mystery

[This Might Hurt](#) by Stephanie Wrobel
Thriller

[The Justice of Kings: Empire of the Wolf #1](#) by Richard Swan
Sci-Fi/Fantasy/Speculative Fiction/Alternate History

[What My Bones Know: A Memoir of Healing from Complex Trauma](#)
by Stephanie Foo
Biography/Memoir

[Scoundrel: How a Convicted Murderer Persuaded the Women Who Loved Him, the Conservative Establishment, and the Courts to Set Him Free](#) by Sarah Weinman
History/Current Affairs/Religion

[Life Between the Tides](#) by Adam Nicolson
Science, Health and the Environment

[Sentient: How Animals Illuminate the Wonder of Our Human Senses](#)
by Jackie Higgins
Science, Health and the Environment

[Wakers: The Side Step Trilogy #1](#)
By Orson Scott Card
Science Fiction

This Woven Kingdom
by Tahereh Mafi
Fantasy

<https://www.harpercollins.com/products/this-woven-kingdom-tahereh-mafi?variant=39356535439394>

[Castles in Their Bones](#)

by Laura Sebastian
Young Adult

[Float](#)

by Kate Marchant
Romance

[Mirror Girls](#)

by Kelly McWilliams
Young Adult

[War with Myself: Achieving Victory in the Battle with Bulimia](#)

By Shani-Lee Wallis
Biography/Memoir

EDITOR CORNER

News in the World of Editing

[Australian Survivor: Why Blood V Water's Editing Is Getting Criticism](#) by Lee Whitten

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Feature Article

Who is the Best Person to Give Advice to Writers?

By Dawn Colclasure

When I first started writing my book, [*365 Tips for Writers: Inspiration, Writing Prompts and Beat the Block Tips to Turbo Charge Your Creativity*](#), I had not been a working writer for too long. However, at that time in my writing career, I was not interested in deciding whether or not I was the best person to be telling writers everything I knew about being a writer, the business of writing or the creative process. The only thing I focused on were all of these ideas that I had for this new book I was inspired to write.

Before I even started writing this book, however, I was a member of an online community of writers. Writers young and old, seasoned and new, were dishing out bits of advice and suggestions to other writers from left to right. And nobody was judged for it, either. Why? Because there were people on one side who knew quite a bit about writing, no matter how long they had been at it, and people on the other side who didn't know what the other people knew, and found their advice to be helpful.

With this in mind, I still felt that I could contribute something valuable to the writing community. And since there was no other book like this out on the market (yet), I decided to just go for it! I ran with that idea and started writing the book anyway, not even caring that I was only a writer with ten years of experience under my belt. I just wanted to write the book! So I wrote it.

Ever since its publication, sales were mediocre. The book got rave reviews and talked up on the Internet, but it still did not sell very well. I started to wonder if the lack of sales was due to disinterest rather than the entire writing community demanding, "Who do you think you are to write such a book?!"

Well, now we're going to find out what was the real cause of those small sales numbers. These days, I now have 20+ years of experience as a working writer, and I had the privilege of bringing that expertise and that experience to the book all over again when my publisher suggested we write a new edition of this book. Not only was the suggestion to add new material on the table,

but also a new cover for the book as well as a new marketing strategy. Since the first edition of the book came out over 16 years ago, it made sense to release a new edition. Some nonfiction books could require an upgrade, especially when it comes to a trade where there are always new things to learn, new tricks and new kinds of software made available. That said, I agreed to take this on! The new material just poured right out of me and I fell in love with the book all over again. Plus, it was a great opportunity to include some new authors I had met since the book's original publication, and they welcomed the chance to share their wisdom in the new book.

But the question remained: Was I still the right person to author such a book? I grappled with this during the revision process. I was coming to this process as someone who went through a dry spell that lasted for a long time. I was not yet published in a major magazine. At the time, my only gig was as a ghostwriter. (I have taken on others since then.) And, alas, I was still not yet a bestselling novelist, as I hoped to one day be. But I WAS still the original author of this book, and I DID have new information to share. It's not like I dropped out of the writing world altogether. I was still in it, and I still had more information to pass on to readers. Perhaps this is enough to make me the "right" person to author such a book.

When it comes to a nonfiction book, however, a lot of times, readers will want to know if the author of the book is the right person to be authoring such a book. For example, I don't think a person who is not trained in psychology or without any experience as a psychologist should write a book about psychology. Likewise, a person who doesn't know the first thing about Komodo dragons should not write a book about Komodo dragons.

Even so, with a topic such as writing, there is some leeway. If you've got the experience, have had some success and really know your stuff, then by all means, write a book on writing. As a ghostwriter, I had to do some serious research on topics in order

to write certain books, and I have brought that research to my own work when it comes to writing a nonfiction book. I write about writing, the paranormal and parenting – things that I know about and have experience with. This way, no one can fault me for writing about them. But there are some topics we can still write about if we research it well enough, such as astronomy. I recently wrote a book on self-care, and even though I am not a therapist, I felt I could still write this book if I did enough research on it. That worked out and I felt I did a good enough job on it. And that, at least, is all we can hope for.

Writers of nonfiction are not trying to be some “hack” doling out numerous articles and books on things we know nothing about. We genuinely want to contribute something meaningful, important and helpful to readers. We want to get this great idea for our nonfiction topic turned into an article or book then release it into the world hoping it will be accepted and useful. And as writers with quite a bit of experience, as well as a certain number of years as a working writer, we want to share our knowledge with other writers too. Books can do that. It’s up to the writing community to decide whether or not our offerings of these writing books are worth their money to buy, and their time to read.

Thanks for Reading! See you next month.

SPAREW ISSUE THREE

Welcome to the SPARREW Newsletter!

The newsletter for Self-Publishers, Authors, Readers, Reviewers, Editors and Writers!

This month's writing challenge clashed with another challenge I wanted to try to accomplish: Write 10,000 words in one day. I have been writing for a very long time, and for a majority of that time, I didn't keep strict tabs on how many words I wrote in a day. My priority was and still is more about writing what needed to be written for the day. Even so, I was wondering if it was possible for me to write 10K words in a day.

This month's KU book was a great opportunity to see if I could get there, because the book I was writing had 30 chapters! That's a good chance of fitting in 10K words right there. But the most I got was a little over 5K words in one day, and even then, it was like I was writing all day long. That's a little inconvenient for a busy mom like me, and it would be inconvenient for writers who also have full-time jobs and families to tend to.

It's a nice challenge to work towards, all the same. I will keep trying to get to 10K words in a day, just to see if I can! When you're a writer, it's not just your creativity you get to put to the test, but also just how much writing you can get done.

Happy writing!

Posts to Check Out:

Dawn Colclasure's Blog: "[Got an idea? New book, THE IDEA WORKBOOK, offers tips on what to do with it](#)"

It Got Cut: "[Just the Facts](#)"

I welcome submissions from subscribers!

Are you a booklover who wants to have your book blog featured?
Are you a writer with news?
Are you an author looking for reviewers of your latest book?
Are you a book reviewer whose review just went live?
Are you a self-publisher with a new release?
Are you an editor who wants to share your thoughts on editing, complete with a bio advertising your business?

Please feel free to submit any of these notes to me at DMCWriter@gmail.com for the next issue of the newsletter!

SELF-PUBLISHING CORNER

New Releases

My March KU ebook, *THE IDEA WORKBOOK: How to Choose and Use Your Ideas*, is OUT NOW and it is LIVE on Amazon!

The world as we know it would not exist without ideas. Ideas are the building blocks of the future. From the moment someone is inspired to create something that would benefit humankind to the moment their idea is turned into reality, the steps we take on whether or not to grab hold of that idea all depend on you. It is up to you to pay attention to your ideas, grab hold of them, and

do everything you can to make your idea come true. Believe in your ideas and what they can do. Your next big idea can be your next step toward building a better world.

Available as a free download on Kindle Unlimited. Print edition coming soon. Check it out [here!](#)

Coming Soon!

April is National Poetry Month! That means it's time for a poetry-related ebook – in this case, a book of quotes on poets and poetry! Or, rather, *101 Quotes on Poets and Poetry*, which will be available in April on Kindle Unlimited.

News in Self-Publishing

["Fantasy Author Raises \\$15.4 Million in 24 Hours to Self-Publish"](#)

by Elizabeth A. Harris
via The New York Times

["Annabel Wright on how self-publishing could empower women in business"](#) by Annabel Wright

via Creative Boom

["Five Misconceptions About Self-Publishing \(Your Own Unauthorized Sequel to Walden\)"](#)

by Adam Dietz
via McSweeney's

["This Is What It's Like As A Self-Published Author"](#) by Rachel

Thompson
via Medium

AUTHOR CORNER

Author Interview with Christopher Stires

1. When did you start writing?

I began reading stories at an early age and I quickly decided that I wanted to be a storyteller, too. I loved the idea that people would read a tale that I created and, hopefully, get the same thrill I got from reading others' stories and novels. So, there I was – writing stories on three-hole notebook paper with pencil. In 1997, I saw my first short story in print. It was a small press magazine that couldn't afford to pay its writers even in a single copy of the issue. Oh, well, so be it. I was a printed writer. Now I have had more than 70 short stories and articles that have appeared in publications in the United States, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Finland, France, Greece, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

2. What was your journey towards becoming an author like?

I read and read more. When I was in fifth or sixth grade school, I started reading the Hardy Boys adventures. Read all 50 (at that time) in the series. In junior high, I was into Louis L'Amour and Zane Grey. Then I read *The Carpetbaggers* by Harold Robbins. I bought the book at a swap meet because I knew one section of the novel had become a Steve McQueen western movie. Boy, did that change some of the books I read. Still remember a visiting aunt saw the book laying out and asked my mother if she allowed me to read that kind of stuff. Mom had no clue, and I didn't tell. There were no creative-writing classes in high school, so I took journalism classes. In college, I took creative-writing courses. My work was routinely shredded big-time in class review. But I listened and learned. After college, I took some night novel-

writing classes. I learned more and I liked being around others who wanted to write.

In 2003, *The Inheritance* was accepted for print by Zumaya Publications. I think it was my fourth or fifth completed novel. The earlier ones are in a box in the garage rafters and will never see daylight again. At that time, I was a big Stephen King, Dean Koontz, and Robert McCammon fan. *The Inheritance* and my next two printed novels – *Dark Legend* and *Starbeast* – were horror novels.

Then I started writing alternative-history (*Rebel Nation*) and fantasy-adventure (*Paladin's Journey*).

3. What can you tell me about your latest book?

[*Desire and Witchery*](#) is the third novel in my Thurian Chronicles series. They do not need to be read in order. They all take place in the same medieval time period and in the same kingdom. Along with my usual hard-boiled and fantasy reading, I had discovered the novels of Karen Robards, Monica McCarty, Elizabeth Hoyt, Julia Quinn, and Pamela Clare. I had this idea -- that would not fade away as so many others had -- for a historical romance.

D&W is a little different from the other two. It is only one story and is the only one told in first-person. The narrator is a primary character than I'd ever written before. To explain, below is the back-cover description:

I am witch's animal companion, known as familiar by those with sorcery knowledge. I am in the legendary appearance of a male black cat. One can believe my words or not. I shall admit that I lie when it is convenient.

Milady Londyn is not witch nor sorceress. Never has been. She is human mortal and has no wizardry skills or aspirations. And she does not know about my true nature despite our time together.

My mistress is a stunning, golden-haired beauty who had lived a most privileged life as the daughter of the most powerful lord in the kingdom's northern realm.

Then her father led a rebellion against the king. And failed. Now Milady is hunted as traitor with bounty upon her. I vow to protect her from all who wish her harm. Alas, I may not be able to shield her from her own desires when the Captain comes into our lives.

4. What sort of methods do you use for book promotion?

I do wish when the novel was done, my part was done. It's not. Publishing houses only have a certain limited advertising budget. I promote my novels on my Facebook page, Goodreads, and my writer's homepage. On a few occasions, I have offered my novels as prizes on other sites. I also co-host (most times) a biweekly podcast about movie screenwriting.

5. Where do you get your ideas for stories?

Everywhere. The news, crazy family stories, a memory of something long in my past, a minor event I witness, a dream, song lyrics, a single line from a book. Often when watching a movie or television series I wonder what if the reverse had happened in that tale.

6. What are you working on right now?

While doing research and taking notes for the storylines of two future novels, I am currently working on a screenplay. Writing for the screen is completely different from stories and novels. New rules of structure. All must be visual with no inner thoughts or observations from a character. Of course, I'm taking a Zoom class on screenwriting. I so enjoy being around other writers again. One of my previous screenplays made the quarterfinals in a major screenwriting competition. Alas, it went no further but inspired me to write another.

7. Any advice for other authors?

I'll quote Stephen King:

"If you want to be a writer, you must do two things above all others: read a lot and write a lot ... There's no way around these two things that I'm aware of, no shortcut."

You must write every day. Even if it's for a brief period and you just write a single word or sentence.

About Christopher Stires:

"I have written eight published novels and have had over 70 short stories and articles appear in print and web publications in the United States, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Finland, Greece, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. My latest novel is [*Desire and Witchery*](#) released by Deep Desires Press."

REVIEWER CORNER

My Latest Review:

[Psychic Killer on the Loose: The Bakery Murders: Challenge by Charlotte Holley Was a Murder Mystery that Was Hard to Put Down](#)

New Reviews

[Points North: Discover Hidden Campgrounds, Natural Wonders, and Waterways of the Upper Peninsula](#) at The New Book Review

Review: A Family of Strangers by Fiona Lowe at Book'd Out
<https://bookdout.wordpress.com/2022/03/29/review-a-family-of-strangers-by-fiona-lowel/>

[Book Review: The Cartographers by Peng Shepherd \(ARC\)](#) at Book, Blog & Candle

[The Curfew by T.M. Logan](#) at Books With Raven

[Reviews: Wild and Wicked Things by Francesca May, The Love Connection by Denise Williams](#) at Du Livre

What I'm Reviewing Now:

Whispers From the Past: Vendetta (Book Three of The Actor's Guild Paranormal Mystery Series) by Charlotte Holley

Calls for Reviews:

I'd love to have my latest book, THE IDEA WORKBOOK: How to Choose and Use Your Ideas, reviewed. Please contact me at DMCWriter@gmail.com if interested.

News in Book Reviewing:

["18 Common Things In Book Reviews That Readers Are Sick Of Seeing"](#) by Kelly Martinez
via BuzzFeed

READER CORNER

New from Gypsy Shadow Publishing!

The Bella Lakeside Ghost

By John Charles Unger

The burned-out, Oscar-Nominated actor Chase Derrick thinks he is getting away from it all but instead, walks right into it the day he enters the gorgeous B&B known as Bella Lakeside. His saving grace is meeting the gorgeous Jenna, someone he never expected to find on a small island in the Canadian Great Lakes. As he reads the thick old book given to him by his lovable British housekeeper Maggie, a story begins to unfold that explains why he is seeing and hearing horrible things, why he's been drawn there, and why he is falling madly in love with this one-of-a-kind Pittsburgh girl.

Word Count: 58000

Now AVAILABLE

SMASHWORDS [LINK](#)

BARNES & NOBLE [LINK](#)

AMAZON [LINK](#)

Terror Times Three

By Stephen M. DeBock

Three tales testify to horror's presence in varied venues of time and place.

NIGHT SWEATS: Geoff has covered over a horrible crime he committed as a youth. But sometimes the past just won't stay buried. MAYA: An exotic Latin beauty brings her American lover back to her Mexican village to receive her family's blessing. His welcome exceeds his expectations. But it includes something he never expected. SEED: When all the women in the pre-colonial village become pregnant overnight, the only explanation is that a witch lives among them. The village pastor, son of a witchfinder, is tasked to find her. Multiple accusations and executions follow. But when all the babies are born deformed on the same day, and die that same night, the panicked villagers demand an accounting for their pastor's failures.

Word Count: 18,000 words

Now AVAILABLE

SMASHWORDS [LINK](#)

AMAZON [LINK](#)

Poison Ivy

By Violetta Antcliff

After Sally has lived in care for over twelve years, someone has come forward and says she would like to be Sally's foster mother, and Sally can't be happier. It was the young and prettiest who got chosen as a rule. Sally has never been called pretty but she knows how to look after herself, that is until Ivy Webster comes into her life. Being told to go to her room whenever she has been disobedient is one thing, but a backhanded slap for no reason is another. Sally wants to run away, but there's no place to go... until a boy called Adam comes into her life.

Word Count: 10417

Now available on [Smashwords](#)

New Books:

[Accidentally Perfect \(The Hideaway Harbor\)](#)

By Marissa Clarke

Genre: Romance

[Burning Questions: Essays and Occasional Pieces, 2004 to 2021](#)

By Margaret Atwood

Category: Literary Collections

[Disorientation](#)

By Elaine Hsieh Chou

Genre: Literary Fiction

[Girl on Fire](#)

By Alicia Keys and Andrew Weiner

Genre: YA Graphic Novel

[Girls Can Kiss Now: Essays](#)

by Jill Gutowitz

Category: Biography/Autobiography, LGBT

[Letter to a Stranger: Essays to the Ones Who Haunt Us](#)

Edited by Colleen Kinder

Genre: Fiction/Travel/Biography & Memoir

[Like a Sister](#)

By Kellye Garrett

Genre: Mystery

[Never Simple](#)

By Liz Scheier

Category: Biography & Memoir

[One Italian Summer](#)

By Rebecca Serle

Genre: Contemporary Romance

[Rise: A Pop History of Asian America from the Nineties to Now](#)

By Jeff Yang, Phil Yu, and Philip Wang

Category: Arts

[The Bald Eagle: The Improbable Journey of America's Bird](#)

By Jack Emerson Davis

Category: History/Animals/Nature

[The Fear](#)

By Natasha Preston

Genre: Teen & YA Adult Fiction, Mystery & Suspense, Action & Adventure

[The Other Dr. Gilmer: Two Men, a Murder, and an Unlikely Fight for Justice](#)

By Benjamin Gilmer

Category: Biography & Memoir

[The Unsinkable Greta James](#)

By Jennifer E. Smith

Genre: Contemporary Romance

[Vagabonds!](#)

By Eloghosa Osunde

Genre: Fairy Tale/Urban Fiction/LGBT

News in Books:

["After Callouts for Ableist Tropes & Language, Author Thankfully Delays Book Release"](#) by Alyssa Shotwell

via The Mary Sue

["The Many Uses \(and Abuses\) of Shame"](#) by Jennifer Szalai

Via The New York Times

["Dutch Publisher of 'The Betrayal of Anne Frank' Halts Publication"](#)

by Nina Siegal

Via The New York Times

["Readers and Writers: St. Paul author's book about transgender P.I. is focus of 'Day of Visibility' program"](#) by Mary Ann Grossmann

via Twin Cities Pioneer Press

["10 women writers currently KILLING it in the YA fantasy genre"](#)

by Isobel Pankhurst

via Fansided

WRITER CORNER

News for Writers:

["The Writer's Desk: Prepare to Celebrate National Poetry Month"](#)

by Laura Moe

via My Edmonds News

["How a Marine Vet Helped 'This Is Us' Writers Understand War"](#) by
JAMES LAPORTA
via Military.com

Feature Article

Write Without Limits

By Dawn Colclasure

Some writers feel that they should only write one thing. Mysteries, commercial writing, horror novels or short stories. However, as a "writer of all trades," I feel it is important for writers to flex their writing muscles, so to speak, and try writing other things which they do not normally write.

When we write only one thing, we are doing what we have always done. There's no variety, no challenge and no new writing styles to explore. We keep churning out the same old kind of material day after day, and after a while, it will get old.

But when we take a break from writing the same old thing and try writing something different, it snaps our muse to attention. We get to exercise our creativity and see if we can even write a poem, a romance novel, a short story or even something like a play. It can be fun, challenging and even surprising to see just how far we can go with our writing ability and just how creative we can be.

Taking a break from writing the same thing can also give us a chance to see what it is like to write that particular thing. Writing something different than what we are used to writing can put us into a whole 'nother state of mind and open doors to other methods of writing.

A writer should be able to write without any limitations on what they choose to write. When we write without limits on what we write, we are giving our brain something “new” and unexpected to work on. This will be a good mental exercise and it will sharpen our skill with words. We also stretch our creativity in a way we have not used it before, or for a long time.

Some writers may not be comfortable doing this. They may feel that writing something outside of what they normally write will mean it will take too much work to get a footing into that particular market or that they just aren’t very good at it. However, if you focus more on just writing something different for the pure educational value it can present to you, as well as just as a fun break from your normal writing routine, it could be a fun diversion to take part in every once in a while.

It may seem intimidating to try writing something you have never written before, but if you get an idea for such a thing to write, give it a try. See where it takes you. You just might surprise yourself with this experiment in writing.

It's really not a good idea to limit what you write or what you even try to write. Don’t dismiss an idea for something to write just because you don’t write that kind of thing; play around with that idea and see where it takes you. In fact, tear away the limitations you have on your writing and start writing without limits. You just may discover that you are actually good at writing something that you never tried writing before.

Thanks for reading! See you next month!

SPARREW ISSUE FOUR

Welcome to the fourth issue of the SPARREW Newsletter! This is a newsletter for self-publishers, authors, readers, reviewers, editors and writers! Thank you for subscribing to this newsletter! I hope you enjoy reading this issue.

Some of you on this mailing list may be familiar with a medical issue I had nearly five years ago which required hospitalization. During recovery, I was unable to write, and I started to think I may never write again.

But life has a funny way of proving us wrong.

I did eventually start writing again, and I was thrilled when I was able to write a whole book again (which is currently with a publisher). But one of the tasks I set upon when I knew I was ready to tackle writing fiction again was finishing up The GHOST Group series, which I started back in 2012!

For some reason, I got the first 4 books in this 12-book series written up and published and then ... I moved on to other things.

But after hitting that "reset" button for my writing life, I knew it was time to prioritize my WIPs. This included the fiction I was writing.

I noticed that the old "writer me" just wrote book after book without doing anything with them. I soon had a nice collection of first drafts on my computer!

However, the NEW "writer me" is not okay with that sort of thing!

These days, I see a book until the end. I get it written, fixed up, and submitted. I stay with the book until it gets an acceptance somewhere. Or, if I decide to self-publish it, then I stay with it until it's published.

That said, I'm back to work on the GHOST Group series. YAY! All novels and novellas I have to edit/revise/submit have been put on the back burner. For now, as far as fiction books are concerned, I am only focusing on seeing this entire series, and not just the next book in the series, until the end. (Sidenote: I have no trouble writing and editing short fiction while also working on The GHOST Group, so expect to see news about short stories in the future!)

In fact, the latest installment in this series has now been published! That's right: *The GHOST Group, Book Three*, is now available for purchase at Smashwords, Barnes & Noble and Amazon. This one contains stories 5 and 6, which are for Mother's Day and Father's Day. I am currently at work on the 7th and 8th stories (for the 4th of July and Friendship Day holidays), and I plan to get those out, too, for Book Four. Once those are also out, stories 5-8 will be published in print, to complement the first GHOST Group print book.

I am excited to be working on this series again. And after I finish this particular series, I will move on to the next fiction books!

For now, I'm sticking with the GHOST Group until the end, and I really think this is a better way for me to go, as an author.

P.S. April is National Poetry Month! If you'd like to check out my poetry books, find them [here](#)

POSTS TO CHECK OUT:

It Got Cut:

["Removing Material from an Article That is Too Long"](#)

Dawn Colclasure's Blog:

["Ghost Stories for Mother's Day and Father's Day: The GHOST Group Three Provides Tales of Young Ghosthunters on the Case!"](#)

I welcome submissions from subscribers!

Are you a booklover who wants to have your book blog featured?
Are you a writer with news? An article to share?
Are you an author looking for reviewers of your latest book?
Are you a book reviewer whose review just went live?
Are you a self-publisher with a new release?
Are you an editor who wants to share your thoughts on editing,
complete with a bio advertising your business?

Please feel free to submit any of these notes to me at
DMCWriter@gmail.com for the next issue of the newsletter!

THANK YOU....

**A huge thank you to the following for helping this author
along with a bit of book promo!**

The Wordling, for mentioning my book, *365 Tips for Writers*, in
their list of suggested books. Not subscribed yet? Check out The
Wordling [here](#)

Filbert Publishing, for including an excerpt of *365 Tips for Writers*
in their latest issue. Check out their site [here](#) and check out their
newsletter [here](#)

CONGRATS TO SUBSCRIBERS!

Congrats to subscriber, Pamela K. Kinney, on the recent release of her book, [Werewolves, Dogmen, and Other Shapeshifters Stalking North America](#), as well as having an article appear in the newest book, [Horror Addicts Guide to Life 2](#)

SELF-PUBLISHING CORNER

New Releases

My March KU ebook, *101 Quotes on Poetry*, is OUT NOW and it is LIVE on Amazon!

There's a lot to be said about poetry, as well as poets. From Angelou to Zaprunder, Auden to Yevtushenko, this collection of quotes on poetry will bring readers of verse a deeper appreciation of the beauty, agony and power of poetic words. Bonus section of 50 quotes on poets included.

Available as a free download on Kindle Unlimited. Print edition coming soon. Check it out [here!](#)

Coming Soon!

May is my birthday month, so the KU book for May will be on my favorite topic: Writing! I have noticed that I love a good writing challenge, and I have done many of them. In fact, this journey in self-publishing a book on Kindle Unlimited each month for this year is the latest writing challenge I have taken on! If you're interested in taking on a writing challenge as well, you won't want to miss my next Kindle Unlimited book: *The Big Book of Writing Challenges*, which will be available in May on Kindle Unlimited.

News in Self-Publishing

["Hendersonville teen fulfills a lifelong dream self-publishing his own book"](#) by Chris Davis
via NewsChannel5 Nashville

["Asheville author and creator breaks statistic of self-publishing"](#)
by HBayden Bailey
via The Blue Banner

["Local writer, teacher publishes children's book"](#) by Mikayla Heiss
via Tri-County Weekend

["Collingwood Collegiate Institute student self-publishes first novel"](#) by Maddie Johnson
via CollingwoodToday

["Estelline woman preserves piece of local history through publishing poetry book"](#) by Kerry Kulkarni
via Watertown Public opinion

["Three Teachers Turned Bestselling Children's Book Authors Team Up to Help Others Get Published Too"](#) by iNewswire
via Digital Journal

AUTHOR CORNER

Author Interview with Pamela K. Kinney

1. When did you start writing?

I was always writing something story-wise since I was eight years old. But I was first published at age 17, in a poetry magazine, *Hyacinths and Biscuits*, back in Spring 1972. These were three poems of mine, "The Horse," "The Leopard," and "Sands of Time."

2. What was your journey towards becoming an author like?

I began with poetry, an article about a friend in *True Story Magazine* (which I got paid!), short stories, then novels and nonfiction ghost books. The past few years were about promoting the books. My latest nonfiction book, *Werewolves, Dogmen, and Other Shapeshifters Stalking North America* made the top new releases in Mythology and Folklore, plus Social Sciences Reference, on US Amazon and top 100 and top 25 on UK Amazon. The book releases on April 26th. I have also been working on a couple of horror short stories, and some made it into paid anthologies, which is nice.

3. What can you tell me about your latest book?

Werewolves, Dogmen, and Other Shapeshifters Stalking North America is part of witnessed stories, mythology, and folklore, particularly indigenous tribes' tales concerning shapeshifters in the United States. There are some photos in it, too. It is available in paperback and ebook (Kindle, Kobo, and NookBook). This book is for writers wanting ideas of shapeshifters for their fiction, readers who enjoy nonfiction books on the paranormal, and people into cryptids, accounts by witnesses, mythology, and folklore.

Book Blurb:

Have you ever been driving, alone, at night, and know that what you saw along the side of the road was not human? Do you ever wonder just what was howling on your last camping trip? Have you ever felt your skin crawl as you passed by that hitchhiker in the fog?

Join Pamela K. Kinney as she explores the North American tales and mythology that deal with shapeshifting frights. From the arid deserts of the American Southwest to the dense forest of the American Northwest, and even farther north to the Last Frontier of Alaska; from the Midwest to the Appalachian Mountains, continuing to the Atlantic Ocean in the east and down south to Florida, the tales of were-beasts are myriad-and hauntingly similar.

With all these stories spanning cultures and landscapes, might there be some spark of truth to them?

Researching books, movies, and legends, Pamela K. Kinney leaves nothing unturned in her quest to discern the truth about the shapeshifters staking North America.

4. What sort of methods do you use for book promotion?

I use ads placed in newsletters, ezines, magazines, and on websites, social media, like Facebook ads, and promoting on social media sites like Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn. Some are placed free, some for an amount of money I can afford to spend. I have a YouTube channel—mainly book reading, although I have not done it lately. I also do live events and book signings, as even the old-fashioned way still works and gets me, readers. I think there is no one way that is better than another—you do trial and error to see what works the best for you. Facebook works for me, but it doesn't for another. It is all testing and checking for results.

5. Where do you get your ideas for stories?

It is mostly from my imagination, but still, something in the real world sparks a germ of an idea.

6. What are you working on right now?

A short story, but I plan to get back to two sequels of novels/novellas of potential series I got published. I also have a children's book idea thanks to a poem that one of my publishers, Dreampunk Press, wants to see.

7. Any advice for other authors?

Keep writing. And take a local writers conference and workshops, even those online like on Zoom, because these workshops and conferences can help you learn more about writing and, most of all, it's business. Like I am a Horror Writers Association and Virginia Writers Club member, join a writer's organization. These organizations can help a writer swim through the murky waters of writing and publication. When I was a member of Romance Writers of America, I learned a lot about the business of writing—not writing itself, but getting published, what to know when a publisher cheats you, etc... If you are worried about paying for a membership—it's a tax deduction. That was something I learned through RWA—I would never have known before that. Most of all, become friends with other writers because writing is a lonely business, and being friends with other writers is not just for pleasure but for learning facts, too.

Buy links for *Werewolves, Dogmen, and Other Shapeshifters Stalking North America*:

Dreampunk Press: Pre-Order now! *Werewolves, Dogmen, and other Shapeshifters Stalking North America* – [DreamPunk Press](#)

Amazon US: *Werewolves, Dogmen, and other Shapeshifters Stalking North America* - Kindle edition by Kinney, Pamela K.. Politics & Social Sciences Kindle eBooks @ [Amazon.com](#)

Amazon UK: *Werewolves, Dogmen, and other Shapeshifters Stalking North America* eBook : Kinney, Pamela K.: [Amazon.co.uk: Books](#)

Barnes and Noble: Werewolves, Dogmen, and Other Shapeshifters Stalking North America by Pamela K. Kinney, Paperback | [Barnes & Noble®](https://www.barnesandnoble.com) (barnesandnoble.com)

Books a Million: [Werewolves, Dogmen, and Other Shapeshifters Stalking North America](https://www.booksamillion.com) (booksamillion.com)

Bookshop.org: [Werewolves, Dogmen, and Other Shapeshifters Stalking North America](https://www.bookshop.org) a book by Pamela K. Kinney (bookshop.org)

Indiebound.org: [Werewolves, Dogmen, and Other Shapeshifters Stalking North America](https://www.indiebound.org) | IndieBound.org

Walmart.com: [Werewolves, Dogmen, and Other Shapeshifters Stalking North America](https://www.walmart.com) (Paperback) - Walmart.com

Kobo.com: [Werewolves, Dogmen, and Other Shapeshifters Stalking North America](https://www.kobo.com) eBook by Pamela K. Kinney - 9781954214095 | Rakuten Kobo United States

About Pamela K. Kinney: Pamela K. Kinney gave up long ago trying not to listen to the voices in her head and has written award-winning bestselling horror, fantasy, science fiction, poetry, nonfiction ghost books, and a cryptid book ever since. Three of her nonfiction ghost books garnered Library of Virginia nominations. Her horror short story, "Bottled Spirits," was runner up for the 2013 WSFA Small Press Award and is considered one of the seven best genre short fiction for that year. One of her ghost books went to second printing and second edition with new stories and photos added.

Pamela and her husband live with one crazy black cat. Along with writing, Pamela has acted on stage and film, does paranormal investigations for Paranormal World Seekers for AVA Productions, and is a member of Horror Writers Association and Virginia

Writers Club. Learn more about Pamela K. Kinney at <https://PamelaKKinney.com>.

New nonfiction book releasing April 26, 2022, from Dreampunk Press: *Werewolves, Dogmen, and Other Shapeshifters Stalking North America*.

New horror short story, *Rope*, now available and free to read in the Spring 2022 issue of Sirens Call Ezine by Sirens Call Publications.

Pumpkin Hollow to be in Horror for Halloween anthology, coming September 2022: "No sacrifice ever escapes Pumpkin Hollow."

Pamela K. Kinney' article, "Why Women Write About Monsters and Ghosts" included in Horror Addicts Guide to Life 2 nonfiction anthology, coming summer 2022.

Pamela K. Kinney's article, "Paranormal Investigation at Rosewell Plantation," in True Ghosts Stories, available on Kindle at Amazon.

NEWS FOR AUTHORS:

["Author of 'How to Murder Your Husband' on trial in fatal shooting of spouse"](#)

Via CTVNews

["Stephen King's prolific writing will leave future generations grateful"](#) by Donald Clarke

via The Irish Times

["Building An Author Brand \(Even If You Don't Write Full-Time\)"](#) by

Tucker Max

via Scribe Media

["The long road to publishing a novel brings relief, life lessons"](#) by
Vanessa Hua
via Datebook

["Children's author Simon James Green: 'I just wanted to show
LGBT+ kids that it's not all doom and gloom'"](#) by Libby Brooks
via The Guardian

["Meet the real estate exec who authors thrillers, plays in a band
and skydives"](#) by Mackenzie Dawson
via New York Post

["A Vermont author finds a novel way of revealing how the state
can help refugees"](#) by Kevin O'Connor
via VTDigger

["Latino authors, activists lead caravan, march against book bans"](#)
by Suzanne Gamboa
via NBC News

["The Girls Who Went Away: Author chronicles 'hidden adoption'
stories"](#) by Erin Kiernan
via WHO13

["This veteran author wants to flip the script on post-9/11 war
stories"](#) by sarah Sicard
via MilitaryTimes

REVIEWER CORNER

My Latest Review:

["Controversial Parenting or Cultural Differences? Battle Hymn of
the Tiger Mother Speaks of Common Parenting Issues"](#)

New Reviews

["Solstice Literary Reviews Jendi Reiter's Newest Book of Poetry"](#)

via Carolyn Howard-Johnson's New Book Review

["Not Your Grandfather's Skyscraper"](#) by Paul Goldberger

via The New York Times

["Emily St. John Mandel's 'Sea of Tranquility' is a mind-bending novel"](#) by Ron Charles

via The Washington Post

["Tasha' is a bracing account of one woman's final years"](#) by Joan Frank

via The Washington Post

["In Edna St. Vincent Millay's Diaries, the Private Life of a Celebrity Poet"](#) by Heather Clark

via The New York Times

["He Never Existed. Here Are His Selected Poems."](#) by Christopher Soto

via The New York Times

["An Angel's Wylder Assignment"](#)

Review by M.C.V. Egan

Defining Ways book review blog

Calls for Reviews:

I'd love to have my latest book, *101 Quotes on Poetry*, reviewed. Please contact me at DMCWriter@gmail.com if interested.

News in Book Reviewing:

["Please Start Reading Books for What They Are"](#) by Leah Rachel von Essen

Via Book Riot

["The New York Times Book Review at a Crossroads"](#) by Kyle Paoletta
via The Nation

["So what is the good of book reviewing? A review of a review of the reviewers"](#) by Ronan McDonald
via The Conversation

READER CORNER

New from Gypsy Shadow Publishing!

Congratulations to Violetta Antcliff on the release of her new short story, *Poison Ivy*

After Sally has lived in care for over twelve years, someone has come forward and says she would like to be Sally's foster mother, and Sally can't be happier. It was the young and prettiest who got chosen as a rule. Sally has never been called pretty but she knows how to look after herself, that is until Ivy Webster comes into her life. Being told to go to her room whenever she has been disobedient is one thing, but a backhanded slap for no reason is another. Sally wants to run away, but there's no place to go... until a boy called Adam comes into her life.

Word Count: 10417

Now available on
[Smashwords](#)
[Amazon](#)
[Barnes & Noble](#)

New Books

[The Last Days of the Dinosaurs: An Asteroid, Extinction, and the Beginning of Our World](#)

By Riley Black

Category: Science

[The Vanishing Triangle](#)

by Claire McGowan

Category: True Crime

[Unlikely Animals](#)

By Annie Hatnett

Genre: Literary Fiction

[Hope and Glory](#)

by Jendella Benson

Genre: Contemporary Fiction

[An Arrow to the Moon](#)

by Emily X.R. Pan

Genre: YA Fantasy

[Unmasked: My life Solving America's Cold Cases](#)

by Paul Holes

Category: True Crime

[Portrait of a Thief](#)

by Grace D. Li

Genre: Mystery

[The Wedding Crasher](#)

by Mia Sosa

Genre: Romance

[Love, Hate & Clickbait](#)

by Liz Bowery

Genre: LGBT Romance

[Sea of Tranquility](#)

by Emily St. John Mandel

Genre: Science Fiction

[Time Is a Mother](#)

by Ocean Vuong

Category: Poetry

Hotel Magnifique

by Emily J. Taylor

Genre: YA Fantasy

https://www.bookbrowse.com/bb_briefs/detail/index.cfm/ezine_p_review_number/16607

[Junk Science and the American Criminal Justice System](#)

by M. Chris Fabricant

Category: History, Current Affairs

News in Books:

["Book Banning Efforts Surged in 2021. These Titles Were the Most Targeted."](#) by Elizabeth A. Harris and Alexandra Alter

via The New York Times

["Opinion: Make e-books available to all"](#) by Alice Knapp

via Shelton Herald

["Brooklyn Library Offers Access to Banned eBooks to Teens Across the U.S."](#) by Danika Ellis

via Book Riot

["A Picture Book About Unicorns Was Banned in an Ohio School District"](#)

via Book Riot

["In Defense of Single Point Of View Romance Books"](#) by Megan

Mabee

via Book Riot

["The New York Public Library makes four banned books free nationwide on its e-reader app"](#) by A. Khalid

via engadget

["15 LGBTQ Books for Kids and Teens Recommended by Queer Librarians, Educators, and Independent Booksellers"](#) by Caitlin Giddings

via The New York Times

["New Releases in #SciFi #Fantasy and Paranormal Romance for APRIL 20"](#) by Veronica Scott

via Veronica Scott blog

["BookTok Is Revitalizing the Publishing Industry, and POC Creators Are Leading the Charge"](#) by Juliana Ukiomogbe

via Elle

["After publisher pulls book by white professor on 'trap feminism,' founder speaks out"](#) by Nathan Solis

via Los Angeles Times

["'I refuse to surrender,' says author fighting to keep gender identity issues in books for young adults"](#) by Evan McMorris-

Santoro and Meridith Edwards

via CNN

["How Tiktok's "BookTok" Revived Reading"](#) by Anuja Thapa

via The Muse

EDITOR CORNER

Editor Interview with Jenn Greenleaf

How did you become an editor?

I sort of fell into it - an author asked me to review his book. It was a mess and I sent him some editing suggestions. He asked me for a price to do a thorough job, and it blossomed from there.

What do you feel are good editing tools?

I like Grammarly and Copyscape the most.

What is are most common mistakes you see as an editor?

It varies - some writers have a strong academic tone, but the client wants their content to speak to a general audience. Other writers seem to submit their first draft (that's weird to me and I'm glad it doesn't happen often).

Which books do you feel are helpful to writers who want to write better?

That's a hard question - I feel like I have every writing book written in my collection. There isn't just one book that helped me along my path - pieces from each helped pave the way.

Well, which ones stand out? Which ones do you turn to a lot or feel are must-reads?

Hmmm... Most were published awhile ago, but they're worth mentioning:

[*The Renegade Writer: A Totally Unconventional Guide to Freelance Writing Success*](#) by Diana Burrell and Linda Formicjelli

[*The Well-Fed Writer*](#) by Peter Bowerman

[*Six Figure Freelancing*](#) by Kelly James-Enger

[Writer Mama: How to Raise a writing Career Alongside your Kids](#)
by Christina Katz

[Writer's Market](#) (I used to get the new one every year)

[The Freelancer's Bible by Everything You Need to Know to Have the Career of Your Dreams—On Your Terms](#) by Sara Horowitz

How do you handle a situation where a client often questions or argues your edits done on their work?

That actually hasn't happened - we have a productive rapport and work as a team until the content aligns.

That's great! Thank you. So, can you please describe the ideal client?

One that likes working with me.

That's always a plus. What can a client expect when they are working with you as their editor?

I adapt to their needs and, if they don't know what they need, we work together to figure that out. My role at nDash is all about being a team - with my colleagues and with the client. We all work together to achieve goals.

How about when you are working as a freelance editor?

They can expect the same - it's my responsibility to meet the client's needs. For example, if their content is complete, but they need help figuring out how to expand ideas, fact check, and ensure continuity, I'll do that. It's so much more than checking for spelling or other grammar errors.

I agree. The task of editing covers a lot more ground than typical checks for grammar and punctuation. Thank you for

that information. I think it's important to have a good editor-client relationship. What do you do in the event you feel the client's work needs more in-depth editing than what they have hired you for?

I have that conversation before we begin - it's important for everyone involved to understand the original scope of work and -- if that changes for whatever reason -- have a plan B. That way, there are no (or minimal) awkward conversations during the project.

That sounds like a good way to go. Having that Plan B can be very helpful to writers who go into hiring an editor without having a really good idea of what kind of editing their work needs. Do you negotiate your rate? For freelance editing.

Well, that's also a tough question...we don't ask other service providers to negotiate, so why should that differ for writers and editors?

That makes sense. Do you think that it's actually possible to edit something to death?

That usually happens when the writer isn't 100% sure what they want to write. Eventually, it has to be marked as "done" even if the writer wants to continue changing things.

I agree. We all have to get to that point where we can call it "done" and move on to the next project. Thanks so much for taking the time to answer my questions, Jenn. It is greatly appreciated! How does someone contact you if they want to get in touch about editing? Do you have a website they can go to?

My pleasure!

Yes - jg@jenngreenleaf.com.com or jenn@ndash.com.

My site is very out-of-date, but it's on my list of things to do --
jenngreenleaf.com

About Jenn:

Jenn Greenleaf specializes in in-depth research and SEO for several websites, businesses, and firms. Her expertise ranges from generating blog posts for construction companies to developing webpage content for law firms.

Her professional writing career began in 1999. Earlier in her career, she wrote articles for magazines, newspapers, and other outlets, including The Maine Construction News, The Writer, Writer Gazette, Do! Magazine, the Washington Post, and NBC News.

Jenn has been editing both as a freelance editor and on staff for over 20 years.

News in Editing:

["Editor World Expands eBook Editing Services to Give Authors More Choices"](#)

via PRWeb

["What Are the Different Types of Editing?"](#) by Tucker Max

via Scribe Media

["News editor jailed in Russia over Ukraine report"](#)

via The Straits Times

WRITER CORNER

News in Writing:

["Think you can write a book? Here's how to pitch, publish and push your career"](#) by Perri Ormont Blumberg
via New York Post

["Tokyo's Manuscript Writing Cafe won't let you leave until you finish your novel."](#) by Jessie Gaynor
via Literary Hub

["Nature Writing is Survival Writing: On Rethinking a Genre"](#) by Michelle Nijhuis
via Literary Hub

["Israeli writer brings his homeland to life in new English story collection"](#) by Amy Spiro
via The Times of India

["Songwriter U: 3 Ways to Overcome Writer's Block"](#)
via American Songwriter

["How Much Should You Charge as a Freelance Writer?"](#) by Laura Pennington Briggs
via Entrepreneur

["The Shape of the Void: Toward a Definition of Poetry"](#) by Elisa Gabbert
via The New York Times

["Bringing community together for National Poetry Month"](#) by Misty Harris
via San Antonio Express-News

["Sci-fi writing program helps queer youth of color"](#) by Heather Cassell

via Bay Area Reporter

["Writing of people with disabilities to be shared at reading"](#) by
Jordan Smith
via The Free Press

Feature Article

Why Authors Need to Have a Newsletter

By Dawn Colclasure

Authors are busy people. In the old days, being an author meant writing a book and, if it sold well, gaining admiration and respect from the public. Authors didn't really need to do much of anything to be respectable and recognized members of society. But these days? Things have changed for authors.

Today, being an author means so much more than writing a book. An author nowadays just can't write a book then call it a day. There's a lot more involved. There's book promotion, marketing, readings, blog tours, speaking engagements, cons, etc., etc.

Why have things changed for authors? Because the world has changed. Authors have to compete with the thousands of other authors out there. We have to do much more work just to get our name "out there" and let readers know about our books.

One way to do that is to have a newsletter. Granted, a newsletter is not a guarantee that sales of your books will skyrocket. With my first newsletter, that just didn't happen. However, an author newsletter is not just a tool to boost sales of books. An author newsletter serves so many other purposes, as well.

Here are just some ways an author newsletter can be an essential and valuable tool in the author's toolbox.

You stay connected with readers.

Thanks to the Internet, we have a way of reaching out to people in ways we didn't before. Remember correspondence courses? Newsletters by mail? Those are things of the past! These days, most connections with everyone is electronic – through the Internet! We have email, blogs, social media and websites. We have electronic mailing lists, online courses – and e-newsletters! The newsletter can help authors to check in with readers on a scheduled basis and keep them posted about any news or things going on in the author's life.

You keep readers apprised of what you are working on.

For most authors, they write more than one book. Not only this, but they KEEP writing books. What better way to let readers know what new books they can expect to see from you than through a newsletter? It can bring in pre-orders as well as stoke interest in getting your book reviewed, in the chance you have book reviewers on your mailing list.

You get to share any news about appearances, signings, etc.

Most authors these days are not just promoting their books at the desk. A lot of modern day authors are out there in the world, attending cons, giving readings, teaching classes and speaking on their book's topic. Most of these things are scheduled weeks in advance. This gives the author with a newsletter a great opportunity to let their readers know all about these forthcoming events! Who knows? One such appearance may be in a reader's area, and they just might attend so they can meet the author in person!

You get the word out about contests.

Contests have deadlines, and if you want to get more readers interested in entering your contest, your author newsletter can help you achieve that goal. Your readers may not have otherwise heard of your contest, and they just may appreciate the opportunity to enter.

You get to offer readers a prize as part of their promotional efforts.

There is no better “street team” for an author than their newsletter’s readers. Your readers signed up for your newsletter because they are interested in you, your book(s) and anything else that might be going on in your authorly life. What this means for you, the author, is that if you have some kind of promotional campaign going on for your book, your readers might be interested in participating! Thank your readers by offering them a gift for their efforts, whether it is a gift card, free copy of a book or a discount in your store.

You get to dabble with ideas and gain feedback (such as holding a poll).

Decisions, decisions. Sometimes, an author just can’t decide on the right book cover, a character name or if your idea for a new writing experiment is a good one. Your newsletter gives you the platform you need to sound off on these ideas. You can create a poll, hold a survey or invite feedback from readers to see what THEY think about your ideas. You can create a whole ‘nother newsletter and see if your readers have any interest in this idea by inviting them to sign up. You can also throw around ideas to see if anything sticks. Your readers are your audience. Give them something interesting, insightful and helpful they can think about and be a part of in their own way.

You get to share new knowledge related to books, writing, and trends.

Authors LOVE talking shop. Whether we get to talk about writing, author stuff, books, writing trends and new ideas, there is no limit to just how much an author could go on and on talking about everything related to books, writing and trends related to the industry. Your author newsletter gives you that chance to talk shop. Your newsletter is just the right sounding board to discuss anything and everything related to the world of writing. Your readers just might appreciate having the chance to be a part of that discussion, as well.

While most writers and authors may claim that a newsletter is a waste of time, it can definitely serve many authors well. It can't hurt to at least give the newsletter thing a try, and it just might turn out to be a fun, engaging experience. Who knows? Your author newsletter just may find new readers who have heard about you simply because they heard about your newsletter.

Thanks for reading! See you next month!

SPARREW ISSUE FIVE

Welcome to the SPARREW Newsletter!

The newsletter for Self-Publishers, Authors, Readers, Reviewers, Editors and Writers!

Welcome to the latest issue of the newsletter! This newsletter is just for writers, book reviewers, booklovers, self-publishers, editors and authors. So glad to have you on board!

When I write something for the public to read, I try my hardest to remain objective. However, I recently got up on my soapbox while I was writing this month's KU book to sound off against the trend of writers writing books super-fast! I'm talking a week or a month here. While it's great that some writers are able to write their books so quickly, this has made the other writers out there who are struggling to FINISH writing a book after one or two years have passed feel pretty rotten about themselves.

In fact, they felt so disheartened that some of them gave up on their books.

I just felt that I needed to say something about it. There is no real deadline on when a writer "should" finish writing their book. Every writer is different and every writer goes at their own pace.

So, yes, I did allow myself to have my say against this sort of thing in that book. Curious? Check the ebook out! It's a free download and you'll find the link in this issue!

Also in this issue, you'll get to meet author Anne Catherine Cavendish. I was first made aware of Catherine's work when I joined the Gypsy Shadow Publishing family and ever since then,

Catherine has taken the book world by storm! It seems as though you can find her books everywhere. I enjoyed chatting with Catherine and I hope you enjoy reading the interview as well.

I was also fortunate to land an interview with the VERY busy yet VERY prolific copywriter, Peter Bowerman. I heard about the well-fed writer years ago and have been following his career since. I'm a subscriber to his very helpful and insightful newsletter, The Well-Fed EPUB, and his books on copywriting as well as self-publishing have been informative reads that I often grab to reread passages of many times. Check out the interview with Peter to learn all about how he has found success as a copywriter!

For the editing section of this newsletter, I had the opportunity to interview the amazing and successful editor, RJ Thesman. I was introduced to RJ several years ago, when a fellow author reached out about getting endorsements for her book. At that time, RJ was responsible for edits on the book, and I immediately connected with her through social media. I have been enjoying her insightful posts ever since! RJ offers some great advice on editing, as well as some helpful tips. Check the interview out!

And on the editing note, the feature article in this newsletter is all about the extra steps I take when self-editing a manuscript. These things are done before I send my work off to the other editors, who I can count on to give the work a final and thorough edit before it sees publication. If you have ever struggled with self-editing your work before submitting it, maybe the advice in this article can help you out!

Meanwhile, please check out my latest posts:

Dawn Colclasure's Blog:
["Authors Breaking the "Rules" of Writing in Their Books"](#)

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I welcome submissions from subscribers!

Are you a booklover who wants to have your book blog featured?

Are you a writer with news?

Are you an author looking for reviewers of your latest book?

Are you a book reviewer whose review just went live?

Are you a self-publisher with a new release?

Are you an editor who wants to share your thoughts on editing,
complete with a bio advertising your business?

Please feel free to submit any of these notes to me at
DMCWriter@gmail.com for the next issue of the newsletter!

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THANK YOU.....

Many thanks to the website [LoveReading4Kids](#) for featuring my children's book, *The Dream Forest*, on their website [here](#)

Thank you to Enable Utah for including my book, *Parenting Pauses: Life as a Deaf Parent*, in their lending library.

About Enable Utah:

Enable Utah is a non-profit that was created in 1968. Enable helps people with disabilities and special needs find meaningful employment in the community through job training and education. Please feel free to learn more about Enable Utah and its mission at <https://www.enableutah.org/>

SELF-PUBLISHING CORNER

New Releases

Are you a writer struggling with writer's block?
Are you an aspiring writer with no idea of what to write?
Or, are you a writer looking for a fun diversion in between assignments and deadlines?

If any of the above applies to you, look no further! The Big Book of writing Challenges is full of a variety of challenges to get your creative juices flowing! This book contains daily, weekly, monthly and yearly challenges complete with resources to help you get started! Writing challenges can certainly challenge your creativity and encourage you to think outside of the box. The best part is that you can perform each challenge as often as you like. Check out this book and get busy strengthening your writing skills and getting those words onto the page.

Grab your free copy of this ebook [here](#)

Coming Soon!

Every single day, we are exposed to things that can tear us down. From depressing and horrific events, scary news stories, doomscrolling on social media and dealing with unpleasant and even violent people, our mental health takes a lot of abuse as we try to make it through yet another day. In *10 Ways to Boost Your Mental Health*, you'll find 10 easy, free and rejuvenating activities you can do to help you feel just a little bit better despite all of the bad things in life. We can't make the negative things we are exposed to go away, but we CAN do things to protect our mental health and try to keep our sanity in this chaotic world.

News in Self-Publishing

["Orland Park Teen Donates Money From First Poetry Book To Ukraine"](#) by Eileen O'Gorman
via Patch

["Rupi Kaur Is Empowering Women Through Her Poetry. This Is How She Plans On Spreading Her Message Globally."](#) by Laura Schreffler
via Haute Living

["Family pens book about achieving your dreams"](#) by Karina Kovac
via LIHerald

["Bloomington Woman + Friend Self-Publish Tale Of Nazi Woman's Legacy"](#) by Michelle Rotuno-Johnson
via Patch

["A professional editor completes a manuscript by making it stand out"](#)
via Digital Journal

["For the love of writing children's books"](#)
via The Jackson Star & Herald

["Author shares stories of radio, publishing journey"](#) by Emma Spaeth
via Half Moon Bay Review

["Photographic exhibition celebrates 90 years of the North West 200"](#)
via Causeway Coast Community

["Colorado Springs author's new bookstore solely sells self-published children's books"](#) by Amanda Hancock
via The Gazette

["Write a book: Self-publishing boom evident in Tucson"](#) by Bill Finley
via Tucson.com

AUTHOR CORNER

Author Interview with Catherine Cavendish

1. When did you start writing?

As soon as I could hold a pencil. I could read well before I started school and loved it so much, I wanted to write stories myself. Of course, my early efforts weren't exactly publishable, and usually involved fluffy kittens.

My tastes evolved over the years, moving from Enid Blyton's adventure stories, and her tales about impossibly amazing schoolgirls who enjoyed practical jokes and lashings of ginger beer, to Agatha Christie. At around eight or nine, I read *The Monkey's Paw* – a short story by W.W. Jacobs. It's by no means a children's story and is incredibly creepy. It's also one of the cleverest stories I have ever read in the way the author racks up the tension and plays with your mind. It scared the life out of me when I first read it and still gives me the shivers now. If you haven't read it, I won't spoil it for you but if you want to know how to create scary tension, it's a masterclass. It inspired me and continues to do so. It also started me down a road that led to some pretty dark fiction. I then, of course, wanted to write my own so started to write my first novel in my early teens. It was terrible!

2. What was your journey towards becoming an author like?

I suppose, like most people, long and arduous with more potholes than a farm track. Trying to combine writing with a demanding full-time job is never an easy matter. Trying to find an agent is cram full of disappointments. I was fortunate to find two agents over the years who were willing to give me a chance but, in both cases, it didn't result in a publishing contract.

I then joined an online writers' circle and that's when I decided to abandon writing the historical fiction I had been producing unsuccessfully for a few years and switch to ghostly, dark, Gothic and haunted house horror – with witches thrown in for good measure and where appropriate.

That's when I found my first publisher. it's also when I found someone every writer needs – a reader who is also a writer in the genre and knows her craft. Julia offers constructive and helpful criticism of my stories, points out where I have erred and strayed, or suspended disbelief so far the elastic has snapped. I first availed myself of her advice when I was working on a novella for a Gothic Horror competition run by Samhain Publishing. Four novellas would be chosen out of all the entrants, to appear in an anthology. The day I received an email from their editor Don D'Auria to say I was one of the successful four is a day I shall never forget. Sadly, Samhain is no more but my winning novella – *Linden Manor* – was republished by Crossroad Press and is still available on Kindle and Audio.

As for Don – we work together still. He's the Executive Editor at Flame Tree Press with whom I have three published books – *The Haunting of Henderson Close*, *Garden of Bewitchment*, and *In Darkness, Shadows Breathe*. A fourth – *Dark Observation* – is coming out in September, and I am contracted for another two novels with them so far.

3. What can you tell me about your latest book?

Dark Observation takes place mainly during World War 2. Here is the official blurb which gives you a flavour of what to expect:

1941. In the dark days of war-torn London, Violet works in Churchill's subterranean top secret Cabinet War Rooms, where key decisions that will dictate Britain's conduct of the war are made. Above, the people of London go about their daily business as best they can, unaware of the life that teems beneath their feet.

Night after night the bombs rain down, yet Violet has far more to fear than air raids. A mysterious man, a room only she can see, memories she can no longer trust, and a best friend who denies their shared past... Something or someone - is targeting her.

4. What sort of methods do you use for book promotion?

I have a blog and I use social media – Facebook, Twitter and Instagram mainly. It is an added bonus that Flame Tree Press are so active on the marketing front, so I do podcasts and participate in activities online generated by them. I also do book launches when invited and hope to return to conventions and other events which have been curtailed for so long.

5. Where do you get your ideas for stories?

From anywhere and everywhere. *The Haunting of Henderson Close* was inspired by a number of trips to Edinburgh and especially to The Real Mary King's Close in the Old Town which is a spooky underground street dating back centuries – parts of a few streets actually. *The Garden of Bewitchment* comes from my childhood growing up near the Yorkshire moors where the Brontes spent their lives. *In Darkness, Shadows Breathe* would never

have happened if I hadn't contracted cancer and needed to spend weeks in hospital undergoing surgery.

A recent idea for a short story was born out of a Facebook post by Mark Lindsay – former lead singer of '60s group, Paul Revere and the Raiders. He wrote about a square grand piano called Rose which he inherited from the previous owners of a house he and his wife bought and lived in in Maine. The piano had been installed there back in the latter half of the nineteenth century before the house was completed. It was too big to fit through any of the doors and had to stay where it was each time the house was sold. I looked at the picture, read the post and an idea formed there and then... All of a sudden, there was a story about a piano called Emily. Of course the piano in my story hides a sinister secret

Ideas can come from anywhere. Nothing is ever wasted!

6. What are you working on right now?

On the novel side, I am about to start work on a story set around the standing stones of Avebury. It's something I tackled years ago but the story I wrote then was never published and has long been lost. So it's back to the drawing board, but, strangely, so much of it remains in my head, it's like revisiting an old friend I haven't seen in decades. I'm looking forward to getting stuck into it.

In addition to that, I am working on a number of projects mainly involving short stories with another publisher. I can't say much about these yet but watch this space...

7. Any advice for other authors?

Rejections come with the territory. Usually, unless you are extremely lucky, you'll receive shedloads of them. Don't give up. Sometimes a rejection can actually be helpful – some publishers

and/or agents will give you constructive feedback if they think your work shows promise.

You need a reader. Not your best friend or your favourite auntie. You need someone who will give you objective criticism and, when they do, be prepared to act on it.

Read widely and often and not merely in your own genre. Analyse how successful and respected authors create their stories.

Write. Write. Write. Also be prepared to hit the delete button. Recently I hit it and wiped out 2,500 words and two entire characters. The scenes were adding nothing to the action and plot of the story, and neither were the characters. Out they came. Chop. Chop. Sometimes you have to be ruthless.

ABOUT CATHERINE CAVENDISH:

Following a varied career in sales, advertising and career guidance, Catherine Cavendish is now the full-time author of a number of paranormal, ghostly and Gothic horror novels, novellas and short stories. Cat's novels include *In Darkness*, *Shadows Breathe*, *The Garden of Bewitchment*, *The Haunting of Henderson Close*, the Nemesis of the Gods trilogy – *Wrath of the Ancients*, *Waking the Ancients* and *Damned by the Ancients*, plus *The Devil's Serenade*, *The Pendle Curse* and *Saving Grace Devine*.

Her new novel, [*Dark Observation*](#), will be published by Flame Tree Press in September.

Her novellas include: *The Darkest Veil*, *Linden Manor*, *Cold Revenge*, *Miss Abigail's Room*, *The Demons of Cambian Street*, *Dark Avenging Angel*, *The Devil Inside Her*, and *The Second Wife*

She lives by the sea in Southport, England with her long-suffering husband, and a black cat called Serafina who has never forgotten that her species used to be worshipped in ancient Egypt. She sees no reason why that practice should not continue.

You can connect with Cat here:

Catherine Cavendish [site](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Goodreads](#)

REVIEWER CORNER

Other Book Reviews

["Karen A. Wyle Releases New Nature Picture Book"](#)

Reviewed by Jill Franclemont originally for All Things Jill-Elizabeth

Via The New Book Review

["Book review - Barking At the Moon"](#) by Arlene Johns

via The Tribune-Democrat

["Either/Or Is a Coming-of-Age Story That Moves at the Speed of Thought"](#) by Sarah Chihaya

via Vulture

["Iowa book review: 'Stone City' is a moving and rewarding read"](#)

by Michael Tidemann

via Des Moines Register

["Book Review: The Nutmeg's Curse: Parables for a Planet in Crisis by Amitav Ghosh"](#) by Shaan Kashyap

via LSE Phelan US Centre

["Book Review: The Billboard, by Natalie Y. Moore"](#) by Adam

Prestigiacomo

via 3CR

["Book review: 'It Was All a Dream'"](#)

via Bowling Green Daily News

["Book review \(nonfiction\): 'From Hollywood with Love' as zippy and fun as the rom-coms it honors"](#) by Joshua Axelrod Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

via Richmond Times-Dispatch

["Book review: Phil Mickelson bio a rough take on exiled Lefty"](#) by

Tony Paul

via The Detroit News

["Review: Chronicle of campaigns past"](#) by J. KEMPER CAMPBELL

via Lincoln Journal Star

["'Translating Myself and Others' is a reminder of how alive language can be"](#) by Lily Meyer

via NPR

["Book Review: 'Woman, Eating' — A Poignant Bite All Its Own"](#)

by Clea Simon

via The Arts Fuse

["Life of journalist Cokie Roberts explored in new book - review"](#)

by Aaron Leibel

via The Jerusalem Post

["Book review: 'Circa' is a fierce, poignant coming-of-age novel"](#)

By Ashley Riggleson

via The Free Lance Star

Calls for Reviews

I'd love to find reviewers for my latest release, *The Big Book of Writing Challenges*. Available only as an ebook. Contact me at DMCWriter@gmail.com if interested.

READER CORNER

Book Blogs

[Linda's Book Bag](#)

[Maryse's Book Blog](#)

[Nose in a book](#)

[Novel Kicks](#)

[Shaz's Book Blog](#)

Book News:

["Why Are Authors Like Colleen Hoover and Taylor Jenkins Reid Seeing Their Book Sales Spike? Credit BookTok"](#) by Yashwina Canter
via Oprah Daily

["Upset by book bans, teen starts forbidden book club in small Pa. town"](#) by Sydney Page
via The Washington Post

["My Queer Life Is Not Inappropriate, and Neither Are the Books That Reflect It"](#) by Nicole Melleby
via Lit Hub

["Marie Myung-Ok Lee on the Inevitable Slowness of Writing"](#) by Jimin Han
via Lit Hub

["Fourth graders from Blennerhassett Elementary create book of poems"](#) by Mitchell Blahut
via WTAP

New Books:

[Siren Queen](#)
by Nghi Vo
Genre: Fantasy

[The Hacienda](#)
by Isabel Cañas
Genre: Paranormal Fiction

[The Lioness](#)
by Chris Bohjalian
Genre: Historical Fiction

[The Murder Rule](#)
by Dervla McTiernan
Genre: Mystery and Detective

[Jameela Green Ruins Everything](#)
by Zarqa Nawaz
Genre: Satire, Action & Adventure

[Magic, Lies, and Deadly Pies](#)
by Misha Pops
Genre: Cozy Mystery

[The Ocean House: Stories](#)

by Mary-Beth Hughes

Genre: Short Story Collection

[Hidden Pictures: A Novel Hardcover](#)

by Jason Rekulak

Genre: Thriller

[Bloomsbury Girls: A Novel](#)

by Natalie Jenner

Genre: Historical Fiction

[Uncertain Ground: Citizenship in an Age of Endless, Invisible War](#)

by Phil Klay

Category: Essay Collection

[You Have a Friend in 10a: Stories](#)

by Maggie Shipstead

Genre: Short Story Collection

[Sex and the Single Woman: 24 Writers Reimagine Helen Gurley Brown's Cult Classic](#)

Edited by Eliza M. Smith and Haley Swanson

Category: Essay Collection

[This Time Tomorrow](#)

by Emma Straub

Genre: Science Fiction

[His Name Is George Floyd: One Man's Life and the Struggle for Racial Justice](#)

by Robert Samuels and Toluse Olorunnipa

Category: Domestic Politics

[The Colony: A Novel](#)

by Audrey Magee

Genre: Historical Fiction

[Ma and Me: A Memoir](#)

by Putsata Reang

Category: Memoir

[River of the Gods: Genius, Courage, and Betrayal in the Search for the Source of the Nile](#)

by Candice Millard

Category: Biography and Memoir

[She Is Haunted](#)

by Paige Clark

Genre: Short Story Collection

[Holding Her Breath](#)

by Eimear Ryan

Genre: Literary Fiction

[The High Desert: Black. Punk. Nowhere.](#)

by James Spooner

Category: Memoir

[The Long Corner](#)

by Alexander Maksik

Genre: Coming of Age Fiction

[Mother Noise: A Memoir](#)

by Cindy House

Category: Memoir

[We Measure the Earth with Our Bodies](#)

by Tsering Yangzom Lama

Genre: Literary Fiction

[Mirror Made of Rain](#)

by Naheed Phiroze Patel

Genre: Literary Fiction

[The Red Arrow](#)

by William Brewer

Genre: Literary Fiction

[My America: Recipes from a Young Black Chef: A Cookbook](#)

by Kwame Onwuachi and Joshua David Stein

Category: Cooking

[Mean Baby: A Memoir of Growing Up](#)

by Selma Blair

Category: Memoir

[The Office Bffs: Tales of the Office from Two Best Friends Who Were There](#)

by Jenna Fischer and Angela Kinsey

Category: Celebrity & Popular Culture

[Upper Hand: The Future of Work for the Rest of Us](#)

by Sherrell Dorsey

Category: Business & Management

[The Many Half-Lived Lives of Sam Sylvester](#)

by Maya MacGregor

Genre: Queer Contemporary YA Mystery

EDITOR CORNER

NEW COLUMN: “Carolyn’s Editing Tips” is a new monthly installment in the newsletter. Carolyn-Howard Johnson is an award-winning author and poet who has written groundbreaking books such as *The Frugal Book Promoter*, *The Frugal Editor* and *How to Get Great Book Reviews*. A former publicist and journalist, Carolyn provides teaching, coaching and editing services. Her website is at <https://howtodoitfrugally.com/>

Carolyn's Editing Tips

Tricky Edits from Carolyn Howard-Johnson

Generally speaking, first words and other words in titles get capitalized with the exception of articles and prepositions of four characters or less. This rule may not apply when "to" is functioning as part of an infinitive rather than as a preposition, you know, because in this case it *isn't* a preposition. You'll see it both capped, and not. The decision to cap or not cap the infinitive "to" are sometimes made based on artistic considerations.

About Carolyn:

Once a month Carolyn Howard-Johnson shares a tricky edit excerpted from her *The Frugal Editor*, the second multi award-winning book in her *HowToDoItFrugally* Series of books for writers. Find it on Amazon in paper or as an e-book at bit.ly/FrugalEditor or learn more at her website, <https://HowToDoItFrugally.com>

Editor Interview with RJ Thesman

How did you become an editor?

I started as an English teacher, proofreading for grading purposes. Later, I learned more about line editing, took some courses and attended workshops and webinars. As an author, I'm always aware of the writing rules and how they have changed.

What editing tools do you feel are the most helpful?

Track Changes in Microsoft Word is my go-to tool, and I keep my big copy of the *Chicago Manual of Style* right next to me.

What are the most common mistakes you see?

Two grammar mistakes happen often: farther vs further and messing up the objective vs subjective voice. I see this one all the time. "Her and I" is not correct. It should be "Her and me" or "She and I."

The other big mistake is when writers don't realize how formatting is going to change their manuscript. They indent paragraphs which will later become a problem. They number pages which will have to be changed. In today's indie publishing world, writers need to be aware of every piece of the process.

Which books do you feel are helpful to writers who want to write better?

The Artist's Way by Julia Cameron

The War of Art by Steven Pressfield

The old standby: *The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White

How do you handle a situation where a client often questions or argues your edits done on their work?

Before signing the contract, I tell my clients they are the author. It is their choice to accept or reject edits. This has never been a problem.

That said, please describe your ideal client.

A writer who is willing to learn, willing to accept some coaching ideas and pays on time.

What should a client expect when working with you as their editor?

I work hard to make sure the writer's voice remains true. The book should not sound like me. So if I have suggestions for changing a word, I give several ideas and the author can choose the best. For a book length manuscript, I require 1.5 months to

complete the project. Sometimes it works out to be faster, depending on the word count. I will also be honest with my clients. I am not afraid to tell the truth about what they need to do.

What do you do in the event that you feel the client's work needs more in-depth editing than what they have asked for?

This sometimes happens in fiction when they might need more of a developmental editor. I give them referrals.

Do you negotiate your rates?

Rarely. My coaching clients get an automatic discount when they choose me to be their editor. This is my business, and I check every word. Several clients have told me, "The edits were worth every penny."

Do you feel a manuscript could actually be edited to death?

This can happen on the writer's end, when they can't let it go.

ABOUT RJ THESMAN:

RJ Thesman is a Certified Writing Coach (since 2012), an Editor (since 1990) and a prolific Author. She has written 20 books (so far) and published 800+ articles and stories in various publications around the world. Her work is included in 14 anthologies, and she is listed in the Who's Who of Professional Women. She also holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Education. She is a trained Stephen Minister and Biblical Counselor.

Thesman is a member of the National Association of Professional Women, the Heart of America Christian Writer's Network, the

Fellowship of Christian Writers and the American Association of Christian Counselors.

She is a popular speaker and teacher for numerous writers conferences. Thesman loves to help her clients birth new words and publish their books. She enjoys teaching workshops, organizing coaching retreats, speaking at various venues, reading, gardening and cooking — especially anything with blueberries.

Follow RJ Thesman on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Kobo, YouTube and Goodreads. Check out her website at: <https://RJThesman.net> and follow her blog. Subscribe to her YouTube channel where she posts videos about the writing craft: "RJ Thesman – Coaching for Writers."

News in the World of Editing

["Microsoft launches 'woke' editing tool which advises writers to type 'assigned female at birth' rather than 'biologically female' after Google introduced an 'inclusive language' function to avoid politically incorrect words"](#) by Stephen Wynn-davies
via Daily Mail

["Your Copyeditor Is Out to Shame You \(and Other Editing Myths\)"](#)
by The Lacek Group
Via Thinking Out Loud

["How to edit your own writing"](#) by Allison Carter
via Ragan

WRITER CORNER

Copywriter Interview with Peter Bowerman

1. How long ago did you get into copywriting and how did you get your start?

I'd always wanted to be a writer, but could never figure out how to do it without starving! About a dozen years into a sales career that preceded my writing career, I came across a book on the "commercial writing" field by one of the icons, Bob Bly. The light bulb went on, and I said, "This is how I'm going to do it!" For the next two years, I talked myself in and out of the idea about 100 times, before finally pulling the trigger in January 1994.

In the first two months, I made about 1000 phone calls, calling every graphic designer, PR firm, ad agency and marketing company in Atlanta, and inside of four months, I had more work than I could handle. And no, phone cold-calling (like I did it) isn't the only way to build a copywriting business. There's email marketing, direct-mail marketing (like postcards), and networking—the in-person type (less these days, post-COVID, but will no doubt come back); the grapevine type (reaching out to friends of friends, etc.) and platforms like LinkedIn.

2. What exactly does a copywriter do?

Well, I'll paraphrase the back cover of my book, *The Well-Fed Writer*: In the course of communicating with prospects, clients and employees, the typical corporation (from the 50-person shop to the Fortune 100 company) has to create an enormous amount of written material. The only question is whether they'll do it in-house or hire an outside contractor, and there are enough in the latter category to make it an exceptionally rich opportunity. So, we'd be those people they'd hire.

What kinds of projects do we write? Marketing brochures (of all types), newsletters, direct mail, web content, web messaging, case studies, white papers, video scripts, sales sheets, sales letters, email marketing campaigns, executive profiles, taglines, slogans, names, and dozens of other categories.

3. Can anyone be a copywriter?

If you're a good writer, and you want to make a good living writing, that's pretty much the baseline requirements. I've always said copywriting is a very democratic business. Good clients don't care about your age, race, gender, where you went to school (or even if you went to school). They only care if you can deliver the goods, on time and on budget.

But this is NOT an easy business, and it takes a lot of hard work to get established. But anything that can pay, on the low-end, \$50-60/hour, on up to \$150+/hour, IS going to take hard work.

But it's a *bona fide* opportunity. Fact: Companies of all sizes create a lot of writing, and constantly struggle to create good writing, so there's an eternal demand for people who can deliver in this arena.

4. What are some of the challenges you have faced in your line of work?

The main one is the same challenge any independent businessperson in any field faces: How to get enough business in the door to support yourself and, eventually, make a handsome living. Our business is no different. Of course, I'm assuming that anyone starting this business knows that they're a good writer, and not just because their mother told them so!

But if you do have solid writing skills (brilliance is not required, but certainly helpful), that's half the battle, though the other half of the battle is the tough one. But as I try to remind people all the time, there really is a healthy and ongoing demand for good

writing skills in the business world, and they will pay handsomely for those skills. But you have to dig for that well-paying work; you're unlikely to find it bidding on projects on an online job site.

I had no writing background, no writing training, and I'd never written anything for money. But I knew I was a good writer, and had always been drawn to the writing tasks in any job I'd held. But, while I had little professional writing experience, my sales background helped me a lot. I wasn't afraid to pick up the phone and call strangers, and when I did land a project, I understood how to "write to sell."

Now, if you're reading this, don't decide, "well, I don't have that sales background, so I'm doomed out of the gate." Wrong. MOST people in our field who've built successful practices don't have that background, yet they still have done just fine.

5. And how about the benefits?

The benefits are many. Once established, you get to enjoy a lifestyle most would kill for. You work on your schedule, take days off/vacation when YOU want, and make good money in the process. But, like anything that can deliver goodies like that, there comes a lot of responsibility to do the consistent marketing necessary to keep the business flowing.

Plus, I get an enormous amount of satisfaction from my work, from essentially taking the proverbial lump of clay and turning it into polished finished product. Not saying you will get all your creative fulfillment from writing marketing copy, but you might be surprised at how much you do. I know, you just want to sit at home in your sweats on the sofa, writing poetry and make \$100K a year. Take a number.. ;)

6. What is one of your most memorable experiences as a copywriter?

Early in my career, I was tapped by a multimedia producer for a very cool project. The Korean War Veterans Memorial was being built in D.C., and they were creating a commemorative CD-ROM (remember those?) to sell to visitors and the general public. I was hired to write the script for the CD. My sources were history books, and I had to spin a compelling story, and once the script was done, others took over and found photos and video footage in the National Archives to match my words. To see the final product was very cool.

7. Please share some things you have learned working in copywriting.

I already knew about sales and marketing, but being steeped in it further, as a copywriter, for 28 years now (on top of my prior 15 years IN sales), has helped me further internalize some fundamental sales and marketing principles, allowing me to serve my clients that much better.

I've learned about countless types of businesses across countless industries: financial services, education, real estate, high-tech, manufacturing, healthcare, hospitality, and so many more. And in the process, I've learned more about business in general, and the inner workings of many businesses and industries in particular.

As a result, I say I have a much broader and more informed worldview than someone who hasn't had a similar set of experiences.

8. What books do you recommend for anyone interested in learning more about the kind of work you do?

Well, at the risk of a self-serving suggestion... ;) I have written four multiple-award-winning books [in *The Well-Fed Writer* series](#): detailed how-to guides to starting your own copywriting (i.e., commercial freelancing) practice, including the most recent edition (2021) of the book.

I say it's an excellent primer on the subject that will give you an expansive "lay of the land" of our field, providing you with step-by-step, how-to instruction on every step to building a profitable practice.

Two books that got me started many years ago (as noted in my answer to question #1) were Bob Bly's *Secrets of a Freelance Writer* (which opened my eyes to the commercial writing field), and his how-to guide, *The Copywriter's Handbook*. Both excellent resources.

9. What's your advice for anyone thinking of trying their hand at copywriting?

If your goal is making money (and whose isn't?), there are few fields that can pay what copywriting (a.k.a. commercial writing, or marketing copywriting) does. Just don't spin your wheels. Meaning, some writing arenas have become "commoditized" (i.e., blog posts and articles), where countless writers have the requisite skills to write them. As such, rates have plummeted. You have to be able to do writing that NOT everyone else can do if you want to make money.

For instance, if you're able to specialize in a particular industry by virtue of plenty of career experience, training or education, that's a good example of being able to write well about a subject that few people can.

My mantra to those starting out is, "Leverage what you know." Say, 10 years in financial services or 20 in high-tech, for example, can go a long way to instilling confidence in a prospect in that industry, even if you don't have a huge portfolio of writing work.

The great thing about our field is that you can leverage virtually ANY background into a commercial writing practice. If you've gotten to a point, professionally, where you want more freedom and more control over your lifestyle and schedule, and don't mind

writing about an industry where you have a lot of experience, this field can be a great vehicle for doing just that.

Just as importantly, read plenty of books about marketing, and start the process of building a portfolio of samples. And enjoy the journey!

ABOUT PETER BOWERMAN:

Since 2000, through his books, courses and coaching, Peter Bowerman has been helping freelance writers and self-publishing authors separate the words “starving” and “writer,” and make a GOOD living from their words.

A 28-year veteran marketing copywriter, popular speaker and coach for writers and authors (since 2002), he is the self-published author of the four multiple-award-winning *Well-Fed Writer* titles (www.wellfedwriter.com), how-to “standards” on lucrative “commercial” freelance writing. His popular self-paced course, *Well-Fed Craft*, shows how to actually write the most commonly encountered commercial-writing projects. (www.wellfedcraft.com).

He chronicled his self-publishing success (100,000+ copies of his books/ebooks in circulation and a full-time living for 10+ years) in the 2007 release (and its 2014 update—both multiple-award-winners): **The Well-Fed Self-Publisher: How to Turn One Book into a Full-Time Living**. www.wellfedsp.com.

In 2010, he launched the *Title Tailor*, providing publishers and self-publishing authors with help in creating book titles and back-cover copy (www.titletailor.com).

News for Writers

["He's heading to nationals, bringing poems to life through sign language"](#) by Steven Tonthat
via Oregon Public Broadcasting

["Writing in the Language of Horse People"](#) by Judith Tarr
via Tor

["Tips For Writing Unique Meta Titles At Enterprise Scale"](#) by Ludwig Makhyan
via Search Engine Journal

["The Art of Writing"](#) by A.J. Lees FRCP, FRCPEd, FMedsci
via Psychology Today

["Lila struggled to write, then a teacher discovered why and unlocked her creativity"](#) by Laura Kwerel
via NPR

["Is the Freelancer Market Saturated After the Pandemic?"](#)
via nDash

["Thomas J Powell- 13 Tips for Writing Better Web Content"](#) by Anna Duke
via TechBullion

["Before I was a novelist, audiobooks taught me how to tell a story"](#) by Lizz Huerta
via The Washington Post

["Writing poetry helped me realise I didn't have to conform to gender norms"](#) by Patrick Kelleher
via PinkNews

["Digital journalism is the future, and I'm embracing it"](#) by Kelsey Harrell

via The Daily Iowan

["The Future of the Content Writing Industry"](#) by Bhavik Sarkhed
via Entrepreneur

["9 Steps When Critiquing Another Writer's Work"](#) by Leon Lazarus
via San Diego Writers and Editors Guild

["10-year-old's first poetry collection"](#)
via DAWN

["You'll want to vomit, cry, die or sleep forever: what happens when you finish writing your book"](#) by Brigid Delaney
via The Guardian

["The vehicle for my feelings': how sign language helped a deaf author find her voice"](#) by Sara Nović
via The Guardian

["3 Common Reasons Why Freelancers Get Sued – It Happened To Me!"](#) by Emily Thompson
via WritersWeekly

["Writing from dreams"](#) by M.J. Cody
via Coast Weekend

"Writing Short Stories For Money: 27 Best Sites That Pay" by
Chris Panteli
via Life Upswing
<https://www.lifeupswing.com/writing-short-stories-for-money/>

["Minneapolis to pay \\$600K to journalist blinded in one eye by police projectile after George Floyd's death"](#) by Faiza Mahamud
via Star Tribune

["Afghan journalist Ali Akbar Khairkhah disappears in Kabul, Taliban cracks down on women reporters"](#)
via Committee to Protect Journalists

["What Skills Do Freelance Journalists Need in 2022?"](#)

via Foreign Press Correspondents USA

["Christopher Nolan's 20 Tips for Writing Screenplays"](#) by Jason
Hellerman

via No Film School

["Top Five Grammar Apps to Help You Improve Your Writing"](#)

via TechGuide

["Why I Quit Writing Screenplays and Wrote a Novel"](#) by P. David
Ebersole

via Crime Reads

FEATURE ARTICLE

Editing is a Lot More Than Just Correcting Grammar and Punctuation

By Dawn Colclasure

When it comes to editing, I'm old school. I don't use any kind of software or websites to edit books or articles. I use my good, old fashioned eyeballs to scan documents I edit. I use books to refer to, of course, as well as websites such as Grammar Girl, Grammarly and the Purdue Online Writing Lab.

But when I edit, I am not just looking for typos. I am not checking how sentences are constructed, if there should be a quote mark where an apostrophe is at, or if the word "principle" was used when the writer meant "principal."

There are other things I do when I edit material, including my own material. Doing these tasks myself may mean the editing

process will take longer and it may mean more work on the writer's part, but I just don't feel right giving a manuscript a quick scan using some computer program then calling it "edited." There are other factors that need to be taken in consideration when I perform edits.

Links. If the manuscript contains links, I need to make sure the full link is there. I once made the mistake of listing my website as dawnsbooks.com at a website requesting my URL, when it should have been <https://dawnsbooks.com/> Right after I typed that, it became a highlighted link. During the production stage, I will insert the link into the proper word(s) to make that word or words a hyperlink, but during the writing stage, I have to include the FULL link. Not only this, but I have to make sure that all links are still good. If a link is dead or inactive, it has to go.

Fact Checking. I write a lot of nonfiction, and I need to make sure I get my information right. Not only this, but I also need to make sure that the information is coming from a legitimate source. I always try to find more than one source for a claim, because this not only helps validate said claim but it lets the reader know that there are a majority of authoritative figures making such a claim. I also check dates, locations, spelling of names and time periods. If I say that a certain item existed during a point in time, I need to look this up to make sure this is true!

Sources. I was recently told some interesting medical information. Skeptical, I asked this person, "Who is your source?" I used to work in journalism so I was trained to always question everything. If someone makes a claim, look it up to see if it's true. One thing I have noticed is that Facebook has become a hotbed of misinformation. I am often looking up claims made on Facebook to see if there is an authoritative source behind it. And that's the thing: You need to make sure your source is authoritative. I have been told that Wikipedia is not a good source, since anyone can put anything on there, so I try to find a GOOD source to support or validate a claim or argument. Books

are good sources, too – but make sure they are written by an authoritative person! Again, anyone can write, and publish, a book. Question everything! Additionally, don't neglect including sources for your work. If you did research for the information in the manuscript, include that information!

Organization and Story Construction. Everything we write has a beginning and an ending. When I edit, I have to make sure those factors are there. If it's nonfiction, I need to make sure there is an introduction and a conclusion. If it's fiction, I need to make sure the beginning does the job beginnings in fiction are supposed to do (introduce us to characters, establish the setting, introduce a conflict, etc.) and an ending (the climax, falling action, resolution and denouement). This is usually referred to as "developmental editing" and, as you can see, my kind of editing usually embraces all forms of editing: Line by line, developmental, copyediting and proofreading. Of course, fiction and nonfiction can be written in a variety of ways, but these structures of plot are essential in telling a whole story, as well as organizing your nonfiction material in a way that is easier for readers to understand.

The Big Picture. Finally, with editing, I try to see if the entire manuscript as a whole contains everything that needs to be there. If a claim is made, does the author support this claim with research and interviews? If the piece is meant to be a fantasy story, are elements of the fantasy genre actually in the story? If a poem is meant to be about an event, does the entire poem focus on that event? Basically, I am making sure that the piece accomplishes its promise to the reader (this promise is usually made in the title of the piece and/or the book's blurb). I also check to see if there is any new information that should be included or if there's any unanswered questions that leaves me confused. If I am not clear in my writing, then the reading experience will not be clear for the reader. Clarity is so important in what we read. If a reader becomes confused about something in the book, it's not like they can phone the author to ask what they meant.

In summary, writers need to get things right, but of course we writers may end up missing those things, no matter how many times we read and reread our work. We need to be tenacious in our edits and ensure we cover the above elements in order to avoid problems for our readers. We writers try to do the best we can when we write our material, and we can only go so far with edits.

I never trust myself to self-edit my work; it always helps to have another editor look it over before publication. But if the editing process is done well and does indeed include those five elements, then at least we are trying to put in our best effort to get good writing out there.

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Thanks for Reading! See you next month.

SPARREW ISSUE SIX

Welcome to the SPARREW Newsletter!

The newsletter for Self-Publishers, Authors, Readers, Reviewers, Editors and Writers!

Welcome to the latest issue of the newsletter! This newsletter is just for writers, book reviewers, booklovers, self-publishers, editors and authors. So glad to have you on board!

I had to make a difficult decision this month. And by difficult, I mean, deciding whether or not I wanted to learn something new.

After I had learned how to self-publish both a print and electronic book on KDP, I figured I was all set. I was at the end of my journey in learning how to use a major bookseller's self-publishing service.

That wasn't exactly true.

One thing I disliked about self-publishing an ebook through KDP was its rule about how I could not have my ebook available anywhere else. If it was published through Amazon, it could only be on Amazon. I seriously disliked that rule because one thing authors rely on to get their books in front of more readers is broader distribution. We want our books to be EVERYWHERE. As for an ebook, I could not have the ebooks I published through KDP on other sites such as Smashwords, Kobo, Apple Books or even Google Books. Just on Amazon. This despite one of my publishers ensuring that my books they published were, indeed, everywhere.

However, I knew I could no longer use KDP to self-pub ebooks. After learning that Amazon refused to remove books promoting hateful and harmful speech against the LGBTQ+ community (see news below), I knew I would not feel right to continue to use their self-publishing service. As the parent of kids who belong to the LGBTQ+ community, I knew I had to take a stand. I could not, in good conscience, continue to patronize their service if they continued to sell books which attacked members of the LGBTQ+ community. In fact, I discussed this with my oldest, and he assured me that it was the right decision to make.

So, after a bit of research and talking with someone familiar with other self-publishing services, I decided to go with Smashwords for self-publishing ebooks. I braced myself, predicting that the learning process would bring the same kind of hair-pulling, crying, begging for mercy, tears of frustration and agonized cries of disappointment that I went through when I first learned how to use KDP to self-publish. (Not only this, but the process took HOURS to get everything formatted correctly and uploaded! I'd lose a whole day with just one ebook.)

But, actually, the process of self-publishing an ebook on Smashwords was not so painful after all. Sure, I had some formatting goofs, but once I figured it out, I could easily fix them and correct the uploaded book then and there. It helped that they offer a free style guide for self-publishers.

The whole thing went down in just one day and it was actually quite painless.

The best part? I learned that by self-publishing my ebook on Smashwords, I had greater distribution of the ebook.

By publishing an ebook through Smashwords, I learned that not only will it be available on the Smashwords site, but also through other online ebook retailers such as Apple Books, Kobo and Scribd.

Wow, that's awesome!

And, it turns out, this was not as hard of a decision to make after all.

The remaining free ebooks I am writing and publishing this year will now be self-published through Smashwords. Additionally, there's a chance I'll be doing free ebooks next year as well. I already have a bunch of ideas for them. And the prospect of having more ebooks to write is exciting.

I am very excited about this issue! You'll get to meet author Gloria Oliver. Long ago, I submitted a manuscript to a small press. They accepted the book and I joined their network. During that time, I got to meet some fabulous authors, and Gloria Oliver was one of them. Sadly, things did not work out with that publisher, and we parted ways on good terms. However, I stayed connected with the authors I met through them, and I am excited to share the news about Gloria's latest book!

I was also fortunate to land an interview with the VERY busy yet VERY prolific self-publisher, Peter Bowerman. I first learned about Peter's work with *The Well-Fed Writer*, but he wasn't done trying his hand at new things! He jumped into self-publishing, and since I was interested in taking that route myself, I naturally checked out his book, *The Well-Fed Self-Publisher*. Check out the interview with Peter to learn all about how he has found success in self-publishing!

For the editing section of this newsletter, I had the opportunity to interview Carol Narigon. I have known Carol for years and included her in one of my WIPs. Recently, she mentioned she worked as a corporate editor, and that got my attention. Corporate editing? What's that all about? Thankfully, she agreed to be interviewed for this newsletter, sharing her experience and the kind of work she does. Check the interview out!

Finally, you get to read an interview with the very lovely and very talented ghostwriter, Jenna Glatzer. I met Jenna through the message board for writers, Absolute Write, and at that time, she was still working as a freelancer in addition to building her career as an author. Then I noticed she started ghostwriting books! (Is there no end to her amazing skills as a writer? I think not!) So I was very excited to land an interview with Jenna for this newsletter. Check out our Q&A to learn all about her work as a ghostwriter!

This issue's feature article discusses a topic that not many writers like to bring up: All of the sitting down we do just to get the writing done! All of that constant sitting for hours on end can lead to serious health problems, and my article shares strategies to still enjoy your passion for writing while at the same time preventing the negative side effects of all of that sedentary time spent at the desk or table.

Also, guess what? We now have an archive! Yay!

Check out archived issues of the SPARREW Newsletter here:
<https://sparrewarchives.blogspot.com/>

All current issues will be posted on my website here:
<https://www.dmcwriter.com/the-sparrew-newsletter>

Meanwhile, please check out my latest post:

Dawn Colclasure's Blog:
["Better Mental Health the Natural Way – New Ebook Offers Tips on 10 Ways to Improve Your Mental Health"](#)

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I welcome submissions from subscribers!

Are you a booklover who wants to have your book blog featured?

Are you a writer with news?
Are you an author looking for reviewers of your latest book?
Are you a book reviewer whose review just went live?
Are you a self-publisher with a new release?
Are you an editor who wants to share your thoughts on editing,
complete with a bio advertising your business?

Please feel free to submit any of these notes to me at
DMCWriter@gmail.com for the next issue of the newsletter!

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SELF-PUBLISHING CORNER

Self-Publisher Interview with Peter Bowerman

I am familiar with your experiences as a self-publisher and I have read your book on self-publishing, *The Well-Fed Self-Publisher*. I have been hoping to chat with you about self-publishing, but first, I think it might be helpful to go over your background as a writer. So, what can you tell me about your experience as a writer?

I started as a commercial freelance writer in 1994 and, within a few years, began thinking about doing workshops and seminars. So, I started collecting information about how I did what I did in my daily job and, after a few years of collecting notes, I saw I had 80-90 pages of material, and realized it was enough to write a book. I tried to find a publisher initially, but soon decided to do it myself. I came from a sales and marketing background, so I felt comfortable with the marketing side of things.

What has your experience as a self-publisher been like? I mean, did you have trouble learning the ropes? How did you find the right printer? That sort of thing.

Well, it was definitely a learning process, but I kept things simple and I focused on one step at a time. I researched several printers, and wanted to find someone who could print my book as well as handle the logistics of shipping and fulfillment. All in all, it's been a great experience. One of the unpleasant things that many authors who go the traditional publishing route discover is that they still have to do most of their own marketing. With self-publishing, you know that going in. Yes, you have to do all the production stuff yourself, but that's just a matter of finding good professional resources like cover designers, editors, interior layout designers, indexers and, yes, obviously printers.

I think your experience in copywriting may have helped you develop the skills to market your book. Aside from the marketing side of self-publishing, though, there's been an ongoing negative stigma attached to self-publishing in general. A lot of negative press about self-published books is out there. How do you respond to the negative stigma attached to self-publishing and self-published books?

Honestly, I don't think about it or care about it, mainly because very few people realize my books are self-published. And whenever I'm asked the question, I say, "Last I checked, you didn't have to put some big neon sticker on your book that says 'Self-published!'" I've been approached over the years by four traditional publishers asking whether I'd be interested in going the traditional route, so, obviously, they saw the quality in my books. Frankly, self-publishing has become far more acceptable these days, and as it has, whole industries catering to self-publishers have sprung up. So, the perception is definitely changing.

Wow, I never knew you were approached by traditional publishers about your books. I have come across this happening with many other self-published authors. Did they offer you a contract? What did you tell them?

We never got to the contract stage. I always just thanked them for reaching out to me but let them know that I was doing far better financially on my own than I ever could going with them. It's always flattering to be approached by those in the industry, so I appreciated it for that alone.

Your books have definitely done well as self-published titles. I'm sure you have had quite a few experiences as a self-publisher. What is one very important lesson you have learned as a self-publisher? What do you know now about self-publishing that you wish you knew at the beginning?

Probably one of the biggest lessons is that you CAN create a product equal to or better than anything a traditional publisher could. It's all about hiring quality resources, which isn't very difficult to do. Yes, it'll cost you money, but you'll only have to go through that initial production process once.

Do you feel that the money issue should not be an issue at all? That money spent on the production of a quality book is an investment worth making?

Absolutely. If your goal is (as mine was) to have a commercially successful book, then money spent on good cover design, good editing, good interior layout design is money well spent. I see a lot of people that try to cut corners on those things and it shows. People recognize that. That's exactly the sort of thing that perpetuates the stereotype of low-quality self-publishing.

I completely agree. There are complaints from self-published authors about the production cost for a book, but I really feel it's important to put in your best effort in publishing a book. Let's talk a minute about the marketing aspect, which seems to be another complaint I have come across a time or two. A lot of authors of self-published books have reservations about promoting and marketing their book. Some even feel that it is a form of vanity or self-importance. What is your opinion about this?

Being a self-publisher is no time to be modest. You really need to get past that mindset if you even hope to have success as an author. Not to sound harsh, but if you truly are hesitant to promote yourself and your books, then don't waste your time and money trying to get self-published. Even for authors comfortable promoting their books, there's no guarantee your books will succeed. If you *are* hesitant to promote those books, they're almost guaranteed to fail.

I agree. Marketing books is so important for a self-published author because they are the publisher and it's basically up to them to promote their books. And speaking of promoting books, how do you promote your books and what form of book promotion has worked the best for you?

Well, that could be a very long answer, to say the least. My main promotional strategy was an online strategy. I reached out to hundreds of online publications, websites, and other entities whose audiences I'd determined were markets for my book (writer, at-home-Moms, home-based-business seekers, etc.). I asked them if I could send them the book to review, do an interview with me, let me write an article for their site, do a book giveaway, or some combination of any or all of the above. I was choosing those entities very specifically, because their members would have an interest in my books versus mainstream media, which, by definition, is geared to a far more general audience. I got a very good reception from them, and by doing that 400-500 times over a number of years, I was able to land a lot of promotion and exposure for my work.

That's awesome. Did those efforts bring in book sales?

Absolutely. They did, over time. I have sold well over 100,000 copies of my books and ebooks. But, when I first released the original edition of *The Well-Fed Writer*, it did very, very well. My first print run was 5,000 copies and I think I went through that in the first three or four months after releasing the book. It didn't

hurt that my book was picked up as an alternate selection of *Book-of-the-Month Club* shortly after its release. That's an accolade that I promoted the heck out of and it gave me some pretty strong bragging rights.

That's amazing. Congratulations on all of your success. Does your approach to book promotion differ from the norm?

Absolutely. Most books recommend focusing on mainstream media (MM) – sending out massive numbers of press releases to journalists, in an attempt to catch their attention on the right day and when they're in the right mood. Well, MM is fickle and jaded, and, well...mainstream.

Meaning that if you have a "niche" book, like my first two are (i.e., on freelance writing, as opposed to a hot mainstream subject like relationships, health, dieting, financial security, religion, politics, etc.), the MM really don't care about you. It's that simple. Sure, I could beat my head against the wall repeatedly, and I'm sure I'd generate some interest, but it wouldn't been enough to justify the effort.

Don't you have to be a marketing "natural" in order to successfully self-publish?

Absolutely, positively, not. Yes, developing a marketing mindset is crucial for success as a self-publisher. But, it's just not difficult to do so (I devote an entire chapter in *The Well-Fed Self-Publisher* specifically to getting one's mind right – marketing-wise). Success as a self-publisher is far more about a process than an aptitude, far more about a bunch of things you have to *do* than some way you have to *be*.

A lot of creative types walk around telling anyone who'll listen that, "Oh, I'm no good at marketing" or "There's no way I could ever be a salesman," when the fact is, they don't understand what marketing and sales are, and what they think they are (i.e.,

being pushy or high-pressure), they're not. If you're committed to that point of view, and refuse to be persuaded that you TOO can be a successful marketer, then, there's nothing I or anyone else can do. If however, you're more committed to being successful with your book, maybe you'll investigate it a bit further. I hope so, because it's quite doable...

What are some other important things you have learned as a self-publisher?

When I first saw the question, I sort of smiled, because the first thing that popped into my head was that self-publishing cured my perfectionism. As an old adage reminds, *Perfect is the enemy of good*. You have so much to get done as a self-publisher, you can't be a perfectionist on everything, or you'll never get anything done!

Haha. I can so relate to that. Sometimes I have to recheck everything and hit "publish" or "update" several times but then I have to grab hold of myself and say "it's fine!" and just let the book get out there already. So I totally understand that. But I'm curious about your feelings regarding self-publishing today compared to self-publishing in the past. I mean, in the past, there was a lot of negative talk about self-publishing and aspiring authors were being told to steer clear of it. That has changed nowadays and I'm seeing a lot of authors find success in self-publishing. Having said that, do you feel that self-publishing should be a more acceptable form of getting published these days compared to how it was seen as a "last resort" in the past?

I definitely feel that self-publishing is and should be a *bona fide* first option for authors. And that's almost besides the point. Here's the reality: Overwhelmingly, most authors won't be able to land a traditional publisher, so self-publishing will be their only option.

That is a good way of looking at it. Plus, there's the fact that some books will be stuck with a traditional publisher for a year or more before seeing print.

Yes. One of the biggest advantages to self-publishing is that you can bring a book to print far faster—6 to 9 months—than you would if you went the traditional route—often 18-24 months. And that 6-9 months is from the time my book is finished, not even counting editing.

That's awesome. Self-publishing can really make the process go faster, if it's done well. Looking back on your self-publishing journey, what do you consider to be the keys to your success that'd you'd want to share with aspiring self-publishers?

FYI: My books are non-fiction, and specifically, non-fiction “how-to,” so that’s the only genre I can speak about authoritatively. Fiction is a different ballgame, though many fiction authors have applied my strategies with good success.

However you choose to publish, the first crucial step is to come up with a topic that’s marketable. Using my books as an example, I knew there was a market for a book (*The Well-Fed Writer*, a complete blueprint on starting your own high-dollar “commercial” writing business, vs. most “freelance writing” avenues, where starving is the norm.

Ditto with *The Well-Fed Self-Publisher*, offering a complete blueprint for profitable self-publishing. Not just telling you how, logistically, to self-publish, but (as my subtitle promises), how to turn one book into a full-time living. If there are already 20 books on your subject, does the world need a 21st and if so, what makes yours better in ways that’ll mean something to a buyer?

Just as crucially, is this: **Write a Really Good Book**. People laugh when I say that, because they’re thinking, “Well, of course,” but it’s certainly not the reality of MOST books! I say it’s THE #1

most important marketing strategy any self-publisher can employ. Write a really good book, one that's better than it has to be—well-written, well-produced, topical, comprehensive, useful – and you'll make your ongoing marketing infinitely easier. Why? Because you'll have precious and powerful word-of-mouth advertising going for you.

For many writers, the biggest challenge will be "MARKETING," which can terrorize creative types. Having come from that background, I've been able, in my books, to demystify those often-scary concepts so they'll work for you, not against you.

I have one last question for you. How do you feel that self-publishing their books has helped many unknown authors finally get the recognition their books deserve?

Well, I hope this doesn't sound too harsh, and I'm smiling as I say it, the good news of self-publishing trend is, yes, it's definitely helped a lot of unknown authors get recognized. And that's great. At the same time, because there are no longer any barriers to being "published"—especially given the low-investment POD (print-on-demand) options—it's encouraged those with mediocre books to publish without having any sense of how to create a quality product—writing-wise, editing-wise or production-wise. That, in turn, unfortunately, can perpetuate the stereotype of self-published books as being amateur productions. Another way of saying that is that the stigma of self-publishing, sadly, is often well-deserved. But the way I do it, as outlined in my book, you can create a product that is indistinguishable from one that comes out of a traditional publishing house.

I agree that is important. Thank you for sharing your insights with me. Please feel free to share any last thoughts you want to add.

Well, thank you, Dawn, for reaching out and giving me an opportunity to share a few ideas. I'm been a happy self-publisher and, given how far the industry has come in the last 20 years,

and all the cost-effective services and support available, it's an exceptionally viable path for authors.

About Peter Bowerman:

Peter Bowerman, a veteran commercial writer, is the self-published author of the four multiple-award-winning Well-Fed Writer titles (www.wellfedwriter.com), how-to "standards" on lucrative "commercial" freelancing – writing for businesses for \$50-125+ an hour (his chosen profession since 1993).

He chronicled his self-publishing success (~100,000 copies of his books/ebooks in circulation and a full-time living for 10+ years) in the award-winning 2007 release, and its 2014 update, *The Well-Fed Self-Publisher: How to Turn One Book into a Full-Time Living*, and its newly released updated edition.

www.wellfedsp.com. In 2010, he launched The Title Tailor, his book-titling specialty (<https://titletailor.com/>).

New Releases

Do you feel like there is just too much chaos to get through your day? Does it feel like you have no way out of an oversensitized environment? This ebook shares tips and tricks to help you destress and find a sense of inner peace. Every single day, we are exposed to things that can tear us down. From depressing and horrific events, scary news stories, doomscrolling on social media and dealing with unpleasant and even violent people, our mental health takes a lot of abuse as we try to make it through yet another day. In *10 Ways to Boost Your Mental Health*, you'll find 10 easy, free and rejuvenating activities you can do to help you feel just a little bit better despite all of the bad things in life. We can't make the negative things we are exposed to go away, but we CAN do things to protect our mental health and try to keep our sanity in this chaotic world.

Check out *10 Ways to Boost Your Mental Health* to get some helpful tips for better mental health!
It's available for free through Smashwords [here](#)

Coming Soon!

Take some time to reflect and renew your faith with Christian poetry. *Meditating Heart* shares poems of devotion, faith and guidance to God and how turning to the Lord can help in troubled times.

News in Self-Publishing

["NJ high school student used pandemic lockdown time to pen four historical fiction books"](#) by Philip DeVencentis
via NorthJersey.com

["How To Sabotage Your Self-Published Book \(in five easy steps\)"](#)
by Paul Goat Allen
via BookBaby

["Self-publishing trend surges amid pandemic demand for new literature"](#) by Rodaina Ibrahim
via Capital Current

["No one would publish my novel, and now it's up for the Miles Franklin"](#) by Michael Winkler
via The Sydney Morning Herald

AUTHOR CORNER

Author Interview with Gloria Oliver

When did you start writing?

I started dipping my toes into writing in my teens. Back then, I had a hard time falling asleep, so I would make up stories in my head to entertain myself until I got sleepy. I liked one of them so much that I wrote it down. Not long after, I realized I enjoyed doing it and got an idea for a novel. After that, I was hooked. (Writing can be an addiction!) :P

What was your journey towards becoming an author like?

It was convoluted? Lol. If there was a wrong way to do things, that's the direction I went. D'oh!

After finishing my first novel in my senior year of high school, I didn't do enough research before sending the manuscript to the big publishers, so I committed many newbie mistakes. (For example: not getting the manuscript edited!) The poor thing would languish in the slush pile for a year or two, and then I'd receive a rejection letter.

But I didn't just wait while that first manuscript was away; I started another novel and kept writing. I also discovered fan fiction and joined a group of fans who loved to write. We'd swap stories and try to edit each other's works. I learned a lot from those guys!

Eventually, I got an agent to shop my second book. Unfortunately, though there were some nibbles, nothing panned out.

When I had two more manuscripts done, I heard about a brand new local fantasy and science fiction convention in Dallas called ConDFW. That's when my eyes truly opened. I realized networking was definitely worthwhile and tried to push myself (or at least eavesdropped a lot!). It's where I learned about small presses. Attending the panels and activities, I found new places to submit my work. That's when I sent sample chapters to an outfit called Zumaya Publications. They contracted two of the three manuscripts I'd sent them! From there, I attended more conventions, became a panelist, made more connections, and got more books and stories published by other small presses.

It was only after a couple of them folded and I had to find new homes for two of my titles that I republished them myself with new covers. To get more flexibility in marketing efforts for additional works and pushing my backlist with other companies, I decided I would also independently publish my first series.

But the learning never ends. The journey is constantly changing.

What can you tell me about your latest book?

June-July 2022 will see the release of **The JOY of Murder—A Daiyu Wu Mystery**. This will be my *first ever book 2!* All my other novels have been standalones. (Yes, I always seem to take the longest path to get anywhere. Lol.)

A socialite accused of murder, planted evidence, and mysterious enemies challenge blind detective Daiyu Wu in her new sleuthing adventure.

When a highly respected member of the 'Little Mexico' community is killed in 1930 Dallas, all the evidence points towards Grace Pierce, wife of a local businessman and a former member of the Ku Klux Klan. Grace's son Truman turns to Daiyu Wu and her unique detective skills for help, but Dai quickly discovers that nothing about this case is what it seems.

With her companion Jacques and canine bodyguard Prince Razor, Dai must navigate a family in turmoil, racial tensions, and shady business deals to find the actual killer before Truman's mother is sentenced to death.

You can read/download sample chapters [here](#)

I even have a [book trailer](#)!

What sort of methods do you use for book promotion?

Oh my! All manner of things! I have a [website](#), a [newsletter](#), a [blog](#), [Pinterest](#) boards, a [Facebook](#) page, [Twitter](#), and more. I also have a ton of places I can connect with others. (Too many, if truth be told. LOL.) You can find links to most of them on the website.

I also have book trailers for all my novels. The website can even read the sample chapters to you using an AI Narrator. (It sounded too cool not to do it!) Just hit the play button of the embedded player.

Lately, my efforts have been in the direction of growing my mailing list by doing book mention swaps and joining group promotions. Reader Magnets are popular, and since I write in multiple genres, I offer readers their choice of five, so they can choose the genre they prefer. You can see what's on offer here: <https://www.gloriaoliver.com/subscribe/>

Since **The JOY of Murder—A Daiyu Wu Mystery** is about to release, I will be doing a *special release celebration giveaway* for July. The grand prize is three hardcover books—**Poirot Investigates - Royal Collector's Edition**, **Black Jade—A Daiyu Wu Mystery** (Book 1), and **The JOY of Murder—A Daiyu Wu Mystery** (Book 2). There will also be a bunch of free ebooks and short stories for cozy/mystery/thriller up for grabs. Go [here](#)

Where do you get your ideas for stories?

I believe that creativity is like a muscle. The more you use it, the more it can do. So I feed it books, movies, TV shows, manga, and anime because you never know what will create a spark. And when I get one that captivates me, I follow the trail to see where it might lead.

I wrote **Vassal of El** (Fantasy) based solely on an image I saw which stuck with me and demanded I use it in one of my worlds.

Sometimes it's a topic I trip over that I want to explore—for example, the facets of truth, which is a topic I used in **Willing Sacrifice** (YA Fantasy).

In the Service of Samurai (YA Fantasy) grew from some fascinating characters my husband used in an oriental D&D campaign.

Not that everything turns into a story or novel, though. So I keep things that pop into my head in a document, so they can germinate and perhaps eventually ferment enough that I can use them, as I did with **Jewel of the Gods** (Fantasy).

The Daiyu Wu Mystery series was a more deliberate creative affair. I wanted to do a series, and I knew mysteries lend themselves to that (plus, I enjoy them!). Then I narrowed down what section of history I thought would make for a rarely covered time period, and after that, I started thinking about who would be an unusual amateur sleuth.

What are you working on right now?

I'd started an urban fantasy project before Daiyu took over. Now that book two is going to print, I want to finish that project. **The Secret Humankind** is also going to be a series. (My second one!) However, some books are easier to write than others, and this one has been a stickler. But I am stubborn. Lol. As an author, you have no choice but to be. :P

Any advice for other authors?

If writing is your passion, never give up. Do your research, don't skimp on getting your manuscript edited (whether going indie or big pub), and go to conventions! I discovered some of my absolute favorite authors at conventions and made fantastic connections and friends there.

About Gloria Oliver:

Gloria Oliver, a slave to her feline and puppy masters, lives in Texas. She is the author of ten fantasy, YA fantasy, urban fantasy, sci-fi, and cozy mystery novels. Her newest release is "The JOY of Murder - A Daiyu Wu Mystery." Book 2 of her first-ever series!

For sample chapters, free reads, and other info, please visit <http://www.gloriaoliver.com>. Want a gift? Join Gloria's newsletter at <https://www.gloriaoliver.com/subscribe>

Author News

["Marcy Dermansky on Revising Without Losing Your Mind"](#) by Marcy Dermansky
via LitHub

["Quadriplegic author publishing third book"](#) by Taylor Burke
via Alaska's News Source

["The Constellation of Possibilities: An Approach to Writing Historical Fiction"](#) by Matt Bondurant
via Crime Reads

["On Writing Unlikeable Characters"](#) by Kate Williams
via CrimeReads

REVIEWER CORNER

Other Book Reviews

["The Crystal Pond A Young Girl's Journey Through Imagination"](#)

by Alvin M. Stenzel"

via The New Book Review

[Book Review: Existential Exploration in Poetry by Gopal Lahiri](#)

via Livewire

["Review: Whips and quips in comedian Tom Segura's new book"](#)

by Donna Edwards

via AP News

["Review: Bay Area writer brings powerful new voice to Indigenous literature"](#) by Alexis Burling

via Datebook

["In 'Human Resources,' a poet finds her voice by working on artificial intelligence"](#) by Jeevika Verma

via NPR

["City on Fire: A Novel"](#) reviewed by Bob Duffy

via Washington Independent

["The Ends of Men"](#) by Rebecca Onion

via Slate

["Book Review: Jokha Alharthi's 'Bitter Orange Tree' reflects on oil and the lives of Oman's women"](#) by Radhika Holmström

via Frontline

["The historical novel 'Horse' sheds light on real-life racism"](#) by

Maggie Shipstead

via The Washington Post

Calls for Reviews

I'd love to find reviewers for my latest release, *10 Ways to Boost Your Mental Health*. Available only as an ebook. Contact me at DMCWriter@gmail.com if interested.

READER CORNER

Book Blogs

[Book Jotter](#)

[Emma Reads](#)

[Kristin Kraves Books](#)

Book News

["Amazon employees protest the sale of books they say are anti-trans"](#) by Caroline O'Donovan
via The Washington Post

["Why Writing a Book is a Better Use of Your Time Than Yet Another "Invisible" Facebook Post"](#) by Stephanie Mojica
via Entrepreneur

["When Will Novels Fix Society Already?"](#) by Lincoln Michel
via Counter Craft

["Making sense of a senseless world: How children's books can mitigate the horror around us"](#) by Helena Ku Rhee
via Salon

["NYPL is giving away 500,000 free books to New York kids and teens this summer"](#) by Devin Gannon
via 6sqft

["Judge in Maryland strikes down library e-book law"](#) by Hillel Italie
via Pique Newsmagazine

["10-Year-Old Creates Library Offering Free LGBTQ Books"](#)
via US News & World Report

["10 Poorly Written Books That People Still Love"](#) by Amber Smith
via Listverse

["Writer Tweets About Owing Money To Amazon Because Readers Are Returning Their Finished eBooks, Sparks A Debate Among Online Users"](#) by Jurgita Dominauskaitė
via Bored Panda

["Fight book bans so all teens know they are worthy of love"](#) by Karen Buley
via Seattle Times

["The book that tore publishing apart: 'Harm has been done, and now everyone's afraid'"](#) by Gaby Hinsliff
via The Guardian

["Review: Roundup of kids books that celebrate LGBTQ Pride"](#) by Susan Faust
via Datebook

"Reading Voraciously--Why It Matters to Writers" by Mary Carroll Moore
via How to Plan, Write, and Develop a Book

<https://howtoplanwriteanddevelopabook.blogspot.com/>

New from Gypsy Shadow Publishing!

Congratulations to Elizabeth Ann Scarborough on the re-release of her book, *The Healer's War*. Just in time for Memorial Day!

Winner of the 1989 Nebula Award Award for Best Novel of 1988. "A brutal and beautiful book" that follows the surreal, fantastical journey of a Vietnam War nurse (Minneapolis Star-Tribune).

A literary departure for acclaimed fantasy author Elizabeth Ann Scarborough, *The Healer's War* draws on her personal experience as an army nurse in Da Nang to create a classic novel of the Vietnam War, enriched with a magical, mystical twist.

Lt. Kitty McCulley, a young and inexperienced nurse tossed into a stressful and chaotic situation, is having a difficult time reconciling her duty to help and heal with the indifference and overt racism of some of her colleagues, and with the horrendously damaged soldiers and Vietnamese civilians she encounters during her service at the China Beach medical facilities. She is unexpectedly helped by the mysterious and inexplicable properties of an amulet, given to her by one of her patients, an elderly, dying Vietnamese holy man, which allows her to see other people's "auras" and to understand more about them as a result. This eventually leads to a strange, almost surrealistic journey through the jungle, accompanied by a one-legged boy and a battle-seasoned but crazed soldier—as McCulley struggles to find herself and a way to survive through the madness and destruction.

Word Count: 121450

Available NOW at Smashwords; Amazon and BN Links to follow as soon as they are available.

[Smashwords](#)

[Amazon](#)

[Barnes & Noble](#)

New Books

[*Raising Raffi: The First Five Years*](#)

By Keith Gessen

Category: Memoir

[*The Hotel Nantucket*](#)

by Elin Hilderbrand

Genre: Wome's Fiction

[*Cult Classic*](#)

by Sloane Crosley

Genre: Literary Fiction

[*Last Summer on State Street*](#)

by Toya Wolfe

Genre: YA

[*Nightcrawling*](#)

by Leila Mottley

Genre: Literary Fiction

[*An Immense World: How Animal Senses Reveal the Hidden Realms Around Us*](#)

by Ed Yong

Category: Science

[*Rogues: True Stories of Grifters, Killers, Rebels and Crooks*](#)

by Patrick Radden Keefe

Category: Biography & Memoir

[Under the Skin: The Hidden Toll of Racism on American Lives and on the Health of Our Nation](#)

by Linda Villarosa

Category: Health & Fitness

[Tree Thieves: Crime and Survival in North America's Woods](#)

by Lyndsie Bourgon

Category: Nature

[Who Is Wellness For?: An Examination of Wellness Culture and Who It Leaves Behind](#)

by Fariha Roisin

Category: Health

[This Wicked Fate](#) (This Poison Heart #2)

by Kalynn Bayron

Genre: YA

[This Vicious Grace](#) (The Last Finestra #1)

by Emily Thiede

Genre: YA

[Forging Silver into Stars](#) (Forging Silver into Stars #1)

by Brigid Kemmerer

Genre: YA

[Our Crooked Hearts](#)

by Melissa Albert

Genre: YA

[Hell Followed with Us](#)

by Andrew Joseph White

Genre: YA

[The Divorce Colony: How Women Revolutionized Marriage and Found Freedom on the American Frontier](#)

by April White

Category: History

[Rickey: The Life and Legend of an American Original](#)

by Howard Bryant

Category: Biography/Sports

[The Rise and Reign of the Mammals: A New History, from the Shadow of the Dinosaurs to Us \(The Rise and Fall\)](#)

by Steve Brusatte

Category: Science

[The Facemaker: A Visionary Surgeon's Battle to Mend the Disfigured Soldiers of World War I](#)

by Lindsey Fitzharris

Category: Biography & Memoir

[We Refuse to Forget: A True Story of Black Creeks, American Identity, and Power](#)

by Caleb Gayle

Category: Native American History

[Crying in the Bathroom: A Memoir](#)

by Erika L. Sánchez

Category: Biography & Memoir

[Riding the Lightning](#)

[A Year in the Life of a New York City Paramedic](#)

By Anthony Almojera

Category: Biography & Memoir

[Radical Love: Learning to Accept Yourself and Others](#)

by Zachary Levi

Category: Biography & Memoir

[Boys and Oil: Growing Up Gay in a Fractured Land](#)

by Taylor Brorby

Category: Biography & Memoir

[Rough Draft: A Memoir](#)

by Katy Tur

Category: Biography & Memoir

[The House Across the Lake](#)

by Riley Sager

Genre: Suspense & Thriller

[More Than You'll Ever Know](#)

by Katie Gutierrez

Genre: Thriller/Suspense

[Counterfeit](#)

by Kirstin Chen

Genre: Crime/Thriller

[A Botanist's Guide to Parties and Poisons](#)

by Kate Khavari

Genre: Mystery & Suspense

[Fake It Till You Bake It](#)

by Jamie Wesley

Genre: Romance

EDITOR CORNER

Editor Interview with Carol Narigon

How did you become an editor?

Way back in the day I was active on the homeschool boards on AOL, in particular Home Education Magazine. As online communication became more popular, the editors decided to offer homeschoolers a free email newsletter. I was already helping them manage their message boards, so when they asked for

someone to start that newsletter and write/edit it, I applied and they gave me the job. Later when they asked for an articles editor, I applied for that job as well. I also pitched them an advice column, which I wrote for 8 or 9 years. Those were my first professional editing jobs.

What kind of editing do you do? And will you work with a client who asks for the kind of editing you don't normally provide?

I work for a data conversion company as their corporate editor. I deeply edit documents that go out to customers and potential customers, such as proposals, transmittal letters, delivery letters, white papers, meeting minutes, meeting slide sets, training slides. I create PowerPoint slide sets for internal purposes like training and staff meetings. I also write and create the monthly company newsletter. Anything a writer or editor can do, I do it. I'm even learning how to design a website so I can take that over.

I do not work with clients often. They usually just see the end result of my product. Even when I take meeting minutes, I don't engage in the meeting.

What editing tools do you feel are the most helpful?

I use MS Word and PowerPoint almost exclusively. I sometimes use Excel, but I'm not proficient in Excel like I am in the other two. Some of the specific tools I use in Word to make my work more efficient are Styles, templates, read aloud, quick parts, and fillable forms. If I need to design a document with lots of graphics, I will use PowerPoint and turn it into a PDF.

What are the most common mistakes you see?

Nothing unusual. Not using Styles in Word. Using bullets improperly. (Bullets are a list. One bullet is not a list.) Periods and commas inside quotation marks. Underlining or using

quotation marks to highlight words. Writing that is too technical and not accessible for the intended audience. The kinds of things that keep me employed.

Which books do you feel are helpful to writers who want to write better?

One of my favorite writing books is Stephen King's *On Writing*. Otherwise I rarely read writing books these days. If I have time outside of work to either read a book on writing or write something, I prioritize writing over reading about it. The best way to learn to write is to do it and to perfect it. To use the spelling and grammar tools that are available and to get advice from a seasoned editor if necessary. I did read a lot of writing books earlier in my career, but so many more good ones are out there today I would go with something more current.

How do you handle a situation where a client often questions or argues your edits done on their work?

I would be more likely to hear an argument from a co-worker. I don't mind sending a source from the internet if I have to. However, the president of the company has made it clear that I'm the expert on writing and editing so the authority for that kind of thing is usually weighed in my favor. Sometimes I do have to give in to a client who wants to use a particular template for meeting slides or minutes that I know is horrible. In that case, I just suck it up and make our contribution to the template the best it can be. Some battles cannot be won.

That said, please describe your ideal client.

Like I said, I don't really work with clients any more. Obviously I prefer a client or co-worker who trusts me to do my job and who respects my experience and my position in the company. I'm fortunate that my co-workers do value my contributions and appreciate that my corrections and input make their product better and more professional.

What should a client expect when working with you as their editor?

I try to be gentle, but I am thorough and I will make a document bleed with my red pen. When I did freelance work, one thing clients knew they would get was honesty. If I'm getting paid for my experience and my opinion I will be as authentic as possible. I have warned potential clients that I will tell a person if their butt looks big in a pair of pants, so to expect that I will be honest about their writing and their potential for publication if that is part of the equation.

What do you do in the event that you feel the client's work needs more in-depth editing than what they have asked for?

If I thought a client needed someone with different skills from mine or with more experience than I have, I would try to recommend someone else if I could. Otherwise, I would turn the job down. If I thought I could learn the skill, I would tell the customer I needed to brush up on that skill and do it in my own time.

Do you negotiate your rates?

I don't need to now, but I rarely did when I was doing freelance work. I know my worth and my skills were worth at least what I charged. I make people look good.

About Carol Narigon:

Carol Narigon has been the corporate editor and QA specialist for Pentecom, LLC for about a year and a half now. Before that, she taught various types of writing from composition/research writing to technical/business writing for engineers to creative writing. She has also worked as a contract editor for an airline support

corporation and done various freelance jobs for people who were writing memoirs or other longer forms. And before that she was the articles editor and advice columnist for *Home Education Magazine*.

Carolyn's Tricky Edits Column:

Tricky Edits from Carolyn Howard-Johnson

Excerpt from 3rd Edition of *The Frugal Editor*

@frugalbookpromo

Grammar Tip. We often use the word *quote* when we write book proposals and query letters. Trouble is, we rarely stop to consider *quotation* and so we get it wrong. They are not interchangeable. *Quote* is a verb which means to repeat the words of a writer or speaker. Think of it as the infinitive *to quote*. Thus, we are quoting someone when we include a blurb or endorsement in our query letter. But when we write down *what* that person says, it becomes a noun, a *quotation*.

ABOUT CAROLYN:

Once a month Carolyn Howard-Johnson shares a tricky edit excerpted from her *The Frugal Editor*, the second multi award-winning book in her *HowToDoItFrugally* Series of books for writers. Find it on Amazon in paper or as an e-book at bit.ly/FrugalEditor or learn more at her website, <https://HowToDoItFrugally.com>

News in the World of Editing

["Is the Subjunctive Mood Right for Fiction?"](#) by Carol Saller
via Writer, Editor, Helper

["Alright, grey, judgement, barbeque: Alternate spellings and how to choose the best one"](#) by June
via Grammar Underground

WRITER CORNER

Ghostwriter Interview with Jenna Glatzer

1. There is a lot of confusion some people have about what exactly a ghostwriter does. Some people don't know exactly what a ghostwriter is or what they do. Can you please explain what a ghostwriter does?

Sure! A ghostwriter writes material under another person's byline, usually based on that person's ideas or direction.

2. Are there different types of ghostwriting? Please explain.

Yes. I focus on ghostwriting nonfiction books, which means that I do lots of phone interviews with a client and turn those interviews into a book manuscript. My clients are all very involved in the process.

With novels, it can be different—some well-known novelists will give ghostwriters a basic outline and the writer will be in charge of coming up with the material without a lot of other input.

Then there are also ghostwriters who work on articles and essays that are generally used to promote a business.

And some who cross the line into academics, by writing students' term papers and college essays. I find that deplorable and those are not my colleagues.

3. How long have you been a ghostwriter?

Since 2004.

4. How did you get your start in ghostwriting? And what did you start with?

By accident! I had written and edited a few books of my own, including a book about anxiety disorders. One of the people who read that book was Jamie Blyth, a contestant on the first season of *The Bachelorette*. He was recruited for the show and decided to go for it because he had social anxiety disorder and thought this would be a great way to challenge himself. He wanted to prove to himself that he could get through a truly anxiety-inducing social situation.

After the show, he contacted me and said he enjoyed my book *Conquering Panic and Anxiety Disorders* and wanted to know if I'd help him write his book. I ended up loving the process, and the editor and agent for that book (*Fear is No Longer My Reality*) both referred me to other clients. Almost everything I've done since then has been word of mouth.

5. Is this type of ghostwriting something you will probably stick with?

I've always planned to, yes. As you know but other readers won't, I've been going through a health crisis recently and have completely lost my voice. I don't know if that's forever or not. So for the immediate future, I'm doing other types of writing that don't require me to do interviews. That's tough because my whole career has been about ghostwriting and interviewing. I hope I'll get back to it soon.

6. Any chance you will branch out into other types of ghostwriting in the future?

Not too much chance of it—I really enjoy what I do. I would like to add more children’s books.

7. What sort of skills do you feel are important to have as a ghostwriter?

A lack of ego, a great sense of where a conversation needs to go and how to ask follow-up questions, a strong adherence to deadlines, and a willingness to incorporate feedback from multiple sources (agent, editor, client, possibly publicist and manager, etc.).

8. What is your most memorable experience working as a ghostwriter?

So many. One of my clients brought me to the Glamour Women of the Year Awards—that was fun. Another client is Broadway actress Tiffany Haas, who invited my daughter to attend a summer acting seminar taught by other Broadway stars... so exciting for both of us. It was an experience my daughter would never have had otherwise.

9. What are some good books you feel would be helpful to anyone who wants to be a ghostwriter?

I think the key in just about any writing genre is to study bestsellers in the genre. So personally, I write a lot of memoirs, health books, and leadership books—which is also what I read most. The more you read, the more you get a feel for what those genres call for.

10. Is ghostwriting really as profitable as other ghostwriters make it out to be? How can newbies achieve this kind of financial success?

There's a huge range. It can be VERY lucrative, but that's if you get to the top. I spent far too long undercharging because I had no idea what others were charging and that I could command much higher fees. Financial success depends a lot on your track record. You need to be able to point to other books or articles you've done that have performed really well—books with major publishers, celebrity clients, bestseller lists, etc. Once you have that, the next contract gets a lot easier to negotiate!

So it's a matter of being picky about what you take on (even as a newbie) because it does not help your brand at all to show an editor that you worked on a whole bunch of little books that didn't sell well. (Frankly, that was a mistake I made—I thought I had to work my way up by writing for lots of small publishers first, but that just made me look like small potatoes.) Hold out for bigger projects that can sell to major publishers. Chase people down. Look for people in your circle who might have stories you can tell—social media stars, executives, entrepreneurs, doctors... if you follow someone online and really like them and they don't have a book out yet, you might write to them and offer your services.

11. What is your advice to other writers out there who are considering becoming a ghostwriter?

You need to have a track record of your own first, so make sure you have some solid credits. From there, you can contact potential clients directly and/or pitch yourself to agents and editors, asking them to refer you to clients. I've done both. It can be a long haul (I've been bugging a certain celebrity for years to do a book with me!), but it can also pay off well.

About Jenna Glatzer:

Jenna Glatzer (www.jennaglatzer.com) is the author or ghostwriter of more than 30 books for all five of the Big Five publishers (Simon & Schuster, Penguin Random House, Hachette, Macmillan, and HarperCollins). She wrote Celine Dion's authorized

biography and a Marilyn Monroe biography authorized by her estate.

She's also written articles and essays for The Washington Post, Newsweek, USA Today, Writer's Digest, Everyday Health, Parents, Mic, and many others. Jenna and her daughter live in New York.

News for Writers

["New AP Stylebook offers chapter on inclusive storytelling"](#) by

Joseph Guzman

via Changing America

["Writing honestly about motherhood still provokes anger, but we must tell our stories"](#)

by Rhiannon Lucy Cosslett

via The Guardian

["Trauma Is Everywhere. Write About It Anyway."](#) by Adam Dalva

via The Atlantic

["How to Help Your Editor #AmWriting #WritingaNovel](#)

[#WritingCommunity"](#) by Alison Williams

via Alison Williams Writing

["Potential Legal Issues for Freelancers: What They Don't Tell You"](#)

by Emily Thompson

via WritersWeekly

["Writing a Novel and Healing from Tragedy, Leon's Learned to Love Himself"](#)

via Thrive

["For poet Tanikawa, it's fun, not work, at 90"](#) by Yuri Kageyama

via Star Advertiser

["7 Tips for Writing Blog Articles That Increase Traffic"](#) by Chad Buleen
via ClearVoice

["Why I Will Never Stop Writing Gay Sex Scenes for TV"](#) by Ryan O'Connell
via Time

["It Was A Big Mistake To Remove The Write and Edit Function From The Medium App"](#) by Kristina God
via Medium

["When email interviews, once considered 'a last resort,' are invaluable for reporters"](#) by John Loepky
via Poynter

Feature Article

How Writers Can Take a Stand, or Go For a Walk, to Avoid the Negative Health Effects of Prolonged Sitting

By Dawn Colclasure

One of the things that has created the most pleasure in my life? Writing.

One of the things that has created the most health problems in my life? Writing.

Seriously, though. It probably goes without saying that when you are a writer, you will be sitting down. A lot. In fact, one of the popular expressions among writers is "get your butt in the chair" in order to get writing. There are stories of writers sitting at the desk for hours, writing.

On the other hand, it doesn't always have to be that way! In fact, it hasn't.

Ernest Hemingway made it a habit to stand while typing at his typewriter.

Wallace Stevens wrote while he walked.

James Joyce wrote while lying on his stomach in bed.

These are just a few examples of how writers got creative with the otherwise unhealthy task of sitting down for long periods of time to write. Such a habit can cause health problems such as weight gain, high blood pressure and abnormal cholesterol levels. For me, personally, I definitely took on extra pounds because I was sitting so much, but I also ended up experiencing bursitis coupled with sciatica. It was because I had sciatica, in which I could not bend my leg, that compelled me to be creative with doing things while standing. I ate a lot of meals while standing at the counter!

Standing is indeed one of the recommendations of fellow writers who have expressed concerns about just how much of an impact all that sitting down can have on their health. One writer I know even bought a desk they could stand at and work. Another writer started working at the treadmill, writing and walking at the same time.

Exercise is indeed an important habit to adopt if a writer who does a lot of sitting wants to avoid health problems. In fact, when I had my own health problem, my doctor encouraged me to start eating healthy and exercise more often.

According to the Mayo Clinic website which shared information about the negative impacts too much sitting can have on our health, "An analysis of 13 studies of sitting time and activity levels found that those who sat for more than eight hours a day with no physical activity had a risk of dying similar to the risks of dying posed by obesity and smoking. However, unlike some other studies, this analysis of data from more than 1 million people

found that 60 to 75 minutes of moderately intense physical activity a day countered the effects of too much sitting.”

After I got sober, one of the changes I made to my daily habits was to add more exercise to my routines. It took a long time, but I finally came up with a schedule in which I could get at least one hour of exercise a day (or more, if I followed ALL of the routines) and still have time to write. When I started implementing these routines, I could definitely see positive results.

Not only this, I felt healthier.

Not only that, but there was less guilt for all the sitting I did when I was writing.

In addition to daily exercise, another way writers can offset the negative health impacts of too much sitting is by taking breaks. One writer I was reading about shared how that since he adopted a more active and healthy lifestyle, he continued to pursue his passion for writing but also took breaks from it every hour. If possible, take a break from writing at the desk every 30 minutes.

Taking breaks has also been helpful for me. It doesn't hurt that we have a dog constantly asking to be let outside. But I'm also getting up from the desk to do chores, check in with my kids, take care of some errand or other thing. These breaks are great not only because they shorten how much time I am sitting and writing, but they also give me a chance to think about my writing. I go over things I have written so far and check to see if I missed anything, or I'll think about what I should add next. Writers don't say they enjoy doing chores for nothing! While we're busy folding laundry, washing dishes or sweeping the floor, we're thinking about our writing!

It's a nice break from an unhealthy sitting habit and a nice break from our work. Additionally, we get to back to our work refreshed and recharged. Plus, we have more writing in our head that we need to get down!

We can take breaks from our writing while sitting at the desk as well. I often do foot or arm and shoulder exercises in the chair while thinking about my writing. Yes, it may look or seem silly at first, but your body probably needs them, especially to avoid strain.

Keep in mind that there may be times in which you will need to sit at the desk for long periods of time in order to get certain writing assignments done or projects completed. For example, in addition to writing, I also self-publish books and ebooks, so this can occasionally require working at the desk for hours. In that case, just do the work that you need to do. You might need to spend a long time typing up a handwritten chapter or you might need to spend an hour or so doing research on the Internet. It happens. Just make sure this is extended period of sitting down for your work is not a daily habit.

Sitting is a part of the writing life, but writers have found a way to get the job done without facing the unhealthy side effects that prolonged sitting can cause. You can do the same. Add exercise to your daily routines, take breaks or get creative with how you write. Just make sure you are able to get the writing done that you need to get done without allowing it to damage your health.

Sources:

["The Odd Habits and Curious Customs of Famous Writers"](#) by Maria Popova; The Marginalian; September 23, 2019

["What are the risks of sitting too much?"](#) Answer From Edward R. Laskowski, M.D.; Mayo Clinic

Thanks for reading! See you next month!

SPARREW ISSUE SEVEN

Welcome to the SPARREW Newsletter!

The newsletter for Self-Publishers, Authors, Readers, Reviewers, Editors and Writers!

Welcome to the latest issue of the newsletter! This newsletter is just for writers, book reviewers, booklovers, self-publishers, editors and authors. So glad to have you on board!

They say that being a writer means giving yourself homework for the rest of your life. In my case, I give myself deadlines!

I'm a firm believer in using self-imposed deadlines. They are a great way to ensure that I finish an assignment or a WIP in time to turn it in. I hate missing deadlines, so I always try to get assignments done at least a day before they are due.

This month, though, I gave myself a different set of deadlines: The deadlines to submit work to calls for stories as well as contests soliciting manuscripts. I ended up putting together a nice list of these calls on my phone, all for work I knew I could write. They were either for an anthology, magazine or a contest. And a good chunk of those deadlines for July happened to either land on the 30th or the 31st! In fact, I had 6 such deadlines, and I also worked on a magazine call for stories as well because the deadline was August 1st and I just wanted to get that one out the door since I have another commitment to tackle on that date.

So that brought it to seven. Seven deadlines to tackle all at once.

In the end, though, one of those deadlines never materialized because the client I was hoping to submit an article to on the first

of August went AWOL (I think maybe on vacation!) and another deadline had to be dropped since I didn't have the funding to cover the entry fee for the contest.

I did manage to meet all of those deadlines, but it was a lot of work. I had to disappear for a while. (Sometimes, a writer needs to disappear in order to get work done and meet those deadlines! I pretty much disappear while writing the ebook for the month.) I was also either writing in the car while running errands or writing while cooking meals. I am glad I was able to meet all of those deadlines, even if I had to stay awake until 1AM writing in my notebook on the last day! (Which was the day before THAT particular deadline.) It was definitely a learning experience. Just more grist for the writing mill!

I am very excited about this issue! You'll get to meet author Jill Dearman, who talks about her new book, *Jazzed*. When I saw the announcement for this book, which is a novel, I was surprised. I have known about Jill Dearman for years; I have also followed her career and subscribed to everything that she has been sending out to writers. I remember the days of receiving her newsletter, Bang the Keys. I was excited about being introduced to Jill Dearman, the novelist, and I hope you'll take the time to introduce yourself to her fiction work as well.

I was also fortunate to land an interview with Kim Catanzarite for the self-publisher section of this newsletter. I came across one of her guest posts in one of the many newsletters I am subscribed to, so I was curious about her and her work. I clicked on her link and subscribed to her newsletter, Self-Pub 101, which I enjoy reading. I have read both of Kin's self-published novels and became curious about her journey in self-publishing. Read all about it in the interview below!

This issue's feature article tackles the bane of many writers: How we get inspired with ideas for something to write but just can't get that idea down into print at the moment. I have been writing for over three decades and I have experienced this problem MANY

times. From getting ideas while in the shower to getting ideas for something to write while busy at work, I have found a variety of ways to handle that light bulb moment and get my ideas down for later. The article will share with you these strategies so that the next time you get an idea for something to write but can't put that idea into words, you will be able to do so when you have the time.

Enjoy this issue!

Check out archived issues of the SPARREW Newsletter here:
<https://sparrewarchives.blogspot.com/>

All current issues will be posted on my website here:
<https://www.dmcwriter.com/the-sparrew-newsletter>

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I welcome submissions from subscribers!

Are you a booklover who wants to have your book blog featured?
Are you a writer with news?
Are you an author looking for reviewers of your latest book?
Are you a book reviewer whose review just went live?
Are you a self-publisher with a new release?
Are you an editor who wants to share your thoughts on editing, complete with a bio advertising your business?

Please feel free to submit any of these notes to me at
DMCWriter@gmail.com for the next issue of the newsletter!

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THANK YOU...

Thank you to Kim Catanzarite for sharing my post, "Can a Deaf Writer Write About Being Deaf?" on her blog. Check out the post [here](#)

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SELF-PUBLISHING CORNER

Self-Publisher Interview with Kim Catanzarite

1. What can you tell me about your experience as a writer?

Like many writers, my first desire to write occurred in childhood, but I thought people were born Shakespeare. I didn't think it was something anyone could pursue. I took my first creative writing course at college and was immediately hooked.

2. What made you decide to write a book?

I started writing literary fiction, short stories. In my mid-twenties, I read an interview with Ann Patchett and she mentioned that she wrote her first novel because, and I'm paraphrasing from an old memory here, writers needed to write a novel if they want to get anywhere, career wise. So, even though I didn't think I could do it, I made an attempt.

3. What circumstances brought you to the decision to self-publish your book?

At 28, I actually landed an agent for my first completed novel. But my agent didn't sell the book, and I was more than willing to let it go, convinced my next novel would be better. It wasn't. My agent and I parted ways after that. Over the years, I continued to write novels, but I kept to myself with the attitude that writing was something I did for myself and maybe one day I'd be good enough. I went to conferences once a year and received positive feedback from agents and editors, but nothing sparked their interest enough. When I wrote *They Will Be Coming for Us*, I was tired of trying to land an agent. So when the first twenty-five or so queries resulted in only one agent asking for three chapters (it was my dream agent, which was nice), I was ready to leave querying behind.

My first fifty pages had won an award in a regional contest, and in other contests, judges gave it high marks and said things like, "I wanted to keep reading!" I took the book through the editorial process, through beta readers and professional editors, and based on their feedback I truly felt it was ready. The first professional review *They Will Be Coming* received was a starred review from BlueInk. Kirkus liked it too. I was ready.

4. What has your experience as a self-publisher been like?

Eye-opening. Glorious. Frustrating. And everything in between. I knew it would be. About fifteen years ago, I edited a book on self-publishing (I'm a freelance editor) and when I finished, I said to myself, "There's no way I could do this!" But technology has come a long way since then, and it's a lot easier to self-publish than it was a decade ago. It's kind of like parenthood. You think you know what it'll be like, but you have no idea until you're living that life. It's definitely a challenge. That said, nothing beats seeing your book in print and having complete strangers tell you they loved it.

5. How do you respond to the negative stigma attached to self-publishing and self-published books?

There's still a stigma, no doubt about it. But enough very good writers have self-published at this point that everyone knows some self-published books are awesome. A lot of people who haven't taken the time to put their manuscripts through a vigorous editorial process—who haven't done their best to create a quality product—aren't doing anything to fade the stigma, and I don't see that changing anytime soon.

6. What is one very important lesson you have learned as a self-publisher?

Writing and bringing the book itself to fruition really is the easiest part! Marketing isn't some magical thing that "just happens."

7. What do you know now about self-publishing that you wish you knew at the beginning?

This is a long game. As a self-publisher, you're going to have to write several books if you want to make a successful career of it. (Which is no different from what most traditionally published authors do.) You're a writer, but you can't just write; you have to learn how to sell. In order to continue writing those masterpieces, you're going to have to make a concerted effort at marketing. Again, it's not going to "just happen."

8. A lot of authors of self-published books have reservations about promoting and marketing their book. Some even feel that it is a form of vanity or self-importance. What is your opinion about this?

It's not a matter of vanity or self-importance. You only have to promote and market if you want many people to buy and read your book. If you don't care about the book getting read and you don't care about making money from the book, then you don't have to promote or market. It's a decision you have to make.

9. How do you promote your books and what form of book promotion has worked the best for you?

I've dabbled in many forms of promotion and want to dabble in many more. I've had some luck with FREE book promos via Kindle Select. Advertised by a quality e-newsletter—for instance, Fussy Librarian or Freebooksy—a FREE book promo helps you sell the other books you've written, the books in your backlist. If readers like Book 1 enough, they'll buy Book 2 or read it on Kindle Unlimited. After doing a FREE promo, I usually get many page reads on KU. If you only have one book, FREE promos will help readers discover you and get to know your brand.

10. What are some other important things you have learned as a self-publisher?

I've learned that creating content is something that takes a lot of time and creative energy, so if you're going to start a blog or vlog or podcast, you need to make sure it's something you really want to do, and enjoy doing. Since you have to post regularly in order for your content to do the job of drawing attention to you and your books, you'll feel like you're doing it all the time, almost like a part-time job—one of your many part-time jobs as a self-publisher.

Another thing I learned is that once you self-publish, you actually won't have as much time for writing. Creating content, running promotions, seeking out opportunities for in-person events, and all the other tasks you have to do will take time. So, you'll need to block out hours for writing. Self-publishing throws you deeper into the writing/book world, but you'll be doing things other than writing. It's kind of a paradox.

11. Do you feel that self-publishing is a viable choice for other authors?

It's a viable choice for anyone who is willing to learn what goes into producing a quality book. If you're willing to take your book through a rigorous editorial process (beta reading, various phases of editing, proofreading), then do what needs to be done to turn it into a book (hire a cover designer, work out the page design, proof again), and then promote and market it, self-publishing is a viable option. If you write a book, slap any old cover on it, don't bother to design the pages, and throw it on Amazon, that's self-publishing too, but you may not sell any books. If you hope for your book to sell to the masses, you have to create a quality product.

12. How do you feel that self-publishing their books has helped many unknown authors finally get the recognition their books deserve?

Some extremely popular books have fallen through the traditional book-publishing cracks partly because the trads prefer to publish safe bets. They also shy away from cross-genre stories because they're harder to market. My books fall into the cross-genre category. They are sci-fi love story thrillers, and I can attest to it being more complicated to market them (though not impossible). That said, a good, well-written story is going to sell no matter what. If a self-publisher tries hard enough, she can find her readership. She'll have to make the extra effort, but that's to be

expected. I'm very glad there's a self-publishing option in the world. I've enjoyed my publishing journey, and I have no regrets.

ABOUT KIM CATANZARITE:

Kim Catanzarite is the author of the award-winning [Jovian Duology](#), a sci-fi thriller. She is a freelance writer and editor for publishers and independent authors, and she teaches copyediting for Writer's Digest University. Her [Self-Publishing 101 blog](#) discusses the ins and outs of indie life as well as all things writing craft. She lives in New Jersey with her husband and daughter.

New Releases

Take some time to reflect and renew your faith with Christian poetry. *Meditating Heart* shares poems of devotion, faith and guidance to God and how turning to the Lord can help in troubled times. As we grapple with so much struggle, fear, worry, confusion and pain in this world, our faith can be shaken to the core. We may lose hope or we may start to doubt our faith. *Meditating Heart* contains poetry and musings which will help you find solace in your faith and renew your closeness to God.

Check out *Meditating Heart* for some spiritual Christian poetry. It's available for free through Smashwords [here](#)

Coming Soon!

It's time for some free fiction! And for August, what better light reading to get through another sizzling month than with a novella promising a bit of heat of its own? *Girl With a Blog* is a chick-lit story about Ella, an independent young woman who has her heart

set on the wrong man! Can the real Mr. Right convince her that there's more to love than money and power?

News in Self-Publishing

["8 Steps To Success In Self-Publishing From TSPA Founder Megan Williams"](#) by MeiMei Fox
via Forbes

["Finding 'Joy' in Self-Publishing"](#) by Thomishia Booker
via Publishers Weekly

["Self-Publishing Taught Me To Rethink Success"](#) by Sarah Wallace
via Autostraddle

AUTHOR CORNER

Author Interview with Jill Dearman

1. When did you start writing?

Since I could first write a sentence! I remember making up names for "characters" and that was my way "in" to the magic of writing.

2. What was your journey towards becoming an author like?

I always knew I wanted to be a writer, but it's been a zig-zaggy road. After college I worked as an HIV counselor for many years, because the epidemic was hitting very close to home in the queer community. My first book was published in 1999 and this new

book, [JAZZED](#), is my sixth book. Whenever I get too obsessed with my own perceived successes or failures I find that taking the focus off of myself is the answer. Writing is a pleasure for me even when it's a struggle. (Much like parenting!) But publishing is a whole different animal, and one can't rely on it to feel good. Helping other writers along the way, as an editor, coach, teacher...that's been the greatest reward, because "wins" like publication are few and far between.

3. What can you tell me about your latest book?

It's based on a true crime. The Leopold and Loeb murder case. My late father was obsessed with true crime and I guess got me obsessed too! This [essay](#) tells the story behind the book.

4. What sort of methods do you use for book promotion?

These days I've been sharing these fab [videos](#) from my publisher.

5. Where do you get your ideas for stories?

I just ask myself "what do you REALLY want to write about next?"

6. What are you working on right now?

My next book is a nonfiction book about Metaphysics.

7. Any advice for other authors?

Write because it's what you love to do. It's truly about the process not the product. Also, I work as a freelance editor, so if you've got a draft you need help with, you can reach out to me at

Jill@JillDearman.com. Remember, writing is a long game and we all need help from time to time.

ABOUT JILL DEARMAN:

Jill Dearman writes social-engaged crime fiction, with an emphasis on queer history, and intersectional feminism. She is the author of [JAZZED](#) (Vine Leaves Press 2022), which received a rave starred [review](#) from Kirkus; [BANG THE KEYS](#), a book for writers (Penguin 2009); her historical crime novel [THE GREAT BRAVURA](#) (She Writes Press 2015) was featured on NPR, and in The Brooklyn Rail; she is the author of [FEMINISM: THE MARCH TOWARDS EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN](#) (Nomad Press 2019), a history of feminism for teens; and [QUEER ASTROLOGY FOR MEN](#) and [QUEER ASTROLOGY FOR WOMEN](#) (both from St. Martins Griffin 2009, reprinted by MacMillan 2015). Jill works as a part-time Professor of Writing in New York University's Liberal Studies Program. For more: www.jilldearman.com

Author News

["7 Questions to Design a Better Arc of Change for Your Protagonist"](#) by Heather Davis
via Jane Friedman

["The Building Blocks of Scene"](#) by Sharon Oard Warner
via Jane Friedman

["The Secret Side Careers of Successful Authors"](#) by Alexander Lewis
via Jane Friedman

["How to Structure Stories With Multiple Main Characters?"](#) by K.M. Weiland
via Helping Writers Become Authors

REVIEWER CORNER

Other Book Reviews

["The Patriot's Grill by Steven Day Reviewed by Alvin M. Stenzel"](#)
via The New Book Review

["Gregory Day's essays are immersed in the natural world, but think beyond the category of 'nature writing'"](#) by David Carlin
via The Conversation

["C. Russell Price's 'Apocalypse Poems'"](#) by Mark William Norby
via The Bay Area Reporter

["Author Linda Buckley's collection of poetry celebrates life in Alaska"](#) by Jonson Kuhn
via Juneau Empire

["Book Review: A Global History of the Black Death"](#) by Jordan Michael Smith
via Undark

["Book Review: David Sokol and Adam Brandon's 'America In Perspective'"](#) by John Tamny
via RealClear Markets

Calls for Reviews

I'd love to find reviewers for my latest release, *Meditating Heart*. Available only as an ebook. Contact me at DMCWriter@gmail.com if interested.

News in Book Reviewing:

["What happened to newspaper book reviewing?"](#) by Frank Guan
via The Nation

["Amazon's War on Fake Reviews"](#) by Matt Stieb
via New York Magazine

["Critic accused of writing 'transphobic' review of poetry book"](#) by
Gabrielle McCulloch
via Stuff

Book Blogs

[Armed with A Book](#)

[Bookish Brews](#)

[Lisa's Reading](#)

[Literary Quicksand](#)

[Reader Voracious](#)

Book News

["Stephen King Is Set to Testify in Book Publishing Antitrust Trial"](#)
by Evan Peng
via Bloomberg

["SAGE Publishing is set to shut its book publishing division in India"](#) by Paromita Chakrabarti
via The Indian Express

["Undisputed "World's Greatest Author" finally lands Big 5 publishing deal."](#) by Jonny Diamond

via LitHub

["Nosy Crow kickstarts graphic novel list with open call for submissions"](#) by Ruth Comerford
via The Bookseller

["Publishing will never be fair"](#) by Kat Rosenfield
via UnHerd

["A major publishing lawsuit would cement surveillance into the future of libraries"](#) by Lia Holland
via Fast Company

New Books

[*Other Terrors: An Inclusive Anthology*](#)
By Vince A. Liaguno, Rena Mason
Category: Anthology (Fiction: Horror)

[*What Moves the Dead*](#)
By T. Kingfisher
Genre: Horror

[*Gilded Glass: Twisted Myths and Shattered Fairy Tales*](#)
Edited by Kevin J. Anderson and Allyson Longueira
Genre: Anthology (Spec Fic)

[*Mary: An Awakening of Terror*](#)
By Nat Cassidy
Genre: Horror

[*Upgrade*](#)
By Blake Crouch
Genre: Suspense & Thriller

[*Dead Water*](#)

By C.A. Fletcher

Genre: Dystopian Fiction

[*Just Like Home*](#)

By Sarah Gailey

Genre: Thriller

[*Hokuloa Road*](#)

By Elizabeth Hand

Genre: Mystery & Thriller

[*The Moonday Letters*](#)

By Emmi Itäranta

Genre: Science Fiction & Fantasy

[*The Stone Road*](#)

By Trent Jamieson

Genre: Fantasy

[*Heat Wave – The Extraordinaries*](#) (Volume 3)

By TJ Klune

Genre: YA Fantasy/LGBTQ

[*Goth Girl, Queen of the Universe*](#)

by Lindsay S. Zrull

Genre: YA Literary Fiction

[*The Work Wife: A Novel*](#)

by Alison B. Hart

Genre: Literary Fiction

[*Switchboard Soldiers: A Novel*](#)

by Jennifer Chiaverini

Genre: Historical Fiction

[The Kingdoms of Savannah: A Novel](#)

by George Dawes Green

Genre: Mystery/Thriller

[Baby Teeth](#)

by Meg Grehan

Genre: Sci-Fi/Fantasy

[Dark Earth: A Novel](#)

by Rebecca Stott

Genre: Historical Fiction

[What Goes Unsaid: A Memoir of Fathers Who Never Were](#)

by Emiliano Monge

Category: Biography/Memoir

[Some of It Was Real](#)

by Nan Fischer

Genre: Romance

[Boys I Know](#)

by Anna Gracia

Genre: Literary Fiction

[Calling for a Blanket Dance](#)

by Oscar Hokeah

Genre: Literary Fiction

[Love Times Infinity](#)

by Lane Clarke

Genre: Literary Fiction

[The Half Life of Valery K](#)

by Natasha Pulley

Genre: Literary Fiction

[How to Read Now: Essays](#)

by Elaine Castillo

Category: Literary Collection

[The Last to Vanish: A Novel](#)

by Megan Miranda

Genre: Thriller

[Beating Heart Baby](#)

by Lio Min

Genre: Romance

[Inventing the It Girl: How Elinor Glyn Created the Modern Romance and Conquered Early Hollywood](#)

by Hilary A. Hallett

Category: Biography/Memoir

[Proving Ground: The Untold Story of the Six Women Who Programmed the World's First Modern Computer](#)

by Kathy Kleiman

Category: History/Current Affairs

[Fantastic Numbers and Where to Find Them: A Cosmic Quest from Zero to Infinity](#)

by Antonio Padilla

Category: Science

EDITOR CORNER

Carolyn's Tricky Edits Column:

Tricky Edits from Carolyn Howard-Johnson

Excerpt from 3rd Edition of *The Frugal Editor*

@frugalbookpromo

Nonbreaking Hyphens are magical little hyphens publishers and typesetters use for consecutive dates (1912-1918) and in indexes for a ranges of pages that might become confusing if they are separated inappropriately. They cue your autocorrect feature not to change your formatting. They look just like any other hyphen, but you get it using this shortcut: Control + Shift + the underline key (Find that underline to the right of the zero on your regular keyboard). Knowing this trick will keep #bookbigots from identifying your book as self-published or to put it a better way, to keep your book polished and professional as possible. Use Google to find whole lists of these shortcuts for any word processor, Grammarly to Word's version for Apple.

Once a month Carolyn Howard-Johnson shares a tricky edit excerpted from *The Frugal Editor* with Dawn's newsletter readers. It's the winningest book in her multi award-winning HowToDoItFrugally Series for writers. She is now working on the third edition for release in September and found this tip that will be especially useful for self-publishers. Learn more about the series at her website, <https://HowToDoItFrugally.com>.

News in the World of Editing

["Grammarly, the tool that takes editing beyond spell check and autocorrect"](#) by Ken Colburn
via KTAR News

WRITER CORNER

News for Writers

["5 Freelance Writing Lessons That Helped Me Reach 5-Figure Months"](#) by Jessica Walrack
via nDash

["In Praise of Poet Voice"](#) by Dan O'Brien
via LitHub

["Journalism is a more dangerous job than ever. These films explain why"](#) by Chris Vognar
via Datebook

["Your Best Writing May Not Be What You Think"](#) by Carolyn Howard-Johnson
via Reader Views

["7 Tips for Opening Your Story In Medias Res"](#) by K.M. Weiland
via Helping Writers Become Authors

["Coding for Journalists: Why It's Useful & Where to Start"](#) by Rocky Parker
via Cision

["Tired of Waiting for Their Dream Workplace, These Writers Made Their Own"](#) by Ashley Wong
via The New York Times

["South African poet writes to change perceptions"](#) by Leslie Quan
via The Hawk Newspaper

["Mindful of mental health"](#) by Gretchen A. Peck
via Editor&Publisher

Feature Article

Inspired to Write – Later

By Dawn Colclasure

It never fails. I'll be hip-deep in the middle of something, my mind focused on the task at hand, when, BOOM! An idea for something to write will strike.

And as I have often said to my kids when they interrupt me for something they want me to do, "I'm kind of in the middle of something."

But the muse won't wait, and neither will that idea.

What's a writer to do when they're busy or distracted and an idea hits? After all, we want some way to get our ideas down and be able to remember them later if we can't.

Here are some ways you can grab hold of your idea to save it for something you can write later on.

Keep that idea in mind as much as possible.

Whether it's a title for something, a line of dialogue, something to write or what to add to something already written, I try to keep that idea in mind. It also helps to think about it for a minute or two and use something to relate to that idea so that it's easier to remember later on.

Tell someone about that idea.

If there is someone with you at the time an idea strikes and you're not able to take note of it (such as if you are driving), mention your idea to them. Ask them to write it down for you, if possible. In such cases, I first make sure this is someone who knows I'm a writer and I can trust them with my idea. That way, if I forget the idea later, I can ask them about it.

Use a voice recorder to get your idea into words.

Voice to text technology is not perfect, but if it can get the bulk of your idea into words, and that can help a lot. Or you can go old school and use a tape recorder.

Associate your idea with something.

If there's something at hand you can associate with your idea, keep it with you. Or remind yourself to remember this moment later on. Soak up everything in your environment so that you can be completely part of that moment. Usually, when I have time to write later, I think about the situation I was in that inspired that idea. If it was something that someone said which inspired your idea, try to remember it as clearly as possible. What did it make you think about? How were you feeling when you got that idea? Who were you with? If you try to recreate the situation in which you got your idea, it can make it easier to remember what that idea was.

Act as though you have already written that particular piece.

If I get an idea for a poem, then I'll imagine that poem appearing in print somewhere. Or, if it's an idea for an article, I think of a possible market that would publish it. If it's a scene for a story, then I'll create reviewer comments about that scene. Or I'll try to have that scene act out in my head so I can remember it better later. These reminders can be a great way to help you remember your idea later on.

In a perfect world, a writer would be able to write down every single idea we get for something to write. Unfortunately, ideas can strike at the most inconvenient of times! But if you use the memory tricks mentioned above to help you remember your ideas when you have a chance to write, the task of remembering them will improve and you'll get more ideas out of your head and onto paper.

Thanks for reading! See you next month!

SPARREW ISSUE EIGHT

Welcome to the SPARREW Newsletter!

The newsletter for Self-Publishers, Authors, Readers, Reviewers, Editors and Writers!

Welcome to the latest issue of the newsletter! This newsletter is just for writers, book reviewers, booklovers, self-publishers, editors and authors. So glad to have you on board!

Confession time: I was not able to release the book I intended to release this month. My plan was to release a novelette but, unfortunately, I was without a fiction editor. I debated releasing this ebook without edits, however, I did not feel comfortable doing so. My experience in trying to read a nonfiction ebook that was sorely in need of edits pretty much helped me to come to the decision that I shouldn't do it. While I enjoyed reading the book, the various mistakes made it hard for me to read it without interruption. I would edit the book in my mind as I read it, but it really killed the reading experience for me. I could not sit back and REALLY enjoy reading the book. All of those mistakes kept bothering me too much. I eventually stopped reading the ebook altogether.

So that pretty much told me that releasing a novelette without edits was a really bad idea!

I got busy looking for an affordable editor of fiction. Since my finances are pretty limited at this time, and since I was not going to ask an editor already charging extensive fees to offer me a deal on their editing services, I had to see if I could find an editor of fiction who charged a decent rate. Fortunately, that happened rather quickly, and since her rate was her regular rate, I hired her on to edit my remaining fiction ebooks. Yay!

Some writers may feel that if they are giving away their work (such as with a free ebook), it's not worth it to invest in an editor or a good cover designer. However, consider this: Readers new to your work who read one of your free ebooks may walk away with a bad opinion of your skill as a writer if you don't put in the effort to produce your best work. I have come across many free ebooks that had bad covers and very poor editing, and this was the first time I was getting acquainted with the writer's work. Not only did I NOT finish reading their ebooks but I also had zero interest in reading any of their other work.

With the free ebooks I came across which had great covers, good writing, and interesting content, as well as stories written well, I read their books to the end, left positive reviews, and looked for the author's other work to read. (I love finding new authors to read!)

I have said it before and I'll say it again: Put your best book forward. As professional writers, we owe it to ourselves to produce our best work, even if it's something we choose to give away for free. Some writers may feel it is a "waste" of money to pay for editing, cover design and formatting, but if you want to attract new readers with your free content (which is your ultimate goal), you want to make sure that the sample of your work they are receiving is a good representation of the kind of writing you provide in your work which they would otherwise have to pay for. If your work is good enough, and if your writing is good enough, they'll be willing to pay for it.

In other news, you will find more info on what kind of free ebook awaits your clicks below.

I am very excited about this issue! Check out the interview with self-publisher, Valerie Allen. I became aware of Valerie's work through a Facebook group for writers, and I soon learned she also self-published ebooks. In fact, she has self-published many of them, most of them available through Amazon. Learn all about

Valerie's experiences as a writer as well as her journey in self-publishing.

You'll also get to meet author Russell R. James, a prolific author of science fiction and horror novels. I became acquainted with Russell and his work through Facebook, and I have been impressed at the rate he is constantly bringing out new books. Read all about him and his work in the author interview!

Kim Catanzarite returns to the newsletter, this time with an interview about being an editor. I have been checking out Kim's editing services and her course at Writer's Digest (which is on my wish list!). Read all about her experience and advice as an editor.

Finally, you'll get to meet short story writer Elana Gomel. After Elana joined the Gypsy Shadow Publishing family, I immediately got busy checking out her work as an author and writer. I connected with her through Facebook, and I was constantly coming across her posts about acceptances and publication of her short stories. She is definitely a successful and prolific short story writer. Read my interview with Elana to learn all about her and her work!

As always, check out the latest installment in Carolyn Howard-Johnson's Tricky Edits column!

This issue's feature article is about something which I feel a lot of writers might be able to relate to: How writing first thing in the morning seems to be the only chance they have ever been able to find time to write! My writing schedule and "working hours" went out the window this summer. My oldest does not use the PC very often, but my youngest definitely grabs time to use it whenever they can! And they usually end up being on the computer for hours – since, of course, they don't have school! Morning writing has helped me to manage getting a lot of writing done this summer, although sadly, the same can't be said about work on my books. Hopefully I can get back to working on them soon!

Enjoy this issue!

Check out archived issues of the SPARREW Newsletter here:

<https://sparrewarchives.blogspot.com/>

All current issues will be posted on my website here:

<https://www.dmcwriter.com/the-sparrew-newsletter>

Meanwhile, here are my most recent blog posts:

Dawn Colclasure's Blog: "The August Ebook Confusion"

<https://dawncolclasureblog.blogspot.com/2022/08/the-august-ebook-confusion.html>

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I welcome submissions from subscribers!

Are you a booklover who wants to have your book blog featured?

Are you a writer with news?

Are you an author looking for reviewers of your latest book?

Are you a book reviewer whose review just went live?

Are you a self-publisher with a new release?

Are you an editor who wants to share your thoughts on editing,
complete with a bio advertising your business?

Please feel free to submit any of these notes to me at

DMCWriter@gmail.com for the next issue of the newsletter!

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SELF-PUBLISHER CORNER

Self-Publisher Interview with Valerie Allen

1. What can you tell me about your experience as a writer?

I write fiction, nonfiction, short stories, anthologies, and children's books. For many years I wrote primarily academic and educational materials. My interest turned to writing fiction based on issues that impact families. All of my novels are psychological thrillers with a focus on a child in peril. My short stories delve into various family relationships, some humorous and others poignant. My children's chapter books touch on the concerns of children in middle grades.

2. What made you decide to write a book?

As a psychologist, I've always been moved by the depth of emotion brought about by life circumstances, as well as the reaction in dealing with them. Within this context I attempt to share the idea that we all experience and survive the day-to-day events presented by our life situation.

3. What circumstances brought you to the decision to self-publish your book?

I decided to self-publish after I explored the timeliness of traditional publishing and the restrictions involved.

4. What has your experience as a self-publisher been like?

I have enjoyed the success I've found as an Indie publisher! The

convenience, going at my own pace, making timely changes/corrections/edits to make updates, and yes, even doing my own marketing! I have enjoyed the support and encouragement of other Indie publishers as well as traditionally published writers.

5. How do you respond to the negative stigma attached to self-publishing and self-published books?

Truthfully, I have not found this to be an issue. My writing has found a following of readers and my books are in libraries. They are well represented on social media and Amazon sends out notification of my work without a charge.

6. What is one very important lesson you have learned as a self-publisher?

As with anything, "Persistence is the key to success!" I enjoy creativity and self-expression. My writing brings self-satisfaction and insight to others.

7. What do you know now about self-publishing that you wish you knew at the beginning?

It may be hard to believe, but there was a time of no computers, no electronic devices, and no cell phones! Self-publishing would have been much easier if I had the benefit of IT from the beginning instead of all that trial and error along the way!

8. A lot of authors of self-published books have reservations about promoting and marketing their book. Some even feel that it is a form of vanity or self-importance. What is your opinion about this?

I'm likely one of the few writers who enjoy marketing. You must "tell to sell" and reach readers. I enjoy meeting people and sharing information that I think they will find interesting.

9. How do you promote your books and what form of book promotion has worked the best for you?

I use all three modes to promote my work: in person, hard copy materials, and social media. All are successful in their own way, as I reach a different group of readers (and hopefully buyers).

10. What are some other important things you have learned as a self-publisher?

I've learned the importance of networking and sharing information with others. Writing is done in isolation and it's important to have others to turn to for information and encouragement.

11. Do you feel that self-publishing is a viable choice for other authors?

Absolutely! One must have computer skills and a willingness to learn about the publishing industry as a whole.

12. How do you feel that self-publishing their books has helped many unknown authors finally get the recognition their books deserve?

This was bound to happen, as there are many talented authors, with the skills to write interesting stories. Traditional publishers cannot accept every manuscript due to limitations of costs and staff. Additionally, they tend to accept only manuscripts within what they feel is of interest to their target readership. Books outside of that realm are rejected out of hand. Self-published authors take on full responsibility for their work from start to finish!

ABOUT VALERIE:

[Valerie Allen](#), psychologist and author writes, fiction, nonfiction, short stories, anthologies, and children's books. She is the Executive Director of Authors for Authors and a popular speaker at book and author events. She conducts workshops for writers using her book, *Write, Publish, Sell!* 2nd Ed, and seminars for educators, parents, medical, and mental health professionals based on her motivational, self-help books, [Beyond the Inkblots: Confusion to Harmony](#) and [Understanding Mental Illness: A Guide for Family and Friends](#). She lives in warm and sunny Florida, where she has raised six children from whom she has learned many things about life and love!

New Release!

Free tools and resources for writers are all over the Internet. If you have been hoping to find them all in one place, then look no further! From editing to formatting, grammar and spelling, character names and world building, Free Stuff For Writers is a new ebook that will help writers find the free tools and resources they need. This ebook is full of lists of where to find free courses and workshops, where to score free word processing apps and

how you can get your manuscript edited using a free online tool. You'll also discover free newsletters for writers as well as where to find jobs. Free Stuff For Writers is your answer to "where can I find a GOOD free writing tool on the Internet?" and can help you make sure your work looks professional, edited, and just the way you want it to be!

Available as a free download from Kindle Unlimited [here](#)

Coming Soon!

Smokey is a curious, adventurous and fun-loving housecat who leads a secret life going on missions with his friends. *The Smokey Files* shares stories of this lovable housecat's many adventures, all while surviving the crazy antics he comes across while living with a human who would rather spend more time writing than filling up his food bowl!

News in Self-Publishing

["Everything you need to know about self-publishing your book, in 7 simple steps"](#) by Supriya Thanawala
via Money Control

["The Write Stuff: Tips On Self-Publishing A Book"](#) by Michelle Talsma Everson
via Forbes

["What is the best way to market your self-published book?"](#) by Rachel Klaver
via Stuff

AUTHOR CORNER

Author Interview with Russell James

1. When did you start writing?

My first novel to be accepted by a publisher was *DARK INSPIRATION* in 2011, but there was a lot of very bad writing that went on for years before that. Many might say some bad writing has gone on after that as well.

2. What was your journey towards becoming an author like?

When my wife and I would take a long trip, I would say "You know what would be a good story?" and then give her a plot outline of something I'd thought of.

Eventually she got tired of listening to this and said "Why don't you write down these stories you keep telling me?"

"Because no one would ever pay to read something I'd written," I said.

Well, she got me into a writing class for a Christmas present.

That led to working with a coach and an excellent critique group to get my skills honed. Eventually I had two short stories accepted for publication and then Samhain Horror picked up *DARK INSPIRATION*.

3. What can you tell me about your latest book?

[DEMON DAGGER](#) came out August 16th from Flame Tree Press. In this story, Drew Price has the gift of being able to see the demon within a possessed person, which has set him on the path to be a demon hunter. Archdemon Nicobar, who had been sent back to Hell, returns and possesses a new host. That archdemon is bent on revenge against demon hunters, and the hunter's family is not exempt from that vengeance. Drew has to master using the demon dagger to slay the archdemon, but Nicobar is always one step ahead, and the stakes keep getting higher. I'm very proud of this latest work and it has gotten a great review at Publisher's Weekly.

4. What sort of methods do you use for book promotion?

For *DEMON DAGGER* I hired Kaye Publicity to help me get out the word. This is the first time I've done that and I think it has been worth the investment. They have been able to line up a lot of interviews and reviews for the book.

On my own I use Facebook and to a lesser extent Twitter to keep in touch with people, but I don't think either are very good sales tools.

Getting the word out about my books mostly happens at horror and pop culture cons. I do a dozen or so events a year where I get to meet hordes of fun readers and chat with returning fans. Those appearances are always a blast.

I have a [monthly newsletter](#) that people can sign up for here if they want to see the latest happenings in my writing, convention, and auto repair world.

5. Where do you get your ideas for stories?

Every story is different, usually sparked by something I observe or an interesting article I've read. That gives me a starting point and I write organically from there.

DEMON DAGGER is the only novel where the idea started the story in the middle. I live in Central Florida and love to visit the theme parks. Watching the costumed characters one day I thought how you really don't know who is inside the big smiling character head. It could be anyone.

Being a horror writer, of course that led me to wondering if it could be a bad person, someone intent on exploiting this moment where people drop their guard in a supposedly safe environment. This idea became pivotal scene in the middle of the book. So, for the first time I had to write outward from the middle instead of from the start to the finish.

6. What are you working on right now?

I have three series through Severed Press: The Grant Coleman Adventures, the Ranger Kathy West Adventures, and the new Rick and Rose Sinclair Adventures. Grant is a paleontologist who keeps getting roped into expeditions that end up finding giant monsters. These are Saturday matinee B-movie fun tales. His sixth adventure was trying to steal resurrected woolly mammoths from a Russian oligarch above the Arctic Circle in *MAMMOTH ISLAND*. In the current work-in-progress, I have him facing some serious dinosaurs in the wilds of Utah in *DESOLATION CANYON*.

7. Any advice for other authors?

Keep reading, keep writing, and finish what you have started. Completing that first work is a major milestone, proof that you can take a project from start to finish. That confidence makes

tackling the second round of inspiration easier. Be prepared for a lot of rejection and celebrate even the smallest win.

ABOUT RUSSELL:

Russell James grew up on Long Island, New York and spent too much time watching late night horror. After flying helicopters with the U.S. Army and a career as a technical writer, he now spins twisted tales best read in daylight, including horror thrillers *DARK INSPIRATION*, *Q ISLAND*, and *THE PORTAL*. He authored the Grant Coleman Adventures series starting with *CAVERN OF THE DAMNED* and the Ranger Kathy West series starting with *CLAWS*. He resides in sunny Florida. His wife reads his work, rolls her eyes, and says "There is something seriously wrong with you."

Visit his website at <http://www.russellrjames.com>, check in at Russell R. James or Russell James–Author on Facebook, follow on Twitter @RRJames14, or say hello at rrj@russellrjames.com.

Author News

["I wanted to use gender-neutral pronouns in my new book – my publisher pushed back"](#) by Linda Jane Keegan
via The Spinoff

["The quirky bookshop representing independent and self-published authors from around the world"](#) by Anna Ferguson
via TeessideLive

["Quick Tips on Writing a Novelette"](#) by Deborah Sheldon
via HorrorTree

["Writing Advice: How to Get the Feedback You Need"](#) by Carmen Amato
via Publisher's Weekly

["7 Questions to Reboot a Nonfiction Book You've Been Writing Forever"](#) by Jennifer Louden
via Jane Friedman

["How Suspense and Tension Work Together to Increase Story Impact"](#) by Tiffany Yates Martin
via Jane Friedman

["THE MAKING OF A CHILDREN'S BOOK ILLUSTRATION"](#) by Karen Cioffi
via Writing for Children with Karen Cioffi

["True Publishing Includes Marketing... or How I Developed My Book Marketing World View"](#) by Carolyn-Howard Johnson
via Reader Views

REVIEWER CORNER

Other Book Reviews:

[Buried Secrets of Krissy Baccaro reviewed by Rod DiGruttolo](#)
via New Book Review

[Review of Raiden](#)
via Defining Ways

["Book review: 2 new poetry collections lay the groundwork for reclaiming our humanity" by Nancy Lord](#)
via Anchorage Daily News

["Review: 'Where Are the Snows,' by Kathleen Rooney by Max Winter](#)
via The Star Tribune

Calls for Reviews

I'd love to find reviewers for my latest release, *Free Stuff For Writers*. Available only as an ebook. Contact me at DMCWriter@gmail.com if interested.

News in Book Reviewing:

["How to review a book you don't like without destroying your professional relationships"](#) by Letitia Henville
via University Affairs

READER CORNER

Book Blogs

[Chick Lit Café](#)

[Likely Story](#)

[Pooled Ink](#)

[Shelly's Book Corner](#)

[Snazzy Books](#)

BOOK NEWS:

["Graywolf Press's New Publisher is Looking for Talent in New Places"](#) by Kate Dwyer
via The New York Times

["This New DC Bookstore Sells Only Queer-Focused Books"](#) by Grace Deng
via Washingtonian

["For Instant Happiness, Grab a Book and Head Outside"](#) by Elisabeth Egan and Erica Ackerberg
via The New York Times

["Little Free Libraries put books in their place"](#) by M. English
via The Times Herald

["Author Angela Deik's new book "Hey, I Have Two Dads" is an inclusive children's story with a warmhearted message of empowerment and acceptance for LGBTQ youth"](#)
via Cision

["Banning Books Is No Way to Protect Young Minds"](#) by Stephen L. Carter
via The Washington Post

["Making sure that we are reaching new audiences": How publishers are innovating with audio"](#) by Faisal Kalim
via What's New in Publishing

["Google's "helpful content update" rolls out today: What publishers need to know"](#)
via What's New in Publishing

"Amazon Stands by Books" by Jim Milliot
via Publishers Weekly
<https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/bookselling/article/90164-amazon-stands-by-books.html>

["Americans Don't Want Books Banned, But They're Divided Over What Schools Teach"](#) by Zoha Qamar
via FiveThirtyEight

["The freedom to read banned books"](#) by AJ Fahr
via Branson Tri Lakes News

New Books

[Screamcatcher: Sa'be Most Monstrous](#) (Screamcatcher #4)
by Christy J. Breedlove
Genre: Paranormal/Fantasy

[INVENTOR OF THE FUTURE: The Visionary Life of Buckminster Fuller](#)
by Alec Nevala-Lee
Category: Biography

[COMPLICIT](#)
by Winnie M Li
Genre: Thriller

[Hunter's Wish: A Post-Apocalyptic Alien Romance](#) (Xarc'n Warriors: Mountains Book 4)
by Lynnea Lee
Genre: Science Fiction

[Chaos: A Sci-Fi Alien Romance](#) (Elite Rogue Alien Warriors Book 3)
by Hattie Jacks
Genre: Science Fiction

[SEDUCE](#) (SKY CLAN OF THE TAORI BOOK 3) by Tana Stone
by Tana Stone
Genre: Science Fiction/Fantasy

[Reede's Mission to the Sectors: A Badari Warriors SciFi Romance Novel](#) (Sectors New Allies Series Book 15)

by Veronica Scott

Genre: Science Fiction

[Dark Elf's Property](#) (Dark Elves of Protheke Book 8)

by Celeste King

Genre: Paranormal/Romance

[BRUTAL ORC](#) (BRIDES OF ATTIS BOOK 2) by Luna Hunter

by Luna Hunter

Genre: Science Fiction

[THE HIVE](#) (OMEGA BLOODLINES BOOK ONE)

by SC Morrison

Genre: LGBTQ+ Science Fiction/Horror

[GUARDED BY THE ALIEN BOSS](#) (A MATE FOR THE LURAELEA TRADERS BOOK 2)

by Alina Riley

Genre: Steampunk/Science Fiction

[Hers, United](#)

by Anna Adler

Genre: Romance

[IMMUNITY BOND](#) (MODIFIED HUMANS BOOK TWO)

by L M Spilsbury

Dystopian Science Fiction

[Flame Kept](#) (Intergalactic Matchmaking Agency Book 2)

by Athena Storm

Genre: Paranormal Romance

[BLOOD OF THE JAGUAR](#) (SONS OF KUKULCAN BOOK 9)

by R L Olvitt

Genre: Science Fiction

[Ruby Fever](#) (A Hidden Legacy Novel)

by Ilona Andrews

Genre: Paranormal Romance

[ONCE UPON AN EVER AFTER: A COLLECTION OF TWISTED FAIRY TALES](#)

by Various Authors

Genre: Anthology/Urban Fantasy/Paranormal Romance

[TOGETHER WE STAND VOL 2: A CHARITY ANTHOLOGY FOR UKRAINE](#)

by Various Authors

Genre: Anthology

[THE GIRL ON THE POSTER](#) (THE DARK CIRCUS TRILOGY BOOK TWO)

by H P Mallory and J R Rain

Genre: Paranormal Romance

[ETERNALLY HERS: FF PARANORMAL ROMANCE COLLECTION](#)

by Various Authors

Genre: Anthology/LGBTQ+ Paranormal Romance

[MUSE INSPIRED](#) (NINE HEIRS AND A SPARE BOOK 6)

by Donna McDonald

Genre: Paranormal Fantasy

[COLD BROOM COFFEE](#) (ENCHANTED ENCLAVE MYSTERIES BOOK 8)

by Samantha Silver

Genre: Cozy Mystery

[FLUKE AND THE FANTASTIC FINALE](#) (THE FANTASTIC FLUKE BOOK 5)

by Sam Burns

Genre: LGBT Fantasy/Paranormal

[PACK RECLAIMED](#) (BLOOD AND MOONLIGHT BOOK THREE)

by Jarica James

Genre: Romance

[Clown in a Cornfield 2: Frendo Lives](#)

by Adam Cesare

Genre: YA Horror

EDITOR CORNER

Tricky Edits from Carolyn Howard-Johnson

Excerpt from 3rd Edition of *The Frugal Editor*

@frugalbookpromo

What All-Cap Titles Won't Do for You!

Stop! Reserve your use of all-caps for places they will work for you, and that's very few places. Many search engines' algorithms don't recognize all-caps, so using them may do the opposite of what you are trying to do. For instance, if you use them on your book's title or author name, they can limit search engine discoverability for your books. That might mean fewer book sales among other benefits.

Once a month Carolyn Howard-Johnson shares a tricky edit excerpted from *The Frugal Editor* with Dawn's newsletter readers. It's the winningest book in her multi award-winning *HowToDoItFrugally* Series for writers. She is now working on the third edition for release in September and found this tip that will

be especially useful for self-publishers. Learn more about the series at her website, <https://HowToDoItFrugally.com>

Editor Interview with Kim Catanzarite

1. How did you become an editor?

My first editing job was for a local newspaper. That's where I learned what copyeditors do. Before that, I thought they simply read a piece of writing and corrected typos. At the newspaper, I realized that copyeditors delve a lot deeper than that. They fix awkward sentences, apply the rules of the stylebook, and sometimes totally restructure a piece of writing.

After the newspaper, I became an editor at a book publishing company and was introduced to developmental editing, *The Chicago Manual of Style*, and the book publishing process.

2. What kind of editing do you do? And will you work with a client who asks for the kind of editing you don't normally provide?

I offer developmental editing (also called content editing) and copyediting. The first type deals with the "big" things, like overall story structure, characters and their arcs, point of view, and pacing. Copyediting, on the other hand, takes a close look at the writing itself. That's where grammar, word choices, and style come in. I don't offer proofreading.

3. What editing tools do you feel are the most helpful?

The Chicago Manual of Style is the most helpful tool out there. I'm old school so I have never used editing software. I know there are programs available that help with basic grammar, and I

think that's great for getting those errors out of the way. I also believe programs like this can't replace the work of a human editor.

4. What are the most common mistakes you see?

When it comes to developmental editing, I see a lot of errors in point of view, which pertains to who is telling the story. For instance, if you're telling the story from Anne's point of view, you can't head-hop into Bill's thoughts and feelings. You can only tell us what Anne sees, hears, thinks—what Anne experiences—and unless she's telepathic, she won't know what Bill is specifically thinking until he tells her.

As a copyeditor, I see every kind of mistake. The worst of them are sentences that are hard to follow or simply don't make sense. If the reader can't figure out what you're trying to say, that is a big problem.

5. Which books do you feel are helpful to writers who want to write better?

The Chicago Manual of Style. Part II of the book, titled Style and Usage, contains sections on grammar and punctuation as well as spelling and hyphenation. These are the basics every writer should know. Writers who want to improve can study that section and practice applying what they learn to their writing.

6. How do you handle a situation where a client often questions or argues your edits done on their work?

I haven't had this experience. I edit the entire book and return it to the writer. In the case of a developmental edit, they will go through my comments and suggestions, and decide which they want to incorporate. If a suggestion doesn't resonate with them,

they always have the option to ignore it. Only the author knows what's best for their book.

When it comes to copyediting, they can decide to accept all of my changes or some of them or none of them. If a change doesn't feel right to them, or they don't like it for artistic reasons, they are free to stick with the original.

I always provide a three-page editing sample before we've agreed to work together so the client can get a feel for the kind of edits they'll get from me.

7. That said, please describe your ideal client.

An ideal client is one who is open-minded and eager to learn from the editing experience. Both a developmental edit and a copyedit can be an eye-opening learning experience for a writer who wants to up their game.

8. What should a client expect when working with you as their editor?

They can expect me to do a thorough job and to give them the best advice I can provide to help them improve their book.

9. What do you do in the event that you feel the client's work needs more in-depth editing than what they have asked for?

Often a client will think the book is ready for a copyedit, but when I start reading it, it becomes clear that there are too many development issues to ignore. This can happen when an author uses beta readers to help with the developmental editing rather than hiring a professional editor. Beta readers are important and

they're definitely useful, but they don't have the depth of knowledge a professional has.

I suggest using a round or two of beta readers before hiring a developmental editor. The best situation is one in which the author pays for just one round of developmental editing.

If the book suffers from structural issues or POV problems, or things like repetition, slow pacing, and plot holes, it's not time for the copyeditor to work her magic. A copyedit is a waste if the content of the book is still being shaped, added to, or deleted from. The manuscript must be in the best shape possible before it's ready for the polish a copyeditor will apply.

10. Do you negotiate your rates?

Editing fees are not cheap because good editors have worked very hard to hone their skills, usually over a substantial number of years. Sometimes there's room for negotiation. For instance, when an author has had a developmental edit done, follows with a substantial amount of revision, and then feels a second round of editing is warranted.

I offer a high skill level and decades of experience, but I take a middle-of-the-road approach when it comes to the rates I charge. I stick with the industry averages.

ABOUT KIM:

Kim Catanzarite began editing in 1990. She has worked with large publishing companies like Random House, New American Library, Better Homes and Gardens Books, and Writer's Digest Books as well as independent authors at various stages in their career. Kim also teaches copyediting courses for Writer's Digest University, and she writes for print and online magazines all over the internet. Her [blog](#) discusses the ins and outs of self-publishing

and all things writing craft. She is the award-winning author of [The Jovian Duology](#).

News in Editing

["When Newspaper Editors Fail to Edit, Harm Can Result"](#) by H. Dennis Beaver, Esq.
via Kiplinger

["Capitalizing Titles"](#) by Mignon Fogarty
via Quick and Dirty Tips

WRITER CORNER

Interview with Short Story Writer Elana Gomel

1. How did you get started writing fiction?

I was a writer before I knew the alphabet. My mother was a journalist and an essayist, and she told me that as a toddler, I used to sit in front of her and copy what she was doing by pretending to type. Once I started reading, I knew that storytelling was what I wanted to do with my life. But there are bills to pay, so I took a long detour into the academy. I became a university professor, teaching narrative theory and English literature. In order to climb the professional ladder, you need to publish a lot. My first books were academic: I wrote about the kind of stories I wanted to write: sci-fi, fantasy, mystery. About twelve years ago, I realized that if I didn't start writing fiction now, I would never do it. So, I did.

2. What kind of fiction do you enjoy writing? (Such as fantasy, romance, horror, or unspecified)

I only write dark speculative fiction. This actually covers quite a lot of ground: from sci-fi to fantasy to supernatural horror. But everything I write has to have a speculative element. For me, the greatness of fiction is that it opens up new worlds and lets us see beyond our everyday concerns. As a reader, I seek the sense of wonder above all else. And as a writer, I write what I would like to read. As for the "dark" part, this is how my imagination works, though in life I am actually a very optimistic person.

3. What was it about writing short stories that just seemed to "click" with your writing career?

My first short story was based on a fairy tale I loved as a child: the story of Princess Turandot who challenged her suitors with clever riddles. I read it when I was about 8, and even though I did not quite understand why she rejected all suitors but one, it stayed with me. So, when many years later I decided to start writing, I sat down with no plan and no outline, and the story came back to me but in a very different guise. Now it became a tale about a strange world in which women gave birth to flowers and men worshipped a veiled god. And then the floodgates opened, and all the fairy tales that I remembered; all the sci-fi ideas I pondered; all the ghosts and monsters I enjoyed poured in, clamoring for new visions. There were so many that I realized that if I wanted to do justice to the creatures of my imagination, I need to start with short stories. Worldbuilding in a novel is very different from worldbuilding in a short story where the constraints of length force the writer to focus on what is crucial. Since my stories aim to create a single powerful experience of wonder and (often) terror, I need to pare down the plot and characters to what is essential. This is why fairy tales are my go-to models of great storytelling. They give you only what is needed to create an entire world in your head. Fairy tales can, of course, be expanded into novels: my latest novel *Nightwood* is precisely such an

expansion. But you don't have to write 100,000 words to tell the story of Sleeping Beauty, yet it stays with you forever.

4. Is there a type of short story that you enjoy writing most? Please explain.

I am a lucid dreamer. Every night I enter realms of wonder that are more vivid than my everyday life. I try to remember my dreams by writing them down (I have a large folder titled Dreams in my Dropbox) and use them as inspiration. Translating the beautiful illogic of dreams into a coherent narrative is more difficult than it sounds, but some of the greatest fantasy writers, such as Clive Barker and Thomas Ligotti, knew how to do it. I am trying to do the same. So, my favorite type of story is the one that retains the vivid and compelling imagery of a dream, yet also has something meaningful to say about the human condition.

5. What was it like when you sold your first short story?

It sounds like a cliché, but I could not believe it. I just stared at the email for a long time, and then called my mother (who was alive then), and she was incredibly happy. But the thing was, she could not read it. My mother was a wonderful writer, but she only wrote in Russian and did not speak a word of English. It is still my greatest regret that she could not read any of my stories or novels. Anyway, the feeling of having your first story sold is indescribable, and quite different from the satisfaction of having an academic article or book published (which I had already experienced by that time). Fiction is much more you than nonfiction. You feel your first sale like the validation of you as a person, not just of your analytical or writing skills.

6. Where do you find short story markets to submit to?

There are several excellent sites that offer easy tools to search for appropriate markets. I use three: Duotrope, Horror Tree, and Submission Grinder, but there are others. But I cannot overestimate the importance of social media. I am a member of several Open Submission groups on FB in which writers and publishers share their open calls. Without these groups, I would miss about half of the calls that are out there. There has been an increasing trend of anthologies and zines calling for very specific themes and giving strict deadlines. Googling "Open submissions" or something like this won't take you far. But if you know about a specific theme and the dates of its open window, you can start working on a story appropriate for this venue in advance. I have been doing more of this recently – tailoring my stories to a particular anthology or special issue. It's great in many ways, not least because it increases your chances of a sale but also because it trains you to be more disciplined. Twitter can also be useful, especially if you have a specific publisher in mind who you can follow.

7. What is one lesson you have learned as a writer when it comes to writing short fiction?

It may sound trite, but the most important lesson is never to give up. For every sale, you will have many rejections. You will have to deal with negative reviews, obtuse editors, and unsympathetic readers. Rejections are hard to take. Negativity may be destructive – if you let it. It is as true for writers as it is for academics, and perhaps for everybody. I have learned to roll with the punches. When a story is rejected, I resubmit immediately – unless I realize that there is, in fact, something wrong with it, and then I revise. I revise constantly, and I enjoy the process (I know that other writers do not but for a short story, in which every word counts, you simply have to). Rejections are not simply part of being a writer: they are a necessary part. Coping with them is what ultimately makes you a professional.

ABOUT ELANA:

Born in Ukraine and currently residing in California, Elana Gomel is an academic with a long list of books and articles, specializing in science fiction, Victorian literature, and serial killers. She is also an award-winning fiction writer and the author of more than a hundred short stories, several novellas, and four novels. Her latest fiction publications are Little Sister, a historical horror novella, and Black House, a dark fantasy novel. She is a member of HWA and can be found at <https://www.citiesoflightanddarkness.com> and on social media.

News for Writers

["The 7 Commandments for Good Content Writing"](#) by Bhavik Sarkhedi
via Entrepreneur

["I Can't Separate My Writing and My Diagnosis, So I Use Them to Help One Another"](#) by Sydney Hegele
via Electric Lit

["Once Champions of Working Class, Journalists Now Represent America's Elite"](#) by Rob Bluey
via The Daily Signal

["How 'pink slime' journalism exploits our faith in local news"](#) by Ryan Zickgraf
via The Washington Post

["You Can't Look Away: On Responsibility and Horror"](#) by Michael Sedlinger
via CrimeReads

["WaPo quietly suspended one of its top reporters last spring"](#) by Max Tani
via Politico

["5 SEO Trends To Stop Worrying About"](#) by Emily Thompson
via WritersWeekly

["Top 6 Free Content Writing Courses"](#) by Dawn Colclasure
via nDash

["Is Indonesia criminalizing journalism?"](#) by Liam Scott
via Coda

["Is journalism dead?"](#) by Armstrong Williams
via WSBT

["Google's Helpful Content Update Rolls Out: 7 Things To Know"](#) by Matt G. Southern
via Search Engine Journal

["12 Paying SPOOKY Markets for Writers!"](#) by Dawn Colclasure
via WritersWeekly

["Is Your Story Too Complicated? Here Are 9 Signs"](#) by K.M. Weiland
via Helping Writers Become Authors

Feature Article

Morning Writing Gets the Day Off to a Good Start!

By Dawn Colclasure

Whenever I come across someone complaining that they never have time to write, I suggest they write first thing in the morning. This very act of getting words onto the page before tackling the

day has helped me get A LOT of writing done ever since I became a parent. However, I have also noticed certain benefits of morning writing even after my kids have gotten older and need less of Mom in the mornings.

I have written about the benefits of morning writing in the past for an article I sold somewhere. Unfortunately, this article was published sometime before 2010, and I don't have the link for it anymore. I can't even remember where I sold it! Google was no help in my search for it, either. All I know is that when I wrote about the benefits of morning writing, it was pretty much an objective look at those benefits, with quotes from writers singing its praises.

This article, however, reflects my own personal benefits of morning writing, which I have uncovered ever since that article was written.

When my kids were little, I adopted the habit of getting up early in the morning so that I had time to write. With little ones underfoot, this was the best time available for it! (Although, I often ended up writing while taking care of them as well. I wrote during playdates, while feeding them, and during their naps! I was often at the computer writing while my oldest, as a toddler, was at my feet playing with toys or paging through his baby books.) This habit turned out to work for me so well that I decided to keep it long-term.

And since I am the only morning person in this family, it has worked out well for me too. I can often be found at the desk writing in the mornings with the rays of the sun at my back just as the sun is coming up.

When I write first thing in the morning, I am able to get all of that stuff that's in my head out of there. Instead of carrying it around as I go about my morning routines, I sit at the computer and type it out. Or, if I can't get to the computer or laptop, I will either write it on my phone or in a notebook. (It depends on how

much I want to write!) So, getting all of that stuff out of my head first thing in the morning ensures that I won't forget it. It also gives me the mental ability to focus on doing other things in the morning.

Another benefit of writing first thing in the morning is that I am able to make sure I have my "writing time" for the day taken care of before I have to get busy with everything else. There is always something which I want to write each day, and having the opportunity to write about it in the morning helps me to feel at ease that that particular thing will get written. This has been especially true for the summer, when my youngest, who is a HUGE gamer, spends a lot of time on the one computer we have playing games. (Yes, I am anticipating the days I get the computer back after the kiddo returns to school!) With my laptop conking out on me and my preference for typing everything instead of writing it by hand complicating my ability to get things written, getting that "writing time" first thing in the morning has helped me to get things written up!

Of course, there were times I didn't get the writing done first thing in the morning. On those days, I had to wait until I could use the computer to get some writing done. (I don't like bugging my family to get off the computer so that I can write. Just as they patiently wait for me to finish using it while I write, I patiently wait until they are done doing whatever they're doing on the computer so that I could use it.) The next time the computer was free to use, however, I'd grab it and start eagerly writing whatever it was I needed to write. (It helps to make notes in my notebook and on my phone to help me to remember things about what I want/need to write.)

Another benefit of writing first thing in the morning is that I have often had ideas for things to write later in my day, with no opportunity available to write it. So I had to save that idea for the next time I had to sit at the computer and write. So, when the next morning arrived, I had the blissful number of hours of

uninterrupted time to write. I would use this time to write the thing I had an idea for – and then some!

Finally, when I wake up in the morning, I am usually feeling well enough to write. Usually. I don't normally deal with chest pain, dizziness or headaches in the mornings – all threats to my ability to write later in the day. There was one day, for example, that I was pondering writing a blog post while I was out running errands. Unfortunately, the rest of the day brought on two episodes of migraines, and there was NO WAY I would be able to write anything while dealing with those. Those migraines pretty much canceled out any writing I would be able to do during the rest of my day. But I DID write that morning, and I was relieved that at least I got THAT bit of writing done for the day. Even so, when something like this happens, it doesn't cancel what I'm going to write. It just postpones my ability to write it!

Because of these benefits, I now make it a point to write every morning. I may do a workout first or I may send out a quick post on social media, but the mornings are meant for writing. It is the one time of the morning that I have control over – before I have to get busy with the kids or do other things.

Not everyone may feel that writing first thing in the morning is for them, and that's fine. Everyone's internal clock is different. We all have different sleeping patterns (not to mention episodes of creativity which strike at odd hours of the night!). And some people prefer to write at night.

That's fine. Nothing wrong with that at all.

But as for me, I am a morning writer. I get up out of bed and start writing. It's a great start to my day, and at least it gives me the satisfaction that no matter what the day throws at me, I still put aside time to write.

BIO:

Dawn Colclasure is a writer who lives in Oregon with her husband and children. She is the author and co-author of over two dozen books, among them 365 Tips for Writers: Inspiration, Writing Prompts and Beat the Block Tips to Turbo Charge Your Creativity and the horror novel, Shadow of Samhain. She is also a content writer, freelance writer, book reviewer and ghostwriter. She is also a self-publisher. Her short stories have appeared in magazines and anthologies. She publishes the SPARREW Newsletter each month. Her websites are <https://dawnsbooks.com/> and <https://www.dmcwriter.com/>. She's on Twitter @dawncolclasure.

Thanks for reading! See you next month!

SPARREW ISSUE NINE

Welcome to the SPARREW Newsletter!

The newsletter for Self-Publishers, Authors, Readers, Reviewers, Editors and Writers!

Welcome to the latest issue of the newsletter! This newsletter is just for writers, book reviewers, booklovers, self-publishers, editors and authors. So glad to have you on board!

This issue is a little bit different! Because of the formatting issue from last month, I jumped at the opportunity to change things up a little to make the newsletter easier for subscribers to navigate. Subscribers of this newsletter got a NEW design to check out and enjoy. I hope it works better than the old, text-only design!

We got a great issue put together for you this month.

When I learned about the success experienced by self-publisher Michal Stawicki, I knew I had to interview him for this newsletter! I was stunned by his success with his self-published book. Check out the interview to find out how he did it!

You'll also get to meet author Shannon Kennedy, whose new YA novel, *Throw Away Teen*, has piqued this reader's interest! Learn all about her amazing journey as a writer and her determination to accomplish her dream to be an author.

Don't miss the editor interview with editor Shayla Raquel! She shares some awesome editing advice for writers.

An interview with freelance writer Kat Gál highlights the quest many freelancers face in finding their footing in the industry. Read all about how she found her way towards the right niche and started collecting writing assignments to keep her freelancing going strong.

Carolyn Howard-Johnson returns with the latest editing trick for her "Tricky Edits" column. Check it out and see just how her tip can be a game-changer for writers.

This month's feature article is all about how you can "give back" with your writing. Ever since I started writing again, after first losing a job as a DSP then as a member of a cleaning team, I felt a strong need to give back to others in some way. It wasn't long before my writing helped me understand how to do that! I love seeing other writers "giving back" by teaching, mentoring, coaching and critiquing, so if you've ever wanted to help other writers out in some way, your skill and knowledge with writing can make it happen!

I hope you enjoy this issue! Feel free to drop me a note or connect with me on social media! I'd love to connect with you! This issue's feature article is about something which I feel a lot of writers might be able to relate to: How writing first thing in the morning seems to be the only chance they have ever been able to find time to write! My writing schedule and "working hours" went out the window this summer. My oldest does not use the PC very often, but my youngest definitely grabs time to use it whenever they can! And they usually end up being on the computer for hours – since, of course, they don't have school! Morning writing has helped me to manage getting a lot of writing done this summer, although sadly, the same can't be said about work on my books. Hopefully I can get back to working on them soon!

Enjoy this issue!

Check out archived issues of the SPARREW Newsletter here:

<https://sparrewarchives.blogspot.com/>

All current issues will be posted on my website here:

<https://www.dmcwriter.com/the-sparrew-newsletter>

Meanwhile, here are my most recent blog posts:

Dawn Colclasure's Blog: "[You Will Always Be a Writer](#)"

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I welcome submissions from subscribers!

Are you a booklover who wants to have your book blog featured?

Are you a writer with news?

Are you an author looking for reviewers of your latest book?

Are you a book reviewer whose review just went live?

Are you a self-publisher with a new release?

Are you an editor who wants to share your thoughts on editing, complete with a bio advertising your business?

Please feel free to submit any of these notes to me at

DMCWriter@gmail.com for the next issue of the newsletter!

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SELF-PUBLISHER CORNER

Self-Publisher Interview with Mikal Stawicki

1. What can you tell me about your experience as a writer?

I published my first book, A Personal Mission Statement: Your Road Map to Happiness in May 2013. Since then, I published 19 books on Amazon. One of them is just a public domain work, two

others are co-authored, the rest of them are short personal development books written from my experience.

English is not my first language, but I write mostly in English. Apart from writing books, I also write answers on Quora.com (I have about 1,700 answers there, viewed over 11 million times), and on my own blog.

I translated my books into Spanish, German, and Chinese, and produced six audiobooks so far.

2. What made you decide to write a book?

When, in September 2012, I decided to transform my life, I quickly rediscovered my childhood dream of being a writer. I stumbled for several months trying to write fiction in Polish, or a personal development blog in English.

Then, one of my friends remarked that one of my blog posts would have made a nice eBook. Her encouragement motivated me enough to write the first book.

3. What circumstances brought you to the decision to self-publish your book?

It was a no-brainer: no publisher would have published my book. I had no experience, no brand, no following, and English wasn't my first language!

And even if anyone would have accepted my submission, traditional publishing would have taken a year or longer. Self-publishing speed is unrivaled. It took me exactly 49 days from writing the first word to publishing my book on Amazon.

4. What has your experience as a self-publisher been like?

A mixed bag. A steep learning curve, not only about the publishing process, but even more about the marketing process. It was overwhelming! I got close to the burnout point a few times.

On the other hand, the freedom to do whatever I wish with the creative, publishing, and marketing processes was incredible. I don't think I could now fit in the shoes of a traditionally published author anymore.

5. How do you respond to the negative stigma attached to self-publishing and self-published books?

I ignore it. So I guess, I don't respond to it at all.

My own books were derided as botches by 'wise' heads. So what? Those derided books sold thousands of copies and got hundreds of positive reviews.

6. What is one very important lesson you have learned as a self-publisher?

I'm responsible for my own success. And the lack of it. I made only \$8,500 on Amazon in 2022. Why? Because I did almost nothing to promote and market my books.

I know highly successful self-published authors, I know success in this realm is possible. But I'm not willing to pour the hours they are pouring to sell so many copies.

7. What do you know now about self-publishing that you wish you knew at the beginning?

Collaboration is the shortcut to success. And it doesn't even have to be an active cooperation. I upped my game significantly by just being among successful authors in Facebook groups.

8. A lot of authors of self-published books have reservations about promoting and marketing their book. Some even feel that it is a form of vanity or self-importance. What is your opinion about this?

Those authors are shooting themselves in the foot. Who else is going to promote and market their books? The most probable answer is: nobody. Then, how would their books land in the hands of readers? They won't.

9. How do you promote your books and what form of book promotion has worked the best for you?

My friend, Denis Caron, the author of *Catch the Unicorn*, says that only two things work in the book promotion realm: your email list and Amazon ads.

I would add two more promotional vehicles: email lists of other authors and a selected narrow group of book promotion websites. Denis' objection about the book promo sites is that it takes a lot of trial and error. I firmly agree. But I paid that price and I use three websites worth their salt for nonfiction.

Recently, I experimented with podcast interviews as a way to create a steady evergreen trickle of sales. It's too early to tell if it's working.

10. What are some other important things you have learned as a self-publisher?

Spending money on the pre-production phase is an investment. I published the first four of my books by spending only about \$100. I saved on everything – from editing to covers. I perceived every dime spent as a cost.

But it was an investment! If you will make \$2,000 from your book royalties, it is a no-brainer to spend \$1,000 on producing the book.

11. Do you feel that self-publishing is a viable choice for other authors?

I feel it's the only choice for new authors. Instead of knocking on the gatekeepers' doors, which may take literally forever, you immediately start writing and publishing.

Even if you traditionally published before, it's a better economic choice. If my books were traditionally-published, I'd have been lucky to make \$850 this year!

12. How do you feel that self-publishing their books has helped many unknown authors finally get the recognition their books deserve?

Hey, it is about recognition only for the very top authors and books who are getting it.

For me, self-publishing is about equal opportunity and connection with readers. I don't care about the recognition. But I care about my readers. I sold over 83,000 copies of my books; they got over 1,000 reviews on Amazon, meaning that thousands of people got enough from them to care about writing a positive review.

If I'd have tried the traditional path, probably I would've been still knocking at the doors of publishers. And thousands of my readers wouldn't have had the chance to improve their lives.

ABOUT MICHAL:

Nicknamed Mr. Consistency, Michal Stawicki is a bestselling author in the personal development field and a business coach. He is obsessed with changing the world through daily habits, starting with his own habits and his world.

In the last decade he published 19 books, sold over 83,000 copies of them, created dozens of new good habits, coached over 100 people in developing new habits, started a book advertising business, and quit his day job as a database administrator.

Michal preaches and practices consistent daily action. He believes this is the means to achieve success in any area of life, from parenting to business.

New Release!

Smokey is an American shorthair cat who likes to get into lots of mischief! But when it's time to join a new family, Smokey finds out that life will be a little different from now on. But different in a good way! His new family loves him to pieces and his new life brings new adventure! Now if only one of those adventures meant some way to get rid of their dog...

Get it FREE on Smashwords [here](#)

Coming Soon!

Dana Mitchells leads a shattered life – until the day she decides to fight back against her abusers. This choice leads her on a dark

road that leads to homelessness and despair. Can she find her way out of the darkness before it's too late?

News in Self-Publishing

["Want to write a book? Experienced authors share the perks and pitfalls of self-publishing"](#) by Michelle Talsma Everson
via MarketWatch

["I've Self-Published 9 Books. Here's What I'll Do Differently Next Time"](#) by Natasha Khullar Relph
via The Wordling

AUTHOR CORNER

Author Interview with Shannon Kennedy

1. When did you start writing?

I am a writer. I have always been a story-teller. I hope to always be one. It's a family tradition, learned from my grandmother, the queen of pithy comments who served putdowns at her Sunday dinners. Attendance was mandatory, not only for my immediate family, but also for my aunts, uncles, and cousins. Grandma never swore. It wasn't ladylike, but she raised insulting someone's intelligence, morality, behavior, manners, children, and mates to an art form. My grandparents owned the Pine Tree Tavern below First Avenue in downtown Seattle which Grandma operated. She kept a "cuss jar" for her clientele who were not allowed to use inappropriate language in her presence, even if many of the "ladies" actually weren't, and their "gentlemen" friends paid for the "pleasure" of their company.

I began to write down Grandma's stories as a young teen, although I knew nothing about the techniques or mechanics of what would become my passion. Many listeners squirmed at her turn of a phrase. However, I always admired Grandma's use of language, which made her the powerful matriarch of our extended family. She supported my writing, repeating stories of her family numerous times, warning me to get my facts straight and asking me to repeat the stories back to her. This became a foundation for my writing.

2. What was your journey towards becoming an author like?

When I graduated from high school, I was determined to be a writer. My creative writing teacher had told me I had talent and suggested college. No one in our extended family had ever attended college. The girls married and the boys went to work. I was different. The last thing I wanted was a husband. Life in a single-parent household taught reality. As I told Grandma then, I knew men came with baggage and expected women to buy the suitcases. Grandma told me she'd planned to remain single but when she was 22, she met Grand-dad and he refused to "live in sin" with her.

My grandparents had worked hard all their lives, but they didn't have the money to send me to college and neither did my mother. I came from a poor, single-parent household. I went to work for a temporary office service and washed dishes at night in a restaurant. I wasn't able to fulfill my dream of joining the Army for a life of adventure because I was needed at home to raise my younger sisters, so I enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserve instead. When the wolf was at the door with a litter of pups, as my grandfather used to say, or when times were even harder, the civilian liaison of my Army Reserve unit put me "on orders."

This meant I did office work for him, answered phones, and taught myself to type on his new electric machine. He didn't care

what I typed as long as I **looked** busy and didn't allow anyone at his desk when he was out playing golf with the general who commanded Fort Lawton. So, I began my first novel. At nearly nineteen, romances fascinated me. They were my favorite fantasy. I always wanted a hero on a white horse to rescue me although I knew it would never happen. I'd seen too many real-life struggles at too young an age, but romance novels were about hopes and dreams, not the monotony of every-day life. I knew I could write a great love story.

While I happily typed away on my masterpiece, my boss occasionally looked over my shoulder. If he felt my hero was turning into a jerk, or worse, was acting like a coward, he told me so. My orders ran out about the time I finished the novel, so I bundled up my baby and shipped it off to Harlequin Books in Canada. I didn't know anything about the publishing business, so I mailed the only copy I had. In addition to this no-no, I also didn't have a clue about setting up a manuscript. I finished each chapter and began the next one on the same page, a fatal flaw. I also wrote on every scrap of paper and didn't worry about such things as margins. Worst of all, while the man my heroine thought she loved was dashing, romantic and charming – he was also unfaithful, dishonest, and nasty.

My father served as the perfect model for this sleazy character, and I practiced the first rule of novelists everywhere. "Write what you know, or in this case, who you know!" I also used Grandma's rule of understatement or as Grand-dad said it, "I wouldn't slam an outhouse door that hard." Harlequin eventually turned down my manuscript, but I was hooked. I was determined to write my stories and I knew someday I would sell a book. Along the way, I kept working at a variety of jobs, went to college, took classes from published authors, and never gave up on my stories or my dreams.

I sold two middle-grade novels, then when that publisher folded, went on to write for magazines and newspapers. In 2010, I sold my first romance novel to SirenBookStrand. I needed a

pseudonym, so I opted for a variation of my grandmother's name, Josie Malone. Today, I write four different series, two paranormal romance series as Josie Malone and two young adult series as Shannon Kennedy. I love writing and I always remember what my grandmother told me. Her love of language was the legacy she passed on to me. As she said more than once, "Your words have power. Use it wisely. Don't shout when a whisper will do."

3. What can you tell me about your latest book?

[Throw Away Teen, Book 1](#) in the **Stewart Falls Cheerleaders** series came out from Fire and Ice YA this September. Set in and around a private school, Stewart Falls Academy, twelve girls deal with timely issues while they learn to interact and build a winning cheer squad. The life lesson their coach wants them to learn is that "Sometimes you have to be your own cheerleader!" Characters grow and change in a variety of ways which may surprise the writer as much as it does the reader. When B.J. Larson, a street-smart foster kid moves to small town Stewart Falls, she's the Princess of Passing Though, but has she found a "forever" home, somewhere it will be safe to unpack and stay a while?

This is an updated re-release as are some of the others in the series. **Asking For It**, the second book is a story about dating violence will soon be released.

4. What sort of methods do you use for book promotion?

I have a fabulous VA or Virtual Assistant who handles my social media – Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Book Bub. In addition, we do blog tours for every book whether it's a Josie Malone or Shannon Kennedy title. My VA also does the two newsletters for Josie and Shannon. We talk either on the phone or connect through email several times a week. My fabulous publisher does

Amazon ads for my new releases, but I also arrange for other ads. In addition, I belong to writer groups and that helps me promote too. Now that the pandemic is coming to an end (we hope), one of those groups organizes booths at local events and I appear in person on those occasions.

5. Where do you get your ideas for stories?

They come from everywhere; books, newspapers, articles, documentaries, conversations – like other authors, I’m always playing the “what if” game in my mind. Sometimes, an idea won’t be appropriate for a teen drama or YA book, but it’s perfect for one of my paranormal romances. I also brainstorm ideas with writer friends at critique groups. We tend to meet virtually right now, but I can’t wait until we’re able to meet in person again.

6. What are you working on right now?

I’m editing upcoming releases in the Stewart Falls Cheerleader series, plotting and rough-drafting book 6 in that series. I’m polishing the final draft of Book 6 in the Shamrock Stable series. I’m also writing the next two Josie Malone romances. Since I have new releases, I’m also promoting those books with the wonderful help of my VA. A new blog tour for *Throw Away Teen* starts on Friday (9/29/22).

7. Any advice for other authors?

I always dreamed of someday being a writer. Then I wanted to be a published writer, and this is when I quote the cliché, “You’re never given a dream without being given the power to make it come true.” You may have to work for it, however. As the old Frank Sinatra song goes, “..and as funny as it may seem, some people get their kicks stomping on a dream..” Be true to yourself and never quit writing.

ABOUT SHANNON:

Shannon Kennedy lives and works at the family riding stable in Washington State. Teaching kids to ride and know about horses since 1967, she finds in many cases, she's taught three generations of families. Her life experiences span adventures from dealing cards in a casino, attending graduate school to get her master's in teaching degree, being a middle and high school teacher, and serving in the Army Reserve - all leading to her second career as a published author. She recently retired from teaching school and plans to write more books for Fire & Ice YA, the Stewart Falls Cheerleaders realistic fiction series and the Shamrock Stable series about teen girls and their horses. Visit her at her website, www.shannonkennedybooks.com to learn about her YA books. To learn about her paranormal romances, visit www.josiemalone.com

Author News

["Conflict + Choices = Character Agency"](#) by Becca Puglisi
via Writers Helping Writers Become Authors

["3 Ways That Writerly Grit Leads to Publishing Success"](#) by Susan DeFreitas
via Jane Friedman

["Local author Lora Senf introduces kids to horror writing through her debut novel, The Clackity"](#) by Madison Pearson
via Insider

["The Villain's Journey"](#) by Debbie Burke
via Kill Zone

["6 Ways to Refresh Your Speculative Fiction"](#) by Clee McKenzie
via Insecure Writers Support Group

["How To Create A Writing Schedule"](#) by Stuart Conover
via Horror Tree

["7 Simple Mistakes That Will Stagnate Your Book Sales \(And How to Avoid Them\)"](#) by William Opar
via WritersWeekly

REVIEWER CORNER

My Reviews:

My review of [ByTheWay by Dennis Santos](#)

["When Love Bends the Rules: Sunflowers and Lavender is a YA Story of Love, Friendship and Trust"](#)
via Dawn Reviews Books

Other Book Reviews:

["Book review: What the Chickadee Knows: Poems in Anishinaabemowin and English"](#)
via Anishinabek News

["Book Review-The Fountain \(Second Chance Book 1\)-John A Heldt"](#)
via Miki's Hope

["Ghostly Howls"](#) by Stephanie Hansen
via Reader Views

["Almost Full Circle"](#) by Jacqueline Greer Graham
via Reader Views

[Giant Turtle's Long Nap](#)
via Reader Views Kids

["How to Get Book Reviews & Endorsements"](#) by Jacquelyn Lynn
via Medium

Calls for Reviews

I'd love to find reviewers for my latest release, *The Smokey Files: Adventures of a Lovable Housecat*. Available only as an ebook. Contact me at DMCWriter@gmail.com if interested.

READER CORNER

Book Blogs

[A Work in Progress](#)

[The Book Nest](#)

[The Boston Bibliophile](#)

BOOK NEWS:

["How Poetry is Grounding Me When I Feel Hopeless"](#) by Nikki DeMarco
via Book Riot

["It's Banned Books Week, And Chances Are, Your Favorite Book Is On This List Of Books That Have Been Banned For Absolutely Absurd Reasons"](#) by Madison McGee
via BuzzFeed

["At 21,450 Pages, the Longest Book in the World Is Impossible to Read"](#) by Sarah Kuta
via Smithsonian Magazine

["Celebrating Banned Books Week 2022"](#) by Nikki DeMarco
via Book Riot

New Books

[Dark Observation](#)

By Catherine Cavendish
Genre: Horror

[Fairy Tale](#)

By Stephen King
Genre: Horror

[Nona the Ninth](#)

By Tamsyn Muir
Genre: Science Fiction/Fantasy

[Notorious Sorcerer](#)

By Davinia Evans
Genre: Science Fiction/Fantasy

[Natural History: Stories](#)

By Andrea Barrett
Genre: Short Story Collection

[Lessons: A novel](#)

By Ian McEwan
Genre: Historical Fiction

[Lungfish: A Novel](#)

By Meghan Gilliss
Genre: Thriller

[The Birdcatcher](#)

By Gayl Jones
Genre: Historical Fiction

[The House Party: A Novel](#)

By Rita Cameron

Genre: Women's Fiction

[The Village Idiot](#)

By Steve Stern

Genre: Biographical Fiction

[I Walk Between the Raindrops: Stories](#)

By T.C. Boyle

Genre: Short Story Collection

[Two Nurses, Smoking: Stories](#)

By David Means

Genre: Short Story Collection

[Ducks: Two Years in the Oil Sands](#)

By Kate Beaton

Category: Graphic Novel/Memoir

[Flush: The Remarkable Science of an Unlikely Treasure](#)

By Bryn Nelson PhD

Category: Science

[The Family Izquierdo: A Novel](#)

By Rubén Degollado

Genre: Domestic Fiction

[The Ways We Hide: A Novel](#)

By Kristina McMorris

Genre: Historical Fiction

[Sacrificio](#)

By Ernesto Mestre-Reed

Genre: Historical Fiction

[The Marriage Portrait: A novel](#)

By Maggie O'Farrell

Genre: Historical Fiction

[If I Survive You](#)

By Jonathan Escoffery

Genre: Literary Fiction

[What We Fed to the Manticore](#)

By Talia Lakshmi Kolluri

Genre: Literary Fiction

[Killers of a Certain Age](#)

By Deanna Raybourn

Genre: Mystery/Suspense

[The Weight of Blood](#)

By Tiffany D Jackson

Genre: YA Horror

[Solito: A Memoir](#)

By Javier Zamora

Category: Biography & Memoir

[Africa Is Not a Country: Notes on a Bright Continent](#)

By Dipo Faloyin

Category: Travel/Global Politics

[Ghost Eaters](#)

By Clay McLeod Chapman

Genre: Gothic Horror

[Leech](#)

By Hiron Ennes

Genre: Science Fiction/Horror

EDITOR CORNER

Tricky Edits from Carolyn Howard-Johnson

Excerpt from 3rd Edition of The Frugal Editor,
to be released Fall, 2022

Writers often forget that *should* is a word that has psychological impact. Tweeters and authors of nonfiction how-to books are notorious overusers of the word. The word *should* can impart an unintended (or intended!) tone of authoritarianism. A good chunk of the population dislikes being preached or dictated to. There are many ways to suggest that a person *should* do something without being blatant about it. Even authors of how-to books where readers expect to be told what they *should* do should try to use the word as rarely as possible. We can soften *should's* annoying quality by using the pronoun *we* instead of *you* as the subject of the verb.

Once a month Carolyn Howard-Johnson shares a tricky edit excerpted from her The Frugal Editor, the second multi award-winning book in her HowToDoItFrugally Series of books for writers. Find it on Amazon in paper or as an e-book at bit.ly/FrugalEditor or learn more at her website, <https://HowToDoItFrugally.com>. Find all the books in that series at <http://bit.ly/CarolynsAmznProfile>

Editor Interview with Shayla Raquel

How did you become an editor?

In 2010, I started as a copywriter for a small publishing company, and within six months, I was asked to apply for the copyediting

position. I drafted an email to say no thank you because I didn't think I was old enough, smart enough, good enough. But I deleted the email and said I wanted to apply.

When I took the copyediting test, I was certain I had failed. When the supervisor offered me the job, I said, "But didn't I fail the test?"

She laughed and said, "Normally, editors miss fourteen errors on that test. You missed four."

I was dumbfounded! I took the job, enjoyed my time there, and by 2013, I started my own company.

What kind of editing do you do? And will you work with a client who asks for the kind of editing you don't normally provide?

I provide developmental editing, content editing, copyediting, and proofreading. If I choose not to work with an author, it's not because of the services I *don't* provide, but because of the things I will not tolerate in a client. (I have learned my lesson!)

I've rejected projects and fired clients if/when: they will not listen to instructions; they do not know how to use a computer (your investment into my services shouldn't be "How do I attach a PDF?"); they hire me but refuse to listen to me; they insist on my doing work way outside the scope of our project; they don't listen to me about genres (e.g., If I made it crystal clear that a children's picture book is 400–700 words, I am not going to work on one that's nearly 2,000).

What editing tools do you feel are the most helpful?

The Chicago Manual of Style (online and the book) is my bible, that's for sure. Second to that is M-W.com so I can ensure

accuracy in my spellings. I use Google Docs every single day to create my style sheets, keep up with client to-do lists, and even paste my favorite quotes in the doc for their future book launch use. I have the Pomodoro Method app (Pomofocus) on my laptop so I can make the most of my time without straining my eyes. Word Hippo is my favorite thesaurus. And Dubsado is the CRM I use.

What are the most common mistakes you see?

I wrote a blog post about this called "[Manuscript Errors Novice Authors Keep Making.](#)" However, there is one area that I wish authors would listen to me about: formatting. When you send in your manuscript via Microsoft Word, I want the most boring, black-and-white, graphics-free manuscript you can give me. It should be Times New Roman, 11-point font, first line indent of .5, and that's it! Very boring.

If you don't do this, I will . . . and all the hours of fancy formatting? Yes, that all gets stripped away.

The two "But my English teacher said so!" conundrums I deal with most often? Prepositions at the end of a sentence are not wrong. It's a remnant from Latin grammar, which should never straitjacket American grammar. And for the love of all things pure and holy, stop using two spaces after a period. I will delete them, your book formatter will delete them, and you will save money with printing.

Which books do you feel are helpful to writers who want to write better?

It depends on the genre, and I list my top favorites [here](#), but for novelists, they should have three books that they read front to back: 1) [Save the Cat! Writes a Novel](#) by Jessica Brody; 2) [Beyond the First Draft: Deep Novel Revision](#) by Laurel Yourke;

and 3) [*The Emotion Thesaurus*](#) by Angela Ackerman and Becca Puglisi. Other books I highly recommend, no matter the genre, are: [*Bird by Bird*](#) by Anne Lamott and [*Pep Talks for Writers*](#) by Grant Faulkner.

I also highly recommend that whatever genre you want to write in, you *must* study those genres. Not just read them! But study them. If you want to write your memoir, you need to read and study memoirs. (Interesting fact: I will turn away a client if they don't read in their genre.)

How do you handle a situation where a client often questions or argues your edits done on their work?

I first start with proof. Usually, that proof is already there in my comments within the manuscript or in the style sheet. But let's say the proof doesn't work. I first have to decide if that's a hill I want to die on. (Oxford comma? I'm dying on that hill.)

If it's not that big of a deal, then I'll shrug and say okay. It is the *author's* book, after all.

But what happens if it's something big, like what happened to me recently: a children's picture book that went from 28–32 pages (standard) to 80 pages. I kindly bowed out of the project and offered a partial refund (since I still had a storyboard and proofread left). If I stayed on that project, I would've made a huge compromise and I would've disrespected the readers.

That said, please describe your ideal client.

The one who signs the contract, pays their invoice, and sends their manuscript. And leaves me alone to work! They listen to me because they respect my twelve years of experience in this industry, trust that I am taking exceptional care of their book, and try to learn from me along the way.

In terms of genre, I love thrillers, horror, science fiction, business leadership, self-help, and poetry.

What should a client expect when working with you as their editor?

A lot of resources! I love to create my own checklists and articles and how-to videos so my clients have the knowledge they need to succeed. Even though I'm an editor, I'm also a marketer, so when I finish edits, I love to suggest marketing and book launch ideas.

What do you do in the event that you feel the client's work needs more in-depth editing than what they have asked for?

I actually have a boilerplate for this! Basically, I praise them for writing their first book (that is no small feat!) and tell them: "At this time, your book is not ready for editing, but I want to give you the steps needed to get it ready." I encourage them with resources and books, suggested online writing courses, and an invitation to resubmit.

Do you negotiate your rates?

Not anymore, no. I know my value and my worth. If I'm out of someone's budget, I simply recommend other editors who can meet their budget.

ABOUT SHAYLA:

A self-publishing mentor, best-selling author, and public speaker, Shayla Raquel works one-on-one with writers every day. A lifelong lover of books, she has been in the publishing industry for

twelve years and teaches on author branding, indie publishing, book marketing, and the craft of writing.

Her award-winning blog teaches new and established authors how to write, publish, and market their books.

She is the author of the [Pre-Publishing Checklist](#), "The Rotting" (in [Shivers in the Night](#)), [The Suicide Tree](#), [The 10 Commandments of Author Branding](#), [All the Things I Should've Told You](#), and ["Savage Indulgence."](#) In her not-so-free time, she studies all things true crime and obsesses over squirrels. She lives in Oklahoma with her husband and three fur babies.

Learn more at shaylaraquel.com.

News in Editing

["Sew vs. So vs. Sow \(Grammar Rules\)"](#) by Robert Lee Brewer
via Writer's Digest

["The Powerhouse Of Writing 6: Colons, Semicolons, & Dashes"](#) by
Susanne Bennett
via Writers Write

WRITER CORNER

Interview with Freelance Writer Kat Gál

1. How long have you been writing?

I'm a freelance health writer. I've been writing online health content for nearly a decade.

2. What drew you to becoming a freelance writer?

I've always enjoyed writing. Whether it was creative writing, scribbling to pen pals, taking notes in class, working on school papers, writing my thesis, writing research reports, or anything else. I just love writing. I never thought making money writing was possible.

Beyond writing, other things that drew me to freelance writing were an opportunity to learn new things every day, my love for the research process, and of course, freedom, daily flexibility, and an opportunity to organize my work around my life, not the other way around.

3. How did it feel when you first got published?

The first time I got published was way before I started freelance writing. It was unpaid, and it was amazing. My first paid gig was unexpected. I didn't seek the opportunity out, someone offered it to me. It was amazing.

4. What are some of the challenges you ran into when you started freelancing? How did you overcome them?

Not getting paid enough and not getting consistent clients and work. Cold emailing was a game-changer for me.

5. What are some of the things you use to help you with freelance writing?

I assume you are asking about helping my own writing business. Honestly, I'm super basic. I write and submit my work in Google docs. I use Grammarly. I don't use any other tools, apps, software, or anything. I use my paper Passion Planners and notepads to plan things. I track my projects, income, and spending in Google sheets.

6. Are there any books you can recommend to anyone interested in becoming a freelance writer?

Big Magic by Liz Gilbert is my creativity bible. And *Catching Big Fish* by David Lynch. I highly recommend *The Copywriter Handbook* by Robert W Blyte for more writing-specific advice.

7. Please describe your typical workday as a freelance writer.

It really depends. I generally don't get up until about 9 am. I may get to my desk by 10 am or 11 am. I may work for a few hours and then go for a run or walk. I may work again once I'm back, then go for a walk later in the afternoon or early evening. Some days I work in the evenings instead of the morning or afternoon. Some weeks I work every day but only for a few hours. Other weeks, I may only work 3 or 4 days. It really depends on what else I have going on. I work part-time hours by choice (but work a full-time income!). I really don't have a set schedule and I prefer it that way.

8. What was the hardest market for you to break into and how did you succeed?

I'm a health writer, and I only write in the health niche. I work with functional medicine, integrative medicine, and naturopathic medicine doctors and health/nutrition brands.

But based on my experience helping other freelance writers, I don't think that there is any niche that's harder to break into than into another one. As long as you have a quality and relevant portfolio, you are golden.

Now, certain niches will pay better than others. SaaS, B2B, tech, and finance generally pay the best, health, real estate, cannabis, lifestyle, and some other niches are pretty good too. In certain

niches, like spirituality and music, it's very difficult or impossible to get clients that pay more than pennies or pay at all.

9. What's one thing about freelance writing that surprised you after you were at it for some time?

The community. At the beginning, I was worried that other freelance writers would be my competition. It's not the case. Everyone has a place. There are a lot of freelance writers, but there are also a lot of clients. And the freelance writing community is incredibly amazing.

10. What advice do you have for a writer thinking of becoming a freelance writer?

Choose a writing specialty and, ideally, a niche. Nail down your ideal clients. Create a high-quality portfolio that's relevant to your ideal clients. Posting on Medium and mock-ups count as long as they are quality. Start cold emailing your ideal clients. Be patient and consistent. Stop comparing yourself to other writers.

ABOUT KAT:

Kat Gál is a freelance health writer and freelance writing mentor. If you are a freelance writer looking for freelance writing tips, check out her [newsletter](#), [website](#), [Linkedin](#), and [upcoming course](#). If you are looking for a freelance health writer, check out her [writing website here](#).

News for Writers

["Why You Should Use Your Writing Skills to Start a Business"](#) by Annie Pilon
via Small Business Trends

["A Nefarious and Hidden Threat to Journalists Rises"](#) by Joel Simon and Carlos Lauria
via Columbia Journalism Review

["Helpful Content Update: Why Content Marketers Should Care"](#)
via nDash

["Google Answers If Adding Content Daily Increases Rankings"](#) by Roger Montti
via Search Engine Journal

["Content Marketing Experts Share How to Improve Writing and SEO"](#) by Annie Pilon
via Small Business Trends

["How To Become A Content Writer"](#) by Andra Picincu
via The List

["Thomas C. Foster on the Seven Deadly Sins of Writing"](#) by Thomas C. Foster
via LitHub

["Journalism's missing diversity link — business folk"](#) by Andrew Ramsammy
via Editor & Publisher

["Reading to become an Author"](#) by Susan Violante
via Reader Views

["Fact-Checking: Get Your Facts Right"](#) by Kristopher Jones
via Search Engine Journal

["How to Use Chapter Cliffhangers in Your Fiction"](#) by K.M. Weiland
via Helping Writers Become Authors

["5 Tips on How To Write Fast—And Well!"](#) by Kate Hewitt
via Writer's Digest

["A Dozen Good Reasons To Freelance"](#) by Jon Younger
via Forbes

["Oregon journalist arrested while reporting on homeless sweep
sues Medford and its police department"](#) by Maxine Bernstein
via The Oregonian

["13-year-old writer wins climate journalism award"](#)
via BBC

["Freelancer Guide: How to Manage Revisions Without Raging Out"](#)
by Anup Sohanta
via nDash

["Feedback and Editing: The Right Eyes at the Right Time"](#) by Lisa
Poisso
via Writers Helping Writers

Feature Article

How You Can Give Back with Your Writing

By Dawn Colclasure

If you're the kind of person who wants to do something nice for someone, or if you want to give back to a certain group, writing is one way for you to do it.

Whether you are writing a poem for someone or using your skill with words to spread awareness about something, your writing can really make a difference. You can brighten someone's day or help someone to understand something better.

While these are small gestures, they can really stand out for the people it was written for. A sweet poem written in a greeting card could make someone smile and a blog post you write about a topic someone doesn't understand can help clear their confusion.

One reason why I chose to pursue a job assisting individuals with disabilities is because I myself have received that kind of help from others. Because of my burn accident injuries and my deafness, a large group of medical professionals, therapists, volunteers and even friends have helped me to manage a "new normal" as a person with disabilities.

I wanted to give back, so I got a job as a Direct Support Professional (DSP). Working as a DSP and supporting individuals with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) was extremely rewarding, but when I could no longer work that job, I wanted to find some way to still give back to others.

It wasn't enough to volunteer to help friends in need.

It wasn't enough to be there to talk to when a friend was struggling.

I wanted to do something more.

Writing gave me that "something more."

With my writing, I have written blog posts aimed at supporting and helping other writers. For the month of September, I posted one blog post every day on my writing blog aimed at inspiring, encouraging, helping and guiding writers. I also wrote a few blog posts on my personal blog that were meant to dispel myths about the Deaf for Deaf Awareness Month.

With my writing, I have spread awareness about deafness and an aspect of life as lived by a Deaf person. My essay collection, *Parenting Pauses: Life as a Deaf Parent*, is one example of that effort. My essays published online also serve that purpose.

With my writing, I have been able to inform readers about a variety of topics and curate useful information into one piece. You can see what I mean by checking out such efforts here.

I have also written free ebooks which serve as tools to help and inform readers.

Of course, there are other ways writing can be a way to “give back” to others.

There is the option of teaching a writing course as well as hosting informative webinars that help other writers.

Another way you can give back with your writing is to write books that would be useful or inspirational to a certain audience.

Finally, you can use your writing talent to create things such as songs, movies, plays, public service announcements and even video scripts to help or inform others. This way, your writing would be serving a purpose outside of just entertaining people. It would spread awareness, bring the truth out of the shadows, and take a stand for marginalized groups.

Whatever you choose to pursue with your writing and no matter what you write, keep in mind that your gift with words can serve as a way of giving back to others. Your writing can make a difference in the world. Your writing may just be the one thing that helps someone when nothing else worked. If anything, using your writing as a way of giving back or to help others can be even better than getting a five-star review.

BIO:

Dawn Colclasure is a writer who lives in Oregon with her husband and children. She is the author and co-author of over two dozen books, among them *365 Tips for Writers: Inspiration, Writing*

Prompts and Beat the Block Tips to Turbo Charge Your Creativity and the horror novel, *Shadow of Samhain*. She is also a content writer, freelance writer, book reviewer and ghostwriter. She is also a self-publisher. Her short stories have appeared in magazines and anthologies. She publishes the SPARREW Newsletter each month. Her websites are <https://dawnsbooks.com/> and <https://www.dmcwriter.com/>. She's on Twitter @dawnclclasure.

Thanks for reading! See you next month!

SPARREW ISSUE TEN

Welcome to the SPARREW Newsletter!

The newsletter for Self-Publishers, Authors, Readers, Reviewers, Editors and Writers!

Welcome to the latest issue of the newsletter! This newsletter is just for writers, book reviewers, booklovers, self-publishers, editors and authors. So glad to have you on board!

We got a great issue put together for you this month.

An early Happy Halloween to those of you who celebrate this spooky holiday!

It's been quite a challenging month for me. From dealing with sickness that lasted for several weeks (note to self: get a flu shot!) to struggling to write a novelette that only brought up bad memories from my past, I'm surprised I am able to get everything finished up and out the door in time! Last month's issue was way too close to the end of the month, so I will try to get these newsletters out a bit earlier.

Aside from the writing, I have been doing a lot of reading! I managed to finish four book reviews this month and just received another ebook to review for my book review blog! (Many thanks to Peter Bowerman for sending it my way!) I've read ten books (so far!) this month and also did a lot of reading online. It would seem that with the sickness limiting my ability to go out and be around people, and hindering my ability to write, I turned to books instead. They kept me company when I couldn't do much else!

I love this time of year and now that I am almost fully recovered, I'm looking forward to getting back outside and enjoying the fall festivities! Till then, I have been longingly watching the colorful leaves falling from the trees in my backyard.

We got a great issue put together for you this month.

The self-publisher interview this month is with Juliann Whicker, whose Watergirl series launched her into the awesome world of self-publishing! Juliann has enjoyed success with her other self-published titles and she has not looked back since. Read all about her thoughts and experiences in self-publishing!

You'll also get to meet author Melanie Hooyenga. I met Melanie years ago through the Absolute Write Water Cooler message board and we have stayed connected in some way ever since. Her latest book in her Campfire series, Chasing the Moon, has met with quite a bit of success and she shares all about her new novel in the interview featured here.

You'll also get to learn all about the writer, Roy Barnes. Roy entered my network when I was publishing the BTMO Book Zine newsletter several years ago, and I have had the pleasure of seeing his writing accomplishments online since. Roy shares about how writing has influenced his life and how he has used his writing to help with personal issues. Don't miss this interview with a very experienced and talented writer!

Carolyn Howard-Johnson returns with the latest editing trick for her "Tricky Edits" column. Check it out and see just how her tip can be a game-changer for writers.

This month's feature article is my take on how free ebooks can help a writer's career. There's so many uses a free ebook can serve for both writers promoting their services and authors promoting their books. Check it out and see just how a free ebook can be a game-changer for book marketing and promotion.

I hope you enjoy this issue! Feel free to drop me a note or connect with me on social media! I'd love to connect with you!

Enjoy this issue!

Check out archived issues of the SPARREW Newsletter here:

<https://sparrewarchives.blogspot.com/>

All current issues will be posted on my website here:

<https://www.dmcwriter.com/the-sparrew-newsletter>

Meanwhile, here are my most recent blog posts:

Dawn Colclasure's Blog: "[From Writing Short Stories to Creating a Short Story Collection: Bad Girls: Five Tales of Twisted Teens is a YA Horror Collection of Murder and Macabre](#)"

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I welcome submissions from subscribers!

Are you a booklover who wants to have your book blog featured?

Are you a writer with news?

Are you an author looking for reviewers of your latest book?

Are you a book reviewer whose review just went live?

Are you a self-publisher with a new release?

Are you an editor who wants to share your thoughts on editing, complete with a bio advertising your business?

Please feel free to submit any of these notes to me at

DMCWriter@gmail.com for the next issue of the newsletter!

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THANK YOU...

Thank you to Gloria Oliver for featuring my new YA horror story collection, *Bad Girls: Five Tales of Twisted Teens*, in the October 21 issue of her newsletter, Mind Sieve. Interested in signing up for her newsletter? Go [here](#)

Thank you to Marcia Peterson at WOW! Women On Writing, for publishing my guest post, "[How Janet Evanovich's Book Helped Me Try Writing in a New Genre](#)" for the Friday Speak Out! Edition on The Muffin blog.

SELF-PUBLISHER CORNER

Self-Publisher Interview with Juliann Whicker

1. What can you tell me about your experience as a writer?

I wrote my first book when I was eight, typed on our old typewriter with several missing keys. It was a Cinderella retelling, only it was also a murder mystery with a tax evasion twist. I've been making nonsense ever since. LOL

2. What made you decide to write a book?

My first real book came about when I was working at a sewing factory, back-breaking, mind-numbing work that I got through by coming up with plots and dialogue that I'd write at five in the morning before I had to get to work. It will never see the light of day, but it's the first full-size novel I finished.

3. What circumstances brought you to the decision to self-publish your book?

My first published book came because I shopped it around for a year and got back that it wasn't marketable, too creative, too unconventional, so I went my own way. I'm actually going to publish that first book again after a complete rewrite where I *ahem* make it more marketable. LOL. It only took me ten years to come to terms with reality. I do love to self-publish, because I like to do the art, and work with artists, and see the whole book come together according to my vision.

4. What has your experience as a self-publisher been like?

It's had its highs and lows. I've had books that were bestsellers, and others that I felt would hit the market perfectly that flopped. There's no guaranteed formula for success, except probably persistence. Apparently, I have that, because after 11 years, I'm still at it.

5. How do you respond to the negative stigma attached to self-publishing and self-published books?

I don't tell people that I'm a writer, self-published or otherwise, because I write fantasy, and there's a stigma attached to that, like there's a stigma attached to everything. When people do judge me, I try to take it as a compliment, that they are thinking about me so much.

6. What is one very important lesson you have learned as a self-publisher?

It's not about one book, but about the whole span of a career that I hope lasts a long time. I've learned so much, about working with other people, juggling a hundred different pieces,

marketing! Oh, marketing is a beast that I'm still fighting, but eventually...

7. What do you know now about self-publishing that you wish you knew at the beginning?

Marketability is a real thing. Write what people want to read. It's not about you, but about the reader. Always respect the reader.

8. A lot of authors of self-published books have reservations about promoting and marketing their book. Some even feel that it is a form of vanity or self-importance. What is your opinion about this?

I understand this deeply, but I'm working on getting over it, because people want to read books like mine, and how will they find them if I don't tell them about it? I guess you have to believe that you have a book that someone wants, that has worth for some reason.

9. How do you promote your books and what form of book promotion has worked the best for you?

I've promoted using almost everything, and the results aren't truly consistent, sadly. I thought I had Amazon ads down, and then when I did a launch, their platform was down and my book never took off. I thought I knew Facebook ads, and then I launched during a voting year, and that didn't work. I would say to definitely build your newsletter, because you have the most control over that. Ads, social media, and of course publishing that next book and making sure your backmatter links everything are all important.

10. What are some other important things you have learned as a self-publisher?

Save your money when you have a good seller for the times when it's not as profitable. Don't buy too many covers because they're so pretty. Treat it as a business. Enjoy the surprises.

11. Do you feel that self-publishing is a viable choice for other authors?

Many authors are making full time wages with self-publishing, but it's important to pick a genre to write in that has hungry readers that can support you. Writing a book and then looking for an audience is much more difficult than targeting from the outset.

12. How do you feel that self-publishing their books has helped many unknown authors finally get the recognition their books deserve?

I don't like that term, 'deserve' because it comes with judgment that I'm always fighting against with myself. Does my book deserve to be popular and make money? Do I? I like thinking that self-publishing helps more variety be published, which suits smaller audiences, as well as those who have a broader base as their target. :)

ABOUT JULIANN:

Juliann Whicker is the author of quirky magical fantasy such as her Watergirl series, the Butcher, Baker, Vampire Slayer series, Her Dark Fae Prince series and the Darkly Sweet series as well as others. Juliann lives in New Mexico where she enjoys the sunsets and tacos. Juliann is the chauffeur to five children and enjoys most random artistic pursuits. Her website:

<https://www.juliannwhicker.com/>

New Release!

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This book is currently no longer available. I took it down because I am revising and expanding it. Watch for a future release of this book under a new title!)

Looking for something creepy to read for Halloween? Check out my new book, *BAD GIRLS: Five Tales of Twisted Teens*, NOW available!

This collection of YA horror stories features five teen girls who seek revenge on those who have harmed them or try to get in their way.

Fed up with being treated horribly, they resort to their darkest nature lurking within to get cold-blooded revenge.

Here is the blurb:

"The best kind of revenge is the kind that no one would expect."

Five girls have been tormented by people who thought it was okay to hurt them.

They never expected them to fight back.

The victim would never fight back.

The loser would never fight back.

The plain Jane would never fight back.

The freak would never fight back.

And the abandoned would never fight back.

But they do.

Not only do they fight back, but they delight in freeing their inner monsters on anyone who hurts them ---

The abusers

The bullies

The fake friends

Five girls find the power within themselves to fight back and get their revenge on all of them. And make sure their tormentors pay.

BAD GIRLS is now available through Smashwords! [Click here.](#)

Coming Soon!

Dana Mitchells leads a shattered life – until the day she decides to fight back against her abusers. This choice leads her on a dark road that leads to homelessness and despair. Can she find her way out of the darkness before it's too late?

News in Self-Publishing

["No Regrets"](#) by Cathy C. Hall
via The Muffin

["Pamela Samuels Young: How Indie Publishing Chose Me"](#) by Amy Jones
via Writer's Digest

AUTHOR CORNER

Author Interview with Melanie Hooyenga

1. When did you start writing?

I first started writing as a kid, and by middle school was entertaining my friends with songs, poems, and short stories. I often joke I supplied my friends with PG-13 smut — I guess I was destined to write romance! I stopped writing when I went to college and focused on graphic design, but I always had an urge to write a novel.

I moved out of the country to Zihuatenejo, Mexico, two weeks before my 33rd birthday, and because I couldn't work, I threw myself into learning everything I could about the publishing industry. My first full-length manuscript was a memoir about my first year in Mexico, then I moved on to novels and haven't looked back.

Since returning to the US in 2010, I've slowly shifted my day job from strictly graphic design to include writing, and I've been very happy with this balance.

2. What was your journey towards becoming an author like?

When I first started writing novels, I swore I would only publish traditionally. I wanted an agent who would do the negotiating for me, and a publishing house to do the editing and marketing. A year and a half into querying my third novel, *Flicker*, I came close to getting an agent, but their biggest hang-up was no one knew how to market my contemporary time travel story. Now I know it's called magical realism, but in 2012, that wasn't a thing yet.

In the meantime, I'd built quite a network of author friends, and had started a freelance business designing covers for authors who were self-publishing. I felt faced with a choice: let my novel gather dust in the bowels of my laptop, or try this self-publishing thing.

By 2012, the stigma had started to lessen and people were making real money, so I went for it. I've since published three trilogies and have met wonderful authors from all over the world. I'd love to be a hybrid author — one who both publishes both traditionally and independently — and I'm working toward that goal.

3. What can you tell me about your latest book? (Feel free to include an excerpt.)

Chasing the Moon is the third and final book in the Campfire series, so while I knew from the start there would be a third book, I didn't know who would be the main characters until I wrote the second book, *Chasing the Stars*. Melody Thompson is the littler sister of one of the main characters from that book and was supposed to merely be a side character, but her personality burst off the pages. She was only twelve years old, but faced problems that a lot of kids can relate to, including changing friend dynamics and peer pressure.

Chasing the Moon takes place five years later. Melody, or Mel, has a good grasp on who she is as a person, but she's struggling with decisions about college, her mother's recent marriage, and the fact that she's falling for her best friend, Stephanie. Meanwhile Steph, the other main character, is reeling from her parents' announcement that they're getting divorced and just wants to spend time with her friends. But of course life is never that simple.

The majority of this story takes place in the Grand Canyon. Not at the canyon—in it. I really hoped to camp there myself before writing the first draft, but the pandemic got in the way of our travel plans. Instead I interviewed several people who have hiked to the bottom and stayed at the campground, and think I captured what it's like to spend a few days at the bottom of the earth.

Here's the blurb:

Two best friends. One tiny tent. An attraction that's impossible to ignore.

Melody

Being a semi-famous science tokker epically rocks because I get to make science accessible for girls. Until I make a mistake and a jerkface tokker ridicules me to his fans. I need to prove I'm not a hack before my followers bail and I ruin my credibility—all before I graduate from high school.

Just one problem: my family's hiking to the bottom of the Grand Canyon, where I won't have signal for a week. Oh, and I'm sharing a tent with the Bestie Brigade—my two best friends—and I've crushed on one of them for longer than trends last on TikTok.

Dating Steph would make Jess feel left out and I vowed I'd never do that to her again. Do I risk hurting my closest friend for a chance at love?

Stephanie

Senior year was rolling along just great until my parents announced they're getting divorced the same night I broke up with my girlfriend.

Spending a week offline in the Grand Canyon to watch the lunar eclipse with Jess and Mel is the perfect way to pretend my life isn't falling apart. Except we're camping with people who insist on talking through EVERY FREAKING PROBLEM around the campfire.

And I'm not ready to share.

The time away with Mel makes our connection even stronger, but I'm scared whatever she's hiding could change our friendship forever.

Book 3 in the Campfire Series is filled with grand adventures, secret kisses, and an epic eclipse you won't soon forget.

4. What sort of methods do you use for book promotion?

A little bit of everything! Social media, of course, but also my newsletter, newsletter swaps with other authors, local events, radio interviews, press releases to local newspapers, asking people to share the news, my website and blog, and I'm sure I'm missing a few.

I also print bookmarks that I can hand out at events and give to people who order directly from me.

5. Where do you get your ideas for stories?

Everywhere. The news, overheard conversations, and sometimes they just pop into my head, but for me an idea doesn't truly

become an Idea until I know how it ends. I have a folder with what I think of as starter ideas, and I'll peruse that every now and then to see if anything jumps out at me and catches my interest.

6. What are you working on right now?

Since I just wrapped up the Campfire Series with *Chasing the Moon's* publication, I'm shifting gears to something totally new.

This is the first book idea that spawned from a dream. I have very vivid dreams and usually remember them right after I wake up, but nothing has ever held my interest enough to turn into a story. As I brainstorm the plot and develop the characters, I find myself sinking back into the feeling I had when I woke up so I can hang onto it while I write.

I've created playlists for about half of my books, but haven't for the past two, and I've already curated a list for this story. I can't wait to start listening! Er, and writing.

7. Any advice for other authors?

Keep writing, make writing a priority, and find a writing community.

Writing is a very solitary activity, and you have to want to do it. No one else can make you find the determination to keep going, but it helps to have a support network, whether that's people in your everyday life or friends you meet online.

ABOUT MELANIE:

Multi-award winning young adult author Melanie Hooyenga writes books about strong girls who learn to navigate life despite its

challenges. She first started writing as a teenager and finds she still relates best to that age group.

Her award-winning YA sports romance series, *The Rules Series*, is about girls from Colorado falling in love and learning to stand up on their own. Her YA time travel trilogy, *The Flicker Effect*, is about a teen who uses sunlight to travel back to yesterday. The first book, *Flicker*, won first place for Middle Grade/Young Adult in the Writer's Digest 2015 Self-Published eBook awards, and *The Rules Series* has won ten awards, including Finalist for MG/YA in the 2019 BookLife Prize. The first book in her current series, *Chasing the Sun*, won gold for young adult general fiction in the Moonbeam Children's Book Awards and was named one of the Best Indie eBooks of 2020 by Barnes & Noble Press.

When not writing books, you can find her wrangling her Miniature Schnauzer Gus and playing every sport imaginable with her husband Jeremy.

[Purchase link](#)

Website and Social Media Links:

<http://www.melaniehoo.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/MelanieHooyenga>

<https://twitter.com/MelanieHoo>

<https://instagram.com/melaniehoo/>

<https://www.tiktok.com/@melaniehooyenga>

Author News

["Are Sell Sheets for Review Copies Only?"](#) by Carolyn Howard-Johnson
via Reader Views

["What Defines Success as a Published Author? It Takes More than Talent!"](#) by Susan Violante
via Reader Views

REVIEWER CORNER

My Latest Book Reviews:

["50 Book Promotion Ideas Gives Authors Good and Thoughtful Book Promotion Suggestions"](#)
via Dawn Reviews Books

["Encore: The show must go on"](#) by Zane Pinner
via Reader Views

["Lonely Lines"](#) by Freya O'Brien
via Reader Views

Other Book Reviews:

["Review: The Secrets We Share"](#)
via Bite Into Books

["The Evil I Own – My Son's Prisoner by K.S. Penn \(Book Review #1312\)"](#)
via Review Tales

["Ichiro and the Great Mountain"](#) by W. Nikola-Lisa
via Reader Views kids

["Cut From Stone"](#) by Brendan O'Meara
via Reader Views kids

["Bertie the Bouncy Beachball"](#) by Mandy Woolf
via Reader Views kids

[Aunt Tina and the A.I. Squirrels Trilogy Experience by Lorrie Hewitt](#)
via Reader Views for kids

["The Persimmon Tree Narrative"](#) by Michael Brookshire
via Reader Views

["The Astrology of 2023"](#) by Gahl Eden Sasson
via Reader Views

["Grateful"](#) by Marnie Olson
via Reader Views

["Violet"](#) by Sabrina Simon
via Reader Views

["America's Loveless Age"](#) by Noel Terry
via Reader Views

["Mother May I?"](#) by Teresa Phelan
via Reader Views

["The Sophocles Rule"](#) by Joseph LeValley
via Reader Views

["Layers: A Collection of Short Stories"](#) by Zuzanne Belec
via Reader Views

["The Bindings of Woe"](#) by Connor Jackson
via Reader Views

["The Wild Rose and the Sea Raven"](#) by Jennifer Ivy Walker
via Reader Views

["Made in America by AmeriCANS not AmeriCANTS"](#) by Richard V. Battle
via Reader Views

["The Atheist and the Afterlife – An Autobiography"](#) by Ray Catania
via Reader Views

["Reclamation"](#) by Nicholas Lawrence Carter
via Reader Views

["Child Sex Abuse: Power, Profit, Perversion"](#) by Beverley Chalmers
via Reader Views

["Knot of Fear"](#) by Bryan Cassidy
via Reader Views

["Fired!"](#) by Steven Mitchell Sack
via Reader Views

["My Race for Life"](#) by Alison J. Delgado
via Reader Views

["Out Front the Following Sea"](#) by Leah Angstman
via Reader Views

["Beyond Death"](#) by Sally Muir
via Reader Views

["Teach Me Tonight"](#) by Susan Coventry
via Reader Views

["Not Me! Speluncaphobia, Secrets and Hidden Treasure"](#) by Charlotte Stuart
via Reader Views

["Out of Wedlock"](#) by Larry Lockridge
via Reader Views

["Avoiding Swindlers"](#) by Al Rosen
via Reader Views

["Unanimity"](#) by Alexandra Almeida
via Reader Views

["Little Toy Car"](#) by Gabe Oliver
via Reader Views

["The Ghost Writer"](#) by Anne K. Hawkinson
via Reader Views

["Out of Tune: Scenes from a Misbegotten Life"](#) by Victoria Maiden
via Reader Views

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via Reader Views

["The Beached Ones"](#) by Colleen M. Story
via Reader Views

["Cuckoo Cuckoo"](#) by Nicholas Ponticello
via Reader Views

["Old Love Skin"](#) by Mukana Press
via Reader Views

["The Blessing of the Black Wolves"](#) by JS Murphy
via Reader Views

["Do Nothing: A Griffin Knight Murder Mystery Thriller"](#) by Miguel Angel Hernandez, Jr.
via Reader Views

["Don't Poke the Bear"](#) by Robin D'Amato
via Reader Views

["A new novel tells the story of Nazi birthing farms"](#) by Kathleen Parker
via Washington Post

[NDG Book Review: 'From Underground Railroad to Rebel Refuge'](#)
By Terri Schlichenmeyer
via North Dallas Gazette

[Book Review: The Glass Castle](#)
By Abigail Sholes
via The Etownioan

[CTech's Book Review: Understanding the four behavior patterns](#)
by Barak Shachnovitz
via CTech

[The Climate Book by Greta Thunberg review – global warning](#)
by Gaia Vince
via The Guardian

["Review of The Silent Epidemic: A Child Psychiatrist's Journey beyond Death Row"](#) by Judy O
via OnlineBookClub.org

["Review of There Are Only 7 Ways to Meditate"](#) by Orizon
via OnlineBookClub.org

["Review of Illegal Tender"](#) by Chiwelite Obioma Mgbeoji
via OnlineBookClub.org

["Review of Not Mary Not Roe: The Survival Story of a Reluctant Teen Mom"](#) by abthegr8t
via OnlineBookClub.org

["Review of Psyched"](#) by JonesLeeh
via OnlineBookClub.org

NEW RELEASE FROM GYPSY SHADOW PUBLISHING

To Love a Vampire

Writer William Pine has stood the vampire genre on its head. The heroine of his latest novel sleeps at night, sunbathes in daylight, and drinks... wine.

At a book signing, William meets Kathryn, a beauty who professes to be his fictional heroine personified. As he pursues her story, she reveals that she's fled the vampire who turned her centuries ago, and fears that her sadistic sire pursues her yet today.

What happens when the monster tracks her down, eager to punish both Kathryn and the mortal man she's grown to love?

[Amazon](#)
[Barnes&Noble](#)
[Smashwords](#)

Nora's Cybaverse by Nathan Gemmell

The story is like Alice in Wonder Land, and Dante's Divine Comedy. The Character, Nora, travels through the 13 worlds and learns to be better than what she once was with the help of a traveling companion, Em.

61 pages with some thirty illustrations. This book is recommended for children and teens, but adults would get a kick out of the unique worlds he created.

[Amazon](#)

[Smashwords](#)

Spirit of Evil by Violetta Antcliff

After the tragic death of her husband, Tess becomes delusional, seeing things that aren't there. She can no longer remember sleeping through the night. Nightmares, realistic and horrific, make her afraid to close her eyes; afraid to catch a few moments of sleep. She is tottering on the brink of a nervous breakdown and there seems nothing she can do about it. That's when Amanda, a bombastic teenager born with a special gift, or curse depending on the way you look at it, barges in and takes over. The outcome of this invasion of Tess's privacy is unpredictable, unbelievable, and life changing.

[Amazon](#)
[Smashwords](#)

Calls for Reviews

I'd love to find reviewers for my books! Contact me at DMCWriter@gmail.com if interested.

READER CORNER

Book Blogs

[Bites](#)

[Bob's Books Blog](#)

[Cracking the Cover](#)

[Crime by the Book](#)

[The Guy Who Reviews Sports Books](#)

BOOK NEWS:

["10 Humorous Horror Books to Make You Gasp and Guffaw"](#) by Chris M. Arnone
via Book Riot

["Top 10 experimental feminist books"](#) by Selby Wynn Schwartz
via The Guardian

["The Growing Religious Alliance to Ban LGBTQ Books"](#) by David Masciotra
via The New Republic

["The 50 Scariest Books Of All Time"](#) by K.W. Colyard
via Book Riot

"Why Horror Books Just Aren't That Scary" by Chris M. Arnone
via Book Riot
<https://bookriot.com/horror-books-arent-that-scary/>

["Ralph Macchio writes of embracing his 'Karate Kid' persona"](#) by Alicia Rancilio
via AP News

New Books

[Lovestruck: Kisses, Lies, and Oatmeal Cream Pies](#)

by Rachel Anne Jones

Genre: YA Romance

[High Body Count: Null & Boyd Noir #3](#)

by Gary S. Kadet

Genre: Mystery/Suspense

[Night Duty: Jack Slade #10](#)

by Richard Dawes

Genre: Paranormal

[A Pirate's Booty: A Cavazutti Crime Novel #4](#)

by Carlo Cavazutti

Genre: Crime Thriller

[The Ladder Project](#)

by Bill Scott

Genre: Science Fiction

[On the Air](#)

By T.D. Jones

Genre: Contemporary Romance

[Cradles of the Reich: A Novel](#)

by Jennifer Coburn

Genre: Historical Fiction

[I Miss You, I Hate This](#)

by Sara Saedi

Genre: YA

[Before All the World: A Novel](#)

by Moriel Rothman-Zecher

Genre: Literary Fiction

[Illuminations: Stories](#)

by Alan Moore

Genre: Short Story Collection (Sci-Fi/Fantasy)

[My People: Five Decades of Writing About Black Lives](#)

by Charlayne Hunter-Gault

Category: Social Science, History

[Numb to This: Memoir of a Mass Shooting](#)

by Kindra Neely

Category: YA Nonfiction

[Savor: A Chef's Hunger for More](#)

by Fatima Ali

Category: Biography & Memoir

[Morgenthau: Power, Privilege, and the Rise of an American Dynasty](#)

by Andrew Meier

Category: Domestic Politics/US History

[Viral Justice: How We Grow the World We Want](#)

by Ruha Benjamin

Category: Memoir

EDITOR CORNER

Tricky Edits from Carolyn Howard-Johnson

Excerpt from 3rd Edition of The Frugal Editor,
to be released Fall, 2022

It seems that those of us associated with the publishing industry get bombarded with homonyms, synonyms, and dozens of other editing tricks, but then one comes our way that somehow we missed. Maybe we have even been doing it right, but it's still a surprise. I recently ran into one of those. It's "Just Deserts." Maybe I always got it right because I was warned about the spelling of *deserts* (the Sahara kind) and *desserts* (the tiramisu kind) long ago and sensed that the phrase didn't belong to either. In this phrase it's about the verb *deserve*, as in "He deserved everything he got!" So you don't forget, use "Just Deserts" somewhere in your creative work today. Use it as a writers' prompt. And if it still seems odd to you, here's why: This *deserts* is derived from the French *desevir* which means *to deserve*. It has nothing to do with stuff that's sandy or stuff that's sweet.

Once a month Carolyn Howard-Johnson shares a tricky edit excerpted from her The Frugal Editor, the second multi award-winning book in her HowToDoItFrugally Series of books for writers. Find it on Amazon in paper or as an e-book at bit.ly/FrugalEditor or learn more at her website, <https://HowToDoItFrugally.com>. Find all the books in that series at <http://bit.ly/CarolynsAmznProfile>

News in Editing

["About Plurals and Possessives"](#) by Bobbie Christmas
via The Muffin

WRITER CORNER

Interview with Writer Roy Barnes

1. Have you always been a writer?

No, I haven't. Even though I was always good in English classes as a K-12 student, I hated writing compositions and essays because I was a lazy student who wanted to do as little as possible to get an "A." Poetry was the first thing that enticed me. In 5th grade, my class once had to write a poem, and I wrote about basketball. I recall one line at the end,

"Basketball is nice
Basketball is never the same game twice!"

It got lots of positive feedback in my class, but I never really got into poetry either until 10th grade. Thanks to my American Literature teacher at Natrona County High School in Casper, Wyoming, Mrs. Shirley Wangelin, well, she got me via her class to see poetry as a great way to express life's struggles. And boy was I struggling as a teenager growing up in Casper, Wyoming, in the early 80s with undiagnosed/unchecked Asperger's Syndrome, which was only helping me to push away my peers most of the time, which really hurt me romantically, too. And my heart was really hurting over my debacles of being in love for the first time

with a certain girl, who I kept seeing virtually every school day since we were in elementary school and who I fell head over heels in love with in 6th grade. I blew it with her, but the pain of that wouldn't go away, and she became the inspiration for writing poetry seriously! Still, I was really afraid to share my feelings even via writing with others for the most part.

Mrs. Wangelin would have me and other kids who wished come to her class during our lunch hour and we'd read and share poetry! Sometimes, I'd share my hurting heart poems. Some of us even went to a writing competition one weekend in northwestern Wyoming with other high school kids to write. I believe I had 45 minutes to write a poem from scratch, and my poem about a funny childhood incident got me Honorable Mention! It was my first recognition as a writer, which happened to be on my 16th birthday in 1983!

2. When did you realize that maybe writing was actually a "thing" you could do, get published and even sell?

This was a really long process indeed! My love of travel is what led me to become someone who really wanted to get published for pay. Yes, I'd write poems and share them more as an adult with people I knew as long as they weren't too personal. Sometimes, I'd use Writers Market books and submit my poems half-ass-like, but never got anywhere. When I began to travel abroad and see articles by the European travel guru Rick Steves in print, I began to wish I could be an actual travel writer. This was in the late 1990s. I began to become fascinated with strange airport codes like MSY for New Orleans and ORD for Chicago and began to research them. Well, I was working as a travel agent, and I found enough strange airport codes to where I contributed them to its company newsletter. It was a hit! But in my next two jobs as a Retail Inventory worker and as a Parts Person for a regional airline, I'd contribute articles for the company newsies, but never got anything for it except a 12 pack of soda because I

did the assignment for a co-worker who didn't want to do the project, so she "paid" me to write the article.

Traveling so much in Europe made me really want to become a travel writer even more so, and after becoming involved in a language immersion program in Spain for Spaniards trying to learn English, this would be the catalyst that would eventually lead to my first paid travel article acceptance in 2004!

3. What was your first sale as a writer and how did it feel to sell your work?

I decided I didn't want to work for the airline anymore. I was single and had saved up some money and with the help and encouragement of my mentor, Robert Powell, I decided to give freelance writing my total focus in August 2004. My travel article about the Spain program above was rejected a lot, but finally, the editor of Transitions Abroad was interested in it and was going to pay me \$100 for the work. BUT, getting that first article in print with my name on it made me all anxious. The article was delayed and it wouldn't be until next spring that it was finally in print, and I was so excited after all the waiting! Now, I just take being published in stride, but it was, I guess, like when someone has their first baby, ha ha! But before that article was actually published, late in 2004, writing newsletter editor Gregory Kompes and I emailed back and forth. I told him how I got an acceptance as a travel writer and he asked me to write an article about becoming a travel writer! This would lead me to write many writing-themed articles for various publications, including The Writer magazine as well as yours, Dawn, Burning the Midnight Oil, if I recall rightly! Once I began to freelance write, I subscribed to many writing newsies, including Hope Clark's Funds for Writers and Angela Hoy's Writers Weekly to get tips and markets, and publication in their mediums, too! One positive thing leads to another!

4. How has writing helped you in other areas of life besides being something you could earn money from?

Writing has helped me come to terms with my past, especially my adolescent and teen years growing up in Casper, Wyoming. That special girl from that time when I was growing up, well, she was more than just a pretty face! As I reflect on the past, she really helped me see the inner soul of myself for the first time but it also exposed all the fears and self-hate I had for myself which is why I blew it with her and had such a rough time in my coming-of-age years. But her inspiration just by her presence alone during six school years started me on my road of inner self acceptance and it would be writing that would be the inner tool for me for this long and winding road we call life. It was very painful to deal with, but writing gives the struggles of life a sense of the epic via a form of art that I've come to fully embrace. She was the catalyst of me becoming a writer and finding my real calling in life!

I see myself as a writer first and foremost, even though I make my living in retail now, but I still submit things hoping for extra money via a few acceptances each year. Writing was my main source of income from 2004-14 but I still dabble in it and use my writing skills as a moderator/contributor to a Facebook group on growing up in Casper, Wyoming, where I've shared much of my young life's experiences. I've also been the editor of two past employers' newsletters, too. Writing is who I am at my core as it's my gift of expression.

5. What was your biggest accomplishment as a writer?

As a travel writer, I was privileged to go on about 40 press trips all over the USA and Europe where I was the guest of tourist boards and they paid all my expenses for the most part to come out and experience their venues and then write about my experiences to garner interest in their locales! My ability to write has taken me to places and helped me to experience things that I

wouldn't have otherwise done. I've been published twice in Chicken Soup for the Soul books. I've interviewed "The Exorcist" star Linda Blair.

That beautiful girl from my past really gave me a gift that went beyond just being able to say I dated her, which sadly, I never did because I was too afraid to take the risk. But she's always got a special place in my heart even though I would have actual romantic relationships, including now with my boyfriend, who, ironically, was born just days after I first encountered my "forever muse," the year being 1977.

Yes, writing has helped me come to terms with being bisexual, too. It was again in that special city of Casper, Wyoming, where I first noticed that I was attracted to both sexes, and two years ago, a Drexel University publication called The Smart Set published my coming out story, and I got paid well for it! It was a bit scary at first coming out, but I'm so glad I can be more open about who I am. We sometimes just have to follow our dreams and take risks in a, as Christian author/evangelist Joyce Meyer says, "do it afraid" way. If you let fear win out, then your life will be one of regrets as I learned the hard way during my Casper years.

6. Who has inspired you the most in the writing field?

I think I answered that above, ha ha!!! And of course, my mentor Robert Powell was great in helping me. For a long time, he'd pay me \$1 for every rejection letter/email I got from publishers just to give me the incentive to keep on trying! And to repeat, my 10th grade English teacher, Mrs. Shirley Wangelin, was a great early influence via her class and her love of literature in capturing the human condition. But yes, that special girl from my Casper past, despite me making such a mess of things, she's in everything I write. I've always hoped to be able to tell her one day how much she meant to me in my life, her being such a muse and all, but the one time I did write to her many years ago, I

never heard back from her. I just have to accept that. It still doesn't take away what she did for me though.

7. What are some of the challenges you have faced as a writer and how did you overcome them?

The fear of rejection. Sometimes a writer can think he or she will never get an acceptance for the work produced with passion, thought, and love. I've had over 2000 rejections as a freelance writer, but I listen to the feedback from editors and even my mentor, who reads much of my work, and ask how can I improve it. If I'm happy with my work, I just keep submitting it until I find an acceptance for it. It's so easy today to submit work via venues like Submittable and other electronic means.

If publications reject my work, it's because it's not a fit for them and/or, it's their loss that someone else will get the benefit of. If you believe in your writing, keep on submitting it. JK Rowling was told her books were too long for kids by a number of publications before she found acceptance by Scholastic. Guess who's laughing all the way to a zillion banks now with all her books and licensed products that are never-ending?

You also need to be disciplined when working on a piece to give ample time daily to it as well as giving ample time to researching paying markets. I make sure I go through my market newsletters when they arrive in my inbox. The more markets you find, the better chance you'll find one that will like your work and pay for an acceptance of your work. I still submit personal essays and poetry now, and am really disciplined about keeping up on submitting to new markets and ones I've submitted to before.

8. What is the best writing advice you have ever received and why do you feel it is important?

“Write what you know and love and/or write about what you want to know about.” If you are really interested in something, it makes all the hard work of researching, writing, and editing all the more fun. Writing shouldn’t be a chore that you hate. If it is, then find another job that you have some interest in and is probably easier to make money at.

9. What sort of writing do you do now?

I write poems still, personal essays, and also contribute to and moderate a Facebook group about growing up in Casper, Wyoming, where I was birthed as a writer!

10. Where can we find some of your work online?

I used to go on assignment for travel articles for a publication called Bootsncall.com, which still has my work in their archives.

You can find my coming out story called “Stonewalling Myself” via the online publication The Smart Set.

Sadly, the Yahoo! site I used to write for ceased operation and all my old articles on that site disappeared years ago. I garnered some six million page views from those articles I wrote about which included current events, culture, travel, and opinion pieces.

11. What advice do you have for other aspiring writers thinking of taking the leap of getting their work published?

JUST DO IT!!! Work on your pieces that you want to see published. Find a writers’ group in your area or online and let others critique it, and ruminate on the criticisms but always trust

your instincts on what you think your ultimate work should be like finished. And have the courage to submit your work knowing that rejections are inevitable, but that one acceptance can change your life and lead to other writing opportunities. If I can do it, anyone can! And follow the writing guidelines and only submit work you want to be paid for to PAYING PUBLICATIONS!!! There's plenty of paying markets out there if you will subscribe to writing newsletters like I discussed above. If you don't mind giving some or all your writing work away, that's your choice, too. But outside my writing to the Casper Facebook group, I expect to be paid for my work, even if it's just a 12 pack of soda, ha ha!!!

12. What are your final thoughts about being a writer?

Writing is the best way I know of to express how one feels, what one is trying to describe such as a travel destination, or convey information. It's a true art form and I'm blessed to have this gift of expression by the grace of God.

ABOUT ROY:

Roy A. Barnes has been a freelance writer since 2004, though his heyday of freelancing was from 2004-14. He's traveled all over the USA and Europe to write about travel destinations. His work has appeared at *Chicken Soup for the Soul*, *The Writer*, Funds for Writers, WritersWeekly, Bootsnaill.com, Poesia, Breath & Shadow, and many others. He has also used the art of writing to help come to terms with his past and embrace his full self as a bisexual male with Asperger's Syndrome. He lives in Cheyenne, Wyoming. You can contact Roy at travelwriteroy@yahoo.com

News for Writers

["75 Things You SHOULDN'T Do When Writing a Script"](#) by Ken Miyamoto
via ScreenCraft

["Freelancers: The Importance of Having a Side Hustle"](#) by Anup Sohanta
via nDash

["How Homesteading Helped Me Write"](#) by Michelle Webster-Hein
via LitHub

["Q&A with Freelance Journalist Darby Murnane"](#) by Jess Focht
via MediaBistro

["9 Negative Character Arcs in the Enneagram"](#) by K.M. Weiland
via Helping Writers Become Authors

["How to Research Your Idea BEFORE You Pitch It"](#) by Dawn Colclasure
via nDash

["7 Writing Tips for How to Write Scenery in Novels"](#) by Stuart Conover
via Horror Tree

["How to write a poem: Break the rules \(but follow these guidelines\)"](#) by Gemma Tipton
via The Irish Times

["How Writers Can Infuse Mood in Story Settings"](#) by C.S. Lakin
via Helping Writers Become Authors

["The Ultimate Guide to Writing a Science Fiction Novel That Will Sell"](#) by William Opar
via WritersWeekly

["9 Positive Character Arcs in the Enneagram"](#) by K.M. Weiland
via Helping Writers Become Authors

["From Journalist to Novelist: Crafinf Characters with the 5 Ws and an H"](#) by Ekta Garg
via WOW! Women on Writing

["Worldbuild Like an Anthropologist"](#) by Shana Scott
via WOW! Women on Writing

["10 Paying Health and Wellness Markets for Writers"](#) by Dawn Colclasure
via WritersWeekly

["Horror: Why We Love It, Hate It & NEED It"](#) by Kristin Lamb
via Kristen Lamb

["8 Tips for Creating Believable Fictional Towns"](#) by L.G. Davis
via Writer's Digest

["5 Tips for Writing a Tie-In Novel"](#) by Kate Heartfield
via Writer's Digest

["6 Writing Techniques That Helped Me Shift From Fiction to Memoir"](#) by Elizabeth Winthrop Alsop
via Writer's Digest

["The 3 Ps of Writing Romantic Suspense"](#) by Laura Griffin
via Writer's Digest

["How a Social Media Challenge Has Helped Me With Novel Revisions"](#) by Renee Roberson
via The Muffin

Feature Article

How Free Ebooks Can Help Your Writing Career

By Dawn Colclasure

There are a lot of writers and authors out there sharing free ebooks containing their original work. And there are a lot of other writers and authors out there putting them down for it. This has actually been a debate going on for a long time, with one side claiming that they enjoy publishing free ebooks and the other side claiming that these writers are wasting their valuable work.

But sharing free original work shouldn't be a badge of shame! In fact, it can actually help a writer or an author's career, no matter what stage they are at with their careers.

Free ebooks have been available for a very long time. And before there were ebooks, there were free samples shared on websites as well as blogs. Writers posting poetry, short stories and a sample of their WIPs who got positive reviews from readers gained the confidence to keep writing – perhaps even to submit their other work for publication. And for the writers who ended up getting negative reviews of their free work shared online, it gave them the chance to working on improving their craft.

In some cases, writers have been able to eventually earn a profit in exchange for sharing ebooks including their work. The smart writer knows that making some of their content available for free can help their writing career, because it shows potential readers and clients what kind of work they can do. The free samples have also shown potential readers and clients what they can expect from these writers. These potential readers and clients may search for the author's other books (and perhaps buy them!) or check out their business.

In addition to giving out samples of your work, or even sharing original content, you can use this as a way of building your email newsletter mailing list. You can collect email addresses from every person who downloads your work through sites such as BookFunnel.

Not only this, but providing free content is a great way to “test the waters” of writing something you don’t normally write. For me, that would be writing in genres such as chick lit and romance. These are genres I don’t normally write in, but they can be a fun change to try. The type of reception these attempts receive would tell me if I should take the leap into writing these genres in my novels which I could try submitting to a publisher. (I am not the type of author to stick with one topic or genre.)

Another point to consider is that free ebooks could bring in a little extra money for writers. Writers who publish through Kindle Unlimited will be paid at the end of the month for every page read in their Kindle Unlimited books. Some writers have found a way to actually earn a good living by doing this. (Personally, I’m not there yet!) If you do choose this route, however, it might be a good idea to publish a series to keep readers coming back for more or publish ebooks on trending or hot topics in order to gain reader interest.

Finally, free ebooks can be used to promote your other books or ebooks. If you are the author of other books, you can either feature them at the back of your book in a section titled “Other Books by This Author” and share the books’ covers as well as blurb and buy links. Alternatively, you can link to your other books somewhere in the interior of your book. (I did this with my free ebook, [*The Big Book of Writing Challenges*](#).)

When it comes to being a writer and/or author, not everything we do has to be monetized. Some of the things we do can work towards promoting us, our business, or our work. Our main goal as authors is to promote our work. They can also show readers

that we are open to making reading material more accessible to people who are on a low income and cannot buy books. A free ebook can go a long way in bringing joy and information to readers, but it can also help promote the writers who are writing and publishing them.

BIO:

Dawn Colclasure is a writer who lives in Oregon with her husband and children. She is the author and co-author of over two dozen books, among them *365 Tips for Writers: Inspiration, Writing Prompts and Beat the Block Tips to Turbo Charge Your Creativity* and the horror novel, *Shadow of Samhain*. She is also a content writer, freelance writer, book reviewer and ghostwriter. She is also a self-publisher. Her short stories have appeared in magazines and anthologies. She publishes the SPARREW Newsletter each month. Her websites are <https://dawnsbooks.com/> and <https://www.dmcwriter.com/>. She's on Twitter @dawncolclasure.

Thanks for reading! See you next month!

SPARREW ISSUE ELEVEN

Welcome to the SPARREW Newsletter!

The newsletter for Self-Publishers, Authors, Readers, Reviewers, Editors and Writers!

Welcome to the latest issue of the newsletter! This newsletter is just for writers, book reviewers, booklovers, self-publishers, editors and authors. So glad to have you on board!

We got a great issue put together for you this month.

For many writers, including myself, we got busy tackling that annual challenge to write a novel in 30 days. Many writers have a love/hate relationship with National Novel Writing Month, and many choose not to participate at all. That's totally okay! There was one month I couldn't do NaNoWriMo because I was too busy with assignments. But this year, I participated, and it has been a blast! I am about 6000 words shy of getting to 50K words, but as long as I stick with it, I know I'll reach my goal! It will be the first time I finally reach that 50K word goal out of all the other times I participated in NaNoWriMo. It's a great feeling knowing I will have yet another novel written by the time December rolls around.

If you're one of those writers who has also participated in NaNoWriMo this year, please share with me your experiences! I would love to read them!

We got another great issue lined up for you this month!

Melanie Hooyenga returns with an interview for the self-publishing section of this newsletter. I have been in awe of just how well Melanie has been rocking the self-publishing gig, and she kindly shares some of her wisdom in this interview.

For the author interview, you'll get to meet the author E. Graziani, whose new novel, *Magenta*, is now available! I learned about E. Graziani and her novel through a Facebook group, and I was intrigued. I knew I had to learn more about her and her journey as an author. Don't miss out!

You'll also get to meet freelance writer Empish Thomas. I have known Empish for many years, although we lost touch for a long time. Empish recently tracked me down and reached out to connect again and I'm so thrilled to have this amazing and talented writer back in my network! She has really come far as a writer and her story is inspiring. Check out the interview to learn how Empish manages to navigate the freelance writing world!

And, finally, check out Carolyn Howard-Johnson's latest editing tip for her "Tricky Edits" column! You won't want to miss it!

Thank you for subscribing and taking the time to read my newsletter. I hope you enjoy this issue! Feel free to drop me a note or connect with me on social media – I'd love to hear from you!

I hope you enjoy this issue! Feel free to drop me a note or connect with me on social media! I'd love to connect with you! This issue's feature article is about something which I feel a lot of writers might be able to relate to: How writing first thing in the morning seems to be the only chance they have ever been able to find time to write! My writing schedule and "working hours" went out the window this summer. My oldest does not use the PC very often, but my youngest definitely grabs time to use it whenever they can! And they usually end up being on the computer for hours – since, of course, they don't have school! Morning writing has helped me to manage getting a lot of writing done this summer, although sadly, the same can't be said about work on my books. Hopefully I can get back to working on them soon!

Enjoy this issue!

Check out archived issues of the SPARREW Newsletter here:
<https://sparrewarchives.blogspot.com/>

All current issues will be posted on my website here:
<https://www.dmcwriter.com/the-sparrew-newsletter>

Meanwhile, here are my most recent blog posts:

Dawn Colclasure's Blog: "[From Horrifying Experience to Shattered Story: Lost Soul is the AU of a Painful Past](#)"

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I welcome submissions from subscribers!

Are you a booklover who wants to have your book blog featured?
Are you a writer with news?
Are you an author looking for reviewers of your latest book?
Are you a book reviewer whose review just went live?
Are you a self-publisher with a new release?
Are you an editor who wants to share your thoughts on editing,
complete with a bio advertising your business?

Please feel free to submit any of these notes to me at
DMCWriter@gmail.com for the next issue of the newsletter!

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SELF-PUBLISHER CORNER

Self-Publisher Interview with Melanie Hooyenga

1. What can you tell me about your experience as a writer?

I've been writing novels for fourteen years and have been published for ten. My first two books were intended for adult audiences but featured teenage protagonists, and after the

second book, a few friends suggested I try writing young adult. I went all in and tried first-person, present tense for the first time, and absolutely loved it.

I've published nine novels (three trilogies), have two short stories in anthologies, and am starting my thirteenth novel right now!

2. What made you decide to write a book?

I've always loved telling stories. When I was young, I wrote a lot of poems, songs, and short stories, and I was always intrigued with the idea of writing a longer manuscript. I'd tried outlining a book a couple times in my twenties, but it wasn't until I moved to Mexico and wasn't working — and therefore had a lot of free time on my hands — that I threw myself into learning everything I could about the publishing industry. My first attempt was a memoir about my first year in Mexico, then I switched to novels and haven't looked back.

3. What circumstances brought you to the decision to self-publish your book?

When I first started writing, I swore I would only publish traditionally. This was in the late '00s, when self-publishing was just getting its legs beneath it. By the time I'd been querying my third book, *Flicker*, for 2+ years, that stigma had started to change and I decided I'd rather put the book out into the world than leave it languishing in my laptop.

At the time, I was partnered with another author designing book covers for authors who were self-publishing, so I swapped services with her to format my book. After that, I did the formatting and covers myself, and the rest is history.

4. What has your experience as a self-publisher been like?

I'm not going to lie, it's challenging. When I first started, I had no idea what I was doing, but I learned more with each book. I also built up my network of indie authors and learned from them. By the time I was ready to release the first book in my second series, I had an arsenal of marketing strategies — blog tours, contest entries, and advanced readers with reviews, to name a few — and it remains my most successful launch to date.

The self-publishing community is wonderful. A lot of successful authors are generous about sharing the techniques that have worked for them, and I'm in countless Facebook groups dedicated to all aspects of indie publishing.

Because of my background in graphic design and marketing, I'm able to do pretty much all the work myself, including cover design, interior formatting, and all marketing materials. (I do use an editor.) But I also have a day job, and it's tough to find time to do all the things I know I should be doing.

5. How do you respond to the negative stigma attached to self-publishing and self-published books?

Fortunately a lot of that stigma has changed. There are still books that have poor quality covers and need an editor, but the majority of them are just as professional as anything come out of traditional publishers.

There will always be people who look down on self-publishing, but that just pushes me to make my books the best they can be. Recently I discovered that a couple traditionally-published author friends won the same award that I've won for several books, and I admit, that made me feel really good because I felt like we were on the same level.

Most importantly, many readers don't seem to care if the cover

isn't as professional or the formatting is a little wonky. They want a good story, and self-publishing has allowed more stories to reach readers.

6. What is one very important lesson you have learned as a self-publisher?

Networking is crucial. I've learned so much from other authors, and having other people on your side makes writing feel a little less isolated. I'm in online groups where I can ask questions about marketing, pricing strategies, problems (and resolutions) with vendors, and we help each other spread the word about our books.

7. What do you know now about self-publishing that you wish you knew at the beginning?

In the past few years, rapid release has become a strategy with which many authors have found success. Basically, you don't publish the first book in a series until the entire series is finished and ready to go. Then you publish them anywhere from a week to a month apart.

For new authors, this can be beneficial because readers are more willing to take a chance on a new author if they've published more than one book. And more established authors love it because it keeps their fans clamoring for more.

If you've never published, time is on your side. You can finish a series and release them close together for a bigger impact than you'd get releasing them one per year (which is my publishing schedule.) Personally, I don't write quickly enough to do this, and I try to be content with my one-book-per-year schedule.

8. A lot of authors of self-published books have reservations about promoting and marketing their book. Some even feel that it is a form of vanity or self-importance. What is your opinion about this?

People choose to self-publish for two reasons: they want a physical book they can share with friends and loved ones, or they want to make writing their business. It's important to be realistic about your goals. If you want the first option — great! It's exciting to hold physical proof of your hard work. But if you want to make writing your business, you have to run it as such.

If you create a product that you want others to buy, you have to tell them about it. That said, there's an art to selling without being obnoxious, and there are ways to promote your work without sharing your personal life with the world.

As for if self-publishing being a form of vanity or self-importance, I mean, yeah, choosing to share your creative work with the world IS a bit self-important, but that doesn't mean it's a bad thing. If you're not comfortable with that aspect of it, this path may not be for you.

9. How do you promote your books and what form of book promotion has worked the best for you?

I've got all the basics — website, newsletter, social media — plus I sell my books on all retailer sites. A lot of authors choose to sell exclusively with Amazon in Kindle Unlimited, and while I've enrolled books in that program at different points in my career, I prefer having my books accessible to as many readers as possible.

I do events throughout the year and have developed my booth with ideas borrowed from other writers. I have a branded table cloth, banner, bookmarks, and business cards, and recently

added wooden crates that I painted purple (my brand color) to help display my growing inventory.

10. What are some other important things you have learned as a self-publisher?

There will always be people who question your decisions. It's important to listen to advice from those who have more experience than you, but you also have to listen to your gut.

Another thing is to find your cheerleaders. They don't have to be family members or people you know in your daily life, but they're out there and they'll keep you going when you start to question yourself.

Finally, market yourself, not your book. Yes, you want to promote each book as they're published, but your website, etc., should be created around you, the author.

11. Do you feel that self-publishing is a viable choice for other authors?

Yes — if you're willing to put in the work. When you self-publish, every decision is up to you, and every success is up to you. If my books get press coverage, or win an award, or get stellar reviews, I know that's because of the work I've put in.

If your goal is to make enough money to quit your day job, you might want to reexamine your goals. Yes, there are success stories that make self-publishing seem like an easy way to get rich and famous, but those instances are few and far between.

12. How do you feel that self-publishing their books has helped many unknown authors finally get the recognition their books deserve?

Self-publishing has definitely made it easier for more authors to get their books to readers. While it's still more difficult to get into brick and mortar stores, ebooks and online retailers have made that access more equitable. That said, it usually still takes money for advertising, but the fact that people anywhere in the world can search an author's name and find their books definitely means more authors are finding success.

ABOUT MELANIE:

Multi-award winning young adult author Melanie Hooyenga writes books about strong girls who learn to navigate life despite its challenges. She first started writing as a teenager and finds she still relates best to that age group.

Her award-winning YA sports romance series, *The Rules Series*, is about girls from Colorado falling in love and learning to stand up on their own. Her YA time travel trilogy, *The Flicker Effect*, is about a teen who uses sunlight to travel back to yesterday. The first book, *Flicker*, won first place for Middle Grade/Young Adult in the Writer's Digest 2015 Self-Published eBook awards, and *The Rules Series* has won ten awards, including Finalist for MG/YA in the 2019 BookLife Prize. The first book in her current series, *Chasing the Sun*, won gold for young adult general fiction in the Moonbeam Children's Book Awards and was named one of the Best Indie eBooks of 2020 by Barnes & Noble Press.

When not writing books, you can find her wrangling her Miniature Schnauzer Gus and playing every sport imaginable with her husband Jeremy.

[Purchase link](#)

Website and Social Media Links:

<http://www.melaniehoo.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/MelanieHooyenga>

<https://twitter.com/MelanieHoo>

<https://instagram.com/melaniehoo/>

<https://www.tiktok.com/@melaniehooyenga>

New Release!

Dana Mitchells leads a shattered life – until the day she decides to fight back against her abusers. This choice leads her on a dark road that leads to homelessness and despair. Can she find her way out of the darkness before it's too late?

Get it FREE on Kindle [here](#)

Coming Soon!

These five stories are not just stories. They are tales inviting readers to draw their own conclusions and come up with their own ideas of what kind of stories they are. These five stories are not just stories. They are the kinds of tales inviting readers to draw their own conclusions and come up with their own ideas of just what kind of stories they are. What the endings mean. What happens after "The End." When you read a story, the author usually tells you the whole story. But what happens if you're not told everything? You're not given all of the information? From a story of an alien duking it out with Death to detectives investigating the mysterious murders of young children to a group of people trapped in a website that transports them to a world where one man has power over them, *5 Tales* are all about the strange and unusual. From the type of unbelievable and

impossible events inspired by real world stories, these tales will make readers ponder "what if?" and invite more ideas for what other outcomes could have happened, or why things happened.

News in Self-Publishing

["No Need To Worry About Amazon's Kindle Prime Lending Program"](#) by Carolyn Howard-Johnson

via Writers on the Move

["Senior resident in hot water over self-published book about life in aged care"](#)

By Seb Costello

via A Current Affair

["Thinking About Self-Publishing Your Children's Book? 4 Tips Why You Should"](#) by Karen Cioffi

via Sharing with Writers and Readers

["12 Pros and Cons of Self-Publishing Your Cookbook"](#) by Deanna Martinez Bey

via Writer's Digest

AUTHOR CORNER

Author Interview with E. Graziani

1. When did you start writing?

My love for writing started early on. In my teens I wrote poetry as an outlet for teen angst, and that was it...I was hooked. I began writing in earnest, after a college professor commented on a reflection piece I submitted. "Hey, you know, you should start thinking about writing seriously...you're good." That was enough for me!

2. What was your journey towards becoming an author like?

When the professor made that comment, it started me thinking...and tinkering. It took me four years to write my first novel. I would write a page, then leave it...my daughters were still young at the time. By the time I would get back to it, I'd forgotten what I'd written. I'd have to reread the manuscript. The journey to get my first book published was a long one. *Alice of the Rocks* was eventually published by a Canadian traditional publisher and after that, it became a lot easier. With seven books under my belt, I can truly say, it's been quite a journey. That said, I could never bring myself to allow a family member to read my first novel before it was published...I was embarrassed for them to read it...it was almost like they were reading my soul.

3. What can you tell me about your latest book? (Feel free to include an excerpt.)

I had a blast writing this one - *Magenta*. The MC, Magenta is powerful, yet vulnerable, unsure of herself, yet strong in so many ways. My dear friend and beta reader Gia, used the term, 'wallflower to allpower' and that is fitting because her character development is staggering.

From a recent review:

"All you need to remember is who you are. Remember your name, what it means and who you are."

Another exquisite novel from E. Graziani!
Magenta takes you beyond the boundaries of reality and introduces a world of infinite possibilities. It's a fantastical coming of age story that puts spotlight on the pressures put on the youth, and the high expectations imposed on them when they themselves are still struggling to find out who they are. It

celebrates the pleasures and giddiness of young, new love but it also bravely talks about grief, and coming to terms with loss of loved ones.

I love how Graziani explored the concept of legacy; the harnessing of powers combined through history and ancestry, while also establishing the truth that we are still our own individual, and so much more than the sum of our parents.

From high school hallways to dark mansions, to secret underground railroads and abandoned warehouses, I really enjoyed the world building. Welcome to the world of Visionaries, Typicals, Empaths, Rogues, Mindbenders, Abiders, and more. I can't get enough of the Community. I honestly wish the book was longer so I can meet them all.

I don't want to reveal anything more about the plot because I don't want to take away the heady experience that I had from any future readers. Go and pick up this book and have fun!
<https://princessandpages.com/> Blogger and Goodreads Reviewer

Here's the book blurb:

Not only is high school junior Magenta Thorson Rain still struggling with the loss of her mom to cancer, but she must also deal with issues that many other teens must face—high school crushes, awkwardness, and an overprotective parent. Then there's Lion, who has his own secrets about Magenta. He knows more about her than he could ever reveal. Lion also sees that Magenta is unwittingly making things happen around her but must keep it secret, as some of his kind may see her as a threat. Then, on Halloween night, Magenta suffers a massive hemorrhage in her brain. After waking up in the hospital, she begins seeing terrifying visions—the hunted women all with flaming red hair just like hers; her mother, who has been dead for years—and the Shadow Man, always in the background, always elusive, but always there.

And if that isn't enough, everything will change again. And when it does, it changes big.

4. What sort of methods do you use for book promotion?

I have some Instagram reviewers who I can count on for honest reviews. I use the usual media platforms, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter. I also have a fabulous bookstore contact whom I rely on to put on a great physical launch!

5. Where do you get your ideas for stories?

Everywhere and anywhere. From snippets of conversation while I'm waiting in line at the grocery store, to documentaries or even as I'm listening to a lecture. I once wrote a note on a church bulletin during mass...not one of my best moments I'll admit, but it was a really good idea. Lol!

6. What are you working on right now?

I'm working on editing a reboot of my *Alice of the Rocks* duology, and my first middle grade novel. I'm all about writing what inspires me, what is in my head at the time, nagging at me to be put to paper. I guess genre jumping is my middle name. I've been told it's probably not the best thing for building up an audience, but pigeon-holing myself into a specific age group or genre bores me. I couldn't write like that.

7. Any advice for other authors?

It's tough out there to say the least. You need to edit the heck out of your work, find beta readers, even writing groups, although that didn't work out for me. Just stick to it. Never stop querying your work. All it takes is one 'yes'.

ABOUT E. GRAZIANI:

E. Graziani is the author of *Magenta* and *Everything That Was Us*. She is the author of *Breaking Faith* (Second Story Press), a contemporary YA novel, listed on CBC Canada's Must-Read Books for Spring 2017, selected for the 'In the Margins' Book Award 2018 Recommended Fiction List and one of CCBC Best Books for Kids and Teens. Graziani is the author of the YA historical memoir, *War in My Town* (Second Story Press), also one of CCBC's Best Books for Kids and Teens, and a finalist in the Hamilton Arts Council 2016 Literary Awards for Best Non-Fiction. Graziani has also written the YA time-travel series, *Alice of the Rocks & Alice~Angel of Time*, and the novella, *Jess Under Pressure*. She resides in Canada with her husband and daughters. To contact the author or for more information on new releases or events, please visit her website...

egraziani1.wix.com/egrazianiauthor

Author News

[“Lyft drivers spread the Gospel with ride-hailing ministries”](#) by Luis Andres Henao
via Associated Press

[“Inspirational passion or paid-for promotion: can BookTok be taken on face value?”](#) by Ismene Ormonde
via The Guardian

REVIEWER CORNER

My Reviews:

["Make Your Author emPact"](#) by Stephanie Feger
via Reader Views

Other Book Reviews:

["Book review: Vancouver poet Christopher Levenson's Small Talk proves to be beautiful, too"](#) by Tom Sandborn
via Vancouver Sun

["Healing Yesterday's Tears"](#) by Kyli Santiago
via Reader Views

["Escape Route"](#) by Elan Barnehama
via Reader Views

["The Betrayal"](#) by Doug Dorsey
via Reader Views

["Coming Full Circle"](#) by Budd Titlow and Mariah Tinger
via Reader Views

["Sunflowers Beneath the Snow"](#) by Teri M. Brown
via Reader Views

["Dare Disturb the Universe"](#) by Charles Newhall III
via Reader Views

["Piece of Work: A Memoir"](#) by Danielle Tantone
via Reader Views

["Musings, Woolgathering, & Ghosts"](#) by C.K. Sobey
via Reader Views

["Severed Echoes"](#) by D.V. Chernov
via Reader Views

["Expraedium"](#) by Armen Melikian
via Reader Views

["Silhouette"](#) by Paul G. Swingle
via Reader Views

["The American Outsider: A Novel"](#) by Homa Poursagari
via Reader Views

["A Recycled Marriage"](#) by Rosemary Mairs
via Reader Views

["The Lighthouse"](#) by Glenn C. Daman
via Reader Views

["The Bridge to Magic"](#) by Alex Thornbury
via Reader Views

["The Waxing Moon"](#) by Elli Morgan
via Reader Views

["Shattered Dreams and Broken Hearts"](#) by Sylvia Abolis Mennear
via Reader Views

["Twisted Piccolo"](#) by Steven Lane Smith
via Reader Views

["For a Better Chance at Life: Achieving Life Satisfaction"](#) by
Jonathan J. Woolverton
via Reader Views

["Side Hustle & Flow"](#) by Cliff Beach
via Reader Views

["Mage's Call"](#) by D. Omran
via Reader Views

["Seeking Tranquility"](#) by Amy Schisler
via Reader Views

["The Outlaw Gillis Kerg"](#) by Mike Murphey
via Reader Views

["The New Empire"](#) by Alison McBain
via Reader Views

["Salmon in the Seine"](#) by Norris Comer
via Reader Views

["Kick Ball Slay: An Introduction to West Coast Swing... AND a Murder Mystery"](#) by Doug Dorsey
via Reader Views

["Ernie's Bleachers"](#) by Tim Pareti
via Reader Views

["The Gift of Gracie"](#) by Amy Heyman
via Reader Views

["Finding Jane"](#) by Elizabeth Conte
via Reader Views

["It's Who We Are: A Photographic Tapestry of Our Diverse Planet"](#)
by Anthony Timiraos
via Reader Views

["Primal Storytelling: Marketing for Humans"](#) by Anthony L. Butler
via Reader Views

["Beyond the Money: 8 Lifestyle Shifts for Entrepreneurs with 8 Figures or More"](#) by Chad Willardson
via Reader Views

[“The Bush Clinic”](#) by Stella Atrium
via Reader Views

[“The Lapone Sisters”](#) by Barry Wilker
via Reader Views

[“The Reluctant Scot”](#) by Liz Fogleman
via Reader Views

[“An Erotic Phenotype”](#) by Sherman P. Bastarache
via Reader Views

Calls for Reviews

I'd love to find reviewers for my books! Contact me at DMCWriter@gmail.com if interested.

READER CORNER

Book Blogs

[John Pistelli](#)

[Nerdy Book Club](#)

[The Indie View](#)

[The Literary Edit](#)

[The New Yorker – Page Turner](#)

BOOK NEWS:

["How and Why I Schedule My Reading"](#) by Sarah S. Davis
via Book Riot

["Keep Tabs On Your Books with These Reading Journals"](#) by Kelly Jensen
via Book Riot

["What are Forgotbusters? The Blockbuster Books that Time Forgot"](#) by Isabelle Popp
via Book Riot

["What Are Hopepunk Books, And Where Should I Get Started?"](#)
by Mara Franzen
via Book Riot

["Book-Industry Activists Should Be Careful What They Wish For"](#)
by Conor Friedersdorf
via The Atlantic

["Hooray for 'hybrid' books: mixing genres to tell better tales"](#) by Barbara Lane
via Datebook

New Release From Filbert Publishing!

Polaris: Harnessing Intuition to Rediscover Your Life Purpose
By Beth Ann Erickson

What if there was a simple way to rediscover your purpose in life?

What if you already possessed everything you need to achieve your highest goals?

What if you could wake up every morning knowing with everything within you that you actually matter? What you do matters? Your existence is vital?

"Follow your dreams." You've likely heard that mantra. The problem is, most gurus don't give you the vital tools, a down to earth plan, on how to achieve that lofty objective. "Give away the 'what.' Sell the 'how,'" I hear them say.

But what if you could not only find out what to do to truly live the life you deserve, but could also gain every tool you need to discover "how" to do it? All in one brief, but powerful volume.

In "Polaris: Harnessing Intuition to Rediscover Your Life Purpose," you'll discover...

- How to find your true calling, your Polaris. It's not as difficult as you may think.
- How to navigate your personal path and why you must sometimes walk alone.
- Easy techniques to cultivate your intuition and instantly make decisions that will serve you best.
- The power of audacity and how to use it to build a support system that lasts.
- Don't listen to this emotion. It's a liar.
- The one activity you must master to keep advancing towards your ultimate goal, your true Polaris.

You have one life to live. You have an important purpose in that life. If you don't achieve it, it will remain incomplete.

Rest easy in the knowledge that no matter your age, your Polaris patiently awaits. The only question is this: How much longer will you put off living your life purpose?

EXCERPT:

[Introduction to Polaris: Harnessing Intuition to Rediscover Your Life Purpose](#)

Beth Ann Erickson (BethAnnErickson.com)

When I was a child, I loved to tell stories. I not only loved to tell stories, I listened to anyone and everyone who would take the time to spin a good yarn.

When I visited my grandparent's home, I raced to my grandpa's lap because I knew he would weave a tale and take me to places where I had superpowers, where everybody was kind, where trees could talk, and dogs could sing.

My grandpa was an extraordinary man who could make every mundane task an adventure.

For example, rather than head to his massive garden to pull weeds, he recruited all his grandchildren, armed them with weaponry (hoes and spades), and mobilized his troops to engage in a full-blown weed war. We spent the afternoon chopping and hacking at our enemies, stealing tangy under-ripe fruit from the nearby apple trees, and dodging enemy attacks.

It was a magical experience, interacting with a real-life Walter Mitty.

I grew up understanding the power of storytelling and yearned to be one of the lucky folks who could wield that power. Everything within me knew that grandpa possessed knowledge I desired and, for that reason, was inexplicably drawn towards him. When we were together, we felt like kindred spirits, storytellers to the bone. I knew hanging out with him would garner me clues to help guide me towards his secrets of engaging the magic of word-smithing.

Whenever I discuss Polaris, I can't help but think about Grandpa and the gentle way with which he not only recognized my personal Polaris. But I sadly got to witness the results when his own Polaris was never allowed to guide him.

The thing is, he never properly engaged in his gift to the point where he received personal gratification from it. His entanglement in a rigid religious sect dictated that he not engage in "vain imaginings." As a result, he never shared his stories with anyone but his immediate family... likely only me. He never felt the peace most people feel when they absolutely know they're on the right track, living their dream, aware of their purpose in life.

Instead, his talent languished, and I often wondered why his eyes looked so sad whenever he was out of his outdoor element, interacting with his fellow religious "friends."

In thinking about him, I feel a small sense of happiness knowing he got to engage in his tremendous gift with his grandchildren even though the religious organization he belonged to never allowed him to pursue storytelling in any other significant way.

And yet his dream never died. Every now and then, he'd pen a letter and submit a story to a publication. By the time a response arrived, out of fear for his immortal soul, he'd respectfully decline each offer.

He was a tremendously talented man, one who received these offers multiple times, each time an opportunity to develop his creative talents on a larger scale. But he steadfastly refused, selecting the life of a poor farmer of faith rather than follow the path he was born to walk. I'm continually haunted by the look in his eyes whenever he mentioned yet another opportunity for him to operate in his gifts, continually saying, "I know I'm not a very good farmer, I know I could provide for my family better if I accepted this new job. But my faith, and my wife, dictate I stay here. So, I stay here."

I tell grandpa's story because I meet so many people who remind me of him.

They are the folks who settle for second best in their lives (or third, or fourth, or fifth...) for a myriad of reasons.

Perhaps they feel like it's the right thing to do.

Perhaps they're working in a job that pays well but doesn't fulfill their soul.

Maybe they feel like they can't afford to work towards any of their childhood dreams.

Maybe they feel like their childhood dreams are fanciful and aren't worth considering.

There are as many reasons for not fulfilling your ultimate life purpose as there are people who are not proceeding towards their personal Polaris.

And it's for those exact people that I wrote this book.

I saw grandpa's eyes when he talked about storytelling. I watched disappointment wash across his face when he talked about the publishers, local publications, and television execs who admired his talent and invited him to join their team. I noticed his fake smile when he said, "That's OK. I'd rather milk the cows..."

To be clear, there's nothing wrong with working in the agricultural industry. However, if it's not your dream, if it's not your *raison d'être*, if it doesn't produce joy, if it's not your dream, then it's not right.

As I pondered my grandpa, I knew I never wanted to look in the mirror and see those eyes gazing back at me from my own reflection when I pondered what I wanted to do with my life. I also don't want anybody to see that kind of sadness in their own face.

While it may seem impossible right now, you don't have to tuck your dreams away. You can trust the inner guidance within you, always prompting you to head in a certain direction.

Your innate talents exist for a reason.

In fact, it's more than possible to live your dreams, or at least a version of those dreams (we'll talk about that later).

Simply stated, you can become the person you were born to be... no matter your age.

You don't have to proceed towards the next phase of your life wondering what happened, how did you get so far off track, hoping against hope you'll somehow do something, anything, to help you feel fulfilled... on your own terms.

I believe every person on this planet is here for a very explicit reason and it is up to that person to discover (or rediscover) that reason and proceed forward, completing the one task they are here to complete.

The good news is this: Discovering (or rediscovering) your life purpose is easier than you may think.

Anybody who knows me, knows I'm not big into woo. That said, the spiritual being within you is continually prodding you towards that reason you're here. That's because once you start proceeding towards it, you will feel such contentment, happiness, and dare I say, bliss.

Ah, I'm getting ahead of myself. I do that a lot.

All I can say for now is, as you proceed through this book, you're in for an adventure of a lifetime. All you need to do is open these pages, open your heart, and allow its message to trigger the curiosity to begin taking those first few steps towards the happiest moments of your life.

Once you start this process, you'll be amazed at the magic you'll trigger, the synchronicity you'll experience, the adventurous spirit you'll find within yourself.

Don't believe me? Don't take my word for it. Flip the page and let's get started.

<https://filbertpublishing.com/a-new-release-2/>

New Books

[Blood Ending: A Vampire Novel](#)

By Michael McGovern

Genre: Gothic Horror

[The Brothers Brown & Gray: A Boston Detective Novel](#)

By Gary Glass

Genre: Mystery & Crime

[Transcending Fire](#)

By E.K. Blalock

Genre: Science Fiction

[Ultimatum or Dinners With Saul: A Novel of Politics and Philosophy](#)

By Michael Veletsky

Genre: Literary Fiction

[The World of Juno: A secondary world history and anthology](#)

Edited by Heather and William C. Tracy

Genre: Anthology (Science Fiction)

[Ride or Die: A Feminist Manifesto for the Well-Being of Black Women](#)

By Shanita Hubbard

Category: Social Science

[Avoiding My Merry Birthday](#)

By Sonja Gunter

Genre: Conventional/Holiday Romance

[An Unconventional Christmas](#)

By Tara Fox Hall

Genre: Conventional/Holiday Romance

[Into the Forest: Tales of the Baba Yaga](#)

Edited by Lindy Ryan

Genre: Anthology (Horror)

[Wicked Little Things](#)

By Justin Arnold

Genre: Horror

[Christmas in Stewart Falls](#)

By Shannon Kennedy

Genre: Social Issues

[Asking For It](#)

By Shannon Kennedy

Genre: Social Issues

[A Firm Plateau: All or Nothing #3](#)

by Rachel Anne Jones

Genre: Contemporary Suspense

[Conversations with Birds](#)

By Priyanka Kumar

Category: Science

[The Story of Jace - Redemption: Bloodlines of Atmos book 3](#)

by J. P. Edgar

Genre: Paranormal Romance

[The Making of Her](#)

by Anna Aysgarth

Genre: Historical Romance

[Hope & Hopelessness: A Pride & Prejudice Reimagining](#)

by Ney Mitch

Genre: Historical Romance

[The Amish Nurse Series #1: Worry Ends Where Faith Begins](#)

by Stephanie Schwartz

Genre: Amish Romance

[American Nightingale](#)

by Debra Scacciaferro

Genre: Historical Romance

[A Christmas Charm](#)

by Gretchen Rose

Genre: Contemporary/Holiday Romance

[The Tale of Mr. & Mrs Bennet](#)

by Ney Mitch

Genre: Historical/Christmas Romance

[The Secret Journey \(Harmonie Books Series Book 1\)](#)

by Brian Barnes and Judith Briles

Genre: Religious/Historical Fiction

[Holiday Traditions: Tales of Christmas Magic](#)

by Steven Manchester

Genre: Children's Fiction/Holiday

[Culinary Travels: Memories Made at the Table](#)

by Emily Szajda

Category: Food/Memoir

[Marrying Myself](#)

by Christine Melanie Benson

Genre: Women's Fiction

[Leigh Howard and the Ghosts of Simmons-Pierce Manor](#)

by Shawn M. Warner

Genre: YA Paranormal

Mass Transit: A Birdie Kelley Mystery

by Bob Joswick

Genre: Mystery & Crime

<https://www.blackrosewriting.com/mystery/masstransit>

[Even Though I Knew the End](#)

By C.L. Polk

Genre: Fantasy

[Bloodmarked \(Book #2 in the Legendborn Series\)](#)

By Tracy Deonn

Genre: YA Fantasy

[Better Than Fiction: A Novel](#)

By Alexa Martin

Genre: Romance

[Now Is Not the Time to Panic: A Novel](#)

By Kevin Wilson

Genre: Literary

[Flight: A Novel](#)

By Lynn Steger Strong

Genre: Literary

[White Horse: A Novel](#)

By Erika T. Wurth

Genre: Horror

[The Hollows](#)

By Daniel Church

Genre: Urban Fantasy/Paranormal

[Strega: A Novel](#)

By Johanne Lykke Holm, Saskia Vogel (Translator)

Genre: Gothic Horror

[Wayward: A Novel](#)

By Chuck Wendig

Genre: Suspense & Thriller

[House of Yesterday](#)

By Deeba Zargarpur

Genre: YA

EDITOR CORNER

Tricky Edits from Carolyn Howard-Johnson

Excerpt from 3rd Edition of The Frugal Editor,
to be released Fall, 2022

We all need occasionally need a special word and our word processor isn't always up to the task. That's when I dig out my near-ancient Roget's Thesaurus in Dictionary Form, a revised edition from 1961 edited by Norman Lewis who was the first president of the academic senate and chairman of the communications department at Rio Hondo College. I kid you not. It's a fat paperback, about the dimensions of a mass-market pocketbook pioneered before the second world war but lots thicker. Its pages are yellowed and crisp and it still has words in it that have been shunted aside by modern references. (Those entries can be uncut gems if you're writing anything that can be considered "historical." If you can get your hands on one, do it! Check bookstores that have New and Used features like Amazon and Powell's.

Once a month Carolyn Howard-Johnson shares a tricky edit excerpted from her The Frugal Editor, the second multi award-winning book in her HowToDoItFrugally Series of books for writers. Find it on Amazon in paper or as an e-book at bit.ly/FrugalEditor or learn more at her website, <https://HowToDoItFrugally.com>. Find all the books in that series at <http://bit.ly/CarolynsAmznProfile>

WRITER CORNER

Interview with Freelance Writer Empish Thomas

1. How long have you been writing?

I have been writing since the 90s in college taking journalism classes. However, I didn't start writing as a professional until about 2005.

2. What drew you to becoming a freelance writer?

It was a way for me to break into professional writing. In those early years, I only had my college clips and I had just become disabled. I was afraid no publication would take me seriously if I applied to journalism positions. Freelancing allowed me to not have to disclose. I would work from home, conduct all business on phone and through email and no one would be the wiser. And it actually worked.

3. How did it feel when you first got published?

Fantastic! Again, at the beginning of the journey I was disabled and not confident people would take me seriously. So, when I pitched my first story and it was accepted, it was truly a great feeling.

4. What are some of the challenges you ran into when you started freelancing? How did you overcome them?

The challenges for me were disability-related. I am blind and work in a visual space. So, I had to get sighted help to read

magazines and newspapers to me. I needed to keep up with trends and how to pitch to publications. During that time, most publications were print only and few were online.

5. What are some of the things you use to help you with freelance writing?

Besides some sighted help for reading publications, I use a screen reader on my desktop computer. I use a mechanical keyboard for my fingers. I type and don't use a mouse so this kind of keyboard is easy on the fingers and hands. I also use my smartphone with accessibility for the blind. I will use it as a personal dictionary and thesaurus.

6. Are there any books you can recommend to anyone interested in becoming a freelance writer?

Two immediately come to mind. I am a non-fiction, journalistic writer, so the Associated Press Style Book is essential. It gives all the do's and don'ts of writing for magazines and newspapers.

Another great guide is *Who Said What: A Writer's Guide to Finding, Evaluating, Quoting and Documenting Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism* by Kayla Meyers. I am still reading this one, but in the first chapter I was quickly impressed. Great nuggets of wisdom on how to document sources and do online research.

7. Please describe your typical workday as a freelance writer.

My day starts off with the regular morning routine: shower and breakfast. I also add exercise in the a.m. Then I get to my desk and review my things to do for the day. Some days is pure writing

while others is reading and researching info. I squeeze in responding to emails and posting on social media.

8. What was the hardest market for you to break into and how did you succeed?

I have not tried to break into a new market yet. This is actually on my list to do. My writing has always been in the disability space. But the work is not steady, so I am branching out to the health and wellness arena. This industry is closely connected to disability so I feel confident that I can break in soon. I am already helping a college friend write posts for her nonprofit on sickle cell. I am sure with these new clips I can land an assignment.

9. What's one thing about freelance writing that surprised you after you were at it for some time?

The fact I could do this for the rest of my life. When you start a career, especially these days, there is no guarantee of longevity. People come in and out of jobs all the time. But I am still here, writing and enjoying it. I can actually see myself continuing way into retirement age but maybe not at the same level or pace.

10. What advice do you have for a writer thinking of becoming a freelance writer?

Work on your craft by reading everything. Well, maybe not everything, but read a lot. As you read, pay attention to sentence structure, words used and how the writer tells the story. Great writers are usually avid readers.

ABOUT EMPISH:

Empish J. Thomas is a freelance writer, blogger and accessibility consultant. She writes human interest and lifestyle pieces along with blog posts about vision loss. She was a diligent and long-time career columnist for 17 years with Dialogue Magazine. She also ventured into broadcast journalism by hosting and producing a radio show called Eye on Blindness with the Georgia Radio Reading Service for 3 years.

When Empish is not working, she is writing about her life on her blog at www.empishthomas.com. She is an audio description movie enthusiast and shares that excitement as a council member for Descriptive Video Works. Empish's other passions include reading audiobooks and listening to podcasts. Read blog posts by Empish Thomas on the Visually Impaired: Now What? blog.

News for Writers

["A Guide To Long-Form Content"](#) by Adriana Stein
via Search Engine Journal

["What Is A Content Management System \(CMS\)?"](#) by Corey Morris
via Search Engine Journal

["3 Key Strategies for Effective Fiction—Derived from Neuroscience"](#) by Susan DeFreitas
via Jane Friedman

["My Son Said That Being a Writer Was Not a Real Job. That Made Me Chuckle, and Then I Felt Sad"](#) by Nathan Rabin
via Nathan Rabin's Happy Place

["The ultimate recipe for writing SEO content"](#) by Rablab
via Search Engine Land

["Protecting Journalists Is Protecting Freedom Of Expression For All"](#) by Dr. Ewelina U. Ochab
via Forbes

["SEO – Back to Basics"](#) by Marjorie Richter
via nDash

["How Cosy Can You Get?"](#) by Juliet Marillier
via Writer Unboxed

["What is Roman Noir? A Brief History of the Genre"](#) by Annika Barranti Klein
via Book Riot

["Focusing the Message: 5 Pro Tips from a Songwriter"](#) by Kathryn Craft
via Writer Unboxed

["Reach The High Notes: Get Paid to Write for the Music Industry!"](#)
by Elizabeth R. Elstien
via WritersWeekly

["Writing a memoir? Don't make these 10 mistakes"](#) by Daphne Larkin
via The Transylvania Times

["How Writing Poetry Can Heal Your Inner Child"](#) by Keri Stewart
via Her Campus

["Creating Content that Resonates with Your LinkedIn Audience"](#)
by Lilian Muliti
via nDash

["What Will Writers Do Without Twitter?"](#) by Erin Somers
via The Atlantic

["But it Really Happened That Way! Tips for Blending Real Life into Fiction"](#) by Charity Tahmaseb
via WOW! Women on Writing

["What to Do During Dry Spells if You're a Freelance Writer"](#)
by Suzanne Lieurance
via Writers on the Move

Feature Article

Do You Walk Away From a Challenge? Try it Instead!

By Dawn Colclasure

"Challenge accepted." This catchphrase has become so common these days that it's caught on with the kind of people who usually won't accept a challenge. But what if you're the kind of writer who likes to play it safe? Does this mean you'll miss out on an opportunity?

When I was presented with the challenge to write poetry several years ago, I balked. This occurred when I was very young, before I was even a writer. Someone just saw something in me and suggested that I write poetry. 'I don't know how to write poetry!' I mentally protested. However, instead of backing away from this challenge, I decided to consider it instead. I already enjoyed reading poetry; how hard could it be to write it? (Stop laughing!)

So instead of saying "no" to this challenge, I decided to try it instead. I was curious to see if I could do it.

I started small, writing couplets and childish rhymes. However, I also threw myself into learning everything I could about how to write poetry. Soon I was composing poems on the daily. By age 11, my poem was accepted for publication. I was thrilled and eager to pursue this journey of writing poetry even further. These days, I have poems published in magazines and several poetry books out there as well.

A challenge may seem intimidating at first. For most folks, a particular challenge may not be for them. Every November, writers are challenged to write a 50,000-word novel in 30 days. If you don't write fiction, this particular challenge may not be for you. But if you have already written one or two novels, then signing up for NaNoWriMo just may be right up your alley.

In addition to deciding if a challenge is right for you, think about whether or not you really want to give it a try. I know many people who tried to do something new and, after realizing they didn't like it or didn't have the time to commit to it, they walked away. This is perfectly acceptable, since you at least gave it a try only to realize it wasn't a good idea right now. But the main thing that matters is if you want to actually TRY to do it. Are you willing to give this new thing a go? Do you want to try it and see if you can do it? If you answered yes, then give it a try.

Finally, before committing to a decision on whether or not you want to take on a challenge, think about what you will need in order to do it. For NaNoWriMo this year, I knew I needed to have an idea for a novel to write before I could commit to participating. I'd actually had an idea for a novel in my head for months, and I figured with the onset of a challenge to write a novel in 30 days, why not write it now?

Think about what you will need in order to complete your challenge and if these are things you either already have or can obtain yourself. Most writing challenges only require the writer to have something to write with, but with something like learning how to write poetry or learning how to write a novel, it might be a

good idea to have a few resources, such as how-to books, on hand.

Completing a challenge can be a great thing for most people. For the writer who has seen a challenge to an end and achieved their goal, it can be a moment of revelation. The writer learns just exactly what they are capable of doing and they might pick up a few skills along the way. Give a challenge a try and see how it can enrich your life.

BIO:

Dawn Colclasure is a writer who lives in Oregon with her husband and children. She is the author and co-author of over two dozen books, among them *365 Tips for Writers: Inspiration, Writing Prompts and Beat the Block Tips to Turbo Charge Your Creativity* and the horror novel, *Shadow of Samhain*. She is also a content writer, freelance writer, book reviewer and ghostwriter. She is also a self-publisher. Her short stories have appeared in magazines and anthologies. She publishes the SPARREW Newsletter each month. Her websites are <https://dawnsbooks.com/> and <https://www.dmcwriter.com/>. She's on Twitter @dawncolclasure.

Thanks for reading! See you next month!

SPARREW ISSUE TWELVE

Welcome to the SPARREW Newsletter!

The newsletter for Self-Publishers, Authors, Readers, Reviewers, Editors and Writers!

Welcome to the latest issue of the newsletter! This newsletter is just for writers, book reviewers, booklovers, self-publishers, editors and authors. So glad to have you on board!

We got a great issue put together for you this month.

The year is almost over and that means a lot of writers are taking stock of the writing goals they have accomplished this year, as well as setting new goals for the new year.

As for me, I've tried some new things this year: Writing an ebook every month, taking the leap into content writing for a content creation agency, and entering manuscripts in contests. Oh, I also finished writing some books, which I submitted to publishers who had open calls and reading periods for certain types of manuscripts. (You can read more about that in my blog post, linked below.) And, of course, starting and running this newsletter! Can't believe it will be the first anniversary next month!

There have been some interesting experiences resulting from these new things but not all of them are things that went well for me. I've been spending some time analyzing what has worked and what hasn't. (The contest thing is definitely out!) It has been a time of reflection and deciding on what sort of changes will need to be made for the new year.

Are you taking stock of your writing accomplishments this year? What goals did you achieve? What sort of plans do you have for your writing next year?

It's time for another great issue of the SPARREW Newsletter!

In this issue, you'll get to meet self-publisher Elana McDougall, the author of the fantasy series, *The Eldritch of Hallows*. I connected with Elana through Twitter and enjoyed reading the first book in her series, *Hidden Magic* (check out my review of her book here!). Elana agreed to be interviewed for the newsletter and she shares some great tips on self-publishing.

For the author interview, you'll find a familiar name this time around: SPARREW Editor columnist Carolyn Howard-Johnson has a newly updated edition of her book coming out REAL SOON and she took the time to share about her experiences as an author plus info about her book.

Next up is the writer interview, where an old friend of mine, Natasha Khullar Relph, is featured. I connected with Natasha eons ago, through a message board for writers, and I have been following her journey as a writer ever since! Natasha took some time out of her very busy schedule to answer questions for this newsletter.

And, finally, check out Carolyn Howard-Johnson's latest editing tip for her "Tricky Edits" column! It's a special holiday column. You won't want to miss it!

This issue's feature article is all about reading goals. For all of you booklovers out there, a new year means new reading goals! My article explains reading goals and some you can consider taking on for 2023.

Thank you for subscribing and taking the time to read my newsletter. I hope you enjoy this issue! Feel free to drop me a

note or connect with me on social media – I'd love to hear from you!

Happy New Year to all! Here's wishing you all the best 2023 has to offer!

I hope you enjoy this issue! Feel free to drop me a note or connect with me on social media! I'd love to connect with you! This issue's feature article is about something which I feel a lot of writers might be able to relate to: How writing first thing in the morning seems to be the only chance they have ever been able to find time to write! My writing schedule and "working hours" went out the window this summer. My oldest does not use the PC very often, but my youngest definitely grabs time to use it whenever they can! And they usually end up being on the computer for hours – since, of course, they don't have school! Morning writing has helped me to manage getting a lot of writing done this summer, although sadly, the same can't be said about work on my books. Hopefully I can get back to working on them soon!

Enjoy this issue!

Check out archived issues of the SPARREW Newsletter here:

<https://sparrewarchives.blogspot.com/>

All current issues will be posted on my website here:

<https://www.dmcwriter.com/the-sparrew-newsletter>

Meanwhile, here are my most recent blog posts:

Dawn Colclasure's Blog: "[How 2022 Was a Year of Doing Things Differently](#)"

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I welcome submissions from subscribers!

Are you a booklover who wants to have your book blog featured?
Are you a writer with news?
Are you an author looking for reviewers of your latest book?
Are you a book reviewer whose review just went live?
Are you a self-publisher with a new release?
Are you an editor who wants to share your thoughts on editing,
complete with a bio advertising your business?

Please feel free to submit any of these notes to me at
DMCWriter@gmail.com for the next issue of the newsletter!

SELF-PUBLISHER CORNER

Self-Publisher Interview with Elana McDougall

1. What can you tell me about your experience as a writer?

Some people listen to music for the song. To me, it was always about the lyrics. I think in words, not pictures. I've always loved reading and would write the odd thing for fun. I dreamed of being an author but never had the time to pursue it. Over the last few years, I decided to take online writing classes to improve the craft and learned so much. And that gave me confidence to continue writing.

2. What made you decide to write a book?

I was a teacher. I would take breaks from writing report cards and pick away at a grand epic fantasy story I was creating, all orcs and battles and swords. But I became more interested in the existence of a small village full of supernatural beings. In a place

where magic was normal there would be talking statues, gossiping doorknockers and houses that shifted by themselves. But then I began to delve deeper. What conflicts would there be between the different magical clans? How would the traumatic history of witch hunts and shapeshifter bounties affect them? What would a hidden community do to protect itself if it knew that the humans Outside would weaponize its peoples' powers. Voila, The Eldritch of Hallows series was born.

3. What circumstances brought you to the decision to self-publish your book?

To my surprise, I actually finished writing Hidden Magic. And I liked it. I loved the love story of Jake and Sasha. Hidden Magic had the romance, fantasy and humour I wanted in the books I was reading. So I decided now was the time to actually follow through on my dream. But the publishing business is risk averse, and my story title didn't contain the expression "The Woman in the...". I spent a year querying with little success before I stumbled on the idea of self-publishing through first Kobo and then Amazon.

4. What has your experience as a self-publisher been like?

It is a steep learning curve. Thank Goodness for Google. I was also lucky to find an online marketplace called Reedsy where I got my editor and book cover artist. And Twitter's Writing Community has been so helpful. But now that I've done it for myself, I'm finding I like the control and independence.

5. How do you respond to the negative stigma attached to self-publishing and self-published books?

There are bad books in the traditional publishing field as well. Quality is quality, no matter where you find it. I think more and

more people are moving towards indie authors as ebooks become more normalized. I strive to publish the most professional book I can. Hopefully people will respond to that.

6. What is one very important lesson you have learned as a self-publisher?

It's hard to narrow that down to just one. I'd say: Be brave and do it. I really should have started earlier. It's important though that you keep polishing your skills and keep asking questions.

7. What do you know now about self-publishing that you wish you knew at the beginning?

That it is available to writers. That it's easy to upload a book but difficult to do it right. That it's not just a case of handing the book over to Amazon but that it's up to you to promote yourself. I wish I had joined Twitter first. The wealth of information people share with you is fantastic.

8. A lot of authors of self-published books have reservations about promoting and marketing their book. Some even feel that it is a form of vanity or self-importance. What is your opinion about this?

Then your book and all your work dies a lonely, sad death, unnoticed and unmourned. The reality is that even famous authors self-promote through Twitter, talk shows and marketers. Publishing houses have entire departments tasked with making sure that books are hyped. If you don't believe in your book enough to shout out loud about it, then why should anyone want to read it?

9. How do you promote your books and what form of book promotion has worked the best for you?

It took me a while to tell friends and family that I had published Hidden Magic. They all went out and bought the book. There was some word of mouth but I needed to do more. A friend helped me create a website (www.elanamcdougall.com) where I could share excerpts. Then I went on Twitter, seeking out other writers. I learned a lot from them. That started the ball rolling. Lately, I've been more active on Facebook where different pages offer opportunities to find books to read and chances to offer my own for consideration.

10. What are some other important things you have learned as a self-publisher?

Keep promoting. Have trailers for your books. If you're on Twitter (and you should be), ask for advice and recommendations. Read other indie authors. And please, post reviews. It's very important.

11. Do you feel that self-publishing is a viable choice for other authors?

I'm amused when burgeoning authors announce that they only want to traditionally publish and sniff at self-publishing. They don't understand that they may wait for a long time and may never get the chance to send their book out into the world. There are so many gatekeepers in the business. Most houses won't even look at a manuscript without a literary agent. And literary agents are reluctant to go beyond what is safe and fits current trends. And even if a publisher makes a request, there's no guarantee that it won't end on a slush pile if the contact shifts houses or is fired. Self-publishing is a viable and respectable alternative.

12. How do you feel that self-publishing their books has helped many unknown authors finally get the recognition their books deserve?

Yes, I've read many indie authors I didn't find in a bookstore. Writers from marginalized communities can find their voice without being stifled. We are all enriched by that.

ABOUT ELANA:

After retiring from teaching rambunctious teenagers, Elana McDougall began 'The Eldritch of Hallows' series, about a supernatural sanctuary, hidden deep in the mountains of North Carolina, where magical beings live and love while struggling to stay hidden from the humans Outside.

When she's not writing, she's traveling to Europe and Central America, where she enjoys practising her atrocious Spanish. Her hair, thanks to her determined stylist, remains red. Everything else is in flux.

New Release!

These five stories are not just stories. They are tales inviting readers to draw their own conclusions and come up with their own ideas of what kind of stories they are. These five stories are not just stories. They are the kinds of tales inviting readers to draw their own conclusions and come up with their own ideas of just what kind of stories they are. What the endings mean. What happens after "The End." When you read a story, the author usually tells you the whole story. But what happens if you're not told everything? You're not given all of the information? From a story of an alien duking it out with Death to detectives investigating the mysterious murders of young children to a group of people trapped in a website that transports them to a world where one man has power over them, 5 Tales are all about

the strange and unusual. From the type of unbelievable and impossible events inspired by real world stories, these tales will make readers ponder "what if?" and invite more ideas for what other outcomes could have happened, or why things happened.

Get it FREE on Smashwords [here](#)

Coming Soon!

Poems celebrating the wonder, beauty and the power of words that are written, either through prose or poetry. If you are a writer who has experienced the sheer joy, sense of peace and excitement which only writing can bring, then you know the power of words. Sitting down to write offers the writer and the poet an escape from the brutalities of reality. Writing gives us a chance to explore our imagination, inform others, and know ourselves better. Whether you write prose or poetry, these poems will show just how meaningful it is to be able to write.

News in Self-Publishing

["6 Self-Publishing Principles For A Fulfilling Authorial Career"](#) by Stephanie BwaBwa
via DIY MFA

["7 Tips For Marketing And Selling Your Self-Published Book"](#) by Jaqui Lane
via Forbes

["Budding Wicklow author defies naysayers to publish first children's book 'Introducing Wanda the Witch'"](#) by Eoin Mac Raghnaill
via Independent.ie

["Chef Gavin Kaysen doesn't let expectations get in the way of growth"](#) by Patricia Cobe
via Restaurant Business

AUTHOR CORNER

Author Interview with Carolyn Howard-Johnson

1. When did you start writing?

I usually attribute my early writing to becoming a staffer for my high school newspaper, *The Olympus High School Thunderbolt* (-: The writing and a new adventure intrigued me, but it was the cute ivy league guys on staff that clinched it for me!

2. What was your journey towards becoming an author like?

I was very lucky. And persistent. As soon as I had clips from the newspaper the very important newspaper with that classy name mentioned above, I started visiting my state's major daily newspaper. Call it brassy, but it was really more about being oblivious. I did do some homework, though. I dressed professionally. Compiled a notebook of clips. Learn the name of the managing editor, and just did it with no idea that it wasn't what anyone interested in any career in journalism would do at the age of seventeen or any other age. It worked. It got my first

paid writing job before I turned eighteen. I wrote wedding stories and a regular column for teens.

3. What can you tell me about your latest book? (Feel free to include an excerpt.)

Well, this is what I have in my media kit that I hope helps authors to decide to buy it when it comes out:

**THIRD EDITION: UPDATED AND
PUBLISHED BY MODERN HISTORY PRESS**

**By multi award-winning author,
poet, and marketer**

Carolyn Howard-Johnson

Available online at Amazon worldwide

Suggested Retail: \$24.95 paperback / \$36.95 hardcover

Also available as an e-book

Whether your publisher assigns zero dollars to your book's campaign or thousands or you do it yourself, *The Frugal Editor* assures it the best possible start in life. The author, a former publicist and publicity and editing instructor for UCLA's renowned Writers' Program, provides what you need to snag the most suitable agent or publisher for your baby or proudly present it to the world as an example of indie publishing at its best.

I can tell you one personal thing about it, though. I worked harder on it than I did either of the earlier editions. I worked on it for nearly two years with the last six months practically nonstop. Let me tell you that writing about grammar and language in ways that can be understood by newbies and still not bore experienced writers is the hardest of all the writing I've ever done, and I've written poetry and fiction—

both short stories and novels—and nonfiction about everything from retailing to marketing to fashion. Here is a copy of the 2nd page of my sell sheet that my publisher sends to anyone we send review copies to:
(Yes! I help with that review process. I believe it's an author's duty to be a full partner with their publisher!)

Why a Third Edition of *The Frugal Editor*?

It surprises people when they learn that grammar rules change over time. Or that what they learned in high school or advanced grammar classes in college is either passé or may not apply to fiction. It also surprises them to learn that a perfectly edited book is never perfect because there are always so many disagreements among experts. And even experts are often misinformed. The worlds of grammar and style choices are filled with myths and misinformation like, "Never use contractions in your writing," "Never use fragments," and "Never end a sentence with a preposition." As my client base grew, I kept running into more flagrant publishing world scams perpetrated by "professionals." Thus, a new edition of *The Frugal Editor* was a must! So here is a smattering of what is new:

- The Third Edition has been reorganized and my publisher tells me I outdid myself with about 50% new (helpful!) material including new "Editor's Extras" based on my own school of hard knocks!
- Authors will love the all-new sections including:
 - Beta readers and peer reviewers
 - What you probably don't know about custom dictionaries
 - Up-to-date rules for accommodating gender-specific and other cultural needs
 - A chapter for word-lovers and poets
 - Quickie reviews of word processors for you

- What even traditionally accepted front and back matter can do for your book sales, your career, and your readers
- Political Correctness considerations change and grow with each passing day. So, yes! Lots of updating here!
- And a few new grammar terms I coined for the sake of making it easier to understand--and more fun.
- The Third Edition of *The Frugal Editor* still includes the basics that make you into an on-your-own editor when you must be. Few writers other than Stephen King can afford to hire an editor for every query letter, every media release, every media kit, every blog post. So until your career is so star-studded you can afford a publicist and editor on a retainer basis, writers need to know both the basics of editing and the little-known secrets.
- The third edition is still loaded with reader favorites like what *authors* need to know about book covers—but it's updated!
- New information will dispel myths like these:
 - Agents are a cantankerous lot. (Nope! In *The Frugal Editor*, twenty-one of the nation's best tell you their pet peeves and they do it in the best of spirits.)
 - If your English teacher told you something is okay, it is. (No! Language rules have changed since you were a sophomore. Anyway, your English teachers likely have no background in publishing, so apart from basic grammar, how much help can they be?)
 - If a manuscript or query is grammar-perfect, you'll be fine. (No! Lots of things that are grammatically correct annoy publishers.)
 - Always use your Spell and Grammar Checker. (No! Some suggest you don't use it at all, but *The Frugal Editor* will help you make it your partner instead of your enemy.)
 - It's easy to avoid agent and editor scams by asking other writers. (*The Frugal Editor* gives you a to-do and not-to-do lists to help you avoid being taken.)
 - Your publisher will assign a top-flight editor. (Maybe, but don't count on it. The more you know, the better partner you'll be for an editor!)

- Formatters and editors will take care of the hyphens, ellipses, and all the other grungy little punctuation marks that English teachers avoided teaching because they didn't know how to use them either. (Chances are, you'll catch even great formatters and editors in an error or two if you know your stuff!)

“Careers that are not fed die as readily as any living organism given no sustenance.”

Carolyn Howard-Johnson,

Website: <http://www.HowToDoItFrugally.com> **Blog:**
<http://sharingwithwriters.blogspot.com>

E-mail: HoJoNews@aol.com **Phone:** 818-790-0502

Amazon Profile and Book List:

<http://bit.ly/CarolynsAmznProfile>

By, the way, anyone who is interested in getting a sell sheet as a visual sample for their own review-getting campaign may email me at HoJoNews @ AOL dot com with SELL SHEET REQUEST in the subject line.

SHOULD BE RELEASED FOR HOLIDAY GIVING

IN ITS 3RD EDITION BY

MODERN HISTORY PRESS

ADVANCE PRAISE

“...The Frugal Editor is part reference guide, part do-it-yourself editing manual, part masterclass on the writing and publishing industry...and all with Carolyn’s signature humor and encouraging energy! She is a master at simplifying overwhelming tasks into

relevant, can-do information...” -Dallas Woodburn, best-selling author and book coach

Cover by Doug West

Headshot by Uriah Carr

4. What sort of methods do you use for book promotion?

One of my favorites is writing for other authors’ newsletters. They share their audience with me, and I give something back to them in return. I even have a registered hashtag I use to help me promote those articles. It’s #SharingwithWriters. Anyone can use it. The more the merrier. Sharing is one of the things that makes writing fun!

5. Where do you get your ideas for stories?

Out of nowhere and at odd times. Usually they are related in some way to personal experience. Before Covid I traveled a lot and I really miss that—for the learning and for the inspiration.

6. What are you working on right now?

I am talking to my publisher about a possible combination memoir focused on writing experiences and how-to book. But he wants to finish the last book of my books from the HowToDoItFrugally Series of books from writers before we start on anything new. It will be a second edition of [*How To Get Great Book Review Frugally and Ethically*](#), 2nd Edition.

7. Any advice for other authors?

I bet you already guessed. Persistence. And being a voracious reader. Too many good writers try to go into the publishing world for the first time without learning much about it. Nobody goes into medicine or business or carpentry without researching or studying their field of interest. I love writing conferences as a great place to start. And reading from how-to books by experienced authors is the most frugal way to learn what they need to keep themselves from falling into publishing potholes.

Thank you, my dear Dawn. For #SharingwithWriters and for sharing those writers (your audience) with me.

ABOUT CAROLYN:

Carolyn Howard-Johnson's first novel, [*This Is the Place*](#), won eight awards and her book of creative nonfiction, [*Harkening: A Collection of Stories Remembered*](#), won three. Her fiction, nonfiction and poems have appeared in national magazines, anthologies, and review journals. A chapbook of poetry, [*Tracings*](#), published by Finishing Line Press, was named to the Compulsive Reader's Ten Best Reads list and was given the Military Writers' Society of America's Award of Excellence. Her poem "Endangered Species" won the Franklin Christoph Prize for poetry, and her poems have been chosen for the revered *Poetry Magazine*, founded in 1912. She speaks on Utah's culture, tolerance, book promotion and editing and has appeared on TV and hundreds of radio stations nationwide.

She is the author of the acclaimed HowToDoItFrugally Series of books for writers. Both [*The Frugal Book Promoter*](#), published by

Modern History Press, is in its third edition, and the soon-to-be-released [*The Frugal Editor*](#), will also be a third. They have awards from names like USA Book News, the Irwin Award, Dan Poynter's Global Ebook Award, Readers' Views Literary Award and Next Generation Indie Book Award. [*How To Get Great Book Reviews Frugally and Ethically: The ins and outs of using free reviews to build and sustain a writing career*](#) is full of ideas for what she calls "forever reviews."

Howard-Johnson is the recipient of the California Legislature's Woman of the Year in Arts and Entertainment Award, and her community's Character and Ethics Award for her work promoting tolerance with her writing and her community's Character and Ethics award for her work promoting tolerance with her writing. She was also named to *Pasadena Weekly's* list of "Fourteen San Gabriel Valley women who make life happen" and was given her community's Diamond Award for Achievement in the Arts. She was an instructor for UCLA Extension's world-renown Writers' Program for nearly a decade.

The author loves to travel. She has visited 100 countries and has studied writing at Cambridge University in the United Kingdom; Herzen University in St. Petersburg, Russia; and Charles University, Prague. She admits to carrying a pen and journal wherever she goes. Her website is <https://howtodoitfrugally.com>.

Author News

["7 Ways Public Readings Can Help Your Writing"](#) by Kathryn Craft via Writer Unboxed

["The DO's and DON'Ts of Submitting to Book Reviewers"](#) by
Susan Violante
via Reader Views

["Books PR & Marketing Questions Answered Part X: What to do on a budget"](#) by Ann Marie Nieves
via Writer Unboxed

REVIEWER CORNER

My Reviews:

["A Tale of Love, Adventure and Discovery: Hidden Magic has Many Hidden Surprises. Magic and Thrills for Readers of Fantasy Novels"](#)

Via Dawn Reviews Books

["The Warlock's Curse"](#) by C.B. Oresky

["Wolf Woman & Other Poems"](#) by Jo-Ann Vega

["Chlorophyll"](#) by Raymond Luczak

Other Book Reviews:

[Book Review: 'True Biz': Stunning portrait of Deaf culture](#) by
Madeline Marriott
via The Lafayette

["Review: The Final Gambit by Jennifer Lynn Barnes"](#)
via ForBooksSake

[Book Review-Truth Over Justice \(Vivian Parker Legal Thriller series Book 1\)](#)-Ellis Keler
via Miki's Hope

[Book Review-For Eternity-a Micro Read](#)-Karen Black
via Miki's Hope

["Book review | Laura C. Stevenson: Arlene Iris Distler's 'This Earth, This Body' a beautifully wrought poetry collection"](#) by Laura C. Stevenson
via Brattleboro Reformer

["Bobish by Magdalena Ball, a New Verse Memoir"](#)
via The New Book Review

["He Is"](#) by Mark R. Worden
via Reader Views

["The Little Coach Engine That Could Because It Stopped Sabotaging Itself"](#) by Hillary Saffran
via Reader Views

["Send Down the Master in Person"](#) by A. Keith Carreiro
via Reader Views

["Last Chance"](#) by Darren E. Watling
via Reader Views

["Attribution"](#) by Linda Moore
via Reader Views

["Toward a Model of Constitutions"](#) by Williams Kuttikadan
via Reader Views

["In The Shadow of The Apennines"](#) by Kimberly Sullivan
via Reader Views

["Rooted and Winged"](#) by Luanne Castle
via Reader Views

["Artemesia"](#) by DC Mallery
via Reader Views

["A Colossal Injustice"](#) by Miguel Angel Hernandez, Jr.
via Reader Views

["Tell Anyone You Want That I Was Here"](#) by Gordon MacKinney
via Reader Views

["The Russian Doll"](#) by Owen Thomas
via Reader Views

["Into the Blue Again"](#) by Marisa Billions
via Reader Views

["Mission 51"](#) by Fernando Crôte
via Reader Views

["Schnooks, Crooks, Liars & Scoundrels: A Field Guide to Identifying Political Buffoons"](#) by Gene Berardelli
via Reader Views

[The Take-Over Friend](#)
via Reader Views Kids

["Magic Unleashed"](#) by Jesper Schmidt and Autumn M. Birt
via Reader Views

["In Spite of It All"](#) by Constance Bierkan
via Reader Views

["How I Lost My Hair Raising Teenage Girls"](#) by Andrew McKinney
via Reader Views

["Playing by Heart"](#) by Mary Flinn
via Reader Views

["SPVCE"](#) by A.W. Karen
via Reader Views

["A Winter's Tail: A Chrissy the Shih Tzu Cozy Mystery"](#) by Diane Wing
via Reader Views

["Moose Willow Mystery"](#) by Terri Martin
via Reader Views

["Einstein: The Man and His Mind"](#) by Gary S. Berger and Michael DiRuggiero
via Reader Views

["CRISPR Evolution"](#) by Charis Jones
via Reader Views

["The Evolution of China's Anti-Poverty Strategies"](#) by William N. Brown
via Reader Views

[The Princess, The Knight, and The Lost God: A Chess Story](#)
via Reader Views Kids

["The Catalyst"](#) by Anttimatti Pennanen
via Reader Views

["The Bell Lady of Blairmont Manor"](#) by Novella Jean
via Reader Views

["Ramayana Through Ikebana"](#) by Meena Iyer and Simpan Sadana
via Reader Views

["The Last Cigar"](#) by Thomas Mello
via Reader Views

["Missing From Me"](#) by Heather Shtuka
via Reader Views

["Pay Attention to Me"](#) by Kelly South
via Reader Views

[Reign Returned: The Felserpent Chronicles: Book One](#)
via Reader Views Kids

["Alaskan Escape"](#) by Maryann Landers
via Reader Views

["Unburdening"](#) by Teresa Benitez
via Reader Views

["Fragile Minds"](#) by Diane Lane Chambers
via Reader Views

["Commissar: A Novel of Civil War Russia"](#) by D.V. Chernov
via Reader Views

["Amalgam-Man"](#) by J. Matthew Neal
via Reader Views

[Your Brain: The Engine to Your Body](#)
via Reader Views Kids

["Biomechanics of Your Body"](#) by Tracy L. Markley
via Reader Views

["The Margo Chronicles"](#) by CJ MacKinnon
via Reader Views

["A Black Woman's Journey"](#) by Melissa Owens
via Reader Views

[Olly & the Spores of Oak Hill](#)

via Reader Views Kids

["Squeeze Plays"](#) by Jeffrey Marshall

["Soulful Return"](#) by Fidelis O. Mkparu

via Reader Views

["The Silence in the Sound"](#) by Dianne C. Braley

via Reader Views

["Cutthroat Express"](#) by Bryan Cassiday

via Reader Views

["Unfair Discrimination"](#) by Mark A. Shaiken

via Reader Views

["Cause For Elimination"](#) by Marla A. White

via Reader Views

["Catalyst"](#) by Brandon Crilly

via Reader Views

["Old Sins"](#) by Lynne Handy

via Reader Views

["Irresistibly Vegan"](#) by Elvira Rodriguez Alonso

via Reader Views

["Alone to America"](#) by Maria Vezetti Matson

via Reader Views

["How Deep the Ocean"](#) by Gloria Lucas

via Reader Views

["Stranger in Love"](#) by Teymour Shahabi

via Reader Views

["Sell Yourself"](#) by Dr. Cindy McGovern
via Reader Views

["To Distant Shores"](#) by Huan Phan and Tiep Phan
via Reader Views

["The Dog Who Wanted To Be A Bird"](#) by Giuseppe Scarpine
via Reader Views

["Tree S.T.A.R.S.: Dominion"](#) by Edward Morrow
via Reader Views

["Face Your Shit, Heal Yourself"](#) by Meredith Ochoa
via Reader Views

["The C.R. Patterson and Sons Company: Black Pioneers in the Vehicle Building Industry, 1865-1939"](#) by Christopher Nelson
via Reader Views

[The Urban Boys: Discovery of the Five Senses](#)
via Reader Views

Calls for Reviews

I'd love to find reviewers for my books! Contact me at DMCWriter@gmail.com if interested.

READER CORNER

Book Blogs

[Miki's Hope](#)

[The Book Brief](#)

[The Book's the Thing](#)

[The Geeky Bibliophile](#)

[The Worn Bookmark](#)

BOOK NEWS:

["Yes, Digital Books Do Wear Out; Stop Accepting Publishers Claims That They Don't"](#) by Glyn Moody
via Techdirt

["I want to savour every word': the joy of reading slowly"](#) by
Susie Measure
via The Guardian

["Our mission is crucial': meet the warrior librarians of Ukraine"](#)
by Stephen Marche
via The Guardian

["Sci-fi Books For Young Readers Often Omit Children of Color From the Future"](#) by Emily Midkiff
via Mississippi Free Press

["Small But Frighty: 8 Horror Novels About Creepy Kids to Haunt You This Holiday Season"](#) by Addison Rizer
via Book Riot

["Books Hitting the Public Domain in 2023"](#) by Annika Barranti Klein
via Book Riot

["New Billboard in Texas Urges, "Ban Censorship, Not Books""](#)
via Book Riot

["How Your Book Club Can Fight Against Books Bans and Censorship"](#) by Nikki DeMarco
via Book Riot

["Ukrainian Publishers Fight On"](#) by Ed Nawotka
via Publishers Weekly

["We're drowning in old books. But getting rid of them is heartbreaking."](#) By Karen Heller
via The Washington Post

["Unwind During the Holidays with a Good Book"](#) by Susan Violante
via Reader Views

New Books

[Yuletide Space Ranger](#)
By C.G. Harris
Genre: Science Fiction/Holiday

[Back Stabber](#)
By J.H. Wear
Genre: Mystery/Suspense

[Hidden: Adam Barrow Mystery, Book III](#)

By Will Ottinger

Genre: Mystery & Crime

[Johnny Lycan & the Vegas Berserker: The Werewolf PI, Book II](#)

By Wayne Turmel

Genre: Fantasy & Paranormal

[The Fist Inside The Glove: A Monk Buttman Mystery, Book V](#)

By David William Pearce

Genre: Mystery & Crime

[The Road to Abilene](#)

By Karri L. Moser

Genre: Romance

[Dawn of Deliverance: The Apocalypse, Book V](#)

By David O. Bullock

Genre: Fantasy & Paranormal

[Give Me Shelter](#)

By David B. Seaburn

Genre: Literary Fiction

[Trust Issues](#)

By Katherine Nichols

Genre: Women's Fiction

[A Feeling in the Bones: Second Son Chronicles Volume VIII](#)

By Pamela Taylor

Genre: Historical and Adventure

[HOSPITAL! A Medical Satire of Unhealthy Proportions](#)

By Kyle Bradford Jones

Category: Humor

[Tilting Toward the Sun: A Chance to Love](#)

By Mario Dell'Olio

Genre: Romance

[A Colorful Beginning](#)

By Raven Howell

Genre: Children's and Middle Grade

[Because I'm Brown, Stewart Falls Cheerleaders #3,](#)

By Shannon Kennedy

Genre: Social Issues

[Spirit Touched](#)

By Matthew Simmons

Genre: YA Paranormal

[Love and Armageddon, Radioactive #1](#)

By Rachel Anne Jones

Genre: YA Contemporary Suspense

[The Soul Reader, The Aberration #4,](#)

By Michel Prince

Genre: YA Sci-Fi

[Dominated By Desire, The Desire Series #1](#)

By Barbara Donlon Bradley

Genre: Sci-Fi/Romance

[Ghost of the Past, Baker City: Hearts and Haunts #4](#)

By Josie Malone

Genre: Paranormal/Military Romance

[Take Down, Jack Slade #11](#)

By Richard Dawes

Genre: Sci-Fi/Mystery

[The Message](#)

By bill Harvey

Genre: Science Fiction

[Beasts of War: A Retelling of the Old English Judith](#)

By Sarah E Zilkowski

Genre: Historical Fiction

[The Crumbling City: Rebirth of the Fallen, Book IV](#)

By JR Konkol

Genre: Dark Fantasy

[Crosswind: The WWII Adventures of MI6 Agent Katrin Nissen](#)

By Karen K. Brees

Genre: Historical Fiction

[The Treatment Plan](#)

By Andrew Wolfendon

Genre: Thriller

EDITOR CORNER

Tricky Edits from Carolyn Howard-Johnson

Excerpt from 3rd Edition of *The Frugal Editor*,
to be released Fall, 2022

Santa Wants You To Use Your Dictionary

**Tricky Edits from Carolyn Howard-Johnson
Author, Poet, and Author of the Multi Award-Winning
Series of
HowToDoItFrugally Series of books for writers**

Often authors are such avid readers they absorb their grammar, structure, spelling, and punctuations naturally. That includes turning singular nouns into plural and it's usually very easy requiring merely the addition of an "s" or an "es" to the singular. But Clement Clarke Moore's 1823 poem "T'was the Night Before Christmas" threw us a screwball by forcing us to decide between two plurals for his team of elves. Or is it spelled elfs?

We often rely on acceptable spelling for the kin of Santa's diminutive helpers like dwarfs and elves for guidance but, good grief! They seem to belong to two indiscernible families that don't give a hoot about regularity. So, if it follows other words ending in *f* like *knives*, *leaves*, *scarves*, and *shelves* (which it does!), we are safe.

But I have personally seen reputable, credible, admired journal spell words like *elf* and *dwarf* that end with the *f* sound like *shelf*, *wolf*, *calf* become plural by trading their *f*'s to *v*'s.

Luckily we have our word processor's AutoCorrect to give us *elfs*.

The trouble is, according to WordGenius.com it's wrong. They clearly tell us, "The plural of *elf* is *elves*, like many words that end in *f* in their singular form, from *shelves* and *scarves* to *leaves* and *knives*." But then, of course, we have words like *thieves*, *roofs*, *cliffs* and (Good Grief!) *mastiffs*.

In situations like this, I begin to hear my fourth-grade teacher repeating "Go to your desk and open your dictionary." Your Webster or Oxford probably won't be as certain as you'd like it to be. They often give us two choices. But they almost always tell us which is first choice, which is second, as well as another really valuable piece of information: Which is preferred for the English-speaking part of the world the audience you write for lives in. If you're an American, check The Chicago Manual of Style. You may find some disagree about their choice, but no one—from Knopf to Farrar, Straus and Giroux—says they are wrong. PS: If you ever have an occasion to make *dwarf* plural, you're pretty safe using Disney's choice for their 1937 animated film *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.

Once a month Carolyn Howard-Johnson shares a tricky edit excerpted from her *The Frugal Editor*, the second multi award-winning book in her *HowToDoItFrugally* Series of books for writers. Find it on Amazon in paper or as an e-book at bit.ly/FrugalEditor or learn more at her website, <https://HowToDoItFrugally.com>. Find all the books in that series at <http://bit.ly/CarolynsAmznProfile>

News in Editing

["Celebrating the Coming Release of "The Frugal Editor" with an Essay on the Conceited Pronoun "I"](#) by Carolyn Howard-Johnson
via Writers on the Move

["Before You Hire a Developmental Editor: What You Need to Know"](#) by Sangeeta Mehta
via Jane Friedman

["Kid Lit Craft: 6 Things to Focus on When Editing your First Draft"](#)
by Olivia Fisher
via DIY MFA

["When Should I Start Editing?"](#) by Jeanette the Writer
via DIY MFA

WRITER CORNER

Interview with Natasha Khullar Relph

1. Have you always been a writer?

I grew up in New Delhi, India, and I'd always been interested in writing but had never really considered it as a career option. The closest I came to getting formally educated in journalism was when I applied for a degree in mass media before I went to college. As it turns out, the results of the qualifying exam for engineering came out a day before I was to give the qualifying exam for journalism, and since I had my top choice of university for Information Technology, I said, heck, why not do that? And then I failed my first year in engineering.

I started writing while I prepared for my semester exams, and was earning a full-time living with it by the time I finished college. I guess I was always meant to end up in journalism. Just took a few detours on the way.

2. When did you realize that maybe writing was actually a "thing" you could do, get published and even sell?

Pretty much immediately. As I said, I was a college student in Delhi when I first decided to become a writer. It was 2002. Within the week, I had learned about query letters and started sending five per day. When I decide to go after something, I typically do so with gusto. I pitched and I wrote on a regular basis. By the time I graduated three years later, I'd already worked at a national magazine in India, created a profitable online business, and been making a full-time living with my writing for two years.

Graduation was a formality—I was already a full-time professional writer by the time I finished college.

3. What was your first sale as a writer and how did it feel to sell your work?

I was looking for things to do as I retook my exams and the words of my English teacher, who had always told me to explore writing, echoed in my head. I looked for resources online, pitched a story to a US-based magazine for college students on surviving failure in college, and got an assignment. A cool \$100 later, I was hooked.

4. How has writing helped you in other areas of life besides being something you could earn money from?

I can't think of an area of my life writing hasn't contributed to, really. There's nothing I can imagine myself being other than a

writer. But if you're looking for specifics, there is one particular aspect of my life that was changed completely through my writing. I wrote a novel a couple of years ago about some traumatic incidents in my life. I wanted to write the novel to tell the story, not to heal, but I was amazed at how different I felt a few months after I finished the novel. I had gotten mentally stuck in my trauma—and so had my writing—and that novel opened up a trapdoor that released all the negative energy and allowed me to be free once again. I was, incredibly, healed.

5. What was your biggest accomplishment as a writer?

That's a tough one, because I don't think in terms of biggest accomplishments anymore. I've had a career spanning 20+ years. I've won a bunch of awards, hit a lot of my income goals, and done meaningful work that I'm proud of. I've written 10+ books. So now I think in terms of the last year I've lived, or how my days measure up to the ideal in my mind. That's where I feel my biggest accomplishments are right now—I feel like I have an incredible level of control over my life and the work I choose to do. Freedom is my highest value and I think my biggest accomplishment, over my entire career, would have to be that I've managed to live my life so far with a level of freedom that not many people are lucky enough to experience.

6. Who has inspired you the most in the writing field?

I tend to be more inspired by pieces of work than people in general. So I'm more likely to see a really good piece of writing and be influenced by its history—how did the writer come across this story, how did they pitch it, how did they report it, etc.

I look at the Pulitzer website frequently as well as "Best of" writing books and find stories in there that catch my interest. It's a great way to learn from the best writers by just following the trajectory of their work and their writing.

Gene Weingarten's stories typically fit into this category. This is [one of his stories](#) that made a big impact on me and influenced my writing. (Trigger warning: child death)

7. What are some of the challenges you have faced as a writer and how did you overcome them?

My location probably put several editors off hiring me and understandably so. It's harder to trust someone all the way across the globe when she's asking for as much money as your current stable of writers, but she's less accessible. The way I overcame it was by one, writing near-perfect query letters and proposals that would impress editors greatly (even if that meant I was putting in a lot more effort than my Western counterparts) and two, by focusing on stories in my own backyard. I pitched India-based stories that only I could because of my location and learned how to make them relevant to their readers.

I live in England now and I still do that. A couple of years ago, a US newspaper passed me over for a regular freelance journalism gig because I'm based in Brighton, not London. They emailed me this year to say they'd really like to work with me now because they've realized that the stories they were publishing were too London-centric and they'd like to see someone cover the whole of the country.

I've long said that my biggest challenge—my location—turned out in the end, to be my biggest advantage. And that's still true today.

8. What is the best writing advice you have ever received and why do you feel it is important?

I think Susan Glaspell says it best: "In writing... remember that the biggest stories are not written about wars, or about politics, or even murders. The biggest stories are written about the things which draw human beings closer together."

9. What sort of writing do you do now?

I returned to journalism again this year after a few years away. I'm now filing weekly stories for global newspapers and magazines, just as I've always done. I've also published eight books in my Freelance Writer's Guide series of books and I'll be bringing out more books in the series this year. And I've written a couple of novels, which I'm thinking about indie publishing.

<https://www.theinternationalfreelancer.com/books/>

Outside of my personal writing, I love working with and coaching writers to help them achieve their goals. People I've worked with have broken into top publications like National Geographic and The New York Times within weeks of working with me, grown their incomes to six figures and beyond, and finished books that had been languishing on their desks for years. One of my best abilities as a coach is being able to see exactly what is keeping a person stuck and I like nothing more than to experience that moment when I finally help someone move through that block.

10. Where can we find some of your work online?

You can find me at www.natasharelph.com.

I also run a weekly business newsletter for writers. You can find that at www.thewordling.com

11. What advice do you have for other aspiring writers thinking of taking the leap of getting their work published?

Just start. You'll get far more clarity after you begin than if you're trying to figure it all out before you start. And more opportunities start to appear, too.

12. What are your final thoughts about being a writer?

I wish I hadn't listened to all the experts and the advice about starting with local publications and the "realistic" advice about freelancing not being a viable career.

I was told I couldn't do it from India. I was told it was impossible to make a decent living with it. I was told you could chase the awards or the money but not both. I was told that if you wrote stories about social issues, you wouldn't get paid for that work. My highest-paying assignments have been about human rights issues.

The hardest thing for me, personally, was learning to trust my gut and to allow myself to follow my own path, even if that meant that I had falls along the way. Because now I am proof that it doesn't have to be love or money. For me, it is both.0

ABOUT NATASHA:

I'm a freelance journalist, author, and entrepreneur.

I've lived and worked from four continents and many countries. I currently divide my time between Brighton, UK, and New Delhi, India.

I hate moral policing, love nerdy conversations, and have frequently been responsible for friends and family locking themselves inside their homes after reading what's been written about them in national magazines.

Before reaching career nirvana as a freelance journo, I spent a year as a corporate slave working nine-to-nine in a four-by-four excuse for a cubicle. Luckily, I came to my senses and gave up my formal attire and make-up for sweatpants and dark circles.

Since then, I've managed to convince editors at *The New York Times*, TIME, CNN, BBC, ABC News, *The Independent*, *The CS Monitor*, *Ms.*, and several other publications to publish my stories.

As a magazine features writer, I have contributed to several women's and general-interest publications, including various international editions of *Elle*, *Marie Claire*, *Vogue*, *Glamour*, and *Cosmopolitan*.

My assignments have required me to trek up and down the tsunami-ravaged coast of India, live with Tibetan nuns, interview coffin makers, learn how cellphones are designed, and so much more.

I was a Visiting Scholar at the University of California, Berkeley, School of Journalism; the recipient of the Development Journalist of the Year award at the Developing Asia Journalism Awards Forum in Tokyo, and the winner of the Silver Excel, a trade magazine award, from the Society of National Association Publications (USA) for my work on female wastepickers in India.

I'm the author of *Shut Up and Write: The No-Nonsense, No B.S. Guide to Getting Words on the Page* and seven other bestselling books for writers. My work has also been included in the books *The Lonely Planet Travel Anthology: True Stories from the World's Best Writers* (Lonely Planet, 2016), *Breaking Out: How to Build Influence in a World of Competing Ideas* (Harvard Business Review Press, May 2013), *Voices of Alcoholism* (LaChance Publishing, April 2008), and *Chicken Soup for the Pre-Teen Soul 2* (HCI, June 2004).

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News for Writers

["Writing Believable Dialogue"](#) by Emily-Jane Hills Orford
via Authors Publish

["Revision in writing: How to improve between drafts"](#) by Jordan
via Now Novel

["Character Sheets - Building a Character"](#) by Karen Cioffi
via Writers on the Move

["The Eighth Element"](#) by Donald Maass
via Writer Unboxed

["How to Get the Best Feedback for Your Work"](#) by Aliya Bree Hall
via Authors Publish

["What Running Has Taught Me About Writing \(and Vice Versa\)"](#)
by Janice Obuchowski
via LitHub

["7 Contemporary Poets on Revision"](#) by Josh Luckenbach
via Iron Horse Review

["Q&A About Earning \\$27K with Freelance Writing in November"](#)
by Jennifer Gregory
via The Content Marketing Writer

["Sam Lipsyte on the What and the How of Writing"](#) by Sam
Lipsyte
via LitHub

["How to Make the Best of Your Writing Goals"](#) by Jim Dempsey
via Writer Unboxed

["December Decision: Finish Strong or Enjoy the Season?"](#) by Jennifer Goforth Gregory
via The Content Marketing Writer

["How I Wrote 17 Blog Posts in 5 Days to Earn \\$8700 in a Single Week"](#) by Jennifer Goforth Gregory
via The Content Marketing Writer

["Writing Fan Fiction Gave Me Community and Creative Freedom"](#)
by Sabrina Qiao
via Electric Lit

["Writer: Should You Ever Tell, Not Show?"](#)
via Medium

["5 Writing Tools for Writing a Horror Story"](#) by Merissa Moore
via Horror Tree

["Creativity Sparks the Writing Practice"](#) by Deborah Lyn Stanley
via Writers on the Move

["How Writing Helps Me to Reduce Negative Self-Talk"](#) by Ipshita Bose
via Medium

["No, Don't Tell Me": How & When Should We Use Foreshadowing?"](#) by Jami Gold
via Writers Helping Writers

["What Makes Writing Valuable?"](#) by William Pierce
via Lit Hub

["Moriel Rothman-Zecher on the Magic of Writing at Sunrise"](#)
by Moriel Rothman-Zecher
via LitHub

["STOP THE STRESS! 4 Budgeting Tips for Freelance Writers To Implement RIGHT NOW"](#) by Louisa Eunice
via WritersWeekly

["How to Keep Writing a Story When You Don't Know What Happens Next"](#) by Dawn Colclasure
via Authors Publish

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via Reader Views

["Diversify Your Writing Skills to Earn More"](#) by Dawn Colclasure
via FundsForWriters

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via Writers in the Storm

["How Writing Your Synopsis Can Fix Your Book"](#) by Allison K. Williams
via Jane Friedman

["Writing How-To: Put Ground Under Their Feet"](#) by Lynette M. Burrows
via Writers in the Storm

["Tips For Writing Magical Realism"](#) by Ellen Buikema
via Writers in the Storm

["A Writerly End-of-the-Year Checklist for 2022"](#) by Kris Maze
via Writers in the Storm

["Theme: The Glue that Binds Your Story"](#) by Linda Wilson
via Writers on the Move

Feature Article

Will You Be Creating Reading Goals for the New Year?

By Dawn Colclasure

One thing booklovers often look forward to when it's almost time to ring in a new year is the opportunity to set reading goals for the new year. If you have the time and the means to follow a reading goal challenge, then consider taking one on for 2023. Read on to find out just what reading goals are and how you can pick the one that's right for you.

What exactly is a reading goal? It's basically a goal you hope to achieve with your reading in a select period of time – usually for one year. But the duration you set for your reading goal is really a personal choice. It can last for a month, six months, or a year. For most children in elementary school, they are often challenged to read a select number of books in a month and, if they do, they win a prize. This is one example of a reading goal. Not all reading goals are set within a period of time, but some readers who take on such challenges have found it to be fun and easier to stick to their reading goals if they give themselves a “deadline” to meet. I once challenged myself to read 100 books in a year, so you can bet I was reading as much as possible that year! (P.S. I did meet this goal!)

Reading goals commonly last for a year, giving booklovers more options to choose the kind of reading goal that fits with their busy lifestyles.

Benefits of having a reading goal

The benefits of having a reading goal can vary. A lot of it comes down to the type of goal the reader has set for themselves.

Some of the benefits you will obtain from having a reading goal are:

- A reading goal offers the booklover the opportunity to read more books in a new genre
- A reading goal introduces readers to new authors they might not have otherwise had a chance to read
- It helps the reader to create and maintain a reading habit
- A reading goal encourages the reader to manage their time better, as they must cut out any time they might waste to use for reading
- A reading goal can help the reader to stay focused with their reading, allowing the reader to read certain books for a certain period of time

Types of reading goals

There are many different kinds of reading goals. The kind of reading goal you select must be one that will fit into your lifestyle. It also must be one that you actually WANT to do. For me, my only reading goal for 2022 was to track the books I read this year. I have been keeping a running list of this progress on my personal blog. Still, I did also hope to beat my record of reading 100 books in a year. I am happy to report that I did achieve that goal. Yes!

When choosing a reading goal, make sure it is one which you feel excited about. It should be something that you are interested in

trying. Don't try to read books you don't normally like to read. A reading goal should be fun and not feel like a chore. It should be something you enjoy participating in and something you look forward to.

Here are just some types of reading goals you can select from to put to use in the new year. If you think of one of your own, then by all means, follow one of your own! These ideas are just suggestions to help you get started in choosing a reading goal that works best for you.

1. Read 100 books in a year.
2. Fill a bookcase with books from your TBR pile and make it your goal to read every one of those books.
3. Read all of the books in a series you have been putting off the time to read.
4. Read as many books in a genre or category that you have been meaning to start reading in.
5. Join a book club and read all of the books selected.
6. Take on a reading challenge (here are examples of reading challenges:
[2023 Reading Challenge for the Rory Gilmore Book List](#)
[Book Riot's 2023 Read Harder Challenge](#)
[2023 Diversify Your Reading Challenge](#)
7. Read at least one book each month. (Perhaps a book from your local library?)
8. Read a new book each month. (Author note: I tried doing this this year, but unfortunately, there were no books released in January at my local library until much later in the year! If you give this reading goal a try, consider looking for newly-released ebooks instead of print for January books.)
9. Read every single book written by a favorite author. (Note: One of my cousins is doing this, but it's taking him a long time because his favorite author has written over 200 books! Should this be a case for your favorite author, either forego setting a deadline or give yourself ample time to meet this goal!)
10. Read five books set during a certain time in history.

These are just some reading goal suggestions. If you have your own reading goal, then use that one instead. Make sure you keep tabs on the books you read for your reading goal, just so you can look back on it later and think about the experience. Consider keeping progress with your reading goal on your blog or in a reading journal.

A new year often brings the excitement of new things. Reading books you don't normally read can open doors for your awareness and spark your creativity. It can also help you to learn about other lesser-known authors. Reading goals can help make that happen and give you the satisfaction of adding more books, as well as time to read, to your life.

If you're thinking about doing something different with your reading routine in 2023, consider taking on a reading goal. Whether or not you assign yourself a deadline to meet this goal is entirely your choice. Just make sure it's a goal you look forward to completing and which brings you an enhanced sense of enjoyment from reading books you love.

FURTHER READING:

[25 Fun Reading Goals to Challenge You This Year by Yen Cabag](#)

[How To Set and Achieve Your Reading Goals by Victoria](#)

[11 Easy Reading Goals for Adults \(& How to Reach Them\) by Jules Buono](#)

BIO:

Dawn Colclasure is a writer who lives in Oregon with her husband and children. She is the author and co-author of over two dozen books, among them *365 Tips for Writers: Inspiration, Writing Prompts and Beat the Block Tips to Turbo Charge Your Creativity* and the horror novel, *Shadow of Samhain*. She is also a content writer, freelance writer, book reviewer and ghostwriter. She is

also a self-publisher. Her short stories have appeared in magazines and anthologies. She publishes the SPARREW Newsletter each month. Her websites are <https://dawnsbooks.com/> and <https://www.dmcwriter.com/>. She's on Twitter @dawncolclasure.

Thanks for reading! See you next month!