



the Broadside

Nebraska Writers Guild

An Official Writers Organization of Nebraska Since 1925

May 2008

Meet Me at the Fair!

The Nebraska State Fair will have its swansong venue at State Fair Park in Lincoln from August 22nd to September 1st, 2008. Sign up now to volunteer at the Nebraska Writers Guild State Fair Booth. This is a great opportunity to promote your writing and the Nebraska Writers Guild at the same time!

In return for just four hours in the State Fair booth you will receive reduced price tickets to the fair for that day (\$3.25), a chance to sell

your books (your books can only be sold while you are there) and you can spend the rest of the day at the fair.

Tables and chairs are provided. You just need to bring your books and promotional materials. We plan to have a "fair veteran" in the booth at all times, but need another person to help. We have 20 four-hour slots to fill.

In the past, parking passes have been available in limited numbers. We are checking on availability for this year. If they're available, they will be passed out on a first come, first served basis.

Contact Charlene Neely to volunteer to help at the State Fair booth. Email her at:

poetrygrandma@yahoo.com

A Word From the Editor...

Sometimes in the course of human events it becomes necessary to attend to personal life, even when you want really bad to meet deadlines. If I were getting paid to do this newsletter, I would certainly be fired by now, I think. All I can offer is an apology for being a little late...again.

I'd like to thank the committee who put together the Spring Conference at Mahoney State Park. What a wonderful and rewarding day it was! The speakers were all excellent and gave attendees helpful information about being successful in our writing endeavors.

Matt Mason was my first introduction to Slam Poetry. His delivery of it was so flamboyant that I had to buy one of his books right away. I'll never be able to deliver it the way he did, but, hey, I can give it a go anyway.

Cheryl St. John's presentation about Research with Historical Details, has absolutely validated me in being a packrat of old books, because they will, indeed help my writing style. (Heavy sigh from my husband!) Great day, Great company.

Keep the news coming! ...Delores (Dee) Feeken-Schmidt

Fall Conference in North Platte October 3-4

Mark your calendar now for the Nebraska Writer's Guild Fall Conference, which will be held in North Platte, NE October 3-4, 2008.

Planners are putting together a program that will make the Conference well worth the drive from the eastern part of the state. Plan now and carpool

Start planning now!

Details forthcoming.

THE TONY HILLERMAN CONFERENCE Report By Monty McCord

Tony Hillerman having long been one of my favorite authors, I was lucky enough to attend the Tony Hillerman Mystery Writers Conference in Albuquerque, NM, last November. The four day conference was sponsored by St. Martin's Press and WORDHARVEST, a writer's workshop organization established by Anne Hillerman (daughter) and Jean Schaumberg.

The four day conference was packed with workshops by **fifteen** great writers including, Margaret Coel (Father John O'Malley & attorney Vicky Holden on the Wind River Res), David Morrell (*First Blood* – Rambo), Bill O'Hanlon (workshop presenter and author of 28 books including *Write is a Verb* – Writers Digest Books), and KJ Erickson (Mars Bahr mystery series). The conference also featured an associate editor from St. Martin's and **four** agents for pitch sessions.

After I signed up, I received emails that kept me supplied with necessary conference information and **valuable** info on preparing for the agent pitch sessions. I can't praise them enough for the excellent pre-conference communications.

The first day I attended "Getting Published-A Bootcamp for Writers" with Bill O'Hanlon. During the main conference, attendees had to pick between two concurrent sessions. Luckily, I had only one or two tortuous decisions to make! There were programs during the luncheons as well, starting with author Steve Brewer interviewing Tony Hillerman. Unfortunately, Mr. Hillerman was having some health issues and had to cancel his other conference appearance.

Even though my crime novel was only 25% finished, and I knew that you're supposed to pitch an agent with a *finished* manuscript, I wanted to do it anyway for the experience. Your goal is to get the agent to ask to see a sample of your book. If he does...touchdown! You don't win the game but you make those extremely important first points to get it moving in the right direction. With the organizer's pre-instructions for pitch sessions, I felt fairly relaxed about it (no, not really).

I chose agent Mike Farris, of the Farris Literary Agency, of Dallas, Texas. Before the conference I did some homework. I went to each agent's website and learned everything I could about them. I'm *really* glad I did this because Mr. Farris just happened to have an excellent website with lots of good information, i.e. what he expects from potential clients and their pitches to his agency.

From the pitch experience I learned that an agent wants to hear about your book, but also wants to get to know you, the person. Are you passionate about your work? Can you speak well, i.e. promote your book? **and**, what is your platform: What is your background? Are you published? What education and experience do you draw from that makes you qualified to write this book? These are just some of my impressions from that pitch session. Oh, and by the way, Mr. Farris asked to see the first 50 pages of my book when it's finished (Yes, really). I just hope I can get it done before he forgets who I am!

Some of the sessions that were offered included: "Nine Elements of Successful Fiction", "Sink Holes in the Road to Publication", "Understanding the Modern Publishing World", "How to Write Dialogue Readers Love", "Writing the First Chapter" and "The ABCs of Writing Mysteries for Kids".

My favorite sessions were with Margaret Coel. Her tips on dialogue and her techniques to use when your manuscript is finished were extremely helpful. We all know that when we're finished, next comes re-writing, not just editing. It is said that writing *is* re-writing. She taught us her multi-leveled approach for this, which is starting with the big stuff, structure, plot, character development, etc., and working your way down to the spelling and grammar with a separate read-through for each level. You are bound to miss a lot of if you try to cover all of the areas at the same time.

As I've discovered in the past, the social times after hours provide another *very important* aspect of a writers conference (really!). What you can learn from other writers and the contacts made are invaluable.

Besides the usual book sale room and signing sessions with all of the authors, the annual \$1500 Tony Hillerman Mystery Short Story Award, sponsored by WORDHARVEST and Cowboys and Indians Magazine, was also presented.

The **big** one, the Tony Hillerman Prize for best first mystery novel, came with a \$10,000 advance and publishing contract with St. Martin's Press. Ohhh...if only...! CHECK OUT: www.wordharvest.com

A Call to Action ... Get Involved ... You Can Help!

Needed: NWG Treasurer

Someone who can use Excel spreadsheet, has access to a Wells Fargo bank and can attend Board meetings in late January, early May, early August, and early November. Please read the full job description on the website, "About Us" By-Laws, Section 5 and contact sallyjwalker@cox.net if you are interested in applying for the 1 1/2 year of the current term.

Needed: NWG Historian Someone who wants to help preserve the history of this organization by collecting materials of current NWG events and author activities, interacting with the Nebraska State Historical Society and the Heritage Room at the Bennett Martin in Lincoln and can attend Board meetings in late January, early May, early August, and early November.. Please read the full job description on the website, "About Us" By-Laws Section 5.

Contact sallyjwalker@cox.net if you are interested in applying for the 1 1/2 year of the current term.

JOIN the NWG Yahoo e-mail list! Are your 2008 dues paid? Have a writing question? Have a publishing question? Have a research question? Need to a writer's shoulder to cry on?

Contact sallyjwalker@cox.net

Submissions for the Broadside by Delores Feeken-Schmidt

After spending literally hours sifting through my mounds of email for articles intended for the Broadside, I have a few parameters I'd like to request for submissions to the Broadside and the Bulletin. They're not hard, but will help me enormously:

1. In the Subject line of your email, please indicate either "For the Broadside" or "For the Bulletin."

2. Remember "KISS" — Keep It Short Sweetie — in some cases I have requested more information for longer articles that would be of interest to members. In most cases, 250—300 words is the maximum.

3. If you are using Microsoft Works, I can't open it in Microsoft Word, so it's best to type your article into your email text box.

If you have sent me pictures and wonder why I haven't included them....well, I'm still working on that little talent. I want them to come out looking good, and I need to read up on the pixel issue. Anyone out there who knows about this topic will be my hero if you'll send me some practical hints!

Thanks for your help with this. Maybe I won't burn so many late candles!

Marilyn Coffey Honored at Orphan Train Event

Marilyn Coffey placed third in a writing contest at the 2008 Nebraska Orphan Train Celebration in Fremont May 3, 2008. Her subject: "Why I admire Teresa Martin, the orphan train rider who is the subject of my book, *Mail-Order Kid*. Her prize was a DVD "Ordinary Orphan Train Riders

Who Became Extraordinary Friends" by Charlotte Endorf. Charlotte, who sponsored the Celebration, chose my entry to reproduce and slip into everyone's registration packet. How neat to see it there!

Congrats Marilyn!!

The Rest of the Story

In the last Broadside issue Connie Crow told us about an Confluence Bookstore. I found this information:

www.confluencebookstore.com is the website, and they have a "contact us" link on the lower left side that offers this address: info@confluencebookstore.com. It appears to be a fairly user-friendly website.

The Importance of Place by Mara Giles

As a writer, it is difficult for me to describe an existing place I have never been to or seen. I can conduct interviews, read other people's descriptions, visit similar locations and museums, and of course use my own imagination. However, for me it is necessary to visit the place, to touch it, to smell it, to see it, to sense it in order to create a more vivid and tangible description of the physical geography, the societal aspects, and the cultural behaviors endemic to it.

I recently interviewed an 89-year-old woman for a human interest article. As a child in the 1930s she lived in a dug-out in what today is Indian Cave State Park. She told me that what she liked most about living there was the beauty of the landscape. Since then, it has changed from farmland to forest. In order to write about the impact these changes have had on her, I

needed to visit places that resemble the land when she was growing up, and to see the living history demonstrations from that time period that are held in the park. Then I could describe more fully how the geography, society, and culture have changed over time.

As a reader, I find that visiting the locations in a story or work opens up a whole new understanding of the reading for me. This is not always possible, financially or otherwise, but when I can go, it is wonderful. In college I had the opportunity to visit Walden's Pond after reading Thoreau. Sitting on the banks gave me an even richer appreciation for his work than I already had. Having visited Red Cloud and the landscape that influenced many of Cather's works, I have a much better understanding of *My Antonia* because I have seen and interacted with the place itself. Someday I may take the Joyce-themed walking tours of Dublin so that I can have a greater

comprehension of *Ulysses*. Each of these places has changed since the authors wrote about them, just as the landscape at Indian Cave State Park has. While visiting these locations today is more helpful than not at all, I would have a greater insight into the readings if I had been able to visit them at the time they were written.

I am glad to be making new friends in the Nebraska Writers Guild. Many of your writings are influenced by the cultures and geographies around you. When I visit the areas where you live, I will have a better understanding of who you are and the places that you are writing about *today*. I don't have to wait until those locations have changed into something else. I can see and experience them now, as you are writing about them, giving me a richer appreciation for your work. And who knows? Perhaps I will find that I have something to write about those places, too.

McCord Finds Link: Hastings And Capone

McCord's article *Al Capone & Hastings High School* was featured in the first issue of 2008 bi-monthly "Historical News" put out by the Adams County Historical Society's Through historical research Monty discovered an interesting tie between Capone and Hastings High. Monty is currently working on his first crime novel. The working title is "*Killing Caitlin*." He hopes it will be the first of a series. Monty says: "I outlined this book ten years ago and have had three non-fiction books published since. Over the last two years I've concentrated on it and am thrilled to report that I just recently finished the first draft (Yaahoo!!) and have started the re-write."

Try a Contest With a Foreign Flair...Mara Giles

Mara found an Irish based publisher that offers ongoing writing contests with cash prizes. Watch for the entry fees, which are posted in Euro Dollars.

Go to www.fishpublishing.com to enter this unique publisher's short story competitions. Some of their categories and genres:

The Fish-Knife Award: A short story competition, run in conjunction with the Crime writers' Association, for those of you who fancy tackling a juicy crime story.

Short Histories IV: A short story competition for stories with a historical theme and setting. This

competition is run in conjunction with the Historical Novel Society.

Criminally-Short Short Histories Award: This is a one-page competition (up to around 300 words) which is split into three sections, Crime Stories, History Stories and of course Historical Crime stories.

The Micro-Fiction Showcase features monthly competition which run through the summer months. Ireland based Fish Publishing also offers critique and editorial services. Go to their website for more information.

From the President...Sally J. Walker

My first six months of being President of this illustrious organization has been a thrill ride. I am indescribably proud of the members all over the state making things happen in the name of the written word. NWG is glowing and growing.

All five of the focal projects and their components I promised to work on when elected Oct 2007 have evolved into viable programs.

- 1) Making membership growth and retention a priority
 - Records have been brought up-to-date and reorganized
 - Officers have made 1:1 contact with as many members as possible
 - A New Member Packet has been created
 - A Membership Recruitment Committee is in place & working
 - Created merchandise as items of pride & advertising
- 2) Promoting communication between members
 - The Yahoo e-mail list working well
 - NE Writing Groups now listed on the new website
 - NWG members who belong to genre groups are sharing information
- 3) Promoting professional atmosphere of NWG
 - Announcements on-line of readings, releases & industry news
 - Redesigned BROADSIDE with reporter input
 - Active Publicity campaign through Board & Committee members
 - Involving Governor, Lt. Governor, other literary organizations
 - Planning with advertising & marketing people
 - Redesign & distribution of new NWG brochure
 - Redesign of information-intensive NWG website
 - Establishing & advertising NWG Speaker's Bureau
- 4) Restructuring the conferences for a more professional appeal
 - Chair persons in place through 2009
 - Planning speakers to advance professional interests of various disciplines
 - Continuing Friday social event & readings
 - Positive responses to afternoon hands-on workshops
 - Plans to invite acquiring editors and agents to 2009 events
- 5) Revision of the By-laws for Board accountability and Member rights

The books were audited by an outside accountant and pronounced fit. Our bookkeeping system was made user-friendly with categories appropriate to NWG. Elected Treasurer Jenn Thor's writing career, work schedule and family responsibilities made it necessary for her to resign after six months of her much-appreciated hard work and budget advice. So, the Board is in need of a TREASURER to step into a system that is neat, tidy and working well.

Since no one stepped up to fill the vacant HISTORIAN post, Secretary Connie Crow and I eased the way by sorting boxes of historical materials dating back to 1984, inventorying appropriate material and delivering it to the NE State Historical Society per their procedure. The only thing a volunteer HISTORIAN needs to do now is keep track of our organization from this point forward, honorable and comparatively easy work.

I look forward to hearing from any of you with suggestions or comments and I especially look forward to reading all your reports in the annual BULLETIN. Nebraska is a great place to be living and writing!

Check out the New Website: <http://www.nebraskawriters.org/>

Though parts of the NWG new website are still "Under Construction," go to <http://www.nebraskawriters.org/> and look over all the changes and information available. Check out the menu bar and drop-down menus! The new Webmaster is working hard to complete everything.

NOTE: The Members menu (Members by Name and Members by Residence) is one of the biggest projects that the officers need to complete. The names that are currently there are only a fraction of our membership, but gave Andrew a trial start. Member Bios to be sent to Sally for

editing to a consistent style. You may include jpg's of book covers that can also be uploaded to your Bio page. Members with Bios will have a direct link to their page from their name on the "Members by Name" list.

The Resources page is currently from the old website but will change to Resource a drop-down menu for searching by genre.

Check back periodically for updates and additions and SEND your bios for that FREE advertising! Be sure to visit our [Cafe Press](#) site where you can find official NWG-logo t-shirts, sweat shirts, mugs, mouse pads, and

more! The merchandise offered is awesome! What a great way to identify yourself as a member of the Guild and advertise at the same time!

Calling all Packrats

Do you collect snippets of "stuff" that might be documenting your life...but you don't know what to do with them? Stuff like stray ticket stubs, newspaper articles, inspirations you wrote down that wound up in the corner of the desk drawer? Sally Walker will have helpful information in the Bulletin to help you start organizing your "stuff!"

1637 Forest Avenue
Crete, NE 68333
Email: deefee@yahoo.com