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The Window

Official eNewsletter of Panhandle Professional Writers
d/b/a Texas High Plains Writers



HIGH PLAINS WRITERS

MAY 2017

A Bi-Monthly Newsletter



May 20th: Abilene author **Karen Witemeyer!**

<http://www.karenwitemeyer.com/>

Karen's books have consistently hit bestseller lists and have garnered awards such as the ACFW Carol Award, the Holt Medallion, and the Inspirational Reader's Choice Award. In addition, she is a multiple RITA and National Reader's Choice finalist. We are fortunate to have Karen visit Amarillo and speak at the May THPW Saturday meeting. Her topics will include:

AUTHOR VOICE: Discover your author voice, develop it, and how to dodge the pitfalls. Author voice must be carefully balanced so that the reader can hear the characters without hearing the author directly. We want our readers to be carried

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DEEP POINT OF VIEW: In the second portion of her program, Karen will explain how to increase the close connection between your characters and your readers. She'll focus on teaching us how to strengthen the voice of our characters. Deep POV is the single most important craft technique for drawing readers into your story. If you do it right, your characters will become so real that the reader will become them. She'll explain how deep POV works, then look at practical ways to incorporate it into your writing. Bring pencil and paper for hands-on writing exercises. We are anticipating a fun, information-packed session.

A life-long bookworm, Karen is living her dream writing novels. She finds deep satisfaction in writing stories set in days gone by of men and women trying to carve out a life amid struggle and hardship, finding love and family along the way. Karen lives in Abilene, Texas with her hero and three children. She earned a bachelor and master's degrees in Psychology.



From the President

We need to connect. Yes, technically we can sit alone at our computer in our home or at a coffee shop and write a full manuscript without anyone's help. We can do our research, hire out editing, and even learn how to format and publish our books without interaction with another living person. It can be done. But it shouldn't be.

These days it's much easier to log on to a webinar by a best-selling author than to put on real clothes, load up our gear, and go to a monthly writers' meeting. But that face-to-face meeting time is what your book really needs. Better yet, share your work in a weekly critique group. **The connection with other writers will fuel you like nothing else can.**

Read their work and let them read yours. Offer your honest (and kind) opinion about how they can make their story better. Listen when they do the same. You'll find an energy within the exchange that can't be generated elsewhere. It's scary, of course. What if others don't like it? What if they do?

Your story is part of you, almost like a child. And nobody wants to expose their child to unnecessary ridicule or criticism. But the truth is, you're too close to your manuscript to see its flaws. When you establish a connection with another writer, you will find eyes that see what needs to be fixed. You might even learn how to fix your problems by seeing how

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easy. You may have to sacrifice a few Saturday mornings. You may have to step out of your comfort zone and introduce yourself to a stranger. The great thing about our bi-monthly meetings is that everyone else is there with a common purpose—writing. When you connect with other writers, you'll be giving yourself a gift. You will advance your writing. Your manuscript will find polish and purpose. You may be surprised by how much your work improves.

I can tell you from first-hand experience that without the connections I've made through this organization, I would never have been published. I'd still have everything I've ever written languishing in a box or computer file. I'd have never had the courage to let a publisher see it. I'd have never pitched a story.

Seven books later, and with several more coming, **I feel a deep appreciation for this organization.** That's why I serve on its Board of Directors. I want to give back to the group that has made this possible for me, and I want to help make it possible for others.

Make the most of Texas High Plains Writers. Attend every meeting. Bring friends. Connect with other members. Join a critique group. Serve on the Board. Do it; regrets are for the fictional characters in your book.

Website: kimblackink.com

Upcoming Programs

May 20 - Karen Witemeyer: *"Author Voice & Deep Point of View"*

*July 15 - Ryan McSwain: *"How to Self-Publish on Amazon like a Pro"*

September 16 - Rosa Latimer

November 18 - Alan Bourgeois

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*Check our website. There may a location change for the July meeting.

Building a story begins with 3 basic elements: Idea. Outline. Characters.

by James Quiggle

In the beginning, there must be an idea. I recently read a Sci Fi work with a “military in outer space” plot. But that was the story, not the idea that generated the story. The idea was “in 300 years the galaxy will be destroyed by aliens. What must the protagonist do in the present to fix the future problem?” That idea, by author Jean Johnson, has spawned seven successful books, so far.

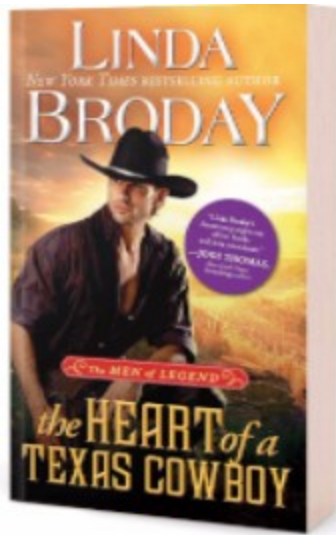
The idea need not be complex. That is what plot is for. Some favorite stories were developed from very simple ideas: what happened *When Harry met Sally*? Some ideas are fanciful: how did an orphan escape cruel relatives using a giant peach, as in *James and the Giant Peach* by Dahl? Ideas need not be questions, but the best stories seem to come from answering questions. The main requirement is an idea that provides a spark to energize the writer’s imagination.

An idea that energizes imagination will naturally form an outline. An outline is a list of the highlights of the story. My outlines (I write nonfiction) are a list of subjects to be discussed. The fiction writer uses an outline to form a plot: when, where, how, and why did Harry meet Sally; and then what happened? The details in the outline are used to develop the plot into setting, conflict, and resolution.

Idea and outline should create characters that live in the setting, work out the plot, and resolve the conflict. A character’s attributes—even the most insignificant of characters—should be defined in great detail. Authors often speak of their characters as acting in ways they did not expect, as though a character was a genuine person. The point of defining the character is to make him, her, or it a genuine living, breathing, acting person/thing in the writer’s mind. No character truly acts in ways unexpected by the author. Each acts according to the attributes the author has defined for the character. If properly defined, then each character, whether major, minor, or insignificant will become a living, breathing genuine person for the reader. Kim Black’s book, *A Fiction Writer’s Character Workbook* is an excellent tool for defining characters.

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Linda Broday announces the release of Book 2 in her Man of Legend Series!

One bullet is all it takes to shatter Houston Legend's world. He swore he'd never love again, but with the future of the Lone Star Ranch on the line, he finds himself at the altar promising to love and cherish a woman he's never met—a woman whose vulnerable beauty touches his heart.

All Lara Boone wants is a name for her baby. She never expected to fall in love with her own husband—or any man—after the heartache she's endured. Yet when her troubled past catches up with them, Houston will move heaven and earth to protect his bride...and discover depths to a marriage of convenience neither realized could be theirs to claim.

You can also read about Linda and her work in the most recent SADDLEBAG DISPATCHES magazine, and find her on the web at <https://lindabroday.com>

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2017 Board Members

President: Kimberly Black
President-Elect: Mike Akins
Secretary: Audrey Massingill
Treasurer: Janet Taylor
Technology: open
Membership: Molly McKnight
Hospitality: Ryan McSwain
Publicity and Newsletter: Natalie Bright
Conferences and Workshops: Carleta Fernandez
Programs: Linda Broday

Thanks to these volunteers who are willing to give their time and knowledge to TPHW in 2017! TPHW needs YOU! The Nominating Committee will begin work soon on filling Board positions for the upcoming year, and we need a few willing and able bodies. Contact our President, Kim Black, for more information on how you can become involved.

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From the Editor's Desk:

Texas High Plains Writers needs YOU!



It's hard to believe, but another year is well underway and the THPW president will be appointing a nominating committee soon to begin compiling a list for the 2018 Board elections. We are in critical need of some enthusiastic volunteers to continue the Youth Writing Contest, as well as fill spots for membership, programs, tech support and Vice President. Think about getting involved in your local writing community.

If you have an event or a new book to announce, please let me know. Send me a JPEG file of your book cover and the details about your book. Do you want to include a book blurb or reviews? How about a few chapters as an excerpt? I can't cut and paste for you because I do not know what information you'd like to share with everyone. Thanks in advance for making the promotion of you and your work easy.

Deeper point of view is something I've heard mentioned, but never studied. I'm really looking forward to the May meeting. Also, I'm right in the midst of editing a book for CreateSpace. This book has won a contest, snagged an agent, lost an agent, been here, yon and back again. What a crazy business! I can hardly wait until Ryan McSwain's program in July about self publishing with


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Have an idea for an article about story craft or newsworthy items that might be of interest to writers? Let me know.

Natalie

<http://nataliebright.com>


WEST TEXAS
WRITERS'
ACADEMY



JUNE 5-9, 2017

HOSTED BY
New York Times and
USA Today Best Selling Author
Jodi THOMAS

& WaterBrook/Random House Author
Timothy LEWIS



Critique Session Guidelines

To participate in the afternoon critique session, you do not need to have a piece to be critiqued. The sessions begin at 1 p.m. and, depending on the number of those who have a story or a poem needing to be critiqued, can last up to a couple of hours.

We suggest that your material not exceed approximately 750 to 1,000 words.

Please bring at about five copies of your story or poem. If possible, it is helpful if you bring a short synopsis of your story so those critiquing have some background.

We ask that you format your manuscript as follows:

- 1. Use white 8.5 by 11-inch paper.*
- 2. Double space using either Times New Roman 12 or similar font.*
- 3. In the header, give your last name, a slash (/), and a short title on the left and the page number on the right (at the top of each page).*
- 4. Use one-inch margins.*
- 5. Use one side of the paper only.*
- 6. If possible, use line numbering.*
- 7. Note: Your synopsis may be single-spaced.*

Each person, in turn, will read 1,000 words or less (15 to 20 minutes) or the author will read their own writing, based on preference; then, the group facilitator will ask for

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to each author.

The goal of every critique is: "How can we make it better."

THPW meetings are held every third Saturday in odd-numbered months: January, March, May, July, September, and November.

Meetings are open to the public and everyone is welcome. There is no fee for members of Texas High Plains Writers to attend our regular bi-monthly meetings. A \$10 fee may apply to nonmembers.

Unless otherwise specified, 2017 meetings are held at:

The Oasis

8201 Canyon Drive

Amarillo, Texas

(Note: We must occasionally switch our meeting location, or we may need to change the date to avoid conflicts. So, please check the address and date for each meeting.)

Our meetings/programs follow this schedule:

Check-In and Meet & Greet

9:30 - 10:00 a.m.

Business Meeting

10:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.

Program/Presentation

10:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Lunch is on Your Own

12:15 - 1 p.m.

Critique Session

1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Our mailing address is listed below.

You can email THPW at

info@texashighplainswriters.com



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