

Wyo-Writer

Official Newsletter of:
Wyoming Writers, Inc.



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Oregon Trail Journal

By
Chris Williams; President WW Inc

Our constitution states in the preamble that “the Wyoming Writers, Inc. is a non profit organization of persons who write for publication or as a hobby, banded together for mutual help and inspiration. Wyoming Writers, Inc. seeks to encourage and promote interest in writing.” Our aims and purposes are “to hold an annual conference at which members may meet for the enjoyment of each other's society, for the exchange of ideas, and for the discussion of projects, programs, and other activities tending to promote the welfare of the Organization and its membership; where lectures and workshops may be delivered on issues related to writing and publishing; where banquets may be held, awards of merit conferred, and officers for the ensuing year elected and installed. To prepare and distribute a publication, The WYO-Writer, designed to keep the membership informed of organization activities and issues related to writing. To hold other writing workshops and activities that will educate, inform or promote Wyoming writers.”

Being involved in conference planning offers an excellent opportunity to really think about what Wyoming Writers is and what the organization does for its members. These past weeks I've been working on an Arts Council grant to help bring in faculty for our 35th annual conference in 2009. (The date is not a typo. Conference planning does begin eighteen months in advance. Conference 2008 scheduling is in full swing, but if anyone in our membership is longing to chair the 2009 conference, please let Jeanne Rogers know at vicepresident@wyowriters.org.)

A grant application closely questions the aims and purposes of an organization. I had to justify exactly what benefit our members get from conference. Having never written a grant before, I went looking for help from the people who had experience in grant writing, our past presidents. Luckily for me, Past President John Beach had three years' worth of WAC grant applications stored on his computer, so I was able to see how Wyoming Writers, Inc. presidents back to 2002 explained our mission to serve the needs of writers living in or connected to Wyoming. The application for 2005 reads (and I think I have Susan Vittitow to thank for the template grant subsequent presidents have been borrowing freely): “The annual conference is the largest component of the Wyoming Writers, Inc. programming, comprising approximately 60 percent of the annual budget and an equivalent percentage of volunteer in-kind hours.” The requested grant would “ensure the artistic quality of educational offerings.”

Conference is mandated by our constitution. Conference is our yearly event. Conference takes a lot of planning, a lot of volunteer time, and a lot of money to bring in high-quality, award-winning faculty to a different location in Wyoming once each year. Conference is big.

On the other hand, one of the attractions of our conference is that it is small. Contrasting our conference with others like the Jackson Hole conference or Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers Colorado Gold, the intimacy of our conference stands out. Some of the friendships and support networks in Wyoming Writers go back more than 30 years. I got a wonderful e-mail from Shelagh Wisdom, in which she put into words all the benefits of a smaller, more “old-fashioned” organization. “I don't care if it doesn't have all the whistles and bells that WritersNet, FirstWriter, etc., etc., etc., all have, and I don't care if I can't quick-write

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a poem to enter a monthly contest or participate in an online poll about someone else's work, or rate another writer's short story or website."

For those looking for that kind of special connection within the group, there is one sure way to get to know others in the organization, and that's to volunteer to help out with conference. Conference Chair Mary Hein and Vice President Jeanne Rogers have been hammering out the schedule, Webmaster Susan Vittitow is in the final stages of laying out the brochure, and Newsletter Editor Linda Vernon, in addition to her newsletter duties, has volunteered to get the brochure printed and distributed. If you want to get involved in conference, e-mail conference@wyowriters.org or vicepresident@wyowriters.org.

But what if I were new to Wyoming Writers? What if I wanted to attend conference for the first time and didn't know anybody? For those of us who need support, friendship, or mentoring year-round, I keep coming back to Chris Valentine's suggestion for a buddy system. This month, on our Web site, in addition to links to the sites of published members and copies of past issues of the *Wyo-Writer*, we're going to launch a classified section in *Members Only* called "Connections."

Send me an ad specifying what writing- or Wyoming Writers-related relationship you need, such as: *Romance novelist needs mentor. Willing to critique in exchange for publishing advice. Contact president@wyowriters.org.*

Members Only is password protected. Your ad will be published where only members can see it and respond. Wyoming Writers exists for its members. We're hoping that "Connections" becomes one more way the organization helps writers.

From Oregon,
Chris Williams

Make Your Pitch to a Literary Agent

By Jeanne Rogers

The Wyoming Writers, Inc., 2008 conference will offer attending writers the opportunity to pitch a book project to either **Rita Rosenkranz** or **Katharine Sands**, literary agents from New York. Both agents are excited about being in Wyoming, meeting writers, and maybe, just maybe, finding a new client (or two or three or . . .). If you have a novel ready to market, or a nonfiction book ready to launch, pitching to one of our panelist agents will, at the least, be good practice, and maybe, just maybe, gain you agent representation.

The following interviews are from the "Guide to Literary Agents Editors Blog: Where and How to Find the Right Agents to Represent Your Work by **Chuck Sambuchino**, Editor, Guide to Literary Agents (GLA), found on the web at <http://www.guidetoliteraryagents.com>.

Both interviews touch on key information that will be helpful to writers preparing to pitch themselves and their writing. By utilizing the agents' suggestions, and researching some "how-tos," your finely-crafted one-page query or cover letter, along with a well-written synopsis, concise outline, and/or sample chapters, will set the stage for a great first impression.

Katharine Sands of the Sarah Jane Freymann Literary Agency (Tuesday, June 12, 2007)

GLA: What's the most recent thing you've sold?

KS: The project I'm most excited about selling is always the most recent. A book I'm particularly excited about is *The Complete Book to International Adoption: A Step by Step Guide to Finding Your Child*, which is by Dawn Davenport. It's with Broadway. I met Dawn at a writers' conference in the hallway

GLA: Speaking of meeting writers at conferences, what do you think is the most common mistake writers make when they give a short in-person pitch to an agent?

Make Your Pitch to a Literary Agent, con't from page 2

KS: One of the things I believe people do wrong is to speak to agents as they would a tax professional or lawyer—somebody for hire who is there to listen to their process and backstory and get involved with their case in that way. Agents are listening in for a reason to be interested, first and foremost, and they're not going to be interested in the writer's [process], the word count, what is impeding, or why the writer doesn't want to do extra work.

GLA: Let's say an acquaintance calls you and says, "Hey, an agent wants to represent me, but she's new and has no sales. Is that OK?" How would you answer that?

KS: An agent with little or no sales who has been an assistant in a leading agency will have just as much clout getting to an editor perhaps as an established agent, at least initially. One of the things I always advise writers to do is to ask an interested agent—that is, one who's made an offer of representation—"Why do you want to be my agent?" They will then hear a very clear thumbnail sketch of how that agent will sound agenting. Secondly, you're listening for strategy and prognosis: How will that agent work with you and what is their prognosis for your career?

In terms of sales, it's not the only indicator of the agent's ability to agent you, because we have *New York Times* bestsellers that were first or second sales from newer agents. It's much more open in that way now than it was some years ago. An important point to remember is that sometimes for newer writers—that is, one without any kind of track record, celebrity or platform—a newer agent is better for several reasons. They're the most committed. They're eager to build their list as the writer is to become published. And also, they don't subject a writer to a problem I have seen with very established, even leading, agents. An editor is not going to make a low offer to a leading or big-money agent that they might make to a newer agent—and sometimes, that works to a newer writer's advantage. Because an editor that wants to be known for big money might simply decline a project rather than make a mediocre offer and be branded in the mind of an agency as someone who can't get big money. It will cost them the chance maybe to get bigger books. I have seen publishable authors sometimes go too high in terms of their representation.

GLA: Bottom line—what attracts you to a work?

KS: It might be the voice or it might be something very specific about the fresh approach to the story or the material.

Katharine Sands is an agent with the Sarah Jane Freymann Literary Agency in New York City. She is the author of *Making the Perfect Pitch: Advice from 45 Top Book Agents* (Kalmbach). Other works she's excited about include *Really Cool Rhymes: The Off the Hook Vocabulary Book*, by Jodi Fodor; as well as *Signature Cocktails*, by celebrity mixologist Alex Michael Ott.

Rita Rosenkranz of the Rita Rosenkranz Literary Agency (Thursday, June 21, 2007)

GLA: What's the most recent thing you've sold?

RR: A book called *Brand your Way to an MBA*.

GLA: Bottom line—what attracts you to a work?

RR: A book that makes a difference—that has a distinction because there are no obvious rivals in the marketplace, either because this author has a better command of the subject than anyone else out there or because it's a fresh subject having to do with our times. Actually the way I say it is: I look for projects that present familiar subjects freshly or lesser known subjects handled commercially.

Make Your Pitch to a Literary Agent, con't from page 3

GLA: Agents say writers should think about where their book would fit on the bookstore shelves. Is that an absolute necessity?

RR: For a certain kind of book, yes, where it is a purpose-driven book, if you will—where the author has a particular need and will be steered toward a particular Barnes and Noble shelf. You want to make sure the commute is an easy, unambiguous one. But there are other kinds of books that are perhaps more radical and revolutionary in their sensibility. Frankly, I have a book coming out next spring called *Survival Guide for Landlocked Mermaids*, which Beyond Words is publishing. And my feeling is there's really nothing comparable. It's totally distinctive and will be shelved in probably a couple of places. I don't know what category they'll put on the back of the book: inspirational, illustrative, gift? It actually straddles a lot of fences. I hope it doesn't get lost because of that, and that's always the threat—that if you can't (classify) it expertly and precisely, it'll end up nowhere. But I think there are some books that can transcend category and catch on because of their fantastic strength and distinction in the marketplace.

GLA: What do you think is the most common mistake writers make when they give a short in-person pitch to an agent?

RR: TMI—too much information. TMI before they get the point of connection to me, such as too much background information that has nothing to do with the material at hand. The pitch has to be scripted and precise, so that I have enough time to react. If they've used all their time in telling me about the work, I can't steer the discussion to find out really if I've got a reason to connect to it. I do my best to interrupt if necessary because I'm aware of the passing of time and I want to make it count for them, hence make it count for me too. When I'm listening to a pitch, it's with the hope that I'll connect with an author and represent the author.

Rita Rosenkranz founded the Rita Rosenkranz Literary Agency in New York City. Her adult nonfiction stretches from the decorative (Flowers, White House Style, published by Simon & Schuster) to the dark (Saving Beauty From the Beast, published by Little, Brown). She represents health, history, parenting, music, how-to, popular science, business, biography, popular reference, cooking, spirituality and general interest titles.

Longtime WW Inc Member John Nesbitt Nominated for Spur Award



Longtime Wyoming Writers' member, John Nesbitt has been nominated for the prestigious Western Writers of America Spur Award for his novel *Raven Springs*, in the 'Best Original Mass-Market paperback' category.

The novel is the third in a mini-series of crossover western-mysteries Nesbitt has written featuring protagonist Jimmy Clevis. A library reviewer online calls it "an engaging hybrid of the traditional western and a mystery," while a reviewer in WWA's Roundup wrote, "As much a mystery novel as a Western, *Raven Springs* is a delightful read, filled with interesting characters, unique plot twists, red herrings, and a likeable hero."

One winner and two finalists are selected for each Spur Award category. WW Inc extends hearty congratulations and best of luck, John.

MARKET NEWS By Andi Hummel

(The following information has been gathered from several sources: The Writer, a national writers' magazine and its online information site, other online market information sources, and some great Cup of Comfort information offered by Chris Williams, our WW, Inc. president! Check the markets mentioned for yourself before you submit. It's wise to make sure they're right for you before submitting!)

GREAT PUBLISHING OPPORTUNITY FOR GREAT PERSONAL ESSAYS

The bestselling book series *A Cup of Comfort* is now seeking authentic and compelling personal essays for the three new volumes: ***A CUP OF COMFORT FOR MILITARY FAMILIES***—It has been said that military life is not for the faint of heart. But neither is it without its benefits and blessings. The popular *Cup of Comfort* book series now seeks powerful and positive stories about how military life affects the personal lives of service men and women, how family affects soldiers on the job, and how military life affects families. The stories in *A Cup of Comfort for Military Families* will cover a wide range of topics and reveal a variety of perspectives, experiences, and emotions specific to military personnel and/or their loved ones. Open to all branches; all ranks; active and veterans. **Submission deadline: April 1, 2008 (urgent last call; extended from March 1)** \$500 grand prize; \$100 each, all other published stories; plus copy of book.

A CUP OF COMFORT FOR NEW MOTHERS—Few experiences bring forth as many anxieties, blessings, challenges, wonders, and changes as having a baby whether it's your first child or fifth, your birth child or adopted child. And nothing is as miraculous as giving birth to or witnessing the birth of your baby. This heartwarming anthology will be filled with birth stories and newborn homecoming stories as well as a wide range of stories about the various experiences, emotions, and concerns involved in adding a new baby to one's life and family. Potential topics include but are not limited to: nursing (or not), caring for a newborn, bonding/falling in love with infant, lack of sleep, relationship with spouse, how siblings respond, returning to work, balancing responsibilities, post-partum depression, self transformation, unexpected joys, life lessons, small miracles, etc. The majority of the stories will be about birth children, but the book will likely include a couple adoptive stories as well. Likewise, most of the stories will be written from the new mother's perspective, but we are open to including a few stories written from the father's—or a very close family member's—perspective. All stories must be uplifting and positive, no matter how difficult the situation portrayed in the story might be. We do not want stories that simply recount misfortunes and sorrows and that do not clearly reveal a positive outcome or redeeming result (silver lining). **Submission deadline: April 15, 2008 (extended from April 1)** \$500 grand prize; \$100 each, all other published stories; plus copy of book.

A CUP OF COMFORT FOR ADOPTIVE FAMILIES—The primary purpose of this book is to celebrate adoptive families and to recognize the extraordinary and challenging experiences that are unique to "chosen children" and their families. We are most interested in stories written by adult adoptive children and their adoptive parents and siblings, but the book will also likely include some stories written by members of the extended adoptive family (grandparent, aunt/uncle, cousin), close friends of the adoptive family (i.e. godparent), and birth family members. Virtually any topic relevant to adopted children and their adoptive parents is acceptable as long as it is authentic, positive, insightful, and uplifting or inspiring. We do not want heartbreaking stories about adoptive parents or birth families that regret the adoption; there is a place for stories of that ilk, but this book is not that place. All of the stories in this collection must show a positive aspect of adoption and must bring comfort or joy or inspiration to those who have been adopted and/or to the families who adopted them, no matter how difficult the experience and emotions portrayed in the story might be. **Submission deadline: June 15, 2008** \$500 grand prize; \$100 each, all other published stories; plus copy of book. All *Cup of Comfort* stories must be true, original, and positive. The stories should be narrative essays (creation nonfiction) and each should run 1,000-2,000 words. Entrants pay no fees. Writer's guidelines: <http://www.cupofcomfort.com/share.htm>.

Interested in contests? Try these!

The Boston Review Short Story Contest is an annual fiction contest for previously unpublished short stories of up to 4,000 words. The market, billing itself as "nonpartisan," also publishes poetry and nonfiction and acquires first serial rights, with copyright reverting to the author after publication. The mailing address is ***Boston Review***, 35 Medford Street, Suite 302, Somerville, MA 02143 – fiction and poetry must be mailed, must include SASE, payment for such varies, and response time is usually two to four months. Poetry submissions are read from September 15 through May 15 of each year. For nonfiction, e-mail a query (and a copy of your resume) with your ideas. There is a \$20 entry fee for this one, and the **deadline is October 1**. First prize is \$1,500 and publication in the *Boston Review*. For more information on this market—and on the annual contest—and for guidelines, check the Web site at www.bostonreview.net.

The Alexander Patterson Cappon Fiction Award is one of three contests currently listed online in a "call for writing" by *New Letters, A Magazine of Writing and Art*. All entrants in this contest—and also those entering for ***The Dorothy Churchill Cappon Essay Award*** and ***The New Letters Poetry Award***—will be considered for publication and will receive a one-year subscription to *New Letters*. There are entry fees for these contests, and very specific guidelines and formatting instructions are given on the *New Letters* Web site. First prize winner for each of these contests will take home \$1500, first runners-up will receive as recently published book of poetry or fiction from New Letters affiliate, BkMk Press, so check www.newletters.org/awards.asp and send in your entries! The snail mail address: New Letters Literary Awards, University House, 5101 Rockhill Rd., University of Missouri-Kansas City, Kansas City, MO 64110.

Wyoming Writers, Inc. Membership Form

Name _____

Company Name _____

Address _____

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Phone: Day _____ Night _____ Cell _____

Email _____ Website _____

Please circle the categories which best describe your writing.

AB *Autobiography/biography***BE** *Business/economics***C** *Cookbooks***CS** *Contemporary social issues***F** *Fiction-books***FA** *Fantasy***H** *History***HU** *Humor***M** *Mysteries***MA** *Magazine articles***N** *Nonfiction-books***NP** *News articles***P** *Poetry***PR** *Publicity/press releases***R** *Romance***S** *Short stories***SF** *Science Fiction***SH** *Self-help***SM** *Science-Medical***T** *Textbooks***TE** *Technical***TH** *Thrillers***TR** *Travel***VP** *Visual Performing
arts***W** *Westerns***WY** *Wyoming***O** *Other writing*

I am interested in:

____ Networking w/others

____ writers' group

____ writing mechanics

____ info

____ publication

____ how-to articles in the

____ newsletter

____ contests

____ journalling

____ holding

____ office/volunteering

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REMEMBER:

All memberships expire
June 30th of each year,
regardless of when you
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Cool Tools Online for Writers

By
Susan Vittitow

Ever pick up a book from a major publisher only to find typos and other editing glitches? Timothy Ferriss, the *New York Times* bestselling author of "The 4-Hour Workweek," is inviting readers to help him edit the 2nd edition of his book using a *wiki*. The site may be found at <http://fourhourworkweek.pbwiki.com/>. What's a wiki? Wikipedia is the best example -- it's an online site that can be edited online by multiple people. Wikipedia is open to anyone who registers, but wikis can be set up to require passwords or even to be closed to public view. Wikis take moments to set up and are easy to edit - no HTML code required! There are paid versions out there if you need a lot of bells and whistles, but most wikis are free. How can you use a wiki for your writing? Here are some options:

- Use a wiki to set up a personal web page to promote your work. It's one of the quickest and easiest ways to put a page on the web.
- Set up a wiki for your local writers' group. Post meeting times, writing exercises and items for critique. Critiques can be done right on the wiki and shared with your entire group that way.
- If you have a published book, be sure to register for the Wyoming Authors Wiki at <http://wiki.wyomingauthors.org> so that you can add and update information about you and your work. You can also add information about other authors and upcoming literary events.

A good, free wiki service is PBWiki.com. If you want to learn more about wikis, Wikipedia has a good overview. You can compare different types of wiki services and software at www.wikimatrix.org.

Help Wanted

Wyoming Writers is in need of a member-at-large for Region Two, which covers Sheridan, Johnson, Campbell, Crook, or Weston Counties. A member-at-large is a communicator and advisor. If you live in Region Two, and would be willing to become the conduit between our members and the board for that area in addition to attending board meetings and voting on Wyoming Writers issues, please contact president@wyowriters.org.

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Wyoming Writers now has a chatroom online,
available to its members.



This is a password-protected online room and
available only to those who provide the
password. Our WW Inc room is located at:
<http://www.chatzy.com/708248764738>

Drop in and take a look!

For the password to this room, visit our
'Members Only' pages online, or contact the
editor at: lgvernon@aol.com

***BE SURE TO WATCH FOR INFO ON
UPCOMING CHATROOM EVENTS!***



Wyo-Writer is edited by

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Wordcount, 500 words, or less, please. If you are a
recently published WW Inc member, please notify the
editor. We are happy to showcase your success.**

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