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PUBLIC SAFETY WRITERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

End of 2010 Newsletter

Editor: Marilyn Meredith, mmeredith@ocsnet.net

This is your newsletter, please contribute articles, your news, book reviews, or anything else you think might be of interest.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

One of the most frequent questions we receive at PSWA from aspiring authors is, once I have an idea for a book, where do I go from there? As both a published author and a journalist, I suggest you consider the following:

Want to get your book published?

Think like a journalist

Every journalist knows that to get a story published, the lead paragraph it must answer six basic questions: who? what? where? why? when? and how?.

The same goes for writers who want to publish a book. Understanding that no matter who publishes your book these days it will be pretty much up to you to market it, **before you even begin to write**, you should also be prepared to answer the journalist's six basic questions.

Who will your audience be? As an author who wants to publish a book like it or not

you are an entrepreneur. You will be creating a product that you will have to sell (to an agent, to a publisher, or, if you self publish, directly to your buyer). So like any small business person, you'll need to have a pretty good idea who your buyer will be before you even begin.

What will your book be about? Once you've identified the likeliest market for your book your next step will be to think about how you could tailor your book to reach that audience. That is, produce the product your audience is most likely to buy.

Where will you market your book? Since, again, no matter how it is published, it will be primarily up to you to market it you will need to write a book that you can conveniently and economically sell. This is, after all, a business.

Why should someone buy your book? Any successful entrepreneur will tell you the most important thing in marketing a product is that you believe 100% in it. Same is true for a book. Before you write the first page, if you can't come up with at least 10 reasons why someone would buy the finished product, perhaps you need to reconsider what you are about to write.

When will you write it? Whether or not your book will be a success may depend largely on the answer to this question. You already know that in this very competitive field, your book, whether it is your first effort or your fifteenth, must be the very best you can write. And it only can be the best if you are willing to prioritize your writing schedule and put in the time it takes to make it great.

How will you market it? As an entrepreneur selling a product you must, from the beginning, have a business plan. Once you have identified your potential customers and have created a product that you can sell to them, you can then identify ways to market your book (your website, local bookstores, local organizations and events and so on) and complete the plan with a financial analysis of what you will need to spend to publish the book, how much you will spend marketing it and how much profit you will receive for your efforts.

How do you do all this? Well, that's what PSWA is all about. No matter where you are in your writing career, PSWA can help you achieve your goals. All of these steps and more are covered each year at our annual conference. Our members-only forum provides the opportunity to correspond online with other members of the organization who will be ready and willing to offer advice. And the annual writing competition is also a great way to test your writing skills and be able to add "Award Winning Author" to the cover of your first or next book. Don't let another minute go by in achieving writing success. Click "Join" on the website today.

--Marilyn Olsen, President

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ABOUT THE PSWA CONFERENCE

Season's greetings. Christmas and Chanukah are right around the corner. If you don't know what to ask Santa to bring you, why don't you ask him to send you to the [Public Safety Writers Association Conference](#) in July, 2011. There are lots of gifts that could be combined by family members to cover your airfare, hotel room and conference fees.

Just think while snow is swirling around and the Christmas tree and Menorah are lighted, you can be thinking of how you will be spending the summer in "balmy" Las Vegas, sitting in an air conditioned conference room learning to better your craft of writing, and lounging around the swimming pool at the Orleans Hotel and Casino while sipping a beverage to cool you down while you tan.

Do you remember the challenge I put out to each of you – get a fellow writer to attend

with you? If not, get out and recruit attendees. You can't beat a conference combined with a vacation in Las Vegas. I have two members attending after I challenged them to join us. Remember we are not limited to the amount of members who can attend. The more the merrier, and the more you get to network with fellow writers.

If you have questions about Las Vegas and activities in the area, drop me an email. I will be happy to answer your questions the best I can. I live here and I love living here. The Orleans is a great hotel that is close to the strip. You can coordinate your trip on the shuttle bus or it is a short cab ride. For our firefighting members the Clark County Fire Academy is right across the street from the hotel. Our bowlers can enjoy 64 lanes of bowling. Our movie lovers can pick from 18 different movies theaters within the casino. If you like to gamble or make investments in your retirement fund, Las Vegas and the Orleans have the venues to try. If you need some liquid libation there are plenty of places to consume beverages of choice. Don't forget, if you are gambling, drinks are free, just tip the cocktail waitress. The Orleans has a great buffet, plenty of other food venues to choose from and one of the best showrooms for shows in Las Vegas and charges reasonable prices. As the conference gets closer, I will let you know if anything is going on in the Orleans Arena behind the hotel. Your hotel rooms will be top notch and the food at the conference, included in your conference fee is to die for. If you don't believe me, ask one of last year's attendees. If you have special dietary needs, check off your requirements on the conference application. Otherwise, you get what the conference coordinator –me – picks for your meal each day.

Take the time to attend the conference. Meet your fellow writers, learn more about writing, get answers to your questions about writing and make new friends with a common interest. This is the best conference for the money. Attend and you won't be sorry. And remember, encourage other writers to attend. They don't have to be a member, they just have to love writing. –Keith Bettinger, site chairman

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PLANNING FOR A SAFE HOLIDAY SEASON

The Christmas season is upon us and the economy is in the tank. When I was a cop we used to say that a bad economy was job security for us. However, for the general public and police officers and their families, this is also the season to become a victim. A few thoughts from an old crime prevention officer come to mind to make the holidays happier and safer for you and your families.

When going to the mall to shop during the Christmas season, if the mall provides a parking valet – use it. Don't walk across a crowded parking lot with arms full of bags and packages. Let the valet go out and bring your car curbside for you to load with your purchases near the door of the mall. The few extra dollars you spend paying and tipping the valet will pay bigger dividends for the holidays than life insurance or medical insurance policies.

If you must walk across the parking lot, shop with a companion so you are not alone. If you must walk alone, keep your cell phone in your coat pocket so it is easily accessible if you need to dial 911. If your car has an alarm system, keep the keys in your hand so you can press the alarm button and sound your car alarm if approached by a suspicious person. Also, walk with your car keys points protruding between your fingers. If attacked you can use these to scratch, poke, and yes, stab the attacker about the face.

Once you are done shopping and are in your automobile, make sure you lock your doors for the ride home. From a well lighted part of the mall, use your cell phone to call home so family members know when to expect you.

If you need cash from an ATM, do not go alone – even if it is a drive up ATM. Have your passenger keep surveying the area, to make sure you are not being approached by someone intent on robbing you. If a person does approach you, leave the area

immediately. If you have an automobile alarm system, hit that red button and sound that alarm to scare him away and call passerby attention to your dangerous situation.

Make sure you get your receipts and your credit cards back after making each purchase. Keep track of purchases and check them against your incoming bills to make sure no one has obtained your credit card number and made purchases against your account.

Here's hoping you have a safe, healthy and happy Christmas and Chanukah.

--Keith Bettinger

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COMMUNICATION DEVICES FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

I think every law enforcement officer in the United States is equipped with a two-way radio while on duty. Some agencies issue only a portable (walkie-talkie type, called "portables," "packsets," "handheld," "handi-talkie," or "rovers," depending on where you are--I'm sure there are other names) radio. Most, I think provide a portable radio for use when out of the vehicle, and a permanently-installed radio in the car. The car radio will have more output power and therefore a better range.

This doesn't mean that officers are always in touch by radio. Many jurisdictions have "dead spots" where distance and terrain features block access to the base station or repeater towers necessary to transmit messages. It's very common for officers in these isolated areas to be able to hear what's going on, but can't connect with a repeater to transmit until they change locations. It's exactly the same situation as with cell phones and "no service" areas.

Officers in remote areas may have multiple radios installed in their cars for the purpose of communicating with a different center or organization when they can't get through on their own channel. I know of a former AZ Dept. of Public Safety (think Highway Patrol) officer who had four radios in his car when he was assigned in the "Four Corners" area where Arizona, Colorado, Utah and New Mexico come together.

Because politics often come before practicality, officers who routinely work together are frequently unable to talk directly over the radio. Their employers will not install the other agency's radios or program their own to communicate with the other operation. Officers will get around this by carrying scanners tuned to the opposite agency's channels. Each officer hears the transmissions from the other over the scanner, and replies over his own radio. If you don't have a scanner or have the scanner tuned to only one of the channels, you will hear only one side of the conversation.

Members of the RCMP in the Yukon provide assistance to Alaska State Troopers, and vice versa, because there isn't anyone else around to help. International border treaties are violated every time this happens, but the officers are just happy to have some backup.

Agencies with very large or remote patrol areas often use the VHF-Low (Very High Frequency-Low Band) radio band with frequencies between 30-46 MHz (megahertz, formerly megacycles). You can pick out the agencies that use these, as their cars will have long whip antennas mounted on the fenders or bumpers. Fewer outfits use these frequencies as time goes on, as there isn't all that much bandwidth, and technology is making the higher UHF frequencies more adaptable for public safety use.

Lower frequencies will propagate less around buildings and other man-made structures. Higher frequencies are reflected, rather than absorbed, by these structures, so they work better for public safety in urban settings. Lower frequencies are prone to "skip" off of the troposphere, and most veteran users will have stories of talking to colleagues hundreds or thousands of miles away who happened to share the same frequency. When I was an

SF Bay Area ambulance jockey in the mid-1970s, we would occasionally talk directly with crews from another ambulance service in Las Cruces, NM.

UHF (Ultra High Frequency) radio channels, which are the most common used by public safety, are not prone to this "skip" phenomenon. These days, most public safety radios have sophisticated filters that reject transmissions not tuned for the same filter.

Is that far more than you wanted to know? 8-)

And is it allowable (or feasible) to turn communications off if on a break or technically off duty?

When you're off duty, you may not even have a radio. Some departments issue a portable radio to every officer, and some even issue a take-home car (common with state police agencies, not so much with local police and sheriff's departments--CHP does not issue take home cars except for the very rare officer assigned to a remote "resident" post). Few officers are going to keep the radio on or carry it when they are off duty. When officers are subject to recall, they generally receive "on call" pay (maybe one hour's pay for every four hours on call--this varies widely) and would have to carry a radio, pager, cell phone or other method of communication.

When you're on a coffee or meal break, you generally keep the radio on, and you're subject to call. If something important happens, coffee break is over.

Tim Dees
tim@timdees.com

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MURPHY'S LAWS OF WILDLAND FIRE FIGHTING

1. If it's a stupid idea but works, it isn't stupid.
 2. Don't look conspicuous, it attracts work.
 3. Never work at a fire that is braver than you are.
 4. Never forget that the lowest bidder made your equipment.
 5. If your efforts are going great, you're in the wrong place.
 6. All fire fronts 1 hour away will arrive in 30 minutes.
 7. The media will turn up, just as your brilliant plan turns to s&t.
 8. When you have an area under control, don't forget to tell the fire.
 9. If you are short of everything except fire, things are normal.
 10. Things that must work together, usually aren't shipped together.
 11. The maps sent to you will be the wrong ones.
 12. Reinforcements will arrive, as soon as the fire is contained.
 13. Anything you do will be wrong, including doing nothing.
 14. If you put out more fire than you are asked too, you will be given more fire to put out.
 15. You will always have more fire than water.
 16. The distance from a piece of equipment you need is directly proportional to the urgency with which you need it.
 17. The firebreak you spent all night constructing is in the wrong place.
 18. Your biggest save will have no witnesses.
 19. Your biggest mistake will have hundreds of witnesses.
 20. The person who contributed least to the fire fighting effort will be the only one interviewed on the six o'clock news.
- Last,
21. No matter how bad things get, it will look worse on TV.

Submitted by Kurt Kamm, author of the award winning serial arson mystery, *Red Flag*.

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CREATIVE MARKETING: FLOWING WITH THE CURRENT

What do you do when you are anxiously awaiting the launch of your second book and suddenly life hits you at the knees. You struggle and try to stay afloat but know you are going under and you can't write yourself out of the mess you are in.

That happened to me. I thought I was ready for my launch of ***A Case of Accidental Intersection***. It was May. My book was going to be available at the Public Safety Writers Conference in Vegas as the first one, ***A Case of Infatuation***, had the year before. I just had to finalize some details, write a bunch of blogs and the publicity machine would crank up.

As I was counting down the days, my husband took a new job in a town two and a half hours away. I boarded the airplane and had a fantastic time in Vegas. Instead of cranking up the publicity machine when I returned, I was packing boxes and taking trips a couple of times a week to look for a new house. (Who would have thought finding a new house would be so difficult!) June, July and August disappeared with my limp attempts to get the buzz generated.

Life settled some in September but was I too late to get anything going for the latest release? I tried things and some worked but I felt I was too late; I didn't have any urgency to getting any blog tours or reviews. I've been puzzling that problem out and have come with an idea. In January when the snow is blowing and there is nothing else to do but write and promote, I am going to do a half year book launch. I'm hoping the idea is just zany enough to generate some interest. I'm doing it on the same theory as school teachers who celebrate kids' summer birthdays as half year birthdays to make them during the school year.

I'm not sure it will work but I figure at least doing a half year launch is better than surrendering to the current I couldn't fight during the summer. If you would like to host me or do a review, let me know. It's never too late in my book. I would be happy to reciprocate!

-- **W.S. Gager** (better known as Wendy to the PSWA gang.)
Author of Humorous Whodunits: ***A Case of Infatuation***
A Case of Accidental Intersection-Now Available
<http://www.wsgager.com>

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GO WITH YOUR GUT

It's Wise Not to Over Analyze

by **JOHN WILLS**

(previously published in *Officer.com*)

A cop's primary responsibility is to return home safely to his family each day. Forget about everything else people may tell you; it's your job to be safe so that your spouse, children, parents, friends and colleagues continue to be blessed with you in their lives. One of the ways you can facilitate your safety is to follow your gut instinct. There are varieties of terms people use to describe gut instinct. It can also be referred to as: common sense, gut feeling, gut reaction, intuition, rationality, or doing the right thing. This phenomenon is a result of experiences we have learned throughout our lives, both on the job and off.

Common sense tells us that it's not a good idea to go down a dark alley; it's not wise to leave a new car parked in a bad neighborhood; it's foolish to run a marathon not having trained for it. Your gut tells you all of the aforementioned ideas are imprudent.

Conversely, your gut also tells you things which are wise or are the right thing to do: aiding an injured person, returning a lost wallet, or helping an elderly person up or down a flight of stairs. These are all a result of feelings we have because of things we've see or done on a regular basis which cause us to react without having to think about them first. Gut instinct is a valuable tool for the cop on the street, particularly as it relates to action versus reaction. The quicker we can act, the better our chances of surviving.

Consider what happens when you make a traffic stop and approach the driver. Smart cops know it's imperative that we see the driver's hands. If we are unable to see them both, or if we command the driver to put his hands on the dash and he refuses, our gut tells us we're in danger. It's a product of our experience and common sense. To irrationally ignore that signal is to put ourselves in harm's way. If we have that same driver out of his vehicle and he darts his eyes around quickly, our gut tells us he's getting ready to bolt. We've experienced that type of behavior before; we know what it means.

Our brain actually catalogues similar incidents and circumstances and stores them like files in a cabinet. Things we encounter on a frequent or regular basis: street stops, certain gestures suspects give when answering questions, tossing drugs one way and running the other, are all things we see time and again. Our short-term memory has those events stored for quick retrieval. Imagine it as a mental matching game. We observe a certain behavior and our brain matches it with what typically comes next.

Michael Gershon, author of *The Second Brain*, explains, "The gut itself literally feeds gut feelings; think of butterflies in the stomach when a decision is pending. The gut has millions of nerve cells and, through them, a 'mind of its own.' Still, gut feelings do not originate there, but in signals from the brain." So gut instincts are not something nebulous; they are actual cognition, an important tool allowing us to quickly make a decision.

What about those who lack gut instinct or intuition? "...Intuitions compel us to act in specific ways, and those who lack intuition are essentially cognitively paralyzed." This is the conclusion of Psychologist Antoine Bechara, at the University of Southern California. Bechara studied brain-damaged patients unable to form emotional intuitions when making a decision. Their only option was to make a decision through reasoning while observing the situation. He said, "They ended up doing such a complicated analysis, factoring everything in, that it could take them hours to decide between two kinds of cereal." That amount of time needed to analyze a situation in police work would be disastrous.

The question becomes whether or not to trust your gut instinct. An article in *Psychology Today* describes intuition as, "...your brain on autopilot, performing its actions of processing information outside of your awareness that it's operating. It's non-conscious thinking." Our job, often times, demands split second decision making. Given that we know from our own experience, and now from authorities in the academic community that gut instincts work in our favor, I will defer to my gut most of the time.

The article concludes, "Studies have shown that we are capable of making sound judgments about people based on non-conscious processes, but if we deliberately think about our preferences and decisions we can actually make them worse. The truth is that all of the factors that influence our reactions just aren't available to our conscious selves. There is no substitute for gathering information about any task or situation before us. But neither should we be afraid of not knowing every reason why we feel the way we do in every situation."

Gut instinct - go with it and live.

Stay Safe, brothers and sisters!

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MEMBER NEWS

Jack Miller's Book Release Party

Jack Miller had a book release party for his latest historical fiction novel titled "The Medal". It is the story of a young man in the army wanting a good conduct medal because it was the medal his favorite uncle showed him the night before the uncle is killed in an auto accident. The story follows the man being given a choice to go to jail for an indiscretion or serve in the military. He selects the lesser of two evils and finds he may have made the wrong choice when he violates a minor military rule and served time in a stockade. There he has the desired epiphany and comes out a soldier. At that point he begins his efforts to be awarded the medal which for various reasons keeps eluding him even though he performs heroically.

The party was held at the VFW club hall in Henderson NV which cost \$100 to rent which included the tables and chairs. Special table cloths, red, white and blue were obtained for \$40. With 36 friends and acquaintances RSVP'ing they would attend, large pizza's were ordered from Pizza Hut for \$10 each. Jack spent another \$50 on bowls, plates, plastic, cashew nuts and memento tokens for each person (These looked like gambling chips with the book cover on one side and Jack's web site address on the other). An arrangement with the VFW allowed an open bar at much reduced prices than other places and the total bar tab was \$90.

Jack presented a short program about the food rations provided to the troops from WWII to the present.

This book release party was slightly different than others in that no books were sold to the attendees. Each couple or single attending were given a copy and asked to read the book and if they liked it, to recommend it to their friends and acquaintances.

Time will tell if the money was well spent.

One disappointment in the party, although twelve different media people were sent invitations, none replied or attended.

Jack Miller, old investigator

PSWA award Winning Author

Author of Cold War Warrior, Cold War Defector, Operation Switch, The Master Cheat, and The Medal

To read summaries please visit www.retafsa.com

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Law Enforcement Management - What Works and What Doesn't

From authors: Michael J. Carpenter & Roger Fulton

Benefit from the combined wisdom of a team of successful law enforcement managers who have discovered - through years of actual experience - the leadership techniques that succeed...and those that don't! Topics include: Gaining confidence, Earning respect, Fostering loyalty, Administrative "survival" and Leading the way. Avoid pitfalls on your path to success! This insightful book includes analysis, exploration and advice on more than 50 actual management topics and situations that illustrate leadership principles that you can broadly apply to your own career.

2009 220 pages 6x9 softcover \$19.95

If you have any interest in this new title or any of our other law enforcement guidebooks, please go to: <http://rogerfulton.com/books.htm>

This new title will be at the top of that webpage. You can also scroll down to see the

other law enforcement titles we have written to help you in your career.

(Roger Fulton is the founder of PSWA)

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Rocky Warren reports he's gotten many articles published in the *New Media Journal*. It's a very well done e-magazine that features articles from the *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today* and others.

His latest published article is here:

<http://www.newmediajournal.us/staff/warren/2010/09092010.htm>

When you go to the site, to the right and lower than the title, you'll see "Past Articles" so you can go through the other articles should you wish.

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John Briant reports he's settling in AZ for the winter. He wishes everyone an enjoyable holiday season. He'll be working on **book seven of my series over the winter. Take care.**

John H. Briant, Publisher
Chalet Publishing
www.capital.net/com/jbrnt

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Mike Orenduff's ***THE POT THIEF WHO STUDIED PYTHAGORAS*** won the New Mexico Book of the Year Award in the mystery category. The New Mexico Book of the Year awards are organized by the New Mexico Book Co-op, a consortium of over a thousand publishers and authors with an interest in books about New Mexico and the Southwest. The awards are sponsored by the New Mexico State Library, the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Library System, the Friends of the Albuquerque Public Library, the Santa Fe Public Library, the New Mexico Book Association, the New Mexico Coalition for Literacy, Pen New Mexico, the Portales Public Library, SouthWest Writers, ReadingNewMexico.com, ReadWest, Rio Rancho Public Library, and numerous publishers, bookstores, and corporations.

There were hundreds of entries. The other finalists were:

Sandi Ault, *Wild Sorrow*, Berkley Prime Crime/Penguin
Jonna-Lynn Mandelbaum, *Unpredictable Crossing*, Outskirts Press
Jonathan Miller, *Conflict Contract*, Cool Titles
Margaret Tessler, *Deadly Triangles*, Booklocker
Florence Weinberg, *Sonora Wind*, Twilight Times Books

The Annual Awards Banquet was held in Albuquerque on November 19th and attracted 200 attendees this year.

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PSWA Members Mike Orenduff and Marilyn Meredith are both finalists in mystery/suspense for Epic's upcoming e-book awards.

The End

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