

ARIZONA AUTHORS ASSOCIATION

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A non-profit
501c3 organization

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Issue 15

Arizona Authors Association

August-September 2021

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President's Corner by Toby Heathcotte

Hello Members!

As my first observation as president, I honor our outgoing three board members for terms as president, treasurer, and board member. Thanks go to Russ Azbill, Debbie Weiland, and Nic LaGrand for their four years of service. They kept AAA from going under at a very difficult time.

These board members implemented new rules in the bylaws, as recommended by Scottsdale Police, to hopefully prevent unscrupulous people from taking advantage in the future. The most significant of these rules are four-year terms for officers and a required three-member (minimum) board that chooses the officers and other leaders.

Chase has been the bank of choice for about fifteen years. When we went to switch over the bank accounts from Russ and Debbie to Jane and me, the Chase people made it extremely difficult for us. They sent us from one branch to another, then said we'd have to return the next day when a qualified changeover agent would be on duty. Since Russ was leaving that day for New Mexico, he withdrew all the funds and turned them over to me. Jane and I went to Desert Financial and opened a new account. I'm sure we'll be treated well there because they have an excellent reputation. I trust them since I have had an account with them for many years.

I am proud and happy to begin my four-year term as president. I was already statutory agent through the Arizona Corporation Commission. Those two positions are not linked and can be filled by different people. Jane Ruby was approved to serve as treasurer for four years, and Kathleen Cook as secretary for one year. We hope to add board members soon.

continued on the next page

President's Corner, continued

Our yearly contest has closed and judges have their assignments now. I know many of you are fulfilling that important function. We couldn't hold the contest without you, and we thank you for volunteering. Your evaluations will decide who wins in each of the events.

The results will appear in the 2022 Arizona Literary Magazine, which will be available for the first time at the banquet this year.

We are returning to the Glendale Civic Center on November 6 for this fantastic event. It's a beautiful venue with yummy food. Make your plan now to attend.

The theme for the banquet will be "Those were the days, my friend." Think of a time or place in your life or the life of a character in the past, or the life yet to come. Come in a costume depicting the same. Creativity in costumes is limitless with this theme. Choose any time or place, past, present, future – real or imagined. Costumes are not required but make the event far more fun for everyone.

My wish for the future is that we will have more fun, not only at the banquet, but at all the events we host in the coming year. I want Arizona Authors' presence to grow in the hearts and minds of our members and our statewide community.

Best of everything,
Toby

Toby Heathcotte
Arizona Authors, President
<https://tobyheathcotte.com/>
<http://www.arizonaauthors.com/>



Resignation of President Russell Azbill

Hello Fellow Members,

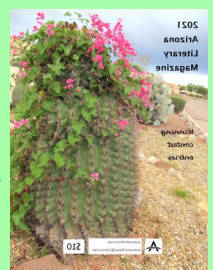
It has been an honor for me to be the President of this fine Association for over two years. During this time, I have been fortunate to have met many of you in person and made many new friends along the way. However, due to an increasing number of health issues, I find I must now step down from the position of President and focus on improving my health.

Going forward, Toby Heathcotte will be the Association's President. I am confident she will do an outstanding job in this role. I intend to remain a member and I look forward to seeing and visiting with you in the future. Best wishes to you all.

Respectfully Yours
Russell Azbill

From all of us on the Board, I want to say a hearty THANK YOU for your service, Russ. It's been a privilege to serve under you. -Kathleen Cook, Editor

*It's not too late to pick
up your copy of the
2021 Arizona
Literary Magazine, on
sale [HERE](#)*



Arizona Authors Association New Newsletter Logo and Header!

You have probably noticed the new header at the top of the first page of this newsletter. The header, designed by Newsletter Editor and incoming Association Secretary Kathleen Cook, reflects the roots and heritage of our wonderful association. The cactus was taken from a photograph by David Rich, who co-founded the Arizona Authors Association back in 1978. David has done some awesome work for us in the past 40-plus years, and we wanted to honor that work on the front page of every issue. Thank you, David, for everything you have done for us.



Old Linen Postcard circa 1930s-50s
Arizona Inn, Tucson, Arizona
Boston Public Library Collection

Arizona Authors Association Leadership

Board of Directors:

President.....Toby Heathcotte
Treasurer/Literary Contest Director.....Jane Ruby
Secretary/Editor.....Kathleen Cook

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

**Editorial correspondence and
newsletter submissions may be emailed to:**

faerland@yahoo.com

All other inquiries should be sent to:

Arizona.Authors@yahoo.com

Literary Trivia

(Answers on the Back Page)

1. Who wrote *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*?
2. What are the three cantos of the *Divine Comedy* by Dante?
3. Which monster does Beowulf fight first in the epic poem?
4. True or False: Agatha Christie is a pen name.
5. *In The Woods* by Tanya French is based in which city?
6. Which novel comes first in Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia* series?

For more trivia, go to:

[Broke By Books](#)



San Xavier Del Bac Mission
Tucson, AZ

Photo by Arizona Authors Association Member
Marilyn June Janson

Arizona Authors Association

Current Benefits and Submission Guidelines

Membership Benefits

The Arizona Authors Association offers several valuable benefits to our members. This newsletter provides you with a bimonthly guide to workshops, events and activities, many of them free or low cost, designed to hone your skills as a writer. In addition, both our blog and our newsletter offer advice, suggestions, and insight to reinforce your expertise.

The yearly Literary Contest furnishes an opportunity to showcase your work and the possibility of earning prizes that will enhance your reputation as an author. Do you have an older book that never got the recognition it deserved? Our new “Oldie but Goldie” category offers a chance to relaunch and renew interest in it. We also offer online book fairs or other events through our Zoom account. Advertising under the Arizona Authors Association banner allows you to promote your work and increase your visibility with a minimum of expense and effort.

I hope you will take advantage of the newsletter to report your accomplishments. Our “Congratulations” page is designed to applaud your efforts and inspire other members. We also welcome your input on anything author related, such as your own literary news, useful tips, helpful websites, etc. Ask questions that will be answered in the next issue. Together, we will all benefit from the combined knowledge of our diverse membership.

Lastly, one of the biggest benefits of your Arizona Authors Association membership is the ability to reach others with your book releases and advertisements. At present, members may submit a quarter-page ad for author-related services without cost. Books released within the previous six months (or about to be released) will receive a free, full-page ad.



Submissions to the Newsletter

Your input is welcome! The following categories accept submissions through midnight on the **15th** day of odd-numbered months. Send all entries to: faerland@yahoo.com.

Features are generally between 800-1200 words (lengthier or shorter submissions will be considered). We seek articles that motivate and inspire writers, enhance their skills, assist in promoting their works and more.

What Are You Reading? asks members to share their current reading material in 200 words or less. Tell us why you like or dislike a book (written by anyone except yourself). This will help other members in their quest for new reading material.

Road to Imagination seeks finished works of 800 words or less based upon the previous issue's story prompt. **Back Page Quotes** seeks jokes or quotes (200 words or less) on the foibles of writing, editing or publishing. We also need Arizona landscape **photos**, as inspiring space fillers for our newsletter. If we use them, we'll credit you. Please be sure to state in your email that you took the photos.

If you published a book within the last six months, share it with the Arizona Authors Association Newsletter. We'd love to advertise it in our next issue. We will also list any upcoming book-related events, meetings, workshops, book sales, book signings, etc., across the state or in nearby regions as space permits. If you offer editing, proofreading, or other literary services, submit a quarter-page ad with us, currently without cost to members in good standing.

Send your articles in Word, Notepad or Wordpad format. Articles will be standardized to a Times New Roman 11pt font. Pictures may be gif, png or jpegs. Send large pictures, if possible, (no less than 2"x4") since we can shrink any picture without losing quality, but small pictures cannot be enlarged without deterioration. Note that all submissions are subject to light editing/proofreading. You will be informed in advance of publication if extensive edits are needed.

Thank you!

Recent and Upcoming Events

RECENT

We had a ball during the July 10 Book Fair on Zoom. Toby Heathcotte, Jane Ruby and Kathleen Cook hosted the event, which lasted from 10:00 am to about 11:40 am on Saturday, July 10. Many authors shared tips and hints, in addition to presenting their chosen books. Diana Grillo shared her experience with making an audio book, which was enthusiastically received by the rest of the group.



I hope you'll join us for the next book fair. It's a way not only to share your books with others, but to pick up some great info and networking opportunities. We will have another one later this year; check the next newsletter for details.

On July 17, the Payson Book Festival held its annual event at the Mazatzal hotel and casino on Highway 87 in Payson, Arizona. The event lasted all day from 9am to 4pm and the estimated turnout was 600 participants.

UPCOMING

Check out the Maricopa County Library Website for a list of events in the Phoenix area [HERE](#).

Check out the Pima County Library website for a list of events in the Tucson area [HERE](#).

Check out the Coconino County Library website for a list of events in the Flagstaff area [HERE](#).



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Have questions? Ask Marilyn [@janitserv@cox.net](mailto:janitserv@cox.net), www.janwrite.com, or call her at 480-699-6389



**Century Plant,
Sedona AZ.**

**Photo by Arizona
Authors Association
Member**

Sharon Sterling

Congratulations to Our Members



Mike's latest release, *[Bombshell: The Night Bobby Kennedy Killed Marilyn Monroe](#)*, has been getting a lot of attention lately. He appeared on *[The Kennedy Show](#)*, Fox Business Network, on July 8th to discuss the book. *[The Sun](#)*, the UK's largest newspaper, interviewed Mike for a July 4th story. *[The Daily Mail](#)*, a UK-based publication seen by 62% of Great Britain's population each week, featured the story and purchased the serialization rights to the book.

In addition to all that, both the *[Latin Times](#)* and *[Meeaw](#)* picked up the story. The book was also featured by *[Yahoo!](#)* and many other outlets, such as Germany's popular paper, *[Bild](#)*.

[Bombshell: The Night Bobby Kennedy Killed Marilyn Monroe](#) is available for pre-order and has already reached number 1 and 2, for the print and kindle editions, on Amazon's best seller list. To find out more about Mike, click [HERE](#).



Arizona Authors Association columnist Mark D. Walker has had several articles published recently, including "Crossing Borders, Building Bridges: A Journalist's Heart in Guatemala." It was featured beginning on page 82 of the July edition of *[Revue Magazine](#)*.

The *[Partnering For Peace Newsletter](#)*, published by Peace Corps and Rotary veterans, featured Mark's article, "Board Transitions Include New Opportunities to Serve," which announced his departure from the board of that organization to focus on writing and on producing his documentary on Guatemala. You may find more on this subject [HERE](#).

The website for the documentary, "Trouble in the Highlands," has been revised to include new team members, including Executive Producer Maria Martin and two Indigenous Maya activists/consultants. Mark is still shooting for the Fall to resume filming.

<https://www.troubleinthehighlands.com/>

To find out more about Mark, check out his website: millionmilewalker.com



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE! Russ, Debbie and Nicolas





Treasurer's Report

by Jane Ruby

General Finances:

After June 14, 2021, the Association's money was moved from Chase Bank to Desert Financial Credit Union.

Total Savings: \$25

Total Checking: \$7320

Since then, revenue was collected from literary contest entries, by check and Venmo:

As of July 11:

Total Savings: \$25

Total Checking: \$7942

Literary Contest Report:

At the close of this year's contest:

Number of Entries: 72

(2020 Entries: 69)

Entries by categories:

Oldie But Goldie: 22

Fiction: 7

Nonfiction: 6

Children's Picture Book: 8

YA/Juvenile: 4

Unpublished Novel: 7

Short Story: 8

Essay: 7

Poetry: 2

Critique Requests: 7

The 2021 contest raised \$2460.

To meet awards, we need \$1550. Projected Net Profit: \$910

(2020 raised \$1890, Needed \$1225, Net Profit \$665)

To date expenses for 2021 contest: \$164.62 (Office Supplies, Shipping, Postage)

I do not anticipate more than \$100 for Award shipping & postage in mid-November

Arizona Authors Association is a nonprofit 501c3 organization. Its mission is to foster literary achievement, advance the art of writing, and to serve the writers, authors, editors, publishers and allied professionals of Arizona and the nation.

Jane Ruby, Treasurer, Arizona Authors Association

Jane Ruby is an award-winning novelist, essayist, and short story writer. She was the Secretary and Literary Contest Director for the past three years and will continue to serve the Arizona Authors Association as the Literary Contest Director and as the new Treasurer. Learn more about Jane [HERE](#).



Book Proposal

by Toby Heathcotte



Call for Contributors

Dear Arizona Authors Members,

I'm thinking of publishing a collection of essays about the pandemic under my personal company name, Mardel Books. I'm wondering whether you have an essay you would like me to consider. Contact me at: toby@tobyheathcotte.com with your stories and suggestions if you'd like to contribute.

Working title:

WHAT DID YOU DO DURING THE PANDEMIC?

AUTHORS CONFRONT THE COVID-19 CRISIS IN 2020 AND 2021

Themes might include uplifting the reader, being soulful, finding meaning, even dark or despairing. Many emotional and intellectual reactions are possible. Essays should sound authentic and reflect the author's perspective, from humorous to sad to profound. We might include songs or poetry, but the majority of the entries would be prose essays of 1000-5000 words.

Questions to Consider:

- ♦ How did the pandemic affect your extended family's social life?
- ♦ Are you or a loved one an essential worker? What changed for you or them?
- ♦ Were your children affected? Did learning at home change the family dynamics?
- ♦ Did the pandemic alter your plans for special events?
- ♦ Were you spending more time online in media vehicles such as Zoom and Facebook during the pandemic?
- ♦ Did you or someone you know experience a layoff?
- ♦ Did anyone you know suffer hospitalization or death from covid-19?



Thank you!

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*One touch of nature
makes the whole
world kin.*

-William Shakespeare

Verde River

Photo by Arizona Authors Association
Member Sharon Sterling



The Road to Imagination

by Cherie Lee

Do you ever need a prompt to get you started? Try Cherie Lee's story starter to spur your imagination and get the sentences flowing. An award-winning author, Cherie wrote the following paragraph as a guide:

"This fictional teaser can be used by teachers or by anyone (recommend sixth grade and up through all adult ages) who wants a creative writing exercise or to jump start a new work. This idea is not meant to be genre specific, but left to the writer's imagination. There are no specific rules to follow. All the listed questions do not need answers. There is no order for preferred reading."

If you would like to share a story you create with this prompt (800 words or less), please send it no later than September 15 to faerland@yahoo.com and we may publish it.

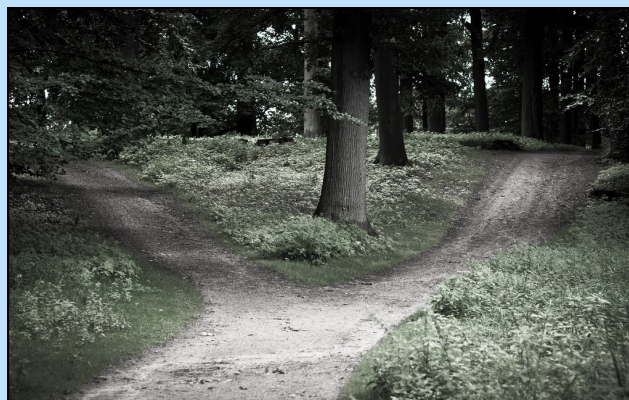
The Pool

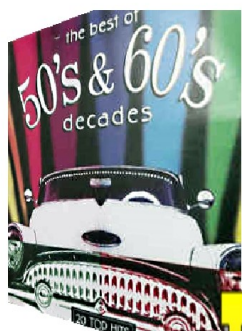
The water gleamed in late morning sunlight. A diving board stood at the deep end. A buoy rope separated the shallow from the deep. The pebble tech pool finish looked as smooth as a well-polished window pane. A lone maple tree grew nearby with chairs and a picnic table under its leafy shade. Yet no one swam on this warm, sunny day with no clouds in the sky. I walked closer to the fence around the pool. The gate was locked, but had broken loose at the rusty hinges. A sign fastened on the gate said, "Enter at your own risk."

Questions:

1. Why would someone keep the pool gleaming and pristine but ignore the rust on the hinges?
2. How old is the person telling this story?
3. Is the water's sparkling clean appearance deceptive?
4. Where did all the people go and why aren't they here?
5. In addition to the old maple tree, what other features can be seen?
6. Is there a town nearby?
7. Why did someone place the sign? Is there a danger from drowning or something else?

Now it's your turn. Go forth and write!





Those Were The Days, My Friend!

Arizona Authors Literary Awards Banquet

Celebrate Winners of 2020 and 2021 Literary Contest
November 6, 2021
Glendale Civic Center

Dinner – Awards – Fun – Prizes – Photos – Literary Magazines
Theme: “Those were the days, my friend.”



Think of a time or place in your life or the life of a character in the past (or the life yet to come). Come in a costume depicting the same. Creativity in costumes is limitless with this theme! Choose any time or place, past, present, future – real or imagined. Costumes are not required but make the event far more fun for everyone!

<https://glendaleciviccenter.com/>





Tile Design
San Xavier Del Bac
Tucson, AZ

Photo by Arizona Authors Association
Member
Marilyn June Janson

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In addition, You can increase the page size by clicking the "plus" sign at the top (where the fat arrow points). Or, you may increase the page size to "page width" by clicking the spot shown by the narrow arrow. If you have any questions, email faerland@yahoo.com. We want all of our readers to love reading the newsletter as much as we love producing it!

ArizonaAuthorsAssociationJuneJuly2020final.pdf - Adobe Acrobat Reader DC

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Arizona Authors Association

Issue 8

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ARIZONA AUTHORS ASSOCIATION

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Vice President's Corner by Toby Heathcotte

While casting around for "things to do while we're stuck at home," I went through the files to help me recall what was going on with Arizona Authors a year ago. I know that's boring. What can I tell you?



The Million Mile Walker Review What We're Reading and Why

By Mark D. Walker



The Long Night of White Chickens was my introduction to Francisco Goldman, the author who I selected to review due to his connections to Guatemala, and I've been a fan ever since. Though born in Boston, his mother is a Catholic Guatemalan, his father Jewish American, so his life started off with an intriguing combination of influences. The book is a tense, almost surrealistic detective story that opens windows on the Latin American reality of State Sponsored assassinations, marabunta youth gangs and organized crime.

His next book, *Say Her Name*, is an evocative story of love and loss between the author and the woman he fell in love with and married, writer Aura Estrada. Tragically, a month before their second wedding anniversary, Aura breaks her neck body surfing. To deal with the loss and deep-seated feelings of guilt, Goldman chronicles his unspeakable loss, and the stages of grief when love and passion give way to inexplicable pain.

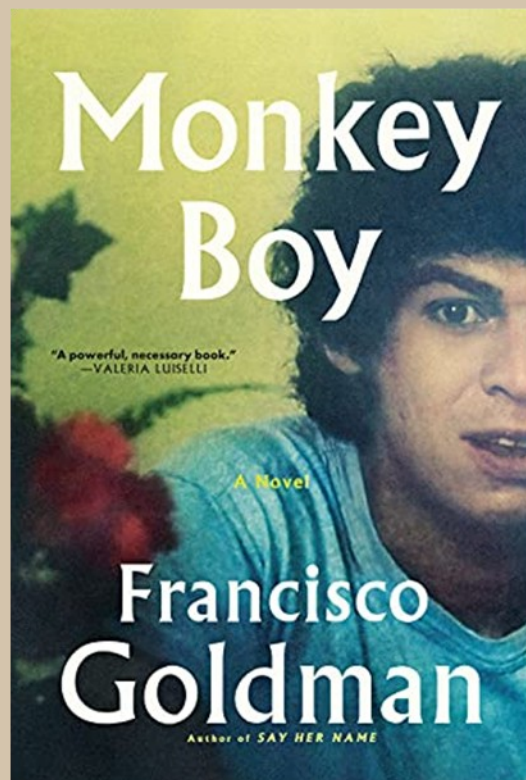
The author recalls memories from their university days in Mexico City, her studies at Columbia University, their early years together in New York City, and the exhilaration of youthful travels in Mexico and Europe. Humor and humility lighten the pain of the author's overwhelming loss.

Covering the wars in Central America in the 1980s for Harper's magazine led Goldman to write *The Art of Political Murder: Who Killed the Bishop?*, an extraordinary piece of investigative journalism that examines the assassination of Guatemalan Catholic Bishop Juan Jose Gerardi Conedera by the Guatemalan military.

Bishop Gerardi, Guatemala's leading human rights activist, was bludgeoned to death in the parish garage, which is only a few hundred feet from the government's most sophisticated security units and surveillance apparatus. The murder took place just two days after a groundbreaking church-sponsored report was released that implicated the military in the murders and disappearances of some 200,000 civilians. Under continuous threats and intimidation, Goldman doggedly tracks down and interviews witnesses that no other reporter or authority is able to access and reports first-hand some of the crucial developments in the case unfolding before him. The book was recently made into an HBO documentary in which Goldman, dramatically, adds critical context drawn from the months he spent investigating the murder.

This book is especially interesting because I've been working on a documentary that will explore the causes for the current migrant crisis: why so many Indigenous are fleeing Guatemala. Our documentary, *Trouble in the Highlands*, covers many of the same issues that Goldman covered, including political corruption, military crimes, and the human rights abuses that Bishop Gerardi's report exposed.

We are pleased that Francisco Goldman has agreed to be interviewed for our documentary. In addition to Goldman, we recently added new team members and updated the website. See: <https://www.troubleinthehighlands.com/>



continued on the next page

The Million Mile Walker, continued

Naturally, as soon as I learned that Goldman has a new book out that is largely “autobiographical,” I ordered [Monkey Boy](#). I was especially interested in its designation as a “novel” rather than autobiography (as reviewers have pointed out). In a revealing interview with Rachel Kushner for *LitHub*, he explains the importance of changing the surname of his lead character:

So, yeah, that “-man” to “-berg” makes a big difference. It’s a first decisive step into fiction, into turning myself into a character that’s going to move and act and think within a fiction. It’s freeing myself from “myself,” from any duty to be faithful to the “known facts,” as I might be if I were writing an autobiography, even if many of the components I may be giving to “Frankie Goldberg” are, in fact, drawn from my own life.

Walking the fine line between literary fiction and autobiography gives the author flexibility to fill in the gaps with fictional material that enhances the story.

In the interview, he explains the key role that several women play in the story—his former Mexican wife, Aura, his mother, sister and grandmother:

There’s also my Guatemalan grandmother, Abuelita, definitely a strong and eccentric woman who I adored, and the women she sent up to Boston to help my mother with housework and looking after us so that she could go to college, eventually becoming a college Spanish professor.

In the novel, Frankie Goldberg visits two of those women:

As an adolescent, I had a talent for turning unrequited loves into friendships. Later my friendships with women didn’t require such painful beginnings. All my adult life, I’ve had strong male friendships, too, in the U.S., in Mexico and Central America. But in the U.S., most of my closest friends are women. I guess I just enjoy their conversation and sense of humor and way of being in the world more, and I think I also relate to them more.

Jewish Italian writer Natalia Ginzburg helped the author learn one important, revealing lesson on coming from a diverse, cultural background, “...how artificial the racial and ethnic categories we’re boxed into are, and that there’s no such things as being “half and half” anything, that we’re only fully what and who we are...”

The author reveals some interesting connections between his family and their friends to some important times in Guatemala’s history and shows how he can speculate what might have been, by edging his commentary into the realm of fiction:

Did the United Fruit bilingual secretary, Lolita Ojito, ever filch a note or diary page in which Freud’s nephew had scribbled something like “If this is gonna work, boys, we gotta get the archbishop on board, and pronto” and bring it to her best friend in Our Lady’s Guild House, so that she could give it to the consul, who would pass it directly to President Arbenz, maybe in time to save the day? Doesn’t seem so. At any rate, the day was never saved. Questioning Mamita (the author’s mother) about the coup had turned out to be futile. If only I’d thought to ask her about it years ago. If only.

The speculation is even more compelling when the author reveals that his mother knows the ambassador, Cabot Lodge, and the upper crust Bostonian “Brahamins” who are employed by United Fruit Company. The author goes on to reveal the origins of his nickname in life, “Monkey Boy,” as well as behind-the-scenes details of the key witness, which leads to the conviction of at least some military personnel responsible for killing the Bishop.

This book is powerful on so many levels and provides additional insights into the author’s previous works. As *Publishers Weekly* correctly points out, “Captivating...Goldman’s direct, intimate writing alone is worth the price of admission.” And Kirkus’s starred review states, “The warmth and humanity of Goldman’s storytelling are impossible to resist.” You can find the entire review by clicking [HERE](#).

Francisco Goldman has published five novels and two books of nonfiction. His books have been published in sixteen

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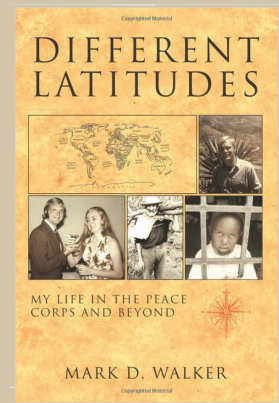
The Million Mile Walker, continued

languages. He lives in Mexico City.

You can find the entire review of this book and many others on my website under the "Library" tab. Please let me know what you think - about this newsletter, my reviews and most importantly, what you are reading so I can ponder all of it and share some of your comments in my next column. You can email me at: Mark@MillionMileWalker.com or through my websites: <http://www.millionmilewalker.com/> or Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/millionmilewalker/>

Walker was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Guatemala and spent over forty years helping disadvantaged people in the developing world. He came to Phoenix as a Senior Director for Food for the Hungry, worked with other groups like Make a Wish International and was the CEO of Hagar USA, a Christian-based organization that supports survivors of human trafficking.

His book, *[Different Latitudes: My Life in the Peace Corps and Beyond](#)*, was recognized by the Arizona Authors Association for nonfiction and according to the *Midwest Review*, "... is more than just another travel memoir. It is an engaged and engaging story of one man's physical and spiritual journey of self-discovery..." His honors include the "Service Above Self" award from Rotary International. His wife and three children were born in Guatemala. You can learn more at www.MillionMileWalker.com and follow him on his [Facebook](#) page.



*It's far better to face your past
than to scurry through life
without a backbone. Go forth
boldly, confidently, without fear
of skeletons.*

- Kathleen Cook

**Giant Saguaro
Cottonwood, Arizona**

**Photo by Arizona Authors Association Member
Sharon Sterling**



July 10th Book Fair

Look who had fun!



Left to Right, Top Row: Kathleen Cook, Isabel Banerjee, Diana Grillo
Middle Row: Jo Ann Crooks, Jeanne Burrows Johnson, Toby Heathcote
Bottom Row: Peter Bernhardt (unseen, Geri Isara)
Also attending: Jane Ruby

Come Join Us For Our Next Book Fair!
Check the October Issue Of This Newsletter for Details!



Oh, the Suspense!

by Donis Casey

When I'm really in the writing zone, in the midst of a scene, I've been known to leap up from the computer and begin pacing the floor, unaware of my surroundings, muttering dialog to myself. I imagine that to an observer I look like a hands-free cell-phone user (or someone who is off her meds). Except there's not a person on the other end - there's another world.

I sometimes have to figure out how I'm going to pull off the particular scene I have in mind. I know what I would like the reader to see in her head, what emotions or feelings I'd like to convey, but what is the most effective way to paint that picture, to evoke those feelings? If I write the scene in two or three different ways, I'll often be able to come up with the right combination of images, but occasionally, I'll realize that I don't quite have it. What I need is more suspense!

That's when I go hunting. If I need more suspense, I pick out several works - literature or movies - that made me tense, and try to pick apart how it was done.

I'm always looking for effective ways to build tension. In the course of writing several books, I've seen and read all the classic suspense-building techniques in action, and keep a list of examples, not only to remind myself, but to use as a teaching tool as well. No matter what genre of book or story you are writing, a sense of suspense - anticipation - is necessary. Will the guy get the girl? Will the thieves pull off the heist? Will the astronaut evade the alien? Will the sheriff outdraw the outlaw? Will the ill child live? We readers want to know how it all turns out! And we authors want you to keep reading.

A refresher on suspense-building never goes amiss, Dear Reader. Here are a few popular techniques I've garnered over the years.

The Ticking Clock: Our hero must accomplish something before a horrible thing happens. Diffuse the bomb before it goes off in two minutes! Find out who really did it before the wrong man is hanged! Great example, the movie *D.O.A.* (the 1950 original with Edmond O'Brien is better than the 1988 Dennis Quaid version).

Drag Out the Action: Seems counterintuitive, doesn't it? But if you just know the trap is going to spring, and it doesn't ... doesn't...doesn't... The anticipation is killing me! The trick here is timing. You have to know when enough is enough. Great example, Lee Child's *Bad Luck and Trouble*.

Add More Peril: Our heroine is running through the jungle and the Columbian drug suppliers are right behind her, brandishing their machetes. She crashes through the brush, and finds herself on the edge of a cliff! There is a river at the bottom of the gorge, so she takes a leap, just feeling the breeze as a blade slashes over her head. She falls 75 feet into the river and realizes it's infested with piranhas! She swims like the dickens, piranhas nipping at her heels, and as she nears the shore, 40 tribesmen with poisoned dart blowguns step out from the trees... No matter how bad the situation is, it can always be worse. Great examples, any of the *Die Hard* movies.

I Know Something You Don't Know: The author has told us the villain is hiding under the stairs, but the hero has no idea as he walks down into the dark basement. The author gives us a piece of crucial information that the

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Oh, the Suspense! Continued

characters don't have. Great example, Louise Penny's *A Fatal Grace*.

The Cliffhanger: Remember the villain under the stairs? He leaps out! He grabs the hero around the neck! He pulls a knife! Meanwhile, back at the ranch... The reason the reader doesn't throw the book against the wall in frustration is because he wants to know what's been going on back at the ranch, too. Great example, *Hour of the Hunter* by J.A. Jance.

My Hands Are Tied: Our hero can see disaster about to happen, but is powerless to stop it. Greatest example of all time, Alfred Hitchcock's movie *Rear Window*.

One Step Forward, Two Steps Back: Our sleuth spends weeks investigating Laura's murder. He cannot discover a single clue to her death. Everyone loved her! She was wonderful and squeaky clean. He's baffled, and sits in her apartment long into the night, pondering. One midnight, the front door opens, and ... it's Laura! She's alive! Then who is the woman who was found lying on the floor of Laura's apartment, wearing her clothes, shot in the face with a shotgun? And where has Laura been all this time? Ultimate example, the 1944 movie *Laura*.

And one of my favorites –

Foreshadowing: This takes some skill to pull off well. The author gives us a hint that eventually something bad is going to happen, and the reader spends 300 pages in tingling anticipation. She has that sense of inevitability. You say your hero is afraid of water - the reader just knows that fear is going to figure in to the climax. *We knew it would come to this*. If the author has set it up well, there are even a couple of false payoffs, leaving us still waiting with bated breath for it to happen. Excellent example, Robert McCammon's *Queen of Bedlam*. What a set up!

Donis Casey is the author of *Valentino Will Die*, the second episode (following *The Wrong Girl*, 2019) of a fresh new series starring Bianca LaBelle, heroine of the silent screen action serial *The Adventures of Bianca Dangereuse*, as well as ten *Alafair Tucker Mysteries*, set in Oklahoma during the booming 1910s and featuring the sleuthing mother of ten children. Donis is a former teacher, academic librarian, and entrepreneur. She lives in Tempe, AZ.

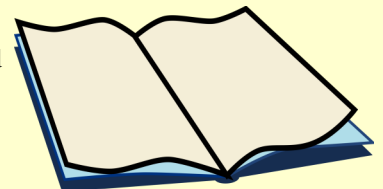
"A delicious glimpse into Hollywood's Golden Age... Bianca might be a glamorous star, but she is also a likable, smart, and feisty heroine." Rhys Bowen

What Are You Reading?

This week, the Guilford Library had a "donation sale" of extra books, some of them recent. I took advantage, as usual, and nearly bought out the place. Thank goodness the covid lockdowns are over! More library sales, yay!

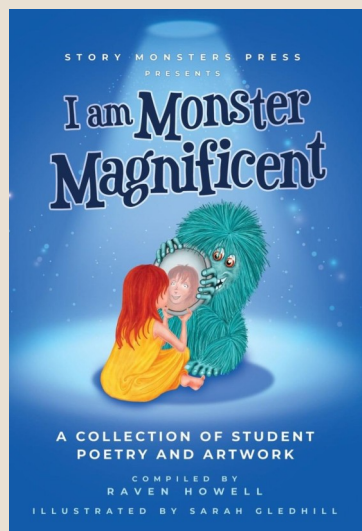
I picked up a volume by Linda Maria Frank in her *Annie Tillery* Series. This one is called [The Madonna Ghost](#). It's geared toward youth and teens, but I found it fun and refreshing. Heck, I'm going through my second childhood anyway, so I think I qualify as a target audience! :) In the book, young Annie vacations with her aunt Jill, an undercover cop. While Annie meets Ty, the hunk of her dreams, her aunt gets into trouble investigating a cell of terrorists. Annie and Ty meet up with a ghost from an old shipwreck, as well as a real live historian and ghost hunter, Alice.

It's not surprising that Annie and Ty, along with historian Alice, manage to get into a heap of trouble as well. But in the end, they save the day, nab the terrorists, and rescue Aunt Jill from going up in flames. This book is rousing good fun, an easy-to-read adventure for kids, teens, and those going through their second childhoods like me! —Editor





Student Poetry and Artwork Collection Celebrates Magnificence in a Monstrous Way



CHANDLER, AZ — What makes you *monster magnificent*? This is the question that students in grades two through seven answered in their poetry submissions to the Monster Magnificent Children's Poetry Contest. Featuring the winning student poems and artwork, *I am Monster Magnificent: A Collection of Student Poems and Artwork* (Story Monsters Press), compiled by award-winning author and poet Raven Howell and illustrated by Sarah Gledhill, is the culmination of the yearlong contest sponsored by Story Monsters LLC.

"As a former teacher and the publisher of Story Monsters Ink, I wanted to find a way to celebrate the best in children through their writing and artwork, and I thought that a contest specifically for students was just the way to do that," shared Linda F. Radke, president of Story Monsters LLC and publisher of Story Monsters Press.

Raven Howell, who serves as Story Monsters' poetry director, was integral in soliciting entries from students and even entire classrooms, including special education classrooms at elementary schools across the country.

"I was honored to have the opportunity to collaborate with Raven for this contest and book," Radke said. "I truly cannot think of a better person to be our poetry director."

Howell also had the daunting task of choosing the 33 original poems and eight self-portrait drawings for publication. The collection of poems selected vary in form and feature fun subjects such as baseball, dragons, classroom Zooming, and friendships. The book also includes a guide written by Howell on writing poems. In recognition of their magnificent entries, upon publication winners will receive a complimentary copy of the book and a small payment.

"When Linda and I were brainstorming ideas, we wanted this contest and subsequent book to be an uplifting reminder to celebrate each day with cheer and gratitude," said Howell. "Each applicant expressed and shared joy and magnificence to their finest capability with their submission."

I am Monster Magnificent: A Collection of Student Poems and Artwork (ISBN: 978-1-58985-201-3, softbound, \$14.95; eISBN: 978-1-58985-205-1, eBook, \$3.99) is slated for release on October 26, 2021, and will be available for purchase from Amazon and at www.monstermagnificent.com. For more information about *I am Monster Magnificent*, Story Monsters Press, or Raven Howell, visit www.storymonsters.com, email publisher@storymonsters.com, or call 480-940-8182.



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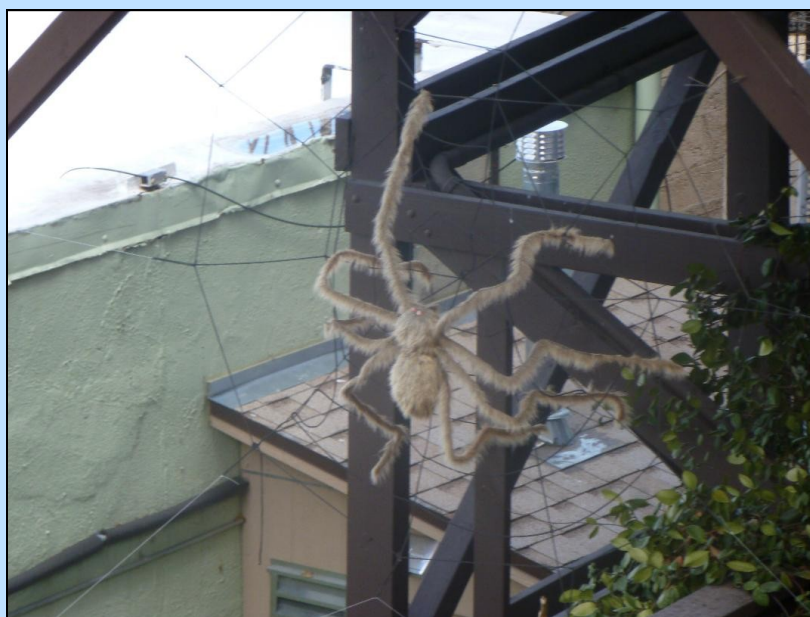
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Where in Arizona?

Each issue we'll add a photograph taken somewhere in Arizona along with a list of ten locations, one of which is correct. If you think you know which one, write to faerland@yahoo.com and let me know. The first one to guess the answer will have their name featured on this page in the next issue.

This month's photo was taken by Dick Waters. I hope you're not afraid of spiders! :)



Possible Locations:

Yuma

Jerome

Page

Gila Bend

Bisbee

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Sedona

Prescott

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Buckeye

Write to faerland@yahoo.com no later than September 15th if you know the location of the photo. If you answer correctly, we'll publish your accomplishment.



The Inevitable Author

by Kathleen Cook

What is Your Legacy?

As I age, I think more and more about the legacy I'll leave behind, one day. That legacy is not only in material goods, or in the children that I know I've raised well and who make me proud daily. The legacy I leave will be in my books, articles, journals and blogs. What writing can I still do that will have an impact on the future, and help to shape it for the better?

There are many subjects worthy of our attention at this critical time in history. Climate change is one of them. We see it in the devastating fires, droughts, floods, and temperature records. Have you thought about documenting it in your own locale? We can see changes in our own backyards. I can now grow plants I didn't grow before, as my area transitions agriculturally from zone four to zone five. In the Valley of the Sun, you may have the opposite reaction ... things you could grow before, such as peaches, are now struggling to fruit in that backyard tree. But with some irrigation (if you can manage it during a drought) you may be able to grow some exotic fruits native to African oases.

Are the animals adapting? Do you see as many lizards now as you did in years past, or are they dwindling in number? Write about it. Write about those things that have resisted climate change and those species that are succumbing to it. Every locale should have a record keeper, a chronicler, to help future scientists understand how we got to where we'll be then. You don't need a science degree. You just need a pen, paper and your own eyes. Such eyewitness accounts will be critical to future understanding and mitigation.

Other subjects abound for the writer who wants to leave a legacy for the future. Do you see changes in your city government, in monuments, in the political landscape, in advances and setbacks in social justice? Write about them. Are the local sentiments different from the state as a whole? Document those sentiments. Sometimes, data is lumped together in a big picture without ever taking apart the small pieces that made up that big picture. Historians of the future will wonder about the nuances ... you may be their only source for those nuances.

Even if you don't want to write about the big issues, the little ones will still be useful to someone. How do you live now, on a day to day basis? When we think about people of the 1960s, we "think" we have all the information, but we don't. Even an era that most of us old folks remember is not really chronicled well enough for posterity to understand the details. As a teen who spent a few years in the rural South, for example, I remember my mother renting a home without plumbing. I remember the dry sink in the kitchen, and wondering why the faucet wasn't there. It took me a while to understand that I had to take a bucket, go to the well, fill it, heat the water on the stove, plug up the sink, and throw the water in the sink to do dishes. I had to remember to put the bucket directly under the hole in the sink for the water to drain out. Oh boy, if I didn't remember, I wound up washing the floor that day, whether it needed it or not. How many people know that? Probably very few ever experienced it. As a Chicago born and bred kid it was a shock to move to the rural South, but I adapted. People adapt . . . and then they forget.

Write about all the things you do now. How long does it take to power up your computer? What about the finicky toaster that makes you pull up toast with a knife, or the coffee pot that continually spills water over the counter? Write

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The Inevitable Author, continued.

about the things that people won't remember. They may not seem important to you, but the little things will make a big difference to people 100 years from now when they're trying to make an authentic movie or documentary. (If there is even such a thing then; I hope so!)

So big or small, important or minor, just start creating your own legacy for future generations. Write.

Kathleen Cook is a retired editor and the author of more than twenty books. A former copy writer/editor for Demand Studios, she also served as the Fictional Religion Editor for the ODP (Open Directory Project) in the late 90s. She is currently the Arizona Authors Association Editor as well as the new Secretary. Find out more about Kathleen [HERE](#).



*“You are the fairy tale
told by your ancestors.”*

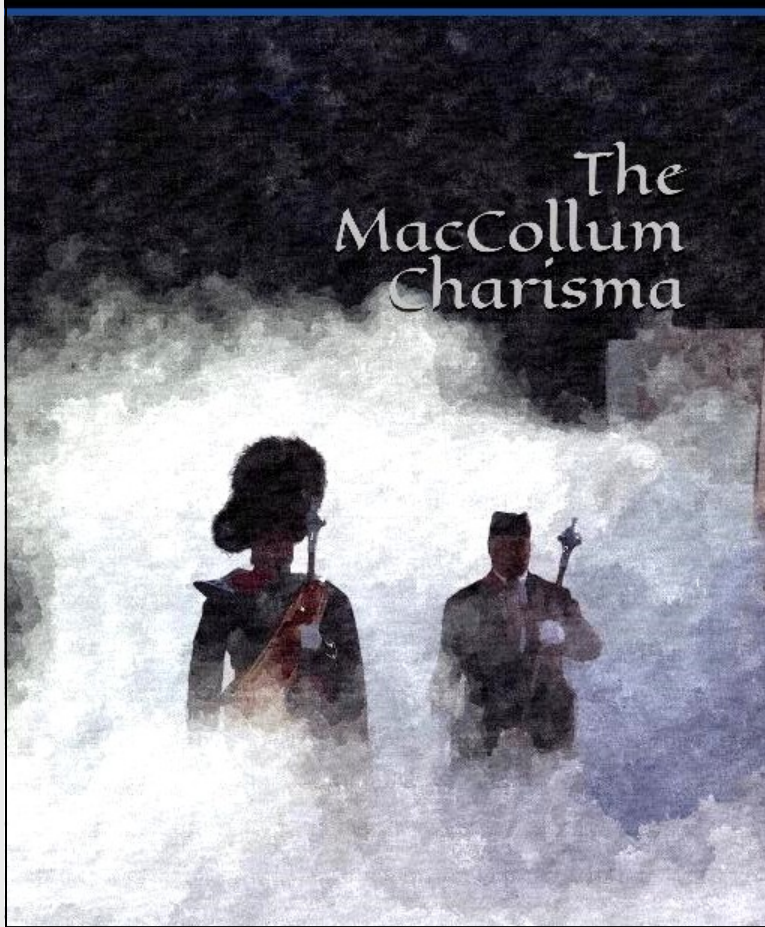
— Toba Beta

Photo courtesy of [Tomas Castelazo](#)

NEW BOOK RELEASE

by Ashleen O'Gaea

Ashleen O'Gaea



The MacCollum Charisma

The MacCollums of Kilwestra are a charming Scottish clan, no doubt – but their *charisma* is a magical artifact that requires careful handling. Since it was created from one woman's agony over the New Berwick witch trials in the 1590s, at least five other first daughters of her line have died of its curse – and not even four more centuries of iniquity, misunderstanding, and disdain could drain its energy. It would take two 21st-century witches, one on either side of the charisma's ancestral power, to do that.

The MacCollum Charisma follows a fictional branch of a real family from its creation of a magical artifact through the growth of its power and the damage it does, to its destruction after the Gathering of the Clans in Edinburgh in 2009.

You can find this book on [Amazon](#), [Waterstones](#), and on the author's website [HERE](#).

From Ashleen's Amazon page:

I was born in the Pacific Northwest, but can't imagine calling anywhere but Tucson home. I've written quite a few novels, ranging from contemporary to fantasy, and including a set of stories for children and a couple of books for middle-schoolers. My nonfiction work ranges from a variety of books about Wicca - because I'm a fully ordained Wiccan priestess - to one about West Highland White Terriers! And of course I've always got more stories and books in the pipeline. When such things are safe, Husband-man and I love to entertain. We like to camp and travel, too, especially to Celtic Festivals, where we often hold a booth for our Scottish clan (MacCallum-Malcolm), and sometimes get to show off our West Highland White Terriers, Wee Dram (CH Headsup Highland Adventure) and Isla, whose formal name is Islay Single Malt. Speaking of single malt, I take mine neat.

To read more about Ashleen, click [HERE](#).



NEW BOOK RELEASE

by Ashleen O'Gaea and Canyon Dancer

IN THE SHADOWS OF ADVENTURE

ADVENTURE WICCA'S ELUCIDATED BOOK OF
SHADOWS



ASHLEEN O'GAEA AND CANYONDANCER

In the Shadows of Adventure

Adventure Wicca's Elucidated
Book of Shadows

Written by the Tradition's founders and leaders of its first coven, *In the Shadows of Adventure* combines the modern Pagan religion of Wicca with humanity's innate urge to explore. Adventure is distinct among Wicca's traditions; known and defined by synthesis and innovation, it's the nature of Adventure to set out from convention and ease, and make camp in the woods beyond.

The foundations of this Trad are a brave heart, a hospitable camp, and the urge—no, the calling—to see what's around the next bend, where we'll confront and reclaim the personal power our shadows hold in trust for us. This handbook is the only one to take you inside the Tradition, revealing its premises and history, and describing its practice.

A complete Book of Shadows and more, it's an illustrated and in-depth exegesis of the Traditions fundamentals and its singular interpretation of Wiccan theology, enhanced with songs, stories, poems, and unique liturgical material and rituals. And if you feel at home with what you discover in these pages? Find out how to get in touch with O'Gaea and Canyon Dancer to see if you're an Adventurista, too.

Find this book on [Amazon](#) and on the author's [website](#).

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Do you know a joke about writing, publishing or editing, or a quote from a famous author? Share it with Back Page Humor and if we use it, we'll credit you with the entry. Send it to faerland@yahoo.com before the 15th of odd-numbered months, and it may appear in the next issue.