

## Our Next KWA Meeting May 15

Rockwell Public Library  
5939 E. 9th, Wichita

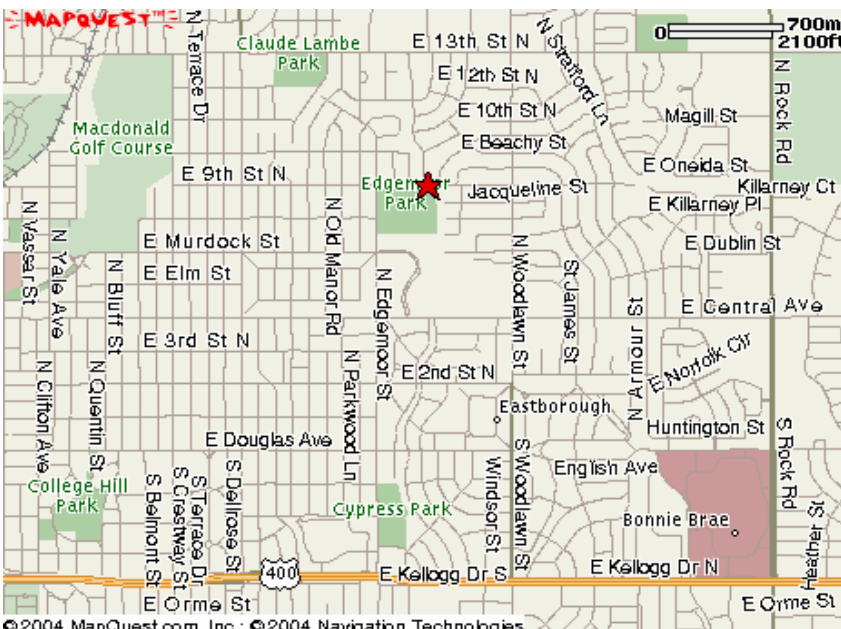
Social Time: 2:30-3:00 p.m.

Meeting: 3:00-4:30 p.m.

Program: What Did You Say Your Name Was?

Do you have a character whispering in your ear for a chance at a life? Want to start fresh with someone new? Here's your chance. Come to the KWA meeting in May and meet that new person: a real character. You will be creating him or her yourself while learning about the many facets that make up a memorable character and how top line writers leave their characters sticking in their readers' minds. The best part is that if you and your character really hit it off, you have a great start on your next work of fiction. If you don't, there's always the round file.

If you have a character in mind and can find a newspaper or magazine picture resembling him or her, bring it along. If not, just bring yourself and pen and paper. See you there.



## New & Renewing Members

### Renewals

Bonnie Eaton  
James P. Johnston  
Kerry Johnston  
Theresa Neal

## Mark Your Calendar

**May 5**— “Scene of the Crime” seminar committee meeting, 6:00 p.m., Borders East cafe. For details contact Gordon at 685-0098 or by email at [gordon@gordonkessler.com](mailto:gordon@gordonkessler.com)

**May 5, 19, and June 2**— GK Brainstormers, Gordon's novel-writing support group, 7:00 p.m. in the “History” section at Borders East. Open to all. For details contact Gordon at 685-0098 or email at [gordon@gordonkessler.com](mailto:gordon@gordonkessler.com).

**May 7, 21, and June 4**— Women Working Writers, 10 a.m. Watermark Books, 4701 E. Douglas.

**May 15** — KWA Pre-Meeting Mini-Workshop on Characters, 1-1:45 p.m. Regular KWA meeting, 2:15-4 p.m., Rockwell Public Library.

**May 20** — KWA Board meeting, 6:30 p.m., 1459 Homestead.

**May 20** — Newsletter deadline for June.

## Our Mission Statement

To inform, support, encourage, and promote the writer.

# Market Place

## Market News

**Beginnings** magazine, designed especially for the beginner writer, is seeking short story submissions of up to 3000 words. They are also looking for human interest stories, creative non-fiction, and articles on the craft of writing. <http://scbeginnings.com/guidelines.htm>.

**Women's Independent Press**, a general interest newspaper for women, is seeking submissions of researched and fact-supported articles, social commentary, essays, fiction, poetry, and humor. Article Length: 250-1200 words. Pay: \$25 per article upon publication. <http://www.womensindependentpress.com/guidelines.php>.

**A Hint of Seduction**, an on-line publication, is seeking submissions of all sub-genres of short romantic fiction. Pay: \$10 per story upon publication. They have a growing list of editors and agents who regularly read the publication. <http://www.ahintofseduction.com/submit.html>.

**The Internet Writing Journal** is seeking nonfiction articles on improving writing skills, the publishing industry, screenwriting, songwriting, business writing, playwriting, Internet writing, and writing-related topics. Article Length: 1500-1750 words. <http://www.writerswrite.com/journal/guide.htm>.

**Wax Romantic** is a new romance fiction e-zine. They are looking for romantic short stories up to 3000 words, articles and essays about reading and writing romance. Pay: \$50 for stories, \$25 for articles and essays. <http://www.waxromantic.com>.

## Contests

**ByLine Magazine Contests.** For more information on all of their contests, see [www.bylinemag.com/contests.asp](http://www.bylinemag.com/contests.asp).

**“Stormy or Blue” Poem** Deadline: May 15. Entry Fee: \$3. Prizes: \$30 first, \$20 second, \$10 third. Submission: A poem in any style strongly tied to the weather—storms, rain, blue skies, etc.

**Personal Memoir** Deadline: May 20. Entry Fee: \$5. Prizes: \$60 first, \$30 second, \$20 third. Submission: An incident or reminiscence from your own life that left a lasting impression. Written in first person, up to 1000 words.

**Humorous Poem** Deadline: May 31. Entry Fee: \$3. Prizes: \$40 first, \$25 second, \$15 third. Submission: Any length or style, the funnier the better.

**Short-Short Story** Deadline: June 5. Entry Fee: \$5. Prizes: \$70 first, \$35 second, \$20 third. Submission: General short story up to 2000 words.

**11th Annual Austin Film Festival** Call for competition entries. For rules and entry forms, go to <http://www.austinfilmfestival.com>.

**Prime Time Teleplay Competition** Deadline: June 1. Entry Fee: \$30. Categories: Sitcom and Drama.

**Film Competition** Deadline: June 15. Entry Fee: \$40. Categories: Narrative Feature, Short, and Student Short.

**Documentary Competition** Deadline: June 15. Entry Fee: \$40. Categories: Doc Feature, Short, and Student Short.

**21st Annual Colorado Gold Writing Contest**, for unpublished authors of commercial novel-length fiction.

Deadline: June 1. Entry Fee: \$25. Entrants limited to the first 200. Details at <http://www.rmfw.org>.

**Cat Writers' Association's** 11th annual writing competition for published writers, photographers and editors in print, online and broadcast media. Deadline: July 1. Entry Fee: \$8.50 per entry if CWA member, \$15 for non-members. Prizes: \$500 to \$1,300 in special awards in 38 categories. Submissions: feline-oriented magazine, newspaper, newsletter and online feature articles and columns, short stories, poetry, books, photography, and more. Details: <http://www.catwriters.org>.

## Conferences

**Juniper Creek Writer's Conference**  
Date: July 16-18  
Location: Brewery Arts Center in Carson City, Nevada  
Cost: \$100-\$150; special room rates.  
Events: Wine tasting and poetry reading, workshops, editors' roundtable, manuscript critiques, portfolio reviews, poetry contest, book sale and author signing. Conference attendees may have their books available for sale.  
Details at: <http://www.junipercreekpubs.com/events>.

Stephanie Diepenbrock  
Typing/Editing Services  
Fees: Typing \$1.75/page, proofreading \$2/page, typing and proofreading \$2.75/page.  
Phone: (316) 685-6303

## Book Review by Hazel Hart

*The First Five Pages: A Writer's Guide to Staying Out of the Slush Pile* by Noah Lukeman. New York: Fireside, 2000. Trade paperback. 207 pages.

If your manuscript has been rejected and you're wondering why, Noah Lukeman's book may help you recognize the problems in your writing and fix them.

Noah Lukeman brings his current experience as a literary agent and his prior experience as an editor to *The First Five Pages*. Since agents and editors usually read manuscripts on nights and weekends, they are looking for a reason not to read any more of a manuscript than necessary.

In the 1st section, "Preliminary Problems," Lukeman discusses the things that will get a book rejected immediately. The first of these is presentation, how the manuscript looks and whether it has been sent to the right editor. Other preliminary problems include the overuse of adjectives and adverbs, the sound of the manuscript, how effectively the writer uses comparisons, and the writer's style.

If a manuscript survives the examination of preliminary problems, dialogue is the next consideration and is the subject of the 2nd section of the book. An agent or editor may begin the evaluation of the dialogue without reading a word of it. There is obviously too much if the characters talk for pages without a break. On the other hand, if several pages are turned and there is no dialogue, there is not enough. Other dialogue problems include the "Hi, how are you?" variety which Lukeman dubs commonplace, informative dialogue which involves a conversation for the sole purpose of informing the reader of things both characters already know, melodramatic dialogue, and hard to follow exchanges.

The 3rd section of *The First Five Pages* is called "The Bigger Picture." Lukeman says 99 percent of all manuscripts don't make it this far. If yours does, then it still has several hurdles in the path of acceptance. They include showing vs. telling, viewpoint and narration, characterization, subtlety, setting, hooks, tone, focus, and pacing progression.

Most of the chapters are divided into sections, 1st, showing the problem, then discussing the solution. This is followed with examples of bad writing. Next, Lukeman discusses why the examples don't work and ends the chapters with exercises to help the writer evaluate and repair his manuscript. While Lukeman does an excellent job of giving examples of bad writing, it would have been helpful if he had provided revisions of his examples. He would also have done well to remember his admonitions on presentation and hired a proofreader to eliminate the grammatical errors that were scattered throughout the book. Otherwise, the organization is effective and easy to follow, and the exercises should be useful to writers of many genres, not just fiction.

Note: The book review was borrowed from Bonnie Eaton's website ([www.sktc.net/~beaton](http://www.sktc.net/~beaton)) with her permission. The book is still available from Amazon.com new for \$9.60. Lukeman has another best selling book out for writers, *The Plot Thickens: 8 Ways to Bring Fiction to Life*, available at Amazon.com for \$10.36.

## Suzanne Brockmann

By Colleen Kelly Johnston

Suzanne Brockmann's fortieth book has just come out and she stopped at Border's on Rock Road for a signing one Tuesday in April. *Flashpoint* is a romantic suspense novel, one of a series involving a Navy Seal team and international terrorists.

Along with signing copies of *Flashpoint* as well as other of her novels, Suzanne talked about the art and business of writing. "Every writer has to adapt the rules of writing to their own needs," she explained when asked whether or not she outlined her stories. "I outline furiously. By the time I'm ready to write my outline is eighty to ninety pages long. Then I sweep right through the book." She knows how and when each character will develop, how they will grow and change during the novel, who wins and who loses. Every facet of the plot and subplots are planned out meticulously.

From the time she begins to actually write, Suzanne works an eight hour day almost exclusively, to finish a book. Most of her novels are completed in six weeks of intensive work. "But," she said, "other well-known writers work an entirely different pattern. Many do not outline at all. Some do just a bare bones outline."

Susan Johnson, well known for her historical and erotic novels, spends preparation time doing extensive research. Most of Johnson's novels are historicals which take place in Europe during the Napoleonic period or in England during the 1700s and 1800s. Susan says, "I never have a hard and fast plan when I begin writing, so my characters tend to take me where they want to go and I just follow."

Brockman already has three more novels with her publisher on their lists to come out this year. She told the small group that gathered to listen at Borders, "Find a method that works for you. That's what is important."

## Tips on Conveying Character Emotions

By Starla Criser

Weave emotions into a story using the full-range of nonverbal communication: physical responses, body language, and internal dialogue.

- Physical responses include autonomic reactions to emotion: dry mouth, rapid respiration, sweaty palms, fluttering heart, weakness in the knees, swallowing hard, eyes tearing, tingling, woozy, and more.
- Body language can include quick glances, sighs, shifts in stance, touching, quivering, smiling, face tightening, facial muscles sagging, raised eyebrow, clenched fist, snorting, laughing, stumbling, strutting, and more.
- Internal dialogue includes everything that goes on in the character's head: thoughts, reactions, and feelings.
- Do not overuse emotional descriptions; use what is appropriate for the scene. Sometimes a simple one line of emotional description is enough. Sometimes the reader needs a combination of physical responses and body language. Sometimes a scene requires a layering of emotional reactions, including internal dialogue.
- Study how your favorite authors use emotion and reactions.
- Try to find substitutes for the over-used emotional tags and reactions such as nodding, grimacing, frowning, smiling and scowling. But don't make the tags too wild, flowery or unbelievable.

## Have You Ever Looked A Man-Eating Shark In The Eye?

By Starla Criser

Emotions. Reactions. Two simple words that cover so much, and are so important to writers. If you want a reader to dive into your work and swim their contentedly for hours on end, then you must bring that work to life. It doesn't matter whether the writing piece is a fictional story, a poem, a script, or even a non-fiction article. If you can't draw the reader in, then he probably won't read the whole piece—maybe not even more than the first paragraph or first few lines.

Focusing now on fiction and characters, it is easy to say that a writer needs to bring the characters to life, to involve the reader in the story. But just how do you do that?

Sometimes it can be as simple as putting yourself in a specific character's place. Of course we can never really know how someone will react in any given situation, but you can make a pretty good guess in some instances. Remember, the characters are fictional, but they need to react in a typical or expected manner for the reader to have a sense of believability about the story.

For instance, if you (as your character) were in the following situations, how would you react?

- *You're swimming and suddenly come face-to-face with a shark.* Does every cell in your body go into a state of panic? Your heart race? Your breathing stop? Do you scream bloody murder? What, what, what?
- *A policeman comes to your door in the middle of the night to tell you your husband/wife/mate was found murdered.* Does your body go limp and you faint in horrified reaction? Do you grab the officer and shake him, demand that he not lie to you, protest that it couldn't possibly be true? Do you burst into tears, body start shaking? What, what?
- *On a whim you buy a lottery ticket and now find out that you won several million dollars.* Do you gasp, "No way!" Do you start jumping up and down like a crazy person? Does your mind race with all the things you can buy, all the debts you can pay off? Do you tear out of the house the middle of the night, dressed only in nightclothes, to stake your claim as the winner? What?
- *You and your wife have wanted children for years but have basically given up, now she tells you that she's pregnant with twins.* Do you collapse into the nearest chair, heart palpitating wildly? Do you grab her, intending to hug her with the depth of your feelings, only to embrace her with extreme tenderness instead? What?

Humans, especially women, are emotional. We laugh, we cry; we feel joy, we feel pain. Chances are you have experienced or seen others experience various lows and highs of emotional reactions. Draw upon those memories or observations as you write your stories and bring characters to life. Just as a reader often steps temporarily into the role of your characters, so should you as you create them.

## Member Bio: Hazel Hart

By Hazel Hart

When it comes to writing, I am a “seasoned aspirer,” a label I adopted several years ago after reading a critique group’s flyer aimed at “seasoned or aspiring writers.” I have had short stories published in a variety of periodicals including *Quivira* (published by Emporia State University), *True Confessions*, *Clubhouse* (a children’s magazine), and *Array*, a magazine I published with a friend. A short story, *Amanda Marie*, will be included in the new Kansas Voices anthology of winning entries published by the Winfield Arts and Humanities Council.

My first attempts at marketing my writing came when I was a teenager and were focused on those magazines I read—confessions. Although the magazines were not highly respected in literary circles, the stories published in them did what I still wanted my fiction to do: touch the hearts of readers and give them an emotional understanding of those whose lives are different from their own.

I dropped out of ninth grade to get married, passed a GED a few years later, and enrolled in Butler County Community College when it was still a junior college. My goal was a career in writing, but counselors suggested teaching would be a better field for me because I had two small children. After completing my first two years of college, I transferred to Kansas State Teachers College, which is now Emporia State University. While there, I majored in English and belonged to *Quivira*, the college writing club. Under the name, the *Quivira Traveling Show*, we write and produced our own material, which we performed at various university gatherings around the state. One of the courses I took was television script writing and a radio play I adapted was used on the college radio station.

It was in college that I started my first novel. I have completed it and one other. Both are still waiting to be published. I have found that novels are easy to start, hard to finish, and almost impossible to get published. While fiction is the focus of my writing, I have also written articles that were published in *Unity* magazine, poetry published in small literary magazines, and even an online English course for Butler County Community College.

After my children were grown, I moved to Boulder, Colorado. While living there, I took several writing courses from individual writers, one for children’s stories by Barbara Steiner, an author of several books for teenagers. I also took other writing courses and joined a critique group where I met Bess Holloway. Bess and I started a little literary magazine, *Array*, which we published for about five years.

A couple of years after I moved back to Kansas from Colorado, I found out about Kansas Writers Association and have been a member ever since. KWA’s programs and newsletters have provided me with valuable information on writing and publishing. Its critique groups have given feedback and encouragement, and many of its members have become good friends. Everywhere I have lived, I have searched out the company of writers and writing groups, and KWA is the best I have found.

Note: *Hazel Hart is a KWA member at large and mini-workshop facilitator. She teaches online composition classes for Butler County Community College.*

## I’ve Changed My Point of View

By Richard R. Walkup

I am almost ashamed to publicly admit that until nearly three years ago I was awesomely POV challenged. My writing went blithely down a chaotic road on which I was first in one person’s head, and then without warning, sometimes in mid-paragraph, or even in mid-sentence, I would leap into the head of another character. Looking back on my earlier undisciplined writing style, I can only be thankful that I have had patient and knowledgeable friends who showed me the *literary light*. I must admit, however, when crossing genres some of the rules concerning when and when to change a point of view are a little confusing and inconsistent.

Point of view is simply experiencing the story from one character’s perspective at a time. The other characters are free to speak and react, but the reader has no direct access to their thoughts or emotions until the focus or point of view is switched to another character. Point of view is like experiencing the story through a unique but imaginary video camera, a camera that not only sees but also transmits what is being felt—but most important, a camera that reads the thoughts of the POV character. The way a character thinks about what takes place around him/her is one of the main reasons people read novels. They want to see how someone reacts to these sometimes incredible things that happen to or around the character. The reader lives safely through the mind of the POV character without risk of harm or loss while the POV character risks it all.

Another way to experience a story is through the omniscient point of view. When in the omniscient perspective, the writer is moved up above the  
(Cont’d pg. 7)

## KWA Anthology Booksigning

The signing party for KWA's 2004 Anthology, *Words Out of the Flatlands*, was a huge success. Most of the writers showed up and enjoyed the opportunity to have other writers sign their copies. The weather cooperated with us to encourage a big attendance of writers and relatives. Watermark sold thirty or more copies over and above those given as complementary copies to the winners.

Conrad Jestmore officiated at the presentation of a copy to Sarah Bagby for Watermark Books and Café, one of our sponsors. Other sponsor copies, signed by the winners in each sponsor's category, were delivered later to Susan McKnight and Criser & Mardis, Chartered. One copy was mailed to the family of Eric Pembrey in County Roscommon, Ireland.

## Reminder: Change in Membership Dues

Due to increased costs of our newsletter, programs and seminars our dues will be \$25.00 beginning immediately. This is a terrific bargain for a one-year membership.

## KWA Help Wanted!

Help! We still need a secretary. This is not a difficult position, nor does it take a lot of time. But it is an important job within a group. Please, please think seriously about offering some time to the organization.

## KWA April Program

By Colleen Kelly Johnston

KWA celebrated National Poetry Month with a program of reading and writing exercises designed for enjoyment. Susan Stonecipher read poetry from her new book, *Threads of Life: Stitched in Rhyme*. Colleen Kelly Johnston talked about the art of poetry and read to the group from poetry by former poet laureate Billy Collins and other poets, Robert Bly, James Wright and Native American Joy Harjo. Johnston talked about why people write poetry, mentioning some work is done to rid the poet of bad feelings or memorialize an event. Others write to express a mood but, Johnston said, there is no right or wrong way to write poetry. Granted there is good and bad poetry but the poet should concentrate on accomplishing the poem's goal.

Johnston read from Richard Hugo's book on poetry and writing, *The Triggering Town*, in which he instructs, "To write a poem you must have a streak of arrogance . . . Never worry about the reader, what the reader can understand. When you are writing, glance over your shoulder, and you'll find there is no reader. Just you and the page. Feel lonely? Good. Assuming you can write clear English sentences, give up all worry about communication. If you want to communicate, use the telephone."

Those twenty some writers in the audience concluded the meeting by writing and reading some of their work.

## Member News With An Added Thought

By Starla Criser

There doesn't seem to be much going on with our members at the moment—at least nothing that has been shared with me to pass on. Hint, hint, hint! So I decided to share with you all a little about what is going on with me. Try to contain your excitement please.

At the time of this newsletter creation I am in Springfield, VA just outside of Washington, D.C., at my daughter's (Angela, KWA's web site coordinator). Normally I don't ever drive anywhere around here, which is safer for my sanity and those of the other drivers here. But I was forced to drive here a few times on my own and, believe me, the experience was not a good one! I got lost, discovered some roads I swear were not on the book of a local map they have. I finally found my way back to her place. (She had gone up to New York City for the weekend . . . trusting that I could survive on my own.)

In a week, after I fully recover from the harrowing "lost" experience, she and I will start our cross-country drive, as she is moving to Sacramento, CA. I suspect we will have many "enjoyable" experiences along our way. In truth, we are looking forward to taking our time driving from one coast to the other and seeing lots of sights that we may never see again.

The reason for this babbling is to remind you that each of us has many different experiences in life: our daily world, traveling, observing, etc. All of this is fodder for future story, article or poetry ideas. So pay attention to the details.

## I've Changed My Point of View

(Cont'd from pg. 5)

setting and the characters are just as the imaginary video camera would pull up for a wide shot. From the perspective he/she knows what each of the characters is thinking and can be inside any of their heads at will. If the omniscient point of view is used sparingly in third person, the combination works well. The problem with a strictly omniscient point of view is that the writer is telling the story rather than showing or doing, which makes it much less intimate and believable. The characters are much more alive and real when the story is told primarily from the character's individual points of view. Most novels are written in third person with a limited omniscient point of view.

Another writing style used today is the first person point of view, but this style can be very tricky. When writing in first person, the writer is writing from one character's point of view throughout the whole story. The reader and the POV character never know what the other characters are thinking until or unless they vocalize their thoughts or they express them through reactions. Though some first person writers have become quite successful in that style, most writers prefer third person with a limited omniscient point of view.

**RULES:** Remember I said in the beginning that the rules for point of view are not always consistent from genre to genre. I won't try to tell you what all the rules are because I am only familiar with those pertaining to the mystery and romance genres. It seems the greatest inconsistency is between these two genres. Generally, in fiction mystery novels, point of view is changed no more frequently than once per scene break or once per chapter. In romance novels, point of view can change as frequently as paragraph to paragraph.

Whatever genre you are writing in and whatever POV rules are appropriate within that genre, remember, the use of point of view can either spice up a story and make it interesting and believable, or without the effective use of POV, the best story will probably be lame and confusing.

Note: Richard Walkup is the KWA current treasurer. The article is borrowed, with permission, from Bonnie Eaton's website [www.sktc.net/~beaton](http://www.sktc.net/~beaton).

## KWA Members' Web Sites

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

**Don Coldsmith**, author of many historical Westerns available as books and audios.

<http://www.sktc.net/~beaton>

**Bonnie Eaton**, aka **B. J. Myrick**, author of *Dark Side of the Rainbow*, a short story collection of dark fiction, available as an e-book. Her site features book reviews and interviews of KWA members, writing articles, poetry, and excerpts from her book.

<http://www.flightfromdallas.com>

**James P. Johnston & Jon Roe**, author of *Flight from Dallas* from 1st Books Library.

<http://www.gordonkessler.com>

**Gordon A. Kessler**, author of *JEZEBEL, DEAD RECKONING* and *Novel Writing Made Simple*.

<http://www.LeapDontSleep.com>

**John Madden**, author of numerous seminars and new book *LEAP, DON'T SLEEP!*

<http://www.sherilmcgathy.com>

**Sheri L. McGathy**, author of *ELFEN GOLD*, a fantasy available as an e-book or paperback.

<http://www.loisruby.com>

**Lois Ruby**, author of literature for children and young adults.

<http://scheerdelightpub.com>

**Ruth Scheer**, author of literature for children: *Hippopotamus, My Friend, Giraffe at the Zoo, Elephant's Trunk, and The Mouse and the Angel*.

<http://members.cox.net/bdtharp/>

**Bonnie Tharp**, has authored several short stories, articles, and the novel, *Feisty Fossils*. She's currently scouring the US for an agent and has begun work on her second novel, *Grace*.

<http://www.yoderbooks.com>

**James D. Yoder**, author of *The Yoder Outsiders, Song In a Nazi Night, Lucy of the Trail of Tears, A Branson Love, Sarah of the Border Wards, Barbara: Sarah's Legacy, and Simone: A Saint for Outsiders*.

## KWA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## Newsletter

Please send all newsletter submissions of articles, member news, or encouraging quotes by the 20th of each month prior to publication to starlakaye@earthlink.net or by snail mail to Starla Criser, 9415 E. Harry, Ste. 603, Wichita, KS 67207. All email attachments should have "KWA" in the subject line and can be submitted in Word, WordPerfect, Works, or rtf format.

## Join KWA For Only \$25.00

This will give you a one-year membership, our monthly newsletter, and a membership card which entitles you to discounts to our various programs and seminars. Send your check to KWA, P.O. Box 2236, Wichita, KS 67201

Visit our Web Site at: [www.kwawriters.com](http://www.kwawriters.com)

## KANSAS WRITERS ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 2236

Wichita, KS 67201

ADDRESS CORRECTION  
REQUESTED

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