

THE SCRIBBLER

From the Desk of Ralph Gordon

Since its inception in 2005 the Mississippi Writers Guild (MWG) has sponsored dozens of writer events. Projects include workshops for most all genres of writing from fiction to songwriting to screenwriting. The administration has taken great strides in making sure facilitators for MWG events have been of the highest professional and ethical nature. Thanks for most part of Richelle Putnam. One of the most important reasons for the success of MWG workshop and projects is the result of partnering with other nonprofits and state agencies.

Guild partnerships have included the East Mississippi Community Development Foundation, the Mississippi Theatre Association and the Rock River Foundation to name a few. The latest partners with the Guild were the Mississippi Library Commission, the Greater Jackson Arts Council and the Jackson Visitors and Convention Bureau. The three agencies along with a grant from the Mississippi Arts Commission were instrumental in making the Guild's fifth annual conference one of the most successful events in the history of the Guild.

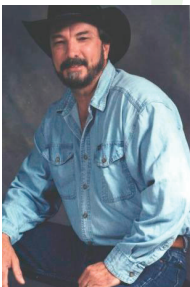
The Library Commission sponsored a lavish reception on Friday night before the workshops. They provided us with hors devours along with coffee, bottled water and soft drinks at no cost to the guild. The only expense for the Guild was the wine. State law prohibits agencies from purchasing alcoholic beverages. The reception was topped off with the Guild's traditional Literary Artist on Stage in the conference room of the Library Commission.

Thanks to the Jackson Visitor and Convention Bureau the Conference had ample advertising in the Jackson area including a radio interview. The Bureau also assisted with registration and stuffing the attendee packets.

As with the four previous conferences the Mississippi Arts Commission fully supported the Guild not only with the grant but leadership and advice. Diane Williams is priceless. She escorted Robert and me to the Greater Jackson Arts Council where she introduced us. From there the rest is history. The 2011 Conference was off and running. The Arts Council not only provided the Guild with their facility for provided personnel to assist us including security.

On behalf of the Guild I want to thank the administrators and hardworking staff of these four agencies for going above and beyond the call of duty for the Guild. These folks never hesitated to make every effort to accommodate Vice President Robert Ray as we made several trips to Jackson in planning the Conference.

As the Conference was drawing to a close the last thing they said to us was, "See you next year.



Ralph Gordon
MWG President



Word Worth

June Davis Davidson

What is the potential worth of a few words? Spun creatively, they could be more valuable than you imagined. An often over-looked source of revenue for writers is the greeting card industry. Humor, sympathy, birthday, seasonal and get-well cards are among the most popular cards sold.

Breaking into this multi-million dollar market as a CREATIVE greeting card writer requires short prose penned eloquently or written with gut-bursting humor.

Humorous situations and word play are fodder for the greeting card writer. Captions are often used as a hook. But, captions can give the writer a prose idea that will lead to a sale too. The writer's voice is unobtrusive and does not interfere between the giver and receiver. They are me-to-you words.

What visual image does 'Take me, I'm yours,' conjure up? It's not the glamour doll you are thinking of. In fact, a hook should mislead the reader when writing humor captions.

Cover caption:

Take me, I'm yours!

Page 1

Ready, aim

Page 2

Fire!

What images do you envision for this caption and three words? My visual is an illustrated skunk that just launched its natural defense. Some might think of this as humorous while others might think it stinks. This pun, of course, is clearly intended. Although the author is not required to provide illustrations, the author is encouraged to provide an idea for an illustration with his or her prose. After all, you did write it with a visual image in mind, didn't you?

Essential tools needed are a thesaurus and 3x5 inch index cards, paper, envelopes and your creativity.

Study current market greeting card themes and pen words that sale.

Jot down the publisher name and address listed on the back of card.

Write to small greeting card companies and request submission guidelines.

Include more than one submission on typed paper. A single submission can be submitted on an index card. Enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope for the publishers reply.

Photographers and illustrators often submit their work to greeting card companies too. Put your creativity to work, and think greeting cards.



June Davis Davidson

News from MWG Natchez Chapter

Mark LaFrancis

Singer/songwriter Leah Faith of Alabama highlighted the program along with her Grammy-winning piano player Roger Ryan of Alabama. Other presenters were Sherry Johnson of Jackson and G. Mark LaFrancis, author of *Natchez*, board member of the Mississippi Writers Guild and president of the Natchez Area Chapter.

The “Never Forget Tour Honoring Fisher House” was created by Johnson and LaFrancis to thank, honor and praise military personnel and their families, as well as bring attention to the Fisher House Foundation, a private, non-profit foundation that provides free temporary lodging for families of active-duty military and veterans in need of medical care. A Fisher House is located at Keesler Air Force Base near the base hospital.

Johnson is co-producer of the “Never Forget” CD, created for the dedication of the USS New York in 2009. The CD includes songs from such notable performers as Charlie Daniels, Aaron Tippin, Tayna Tucker and Faith. She sang the CD song “Red White and Blue Night in Georgia” at the Keesler kickoff.

LaFrancis is the creator of the book series and speaking project “In Their Boots: Poems Inspired by Soldiers and Their Loved Ones.” LaFrancis is an Air Force retiree and was stationed at Keesler for two tours.

Approximately 150 members of “Team Keesler” -- enlisted and officers -- attended the kickoff.

“We created this tour for two major reasons: we believe the military personnel and their loved ones are not receiving the recognition and thanks they deserve, and we believe Fisher House is a fantastic organization,” said LaFrancis, who has been interviewing soldiers from Iraq and Afghanistan and their loved ones for the past five years.

Future stops are planned later this year and into 2012. Performers will accompany both Johnson and LaFrancis, who read from LaFrancis’ poem-story collection. Johnson and LaFrancis also are giving gifts to the military personnel including CDs, posters, pins and other items. Performers Aaron Tippin and Leah Faith have committed to a December tour to Virginia and Maryland.



Mark LaFrancis

Quotes About Writing:

If there’s a book you really want to read, but it hasn’t been written yet, then you must write it.

~Toni Morrison

I try to leave out the parts that people skip.

~Elmore Leonard

Fill your paper with the breathings of your heart.

~William Wordsworth

Don’t tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass.

~Anton Chekhov





Scribblers Gems

By June Davis Davidson

Text Document Reader

Are you tired of reading your article or manuscript out loud? If you are like me and prefer not to read orally, then a text to speech program could be just for you. When your words are read orally, you'll catch errors your eyes skim over.

Try Natural Reader, the free version works with Microsoft Office, Open Office, email and web pages. The paid version allows you to burn a CD of your spoken text.
www.naturalreader.com

Writing Aides

Tired of struggling with a synopsis or keeping your manuscript organized? Read about Ywriter free writing software at:
http://download.cnet.com/yWriter-5/3000-2079_4-77524.html?tag=mncol;1

Free word processors

Let's face it, Microsoft Office is expensive to buy, but did you know there are free alternative word processing programs that are just as good, if not better than Microsoft?

Open Office comes with a PDF converter, excel, power point, templates and a powerful word processor. Absolutely free with no strings attached.
<http://www.openoffice.org>

Another freeware word processing program is Libre Office Editor
<http://www.libreoffice.org/download>

Word Polish

Sometimes all it takes to polish our writing style is feedback. Polish My Writing catches passive voice, grammar errors, and misspelled words.
<http://www.polishmywriting.com>

Greeting Cards

Looking for a way to get your humorous anecdotes published? Put your creativity to work, think greeting cards.

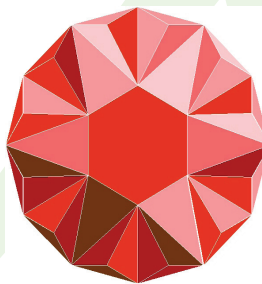
Help with rhymes?

www.rhymezone.com

Stay focused

Try Focus Booster, a time management application that breaks down your work into segments that will help you stay focused.
http://download.cnet.com/Focus-Booster/3000-2350_4-10971798.html?tag=mncol;1

NOTE: Links do not work in PDF, you must copy and past the url into your web browser.



Where Do the Commas Go?

Lydia Dell

Diving into the world of punctuation, specifically the proper use of commas may be something like asking me to help navigate the world of fashion. But surely if I can steer my way through formal wear for my son's wedding, I can break this down and tell you about a few simple rules about using commas correctly. Right? It sounds easier than it is. Think about it. Quick, tell me everything you know about using commas. Didn't take long at all, or did it?

I had a very free-thinking professor in college who taught us to forget about all these rules. According to him, commas were merely a pause, sentences were a longer pause, and paragraphs and chapters even longer. Use a comma to slow the reader down, he would say. It made perfect sense at the time and freed me in ways I had never thought possible. It wasn't until years later I realized that was his intention, to free us from all the rules and restrictions long enough to appreciate the fact we knew so much more than we thought.

I can sit here and tell you about the difference between the use of commas with independent clauses and dependent, or subordinate clauses, or to never separate the subject and verb with a comma, but even my eyes begin to glaze over as I type the words. I will, however, give you the one "always" rule you will find in every source on punctuation.

When independent clauses (basically sentences) are linked by conjunctions (words like but, and, so, or, for, yet, nor, or neither) the conjunctions are always preceded by a comma.

Commas can be as tricky as they are predictable. There are plenty of rules about commas, but for every rule (except for the one above) there is almost always at least one exception. When I really don't know whether to use a comma or not, I often think of my free-thinking professor and how right he was about using a comma to pause. If I am paying attention to what I am saying, I know when I want my reader to slow down, to pause before dashing through the rest of the sentence.

When I was working in the Writing Center of a small liberal arts college, I received a phone call from someone with an advertising agency. He was working on a new advertising campaign; the slogan was THINK MISSISSIPPI. His question was: "Do I need a comma?"

I had no idea, and certainly wasn't going to be responsible for the correct use of a comma on bumper stickers all over the state. Specific questions on grammar and punctuation were not a part of my daily routine, so I deferred to the English department where I got no solid answer. Eventually, I contacted a professor who had studied linguistics. His first question was: "What does he want to say? Does he want to tell people in Mississippi to think? Or does he want people to think about Mississippi?" I will let you decide which is which.

I don't know who it was that said, "When in doubt, leave it out," but I have also made that a personal rule, at very least until the final editing phase. The truth is, navigating the world of commas is crucial to our work. If we write, we need a good handbook on punctuation. They are available in every bookstore. I have even run across these priceless gems in a drugstore or two. I have a few, and skim through them now and again. I shouldn't be by now, but I am amazed that each time I open one of these books I learn something new. I don't know many things I can say that about, do you?

100 Thousand Poets for Change

Wynne Huddleston Alexander

The first Mississippi 100 Thousand Poets for Change event was held at Stonewall, Mississippi on Sept. 24, 2011. 100 TPC started as a face book event by Michael Rothenberg, editor of Big Bridge, a California zine. He invited Wynne H. Alexander to organize an event in Mississippi, who in turn asked MWG to have the program in conjunction with the Meridian/Lauderdale Chapter's monthly meeting, since it was scheduled for that day.

Carol Williams arranged an entire festival around our event--Christy's Annual Community Cultural Arts and Crafts sponsored by Christy's Fine Foods & Catering, LLC. Not only did our event mushroom, but 100 TPC became the biggest poetry event in the history of the world—over 700 Events in 400 cities in 95 countries... and MWG was a part of it!

To what kind of change were we referring? Anything that will improve the human condition as well as our planet and all living things on it:

Abuse—Drug and Alcohol abuse, Child Abuse, Spousal Abuse and Animal Abuse

Environmental Concerns—Pollution, Global Warming

Human Concerns—Hunger, Disease, Social Injustice

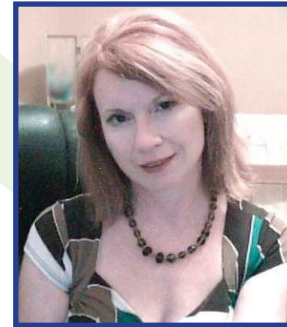
The Dream for World Peace while Supporting our Troop!

Wynne introduced 100 TPC and Ralph spoke about MWG. Wynne led us in a choral reading of her poem, Prayer of 100 Thousand Poets. Readers were Wynne Huddleston, Carol Williams, Ralph Gordon, Jill Alexander Carlberg, Richelle Putnam, Sheila Hutcherson, and Robert Ray. Music was provided by Dinah Rebecca Lachney and singer/songwriter group Mousai—Richelle Putnam, Sheila Hutcherson, Amy Lott, Joey

Ethridge and drummer. Terrence Roberts was on hand for Storytelling.

We are trying to make the event month-long next year, so more people can attend.

Hopefully there will be many 100 TPC events organized across the state.



Wynne Huddleston Alexander
MWG Secretary and 100 TPC Organizer

Jackson MWG Writing Workshop

Mark your calendars for Tuesday evening, October 25, 2011. At 6:00 p.m. we will be having a fantastic, highly interactive writing workshop at the dot.com building at Lemuria. I will be out of town for a few days, but when I return I will tell you all about it and the gracious presenters. For now, if you are looking for an excuse to spend an evening writing come join us. It doesn't cost a thing.

More details are coming!

LAST CALL

November ends the Writing Prompt contest.

The winning article will be published in the winter 2012 issue of the Scribbler.

A winner will be selected by a panel of MWG members. The article will be published in the next issue of the Scribbler.

Review writing prompts on page 5, of the Scribbler spring 2011 issue.

http://mississippiwritersguild.com/files/Scribbler_Volume_1_2011.pdf

Email submission to: Scribblernews@gmail.com

Defining Point of View (POV) in literature has always been a bit tricky, especially since Webster defines point of view as:

a position or perspective from which something is considered or evaluated.

And, of course, who can argue with Webster?

Literary POV, however, simply means “how” the story is told, not “who” is telling the story. Let’s say an argument happens between two friends and each tells you their side. In literary terms you’re hearing the stories from the same POV: first-person, but from two different “perspectives.”

Tricky? Yes.

EXAMPLES OF LITERARY POV:

First Person: The Narrator participates in the story, telling the story from his/her perspective. (“I”).

Second person: The reader (“You”) becomes an active participant in the story. This POV is rarely used because of its limitations and because most readers like to escape into someone else’s drama. Still, there are cases in which second person works.

Third Person: (“he,” “she,” and “they”) Includes narrators that:

- a. See into any of the characters (omniscient). This all-knowing POV can include “editorial” omniscience, which makes judgments about the characters and their actions. Or can be “impartial,” which doesn’t make judgments about the characters’ thoughts and actions.
- b. See into one major character (Selective omniscience)
- c. See into one minor character (Selective omniscience)
- d. Remains objective and doesn’t see into any of the characters (objective omniscience)

Writers can often get hung up between “literary point of view” and “Webster’s point of view,” thinking they’re one in the same. For instance, in a critique ses-

sion, if fellow critiquers say you changed POV midstream, unless you changed from third-person to first-person, or vice-versa, they really mean you changed “perspectives.” Third-person is third-person, whether the focus is on Helga or Swen. For instance, in a third-person POV book, if a new chapter begins inside another character’s mind in third-person, the POV is the same. The perspective has changed. Perspectives can change throughout a book with each character sharing what he or she is thinking, planning, and feeling. Only when authors switch from First Person (I) to Third Person (He, She, They) does the book’s POV change. Have I said that enough?

One novel that masterfully changes the novel’s POV is William Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury*, which consists of First Person and Third Person POVs. Best-selling author James Patterson also does this well.

In short, it’s not in “whose POV is the story written,” but in “what POV” is the story written.

What’s important is to keep your characters “perspectives” from crowding the same paragraph or chapter in your novel. Give each character space by separating each “perspective” with a new chapter or extra spaces and four asterisks.

Here’s a helpful suggestion. Imagine a big room. In the center are five chairs spread out into a wide circle, like what you’d imagine for a group session.

Imagine that room as your manuscript. The chairs represent different parts of your manuscript, either a new chapter or a section set off by four asterisks. One character is allowed to sit in each chair because, well, there’s only room enough for one. Now, during “group,” you, as the leader, must keep your characters on the issue at hand, which is the plot, allowing only one

character to share their “perspective” at a time. By doing this, your readers obtain necessary facts and information from several different characters without getting confused as to who is feeling what, when, where and how. And there is much more opportunity to end each chapter/section with a “hook.” But we’ll save that for another blog!

Point-of-view and perspective can be tricky, but knowing the “tricks of the trade” will keep you from falling victim to the trickster.

Well...that’s my point of view.



Richelle Putnam

Writing is an art that soothes the creative mind. The words are a powerful tool; we spin them into fairy tales and create aliens from other worlds. From the day of birth, words are used to teach and mold, they are the foundation of communication which man relies. They can convey love or cast a shadow of doubt. Words can give comfort and sympathy, or cause anger and distress. Words are a tool shared by the world, spoken in foreign tongues, we listen and translate then weight each for its worth.

Redpelt speaks: The lost kit

Budding Talent? You be the judge

I looked around the clearing for any signs of prey. I was in a hurry because I was freezing my fur off! Pretty soon, I was in luck; I spotted a plump rabbit not far from me. I crouched down and attacked. The rabbit didn’t even see me. The rabbit turned out to be really heavy. I dragged it to the camp. I put it on the fresh-kill pile. Then, Thunderstar padded up to me. “While you were out hunting, Leafpaw chased two Shadow-Clan apprentices out of our territory. She is going to be made a warrior tonight.” He mewed.

Cortney White, age 11

To Do List For Authors:

You are sitting there wondering what you can do to promote your book. You are frustrated because you do not know where to start. Below, you will find some great ideas to use in order to make sure that your book is noticed.

1. Have a book party. Send invitations to friends, local book store managers and employees, librarians, reviewers, and everyone that you want to know about your book. Ask your friends to help with “finger foods.”
2. Visit your library. Talk to your librarian about coming for storytelling/signings.
3. Find reviewers. People like to know that someone else, other than the author recommends a book.
4. Make sure to visit your local hospitals and ask them about putting your book in their gift shop.

Southern Expressions GCWA Author Conference

The Gulf Coast Writers Association presents the second annual Southern Expressions GCWA Authors Conference, October 14 – 16 on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Friday night opens with a big party at the IP casino in Biloxi. Our keynote speaker is the NY Times Oxford professor and bestselling author, Curtis Wilkie, whose most recent book “The Fall of the House of Zeus” is about Dickie Scruggs, a Mississippi Coastal lawyer who was once a kingpin of local politics, but currently serving time in federal prison for judicial bribery. Friday night’s party includes heavy hors d’oeuvres, musician, speech by the mayor, and the silent auction. It costs \$50 a person and provides an excellent opportunity to talk with the many facilitators and other authors attending the event.

Saturday is the big event, running from 8:30 through 5:10, with 6 one-hour time slots, each with 5 choices, held at the Mary C. O’Keefe Cultural Center, 1600 Government St. Ocean Springs. Fifteen facilitators include literary agents, publishing houses, editors, promoters, and authors from several genres, including storytelling, mystery, romance, youth fiction, graphic novels, inspirational, and poetry. Our luncheon keynote speaker is George Thatcher, an 85 year newspaper veteran with plenty of stories to tell! The Saturday conference costs \$150, with a \$15 discount for MWG members if mentioned at the time of enrollment. There’s also a \$50 discount for full-time college students under the age of 21, and a few full scholarships available. One-on-one fifteen minute private sessions are available with the facilitators but must be arranged in advance (\$25).

Sunday morning at the Biloxi IP is our “Meet the Author” brunch, a first for the Mississippi Coast. Over 2 dozen Mississippi published authors come together to sign books and talk about writing. Free admission and free food!

Sunday afternoon will be a storytellers workshop at the Walter Anderson art museum in Ocean Springs. Enrollment is limited to 20 and we have only five slots left. \$60.

This is an amazing opportunity for writers of any level of experience. Please check the website www.gcwriters.org/se11.html, or email or call the coordinator, Philip L. Levin writerpllevin@gmail.com (228)-596-7217 with any questions. Hope to see you there!

Write an ode to Duck tails and Pompadours
(male haircuts in the 1950s)

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http://mississippiwritersguild.com/files/Scribbler_Volume_1_20111.pdf

Email submission to: Scribblernews@gmail.com

The Power of Words

Do you spin your words skillfully?

Do you paint with words?

Do you show, not tell?

Visit the Mississippi Writers Guild website!
www.mississippiwritersguild.com