

---

# The Write Stuff

*A quarterly publication of the Columbia Chapter of the Missouri Writers' Guild*

*July 2009*

---

## Inside this Issue:

- 1 From the President's Pen
- 2 Upcoming Meetings
- 3 Noteworthy Stuff (Member News) / Recommended Reading
- 4 Contests / Inspirational Stuff
- 5 A Writing Exercise

## *From the President's Pen*

### **Self-Publishing a Book**

Authors are ambivalent about self-publishing. It's often considered a last ditch effort to get a manuscript into print, but it can be a first choice for some authors. Self-publishing does have some advantages—complete control, higher profit per book, and access to buy inexpensive books. Most people don't want to work on a manuscript for years and then feed it through the shredder because it isn't *New York Times* Bestseller material.

The economic downturn has affected the publishing business, and more authors than ever choose print on demand. The average self-published book will sell less than a hundred copies. Two recent exceptions to the limited appeal of self-published books are *The Shack* and *Still Alice*. Both began as self-published books and became bestsellers.

Self-publishing is not for sissies. You don't just write the book and turn it over to someone else. You, the author, become a publisher. Even if you hire professionals to edit and format your book, you are ultimately responsible for the quality of the finished product. If you are a do-it-yourself type of person, you need to get in touch with your technical side before you upload your book to the printer.

Self-publishing is on my mind because we just completed all the steps toward publishing *Well Versed*. The process began when Carolyn Mulford found guest editors to read, rank, and select pieces for the book. After the selections were made, work began on the publication. Carolyn, Judy Stock, and I worked on the manuscript and met five times for work sessions. CCMWG is fortunate to benefit from Carolyn's professional editing and Judy's technical and artistic talent. After countless hours of pulling the book together and preparing it for publication, we called on Harold Ream to design the cover and upload our masterpiece to <https://www.createspace.com/>

Continued on page 2

## Upcoming Meetings

### July 12, 2009 Meeting

2 - 4 p.m. at Orr St. Studios

The meeting date has been changed from the first Sunday in July to the second Sunday due to the 4<sup>th</sup> of July holiday weekend.

This meeting will feature speaker **Walter Barga**n, who was appointed as Missouri's first office Poet Laureate on January 8, 2008. Barga, of Ashland, has published 9 books and 2 chapbooks of poems over the last 28 years, including *The Feast: Prose Poem Sequences*, which won the 2005 William Rockhill Nelson Award for best poetry book by a Missouri writer. His work has appeared in more than 100 magazine publications.

Barga, whose talk is titled "Crafting the First Line", says:

"We will ask the question, what makes a good first line, and hopefully, find some answers, and take a look at how a first line can determine so much of what follows in the rest of the poem."

### August 2, 2009 Meeting

2 - 4 p.m. at Orr St. Studios

This will be a critique meeting. Bring your prose or poetry to share in small groups. Check the **Groups** page on the CCMWG web site to find the critique guidelines.

You can find the Columbia Chapter of the Missouri Writers' Guild on the web at: <http://columbiawrites.coin.org>

### September 13, 2009 Meeting

2-4 p.m. at Orr St. Studios

The meeting date has been changed from the first Sunday in September to the second Sunday due to the Labor Day holiday weekend. This is a members-only workshop meeting. All other meetings are free and open to the public.

## From the President's Pen (continued)

The proof copy has been ordered, and we are on track to have *Well Versed* available at the August meeting. We have given all contributors an opportunity to pre-order the book, and will extend a pre-order discounted price to the general membership.

We greatly appreciate our sponsors: the *Columbia Daily Tribune*, *Memory Talk*, *Rock Springs Review*, and Austin/Barkley Publishers. On behalf of all CCMWG members, I want to express sincerest thanks to Carolyn, Judy, and Harold for their tireless efforts to produce an outstanding publication.

Self-publishing a book takes many hours of work, but the finished product is worth the time and effort. *Well Versed* will showcase the talents of the Columbia Chapter of the Missouri Writers' Guild members. Congratulations to all!

Linda Fisher, CCMWG President



[www.lsfisher.com](http://www.lsfisher.com)

<http://earlyonset.blogspot.com>

Do you have suggestions for topics or possible speakers for CCMWG meetings? Email Linda Fisher at [memory\\_talk@hotmail.com](mailto:memory_talk@hotmail.com) with your suggestions.

Do you have newsletter story ideas, information about contests or classes, successes to share, or books to recommend? Email Carol Buckels at [cgb@centurytel.net](mailto:cgb@centurytel.net)

## Noteworthy Stuff

**Linda Fisher's** story "The Cat and Toad Exercise Plan" is being considered for publication in *Chicken Soup for the Soul What I Learned from the Cat*, which will be released in Sept. 2009.

**Eva Ridenour's** latest novel, *Honeysuckle*, written as Elizabeth Butler was released by The Wild Rose Press. This is a sweet romance placed in Southern, Illinois during the late 1920s and revolves around the bootlegging era.

## Missouri Writers Guild Contest Winners

Congratulations to the many Columbia Chapter of the Missouri Writers' Guild members who had winning entries in the Missouri Writers' Guild Contest, which was held at Cape Girardeau, April 4, 2009. The MWG has not yet posted the winners, so if we missed anyone, please email the newsletter editor so we can include your name in the next issue.

### Ed Bailey

2<sup>nd</sup> Sci-Fi/Horror Story & Poetry Contest  
"The Interior Minister's Address"

### Linda Fisher

2<sup>nd</sup> Flash Fiction "Breakfast at Perkins"  
2<sup>nd</sup> Best Health Article "Diagnosis and Doctor Visits"  
2<sup>nd</sup> Best Essay in a Magazine, Anthology, or Journal "You're Going the Wrong Way"  
3<sup>rd</sup> Best Short Story "The Red Velvet Dress"

### Sylvia Forbes

2<sup>nd</sup> Best Short Story or Essay "Wild River, Wild Ride"  
2<sup>nd</sup> Best Restaurant Review "Gold Standard"  
2<sup>nd</sup> Best Travel Article "Paradise Valley"  
3<sup>rd</sup> Highways and Byways "Nature's Fall Splendor along the Great River Road"  
HM Best Historical Article "Roy Werner Barely Survives Prisoner of War Experience"

### Von Pittman

HM Best Short Story or Essay "Lee Harvey Oswald Whistle and Thump"

## Google Settlement News

Any published author can apply to receive payments from Google, which is settling a class-action lawsuit involving copyright infringement from its program to digitize all U.S. books

To apply for payment for any book published on or before Jan. 5, 2009 you need to visit this website:

<http://www.googlebookssettlement.com>

and register your books. There is not a huge amount of money involved, probably between \$60 to \$100 per book published (not per numbers sold). But money is money. All claims must be filed by January 5, 2010.

Here is a link to a very helpful FAQ:

<http://www.googlebooksettlement.com/help/bin/answer.py?answer=118704&hl=%20en>

or

<http://tinyurl.com/chyt33>

If you do not find your books listed, you can add them yourself at the Google Settlement site using the ISBN numbers.

## Recommended Reading

Here are a couple of books that I think are very helpful for writers: *Techniques Of The Selling Writer* by Dwight V. Swain and *Make A Scene* by Jordan E. Rosenfeld. The *Techniques* book focuses on writing fiction and how to correct issues to improve your writing. It is very informative, detailed and easy to read and understand. *Make A Scene* breaks scenes into different types and explains what the function of each type is. It also explains how to develop the different types of scenes to create stronger scenes within your work. – *Cathy Daily*

## Short Story and Flash Fiction Contests

### **Mighty River Short Story Contest**

Deadline: October 1, 2009

Winner receives \$500 and publication in *Big Muddy*. The \$15 entry fee per story includes a copy of *Big Muddy* with the winning story.

MRSS Contest

Southeast Missouri State University Press

MS 2650 One University Plaza

Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

<http://www6.semo.edu/universitypress/mrss.htm>

### **Wilda Hearne Flash Fiction Contest**

Deadline: October 1, 2009

Winner receives \$200 and publication in *Big Muddy*. Stories are limited to 500 words or less. The \$10 fee per story includes a copy of *Big Muddy* with the winning story.

Wilda Hearne Flash Fiction Contest

Southeast Missouri State University Press

MS 2650 One University Plaza

Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

<http://www6.semo.edu/universitypress/hearne.htm>

### 2-Minute Play Competition

#### **"ALL CONTENT CONSIDERED"**

Submissions must be performed and video-taped. No obscenity or Nudity. Get your friends together and act out your best 2-minute play! Video-tape the performance and submit to: [playsnow@heartlandplays.com](mailto:playsnow@heartlandplays.com). Selected plays will appear on the Heartland Plays, Inc. website and will be published in text form in our collection of 52 2-minute plays. They will notify writers if interested in publishing plays in the collection. One over-all winner will receive a three-night stay at Elkhorn View Lodge near Helena, Montana, a prize value over \$500.

### Inspirational Stuff

"There is no other task but to know your own original face."

-Yen-T'ou

"I shut my eyes in order to see."

-Paul Gauguin

"All you need to do to receive guidance is to ask for it and then listen."

-Sanaya Roman

"Inspiration may be a form of superconsciousness, or perhaps of subconsciousness—I wouldn't know. But I am sure it is the antithesis of self-consciousness."

-Aaron Copland

### Wanted: Newsletter Items

Send information; awards, accomplishments, and publications for the next newsletter to the Newsletter Editor, Carol Buckels at [cgb@centurytel.net](mailto:cgb@centurytel.net) with the subject line: **CCMWG Member News** by September 25, 2009.



## *A writing exercise: Using another author's writing as a prompt*

In the following piece, CCMWG member, Judy Stock, provides a good example of one way to prompt yourself to write, based on the poem "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" by Wallace Stevens. You can see the original poem by following the link below:

<http://www.writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/88/stevens-13ways.html>

### *You Want Me To Do What?*

by Judy Stock

I didn't say it aloud, but I thought it at ninety decibels.

The instructor told the poetry class about our exercise for the session.

We opened books to Wallace Stevens' "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird." We were to read it; absorb it; "feel" the author's thoughts, emotions, and reactions to looking at a blackbird.

We read the poem. He took red tennis shoes, laces tied together, and hung them over the back of a chair.

We were to substitute red tennis shoes for the blackbird, and in the manner of Wallace Stevens, write about looking at "red tennis shoes". He would move the shoes every few minutes to give us additional input.

I always said if you gave me a subject, I could write on it. He just called my bluff. Now, I had to prove something to myself. Maybe something would come to me.

The first thing I noticed was the red tennis shoes were dirty.

I read about the blackbird again. Then I looked at the red tennis shoes hanging on the chair.

I checked the shoes again. Wait a minute. Where were they? There they were, climbing a Ficus tree.

I was reminded of my son's joke, and snickered, gaining the attention of others in the group.

Moved again. They were now staring at a ball field.

I joined the shoes in gazing out the window and saw a barefoot boy as he bounced by sharing his enchantment with the world. Opposing emotions gave me darker thoughts.

The shoes headed up the window. What were they looking for up there?

The shoes did look comfortable. What can I say about that?

I thought about my sons coming home from fishing with their shoes slung around their necks. They liked bare feet, too.

I looked at the shoes as the instructor swung them back and forth and thought of Edgar Allen Poe.

Shoemakers used to make shoes, one shoe at a time. Today, nameless people make shoes by the hundreds.

Gazing out the window at the sun-dappled grass, I was eager to find my place in the sun.

When time was up, I was glad to get out. My last thought was wondering where the red tennis shoes would go.

This is about one exercise. It can be worth a writer's time to choose another author's writing to use as a prompt. Use it in different ways. Write the same subject in your own way with your own voice. Follow what painters do. Pick a subject and write in the manner of the writer chosen. Imagine and use the writer's thoughts, emotions, and reactions to give yourself a new viewpoint.

Follow my thoughts through the poem I wrote about "red tennis shoes."

- I. Strings untied, red tennis shoes  
Swirl in the wash water,  
Drowning to be clean.
- II. Hanging from the tied strings,  
Red tennis shoes wait quietly  
To be rescued.
- III. We had no room for  
Red tennis shoes  
Until they climbed the tree.
- IV, These cannot be  
Elephant shoes,  
As this is not a cherry tree.
- V. There are times  
Red tennis shoes call to me,  
"Play ball."
- VI. The child who has no shoes  
Does not understand  
Poems about red tennis shoes.
- VII. Silly red tennis shoes,  
Walking up a window  
Looking for Spiderman.
- VIII. What do I like more,  
Wearing red tennis shoes or going barefoot.  
Red comfort or pointed rocks?

- IX. Red tennis shoes,  
Slung around a poet's neck.  
Easy to carry that way. How do they smell?
- X. Hanging by their strings  
Like pendulums,  
Red tennis shoes pace out the time.
- XI. Shoes, once made by shoemakers,  
Have descended to become  
Red tennis shoes made by assembly lines.
- XII. Red tennis shoes  
Walking by themselves  
Enjoying the sunny day.
- XIII. Red tennis shoes  
Go to shoe heaven  
When their life is over.