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## PUBLIC SAFETY WRITERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER VOLUME XI MID-WINTER 2009 ISSUE

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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,

There are now more reasons than ever not to just JOIN the Police Writers Association but to get actively involved. While it is more difficult than ever to hire an agent, have the agent pitch a book to a major publisher and have the publisher actually publish a book, there are more ways than ever before to become a published author. Despite all this gloom and doom about the publishing world, your fellow PSWA members can help you achieve your publishing goals. How?

**Networking:** Among your fellow PSWA members are dozens of successful, published authors. While the conference is the best way to get to know them, you can also get answers to your questions via our list serve. Every member is invited to join and no question goes unanswered. Among our members, no matter what you want to know, it's very likely someone will have just the answer you're looking for.

**Conference:** The annual conference, to be held in Las Vegas in June 18-21, 2009 (see Conference on this website for details) offers the chance not only to network with these successful writers, but also to learn from the experts how to make your book or articles better, how to find the right publishing option for your work and how to market your work. In addition to our terrific speakers, we've allowed plenty of time for you to meet and talk with the other attendees who will be more than willing to share their insights into how you

can succeed, like they have, as a writer.

**Manuscript Review:** If you're a new or existing member, remember that you are entitled to a FREE manuscript review by a professional editor. Whether it's a short article you'd like to submit to a magazine or a full-length book, our editor will provide invaluable tips on ways to get your work ready for publication.

**Publications List:** As a PSWA member, you are entitled to the nation's most comprehensive list of public safety publications that accept work from free-lance writers. This list is available ONLY to PSWA members. The list provides not just the names of the publications, but all the information you'll need including deadlines, editorial guidelines, pay schedules and contact information. No matter what your area of expertise, there's a publication out there in which your work can appear.

**Writing contest:** Whether you've written a short article or a full-length book, your work is eligible to be entered in the PSWA writing competition (see Writing Contest on this website). Your work will be judged by successful published authors and editors and if you win, your next work can proudly carry the message that you are an award winning author. You have until March 13, 2009 to submit your entry, so get busy preparing it today.

Often, new and prospective members ask just what the benefits are to belonging to PSWA and the answer is all of the above. Many of our members have joined, won awards in the contest and are now published in national magazines and online publications and have gone on to successful book publishing careers. And most of them have started this career by not just joining PSWA but becoming active members.

It's still the beginning of a new year and it's not too late to make some new year's resolutions. Make yours to let PSWA help you achieve your writing goals in 2009. Everything you want to know is available. All you have to do is ask.

Marilyn Olsen  
President PSWA, a.k.a. The Queen

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### **PSWA CONFERENCE UPDATE**

Time is getting short. Soon it will be summer and time for the [PSWA annual conference](#), held once again at the Suncoast Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas. Although the temperature will be high, the hotel and conference room are very well air conditioned.

The meals we'll be having are fantastic, and the restaurants in the casino cater to any special cuisine you are looking for. Fellini's just took over the Italian Restaurant in the hotel and in their old restaurant they had the best Italian food in Las Vegas.

If you're looking for a quick cup of coffee, the bowling alley snack stand has fantastic coffee. You can pick a cup up at anytime. If you like bowling take the time to enjoy the beautiful bowling facility. If you're in the mood for a movie, there are 16 theaters in the hotel to help you relax and enjoy your stay.

Bring a bathing suit and golf clubs. The hotel has a beautiful swimming pool to swim in or just lounge around. Angel Park Golf Course is right behind the hotel and open to the public.

There is free shuttle transportation to the Las Vegas Strip on Las Vegas Boulevard. Take a shuttle bus ride to the strip and walk around and enjoy the tourist sites. Don't forget to watch the water show at the Bellagio Hotel. You can go to the top of the Eiffel Tower at the Paris Hotel and Casino. As long as you're enjoying these sights don't forget your camera. You will want to show your friends the beauty of Las Vegas.

Tours can be arranged to other scenic areas like Red Rock Canyon, Mount Charleston and Valley of Fire. Mount Charleston is a beautiful place to have a respite from the summer heat of the Las Vegas Valley. It probably will be 20 - 25 degrees cooler at the top of the mountain. It's a great place to have lunch at either the Mount Charleston Hotel or the Mount Charleston Lodge. If you have lunch at the Lodge, get a table outside on the balcony. The scenery is breathtaking. If you go to the Lodge, don't forget to visit the Christmas Store and stock up on new Christmas decorations for you, your family and friends.

Before coming to Las Vegas, go on line and check the *Las Vegas Review Journal* to see what shows are in town and what performers are performing while you are in town. The best place to look is in the section titled **NEON**. I can tell you the comedian, George Wallace, puts on a terrific show at 10:00 pm at the Flamingo.

Traveling to Las Vegas year after year may not suit everyone's desire, but after searching different locations, your board has still found this to be an easy location to get to and one that provides exceptional service and quality for each dollar spent. Enjoying Las Vegas does not have to be expensive. Like the rest of the country the economy is struggling and attractions are offering many special deals to visitors. The outdoor events on the Strip and Downtown Las Vegas are all free. The National and State Parks charge minimal entrance fees. Bring your shorts, tank tops and lots of drinking water and enjoy some wonderful time in Las Vegas.

Keith Bettinger—Conference Chair.

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#### **P.S. ABOUT THE CONFERENCE**

Be sure to sign-up by March 31st to take advantage of the lower registration fee. Also, don't forget to sign-up for your hotel room if you're staying at the Suncoast. Make your reservation by calling the phone number and letting them know you're with the Public Safety Writers Conference.

If you have books to promote and hopefully sell, bring them with you to be displayed and sold. PSWA will only take 10%. (If you sell your books at Cheesecake and Crime in Henderson on Sunday, the bookstore takes the regular 40% discount.)

Remember, coming to a writer's conference is a tax write-off whether you are a published writer or working towards being one. In any case, you should be keeping records of all that you spend in your writing career—a conference is a legitimate deduction. So are the costs of getting to and from the conference. If you aren't already keeping track, you should be.

Don't miss out on this great opportunity to learn more about writing, promotion, forensics, writing for online newspapers and magazines, talk to publishers, and so much more.

Bring any questions you might have, someone will be able to answer them.

You'll have fun and make new friends.

Sign up for the PSWA conference now!

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#### **MEMBER ARTICLES**

##### **SPEEDING ON THE INFORMATION HIGHWAY**

by Sunny Frazier

Marketing. Promotion. Tooting your own horn. The bane of the writing life--or a boon?

What every writer wants is a PR person to take the burden off their shoulders, tell the world about the book, make sales so the author can spend valuable time cranking out the next novel.

Fugetaboutit!

My next mystery, **WHERE ANGELS FEAR**, is coming out soon from Oak Tree Press. But, instead of kicking back, waiting for my publisher to wave her magic wand, I'm spending 10 to 12 hours a day at my desk. The only thing I'm kicking are the doors to promotional opportunities out there for the taking.

I believe in FREE. I believe in HARD WORK. I believe the only one responsible for my career is ME.

When my first book, **FOOLS RUSH IN**, came out in 2006, I was a novice at promotion. I did pretty well, but the Internet did not have much blogging going on or all the websites available for promotion. Marilyn M. tried to show me the ropes, but to be honest, I felt much of it was a waste of my time. I had more important things to do than sift through the Internet.

My attitude changed earlier this year. My New Year's resolution was to carefully examine cyberspace. I followed the leads as I came across them on Murder Must Advertise and other Yahoo groups. I used many of the skills I learned while working in a Narcotics unit at the sheriff's department, where I tracked down criminals by scouring confidential sites for clues to their whereabouts. The sleuthing techniques I developed are now useful in an entirely different way.

In the learning process, I've isolated three key elements: finding sites, participating on sites and controlling the vast amounts of information.

Finding sites is not a challenge. Go on any website and check out the links. Links lead to links and the trail seems to go on forever. But, I'm crafty. I also went on Editors and Predators when they were running their voting and I looked to see what reviewers were listed. I check websites to see who reviewed the books of other authors. I am a scavenger, always hunting for clues to the next opportunity. This requires an eye for spotting opportunities and discarding what will not help your career focus.

After checking out a site, I make a decision whether or not to join. Joining means getting my photograph on the page and accumulating "friends." If the process seems overwrought, I just leave a message commenting on the blog. People reading my messages will see my name and face. It's like dropping breadcrumbs to lead back to my own site and books.

If I join, I can put up photos and blogs. I keep it professional. Check out Crime Space and you'll see a slide show featuring members of PSWA. I also recycle blogs for many sites.

All of this is a lot of work. I found it eating into my time and diverting me from writing. But, I've decided I'm in control of the information highway leading to my door. I'm not going to be a victim or a slave to the Internet.

So, I created a folder called "Sunday Work." I attend to it religiously. All week long I move emails from blog sites to the folder. My Sundays now start with a cup of coffee, the Sunday comics and then I tackle each item in the folder. Often, by opening one site, I can eliminate many of the posts telling me I have messages at the site. I also do updates.

The second document is called "Blog Sites." As I come across sites I'd like to check out, I

copy the link and add it to my list. I also put the list in alphabetical order to make sure there were no repeats. If I post on the site, I put the date and action taken.

This information and other tips can be found over at Oak Tree Press,  
<http://otpblog.blogspot.com>

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## CHAPTER MANAGEMENT

by Gay Toltl Kinman

By the time I finished the first draft of **Castle Reiner** (republished as **Wolf Castle**), Gothic novels had become *declassé*. Of course, I continued to write, working on other projects--novels, short stories, articles and plays--but I kept going back to it, adding and revising. I couldn't let go of the story.

Although writing it was labor of love, what was not a labor of love was reading the manuscript over again each time before I put fingers to keyboard. I couldn't remember characters' names and sundry other details like plot points. That quickly turned the anticipation of getting back to the story into dread.

In particular, I remember one sunny Saturday morning spreading all the chapters out on the living room floor of our new home trying to figure out who was on first.

There's got to be a better way, I thought.

Charts!

For the first chart, I kept track of time sequences, for suddenly I was writing about the weather in October when in the previous chapter and the previous day it was April. I included the number of pages in each chapter, so I didn't end up with a series of short ones. Actually, I worked in units of chapters, but, in reality, each was a scene. Psychologically, naming it a chapter seemed to make it larger than just a scene, and gave me a sense of progression. When **Castle Reiner** was completed I combined chapters and re-titled them.

The titles of the chapters were shorthand for me, enough words to convey a sense of the context.

I labeled this chart: CASTLE.CHA(pter) Example

chapter	page numbers	number/ pages	time frame/locale	title of chapter
prologue	1-3	3	America/1926 August	AMERICA/1926
1	4-9	6	London/1899 April	1899/LONDON
2	10-12	3	en route	I START MY JOURNEY
3	13-18	6	California/1899	I ARRIVE
4	19-25	7	"	I MEET MY CHARGE
5	26-30	5	"	THE CASTLE
6	31-36	6	beg. of Aug.	PATTERNS

7	37-39	3	same day	I MEET COUSIN PAUL
8	40-45	6	same day	PAUL (POV)
9	46-51	6	Aug.	COUSIN PAUL AND I APPRAISE EACH OTHER
10	52-53	2	Los Angeles	TO LOS ANGELES
11	54-56	3	next week	A MONTH IN LOS ANGELES
12	57-58	2	same time	I GET READY FOR THE OPERA IN BORROWED FINERY
13	59-68	10	same time	VERONICA REMEMBERS (POV)
14	69-71	4	same time	AN EVENING WITH KEITH
15	72-75	3	"	KEITH (POV)
16	76-78	3	"	ANOTHER ENCOUNTER WITH PAUL
17	79-87	9	Castle/Sept.	THE BARON ARRIVES
18	88-93	6	Oct.	CRATES
19	94-95	2	"	I VISIT THE LABORATORY

Another problem I encountered was keeping track of all the characters and the names. I frequently renamed a character several pages later, or gave two characters the same name. As I began listing the characters in order of their appearance in the story, I discovered many names began with the same letter.

Not professional.

Eye and hair color! At one point I managed to have the hero and heroine gazing into each other's sea green eyes. Not romantic. Worse, sometimes eyes changed colors--all without the benefit of contact lenses in 1899!

So my second chart had to do with names and who the players were. Later I added characteristics and other details about them. Each, particularly minor ones, had at least one physical attribute such as hair or eye color, a dimple, a limp--something that differentiated them. Along with that characteristic I also wanted each to sound different, have an accent or a unique speech pattern.

In addition, I wanted a `notes' column so that I could add a reminder when something needed to be included in a chapter. That was particularly true as I got deeper into the book and nearer the end. How could she lose the handkerchief when she never had one?

The notes column remained blank on the chart when I printed it out. I penciled in what I wanted to add or change. Where did the handkerchief come from? Putting notes in pencil allowed me to be flexible.

The notes turned out to have an added bonus I hadn't foreseen. I always left at least one note to give me something to write the next time I picked up the manuscript which might be months later. A little pump priming.

I made a chart for that information and labeled it:

CASTLE.PER(sons/personality) Example:

character	personality/attributes	notes
(Clergyman father/mother)	her Scottish family disowned	

Medine Fergusson	her when she married a minister in the high Anglican church and, worse, an Englishman. Died giving birth to Vinnie	
Lavinia Fergusson Cathcart	VINNIE	
Phyllidia	Phyl / her close friend to whom she writes / married a Captain of the Guards who is now a mill manager in Burnley, England	
Mr Dudley and son Claude	proposes to Vinnie so that she can still stay in the rectory	
Mrs. Waterfield	Vinnie's neighbor in London	
Gladys	Mr Martin's daily and friend of above	
Clerk at solicitor's	boy of 15	
Mr John Martin	35/ interviews for Baron/ solicitor	
Hennessey	cartdriver who comes for her at the railway station	
Eziah Lujan	Hennessey's grandson / friendly with Tom	
Stationmaster		
(Old Baron)		
Tom	10, son of Baron, dark brown hair, brown eyes,	

I still needed another chart—one that summarized what happened in the chapter, the points I wanted to make in the story, what the clues were.

I found the necessity for that when I moved chapters around and changed the sequence of events. Characters suddenly appeared who hadn't been introduced yet. To help with that, in the third chart I underlined the name of the person when he or she debuted. This is similar to what is done in plays and TV scripts, however there they are in caps.

A sin I committed more than a few times when moving chapters around was having a clue hashed over that hadn't yet been planted. The handkerchief was evidence that she was on the scene. What handkerchief?

And with clues, each must eventually be explained. When I put a clue in, such as the handkerchief, I made a note to explain who gave it to her. I considered each point or clue having a counterpoint or an explanation, so a later chapter balanced off an earlier chapter.

Another bonus of the third chart was that in reviewing the digest of the chapters in bare bones words, ideas for other scenes and relationships were triggered. In the alternative, chapters were deleted as being superfluous, not adding anything to the story. Hard to use the block and delete keys when you've just turned out some great prose.

I never entered any of the penciled notes into the computer or printed them out. Why? My

goal was to have the notes column blank and when it was, then the book was finished. So when the information was written into the story, I erased the notation.

What I liked about making up the charts in Wordperfect was that the boxes expanded as I typed so I could enter as much or as little as I wanted and it always looked neat and made me feel organized.

My third chart was labeled: CASTLE.SUM(Mary) Example:

Chapter/Pages	Summary	Notes
Prologue	<p><b>America /1926</b>  <b>Lavinnia Fergusson Cathcart</b>            by the roadster, bobbed hair,            looking up at the castle and            remembering the first time            she saw the castle,  <b>Hennessey's</b> wagon 27 years ago.            The big oak tree is scarred.  <b>Old Baron and his son.</b>            Have the souls been satisfied?            What of the wolves?</p>	
1	<p><b>1899/London</b>            Q.Victoria - interview  <b>Mr. Benson</b>, governess in America,            called by a clerk, a boy of 15,            for <b>Baron von Reiner</b> at castle            in California. <b>Mrs. Waterfield</b>,            a neighbor, and <b>Gladys</b>, a daily            for Mr. Benson told her about the            job. <b>Her father</b>, a clergyman,            just died. She sells everything.</p>	
2	<p><b>I Start My Journey to America.</b>            She ponders about how Benson            thinks of America.</p>	
3	<p><b>I Arrive Hennessey and grandson,</b>  <b>stationmaster</b> meet her, talks            about the <b>old Baron</b>. Front view of            the Castle sitting in the mist.            She falls asleep in wingback chair.  <b>Bates</b> finds her and tells her he            thought she was dead.</p>	
4	<p><b>I Meet My Charge</b>            Description of <b>Tom</b>, library room and            view.  <b>Bates</b> brings tea.            After dark--howling.</p>	

With these three charts, I could pick up the story any time, check the penciled notes and begin writing. Was it possible that the handkerchief had been left there by someone else?

When Gothics were no longer *declassé*, I sent out **Castle Reiner**. From the charts, I wrote the query letter, summary, outline, blurb and one-liner. Although these are never easy to write, using the charts was better than flipping through the pages for the umpteenth time trying to get down the salient facts in enticing prose--another bonus of chapter management.

Having the charts gave me a feeling of being in control, that I was managing the chapters,

not visa versa. It kept me focused, not frustrated.

Besides, by that time the living room floor of our new home was covered with furniture.

--PSWA member Dr. Gay Toltl Kinman has eight award nominations for her writing, including three Agatha Award nominations. She has published several short stories in American and English magazines and anthologies; eight children's books; a Y.A. gothic novel; two adult mysteries; and over one hundred and fifty articles in professional journals and newspapers. Kinman has co-edited two non-fiction books; had several short plays produced; and currently writes three book review columns. Two of her children's books are scheduled to be published In 2009.

Kinman has taught writing, law, and library science at San Jose State University, Cal State Fullerton, Cal State San Bernardino, and Cal State L. A. She is a past Board member of Sisters in Crime Los Angeles, a member of Mystery Writers of America and the Southern California Chapter; as well as other writing organizations; and has been a panelist and moderator for several mystery writing conferences throughout the United States. She has also been a judge for the Edgars Shamus, EPPIE and Derringer Awards. Kinman has library and law degrees.

<http://gaykinman.com>.

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### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A PANELIST?**

If you've been keeping up with all the information about the coming PSWA conference, we've promised that anyone who wants to be a panelist will be. Just in case you haven't been to many conferences, perhaps you don't know what a panel is or what a panelist does.

For this conference, a panel topic will have be something that we hope will be of interest to most of the people attending the conference. To make a panel interesting and helpful, the panelists will be people who have some knowledge of that topic.

Of course no one has to be a panelist, you can come and just soak up the knowledge, ask questions, and network to your heart's content. But if you have a book that you'd like to promote, being on a panel is a great way to help people connect you with your book when perusing the book tables.

Every panel will have a moderator to introduce you, help move the panel along and ask questions for you to answer.

When you're introduced, if you have a book or series be prepared to describe it in two sentences. After that, stop trying to sell.

Get to the point quickly. The audience will be interested in your answers. Don't talk too long and don't infringe on other panelist's time.

Speak clearly and loud enough so everyone can hear you. Make eye contact with the audience. Smile. Laugh.

Look professional. Don't chew gum, Act interested in whomever is speaking.

Know the topic. Prepare beforehand.

Talk when you're called on or respond to questions from the audience. Passing off questions to others on the panel who are better suited to answer is a great plan.

Polite arguments work—if you disagree with someone go ahead.

It's also okay to be funny.

Being on a panel is fun. Some panels will have mainly authors—others may have experts—and there might be combinations. Until we know who all is coming and who wants to be on a panel, we won't know what the topics are or who will be on what panel. However, you'll all know before the conference.

Being on a panel is fun. People will want to hear what you have to say. Have fun with it.

--Marilyn Meredith, author of the Deputy Tempe Crabtree mystery series and the Rocky Bluff P.D. series, and a veteran moderator and panelist.

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## MEMBER NEWS

### NEWS FROM ROGER FULTON

There are 1.1 billion people in India.

My book, ***Common Sense Leadership*** has just been published by Macmillan, India for the "Indian sub-continent."

Thought you might want to share this moment with me. We must have had something to say in this book. The American version is still available for another few months if you are interested.

--Roger Fulton, Founder and Life-time member of PSWA

"Outdoor books for ordinary people."

Check out all of our titles at: <http://www.RogerFulton.com>

And please keep up-to-date with our Blogs at:

Florida: <http://www.rogerfulton.com/Florida-Blog>

Northern New York: <http://www.rogerfulton.com/Trails-and-Tales>

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### NEW MEMBER JOYCE SPIZER FOY ATTENDING PSWA CONFERENCE

As she states in her bio: "Armed with my PhD in marketing and faithfully carrying my .390, I was a private investigator for some 37 years."

She's published three fiction mysteries based on cases she was involved in, the Harbour Pointe Mystery series, true crime and five non-fiction. She's also ghost written several books for as she put it, famous and infamous people. She has two screen plays in development and one in final draft. She's a partner in a Dallas movie development/production company, a Nashville music company, and an editor for a Las Vegas/Dallas publishing company.

She'll be there to impart her wisdom and share her insights along with all the other published authors, publishers and editors.

This is one conference you do not want to miss.

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**NEWS FROM OAK TREE PRESS**

Member Billie Johnson, Publisher of Oak Tree Press, announces the early February release of PSWA Member Marilyn Meredith's ***No Sanctuary***, the latest in the Rocky Bluff P.D. crime series and Member Sunny Frazier's ***Where Angels Fear*** is set for the end of February, just before she wheels her rollie-bag onto a Hawaii-bound jet to attend Left Coast Crime.

You'll be hearing more about these two books!

**The End**

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