



Home
Join
Newsletter
Conference
Writing Contest
Manuscript Review
Tips & Ideas
Resources
Feedback
Member's Pages
Links
Cop Tales 2000
Mailing List
Contact Us

PUBLIC SAFETY WRITERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER VOLUME X WINTER 2008 ISSUE

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.

IN THIS ISSUE:

[MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT](#)
[PSWA CONFERENCE UPDATE](#)
[SECOND PUBLISHER TO ATTEND CONFERENCE](#)
[PUBLISHING OPPORTUNITY](#)
[ABOUT ADVERTISING TODAY](#)
[MEMBER ARTICLES:](#)

"What Takes So Long", by Roger Fulton
 "Welcome to Your World", by Sunny Frazier
 "How to Write a Novel", by John T. Wills
 "Steps to Getting Published", by Marilyn Meredith
 "Scurvy Dogs, Green Water and Gunsmoke," by Bob Cohen
[MEMBER NEWS](#)

* * *

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear PSWA members,

Dear fellow PSWA members,

As all of you know, when you first joined PSWA, among other things you received "So You've Written a Book, Now What?" a member benefit designed to help you decide how to choose among the many publishing options.

When you renewed your membership, you received "So You Want to be a Freelance Writer?" designed to provide tips to those of you wondering if you could make a living writing for various publications.

Nancy Farrar, our treasurer, who has sent you these publications, has suggested that several of you now renewing for the second or more time have asked if there is another similar publication in the works. And there is! Oak Tree Publishing owner Billie Johnson and I will be collaborating on a new small publication titled, "My Book Will Sell Itself and Other Myths about Publishing and Marketing."

As many of us have found out (the easy way or the hard way) no matter what publishing option a writer chooses, he or she will be expected to do most, if not all, of the book's marketing. For that reason, Billie and I believe that it is increasingly necessary for writers,

particularly first-time writers, to create a marketing plan as an important first step in trying to decide which publishing option is the best fit for the particular publication.

"My Book Will Sell Itself and other Myths about Publishing and Marketing" will be designed to help our members realistically construct such a plan. So, where do you fit in? I know many of you have valuable experience in this area and can offer important tips to your fellow members.

Please send your thoughts to me (molsen@policewriter.com). As we've always said, one of the primary benefits of membership is our ability to network and help each other achieve our writing goals. Hopefully, this publication will do just that. Thanks in advance.

Marilyn Olsen
President PSWA

* * *

PSWA CONFERENCE UPDATE

If you haven't signed up for the conference yet, you missed the first price break. Never fear, there is another one going on right now that will last until the end of March. Don't wait until then, get signed up, especially if you'd like to be on a panel.

What does that mean, being on a panel? We'll put several like-minded people together to discuss a topic of interest both to writers and readers. It will give conference goers a better chance to get to know everyone.

We are also going to have a panel about submitting to publishers. This panel will be moderated by our president, Marilyn Olsen, who is also an editor. Billie Johnson of Oak Tree Press and RJ (Becca) Buckley, who has two presses, will be our panelists. More about RJ Buckley later in the newsletter. (There is one more publisher who may come on board.)

You certainly don't want to miss Joe Scarborough's presentation about **Writing Forensics Right**. Scarborough is a Forensic Scientist with over 30 years experience in Law Enforcement with Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department and the FBI, and an accomplished technical writer. <http://www.steve-scarborough.com/>

We're so fortunate to have mystery author Betty Webb as our Saturday luncheon keynote speaker. Betty is the author of the prize winning and much acclaimed, hard-boiled Lena Jones books, which are based on stories she covered as a reporter, include *Desert Noir*, *Desert Wives*, *Desert Shadows*, *Desert Run* and *Desert Cut*. Her much softer Gunn Zoo series will debut in December with *The Anteater of Death*. She'll be presenting: "**From Hard-boiled to Darn Near Cozy, and Why I Dunit.**" <http://www.bettywebb.com>

Victoria Heckman will charm us at our Friday luncheon telling us, "**The Journey Is Everything**" or "**Where The Hell's The AAA When You Need It?**" about the journey to becoming a writer and how it parallels our own life journeys. Victoria is the author of the K.O.'d in Hawaii mystery series from Pemberley Press & Writer's Exchange. *Kapu, A Coconut Man Mystery of Ancient Hawai'i*, 2008 from Seven Sisters Publishing. <http://www.victoriaheckman.com>

If you came to this year's conference, then you know you don't want to miss Victoria.

Logistics of Writing: How to gear up and rev up your writing productivity. A system to layer on top of your present way of writing. A practical series of steps that will show you how to switch into a proactive approach of generating work will be given by Sarah Cortez.

The poetry of Sarah Cortez ("*How to Undress A Cop*", Arte Público, 2000) brings the world of street policing to the reader in a way that poet-reviewer Ed Hirsch describes as "nervy,

quick-hitting, street-smart, sexual". Winner of the 1999 PEN Texas Literary award in poetry and other juried designations, Ms. Cortez is much in demand as a creative writing teacher. Ms. Cortez edited "*Urban-Speak: Poetry of the City*" (University of Houston, CMAS, 2001) and "*Windows into My World: Latino Youth Write Their Lives*" (Arte Público, 2007), an anthology of short memoir written by young men and women reflecting the diversity of growing up Latino in the U.S., awarded the 2008 Skipping Stones Honor Award for being "an exceptional book promoting understanding of diverse cultures."

Tim Dees, Editor-in-Chief of LawOfficer.com, after serving in law enforcement, he was the first editor-in-chief at Officer.com before joining Elsevier Public Safety and LawOfficer.com in January 2008. His work has been published in nearly every major law enforcement magazine. His topic for the conference will be: **Writing for the New Media**.

Fire Fighting and Arson, Presenter: Dave Doust, retired firefighter.

What Makes Your Characters (and you) Tick – how handwriting reveals motivations, given by Sheila Lowe, a court-qualified forensic handwriting expert. She has a degree in psychology and provides expert testimony in forensic cases, as well as behavioral profiling through handwriting analysis. Her writing career covers a wide range, from the best-selling non-fiction books, *Handwriting of the Famous & Infamous*, and *Complete Idiot's Guide to Handwriting Analysis*, to articles for legal and other magazines. She writes the Forensic Handwriting Mystery series (Penguin's Obsidian Mysteries), featuring handwriting expert, Claudia Rose. www.sheilalowe.com, www.claudiaroseseries.com - Poison Pen, an award-winning mystery featuring a handwriting expert.

As promised, we'll also have several panels with some of the above speakers and anyone who would like to participate—just mark your registration form. To be on a panel, your registration form must be in by April 30.

You will have ample opportunity to network with all these professionals, don't miss out. Go to <http://www.policewriter.com> and [sign up for the conference now!](#)

AND DON'T FORGET TO ENTER THE [WRITING CONTEST!](#)

Marilyn Meredith, Program Chairperson, <http://fictionforyou.com>

* * *

SECOND PUBLISHER TO ATTEND CONFERENCE

R. J. Buckley Publishing (RJBP) and Shazam! Publishing:
www.rjbuckleypublishing.com www.shazampublishing.net

R. J Buckley Publishing is an independent trade paperback publishing company and is dedicated to publish quality books.

Being a writer, a published author, a national writers association founder, and an independent publisher ... as well as an avid reader and a lover of books ... along with her appreciation for writers and understanding the pitfalls, rejections and disappointments in dealing with the major publishing companies of today, Rebecca Buckley has formed the division of **Shazam! Publishing** under the umbrella of RJBP.

Rebecca states, "The influx of writers becoming self-published is growing by the numbers. They're learning that since they must market and promote themselves either way, whether they're picked up by a major or they self-publish, they may as well have more control over their books in the marketplace by self-publishing and increase their earnings per book at the same time.

"However, you might ask whether the undertaking of another publishing company, while the first one is still testing its wings might be a bit aggressive and maybe foolish in today's economy. I don't feel it is and I've always been a risk-taker. I'm always eager to help

authors in whatever way I can to get their books published and in their possession. The thrill of that is more than enough to offset the numbers.

"It is our goal to help authors publish quality books of which they will be proud and encouraged to promote. For it is in all our interests when the books sell. We at RJB and SHAZAM! will be on tap at any time to give our clients vital information and sources to aid sales and marketing."

* * *

PUBLISHING OPPORTUNITY

Articles needed for the *Nebraska Trooper Magazine*, send to Irvin V. Worden, Editor.
Email: sh1ca1b1@inetnebr.com

Working on Spring Issue- closes end of January 09

* * *

ABOUT ADVERTISING

By Tim Dees, our resident computer guru

Advertising on the internet takes away from the pool of money reserved for advertising, but that's not the only advertising venue doing that. There are ad inserts available now that just didn't exist five years ago. Video games carry advertising (billboards in games like Grand Theft Auto IV have real advertising), and it can be changed the next time the game communicates with its home server, to suit new ad clients and even the demographic of the game player. When you go to the movies, you sit in a captive audience for five or ten minutes, watching ads (that especially fries my butt). There are telephone services that are free—so long as you're willing to hear a brief ad that plays before a call connects. The ability to target ads to specific audiences is a powerful selling tool.

Lots of people carry "club" cards for various retailers—Safeway, Kroger, Best Buy, Petsmart, etc. Every time you make a purchase where that card is scanned, you are refining your profile for the merchant and its ad agency. They know things about you that you may not know about yourself. For instance, someone who buys Disney movies at Best Buy likely has some connection with small children. This causes the data aggregator for Best Buy to sell your name and contact info to Toys 'R Us for a promotional mailing or a point-of-sale coupon. If that sort of thing didn't boost sales, they wouldn't do it.

That's only a little frightening. Consider the effect of selling the list of people who buy a lot of ice cream, bacon, bakery items and chips to a health insurer. "Ms. Meredith, you don't seem to be taking very good care of yourself. I'm afraid we're going to have to raise your insurance premiums, as you've become a bad risk."

(This came from a private discussion of the closure of magazines and newspapers and their loss of the advertising dollar. Tim gave me permission to publish this in our newsletter.)

* * *

MEMBER ARTICLES

What Takes So Long?

By: Roger Fulton, Captain, NY State Police, (Ret.)
(Roger is the founder of PSWA)

In October of 2007 I submitted a proposal to my publisher to revise and combine two of my past books. That proposal has been accepted and a new book, titled *Common Sense*

Management, will be released April 1, 2009. That's 19 months from proposal to release date. So what takes so long? I thought you'd like to know.

From October of 2007 through January 2008, various members of the publisher's editorial committees had to review my proposal, evaluate its potential and "fit" for their Spring 2009 catalog.

January 2008 – Publisher's approval, and I started writing the manuscript with some cautions from the editorial staff. I get a letter that a "committee" has met and liked some stuff; not so crazy about other stuff in my proposal.

February - I'm shuffled off from a full editor, to an Assistant Editor AKA a Project Editor. Like I care.

April – I finally get, sign and return a written contract – Legal has been "busy."

May – I submit my manuscript.

May – An e-mail arrives outlining what the timetable for publication will be. The essence of that timetable is reproduced below for your fun, education and enjoyment:

June 9, 2008 - MS to copyeditor

August 1 – MS back to author

August 15 – MS back to editor

August 2008 – Sample pages, brief to design

September 1, 2008 – Review/revise sample pages (Due to sales 9/16). Disk to Design.

September 30 – First pages

October 1 – First pages to proofreader/author

October 15 – First pages back from proofreader/author

November 1 – Marked up first pages back to designer

November 15 – Second pages

December 1, 2008 - Second pages to indexer

December 15 – Second pages and index to designer

Finally we get to January 2009!

January 6, 2009 – To printer

February 15 – In Warehouse

March 17 – Ship date

April 1, 2009 – Final release date (and author's reception)

Along the way the publisher's marketing and sales departments will do press releases, advance sales and schedule the book for special sales, foreign distribution, etc.

About a year later, I'll get me first royalty check.

So, 19 months from proposal to release. Then it will be about 12 months until I get my first royalty check. That's 31 months total. (I'll be on Social Security by then!)

Why do I do this? Because I am a writer and want to share what I can of my education, training and experience with the world. If it helps a few managers to be better managers, that will be good. If it helps the employees of those managers to lead better work lives as a result of competent management, that would be even better. And if it inspires a few people at any level in the workforce to lead happier and more productive lives, then that is even better.

Besides, I'm too lazy to have a real job, and I'm too nervous to steal. So being a writer has been my best option for the last 20 years. Nice country this America that allows me to do that!

Hope you have learned a little bit about the writing and publishing industries from this. Best wishes for success for your current and future writing projects.

Bio: Roger Fulton has written the books *Common Sense Supervision* (1988), *Common Sense Management* (1995), *Practical Law Enforcement Management* (2002) and *A Practical Career Guide for Criminal Justice Professionals* (2008). That new book, *Common Sense Management*, (2009) is well ahead of schedule for its April 1st release date. All of his titles can be seen on his webpage at: www.RogerFulton.com. And he always welcomes questions and comments from fellow members via e-mail at Roger@RogerFulton.com.

* * *

WELCOME TO YOUR WORLD by Sunny Frazier

One of the curses of being a writer is when people say "I've had a fascinating life. You should write about me."

I've had a fascinating life myself. I caused a small riot in a train station in Hanover, Germany, and another riot in a marketplace in Haiti. International misunderstandings can happen when you're 23 and clueless. Seventeen years working in law enforcement gave me plenty of plots.

According to a New York Times survey, 81% of Americans feel they have a book in them and that they should write it. Those of us who worked in law enforcement have material to spare.

My friend talks about writing a novel. Her excuses: "I have no time, I'll get to it when my life settles down, I don't know how to get started." Nothing is on paper. Every day is one more day lost. In a business that takes time to break into and requires energy and \$\$\$ to promote and travel, age is a factor. Writers get younger while my friend waits for her moment of opportunity.

There will never be time to write. Real writers squeeze time between a spouse, children and a job that pays the bills. Real writers wake up an extra hour earlier, go to bed an hour later, give up TV, find excuses to stay home on weekends and carry notebooks everywhere they go in case an idea pops into their head. They give up things. I gave up housework. We all make sacrifices.

When author Jean Kerr wrote "Please Don't Eat the Daisies" in 1957, she locked herself and a typewriter in her station wagon and let her four young sons beat on the windows while she finished the book. Think what she could have accomplished in an SUV!

Still want to write a book? Here's my advice:

1. Put the first word on paper. Any first word. It won't stay there, and it won't be your

- last. Just as a journey starts with the first step, writing starts with the first word.
2. Don't look back. Fill pages up with words. Don't ask yourself if they're the right words. Do that later. Just keep going forward.
 3. Nothing is written that can't be rewritten. This is why computers come with a delete key.
 4. Don't let family members read your work unless they have a novel under their belt. Find a critique group or people who have published. Those are the people worth listening to.
 5. Don't talk your plot out. You will verbally write your story and be instantly satisfied. Soon you won't feel like you have to write it at all.
 6. Don't announce to the world that you are working on a book. You might even want to keep your writing a secret. Friends will be afraid you'll fail. Enemies hope for failure.
 7. Never worry about disappointing people. Never disappoint yourself.
 8. Read up on writing, but don't spend all your time reading. Ditto for research. While fun and informative, it's not writing.
 9. Don't start another novel. Commit to one project all the way to The End.
 10. If you write 300 words a day (half the length of this column) by the end of a year you will have a 100,000 words, which is a hefty manuscript. That's all it takes. What are you waiting for?

* * *

How to Write a Novel

by John M. Wills

I had been writing professionally for several years when the urge to write my first novel finally became so strong that I could no longer ignore it. Until then I had shrugged it off, thinking that I was not prepared for such a daunting task. I had not had any formal instruction, nor really researched how to write a book. But the desire to finally organize the story rattling around in my head and create a finished product with it, finally won out.



Where to begin? I had no clue. I was spending a lot of time on the road with my job which gave me time to read. Being a logical thinker, I went to a bookstore to buy a "How-To" tome that would show me the footsteps that I would need to follow. Of course when I got there and looked at an entire section of books devoted specifically to "writing your first novel," I was back at square one—too much information. I did some research on the internet. Have you ever Googled "how to write a book?" I found that there were

hundreds of titles that purported to explain the process. I finally decided on reading a sampling of a few internet summaries, and then purchased *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Writing a Novel*.

I poured over chapters explaining abstract ideas such as having the right temperament, creativity, plot engines and developments, characters and settings...I now was more confused than ever. I almost decided to postpone writing my novel until sometime later—except that I had already done that. I finally made a command decision: Just sit down and start writing!

And so that's what I did. I had no outline, no written plot or characters, but what I did have was a story in mind that I believed people would enjoy reading, and more important, one that I was anxious to write.

And so I began...writing...chapter after chapter. Learning as I went along—developing characters, multiple plots, tying and connecting people and places. It was a marvelous experience. I found myself getting so involved with my characters that they became real

to me. I agonized over needing to kill one off, feeling guilty about it and trying to think of a way not to kill him. My wife thought that I was crazy, "John, it's only a book. Get a grip!"

I continued with the process, getting deeper and deeper into wordsmithing like never before. When did I write? Just about every day, but it had to be something that contributed to the story, not just writing for the sake of writing. The time of day was really unimportant; I wrote when I had the time, be it day or night. I wrote at home, in airports and hotel rooms. I even wrote aboard cramped airplanes enroute to jobs. It didn't matter the time or place. All that mattered was the story. When I was finished with the book I felt a sense of pride and accomplishment, but also sorrow—it was now over.

I discovered that my anxiety about writing my first novel was due in large measure to fretting about the mechanics. What's the process, how does one begin? Once I convinced myself that the best way to write anything is to simply start putting the words on paper, I was fine. And as the chapters increased in number, so also did my comfort level. When I approached writing as an enjoyable endeavor, rather than a task that needed to be done, the words flowed.

This memoir may or may not help anyone in their quest to write their own novel. And even though I have now completed one, and am hard at work on the second, I do not consider myself qualified to give advice on the subject. But here's what I do know... There are thousands of "How To" books written on this topic, and there are countless numbers of people that have written books. Did they all follow the same formula? I think not, and so I've decided that the best way to write a novel is to just start writing!

* * *

You can't wait for inspiration. You have to go after it with a club. — Jack London, novelist

* * *

STEPS TO GETTING PUBLISHED

1. Have a good manuscript that is completed and the best you can possibly make it. It also means that it's been edited by someone who is not a relative—someone who knows what publishers are looking for in an edited manuscript.
2. Research the publishers who publish the kind of book that you've written or if you're sending to an agent, what kind of books they represent. Study their guidelines. (Address him or her by name.)

Don't send them a mystery if they only publish romance.

Has your book got the right number of words? Most publishers have an amount of words that they are looking for, might be something like 50,000 to 80,000. If your book is over or under, don't send it to them.

3. How do they want you to submit? Do they want you to send them a query letter and a one page synopsis via snail mail with an SASE? (SASE means a self-addressed stamped envelope—this is so they can send you a rejection or acceptance letter.) If they asked for a only a query, just send that and the SASE.

If they asked you to send a query via email and no attachments, do that.

Always do exactly what the guidelines ask for.

4. Do your very best job writing the query letter.

If it's going to be sent snail mail, keep it to one page, single-spaced, double spaces

between paragraphs. (Do the same for queries sent via email.)

First paragraph of the query should have the title of the book, the hook or elevator pitch, genre, word count. This is also a good place for a mini-synopsis about the book. Keep it short.

(If you met an agent or publisher that you are sending this to somewhere, conference, etc. be sure to mention this.)

This could be two paragraphs, but must be succinct.

Then tell why you were the person to write this particular book. Give the information that gives the publisher or agent the reason that you know what you're writing about.

If you have writing credential, give them.

Don't forget to include your personal information, name, address, phone number, email address, website, if you have one.

Nowadays, many publishers want to know what your marketing plan is, so be sure to work on that too so you'll have it ready.

--Marilyn Meredith <http://fictionforyou.com>

* * *

SCURVY DOGS, GREEN WATER & GUNSMOKE

By Bob Cohen

Answers.com™ defines a "sea story" as: "*A tale. Often containing a small grain of truth somewhere.*"

The Tin Can Sailor is the quarterly journal of the National Association of Destroyer Veterans. The name of the journal (TCS for short) is synonymous with the organization itself. With over 21,000 members, TCS serves as a clearinghouse for nearly 900 ships' associations and reunion groups, but also plays a major role in preserving our naval heritage by overseeing a grant program for museums and related historic programs, and maintaining strong ties to the US Navy and other maritime and fraternal organizations.

About ten years ago I started writing sea stories for TCS. Seeing other articles written by fellow destroyer vets, I had an idea – what if we were to collect enough stories to publish a book? We could sell it to raise money for the chronically under-funded museum ships scattered across the country. I began to contact other TCS writers, and the "Secret Scurvy Dog Society" was born.

With some incredible adventures behind us and lots of new friends, this year we finally published not one, but two terrific volumes of sea stories, entitled *Scurvy Dogs, Green Water and Gunsmoke: Fifty Years in US Navy Destroyers* (Oak Tree, 2008).

The world has changed since we began the project, and unfortunately, our country is now at war. While the museum ships are an important legacy, the eighteen contributing writers have unanimously decided that rather than keeping to our original plan, that we would instead donate our royalties to the Navy- Marine Corps Relief Society where it will be used to assist the Sailors and Marines (and their families) who are serving our nation today.

click here: amazon.com/ScurvyDogs_V1 amazon.com/ScurvyDogs_V2
or here: barnesandnoble.com/ScurvyDogs_V1 barnesandnoble.com/ScurvyDogs_V2 or
here: <http://www.oaktreebooks.com/bargainbookshop.htm>

* * *

MEMBER NEWS

Leonard Schonberg's 'Blackfeet trilogy' has been accepted for publication by Sunstone Press of Santa Fe, NM. Each novel in the crime-thriller trilogy is set on Montana's Blackfeet reservation and features the same two protagonists, a Blackfeet tribal cop and a Lakota federal agent. The first book, **Blackfeet Eyes**, will probably be published before the end of the year. The next two, **Shadow Killer** and **Blood Trail** will be published at yearly intervals.

* * *

Praise for **Chicago Warriors** by John Wills.

"I spent a lot of years with John Wills in the law enforcement trenches of Detroit, a place where Christian faith is rarely a survivor. Somehow John's flourished. In **Chicago Warriors**, he has created a unique narrative demonstrating how the worst of a man can be defeated by the best in a man. It is a parable of morality that is vanishing from the American landscape."

---Paul Lindsay, author of *The Fuhrer's Reserve and Traps: A Novel of the FBI*

John M. Wills (FBI ret), Freelance Writer / Speaker www.JohnMWills.com

* * *

Marilyn Meredith's **Kindred Spirits** is receiving great reviews:

...Again Meredith has woven Native American history, small town charm, and a quest for the truth to provide an entertaining read for mystery and crime fans. And while Tempe is still dealing with the prejudice of being the only woman in the Bear Creek Sheriff's Office, she finds Detective Morrison an unexpected ally in this latest installment, perhaps forever changing their working relationship and making me eager to see what the next book will bring for Morrison and Tempe. True to form, Meredith has made the personal lives of her characters an integral part of the story and the reader is eager to see if Tempe and Hutch, her minister husband, can find their way back to each other. Involving Hutch in Tempe's case makes for many tense moments as they each deal with concern for the other's safety, even though they are worlds apart on issues that might have forever changed their marriage.

A great read that mystery and crime readers will certainly enjoy, *Kindred Spirits* proves why Marilyn Meredith's fans keep coming back for more!

-- Cheryl Malandrinos, The Book Connection

... **Calling the Dead**, **Judgment Fire** and now **Kindred Spirits** are books not to be missed. The mystery as well as the way Hutch and Tempe work out their differences makes for interesting reading.

--REVIEWED BY PATRICIA REID, Best Sellers World

"...Tempe is easy to love and her drive to discover the truth is addicting."--Savvy Verse and Wit

<http://fictionforyou.com>

The End

[Previous Issue](#)

[Newsletter Archive](#)

All content owned and copyrighted 2008 by Public Safety Writers Association

Site graphics and design copyright 2008 by [Karen McCullough](#)
[Contact Webmaster](#)