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PUBLIC SAFETY WRITERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER WINTER 2010

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

Dear PSWA Members,

The coming of the New Year challenges us all not only to make resolutions for the coming months, but actually create the steps it takes to make the resolutions happen.

Unlike those other resolutions, like exercising off those holiday cookies or deleting all the junk that's accumulated either physically in the basement or virtually on the computer, we all know that writing is sometimes more than just a matter of scheduling.

While we can easily (well mostly easily) actually get ourselves to the gym on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 8:00 a.m. or dedicate Saturday, the 23rd to cleaning stuff out, with writing, despite our best efforts, sometimes that brilliant plot line we hoped would appear is discouragingly elusive or the information we need to make sure that little detail in our manuscript is absolutely accurate is still, alas, missing.

Fortunately, as a PSWA member, you can jump right into keeping those writing resolutions. You can actually go ahead and plan to write diligently every morning for two hours or every Thursday afternoon. Because right at your fingertips you have access to

dozens of successful writers ready and willing to assist you. They can brainstorm with you to create the perfect plot. Or tell you exactly how far a bullet fired from a .38 Special revolver would travel through a brick wall. Or whether or not you can really retrieve a fingerprint from a dog's nose. Or whether a firefighter would actually swing from a fire hose onto a burning roof. Well, the list goes on. But suffice it to say, if you have the question, someone in PSWA either has the answer or can point you to someone who does.

So go ahead and make those writing resolutions now and, better yet, resolve to stick to them.

May the New Year bring you rave reviews on your best selling book, a nice check for your next published article and, even better yet, a national award in PSWA's annual writing competition!

As the folks at the big box store say, "You can do it. We can help."

Marilyn Olsen
President
Public Safety Writers Association

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2010 CONFERENCE UPDATE—TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT OUR SPEAKERS

If you haven't signed up for the PSWA 2010 Conference as yet, be sure and do so before the March 31 deadline for the lowest registration price available. You also need to sign up by then if you want to be on a panel.

As you probably realize by now, mystery, horror and thriller writer Simon Wood is going to be our keynote speaker and he'll be telling us how to put suspense into our novels. He's also going to be on a panel about short story writing.

Our own Michael A. Black will show us how to plot a book in one hour. I'm really looking forward to that one.

And for those of you who have heard Sunny Frazier speak before you know that she'll definitely wake you up and waiting to hear what she has to say next, and her topic is, "How Much Sex is Too Much."

Kregg Jorgenson will be talking about "How To Target Articles for Specific Magazines". Besides a background in extensive article writing, he's had several books published—and he has a most fascinating background—you can read about it on the website.

Steve Scarborough will discuss detectives—fictional and real, in the early days and now. Point-of-View is probably the most difficult concept for fiction writers to grasp, we are fortunate to have mystery writer Morgan St. James explain it to us.

Micheal and Lai Orneduff are going to review the best and worst of covers and explain what they should do for your book and how it can do it.

And we have three small press publishers who will be tell us what they are looking for in books and they'll be available to talk to you one on one if you so desire: Billie Johnson—Oak Tree Press; Rebecca Buckley—RJ Buckley Publishing Company; and Lee Emory—Treble Heart Publishing.

We will have panels to pique the interest of everyone attending—and the caliber of those appearing on the panels is top-rate. And there are some surprises yet to come.

A tip about registering for the hotel, the PSWA conference rate is the best.

If you haven't signed up yet, do it now. The registration form is right here on the website.

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GIVE ME A "P"

I was never a cheerleader in high school. I was the girl in glasses who ran the school newspaper. Years later I see where that skill paid off more than jumping around with pom-poms flashing.

However, a dormant cheerleader comes out when I promote PSWA. The growth of attendees at last year's conference stunned me. I'm glad we got a chance to videotape promos, we look and sound good on You Tube. Professional and fun (thanks, Sherman and Lawsen).

I just sent out information about next year's conference to 35 Sister-in-Crime chapters throughout the United States and Canada. I also contact authors I come across online who would make a good fit into our organization. My question in emails is "Why aren't you a member of PSWA?" I even contacted Joseph Wambaugh (yeah, that's chutzpa). He nicely declined, he's busy writing novels.

When I go to conventions, I bring material with me to promote us. I always think there's a struggling writer out there who needs what we have to offer. That person may be the next Michael Connelly or Janet Evanovich (she could use our help, right?).

My connection with this group doesn't just happen once a year. Michelle Perin. dropped in on me once with two kids, two cats and two ferrets. Sarah Cortez. and I have long phone conversations. You all know Marilyn Meredith. and I are practically joined at the hip when it comes to promoting locally. Madeline Gornell and I are very close although she's on the desert in a little place outside of Barstow. I met my publisher, Billie, at the second conference I attended and have become very close to the new authors from Oak Tree who showed at the last conference: Mike Orenduff, Holli Castillo and Wendy Gager. I've dubbed them The Three Marketeers.

Denny Griffin and his wife Faith (I refuse to call her Bear) have become such good friends that my sister invited them to her timeshare in Maui in the future. We had such a good time together, I miss them already.

With any organization, you have to give as good as you get. Whether it's putting the word out, buying each other's books, writing a newsletter article or just being there for support, we all have a role. Growth means change and change keeps a group expanding in positive ways.

Okay, that's my rah-rah rant for today. Hope you all had a great Christmas.

--Sunny Frazier

Editors Note: Sunny's got the right idea! PSWA members, you are the ones who need to be promoting both the organization and the conference.

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TRICKS FOR ORGANIZING A WRITING LIFE

A few years ago I sat on a panel of professionals in various artistic careers, such as painting, sculpture, writing, and graphic design. A comment by the painter made a vivid and lasting impression on me. She said, "In today's competitive world, a producing artist of any type cannot afford to be disorganized about your art." Then, she continued to describe the full range of tasks she accomplished to support her actual painting: on Saturday, she visited galleries; on two evenings during the week she did research at an

archive, and so forth.

Her comment continues to ring true for me as a working writer, freelance editor, and creative writing teacher. In fact, as I've managed multiple projects across the U.S. in each of these areas, I've also seen the importance of increased marketing, internet socializing, and relationships with an growing number of publishers, editors, and reviewers. How to manage it all within a finite amount of time?

To juggle so many projects, which we writers often must do, I've borrowed some of the tricks I learned during my corporate career. I'll share a few below and hope that you'll find them useful too.

- set up a folder, concisely labeled for each project, public appearance, or request.

* the key to a usable filing system, as opposed to a frustrating and unusable filing system, is that there never should be more than one folder a paper can go into. Label specifically.

- set up folders for your tax data and use them all year. Don't wait to file tax receipts.
- when you receive an email pertaining to a project, print it immediately and file it. This will save frustrating minutes searching your inbox for the one piece of info, boarding pass, confirmation code, etc.
- set up auxiliary files or inboxes for material you'll review at leisure. Don't lump it all into a large pile. Remember, the key is to find information quickly. A review of my inboxes for information that doesn't pertain to projects, but that I wish to know in case one of my clients or I need it shows that following labels: catalogues of publishers, articles on the writing process, ideas for short stories, ideas for magazine articles, other authors, books to buy, etc.
- keep all folders pertaining to a topic together. For instance, all financial folders are in the same section. All medical folders, etc. For my anthologies, which may have over twenty authors each, with numerous folders for PR, rejections, the title, cover art, etc., I set up folders on each set of anticipated correspondence by topic. Later, when authors are accepted, I set up two folders: one for the numerous revisions of a story and another for correspondence with that author.
- if your email inbox will allow you to set up folders or use a labeling system, do so. Then, scrupulously use it. This will eliminate precious minutes lost hunting through your inbox.
- use detailed but concise titles that pertain to the project for emails. When you receive a reply, the title line will immediately enable you to know what you are receiving.

Remember, the only way a system will save you time and money is if you use it – all the time. Good luck and good writing!

Sarah Cortez, Writer/Editor

Author of "How to Undress and Cop"

Editor of "Windows into My World: Latino Youth Write Their Lives," "Hit List: The Best of Latino Mystery," and "Indian Country Noir" (forthcoming)

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PLANNING YOUR PROMOTION BEFORE YOUR BOOKS COMES OUT

Most authors know they must have a strategy to promote a book before it comes out. In fact, many publishers are asking for your marketing plan at the same time that you send in a synopsis and a few chapters.

Because I've done several marketing plans for publishers I usually build on one of those as I'm working on the plan.

Because I'm with a small, independent press I won't have books to send out for review until the book has gone to press and is available for purchase. But once I get books I'll be asking reviewers if they'd be willing to review it. (For those with larger publishers, to get a reviewer in *Publishers Weekly*, an ARC must be sent out several months ahead of time.)

I'm already planning on another virtual book tour in March. If anyone would like me to visit their blog at that time, let me know. You can send me interview questions or what you'd like me to write about—or I can come up with something.

I'll have a book launch and I've already been told I can have it the same place I had my last one, a combination bakery and gift shop in town. I'm planning to approach the new book store in Porterville too and see if she's willing to do one too. Again, for those with a bigger publisher, you might be lucky and the publisher plan a tour for you, but probably you'll have to plan one for yourself. Bookstore events have never been my most favorite thing to do, but they work well for others, just ask Michael Orenduff.

Of course I'll update my website to include the new book and submit the first chapter for people to sample.

Because I work on promotion all year I already have several months of appearances scheduled on my 2010 calendar:

Conferences and Conventions: Epicon in New Orleans, Mayhem in the Midlands in Omaha, **Public Safety Writers in Las Vegas**, Bouchercon in San Francisco.

Speaking engagements: Clovis Library Book Club, Ridgewriters in Ridgecrest, Visalia Library, Hanford Library

Book Fairs and Craft Festivals: Celebration of the Whales in Oxnard, Jane Austen Fair in Fresno, and if there is a Central Coast Book Festival in the fall, I'll be there.

Group Author Signing: Coalesce Book Store, Morro Bay (Group author booksignings go over very well.)

In November, I'm going on the mystery cruise Sunny tells you about in the next article, and you can be sure I'll be promoting like crazy.

Of course I'll be writing blogs, posting on Facebook, Twitter and all the other social networking places I belong to.

At the moment I'm fairly open from July on. But guess what, in September I'll have a new Deputy Tempe Crabtree mystery and it'll all start over again.

--Marilyn Meredith

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A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO COZUMEL

by Sunny Frazier

What do PSWA members do between the yearly conference? Well, Dennis Griffin, Jack Miller, Charlie McKee and I went on a cruise honoring veterans. We did a panel on the ins and outs of publishing and writing memoirs.

We got with travel agent Beverly Poitras who pulled together the trip and pitched the idea of a mystery cruise: *Mystery On the High Seas: A Cruise To Die For*. We didn't think we'd pull it off until 2011, but she got the ball rolling and it's happening in a year!

Details: Nov. 14-21,2010, leaving from Los Angeles. Three days at sea for panels and

such.

Ports-of-call: Puerto Vallarta, Mazatlan and Cabo San Lucas. No extra charge for the conference, just pay for the cabin. We're really encouraging fans, small presses and their authors to attend. I'm also trying to negotiate with the ship so we can sell our books.

Bev has wrangled 120 cabins. She'd like to see \$100 deposit to hold a cabin as soon as possible, a second installment on the deposit of \$150 by June 1, and the remainder by Aug. 25. Go to Beverly@cruisingsmart.com She'll also send you the flier.

Sarah Cortez and I discussed a panel of Hispanic mystery writers, an emerging group. Since we're sailing to Mexico, what could be more appropriate? Denny is bringing the mob figures aboard. They promise to leave all weapons behind.

I loved Cozumel, loved the free tequila. No lime or salt needed! Oh, and shopping was so much fun, especially after a few shots!

(Just in case you are confused, this is not a PSWA event, but one we thought some of you might be interested in. This is not a cruise limited to writers—there were be many others on board, but they will be able to attend the panels if they so choose.)

--Sunny Frazier

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PUTTING ROMANCE IN A CRIME NOVEL

Though I write mysteries and crime novels, I'm a firm believer that romance needs to be in every book, no matter the genre.

In my latest Rocky Bluff P.D., **No Sanctuary**, which I wrote as F. M. Meredith, there is an ongoing attraction between Detective Doug Milligan and Officer Stacey Wilbur.

In earlier books, Stacey had a strict rule not to date anyone who worked on the Rocky Bluff P.D. Because she was the only female police officer, her fellow police officers at first weren't thrilled when she turned up as back-up for them because of her small stature. However, it didn't take long for her to prove herself. Of course the single guys flirted with her, and the bumbling Officer Butler actively pursued her to no avail. A widow with a young son, she didn't want a relationship to complicate her life.

When she first worked with Doug Milligan she found herself attracted to him, but didn't break her rule. Though they enjoyed each other's company, Doug was still hurting from his divorce and the fact that his ex-wife quickly remarried and took their children to live in San Diego.

In **Smell of Death** Stacey and Doug succumb to the attraction and begin dating, though many obstacles pop up—including the fact that Doug rents a room of his house to Officer Gordon Butler. Gordon still has feelings for Stacey though it's apparent her affections are directed toward Doug.

The romance heats up in **No Sanctuary** as Stacey helps Doug investigate a murder case. They continue to find it difficult to have any time alone as their jobs interfere, and she needs and wants to spend time with her young son and her parents.

Having Doug and Stacey fall in love has added a dimension to the Rocky Bluff series and is definitely influencing the way things are going to develop in future books. Doug is the perfect man for Stacey—he misses his own children and will love helping raise Davey—that is if Davey embraces the idea of having a step-father.

Stacey is a fun heroine to write about. She's gutsy and works on being the kind of police

officer who helps people. She also is willing to take chances—chances that in **No Sanctuary** give her the opportunity for a new and better paying job—and another that will nearly cost her life.

You'll notice I didn't put anything about putting sex your mystery—you'll have to come to the PSWA conference and learn about that subject from Sunny.

To order **No Sanctuary** you can get it through the publisher at <http://www.oaktreebooks.com> or Amazon.com or for an autographed copy, from my website: <http://fictionforyou.com>

Marilyn Meredith a.k.a. F.M. Meredith

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MEMBER NEWS

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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NEW BOOK FROM ROBERT KNIGHTLY

Robert Knightly has a new book out too—***Bodies in Winter***. Book List gave it a great review saying that “Knightly’s twenty-years as an NYPD cop lend a gritty authenticity to his book, and his deft story-telling, high octane action, and genuinely surprising twists make the novel a gripping read from beginning to end.”

This is an Intense book. I purchased it because Knightly is a PSWA member and came to one of our conferences. He is a multi-published short story writer and has written several scripts for TV shows. But this is his first mystery novel.

Bodies in Winter is a complicated and realistic story of corruption in the NYPD and follows two different and most interesting characters. A detective named Harry Corbin—a man who believes in right and wrong, and his partner, Adele Bentibi, a sharp but not well-liked woman.

The murder of a disgraced former cop who'd just been released from prison sets the detectives off on an investigation that leads to a major cover-up and several dishonest cops.

Because Knightly is a retired NYPD cop and a short story writer of note, this is a book anyone who loves realistic police procedurals with plausible plots will thoroughly enjoy. Highly recommended.

Review by Marilyn Meredith

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WHY RYAN?

After a year and a half I have finally finished Ryan's book and have it ready to sell. Proceeds from the sell will be donated to the SSG Wm Ryan Fritsche Memorial Scholarship Fund. My goal is to raise \$5,000. I hope you'll help me make it.

Why Ryan is the story of the extraordinary life of a young man who unknowingly impressed those he met with a quiet intensesness they could not explain. His determination to succeed and his relentless work ethic in whatever he did made up for any lack of skill he might possess. His humility belied an inner strength of character admired by those fortunate enough to know him.

Unlike many people who struggle with trying to find out who they are or what they're suppose to do with their life's, Ryan always seemed to have a clear vision of who he was and where he was going. He often seemed surprised that the rest of us were so clueless.

His dedication and love for his family, his friends, his teammates and his country were always forefront in his life.

The book is written in two sections. The first half provides a glimpse into Ryan's heritage. As you get to know his family it's easy to understand why they believed Ryan was a gift from God. As you get to know Ryan you can't help but be amazed how his short life touched and changed so many others.

The second half gives an in-depth look at the circumstances surrounding his death as his family struggle with their faith and disillusionment with God. Each one is forced to deal with their pain, their loss and their own fear of immortality as they look deep with-in themselves for the answer to **Why Ryan?**

For those of you out of town you can purchase your copy on-line at www.volittasbooks.com click on Why Ryan? above his picture and you can use the Payp\Pal button.

May God bless you each and every one and may he continue to bless the USA!

Volitta Fritsche
Proud mother of SSG Wm Ryan Fritsche

Check out books by Volitta at www.volittasbooks.com
Never Forget SSG Wm Ryan Fritsche KIA 7-29-07

The End

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