

The Public Safety Writer

Volume 1, Number

4

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Membership in New Organization Grows

We're very pleased to report a steady stream of new memberships now that we've evolved the former Police Writers Association into the Public Safety Writers Association. As you'll see later on in the newsletter, our members represent a wide range of experience in the public safety field and come from all over the country. All have expressed enthusiasm for the organization and are looking forward to opportunities to share their expertise and network with other members.

Please look through this website for a lot of updated information in the newsletter, on the conference page and on our "tips" page. If you have any "tips" you'd like to share, please contact us.

As you'll see from a later article about the conference, plans are now firming up. The conference will be held in Las Vegas March 23-26. Check out the Conference page on this website for details.

We're also updating our listserve, a members-only service that you'll be sure to want to take advantage of. If you have questions about the listserve, please contact our webmaster, Tim Dees at tdees@policewriter.com.

Annual Conference to be held in Las Vegas

Our annual conference will be held in Las Vegas, March 23-26, 2006. The conference will begin with a reception Thursday evening, March 23. We're still firming up the exact agenda, but a tentative agenda can be found on the Conference page of this website. At this point, we're very anxious for your input. What topics would you like to have covered? Are there areas of expertise you have and would be willing to share as one of our presenters?

We'll be offering concurrent sessions. One series of presentations will be intended for those primarily interested in writing fiction. A second series of presentations will be intended for those primarily interested in writing non-fiction. Joint sessions will present information we think everyone will want to know: options for publishing and how to market yourself and your writing. Additional options will include how to create a website and/or blog and how to effectively manage your writing as a business. There will also be opportunities to present your work for peer review and to talk one-on-one with successfully published writers.

Our conference bookstore will be open throughout the conference. You are invited to bring your books to sell.

Additionally, on Friday and Saturday afternoons, time will be allotted for conference participants to give brief readings from their works and participate in a book signing.

The conference will include lunches on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, but all evenings will be free so you can enjoy the sights and sounds of Las Vegas.

The awards banquet for the writing competition will be held Sunday noon.

Writing Competition Open to All Members

Writing Competition winners will be announced at the conference (you don't have to be present to win, but it would be a lot more fun if you were). The rules, deadlines and applications for the competition are now available on this website (click on [Writing Competition](#)) to give you plenty of time to work on your entry.

Committees Now Being Organized

We're also recruiting members willing to serve on the committees necessary to make all this happen. Committees include: membership, conference, newsletter and writing competition. If you'd be willing to serve on any of these committees or have any questions about any of this, please feel free to contact Marilyn Olsen at molsen@policewriter.com.

The Website is Always There for You

All members will receive a quarterly newsletter, however a vibrant organization like ours often has late breaking news that occurs more often than quarterly. We are fortunate to have member Tim Dees as our webmaster. Tim and the board are dedicated to keeping the website as up to date as we possibly can. To that end, we will also need your help. Just published a book? Just got an article published? Know about a new public safety organization or publication that you don't see listed? Let us know.

Or do you need some help with your manuscript? Looking for a publisher? Need an agent? Just need a little moral support when writer's block hits? If the website itself doesn't have the information you need, chances are one of our members will. Contact us and we'll see if we can help. The website is available to you wherever you are, 24-7. www.policewriter.com. (Yes, although we've changed the name of the organization, we still have the old domain name. We also have the domain names www.publicsafetywriter.com and

www.publicsafetywriter.org, both of which point to this same site.

Please Join Us!

Membership in the Public Safety Writers Association is open to all new and experienced, published and not yet published authors interested in law enforcement topics and other public safety professionals (sworn and civilian) including fire, emergency medical, search and rescue and related fields and those who write about them.

Membership applications are available on this website. Just click on *Join*. Please mail yours in today!

Welcome New and Renewing Members

The Public Safety Writers Association is pleased to welcome the following new and renewing members:

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Jennie Spallone is past president of Off-Campus Writer's Workshop, a 250-member writers group in Winnetka, IL. A freelance journalist for thirteen years, she has written over 100 profiles and feature stories for local and national publications. Her first mystery book, *Deadly Choices*, has been published. More about Jennie on her website www.jenniespallone.com.

Barry Horney was born and raised in the Bronx, NY. He is a US Army veteran, is married with three children and one grandchild. He was a NYC transit police officer from 1967-1985, working out of District #1 at 59th St. on the IND in Manhattan.

Al Sheppard grew up in Manhattan's Hell's Kitchen in New York City. He served in the US Army during Viet Nam in the 101st Airborne. He retired as an NYPD Detective, having served from 1969-1991, working undercover in the 60s with subversive groups such as the Weathermen and SDS. He was also on the NYPD Emergency Service Unit, Special Operations Division as well as in the Intelligence Division and Major Case Squad of the Special Investigations Division, working on the Son of Sam and Zodiac serial murder copycat cases in 1991. He considers himself an urban archeologist. His first book, *The Last Midnight*, is being released in January.

Jackie Taylor Zortman has been a member since 1995. A resident of southwestern Colorado, she writes both fiction and non-fiction from the perspective as the spouse of a high-profile police officer. (Her husband just retired after 42 years in law enforcement during which, among many other things, he worked on the infamous BTK serial killer case. She has most recently been published in *The Law Enforcement Journal* of the

Colorado Police Protective Associations.

Volitta Fritsche. Volitta is a freelance writer for the Martinsville (Indiana) Reporter-Times. She is also a detective with the Morgan County Sheriff's Department, holding the rank of sergeant. She's served as patrol officer, juvenile officer, detective and chief deputy. She is one of 364 certified death investigators in the State of Indiana. She has published a novella and a children's book.

Guilio Dattero is a captain with the Reidsville, North Carolina PD. He is currently working on a novel, working title: Putting the Pieces Together. The novel deals with both police work and the internal struggle of the book's main character after facing a traumatic event.

Thomas J. McDonnell is a retired Connecticut State Police Captain of Detectives. He is currently looking for a co-author for a "mostly written" book about a high profile murder case.

Robert Wm. Wagner was a member of the Chicago Police Department for more than 30 years serving as a detective, sergeant and lieutenant. He also acted as a consultant with the International Association of Chiefs of Police and reported on various police agencies from Dallas, Texas to the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. He was also an adjunct member of the faculties at Chicago City College, Moraine Valley Junior College and Roosevelt University for more than 25 years. He is a member of the Mystery Writers of America and Society of Southwestern Authors. He has been published in a variety of publications including the Chicago Tribune Sunday Magazine, Police, Pursuit, an Arizona Mystery Writers anthology and Hard Luck Stories webzine. He has just finished a novel and is researching a sequel.

John Bellah, a former Police Writers Association member, spend 25 plus years in law enforcement and is currently a corporal with the California State University Long Beach Police Department. He co-authored Dodge, *Plymouth & Chrysler Police Cars* and has published numerous articles in Police, Law Enforcement Technology, Law & Order, Police Fleet Manager and Tactical Response. He is currently technical editor for Police Fleet Manager.

John Schembra retired after 30 years of service with the Pleasant Hill Police Department. He holds a BA in Administration of Justice and an MA in Public Administration and teaches emergency vehicle operations/pursuit driving through the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office and Police Academy. John has had several articles published in law enforcement magazines including Law and Order, Police Officer's Quarterly and The Backup. He has published *M.P., A Novel of Vietnam*. (For more information about John, see his [member page](#)).

Book Reviews

Each issue of The Public Safety Writer will contain reviews of books by our members and others we think our members might enjoy. If you'd like to have your book reviewed in The Public Safety Writer, please send a copy of your book to: Public Safety Writers Association, 2024 Falcon Court, Bellingham, WA 98229.

The Electric Sewer

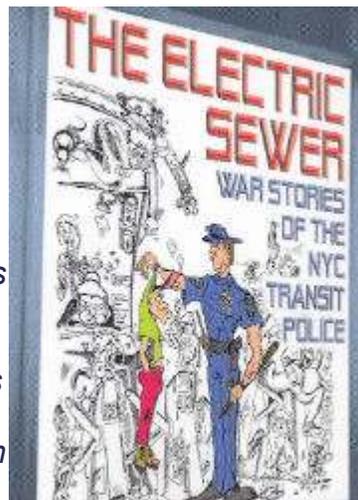
by Trebor Nehoc

207 pp.

\$12.95

Reviewed by Keith Bettinger

I remember my first subway ride as a kid and how exciting it was. However, it never compared to Trebor Nehoc's subway rides as a NYC Transit Cop. Although it is a dangerous job in many different ways the NYC Transit Police was probably one of the closest knit group of cops there ever was. The adventures and misadventures experienced by both Nehoc and his friends had me worried for them some of the time and laughing with them at other times. Pick it up and enjoy the ride through the underground city.



Excerpt: From a story titled "Music Under New York"

"One night I was standing around with the gathering crowd listening to an impromptu underground concert. People are tossing coins and bills into the open guitar cases lying on the subway platform, and some even forgo their trains. I'm applauding along with everyone else after one set, when a concerned citizen tugs on my sleeve: 'Officer, they're not supposed to be playing down here. It's illegal.' Hmmm...He's right. 'Hey fellas, sorry, but it is against the law for you to be playing here.' The entire crowd turns silently and gives me a collective dirty look. 'So, uh, as soon as you're finished playing, you're gonna have to stop.'"

The Publishing Game: Publish a Book in 30 Days

by Fern Reiss

Peanut Butter and Jelly Press

252 pp.

If you had nothing else to do and you never had to sleep, it might be possible, as the name of this book suggests, to publish a book in 30 days. Our guess is that it might take a few months longer, but having said that, this book is still a valuable tool to anyone who is considering self-publishing. In a no-nonsense, straightforward way, the book offers

a series of checklists that include everything from general topics such as defining goals to specific information on how to order a barcode. Even better, the book prioritizes all the tasks involved in self publishing and suggests a logical order in which to accomplish them. It not only gives ideas on each topic, but lists many options, including specific contact information for vendors and contacts in every area of book publishing you might need. In each section, Reiss also includes estimated costs involved so, with your handy calculator in hand, you can quickly determine just what such a venture might cost you before you complete step one.

Publish a Book in 30 Days is one in a series of books including: Bestseller in 30 Days, Find an Agent in 30 Days, Syndicate in 30 Days, and Ebooks in 30 days. For more information on this book, click on www.PublishingGame.com.

Excerpt:

The opportunity to publish exists as never before. Even as few as ten years ago, the only real option for authors was to bang their heads against the establishment wall, querying agents and publishers endlessly. Today, it is possible to publish your book yourself, easily – design a cover, secure a printer, enlist a wholesaler, get your book into bookstores and libraries. Anyone can do it. All you need is a plan. This book is that plan.

Now you can not only publish yourself, you can actually make money at it. There are over 50,000 independent publishers in America today, generating an estimated annual \$14 billion in book sales. You can be one of them.

You can move faster than the big publishing houses. Most big publishers will sit on your manuscript for months, then send you a form rejection letter. Even if you could get a big publisher to accept your book – an increasingly difficult proposition – it would take them at least nine to 18 months to bring it to press. You can do it yourself in a matter of weeks.

The ASJA Guide to Freelance Writing: A Professional Guide to the Business, for Nonfiction Writers of All Experience Levels

Edited by Timothy Harper

St. Martin's Griffin

314 pp.

As in any field, there are a lot of how-to writing books, most written by successful authors who are willing to share the secrets of their success with those who aspire to write, publish and market their works. What makes this book different is that it is an anthology of articles by 26 successful writers who have in common the fact that they are members of the American Society of Journalists and Authors, a national

association of independent nonfiction writers founded in 1948.

As a result the reader gets not just the opinion of one successful writer, but a take on the subject by more than two dozen writers, well known and respected for their ability to create and sell their work. Although some articles are a bit on the philosophical side, most get right to the point on subjects such as how to sell a book, how to find experts, writer-editor relations and protecting your rights as an author. The result is a wealth of practical ideas for writers of all levels of experience from those who are just considering a foray into the business to those who've been writing and selling their work for years.

Excerpt

From Chapter 4, *The Mystery of Ideas* by Jack El-Hai, author of the best selling new nonfiction book, *The Lobotomist*.

Ideas do us no good, and they certainly make us no money, if they are not developed and proposed, so some writers set aside time each day or week to hone their ideas and write proposals based on them. Many writers devote time to thinking about ideas, and some consider it an important part of their regular business planning. Some ideas quickly show themselves to be right or wrong for you, and some need time to ripen or sour. Virtually every writer who makes a living as a freelancer has a system for jotting down ideas, gathering more background information, and keeping track of ideas that have been pitched and the editors who have received them. The respective lists are fluid and ever-changing.

Carol Bly, one of America's best writers and teachers of fiction, once described a story as "a combination of what the writer supposed the story would be about – plus what actually turned up in the course of writing." Creating good and satisfying ideas for articles and books involves that same engrossing process of seizing your donnee and poking at it until you have something new and mysterious that's all your own. You start with something you saw or heard or read and turn it like wet clay on a potter's wheel. The end product can surprise even you.

Charity: True Stories of Giving and Receiving

Edited by Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer

Red Rock Press

204 pp.

As with many books of short stories, *Charity*, as the name suggests is built around a theme, in this case, as the editor writes in the introduction, "about giving and receiving on the most personal of levels. About people responding to each other with genuine kindness and openness. A rare quality, indeed, in a time where cruelty and meanness of spirit seem all too common. The fifty stories in this book look at charity from a variety of perspectives and include a story written by PSWA member,

Keith Bettinger.

Excerpt from Keith's story, *Danny's Vision*

"Some people have a gift for making us see our lives in a different way. Their stories inspire us, opening our eyes to our blessings and to our own potential. As a policeman in Long Island New York, I have heard a lot of stories, but one in particular sticks with me. I heard it at a December meeting of the Shields of Long Island, a fraternal group of police officers who work for different police departments. This story, told to us by fellow policeman John Carlsen, did more than tug at our heartstrings. It showed us something new about family, perseverance and charity."

NOTE: We'd love to review your book in our newsletter. Please send a copy of your book to: Public Safety Writers Association, 2024 Falcon Court, Bellingham, WA, 98229. Feel free to suggest excerpts.

News from our Members

Books published:

The Con Man's Daughter

Ed Dee, one of the PSWA's favorite conference speakers and writing competition judges, has published *The Con Man's Daughter*. Ed's other books include *14 Peck Slip*, *Bronx Angel*, *Little Boy Blue* and *Nightbird*. For more information go to www.eddeauthor.com.

Bad Tidings and Wingbeat

Marilyn Meredith, award winning author of 14 books, announces *Bad Tidings* the latest in her Rocky Bluff P.D. series. Also recently published, *Wingbeat*, the fifth in the Deputy Tempe Crabtree series. For more information: www.fictionforyou.com.

Burden of the Badge

Nine-year Saginaw PD veteran **Michael East** has just published *Burden of the Badge: A Year in the Life of a Street Cop*. The book documents nearly 1,000 calls over a full year in the life of a patrol officer in Saginaw, Michigan. For more information: www.fire-police-ems.com.

A Proactive Law Enforcement Guide for the War on Terror

Long-time PWA member **Lou Savelli** has published *A Proactive Law Enforcement Guide for the War on Terror*. Lou is also

author of *Pocket Guide to Basic Crime Scene Investigation*, *Pocket Guide to Gangs Across America and Their Symbols* and *Pocket Guide to Identity Theft*. To find out more about Lou's books, go to www.looseleaflaw.com.

The Retail Manager's Guide to Crime & Loss Prevention

In her new book also long-time member **Liz Martinez** offers a rare, insider look at retail theft and the strategies that effectively combat it. For more information, go to: www.looseleaflaw.com.

The Beach Club

In his newly published book, **Richard Paloma** reveals a behind the scenes look at the dark humor and aggravations of being a uniformed police officer. Click on www.publishersdrive.com/beach_club_info.html. for more information.

Pension

One of the Association's most prolific authors, **Dennis Griffin** now has six books in print, the newest of which is *Pension*, a novel that features a private investigator caught up in a case of fraud in public employee pension funds. Other books by Dennis include: *Policing Las Vegas*, *Killer In Par-A-Dice*, *One-Armed Bandit*, *The Morgue* and *Blood Money*. For more about Dennis and his books, go to www.authorsden.com/dennisgriffin.

Common Man Books series.

Police Writers Association Founder **Roger Fulton** and long-time PWA member **Mike Carpenter** are collaborating on a series of bicycle and hiking trail guides in Florida and New York. So far there are four in New York (hiking and biking guides for the 1000 Islands area, and hiking guides for both the Lake George and Saratoga Springs areas). There are two hiking guides and a biking guide in Florida and soon to come a wildlife viewing guide in Florida. For more information on these books, go to www.commonmanbooks.com.

Tim Dees, the webmaster for the Public Safety Writers Association, has accepted appointment as the Editor-in-Chief of Officer.com, a web portal and information resource for law enforcement. Officer.com is published by Cygnus Business Media, which also publishes the print journals *Law Enforcement Technology* and *Law Enforcement Product News*, as well as 67 other trade publications and several web portals. Tim's new job requires a move from his current home in southeast Washington State to Maryland. His new position will entail producing more editorial content for the web portal, and recruiting subject matter experts for columns and webcasts.

The change in Tim's status requires a departure from his former slot as the technology editor at *Law and Order*. That post will be assumed by PSWA member **Kevin Gordon**, who will be writing a thus-far-unnamed monthly column.

NOTE: If you've recently published a book or article, please let us know so we can share the good news with other members. Send your notice to: molsen@policewriter.com.

Newsletter Needs News

Since this is your newsletter, by definition it thrives on news. Published a book or article lately? Received an award? Have a writing-related experience (good, bad, ugly or hilarious) you'd be willing to share? Need some specific writing-related advice? Have a joke or story we can send through the mail? All submissions welcome. Send them to molsen@policewriter.com.

Send mail to tdees@policewriter.com with questions or comments about this web site.
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