

A blue, rounded rectangular banner with a black center containing the text "Public Safety Writer" in white. To the left of the banner is a small, dark blue oval with a red dot and the word "Up" in white.

Public Safety Writer

PUBLIC SAFETY WRITERS ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER VOLUME VII SPRING

Editor: Marilyn Meredith, mmeredith@ocsnet.net

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Plans are now being finalized for the [annual conference](#) in Las Vegas. That means we're in the process of selecting conference rooms, menus and so on.

To assure that we can provide you with the best possible accommodations, we'll need to know pretty specifically how many of you to expect. So, even if you haven't made your formal reservations or sent in your conference materials, could you please let us know that you'll be coming? Contact Marilyn Meredith (mmeredith@ocsnet.net), Nancy Farrar (nansnews@att.net) or me (Marilyn.Olsen@comcast.net).

If you haven't decided to attend the conference yet, I urge you to consider it. The conference provides many benefits:

1. [Our speakers](#) are chosen specifically for their expertise in many elements of the writing/editing/publishing process. They provide practical, hands on ideas to make you a better writer, whether you are contemplating your first work or polishing the manuscript on your 100th.
2. In addition to enjoying our speakers as a group, you will also have the opportunity to sign up to speak with them on an one-on-one basis.
3. Our conference offers a variety of formats. You will hear talks by individuals, panel discussions, workshops and always lots of time for questions.
4. You will meet a lot of very interesting people with whom you can network both at the conference and afterwards. Our members are all more than happy to do what they can to help you achieve your writing goals.
5. Because our members have a wide variety of backgrounds in public safety, our conference is also an excellent opportunity for you to meet people who can help you with those minute details that can make your manuscript technically accurate. Plus, these folks have hundreds of stories to tell. You will never be bored!
6. The conference also provides the opportunity for you to share your skills with others. Even people with an entire career's background in one area may know little

about what you know a lot about.

7. It's always a lot of fun. Over the years, those of us who have attended many conferences so enjoy the opportunity both to see familiar faces and meet new ones.

So, don't delay. RIGHT NOW go to the [Conference page](#) on the website and sign up. You'll be so very glad you did!

--Marilyn Olsen, President

PSWA CONFERENCE

Hi Everyone,

The weather is beautiful here in Las Vegas. It has been in the 60s, and by April, we will be in the 70s and 80s. We will be having beautiful weather and sightseeing will be take your breath away. If you are a golfer there is a course to play right behind our host hotel. If you want to swim, the hotel has a beautiful swimming pool in a nice secluded garden area.

It is time to register for the [conference](#). Don't put it off any longer. We need to know who is coming so we can make the final arrangements for food and the classroom. This conference is being held at a different location than the past two conferences because people were not satisfied with the hotel accommodations at the previous hotel. The Suncoast hotel and casino is a class place with food that goes from snacks to 5 star restaurants. The rooms are outstanding. If I could live in one year round I would. The slot machines range from Penny slots to \$5 and make lots of noise and create lots of excitement.

The hotel has transportation to and from the airport on a scheduled basis. They also provide transportation to the Las Vegas Strip where you can see the lights, hotels, casinos and free shows that make Las Vegas famous.

Marilyn Meredith has put together a great group of presenters for the conference. The food at our daily luncheons will make you very happy. The guest speaker, **Stephen Nasser** is a man that will captivate your heart. I guarantee you will shake his hand and not leave the conference without a signed copy of his book, ***In My Brother's Voice***. We will have our fellow members books available for sale at the conference and we are working on goodie bags from our supporters.

Please make your reservations now. We need to finalize the plans for the best conference we have had to date. Don't procrastinate. Take a moment and send it your reservation. I promise you won't be disappointed.

Keith Bettinger

Author of: ***Fighting Crime With "Some" Day and Lenny***, or What Happens When Car 54 Where Are You Meets Dragnet

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BOOKSIGNING AFTER THE CONFERENCE

Any conference attendee wishing to be a part of the group signing at Cheesecake and Crime bookstore in Henderson from 3 to 5 on Sunday after the conference, be sure to let Marilyn know, mmeredith@ocsnet.net that you plan to attend, along with the title of your book(s).

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NEW SPEAKER FOR CONFERENCE

Topic: **USE FOCUS & BRANDING TO PROMOTE YOUR BOOKS**

Speaker: Mary Montague Sikes

Sikes will show authors how to create a marketing plan that starts at least six months prior to publication and will lead them step-by-step through that plan. She will discuss web sites, e-mail newsletters, brochures and many more devices that will make the plan a success. Branding means dressing the part and coordinating all segments of the author's plan to create a package that will develop name recognition. She will show authors how to create a slogan and a sales pitch for their books.

Mary Montague Sikes is an author, freelance writer, photographer, artist, and teacher. She is the author of five books, *Secrets by the Sea* (soon to be released), *Eagle Rising, Hearts Across Forever, Hotels to Remember* (a coffee table book for which she did all the art work, photography and writing), and *Published! Now \$ell It!* A how-to book, *Published! Now \$ell It!* was written by a group of five authors who saw the need to create a tool to help authors promote their books. Sikes has presented numerous talks and workshops relating to marketing and promotion. She has presented writing talks and workshops to the 2006 biennial meeting of the National League of American Pen Women, the Virginia Festival of the Book, the Christopher Newport College Writer's Conference, the Rappahannock Community College Writer's Conference, Virginia Romance Writers, and many more.

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MEMBER ARTICLES

DOLLARS AND SENSE

Sunny Frazier

I heard a woman say at a Sisters in Crime meeting that she was a journalist. "Maybe you could write an article for our newsletter," I suggested. "I don't write unless I get paid," she informed me.

I still shake my head at her short-sightedness. Writing for the *Poison Pen* launched me into the arena of mystery writers. I created a column announcing the latest books before their publishing date. I did the same for an mystery e-zine, and now I have the Murder Circle on my website. I haven't directly earned a penny, but I have fans, book buyers and name recognition.

While we'd all like to get paid for the words we write, sometimes it's more profitable in the long run to give than to receive. I was asked to write a monthly column called "Write On!" for my small town's weekly newspaper. Turning out 600 words a month on a topic I love isn't really work. I'm featured on the entertainment page, and I get props from readers. I found out some were clipping my columns to share. I was even contacted by an old boyfriend who moved away but still gets the paper. He bought several books once he found out I had a novel published.

As a result of a column I did featuring the Local Authors program, the county library has asked if I would give them a hand with publicity. Still no cash-in-hand, but the library gave me a terrific book signing and asked if I will teach a summer writing class. For money.

This *pro bono* writing pays off in many ways: name recognition, community support, a fan base, and sales. My small town is proud to have a writer in residence. They support me just as I support the newspaper and library. It's like the proverbial pebble in

the pond. One simple act on my part and my circle expands and reaches out to people who will be future readers.

When Marilyn M. puts out a call for material to fill this newsletter, I feel it's my responsibility to come up with an article. I'm a writer, it's my job. Plus, I don't want to disappoint Marilyn. Payment comes from getting to know all of you the other 362 days we aren't in Vegas together. Can't put a price tag on friendship.

Oh, and the woman who would only write for money? She seems to have gotten lost in the vast wasteland of would-be writers. Nobody has heard of her or her writing. I don't think her attitude paid off.

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CREATING A BOOK USING "BLURB BOOKSMART" SOFTWARE

Marilyn Olsen

As authors of books, many of us struggle with what format is most appropriate for our work. We now have many choices: traditional publishing with a mainstream publisher, publishing via a small press, creating an on-demand book through a publisher such as iUniverse or self publishing – simply printing up copies of our book.

If none of the above options have proven quite right for you, you may be interested in the article "So You Want to Publish that Novel" by Stephen H. Wildstrom in the January 21 edition of Business Week magazine.

His article deals with a new startup called Blurb that allows writers to produce a book in a wide variety of formats using Indigo press technology. For those of you unfamiliar with Indigo press technology, it is, as Wildstrom describes it, "the love child of a laser printer and conventional offset press. The printing is done with "traditional liquid ink instead of toner, the process is laser-guided, eliminating the extremely expensive step of making lithograph plates." As a result, the writer can produce extremely small press runs or even a single copy.

Blurb BookSmart software is free and can be downloaded on both PCs and Macs. The book is created one page at a time incorporating text and photos with software such as Adobe Photoshop.

Wildstrom tried out the software to produce a book about his recent vacation. His primary criticisms of the software were that although there were many options for page layouts, he had difficulty finding one that was just right for him. He also found it difficult to resize picture boxes or to change typeface settings.

The good news, apparently, is that the software has lots of templates, so if you're willing to be flexible, you can produce a cookbook, a book of poetry, a novel or surprise your relatives a year's worth of your blogs. After you get the book looking the way you want it, you submit it to Blurb and they send you the bound copy(ies) in the mail.

Wildstrom only wanted one copy and the single hardcover book cost him \$29.95. Apparently soft bound books are cheaper to produce and volume discounts are available. Blurb also offers an online bookstore to help you market your book.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Michael Carpenter and Roger Fulton have written *A Practical Career Guide for*

Criminal Justice Professionals, ISBN 978-1-932777-42-0, from Looseleaf Law Publications, Inc., www.looseleaflaw.com

For those who desire to be promoted and advance in their chosen profession, Mike and Roger answer the question – “Can you take charge of your own career?”

According to our PSWA founder and president emeritus, Roger Fulton, you can.

Both Michael and Roger are two guys who have “been there.” Their practical advice on how to take charge of your career, get promoted and outdo your competition can have a substantial impact on your career in any criminal justice agency, and beyond.

Thirty short chapters cover a wide variety of both traditional and non-traditional tips on how to make the most of your criminal justice career.

“Relying on someone else to promote you or to help you in your career is okay, but taking charge of your own career can lead to better results, faster,” according to co-author Roger Fulton, who is also retired New York State Police Captain. “In this book we offer support and advice that could take years to learn in most criminal justice agencies.”

Chapter titles include motivation and morale, dealing with personnel problems, dealing with the media and a host of other practical aspects of a criminal justice career. If you are looking to increase your career options, run up the ranks of your agency, or just take charge of your own career you will find the tips in this practical guide of value.

Affordably priced for any criminal justice pay scale at \$19.95, it is available from the publisher Looseleaf Law, or from www.RogerFulton.com. Additional information is available from: Roger Fulton, co-author Roger@RogerFulton.com

--contributed by A. J. Farrar

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Review of Marilyn Meredith's Latest:

“Full of suspense, realistic, and sprinkled with a light touch of romance, ***Smell of Death*** by F.M. Meredith is a sure hit for crime fiction fans... This book does an excellent job of showing, through well-defined characters, the impact that life on the police force has on its members and their families. The touch of romance between Stacey and Doug is just the right thing to lighten up some of the heavy stuff going on in this book....

Smell of Death by F.M. Meredith (known as Marilyn Meredith by PSWA members) is an engaging, well-written, and gripping page turner, that will leave you hungry for the next book in the [Rocky Bluff](#) P.D. series.” –The Book Connection

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MEMBER NEWS

Tim Dees will be heading up LawOfficer.com, a new online portal. LawOfficer.com will feature daily news, product information and exclusive editorial content in the format and style always present in the magazine. Tim Dees is the new Editor-in-Chief as well as the technology editor of Law Office. Tim has extensive experience in law enforcement technology and training, and was formerly the Editor in Chief of Officer.com. Tim began his law enforcement career as an officer and sergeant with the

Reno NV P.D. and his experience includes doing regional training for the Oregon Dept. of Public Safety Standards and Training, criminal justice and training coordinator at Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton OR, and assistant profession of criminal justice and coordinator in the criminal justice and law enforcement program at Floyd College in Rome, GA. Congratulations, Tim, on your new job. LawOfficer.com is lucky to have you.

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Sarah Cortez reports she received a great review of "Windows into My World: Latino Youth Write Their Lives" (Arte Publico Press, 2007) in the *Houston Chronicle*, Houston's largest newspaper. Two of her policing poems are to be published by the OGI Publishing House in Moscow in a Russian/English poetry anthology.

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John Schembra announced that his second book, ***Retribution***, is now available in paperback! It can be found at Amazon.com by clicking the following link: <http://astore.amazon.com/writers-exchange-20> Once there, click on the "mystery/thriller" category for ***Retribution***, or the "war" category for ***MP***.

You can also find the link at my website: www.jschembra.com - that link will take you directly to the bookstore page.

Both books can be found in electronic format at www.readerseden.com through a search by author name.

* * *

Michael Berish will be attending **2008 SLEUTHFEST**, a two day seminar/conference for mystery/crime writers in Florida. **2008 Sleuthfest** has been gracious enough to have offered Mike a slot on one of their panel discussions and his presentation will be entitled "THE MIAMI BEAT," Immediately after the panel, he will have a book signing for his book: ***REFLECTIONS FROM THE PIT***.

* * *

Tony Burton, author and owner of Wolfmont Press, will be presenting for the second time at the Harriette Austin Writers' Conference this year. The conference is held yearly at the University of Georgia and targets writers from all genres. Tony will be reviewing and critiquing manuscripts, will be on a panel and presenting, his topic being 'To Pay Or Not to Pay, That Is the Question'."

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Denny Griffin has been added to the staff of *Action! Magazine* as a contributing writer. He'll be writing about Las Vegas and the Mob. His first article will appear in the March edition. Their site is <http://www.actionmagazine.com>

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Billy Johnson, member and Oak Tree Press publisher is sending a book of short stories to the printer which Bob Cohen is one of the compilers/editors, called ***SCURVY DOGS, GREEN WATER and GUNSMOKE: Fifty Years in US Navy Destroyers***, Vol 1 and 2. (Korea to the Gulf Wars)

Bob a PSWA member, was a winner in some of the writing competitions last

year. Several of Bob's "sailor stories" are featured in this collection along with those of fifteen other destroyermen.

Bob, writing as Trebor Nehoc, is the author of ***THE ELECTRIC SEWER: War Stories of a NYC Transit Cop***, which Oak Tree Press published several years ago.

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Member **Michael Mehas**, has a great review for his book, ***Stolen Boy***, here:

http://www.bookpleasures.com/Lore2/idx/0/3264/article/Stolen_Boy.html?pt_sid=277bcafea51efb9e68a5dd4a882cf126

Stolen Boy was also voted best book in fiction for 2007:

<http://www.books-and-authors.net/BooksoftheYear2007.html>

Michael will be a speaker at our conference.

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TIM'S COMPUTER TIPS

Funny Letters

by Tim Dees

Do you have a *raison d'être*? How about a *fiancée* or a *résumé*? Did you attend, as I did, San José State University (and if so, have you sobered up yet)? Have you ever wanted to express 250 yen as ¥250, or estimate a figure as ±100 (plus or minus 100)? Have any of your works included a ©Registered Trademark? Did you take an EMT course from The American Academy of Orthopædic Surgeons?

It doesn't matter much if you have or have done any of these things or not; what all of them have in common is that they use characters that you can't find on your standard keyboard. You may have thought that these characters will only display if you have some fancy composition software installed on your computer, but in fact most of these odd characters, and more, are standard features. You just have to know where to find them.

There are 47 keys on the standard keyboard that produce onscreen characters when you press them, and each of these will produce a different character if the Shift key is pressed at the same time. That makes 94 total characters that you can type without any special effort. But each font contains at least 255 characters, and most have more. The ones you can't type with a single keystroke are contained in what is sometimes called the Extended Character Set.

There are a couple of ways to access the Extended Character Set. The quickest way is to key in the character's ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange, although you'll probably have to get to be a contestant on *Jeopardy!* before you'll use that tidbit of information) code right from the keyboard. If you want to try this out, open your word processor to a blank document and make sure that your NumLock key is active (that is, that the numeric keypad is active--if you're using a laptop, this will mean that the block of keys defined by the 7, 0, ? and M keys will produce numbers and math operators instead of letters). Hold down the Alt key and type 0163. You should see the symbol for British Pounds appear in your document. Do the same thing with 0176 (don't forget to hold down the Alt key) and see the little superscript circle that denotes "degrees" appear.

Of course, this method requires that you know the ASCII code for each of the extended characters you want to use, and that kind of knowledge is reserved for the truly geeky such as myself. There are references for this--take a look at <http://www.asciitable.com/> for one--but it is easier for most people to consult the Character Map.

Some word processors have a built-in command to bring up the Character Map, but it's not hard to do, even if you have to resort to the manual method. In Windows, click on Start, then Run (or hold down the Windows key--it's the one toward the left lower corner of your keyboard, usually between the Control and Alt keys--and press the R key). In the blank that appears opposite the label "Open," type "charmap" without the quotes. It doesn't matter whether you use upper or lower case.

The window that appears is a grid that holds every available character in the font presently in use. You can select a different font through the drop-down list at the top of the window, but you're usually better off to stick with the one displayed. Most of the top five rows are taken up with the characters available on your keyboard, but after that you'll see those special characters I mentioned above, plus a lot more. To get one of these into your document, click on it with the mouse pointer. It will enlarge so you can see clearly which one you have selected. If this isn't the right one, or when you're done, click on any other point in the grid to move the focus and keep it from obstructing your view.

When you click on a character, its ASCII code, if it has one, will appear in the lower right corner of the window. You can then key that in directly, if you choose. Otherwise, with your chosen character selected, click on the Select button just below the grid display. You can then repeat the process to select as many other special characters as you might like. When you have what you want, click the Copy button next to Select, and those characters will be moved to the Windows Clipboard. Now, move back to your document and paste them in using Control-V, Edit|Paste, or the context menu that appears when you right-click the mouse.

If you're going to use a special character more than once in that document, you can paste your selected special characters into a convenient place in your document--or in another document--if you like, and then copy-and-paste them as needed from that block. If there are characters you use often, it might be worth memorizing their ASCII codes. I use "é" a lot, and I don't have to look it up to know that it's Alt+0233.

For frequently-used phrases that use special characters, you can save yourself some time by creating some Auto-Correct entries in Word. For instance, "*raison d'être*" not only contains two special characters, it's also easy to misspell. I can create an Auto-Correct entry for a phonetic version by first copying the correctly-spelled version, with the special characters, to the Windows Clipboard. Then, I open Auto-Correct (Tools|Auto-Correct Options), and the correct spelling ought to be in the "With:" box (if it's not, paste it there). Now, in the "Replace" box, enter whatever phrase you want to type when you wish to use "*raison d'être*." I used "raison detra" because that's close to the way my talking dictionary says that it's supposed to sound. Now, if I type that phrase, the correct version will appear as soon as I hit the spacebar.

If you play around with Character Map, you'll find all sorts of Latin, Arabic, Hebrew, Cyrillic, Greek, mathematical, and graphic characters you can use. If you scroll down the font list to "Wingdings" or "Webdings" (what fonts are installed vary from one computer to another), you'll see even more graphic characters.

One caveat that you may have already discovered: if any of the characters in this article appear to you as little white squares, or they're missing completely, that means that either the web server or your computer doesn't understand them. This is one of

those hazards of the web--not every character is recognized the same way, and when the computer doesn't know how to display a character, it either eliminates it completely or replaces it with a little white box. You may find the same problem if you publish your work to a different medium or software package, like Quark Xpress. If that's the case, experiment with different fonts until you get the harmony you need.

***Tim Dees** (tim@timdees.com) manages some of the PSWA's electronic media and is a former police officer. He now works as the editor-in-chief of LawOfficer.com, published by Reed-Elsevier.*

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(Anyone who would like to be interviewed for the newsletter, just contact the editor at mmeredith@ocsnet.net)

The End

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