

JUNE | JULY 2026

ISSUE 44

ARIZONA

AUTHORS DIGEST



ARIZONAAUTHORS.ORG

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Kathleen Cook

PRESIDENT
Arizona Authors Association



Things at the Arizona Authors Association have been very busy, and we are entering the last month of the Arizona Authors Literary Contest. If you haven't submitted your entry yet, you have until 11:59 p.m. on June 1. We could use more entries in the Oldie but Goldie (OBG) sections. If you wrote a book years ago and it never quite received the attention it deserved, consider entering it in one of the OBG categories: OBG Fiction, Nonfiction, or Youth. A win in the contest could breathe new life into that book.

I will send notices to all contestants in mid-September to let them know whether they made the finalist's list. As usual, we will announce the winners at the awards luncheon in November. Arizona Authors member Kebba Buckley Button is gathering information on a venue for that luncheon, and we'll share more details in the coming months.

We currently have 383 members! When I assumed the presidency in January 2024, my goal was to reach 400 members by the time my term ends in January 2028. It looks as though we will meet that goal much earlier.

Thank you all for being part of a growing, thriving, and vital literary organization. Without you, we could not achieve any of our objectives.

Another goal of mine is to offer workshops monthly rather than quarterly. In 2026, we are presenting Zoom workshops every month except May. Next year, we plan to offer them in all 12 months of the year. Our workshops have been getting a great response, with more than 50 members registering for some of the most popular sessions, such as Mike Rothmiller's *Publish It!* and Mark D. Walker's *Literary Journey*. If you remember our workshops from a few years ago, we struggled to get even six or seven people to attend, so this response is tremendously encouraging. Thank you all! While workshops will always be free to members, at least as long as I have anything to say about it, we may increase revenue by charging a small fee

to nonmembers. We are also considering other ways to raise revenue to keep membership dues at the same level they have been at for the past dozen years or so. The more workshops and events we offer, the more we need to earn to accomplish our goals. Although the vast majority of the association's work is still done on a volunteer basis, our volunteers are now working much harder than they once did, when we were a smaller group with fewer offerings.

As we grow, so does our workload. That is why we need to provide small payments to key staff members for services such as directing the contest, managing events, producing digests, and handling our growing paperwork and accounting. We intend to hold the line on membership fees, especially in this economy of rising prices, and look elsewhere for added revenue so we can provide more opportunities for our authors.

Please let me know if there is a festival, book fair, school event or other activity where we could host a table and promote our authors. We'd love to be visible throughout the state, with a presence in as many regions of Arizona as possible. Our events manager, Dan Dickinson is ready to go where no team has gone before. Send your suggestions to ArizonaAuthorsAssociation@gmail.com. I will bring them to the next board meeting. Thank you for all you do for us.

—Peace, Katy

*Kathleen Cook is the president of the Arizona Authors Association, as well as its web administrator and former editor. She retired from Brighter Stars Editing Service in 2017 and has since published numerous books. Her historical western set in 1880s Prescott, *The Sun Always Trumps*, features clerical sleuths known as the St. Francis Gang.*



LEADERSHIP



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KylePatton.AZ@outlook.com

All other inquiries should be sent to:

ArizonaAuthorsAssociation@gmail.com



The Arizona Authors Association, including its staff, neither endorses nor takes responsibility for the opinions expressed in this publication.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Arizona Authors Association membership comes with practical benefits for writers at every stage.

This **Digest** is your bimonthly guide to workshops, events, and activities—many free or low-cost—created to help you strengthen your craft. Our **blog** and **newsletter** also share advice, ideas and insights to support your growth as an author.

Our annual **Literary Contest** gives you a chance to showcase your work and compete for prizes that can raise your profile. Have an older title that deserves a second look? The **Oldie but Goldie category** helps you reintroduce it to new readers. Members can also connect with audiences through **in-person book fairs and online events on Zoom**.

Advertising through the Association is an easy, affordable way to promote your work and expand your visibility.

Use the Digest to share your accomplishments on our **Congratulations** page, where we celebrate member success and inspire fellow writers. We also welcome author-related updates, literary news, helpful tips, and useful resources. When members share what they know, the entire community benefits.

One of the strongest benefits of membership is the ability to **promote your book releases and services** directly to fellow members.

You may submit one free quarter-page ad for author-related services.

Books released within the past six months—or launching soon—are also eligible for one free full-page ad.

See the Arizona Authors Association membership application on the following page for more info.

ARIZONA AUTHORS DIGEST **SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

Submit by **July 1** for inclusion in the next issue.

Advertising

Advertisements are subject to editing, formatting and content. The publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement deemed inappropriate or inconsistent with organizational standards and policies.

New Releases

Members may promote one new book or short release published within the past six months at no cost. See the New Releases page for details.

Feature Articles

Articles should inform, inspire or help writers improve their craft or promotion. We recommend pitching ideas before submitting a draft. Include a headshot and 50-word bio. Length: 600–1,200 words.

Congratulations & Upcoming/Recent Events

Share book signings, workshops, sales or other literary events in Arizona or nearby. Include a 50–100-word summary. Photos and links are optional.

What Are You Reading?

Tell us in 200–300 words about a book you're reading and whether you'd recommend it. Please do not review your own work.

Quotes and Photos

Submit a writing- or publishing-related quote or joke in 100 words or less. We also welcome Arizona landscape photos. Include your name and the photo location.

Submission Guidelines

- Label your email subject line, e.g., “Book Release for August–September 2026.”
- Send text in the email body or as a Word document.
- Submit images as PNG or JPEG files at the highest resolution possible. Please submit only photos you have taken yourself and include photo credit.
- All submissions are subject to editing.

Send entries to: **KylePatton.AZ@outlook.com**





Application for Membership

Benefits of Membership

Literary Contest Awards Banquet Literary Magazine
Book Festivals Book Signings Facebook Page Critique Groups
Newsletter Speakers Workshops Website Page

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

HOME PHONE _____

CELL _____

EMAIL _____

WEBSITE _____

WOULD YOU LIKE TO VOLUNTEER? Yes ____ No ____ Maybe Later ____

We are in need of literary judges (during contest months), proofreaders, volunteers at events, etc.

Writers Published or Unpublished:

One year \$45
Two years \$80

Current Member's Spouse/Partner/Child or any person living in the same household:

One year \$25
Two years \$40

Pay with Check, PayPal, Credit Card or Debit Card at:

www.arizonaauthors.org/join to either join or renew your membership.

Or print this form and send it with your payment to:

**The Arizona Authors Association
Box 538
428 E. Thunderbird Rd.
Phoenix AZ 85022**

Arizona Authors' Association is a Non-profit 501c3 organization. Its mission: To foster literary achievement, advance the art of writing and serve the writers, authors, editors, publishers and allied professionals of Arizona and the nation.

WELCOME

NEW MEMBERS of the Arizona Authors Association



Dr. Sandra L. Abbey

Sandra is a leadership consultant, executive coach and author who blends decades of hands-on leadership experience with academic research. She lives in Cave Creek, Arizona, where she enjoys time in nature.

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Jennifer Griffiths

Jennifer is a retired RN, former Army National Guard medic and aspiring novelist who enjoys writing engaging, humorous stories that spark imagination and keep readers turning pages.



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Anna Dalhaimer Bartkowski

Anna is a writer, genealogist and history enthusiast who explores German-Russian ancestry and family heritage research. She enjoys sharing her passion for storytelling, reading and historical discovery through presentations and community events.



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Rennae Hanson

Rennae spent 35 years in accounting before publishing her first book in 2025. She enjoys writing, baking, gardening, antique hunting, traveling and spending time with family and dogs.



Dr. David J. Doperak

David is an Arizona author and biomechanics expert whose fiction and nonfiction explore movement, resilience and the human side of healthcare through clinical insight and storytelling.

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Tyler Kirk

Tyler is a novelist and lifelong storyteller whose debut book reflects his passion for compelling characters, vivid narratives and the transformative power of literature.



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Michele M. Feeney

Michele is an award-winning writer whose historical fiction explores family, resilience and the hidden stories of rural women across generations. She divides her time between Arizona and Michigan.



[LEARN MORE](#)



Al Krockey

Al is an Arizona memoir writer whose work explores coming-of-age experiences, music culture and entrepreneurship in late 1960s Chicago. After a career in insurance consulting, he returned to writing full time.

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NEW MEMBERS of the Arizona Authors Association



Sara Langh

Sara is a lifelong reader and writer whose work spans leadership, poetry, fantasy, romance and science fiction. She lives in Arizona, where she enjoys hiking, kayaking and baking fresh bread.

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Debora J. Quinn

Debora is a former teacher and lifelong reader who writes children's stories inspired by real events. She enjoys sharing her love of books, learning and creativity with young readers.

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Steve Linstrom

Steve is a novelist, short story writer and former English instructor whose work draws from a varied career in government, business and education. He continues writing and workshopping fiction in Minnesota.



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Jimi's Shadow

Jimi's Shadow is a Southwestern fiction writer and author of multiple short story collections and collaborations. His work blends imagination, humor and a lifelong passion for storytelling.

[LEARN MORE](#)



Maxwell Nyatsambo

Maxwell is a Zimbabwean-born entrepreneur, educator and writer focused on innovation, experiential learning and creative problem-solving. Now based in Arizona, he develops programs that encourage hands-on thinking and mentorship.

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Diane Wingerson

Diane is a children's author whose stories encourage confidence, courage and perseverance. Inspired by her grandson on the autism spectrum, she writes uplifting books for young readers.

[LEARN MORE](#)

John S. O'Connor II

John is a retired military officer, combat veteran and Arizona writer whose poetry, short stories and novels draw on a lifetime of travel, adventure and real-world experience.



[LEARN MORE](#)



[JOIN NOW](#)

FROM THE EDITOR

There is a special, lonely kind of dread reserved for writers, beyond rejection, bad reviews or having to backtrack through a draft and edit. Most of us have experienced it at least once. A computer crashes, a file gets overwritten, a laptop dies, a flash drive vanishes into the void. Years ago, while editing magazine content, I spent an entire day working through four feature stories. I kept telling myself I would send the files one by one, but instead I left them all sitting on my desktop overnight.

The next morning, I pressed the power button on my computer, and nothing happened. No startup screen. No whirring fan. Just silence, followed by me yelling a handful of colorful four-letter words.

Since then, I have saved compulsively, backed everything up and treated files like the untrustworthy things they are.

Here is the rule: If your work exists in only one place, it is living dangerously.

The good news is that you do not need to become an IT person to fix this. Just take a few steps.

- Keep your work in more than one location. Your computer should never be the lone keeper of your creative life.
- Use at least one additional backup, whether that is an external hard drive, flash drive or a cloud service such as Google Drive, Dropbox or OneDrive.
- Use both if you can. I encourage everyone to have an external drive, something physical you keep with you, and a cloud backup, even if it is just your email.

External drives are inexpensive. Once a week, you can drag your writing folder onto one and be done.

That single habit can save you a heartache. Cloud storage adds a safety net. Services like Dropbox, Google Drive and OneDrive can automatically sync files while you work, so if you spill coffee on your laptop, your draft still exists somewhere far away in a server room that'll likely outlast humanity.

Kyle Patton
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Arizona Authors Digest



The best part is that services like these offer a certain amount of free storage, and if you are primarily working in Word documents, the free space will probably be more than you ever need.

It also helps to organize your files like someone who expects to find them again. Create a main writing folder with clearly named subfolders like “Drafts,” “Research” or “Published,” or organize everything by project. The goal is simple: make your work easy to find later. And please stop naming files things like “Story_FINAL_final2_USETHISONE.”

Another smart habit is saving a new version before major edits. Future you may realize the paragraph you deleted at midnight was actually the best thing in the piece.

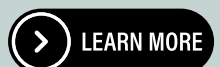
I know this all sounds paranoid until the day something fails. Then it sounds wise. Words are time. Losing five pages is not just losing five pages. It is losing the hours spent finding the rhythm of a sentence, solving a story problem or chasing down an idea before it evaporates. Some writing can be recreated, sure. But most cannot, at least not in quite the same way twice.

Hard drives fail. Files get corrupted. And you and I will eventually click the wrong thing while trying to rename a document at 1:14 a.m. None of this is rare.

So when you finish writing today, make another copy somewhere else. Do it now. Future you will feel unbearably smug about it one day.

Just in case you want some extra incentive, the first five AAA members who email me about a book they've recently read will receive a free 8GB flash drive.

Kyle Patton is an Arizona native and Phoenix-based editor, writer and journalist. He has worked for a variety of publications and is currently the Editor-in-Chief of the State Bar of Arizona's Arizona Attorney Magazine.



LITERARY TRIVIA

(answers on the back page)

1 What literary movement is most closely associated with writers like Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg?

- A. The Lost Generation
- B. The Bloomsbury Group
- C. The Harlem Renaissance
- D. The Beat Generation

2 What is a “bildungsroman?”

- A. A novel centered on political revolution
- B. A poem written in strict meter
- C. A collection of linked short stories
- D. A story focused on a character’s moral or psychological growth

3 What does the literary term “epistolary novel” mean?

- A. A novel written in poetic verse
- B. A story told through letters or documents
- C. A novel published after the author’s death
- D. A work by multiple narrators

4 In *The Lord of the Rings*, Aragorn is first introduced under the ranger name “Strider.” What name was he given as a child while being raised in Rivendell?

- A. Estel
- B. Elessar
- C. Thorongil
- D. Telcontar

Great stories don’t just happen.

They’re crafted—with intention, structure, and emotional resonance.

As a certified book coach and experienced freelance editor, I help writers like you shape the stories of your heart and bring them to life on the page. Whether you're stuck in the messy middle, unsure how to revise, or just getting started, I'll meet you where you are—with support, clarity, and craft guidance that moves your writing forward. Together, we'll untangle your plot, deepen your characters, and polish your prose—without losing your voice or your passion.

Your story matters. Let's bring it to life!



BookCoachingBySharon.com



Websites
Editing
Book
Formatting



Contact me for
Author Discounts

20+ yrs Web Development

Leslie Rager

<https://LeslieRagerAuthor.com>

The Authors Guide to Avoiding Pesky Pitfalls Zoom Workshop with Peter Bernhardt

Rescheduled:

Saturday June 20 10:00 AM on Zoom

To register for this workshop, click [HERE](#).

Have you ever slogged through the opening pages of a manuscript or novel laden with background and wondered what the story is about and when it will finally take off before you quit reading? The self-appointed pitfall detective, Peter Bernhardt, has spotted this malady in more manuscripts than he cares to recount. In this workshop, Peter will cover a plethora of pitfalls and help you avoid them.

Peter Bernhardt is a multiple award-winning author whose works appear in libraries and in the New York Metropolitan Opera House gift shop. His first novel, *The Stasi File*, won first place in the Arizona Authors Association Literary Contest. His second novel, *Kiss of the Shaman's Daughter*, won second place, and his third novel, *Red Romeo*, took first prize in 2023 as an Oldie But Goldie winner. All of his works can be found in both German and English editions.

<https://sedonauthor.com>

<https://www.arizonaauthors.org/members/peter-bernhardt>



Arizona Authors Association
The place where writers flourish.



www.arizonaauthors.org

E-mail:

arizonaauthorsassociation@gmail.com

UPCOMING EVENTS



June 2

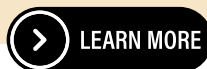
Karen Odden will launch her new novel, *An Artful Dodge (Soho Crime)*, at The Poisoned Pen Bookstore at 7 p.m. During the event, Odden and bookstore owner Barbara Peters will discuss Victorian London, an all-women thieving gang, jewel heists and what comes next for jewel thief Kit Jameson. In a starred review, *Publishers Weekly* called the novel “a brilliant historical mystery.” Preorders are available at **The Poisoned Pen**.

June 2

ATTN Northern AZ: Writers are invited to take part in **Critique Circle**, an ongoing workshop series that meets throughout the year to provide feedback and discussion on participants’ work. Upcoming submission and meeting dates are June 2 and June 6, June 16 and June 20, June 30 and July 4, July 14 and July 18, and July 28 and Aug. 1. All meetings begin at 1 p.m.

June 3

ATTN Northern AZ: Writers will have the opportunity to strengthen their openings in *Hook Your Reader* on the *First Page*, an online course focused on crafting compelling first pages for books, memoirs and short stories. Beginning June 3, participants will complete instructional videos and exercises, take part in two live Ask Me Anything sessions, anonymously workshop up to 300 words of writing with fellow participants and receive summarized peer feedback before a final group discussion on July 3. Registration is \$50 and due by June 15.



SUBMIT TO THIS SECTION

Send 50–100 words, a photo and a link (photo and link optional). You’re an author. Show off that authorship! Write a sharp, engaging summary, and you might see yourself featured in an upcoming issue.

Email: KylePatton.AZ@outlook.com

June 3–24

ATTN Northern AZ: Barbara Shovers will lead *Conscious Writing & Sharing*, a weekly workshop for both seasoned and beginning writers from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Through writing prompts and group discussion, participants will reflect, renew, share stories and enhance their creativity while learning how to offer constructive feedback. Attendees should bring a journal, notebook or laptop. **Click here to learn more.**

June 20

Edwin Hill will be the featured guest on **Donis Casey’s Tell Me Your Story** interview series. Hill is the Edgar and Agatha Award-nominated author of the standalone thrillers *What Happened Next*, *Who to Believe* and *The Secrets We Share*, as well as the Hester Thursby series, including *Little Comfort*, *The Missing Ones* and *Watch Her*. The online feature will be available beginning June 20 at doniscasey.com.



2026 EVENTS



Monthly: Historic Y Open Mic 3rd Sunday,
Downtown Tucson

January 4: Mixer with PEN America,
Phoenix

January 10: Annual Meeting of the
Members (Zoom)

January 17: Zoom Workshop: Write the
Memoir You're Afraid to Write with
Patricia L. Brooks

February 7: Green Valley Authors
Showcase Luncheon

February 21: Zoom Workshop: The Power
of the Pen: Why Reviews Matter
with Mark D. Walker

March 14-15: Tucson Festival of Books

March 28: Zoom Workshop: Arizona
Authors Literary Contest Judges

April 9-12: Northern Arizona Book Festival
(tentative) Flagstaff

April 18: Zoom Workshop: Flash Fiction
with Jane Ruby

May 16: Zoom Workshop: The Authors
Guide to Avoiding Pesky Pitfalls
with Peter Bernhardt

June 1: Arizona Authors Literary
Contest Closes

June 20: Zoom Workshop: The Authors
Guide to Avoiding Pesky Pitfalls
with Peter Bernhardt
(see flyer on pg. 11)

July: Payson Book Festival

July 25: Zoom Workshop - When Human
Destinies Get Mixed Up: Personal and
Historic German-American Stories for
Writers with AnnElise Makin
and Bernd Haber (see flyer on pg. 16)

August 15: Zoom Workshop: Letters to the
Editor with Former Arizona Republic
Opinions Editor Robert Leger
(see flyer on pg. 44)

September 12: Zoom Workshop: How to
Finish Your Book Faster and Enjoy the
Journey with Lorraine Haatiaa, Founder of
Prolific Writer's Life

October: ASU Desert Nights, Rising Stars
Conference and Book Fair

October: Desert Foothills Book Festival

October 24: Zoom Workshop: The Author's
Tactical Promotion with
Jeanne Burrows-Johnson

November: Arizona Authors Literary
Awards Event

November: Zoom Workshop: 7 Deadly Sins
of Writing Romance with Donna Hatch

November: Green Valley Holiday Book Fair

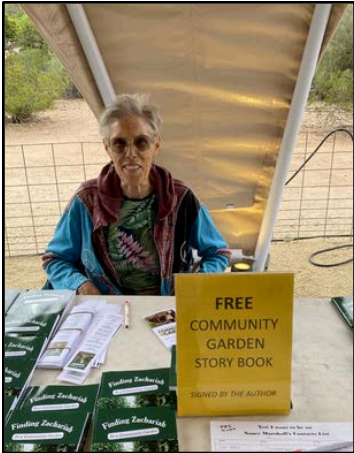
December: Mesa Holiday Book Festival

*Other events will occur as they arise, we will
keep you posted. We're always looking for
opportunities to serve our authors, so if you
have a suggestion, please write to us
at ArizonaAuthorsAssociation@gmail.com*

RECENT EVENTS



May



For the second year in a row, **Nancy Marshall** was invited to sign and distribute hundreds of free copies of *Finding Zachariah* during a fundraising event for Spaces of Opportunity at the Desert Botanical Garden. The books were purchased in advance by

the garden as part of the event supporting the community garden initiative, where Nancy volunteers.

May 20

Lori Duffy Foster was the May guest on **Donis Casey's** *Tell Me Your Story* interview series. Foster, a former crime reporter, is the author of *Spring Melt*, set in New York's Adirondack Mountains. Her novels have won the International Impact Book Award and have been nominated for Agatha, Silver Falchion and Shamus awards. Learn more at doniscasey.com.

SUBMIT TO THIS SECTION

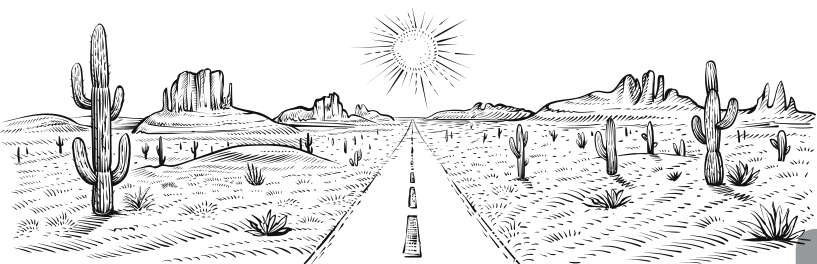
Send 50–100 words, a photo and a link (photo and link optional). You're an author. Show off that authorship! Write a sharp, engaging summary, and you might see yourself featured in an upcoming issue.

Email: KylePatton.AZ@outlook.com



A boutique publisher of English language fiction from around the world.

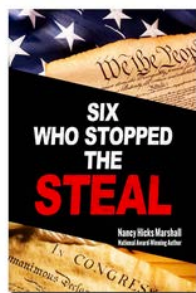
A traditional publisher: No cost. Read the submission guidelines at www.CactusRainPublishing.com



CONGRATULATIONS

Irma Hersel's bilingual children's book *Where Chocolate Grows* was recently accepted into the Mesa Public Library system in Arizona. The story blends cultural exploration, Spanish vocabulary, and interactive learning for young readers. Hersel continues to engage families and educators through community events and library showcases. View the book in the **Mesa Public Library catalog**.

Rita Hanner-Ward, writing as Kiva Wolfe, recently announced the release of the large print editions of *Red Flash* and *Tears of Iemanjá*, the first two books in the Gem Provenance Legacy series. Set in the world of the international gem trade, the novels blend romantic suspense, danger, intrigue, and precious gems. Published by IngramSpark, the new editions feature larger type, increased line spacing, and updated layouts designed to improve accessibility and readability. Learn more at ritahanner-ward.com.

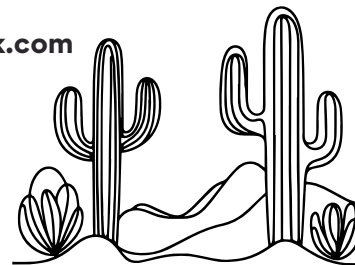


Nancy Marshall's *Six Who Stopped the Steal* was recently featured in an interview with Don McCauley on The Authors Show. The discussion explores the book and Marshall's work with listeners of the long-running author interview program. Archived interviews and additional information are available at **The Authors Show**.

SUBMIT TO THIS SECTION

Send 50–100 words, a photo and a link (photo and link optional). You're an author. Show off that authorship! Write a sharp, engaging summary, and you might see yourself featured in an upcoming issue.

Email: KylePatton.AZ@outlook.com



Susanne Severeid's essays "Siri" and "The Simple Things" were recently published in *The Ashland Chronicle*. Both pieces draw from Severeid's life on a rural Oregon farm, blending humor, reflection, and everyday observations. Her award-winning fiction and nonfiction have appeared in newspapers and online journals, and her published books include a murder mystery, children's books, and the essay collection *Mocha Musings: Reflections on Life, Love, and Chance Encounters*. Read the essays at **The Ashland Chronicle: "Siri"** and **The Ashland Chronicle: "The Simple Things"**.

Susanne Severeid's essay "Death of a Horse" was also recently published in *The Journal of Wild Culture*. The piece reflects on the death of a rescued racehorse on the Oregon farm where Severeid lives. Read the essay at **The Journal of Wild Culture: "Death of a Horse"**.



Saturday, July 25 10:00 AM MST

To register for this FREE ZOOM workshop, click [HERE](#).

WHEN HUMAN DESTINIES GET MIXED UP

Personal & Historic German-American Stories

What if your *CONSCIENCE* pushes you
on to the wrong side of history?

AnnElise Makin

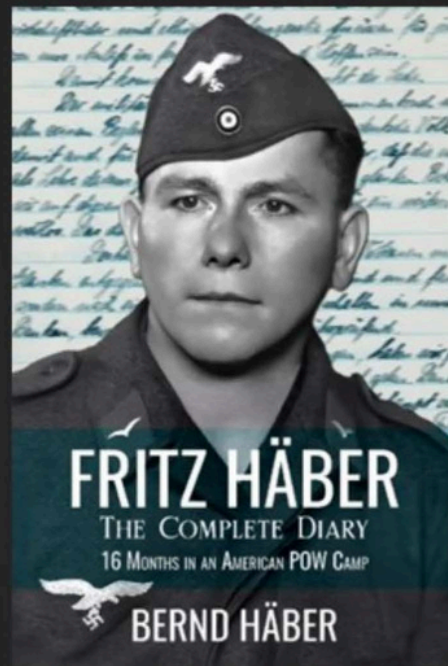
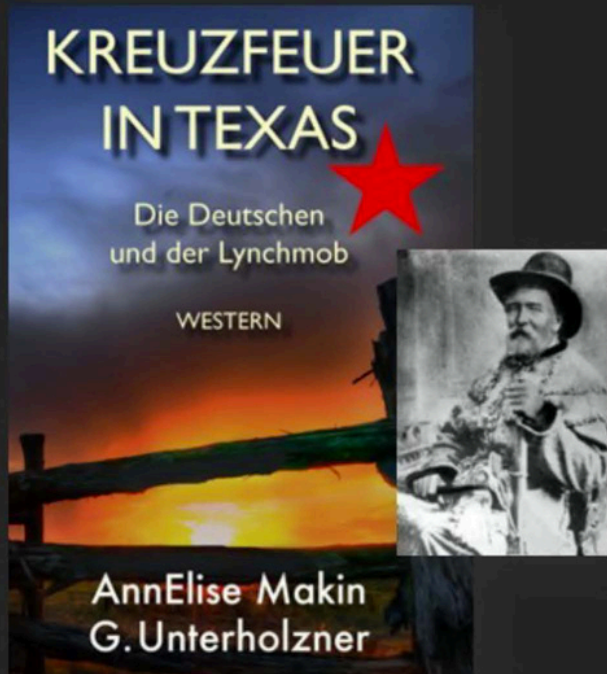


1861 – 1865
TEXAS Civil War
1941 – 1946
GERMANY World War II

Bernd Häber



Join **AnnElise & Bernd** on **July 25** at the **AAA Writer's Workshop**. Learn how to resource and gather key information from documents, archives, and personal narratives. For **history writers** and **creative fiction & nonfiction authors**. History is a sleuthing and rewarding adventure!



I'M NOT THE AUTHOR ... I ONLY WROTE THE BOOK

By Dan Baldwin

PART II OF V A GHOSTWRITING SERIES



[Editor's Note: We are pleased to present the second installment of a five-part series by Dan Baldwin on the craft and business of ghostwriting. In Part III, Dan will outline five key issues that both the author and ghostwriter should address and agree upon before beginning a project. Look for Part III in the August–September 2026 issue.]

WHY DO PEOPLE WRITE BOOKS?

Another way of putting that is: What motivations can I use to close the sale with someone thinking about hiring me to ghostwrite a project?

Every author has his or her reasons for wanting to write a book, but a few dominate the field.

Money leads the list. I've been hired to ghostwrite books by clients who were already counting their advance and royalties, expecting lines around the

block for their book signings, and preparing their National Book Award acceptance speech. It can happen, but I feel honor-bound to tell my clients up front that eight out of ten books fail in the marketplace and that most books never earn back their paltry advance. In my experience, those hard and unpleasant facts have never discouraged a client from continuing to follow his literary dream.

The key to closing a ghostwriting agreement is to discover the real motivation behind the author's drive to produce a book. For example, I had an author who wanted fame and fortune, or so he said. After much polite inquiry, I learned that the real reason for getting his name on the cover of a book was to impress his friends from back in his high school days. A lot of that motivation was his desire to say "Nyah! Nyah!" to certain members of his class who had mocked him back in the day.

Once I discovered that key fact, appealing to that desire helped me close the deal. I bet he loved the next high school reunion.

WHAT, THEN, ARE OTHER KEY MOTIVATIONS?

Improve business. In the mind of the public, the author of a book is automatically considered an expert in whatever field he writes about. That's human nature. "He's gotta know what he's talking about, Marge. He wrote a book, for heaven's sake!" And it's true. I've expressed that thought to many prospective clients. "Once your name is on a book cover, mister person considering hiring me to ghostwrite your how-to book on techniques for underwater soybean growth in zero gravity, you will find an amazing number of formerly closed doors open to you and to your presentation."

That's a fact. A client hired me to ghostwrite a book on his techniques for raising capital in high-dollar real estate transactions. My client dealt with multi-million dollar resorts, golf courses, housing developments, and so on. He had been trying unsuccessfully for years to meet with an investor who specialized in those very large, high-dollar projects. He sent the man a signed copy of his book and received a call and an invitation to meet almost immediately. As a legitimate author, you're automatically ahead of the competition. As my client told me later, "Dan, this book is the best business card I've ever had."

Ego. I can't vouch for the statistics, but I have often heard and read during the past decade or so that only about two percent of all the people in a given profession write books about their experiences, their work, or their thoughts on the industry. That puts the author (name on the cover) in a pretty exclusive club.

That statistic is a valuable tool for the writer (name on the check). I have often used visualization to close the deal. "Imagine walking into a bookstore or scrolling through an online store and seeing your book, with your name on the cover, prominently featured. See that, Mr. Prospect, and imagine the look on the faces of your friends and family ... and competitors ... when they see your book." That image is hard to beat because it plays right into one of the key factors motivating all human beings—ego.

Leave a legacy. Today, books last forever. Unlike paper, which can hold up pretty well but ultimately

turns to dust, the Internet never wears out.

An author's words of wisdom will guide and inspire others long after you, and he has shuffled off the mortal coil and joined the choir eternal. Sometimes the legacy is directed to a wide audience, such as the international business community. Sometimes the audience can be quite small. "My descendants, who will never meet me, will know who I am." People have an enormous need to leave an "I was here" message, and a ghostwriter can be the key element in getting that done.



Rant. Getting it (whatever it may be) off your chest is a legitimate reason to write a book. Haven't you ever wanted to rant and rave about something? Who hasn't? If the personal need and drive are there, hiring a ghostwriter to do the ranting is perfectly acceptable. I worked with a very prominent business leader who was sick and tired of the sick and tiring ways certain professional athletes behaved off the field, court, or diamond.

He had a serious need to rant. "Cut loose, Dan. Don't hold anything back," he said.

That, my friends, was a fun book to write! (He did use a pseudonym. He was, after all, still a businessman.) I believe his book was a form of therapy. It certainly got a lot of bile out of his system.

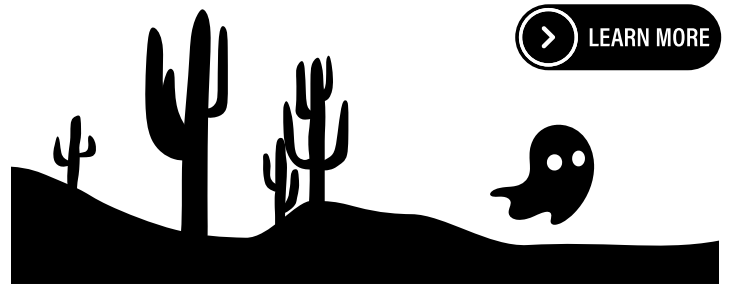
Teach what you know. People are incredible storehouses of information and experiences that others will find valuable. You find them in all walks of life. As I note in my blog, *Writing Tip of the Day*, I have made every literary mistake in the book—I share my mistakes so my readers can avoid making them. Other people feel the same way. I have written books for multimillionaire developers, internationally known motivational leaders, physical fitness gurus, a Playboy bunny, a high-school softball hero, victims of hate crimes, doctors, lawyers, and ... I'm still looking for that Indian chief. Teaching is an honorable profession. Ghostwriting for that teacher is profitable.

THE BOTTOM LINE

People have different motivations for wanting to see their names on a book. When you discover the real reason, you are not only on your way to closing the agreement to ghostwrite that book, but you are also on your way to writing a better book.



Dan Baldwin is an author, ghostwriter, multi-genre novelist, and published paranormal investigator. His work has earned multiple awards, including Best Book Awards, National Indie Excellence, Book Excellence, the New Mexico-Arizona Book Awards, a national Telly, Addy, and honors from major film festivals and advertising networks. His public-awareness campaign for the Louisiana Office of Alcohol and Drug Abuse was cited as a national model. He lectures on writing, paranormal investigations and the JFK assassination. Learn more at DanBaldwin.com.



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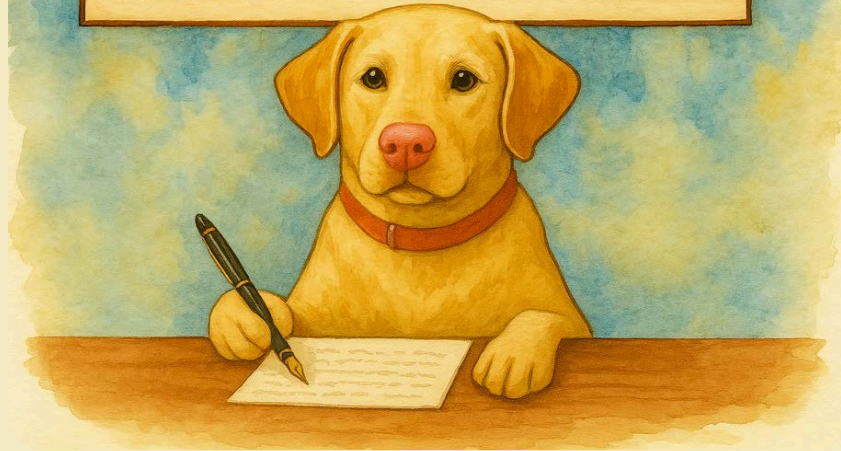
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LARRY'S CORNER



MY MOM IS A WITCH

By Larry Renner

Edited by Barbara Renner (Mom)

Did the title grab your attention? If I could read, I'd want a story that grabs my attention in the first sentence or paragraph. This is called a hook, and I don't mean the kind found in the garage that suspiciously smells like fish. A hook is something that makes my ears perk up, like when I hear the word "treat," and makes me want to keep reading . . . or eating.

A startling statement like "My mom is a witch" might introduce a story about how Mom cast a wicked spell on an unsuspecting dog like me, causing me to chase my tail endlessly. That would make me quite dizzy and want to retch. You know—that special sound dogs make when their tummies are upset. Wouldn't that be a great attention grabber, especially in the middle of the night? I could write stories about all the ways humans fly out of bed to usher their sick dog outside. In reality, "My mom is a witch" could be the hook for a story about a different kind of witch. My mom is

a kitchen witch who concocts savory stews, peanut butter popsicles, and tantalizing turkey loaves to share with her best friend: the dog. (Maybe alliteration will be the topic of my next article.)

Sometimes a hook asks a question: "Have you ever wondered why I bark at absolutely nothing ... or am I the only one who knows what's really out there?" This could lead to a mystery about who—or what—is living in the shed at the far corner of the yard. Maybe it's a roof rat, a sneaky squirrel, or possibly the reincarnation of the bone I buried in the flower garden last month. What is casting that mysterious shadow in the



outbuilding window?

The action hook is an effective way to grab the reader's attention. "I launched myself off the couch, skidded across the tile, and intercepted the falling sandwich before it hit the floor." Was that heroism? Training? Instinct? Maybe it was a little bit of all

three, but what matters most is that I was there when it counted, preventing the waste of a perfectly good piece of chicken. My continued action-packed story could describe how I saved the pansies by chasing rabbits out of our yard and helped the environment by recycling empty cardboard boxes.

Remember, a story without a hook is like a walk without a leash—directionless, scattered, and likely to end with someone yelling.



Larry and his Mom, **Barbara Renner**, are the authors of the award-winning coffee table book *Larry's Words of Wisdom* and the world-famous *Larry's Words of Wisdom* desk calendar. Larry has continued his writing career by publishing monthly articles in the *Neighbors of Sun City West* magazine.

[> LEARN MORE](#)

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ON THE LITERARY TRACK AGAIN

By Jeanne Burrows-Johnson

All aboard for book fairs, literary festivals and rail journeys that can help authors expand their readership and professional reach.



Whether you have written one book or many, book fairs are an excellent way to introduce yourself and your work to current and potential readers. Art shows and holiday events can also provide valuable opportunities to present and sell your books.

In Arizona, authors are fortunate to have access to many literary organizations. These groups often offer distinctive events that help writers strengthen their craft, improve their speaking skills and expand their connection with the public.

VARIATIONS IN TRAVEL

In earlier articles about author travel, I did not cover the differences among local, regional, national, and

international literary events. Those differences matter. Nearby events are usually easier and cheaper to attend. Arizona, for example, hosts spring book fairs, while some events wait until after the worst summer heat.

The holiday season can also combine literary travel with family visits. Even so, longer trips can still be worthwhile and sometimes profitable, depending on transportation, lodging, and meal costs.

Traveling with a companion, whether or not that person is a creative professional, may require adjustments, but it can also cut costs. Sharing a car or van can be a practical way to reach out-of-town events. Though it may seem old-fashioned, train

travel can also be a good option, depending on your starting point and destination.

Living in Tucson, for example, can make rail routes difficult. Wherever you live, it is wise to compare routes, airfares, car rentals, hotels, motels, and bed-and-breakfast rates before you plan.

THE RAILWAY OPTION

Before picturing cramped train seating, remember that many rail systems offer coach, business, and sleeping accommodations. If you plan to travel with another author or friend—no, not by bicycle—look into the sleeping compartments available on your chosen railway.

Many travelers still hope for broader U.S. passenger rail service, but several systems already operate nationwide, from commuter lines to Amtrak, the only U.S. intercity rail provider. In North America, Amtrak and Canada's VIA Rail are generally the only major services that consistently offer sleeping cars.

Depending on the route and equipment, Amtrak offers roomettes, private rooms, and deluxe suites, though standard seating may still suit some travelers. Beyond North America, travelers may think of rail journeys like the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express from Paris to Venice, though it is far from a budget option for authors attending international events. Railway service continues to evolve in Great Britain; Great British Railways is expected to oversee infrastructure and operations by 2027. It will be worth watching how that affects sleeper service for literary travelers.

Although U.S. literacy rates have not risen as much as many would like, book fairs, festivals, and other literary events have grown significantly in recent years, as the Tucson Festival of Books shows. Even if you are not exhibiting, these events can connect you with authors, agents, publishers, and book clubs beyond your region. If you travel with someone else, remember that sleeper rail routes may exist in places you have not considered. Traveling alone or with a friend, train travel can sometimes lower hotel costs and let you enjoy multiple events along the way.

BOOK FAIRS, FESTIVALS AND MORE

The literary events listed here appear substantial and worth considering, but you should also research

others that fit your personal or professional interests, including children's fairs, holiday festivals, and art shows open to authors. Dates, locations, and schedules may change. Some events, such as the Saskatchewan Festival of Words, also offer online coverage. I would have liked to include more events in Africa and the Middle East, but travel advisories remain in place for some countries and regions, so security should factor into international planning.

Even if you cannot attend as an author, the United States' 250th anniversary may make this an especially appealing year to visit a major literary event. International travel may not be practical for everyone, but I have included several interesting events abroad. Many of the strongest options take place in winter or early spring. Also note that some festivals emphasize regional or national languages; in bilingual Canada, for example, French often receives special attention. For more information, use the event titles to find fuller details.



RAILWAYS ACROSS THE WORLD

We are back where we began: author travel by train. Most countries offer a range of rail services, and when in doubt, you can usually learn more through a nation's transportation department website, often in translation.

As I researched long-distance options, I was reminded again that U.S. passenger rail service often compares poorly with what is available elsewhere.

As usual, my research turned up a few surprises, though I have omitted some because many literary events occur early in the year, when travel to or within certain countries is less relevant here. Timing may also be shaped by New Year, Lunar New Year, and other seasonal or cultural holidays. Weather matters too, since extreme heat or cold can deter both local attendees and international visitors.

AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

I have a friend who travels periodically from the Middle East to Africa and enjoys those journeys immensely. Perhaps someday book festivals in those regions will become more practical destinations for visitors traveling from the deserts of the Southwestern United States.

- **South Africa.** Travelers are generally advised to avoid underground trains in larger cities. Metrorail offers affordable commuter service, while the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa oversees most passenger rail and bus service. The Blue Train provides luxury travel with sleepers, meals, and beverages.

And river travel? Perhaps that is a topic for another day, especially if book fairs await along the way.

ASIA

- **China.** Open to private berths on regular trains and high-speed overnight trains.
- **India.** Varied levels of overnight service to the luxurious Maharajas Express.
- **Japan.** Now privatized, Japan Railways Group offers limited sleeper service.
- **Malaysia & Singapore.** Eastern & Oriental Express offers air-conditioned cabins with bathrooms.
- **Thailand.** Sleepers range from curtained bunks to private, lockable cabins.
- **Vietnam.** Vietnam Railways has some sleeper services. The Vietage is luxurious.

EUROPE

Most European countries offer a variety of rail services. A Eurail Pass can be one of the easiest and most economical ways to travel through 33 countries, often with sleeper options for one or two authors. But deeper research would have delayed this article for our wonderful editor.

- **Spain.** Most service is provided by Renfe, a state-owned company.

TIPS FOR YOUR JOURNEY

These suggestions may help before your trip—or even after it. Unexpected problems can arise even close to home. Carry your driver's license, proof of insurance, and any identification you may need if you must rent a vehicle. Because laws vary by state and

country, you may also want documentation for medical conditions or prescribed medications.

If you are traveling with someone, discuss these possibilities in advance—along with your favorite snacks.

When traveling abroad, make sure your passport is current. If you are flying, confirm that your TSA PreCheck information is up to date as well. Review country-specific safety alerts through the U.S. State Department and consider enrolling in STEP, the free Smart Traveler Enrollment Program, for updates on risks before departure. Even if you're attending rather than presenting, you never know whom you'll meet, so maintain a professional appearance. Wear clothing or accessories that suggest your genre. I often wear a colorful Asian jacket and a badge identifying me as an author.

Carrying many books can be awkward. Business cards, bookmarks, colorful half-sheet fliers, and sample audiobooks or recordings are easier to carry and share.

If you staff a booth at multiple events, you may run short of materials. In cities large enough for book festivals, print shops can usually handle last-minute needs. Specialty cards or tassel bookmarks may be harder to replace, but fliers are easy to print.

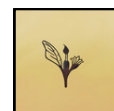
I've recently considered adding QR codes to bookmarks or business cards.

Best wishes for pleasant travels. I hope some of these ideas are useful, though there is much more that could be said on the topic.



Jeanne Burrows-Johnson writes works of fiction and nonfiction. She is the author of an award-winning mystery series. Drawing on her interdisciplinary experience in the performing arts, education, and marketing, her authored and co-authored articles have appeared in literary, professional, and general readership publications.

Check out her new website and blog at **JeanneBurrows-JohnsonImaginations.com**.



UPCOMING LITERARY EVENTS IN THE U.S.

[**Editor's note:** This list of literary events across the United States was kindly researched and compiled by Jeanne Burrows-Johnson. Each **bolded** entry also includes a link for readers who would like to learn more about the event. Due to space constraints, we were only able to include U.S.-based events in this issue. We will feature the international list in a future issue. Please note that event dates, particularly for events scheduled months in advance, are subject to change, so readers are encouraged to verify details directly with organizers.]

- Monthly **Monthly Book Fest** Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, Washington D. C.
- Jun 3–6 **Reader & Author Get Together** Cincinnati, Ohio
Jun 5–6 **Imaginarium Book Festival** Washington, District of Columbia
Jun 5–7 **The Big Ohio Book Con** Medina, Ohio
Jun 6–7 **LitLit: The Little Literary Fair** Los Angeles, California
Jun 11–13 **Wild Deadwood Reads** Deadwood, South Dakota
Jun 11–14 **Nantucket Book Festival** Nantucket, Massachusetts
Jun 20 **Blk Ink Book Festival** New Orleans, Louisiana
- Jul 11 **Bookfest PA** State College, Pennsylvania
Jul 11–12 **Columbus Book Festival** Columbus, Ohio
Jul 19 **Detroit Bookfest** Detroit, Michigan
Jul 24–25 **RomantiConn** Trumbull, Connecticut
- Aug 1 **Black Authors Festival** Sag Harbor, New York
Aug 8 **Book Fair at Bel Air** Bel Air, Maryland
Aug 8 **Mid-Ohio Indie Author Book Expo** Grove City, Ohio
Aug 11 **Southeast Iowa Art and Book Fair** Fairfield, Iowa
Aug 15–19 **Harrisburg Book Festival** Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
Aug 22 **Library of Congress National Book Festival** Washington Convention Center, Washington D.C.
Aug 22 **KPBS San Diego Book Festival** San Diego, California
Aug 29 **The Harlem Book Fair** New York, New York
- Sep 5–6 **The Akron Authors Con** Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio
Sep 6 **National Book Festival** District of Columbia
Sep 12 **Beyond the Book Festival** Starke County, Indiana
Sep 13 **Printer's Row Lit Fest** Chicago, Illinois
Sep 13–14 **Baltimore Book Festival** Baltimore, Maryland
Sep 25–27 **Harbor Springs Festival of the Book** Harbor Springs, Michigan
Sep 25–27 **History Book Festival** Lewes, Delaware
Sep 26 **Jackson Hole Book Festival** Jackson, Wyoming
Sep 26 **Mississippi Book Festival** Jackson, Mississippi
Sep 27 **Brooklyn Book Festival** Brooklyn, New York

- Oct 2 **Southern New Mexico Book Festival** Las Cruces, New Mexico
- Oct 2-3 **Decatur Book Festival** Decatur, Georgia
- Oct 2-3 **New Hampshire Book Festival** Concord, New Hampshire
- Oct 2-4 **Saratoga Book Festival** Saratoga Springs, New York
- Oct 3 **Collingswood Book Festival** Collingswood, New Jersey
- Oct 3 **Fredericksburg Independent Book Festival** Fredericksburg, Virginia
- Oct 6-10 **Fall for the Book Festival** Fairfax, Virginia
- Oct 9-10 **Morristown Festival of Books** Morristown, New Jersey
- Oct 9-10 **Tahoe Literary Festival** Tahoe City, California
- Oct 10 **Ohio Author Festival** Cambridge, Ohio
- Oct 12-18 **Easton Book Festival** Easton, Pennsylvania
- Oct 15-18 **Wisconsin Book Festival** Madison, Wisconsin
- Oct 15-18 **Wisconsin Book Festival** Madison, Wisconsin
- Oct 16-18 **Brattleboro Literary Festival** Brattleboro, Vermont
- Oct 17 **Desert Foothills Book Festival** Scottsdale, Arizona
- Oct 17 **Las Vegas Book Festival** Las Vegas, Nevada
- Oct 17-18 **Southern Festival of Books** Nashville, Tennessee
- Oct 19-25 **Iowa City Book Festival** Iowa City, Iowa
- Oct 22-24 **National Black Book Festival** Houston, Texas
- Oct 24 **Louisville Book Festival** Louisville, Kentucky
- Oct 24 **West Virginia Book Festival** Charleston, West Virginia
- Oct 24-25 **Fright Reads Book Festival** West Friendship, Maryland
- Oct 31 **Louisiana Book Festival** Baton Rouge, Louisiana
-
- Nov 6-15 **Charleston Literary Festival** Charleston, South Carolina
- Nov 7 **Buckeye Book Fair** Wooster, Ohio
- Nov 7 **Portland Book Festival** Portland, Oregon
- Nov 7 **Twin Cities Book Festival** Falcon Heights, Minnesota
- Nov 10-13 **Author Nation** Las Vegas, Nevada
- Nov 12-18 **Yall fest Book Festival** Charleston, South Carolina
- Nov 14 **Books by the Banks** Cincinnati, Ohio
- Nov 14-15 **Texas Book Festival** Austin, Texas
- Nov 15 **New York Jewish Book Festival** Battery Park, New York
- Nov 15-22 **Miami Book Fair** (Street Fair, Nov 20-22) Miami, Florida
-
- Dec 5 **Holiday Book Festival and closeout sale** White House Historical Assoc., Washington D. C.
- Dec 5-6 **Mesa Book Festival** Mesa, Arizona
- Dec 7 **Readers of the Valley Holiday Bookish Market** Glendale, Arizona



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- 6th FINAL Payment Due: SEPT. 15

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— V. Dennison-Murray

"This experience was so powerful. I learned so much about myself and what I need to work through. To get away was an incredible chance to just be."

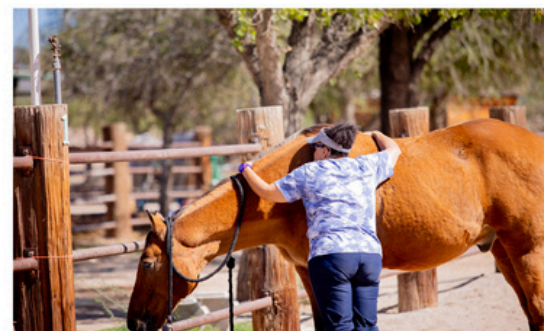
— MW

"Kim has curated an amazing experience full of activities that are supportive of introspection and self-discovery. I am so grateful for this chance."

— MZA



"The genuine kindness, compassion, and shared understanding reminded me that even through our diversity, we are more alike than we are different." — SK



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ADD YOUR BOOKS to the August-September issue of the Arizona Authors Digest no later than **July 1, 2026**

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29-43

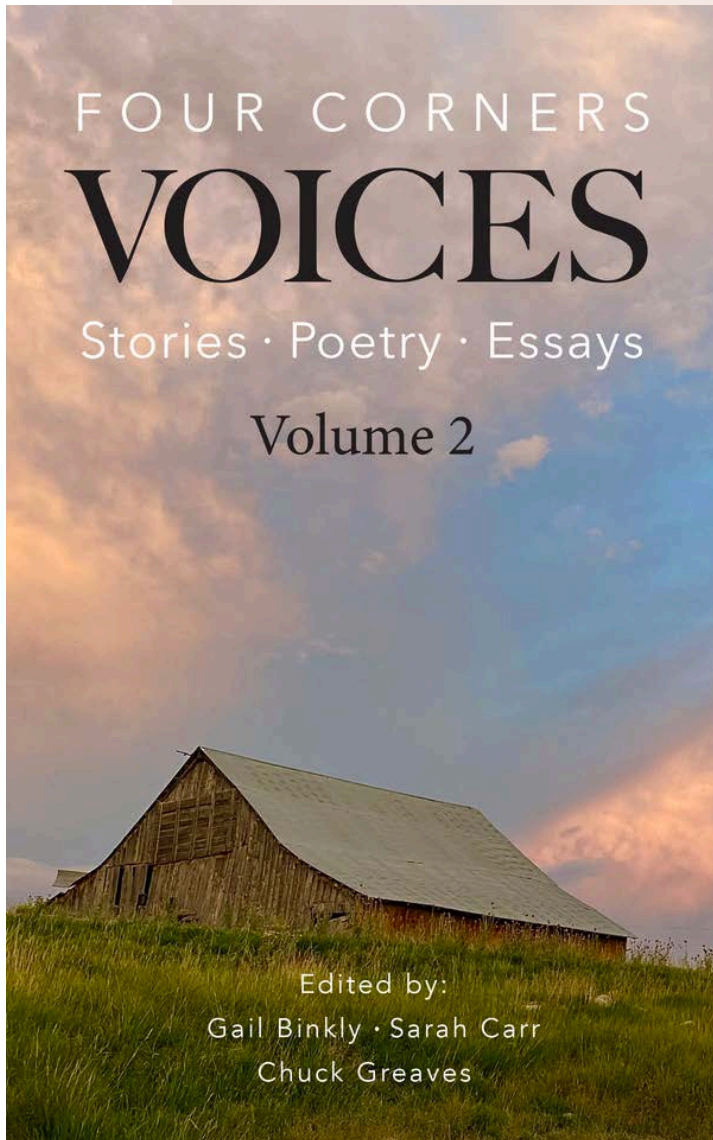
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NEW RELEASES



NEW BOOKS

FOUR CORNERS VOICES STORIES, POETRY, ESSAYS, VOLUME 2
Essays, Poetry and Short Stories | Four Corners Writers



This second anthology from Four Corners Writers, following the success of Four Corners Voices, winner of the 2025 Colorado Book Award, features stories, poetry, and essays from over 40 writers based in Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado, all in furtherance of FCW’s charitable mission of “identifying, developing, and promoting literary voices in the American Southwest.”

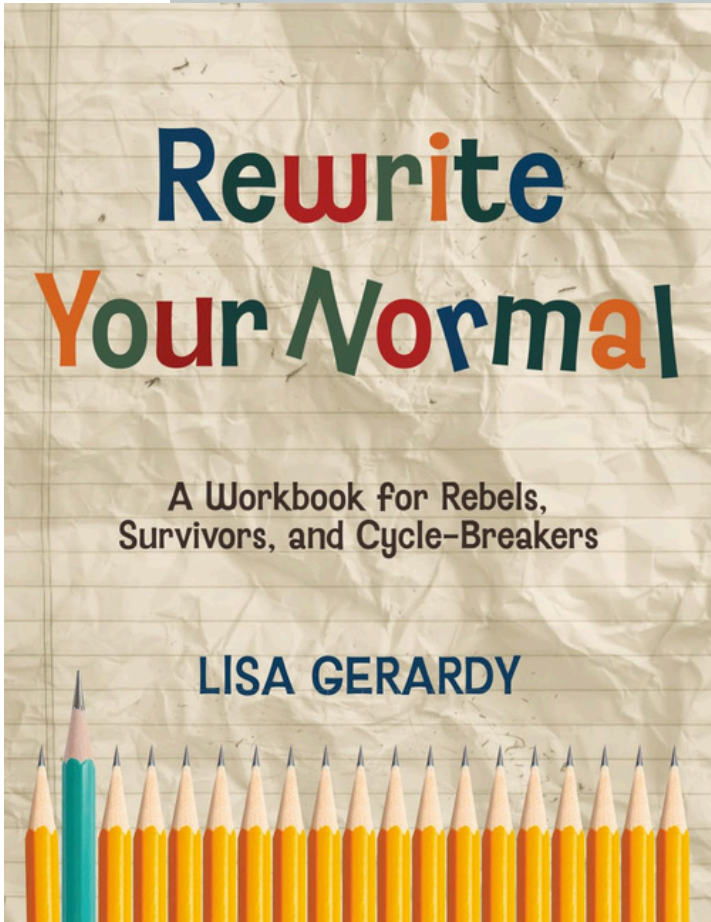


Jamie Nielsen is an ecologist and a returned U.S. Peace Corps volunteer, based in Flagstaff, AZ, with her husband, two teenagers, a puppy named Osa, and an ever-patient rescue dog, Rainy. Jamie’s writing appears in the **Arizona Daily Sun, The Sunlight Press, Cleaver Magazine, Empty House Press**, and she is a past contributor to the Arizona Authors’ Association **Literary Magazine**. She’s currently putting the finishing touches on her first memoir and next month’s **Substack!** She is honored to be one of more than 40 writers to be featured in the 2025 Four Corners Writers Anthology, **Four Corners Voices, Vol 2**.



NEW BOOKS

REWRITE YOUR NORMAL: A WORKBOOK FOR REBELS,
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Rewrite *Your Normal* is a guided workbook for anyone ready to break old patterns and build a life that finally fits. Created for rebels, survivors, and cycle-breakers, this workbook helps you explore the beliefs you inherited, understand the protective habits that shaped you, and create new emotional and mental tracks that support healing and growth.

Through reflective prompts, practical exercises, and clear guidance, you will uncover the stories that have influenced your sense of self and begin writing a healthier narrative for your future.

This workbook is a companion to Lisa Gerardy's memoir *Chasing Normal*, yet it stands completely on its own. You do not need to read the memoir to benefit from the insights and tools offered here.

Choose your direction. Rewrite your story.
Build your version of normal.

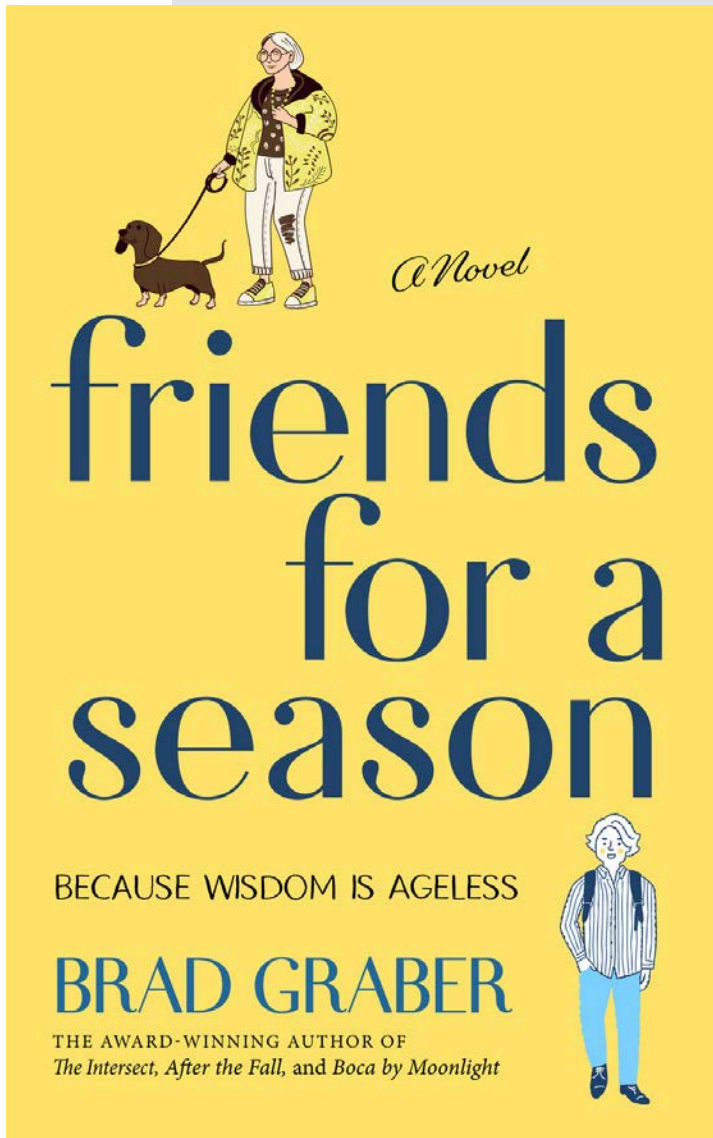
*Lisa Gerardy is a memoirist and educator who writes about family, trauma, and the messy work of breaking generational cycles. She is the author of *Chasing Normal* and *Rewrite Your Normal*, creating accessible, trauma-informed books that combine honesty, reflection, and humor for readers rewriting what “normal” gets to mean.*

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NEW BOOKS

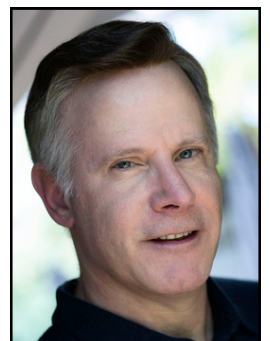
FRIENDS FOR A SEASON: BECAUSE WISDOM IS AGELESS
Upmarket Contemporary Late-Life Second Chance | Dark Victory Press



When Helena takes a tumble that requires hospitalization, she thinks her life as an independent woman is over. In her youth, she'd been a mother, author, speaker, and activist, but now, she's scared and alone, abandoned by her sons, certain the world has forgotten her. Faced with moving into a retirement community, Helena struggles to adjust her expectations, even as Julie, the activities director, wrangles her into volunteering as a patient advocate for Zak, a college freshman, also alone and struggling in this intergenerational novel of the friendship that blossoms between two people on opposite ends of life's journey.

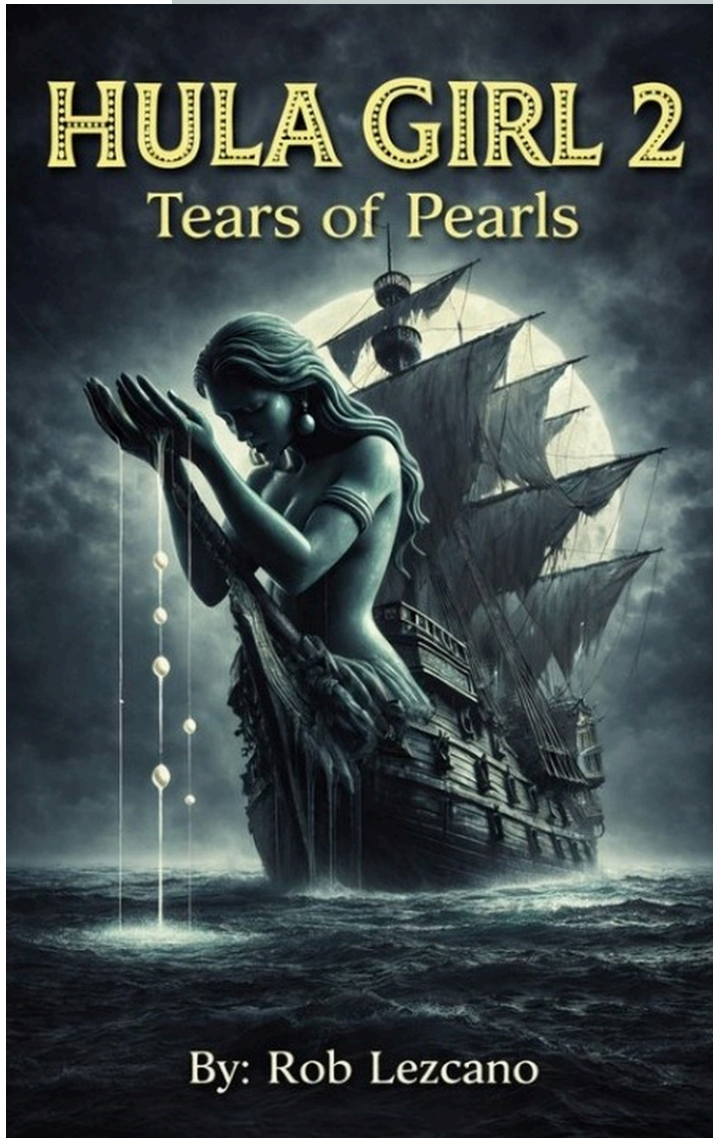


Brad Graber writes novels because he grew up in a family where no one listened to him...so he made up stories about them. Insightful and witty, Graber encourages us to look beyond the surface, creating characters that inspire hope and connection. *Friends for a Season* is Brad's fifth book, following his other three novels, *Boca by Moonlight*, *After the Fall*, *The Intersect*, and his collection of essays, *What's That Growing in My Sour Cream?* Graber also writes a monthly humor blog, ***There, I Said It!***



NEW BOOKS

HULA GIRL 2 – TEARS OF PEARLS
Contemporary Mythological Fantasy | Independently Published



As Tommy Tanner continues studying an ancient scroll and learning the deeper meaning of Aloha, he and the guardian spirit La’Ka discover a wounded woman washed ashore in Oceanside. She is one of the JiaoRén, legendary mermaids whose tears turn into priceless pearls. Through her story, Tommy learns that her people are being captured and tortured deep beneath the South China Sea.

Determined to help, Tommy joins La’Ka and the Protectors of Aloha on a dangerous journey across the Pacific. Facing hidden ocean caverns, ancient myths, and the ruthless pirate Captain Jody “The Butcher” Whitworth, Tommy must embrace his role as a protector before the fate of the ocean is lost forever.



Rob Lezcano is a storyteller who explores the space where mythology and real life collide. His work blends global legends, emotional truth, humor, and lived experience into cinematic narratives that span cultures and time.

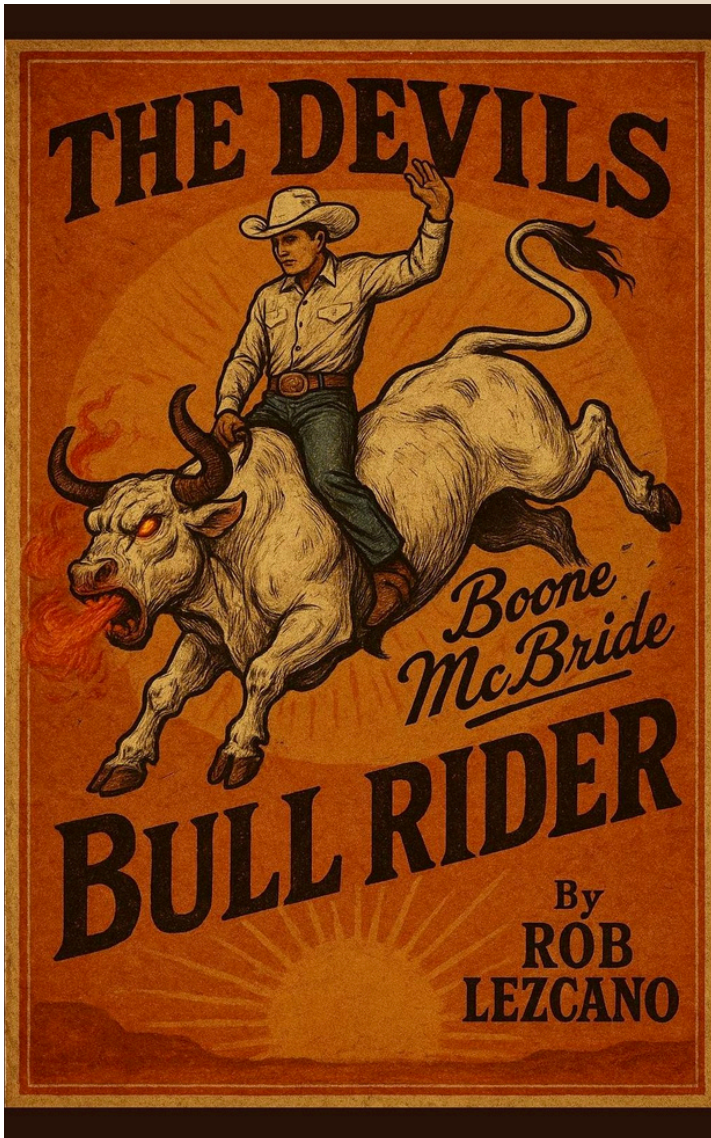
He is the author of *The Island*, *Hula Girl*, *Hula Girl 2: Tears of Pearls*, *The Devil’s Bull Rider*: Boone McBride, *O’Dooly’s Pub & Church*, and the memoir *Sunflower Yellow: Memories of a Latin Lover*.

From ancient gods and ocean myths to personal journeys of love, loss, and discovery, his stories invite readers into worlds where legends are not only remembered but lived.



NEW BOOKS

THE DEVILS BULL RIDER – BOONE MCBRIDE
Western / Supernatural Thriller | Independently Published



Boone McBride made a deal with the devil and built his legend on borrowed time.

On the rugged Arizona frontier, Boone rises from nothing to become the most feared rider in the West. His ranch grows, his reputation spreads, and success seems unstoppable. But his fortune began the night he struck a bargain with a mysterious rider and a ghostly white bull.

As the McBride legacy expands, so does the darkness that follows it, leaving behind loss, silence, and an unsettling presence. Generations later, the debt Boone never fully paid still remains.

Now, the devil has come to collect.



Rob Lezcano is a storyteller who explores the space where mythology and real life collide. His work blends global legends, emotional truth, humor, and lived experience into cinematic narratives that span cultures and time.

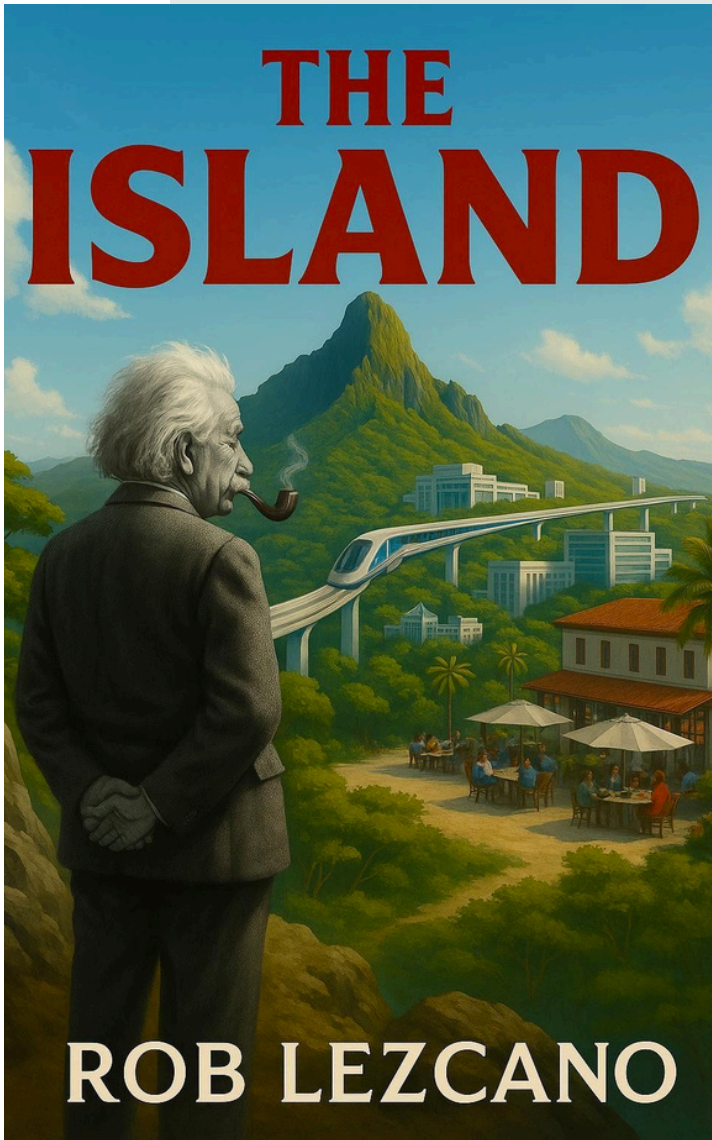
He is the author of *The Island*, *Hula Girl*, *Hula Girl 2: Tears of Pearls*, *The Devil's Bull Rider: Boone McBride*, *O'Dooly's Pub & Church*, and the memoir *Sunflower Yellow: Memories of a Latin Lover*.

From ancient gods and ocean myths to personal journeys of love, loss, and discovery, his stories invite readers into worlds where legends are not only remembered but lived.



NEW BOOKS

THE ISLAND
Speculative Sci-Fi Mystery | Independently Published



When a North Korean solar-powered jet vanishes over the Atlantic, the world fears an international crisis. But the missing pilot lands on an island that should not exist.

At the same time, New York journalist James Jones uncovers a mystery linked to his late grandfather, a brilliant physicist who left behind cryptic messages, hidden rooms, and classified documents. Together, they point to one astonishing truth:
The Island is real.

Built in secret by some of history's greatest minds, The Island is a hidden civilization powered by advanced science. As global tensions rise and those who know the truth begin to disappear, James races to find it before its secrets are lost forever.



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From ancient gods and ocean myths to personal journeys of love, loss, and discovery, his stories invite readers into worlds where legends are not only remembered but lived.



NEW BOOKS

O'DOOLY'S PUB & CHURCH Magical Realism Family Saga | Independently Published



In the seaside village of Doolin, Ireland, Corky O'Dooly has spent his life tending a one-of-a-kind building that is half pub, half church, with one red door and a century of stories.

As his 100th birthday approaches, Corky begins searching for someone to carry on his legacy. A simple DNA test sparks unexpected connections around the world and uncovers long-buried truths.

With help from Laffy O'Sneaky, a mischievous leprechaun with a talent for enchanted trouble, Corky learns that legacy is not something you leave behind. It is something you pass on.



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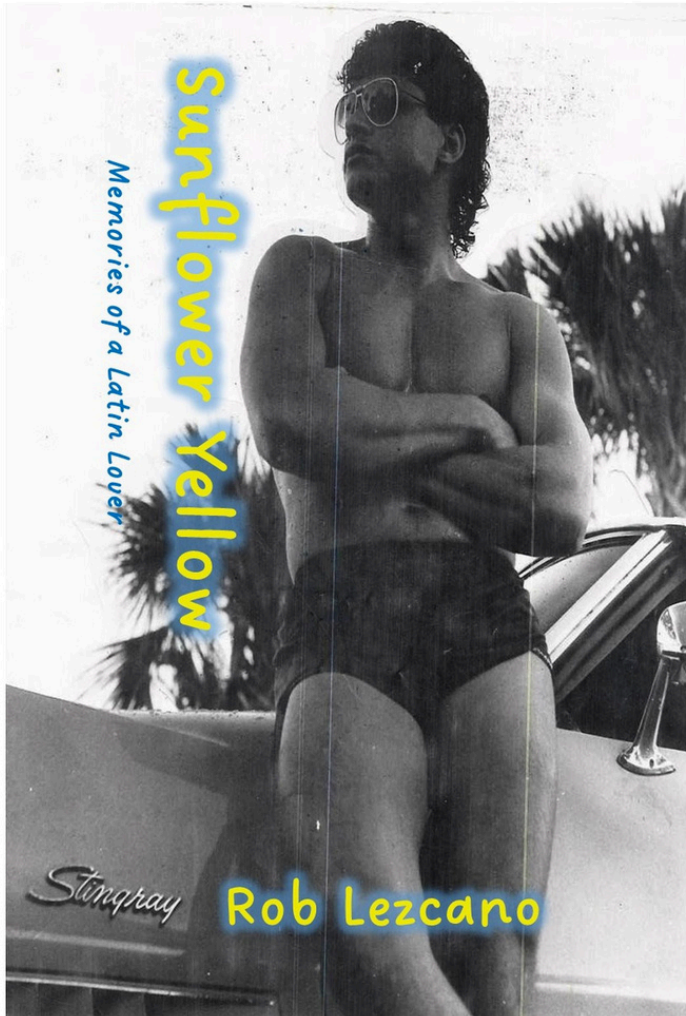
He is the author of *The Island*, *Hula Girl*, *Hula Girl 2: Tears of Pearls*, *The Devil's Bull Rider: Boone McBride*, *O'Dooly's Pub & Church*, and the memoir *Sunflower Yellow: Memories of a Latin Lover*.

From ancient gods and ocean myths to personal journeys of love, loss, and discovery, his stories invite readers into worlds where legends are not only remembered but lived.



NEW BOOKS

SUNFLOWER YELLOW – MEMORIES OF A LATIN LOVER
Raw Coming-of-Age Memoir | Independently Published



Set against the sun-soaked streets of 1970s and 1980s Miami, *Sunflower Yellow: Memories of a Latin Lover* is Rob's candid memoir of growing up with too much heart, too many temptations, and no clear path forward.

Through first loves, reckless choices, and unforgettable nights, Rob traces the experiences that shaped him. Told with honesty, humor, and deep nostalgia, this is a story about love, loss, and the messy process of becoming who you are.

At its heart, it is a tribute to his mother, the women who changed him, and the boy he can never fully leave behind.



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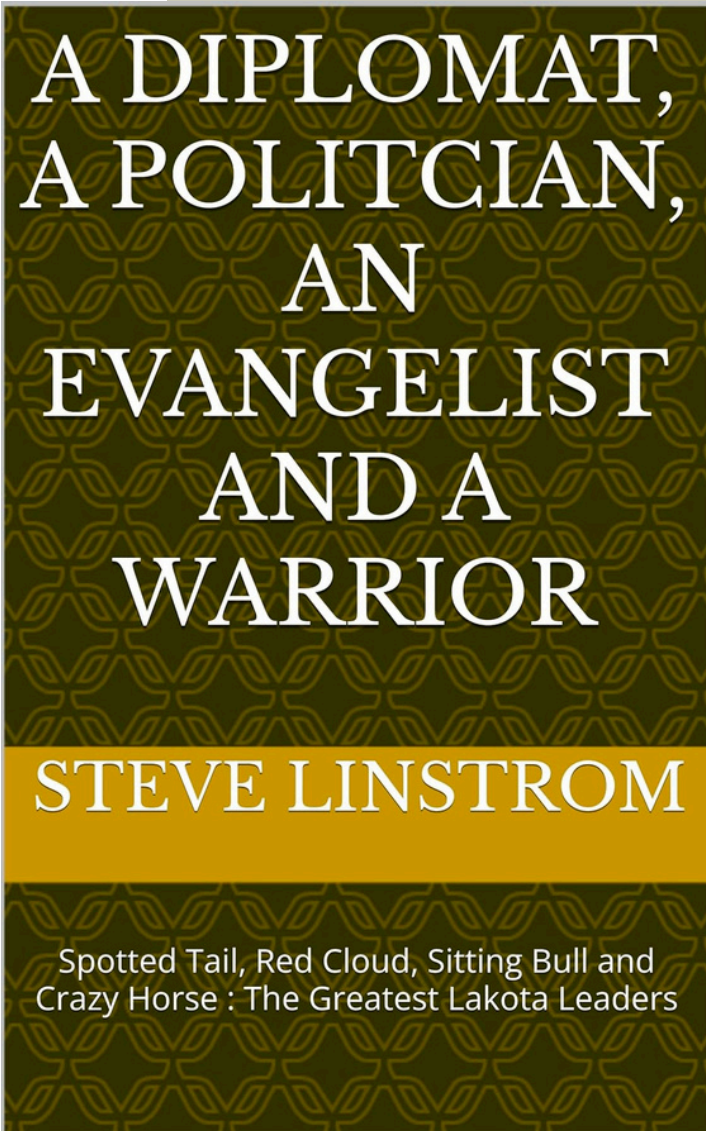
He is the author of *The Island*, *Hula Girl*, *Hula Girl 2: Tears of Pearls*, *The Devil's Bull Rider: Boone McBride*, *O'Dooly's Pub & Church*, and the memoir *Sunflower Yellow: Memories of a Latin Lover*.

From ancient gods and ocean myths to personal journeys of love, loss, and discovery, his stories invite readers into worlds where legends are not only remembered but lived.



NEW BOOKS

A DIPLOMAT, A POLITICIAN, AN EVANGELIST AND A WARRIOR
Old West History of the U.S. | Lake Hops Press



The story of the rise to power of Spotted Tail, Sitting Bull, Red Cloud and Crazy Horse and how they used that power to address the convoluted and inconsistent military, humanitarian and treaty policies presented by the U.S. Government, is a study in leadership styles. They were each the most prominent Indian in America for a time and their every action was closely followed by politicians, military leaders and the American public. The relationships between the four were complicated and they were sometimes allies, sometimes bitter enemies and always rivals. They had drastically different political beliefs, personalities and leadership styles, but were all focused on the preservation of the future of the Lakota people.

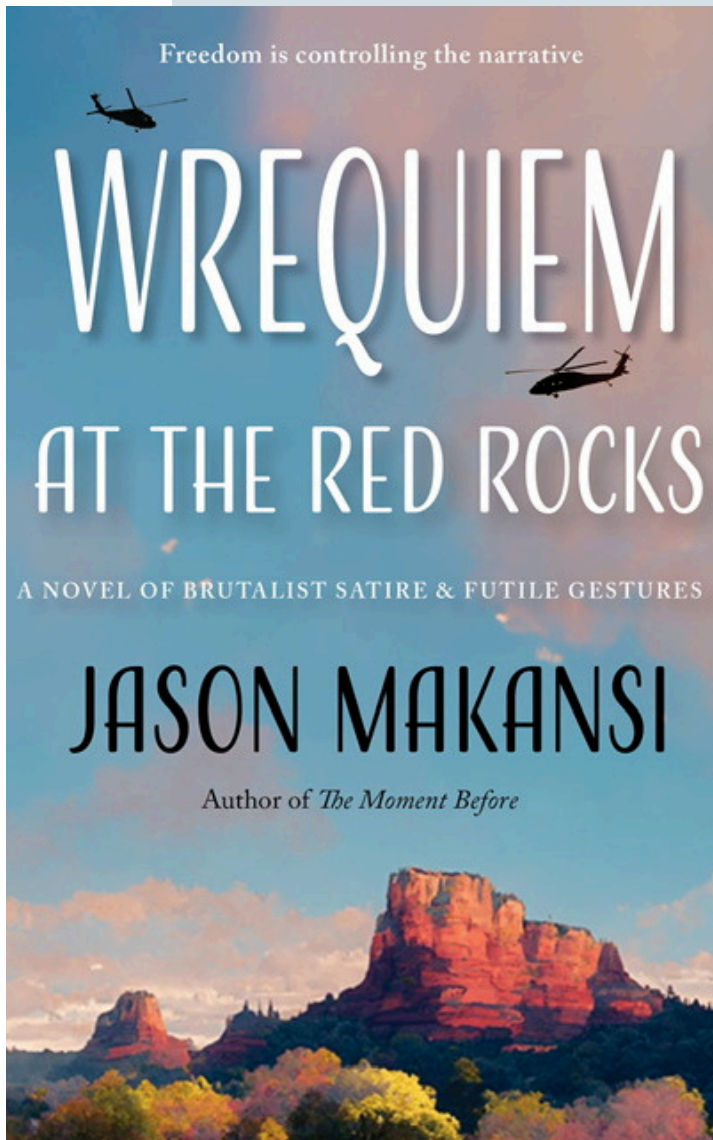


Steve Linstrom began his writing career after working in South Dakota state government and serving as a corporate vice president. Raised in western South Dakota, he now lives in St. Paul, Minnesota, with his wife, Steph. He earned a Master of Arts in English Studies from Minnesota State University Mankato and taught English at Southwest Minnesota State University until retiring in 2021. Steve is the author of the novels *The Last Ram* and *Murder Trial of the Last Lakota Warrior*, as well as the short story collection *Collections*. His short fiction has appeared in several literary journals, and he is an active member of the West Side Writers group.



NEW BOOKS

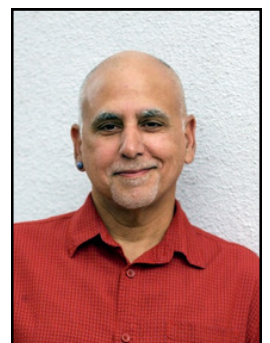
WREQUIEM AT THE RED ROCKS
Satirical Fiction | Layla Dog Press



At a time when Americans either embrace or lament the death of expertise, *Wrequiem at the Red Rocks* hammers the final nail in the coffin. Through the prism of an academic colloquium sponsored by the Center for the Study of the Philosophy of Freedom, *Wrequiem* prosecutes the excesses, contradictions, confrontations, and cul de sacs of contemporary American discourses and aspirations. In this work of brutalist satire, Makansi takes aim at a world in which the most erudite scholars argue about the most mundane words, and the only freedom left is controlling the narrative.

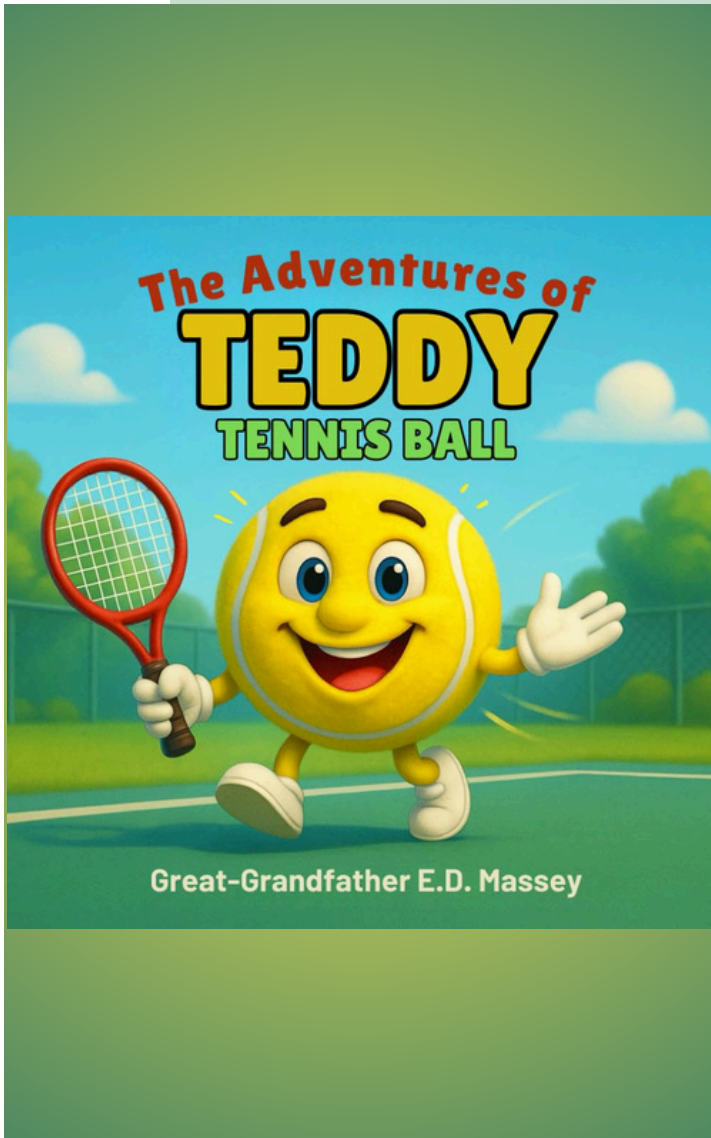


Jason Makansi is the author of the novel *The Moment Before* and several nonfiction and professional books, including *Painting By Numbers: How to Sharpen Your BS Detector* and *Smoke Out the Experts*, which won both the 2016 IPPY Gold Award and Foreword Reviews Indie Silver Award. His short stories have appeared in numerous literary magazines. Jason studied chemical engineering at Columbia University and pursued graduate work in sociology at the University of Missouri. He has lived across the United States and now resides in Tucson.



NEW BOOKS

THE ADVENTURES OF TEDDY TENNIS BALL
Children's Book | Independently Published



Teddy Tennis Ball lives in a crowded bin with other tennis balls and enjoys the company of his friends. Boy and Girl play tennis and use the balls for practice. Teddy is hit hard by Boy, sending him over the fence and into the street. Teddy faces several challenges: nearly being run over by a car, floating in water, being licked and bitten by a dog, and getting stuck under a thorny bush. Abigail Ant and Albert Ant, along with their ant friends, help Teddy escape from under the bush. Crystal Ball, missing Teddy, gets herself hit over the fence to try to reunite with him. Girl finds both Teddy and Crystal Ball and returns them to the bin, where their friends celebrate their return.



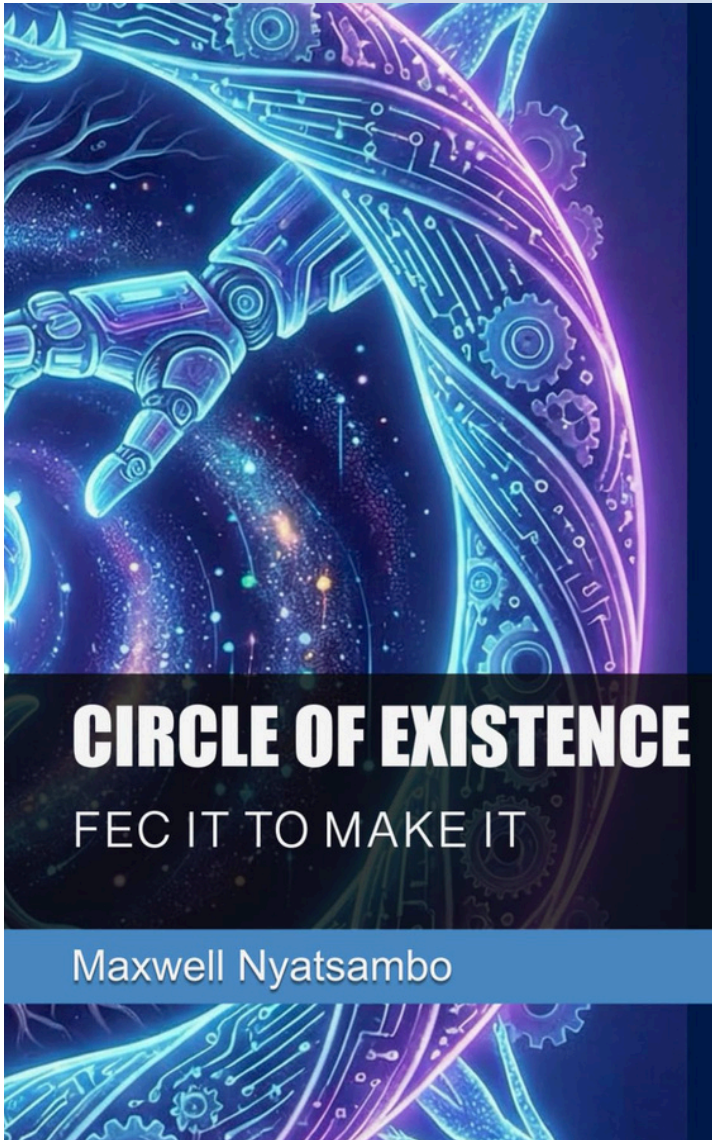
***E.D. Massey** was born and lived in California for most of his life. His desire to write was due to his wife's ongoing struggle with nerve and back pain. Writing became the therapy that kept him going on many long, sad nights. Family and friends encouraged him to publish his first book.*

The birth of his two beautiful great-granddaughters inspired him to give them a special present that they will be able to read to their children someday.



NEW BOOKS

CIRCLE OF EXISTENCE
Philosophy | Independently Published



Circle of Existence is a reflective, accessible philosophy book that explores what it truly means to exist. It presents reality not as something fixed or happening to us, but as something we actively shape and participate in. At its core is the Circle of Existence (COE), a framework of three parts: State (the present moment), Process (change and cause), and Field (possibility shaped by past and future). These elements continuously loop and evolve, gaining meaning through conscious observation.

The book emphasizes the power of the present, where all experience and choice occur. It introduces the FEC Principle: Free Will, Emotion, and Conscience as the tools humans use to navigate reality. Together, these ideas frame existence as dynamic, participatory, and constantly unfolding.



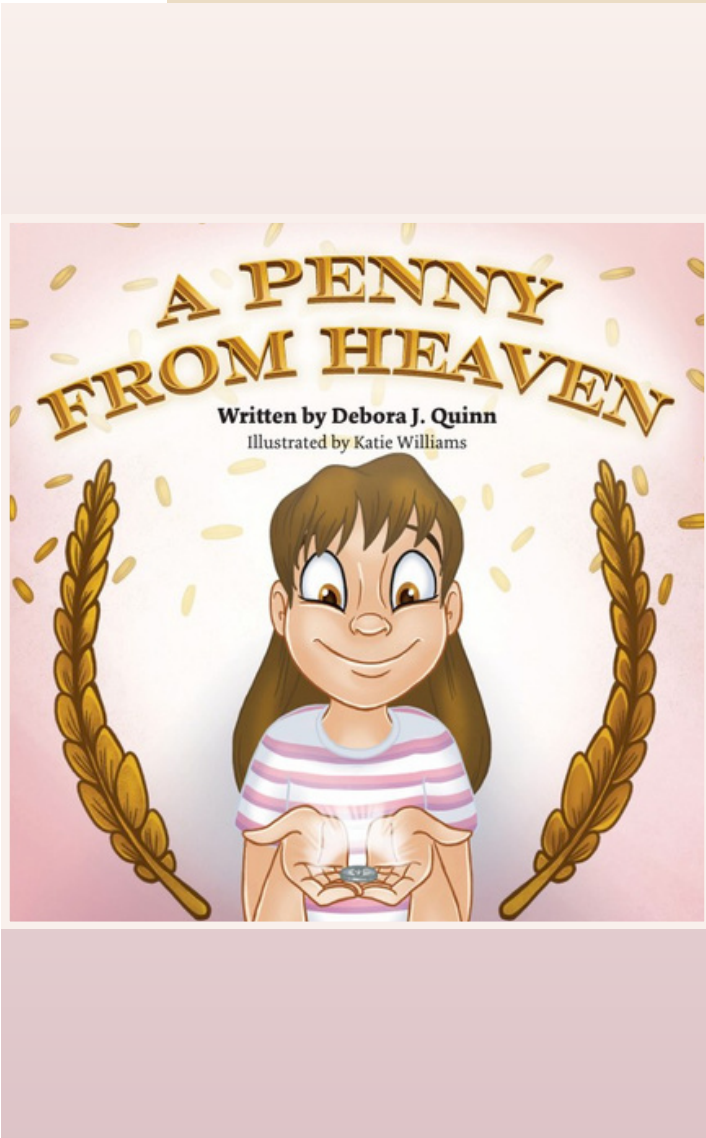
Maxwell Nyatsambo was born in Zimbabwe, where he grew up between traditional values and the rise of the digital age. A self-taught programmer from his teens, he developed an early passion for technology and learning. After leaving Zimbabwe at 21 with little more than a laptop and ideas, he built an entrepreneurial path across Southern Africa before eventually settling in Arizona.

There, he launched a luxury car rental business but remained focused on education and innovation. He founded Innovation and Research Network Inc. (IRN), a hands-on learning institution, along with Maxit Concepts for life coaching and mentorship, and Lil Innovators, a program that inspires children through large-scale innovation challenges. His work centers on practical, experience-driven education and empowering people to build and create.



NEW BOOKS

A PENNY FROM HEAVEN
Children's Book | Lucky Dally, LLC



Jenny enjoyed spending time with her grandmother. They played games, did puzzles, cooked, baked, and much more. They spent a great deal of time together until her grandmother went away. But then something happened that let Jenny know her grandmother was good and thinking of her. This book is about remaining connected to someone even after they're gone.

A Penny from Heaven is about having a special relationship with someone, having to say goodbye, and what can happen next.

Whether it's a penny that mysteriously shows up, or a cardinal that appears in your yard, there are ways people believe they receive a reassuring message from Heaven.

This story is loosely based on what happened the day Debora's mother passed away, and Debora received her own "penny from Heaven."



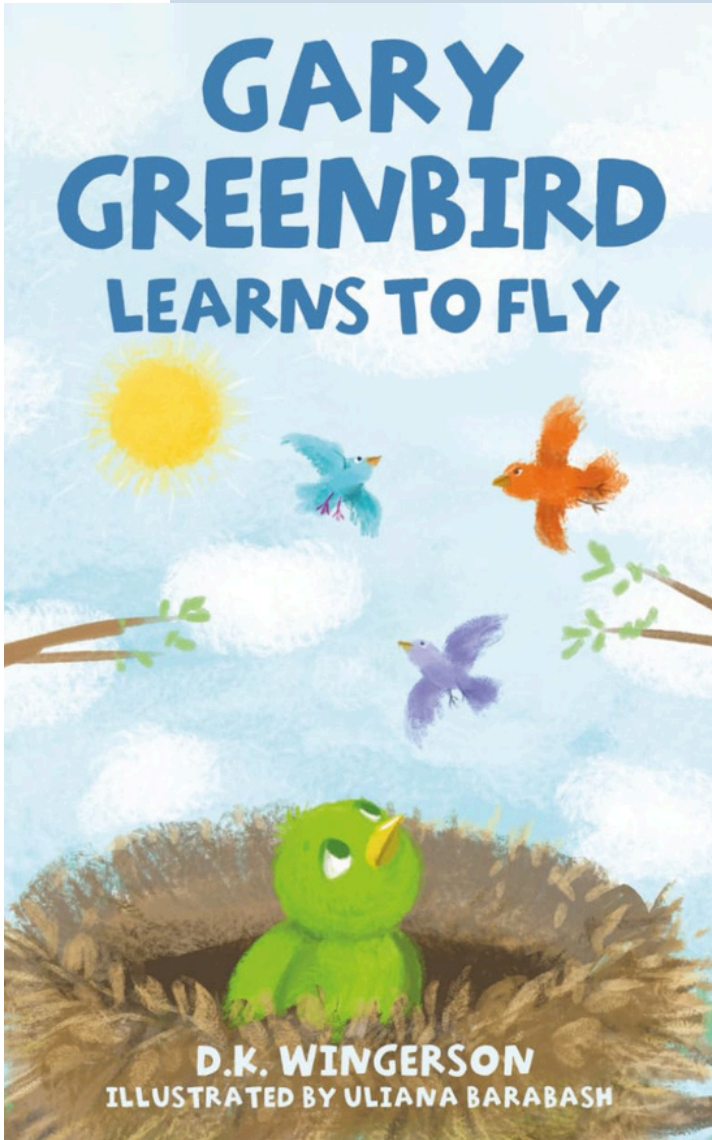
Growing up in Oak Park, Illinois, **Debora Quinn** became an avid reader and lover of books.

Early in life, Debora had a variety of jobs before she followed her passion to make a difference and became a teacher. Over 30+ years Debora taught at every grade level, K-8, finding something to love about each grade and each group of students. She spent most of her career as a Special Education teacher. As a mother and teacher, Debora loved sharing stories. She then tried her hand at writing, often using actual events. After moving to Arizona Debora decided it was time to take the next step and get her stories published. She has published 4 books since 2023, thrilled to share her stories with young children.



NEW BOOKS

GARY GREENBIRD LEARNS TO FLY
Children's Book | Independently Published



Gary Greenbird isn't like the other birds. While his siblings leap from the nest with excitement, Gary prefers the safety of home, watching the world from afar. He's not lazy—he's just scared. What if he falls? What if he's not ready?

But everything changes the day his little sister ends up in trouble. Suddenly, Gary is faced with a choice: stay where it's safe, or spread his wings and soar.



Over 20 years ago, **D.K. Wingerson** moved from Iowa to the Arizona desert with her husband and son. Inspired by her mother, a teacher, she has been an avid reader all her life, enjoying classics, autobiographies, and the occasional mystery or romance. Becoming a grandmother sparked her love for children's books and led her to writing. Her grandson, who is on the autism spectrum, inspires her with his courage and determination. Her debut book, *Gary Greenbird Learns To Fly*, shares a simple message: *believe in yourself, prepare, and face your fears.*



NEW BOOKS

GARY GREENBIRD: A BASEBALL ADVENTURE
Children's Book | Puppy Wuppy LLC



Gary Greenbird is back and he's taking flight on a whole new adventure! When Gary's big brother, Greg, swoops in with a surprise invitation, the Greenbird brothers fly off to discover a favorite pastime of people everywhere.

They are going to the ballpark, and not just one ballpark. From the cheering crowds, the players running around a diamond, to the real reason they're on this journey, the ballpark food, Gary learns that courage, curiosity, and teamwork can take you farther than you ever dreamed.

Join the Greenbird brothers as they fly half way across the country, from one ballpark to the next, making new friends and priceless memories, in *Gary Greenbird A Baseball Adventure*.



Over 20 years ago, **D.K. Wingerson** moved from Iowa to the Arizona desert with her husband and son. Inspired by her mother, a teacher, she has been an avid reader all her life, enjoying classics, autobiographies, and the occasional mystery or romance. Becoming a grandmother sparked her love for children's books and led her to writing. Her grandson, who is on the autism spectrum, inspires her with his courage and determination. Her debut book, *Gary Greenbird Learns To Fly*, shares a simple message: *believe in yourself, prepare, and face your fears.*



Letters To The Editor

with former Arizona Republic Opinions Editor

Robert Leger

Free Zoom Workshop for Arizona Authors Association Members



Have you ever wondered what an editor looks for when choosing letters to publish? What are the most effective ways to get your opinions, views, and beliefs in front of thousands of readers of a major publication? As the former Opinions Editor for the *Arizona Republic*, Robert Leger will share his answers with our members, and offer insights on how and why news publications have changed over the years.

Robert wrote 4 million words in his career as a reporter, columnist, editorial page editor, and public affairs consultant. Some of those words won national awards and many of them influenced local events and politics. Robert led editorial pages in Phoenix, Springfield, Mo., and Coffeyville, Kan., overseeing work that won national Headliner and Sigma Delta Chi awards, as well as winning state and national awards in his own name. In 2002-03, he was national president of the Society of Professional Journalists, the county's oldest and at the time largest association of journalists.

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THE MILLION MILE WALKER WHAT WE'RE READING AND WHY

By Mark D. Walker

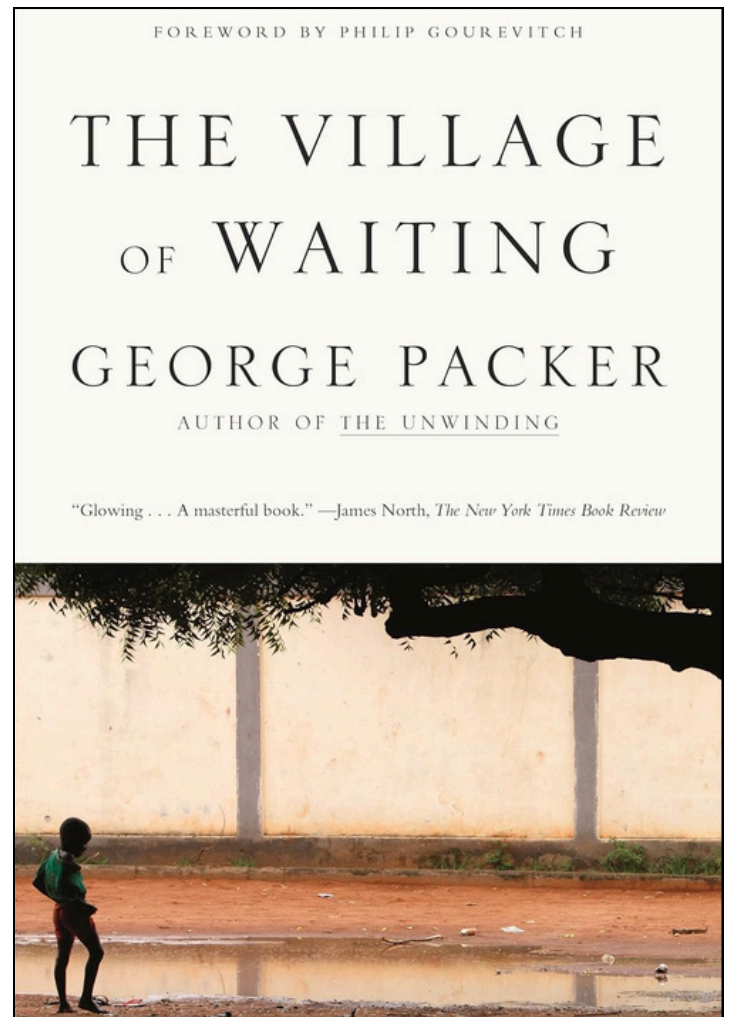
I first came across George Packer through his cover story “The Valley,” the second-longest piece *The Atlantic* has published in the past 40 years. In it, he provides a kaleidoscopic view of Phoenix’s precarious political and physical ecology in the face of climate change, which meant a lot to me in the summer of 2024 as we endured record-breaking triple-digit temperatures. I had no idea he was a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer until a fellow volunteer serving in Togo gave me a heads-up.

When I started reading his memoir, *The Village of Waiting*, I realized it was ideal for the “Million Mile Walker.” This was not another feel-good Peace Corps memoir. He refused easy answers, showing how service in an isolated, unfamiliar culture can break you while also revealing meaning in the struggle. His honesty models the reflective courage that epitomizes the best travel literature.

His book was published in 1984 and republished several times, most recently with a foreword by Philip Gourevitch. The book endures not because of its anecdotes, but because of the moral unease that shadows every page. Packer arrived in Togo in the early 1980s, expecting to teach English—and, of course, to “make a difference”—but instead found a village vacillating between resignation and reliance. Packer opens by quoting *Christ Stopped at Eboli*, Carlo Levi’s memoir about exile in a forgotten part of southern Italy left behind by the state, the church and modern progress.

“Was even he perhaps another person, an unknown and still unmade young man whom change and time had thrust down there under those yellow animal eyes, those black eyes of

women and men and children...so that he might find himself in otherness, in the other-than-self, so that he might discover history outside of history, and time outside of time, and the original pain of things, and himself, outside of the mirror of Narcissus’ pool, in men, on the arid earth?”



Levi uses the tragedy of nonexistent healthcare to demonstrate the limitations of his good intentions. He includes haunting passages about villagers who were sick but unable or unwilling to tell doctors, driving physicians to despair when they encounter patients on their deathbeds with gangrene. “Having done what I could, I’ve done nothing” was the memoir’s depressing core.

Packer is especially insightful on the racial dynamics through which some white expatriates appeared to bestow on themselves a “divine right” inherited from colonial times. He uses Nairobi in Kenya, where whites congregated in their own cultural bubble, insulating themselves from the people they claimed to serve.

He also describes the persistent suspicion among the local population—which many Peace Corps Volunteers like me have experienced—regarding a perceived link between the Peace Corps and the CIA. Instead of sensationalizing this mistrust, he shows how the rumor reflected a deeper reality about American power abroad and how even well-meaning volunteers carry the weight of U.S. geopolitical presence.

One of the things that sets this memoir apart is that Packer wrote an afterword 17 years after its publication, revealing that he left Togo and the Peace Corps because of what he described as a “nervous breakdown.” Evidently, enough time had passed for him to explain why he left, and his story was not complete until he acknowledged his own unraveling.

He would not be the first PCV to suffer from a convergence of isolation, cultural dislocation, and the realization that he could not meet his own expectations for success.

Packer profiles three children to represent some of the different paths through the maze of poverty and limited opportunity. One child even manages to obtain a good education but still cannot find meaningful work. This depiction recalls *The Economist's* description of Africa as “the hopeless continent,” a description he neither endorses nor rejects, but one that is reflected in his lived experience.

The final line in his book reads, “My time in Africa now seems long ago, and yet the people I knew are still alive. They still wait.” It acknowledges that so many are still waiting for medical care, political change and economic opportunity.

As a fellow Returned Peace Corps writer, I can't help but speculate about how Packer's experience shaped his career as a consummate storyteller and investigative reporter for *The Atlantic*, where he has written on Iraq, inequality and American decline.

His time in Africa may have deepened his moral seriousness, sharpened his skepticism toward power, and strengthened empathy free of sentimentality, along with an ability to confront uncomfortable realities.

All of that has served him well as a writer.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

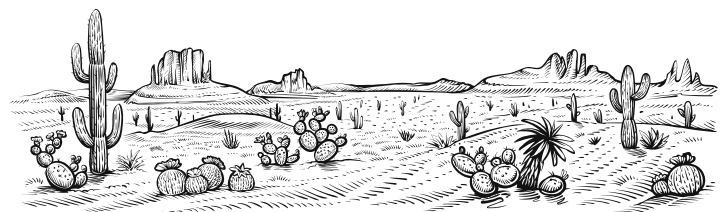
George Packer is an award-winning author and staff writer at *The Atlantic*. His books include *The Unwinding: An Inner History of the New America* (winner of the National Book Award), *The Assassins' Gate: America in Iraq*, and *Our Man: Richard Holbrooke and the End of the American Century* (winner of the Hitchens Prize and the Los Angeles Times Book Prize for biography). He is also the author of two novels and a play, and the editor of a two-volume edition of George Orwell's essays. He's a returned Peace Corps Volunteer from Togo (1982–1983).



Find over 80 book reviews on my website under the “Library” tab. I'd love to hear your thoughts on the newsletter, my reviews, and what you're reading—your insights could inspire future columns and may be featured in the next edition.

Reach me at **Mark@MillionMileWalker.com**, MillionMileWalker.com, or facebook.com/millionmilewalker.

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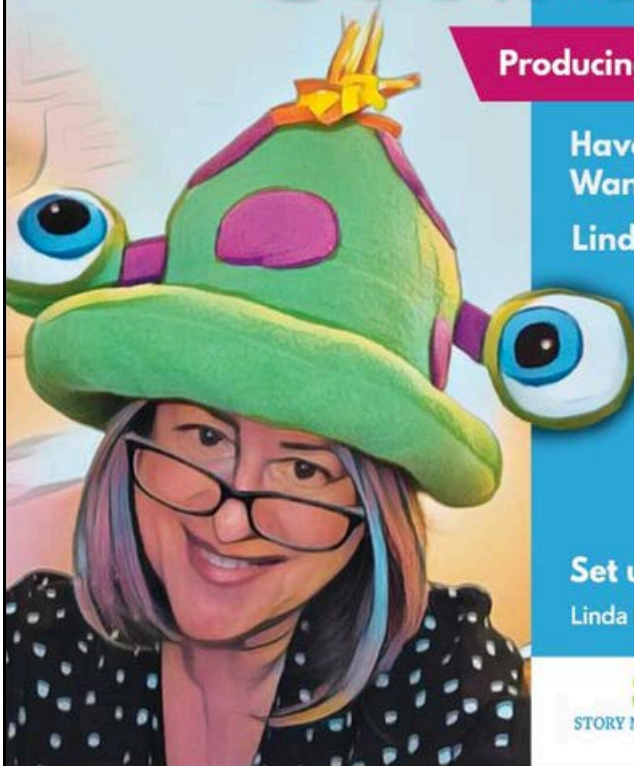
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A WRITER'S TIP

FROM KAREN ODDEN

HISTORICAL TRUTH VERSUS VERISIMILITUDE AND WHY IT MATTERS

I want to say a few words about something I try to keep in mind when writing historical fiction: the tension between historical truth and verisimilitude.

One of my favorite anecdotes that illustrates this tension comes from my friend Susan Elia MacNeal, who wrote the *Maggie Hope* series, which begins during WWII, with Maggie serving as a secretary in Churchill's office. For her research, Susan went to the War Rooms, where she read facsimiles of Churchill's letters in his handwriting. In his letters, he uses the abbreviation "OMG." If you think about it, it makes sense—it's the age of the telegram, when abbreviations saved money.

Now, if Susan were to put that detail in one of her books, she would be sustaining *historical* truth but destroying verisimilitude—which we could define as what the reader believes to be true about the period. Imagine the outcry! I can hear the chuckling Goodreads reviews ... "What's Churchill going to write next? LMAO?"

None of us writers want to push the reader's "disbelief" button. We want to keep our readers in the story. And when it comes to including elements that pull readers out of the story -- well, we have to pick our battles. Susan chose to leave out the "OMG" altogether because it wasn't central to the story.

Now, sometimes we hit that disbelief button inadvertently.

For example, a few years ago, a reviewer wrote something along the lines of, "I love your books, and

they're mostly accurate, except you have Inspector Corravan drinking coffee, when Victorians drank tea. Now, it's true that Victorians drank a lot of tea, a fact widely disseminated both in words and images (such as this painting). But in the 1870s, there were still seven million tons of coffee being imported annually into England, most of it arriving through the London docks. Elaborate coffee services (that you can still see in museums) were still being produced by the best silversmiths.

That said, even though it's historical truth, I might have thought twice about Corravan drinking coffee, had I realized it was going to hit the "disbelief" button. I could have left it out ... except it exactly fit Corravan's personality. What I should have done is presented his coffee drinking in a way that acknowledges a departure from verisimilitude. I could include a line something like: "Corravan knew coffee was more expensive than tea, and an unnecessary luxury, but he hated anything watered down, and tea wasn't enough to wake him up in the morning." Sometimes it just requires a little framing. Finally, sometimes I go ahead and push the "disbelief" button—because while coffee might be a minor indicator about Corravan's character, other historical truths are not small. They're important to the story—central, even.

When readers say, "I just don't quite believe [your heroine] could go running around London the way she does. Weren't Victorian women confined to their homes?"

A WRITER'S TIP

CONTINUED

FROM KAREN ODDEN

It's a valid question. TV shows and movies and even 19th-century novels show Victorian women indoors, at balls, drinking tea, languishing in chaises, reading novels, riding in closed carriages.

But keep in mind two things. First, these characters are often unmarried, upper-class women who are going on the marriage market. They need to be watched and guarded lest their honor be lost and they become unmarriageable. That was a real, historical risk for women of a certain class. Second, novelists and TV writers get a lot of mileage out of holding these female characters in check and exploring their transgressions, which lead to conflict—every writer's best friend.

However, the vast majority of *real* young women in London (as opposed to characters in books) weren't upper-class. Young women who worked as shop girls, dressmakers, music hall performers, scullery maids, teachers, milliners, and so on, had no need to be so careful about their virtue, as they weren't subject to the marriage market scrutiny. As a result, young, unmarried women had considerable autonomy. And orphans of the lower and lower-middle classes? Who was keeping an eye on them? Virtually no one. This is how I weasel a high degree of autonomy for my heroines, all of whom come from the lower and middle classes. As for Kit Jameson, my thief from *Elephant and Castle*, she goes everywhere and does everything. There's no one watching her.

Until someone is.



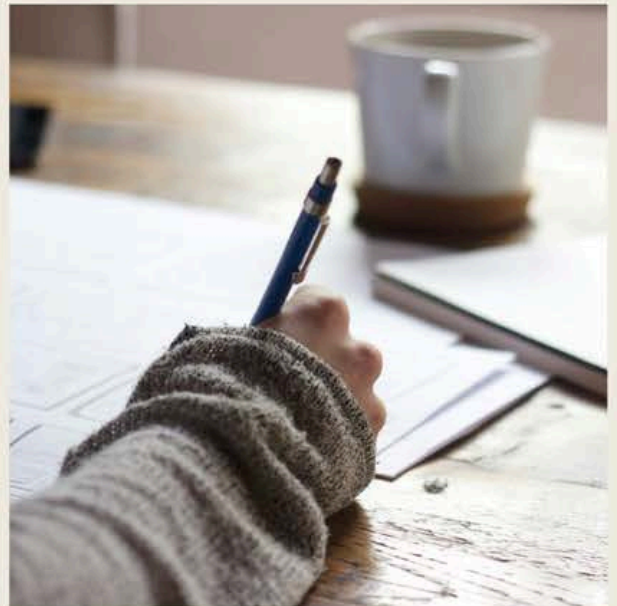
Karen Odden is a USA Today bestselling author; her latest book is *Under A Veiled Moon*, an Inspector Corravan mystery. For more writer's tips and other news, subscribe to Karen's newsletter or visit her website.

You may also visit her Arizona Authors Association page.



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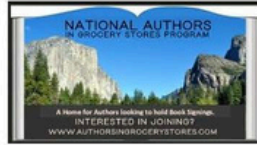
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The National Authors in Grocery Stores Program



Summary:

That's helpful context! Here is the information about the National Authors in Grocery Stores Program presented in an easy-to-read format:

National Authors in Grocery Stores Program Overview

The National Authors in Grocery Stores Program offers an exclusive opportunity for authors whose books are not currently stocked or distributed in grocery stores to hold **book signing events** in affiliated locations.

Key Program Details

- **Goal:** To provide authors with access to high-traffic retail environments for book signings.
- **Locations:** Over 1,650 program locations are available across 19 states.

Participating States

The program operates in the following states (with specific regional limitations noted):

Region	States
Western US	Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Texas
Midwest/South	Alabama (northern), Georgia, Indiana (southern), Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Ohio, South Carolina (southern), Tennessee, West Virginia, Virginia

How to Sign Up and Participate:

Fee Schedule

- **Sign-Up Fee:** \$100
- **Per ISBN Fee:** \$25
- **Annual Renewal:** \$100
- **Note:** A discount is available for 5 or more books.

Phase 2: Setup & Approval

- **Barcode Scan Test:** Bring your book(s) to a participating store (as requested in the Welcome Letter) to ensure **each barcode can be scanned successfully**.
- **System Registration:** Allow **30 days** after successful scanning for the store to register your books in their system.
- **Schedule Request:** Send an email request to us for your desired book signing schedule. Include:
 - A list of dates and times.
 - The grocery store numbers you'd like approved.
- **Internal Approval:** Your requested schedule will be registered and sent to store division leaders, who will forward it to store managers.
- **Final Schedule:** Your **approved schedule** will be provided **2 weeks** before each signing event.

Phase 3: Book Signing Day

- **Check-In:** On the day of your signing, check in at the **Customer Service Desk**.
- **Setup:** Set up your display by the **entrance or by the registers**. You must bring:
 - A 2'x4' table.
 - A tablecloth.
 - Your books.
 - A sign that says: "**Meet the Author. Get Your Book Signed Today!**"
- **Customer Purchase:** When a customer asks to buy a book:
 - Sign the book.
 - Instruct them to **pay for it (them) at the register**.
- **Payment:** Allow **2 weeks** for payment of **62%** of your sales.

Please note: We do not shelf books; your display and books are to be removed at the close of your signing.

Feel Free to check out our website www.authorsinggrocerystores.com

or via email: groceryauthors@gmail.com

ODDS & ENDS

**“We’re going on an
adventure.”**

**—Adrian Tchaikovsky,
Children of Ruin**

Literary Trivia Answers (from page10)

1. D. The Beat Generation
2. D. A story focused on a character’s moral or psychological growth
3. B. A story told through letters or documents
4. A. Estel



Marilyn June Janson M.S. Ed. CEO of Janson Literary Services, Inc. offers her literary expertise to both new and veteran authors.

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Have questions? Ask Marilyn @ arizona@aol.com, www.janwrite.com, or call her at 1-480-699-6389

BACK PAGE JOKES

Whats the difference between swine flu and bird flu?



Bird flu requires tweetment, and swine flu requires oinkment!

SUBMIT TO THIS SECTION

Photos and Jokes and Quotes, OH MY!

Share a joke or quote (200 words or less). We also love Arizona landscape photos. Please include your name and the location where the photo was taken.

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