



## KWA Meeting

# September 16

Rockwell Public Library  
5939 E. 9th, Wichita

12:30—1:30 p.m.

*The Hero’s Journey*

Mini-workshop on Joseph Campbell’s *The Hero’s Journey* and how to apply Campbell’s ten steps to structure any genre of novel presented by Conrad Jestmore.

1:30—1:45 p.m.

Brief Social time

1:45—4:00 p.m.

Plotting

A group discussion about Plotting will be led by Starla Criser. Bring the plot points of your current project so we can figure out how they fit into Campbell’s ten steps, or into another plotting structure type.

## New & Renewing Members

### New

Denise Bale  
Anthony Myers  
Margaret Nichols

### Renewals

Robert & Anne Marsh Egbert  
Aleda Fredenberger  
Dorothy Jones  
Sandra Langel  
Kathleen Nelzen  
Kathy Pritchett  
Joan Sherwood

## Mark Your Calendar

**Sept. 16**—KWA Meeting: 12:30-1:30 p.m. Mini-workshop on *The Hero’s Journey* and structuring a novel presented by Conrad Jestmore. 1:30-1:45 p.m. social time. 1:45-4:00 p.m. group discussion on plotting led by Starla Criser.

**Sept. 20**—Newsletter deadline for October.

**Sept. 21**—KWA Board Meeting at Criser, Gough & Parrish, 9415 E. Harry, Ste. 602, 7:00-9:00 p.m.

**Sept. 22**—Jeff Worley will be reading and signing his latest book of poems during the evening at Watermark Books & Café.

## KWA: 2006 Events

**October 20-22** Scene of the Crime conference and KWA’s tenth anniversary celebration..

**November 18** Tom Mach will present a program on writing historical novels. The meeting will be at Collegiate High School.. There will be a short social afterward, during which time Mach will sign and sell his books.

**December 9** KWA Writing Competition Awards Banquet at The Shadow.

# Market Place

## Market News

**Charlesbridge**, a publisher of children's literature, seeks new authors of both picture books and transitional "bridge books," either nonfiction or fiction. Stories must be lively, plot-driven, with strong, engaging characters. Website: <http://www.charlesbridge.com>.

**Avon**: All editors are acquiring for the fairly new *Avon Red* line. Read the anthologies to see what they like. Stories are very erotic and romance driven. The *Inspired* line, inspirational romance, will start May 2007. Authors are invited to sign up at [www.avonfanlit.com](http://www.avonfanlit.com) to team up with editors and other authors to collectively write a novella, one chapter at a time.

**Red Sage** publishes sensual fiction with a spicy edge. They are accepting novella submissions for an anthology. Word length is from 20,000-35,000 words. Website: <http://www.redsagepub.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).

**Synopsis or Outline**: Deadline: Sept. 8. Entry Fee: \$4. Prizes: \$40 first, \$30 second, \$15 third. Submission: Synopsis for a novel, or outline and summary for a nonfiction book. Make it editor/agent ready.

**Light Verse**: Deadline: Sept. 15. Entry Fee: \$3. Prizes: \$40 first, \$20 second, \$10 third. Submission: Greeting card verse, limericks, whimsical short poems, etc. Maximum 14 lines.

**Nostalgia**: Deadline: Sept. 20. Entry Fee: \$5. Prizes: \$40 first, \$25 second, \$15 third. Submission: A fond remembrance of the way things were. Maximum 1,200 words.

**Poem in Formal Structure**: Deadline: Sept. 30. Entry Fee: \$3. Prizes: \$40 first, \$25 second, \$15 third. Submission: Try a sestina, sonnet, villanelle or any other form that requires a specific structure. List name of form on entry.

**Flash Fiction**: Deadline: Oct. 5. Entry Fee: \$5. Prizes: \$50 first, \$30 second, \$15 third. Submission: A short story or vignette under 1,000 words, which nevertheless feels complete. These often depend on atmosphere and technique more than plot.

**2006 Slamdance Teleplay Contest**: Deadline: Sept. 15. Entry Fee: \$30 half-hour submission, \$40 hour submission. Prizes: Grand prize will be selected by fox21 and receive a blind script deal to develop a television show, with pay being approximately \$30,000 for a half-hour pilot and \$45,000 for an hour pilot. Various other smaller prizes for the top three teleplays. Submission: New original hour or half-hour teleplay. They are not looking for spec scripts for existing shows. Details at: <http://www.slamdance.com/teleplay/#rules>.

**10th Annual Robert Frost Poetry Award**: Deadline: Sept. 15. Entry Fee: \$10 per poem. Prizes: \$1,000 and reading of poem at the Festival in Lawrence, Massachusetts. Submission: Poetry in the spirit of Robert Frost, no more than 3 pages each. Details at <http://www.frostfoundation.org>.

**Literal Latte Essay Awards**: Deadline: Sept. 20. Entry Fee: \$10 per essay or \$15 for 2 essays. Prizes: \$1,000 first, \$300 second, \$200 third. Submission: Unpublished essays, 8,000 word maximum. All styles and

subjects welcome. Details at [http://www.literal-latte.com/contest\\_new.html#essay](http://www.literal-latte.com/contest_new.html#essay).

### 10th Annual Zoetrope: All-Story Short Fiction Contest

Deadline: Oct. 2. Entry Fee: \$15 per story. Prizes: \$1,000 first, \$500 second, \$250 third. Submission: All genres of literary fiction, unpublished work of 5,000 words or less. Details at <http://www.all-story.com/contests.cgi>.

### Jefferson Press Prize for Best New Voice in Fiction

Deadline: Submissions began Jan. 1 and end Dec. 31. Entry Fee: \$35. Prizes: \$5,000 cash and a contract from Jefferson Press to publish the winning manuscript. Four other finalists will receive \$500 prizes. Submission: Book-length fiction or collection of short stories of outstanding merit. The author must be unpublished, except for self-published writers. Details at <http://www.jeffersonpressprize.com>.

## Conferences

### KWA Scene of the Crime

Date: October 20-22

\*See page 5 for additional details, or check out the website at [www.kwawriters.org](http://www.kwawriters.org)

### WordHarvest Writers Workshops & Tony Hillerman Writers Conference

Date: Nov. 2-5

Location: Albuquerque, NM

Cost: \$435 conference, \$135 lunch only

Highlights: Tony Hillerman, J.A.

Jance, legal and law enforcement experts, booksignings, program on humor, on-site contest. Intended for writers of all abilities and mystery fans.

Details at <http://writing.shawguides.com/WordHarvest>.

## Playwrighting

\*Taken with permission from Misti Maynard's handouts.

Playwrighting = building a play, like a shipwright = builds a ship.

### Plays can be defined by *genre*:

- Tragedy—True tragedies belong to earlier times. They are very rare in modern times.
- Drama
- Melodrama
- Parodies
- Musicals
- Musical Comedy
- Comedy—Usually stem from someone else's pain and trouble.
- Farce—"Laugh till you cry" stupid, funny with slamming doors, cross dressing and mistaken identities.
- Dark Comedy/Tragic Comedy: Example—House of Blue Leaves by Guare
- iMystery
- Absurd Theater—The meaning is in the situation and not in the dialogue.
- Reader's Theater—Uses material with dramatic potential that is not dramatic, like diaries, short stories and poems.
- Documentaries—Based on real events and interviews.

### Plays can also be defined by *time*:

- One Act
- Full length play (may be played without an intermission)
- Two Act, Three Act, Four Act—Shakespeare's plays have five acts
- 10 Minute plays—Nicholas Nickleby ran 8 hours and was broken into two parts playing four hours each on consecutive days.

### Components of a play:

- Plot—More than a storyline, plot is a structure of the action.
- Characters—*Protagonist* = Good guy, during the play the protagonist grows and learns. *Antagonist* = The villain or opposition. This could be an individual, society, the environment, or conflicts within the protagonist.
- Theme—The play's overall topic, central idea, or message.
- Spectacle—Make it interesting!
- Exposition—Background information the audience needs to understand the action.

- The inciting incident—What starts the action of the play.
- Conflict and rising action—lead to—
- The Climax—The moment of maximum tension and crisis.
- Falling action and the conclusion, or the denouement.

**Dialogue** needs to flow, to sound like natural speech, and be appropriate to each character. It must further the action of the play and not bog down into banter. To sound realistic, dialogue, like speech, makes use of broken phrases and sentence fragments. What is most important may be implied and never directly stated.

**Monologues** are when a specific person with a need to talk, talks to another specific person. From moment to moment, all characters want something. The character delivering the monologue wants something from the person they are addressing. Some plays are created entirely out of monologues.

**Subtext** is the meaning underneath the line. Subtext gives the play depth and richness. It is the unsaid, intended meaning of what is said. Writing around a topic reveals the shape of the topic. This kind of writing engages an audience because they get to figure out what the play is about as it progresses. The "unstated" also allows a play that leads to real consequences once it is revealed.

**Symbolism.** Plays often make extensive use of symbolism. For example the keys, doors, dog, doll in *The Miracle Worker* or the mathematical proof in *Proof*.

It can be very difficult to get a play produced. One possible route to production is to submit to playwrighting contests. Also, some theaters are open to reading and producing original scripts.

Some local theaters who have done Original Scripts:

- Derby Community Theater
- Mosley Street Melodrama
- Cabaret Old Town
- Wichita Children's Theater
- Wichita Community Theater
- Wichita Center for the Arts
- Big Mike's Little Dinner Theater
- City Rep (formerly Stage One)
- K.C. Repertory Company in Kansas City

*Misti Maynard operates Kechi Playhouse, 61st St. North and Oliver, Kechi, Kansas. The playhouse features local talent.*

# Entering Writing Competitions

By Colleen Kelly Johnston

## Six Commandments

1. Don't wait until the last minute to begin.
2. Read the instructions, rules, and guidelines until you understand them.
3. Familiarize yourself with the sponsors and/or judges. If the sponsor organization/magazine publishes anthologies or previous winners, get a copy and peruse it to see what has received prizes before. If there is a celebrity judge, read something that author has written.
4. Follow the rules or guidelines for submission. You are dependent on the judge(s) for your prize. Make sure your work is a credit to you and do not expect the judge to overlook simple mistakes or sloppy work or ignored rules because they can see the brilliance of your manuscript.
5. Submit your best work. Not all contests return critiqued manuscripts.
6. Read your entry(ies) aloud before printing off your final copy and/or have another person read it to be absolutely sure your writing is clear.

## Common Errors in Prose Entries

1. "I found most entrants thinking they should explain their story in the first few pages before they got started with the action."
2. The biggest problem in the contest was telling instead of showing.
3. Weak or non-existent opening hooks.
4. Awkward and run-on sentences.
5. Weak verbs. Use of passive voice and reliance on adverbs instead of strong verbs.
6. Misspelled words and unchecked grammar. Lack of proofreading.

## Common Judging Guidelines for Novel Entries

*Characters:* Is/are the protagonist(s) vivid, well-defined, and interesting? Are the secondary characters vital to the story without detracting from the main characters?

*Beginning:* Does the beginning of the story grab you? Are the following identified: place, time frame, hint of conflict or goals, the main characters?

*Conflict:* Does the interaction between protagonist(s) and other characters work? Is the antagonist complex and intriguing? Are the scenes believable and riveting? Is suspense/character tension maintained? Does it all work?

*Dialogue:* Is dialogue handled skillfully? Does it sound natural and consistent? Is there a balance between dialogue and narrative? Are action tags and attribution used effectively?

*Plot:* Is there one? Are the subplots important to the main plot? Was it interesting?

*Synopsis:* Does it tell the story clearly? Does it show viewpoint, texture, tone, major plot points? Does it answer questions rather than pose them?

*Mechanics:* Is the manuscript neat, free of grammatical errors, spelling problems, and other glitches? Are the transitions of time and place clear? Is the viewpoint clear?

*Style:* Is the writer's voice appealing? Is there "something special" to lift this from the realm of ordinary? Do you wish you could read all of this work?

## Common Judging Guidelines for Poetry Entries

*Title:* Does the title entice the reader? Does it connect to the poem without being a line from the poem?

*Appearance:* Is it neat, clean? Is it visually pleasing?

*Craftsmanship:* Are there errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar? Does it adhere to accepted rules for construction, syntax?

*Language:* Is the language archaic or obsolete? Is it appropriate to this particular poem? If colloquialisms are used, are they appropriate?

*Style:* Does it read like poetry or choppy prose? Does it have cadence, musicality?

*Imagery:* Is the imagery fresh? The symbolism clear? The metaphor sustained? Does the poem appeal to the five senses — sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste? Have color? Is it trite, skillful?

*Point of View:* Is the mood of the poem consistent? If there is more than one point of view, are they appropriate to the poem?

(Cont'd pg. 6)

## .Podcasts, blogs, great way to reach readers, fellow Writers

By Angela Wilson

Dean Koontz knows how to reach a younger market — and teach us a thing or two about marketing in a techno-savvy age.

On his website, Koontz offers a feed to podcasts. I listened to one where he spoke for 6 1/2 minutes about his experience with editors. At the end? He neatly plugged his new book, *The Husband*.

The New York Times bestselling author doesn't stop there. He is featured on Amazon.com's Fishbowl with Bill Mauer and the website is a treasure — it's up-to-date, easy to navigate and easy on the weary eyes of surfers.

Koontz isn't the only one offering insight into writing. [www.stormwolf.com](http://www.stormwolf.com) offers up advice and inspiration for aspiring and published authors everywhere via podcasts. Writers and editors across the globe — especially Canada, from my research — offer up their experiences and up-to-date industry news through blogs, like those fed from [www.ReadersRead.com](http://www.ReadersRead.com). There are several science fiction websites that offer podcasts.

There are thousands of blogs and podcasts out there, just waiting for you to discover them. Sound a bit daunting to keep up with? Well, it can be — if you Google or Dog Pile or Yahoo! Every day. There are simple ways to keep up with the latest in industry news. Here's what works for me:

I subscribe to news reader [www.bloglines.com](http://www.bloglines.com). Through this site, all I had to do was set up an account and type in the searches I wanted. Through general searches, I discovered a plethora of blogs and websites to pull information. From there, I found a Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feed, and subscribed through bloglines. Every day Bloglines automatically updates my feeds into the folders I specified. It's great. I even have the option of saving the entries I want to keep.

For podcasts, I subscribe through iTunes. Dean Koontz, of course, is at the top of my list. Every day it updates with the latest from Koontz and I can choose which podcasts I want to keep. (Of course, you know that's all of them!)

These are great — and most times, free — resources for writers. Check them out. You'll learn more about writing and learn new ways to promote your work via the net.

[www.angelawilson.blogspot.com](http://www.angelawilson.blogspot.com)  
[www.myspace.com/angelawilson](http://www.myspace.com/angelawilson)

## Scene of the Crime 2006 — the Caper of the Year!

By Gordon Kessler

If you've ever written, tried to write, wanted to write or even read a crime novel, mystery, suspense or thriller novel or short story, you don't want to miss this year's Scene of the Crime. With a mixer, banquet (including the KWA's ten-year anniversary celebration), agent/editor consultations and two days of two concurrent tracks of speakers, this conference will be the biggest of its kind ever in the Midwest.

Keynote Speaker District Attorney Nola Foulston, and speakers on the "Fact Track" such as Homicide Detective Lt. Ken Landwehr and District Coroner/Chief Medical Examiner Dr. Mary Dudley are only a few of our local master crime-fighters who will be there. We're also bringing in a couple of ringers — CSI and Police Procedures Expert Lee Lofland and ATF Agent Rick McMahon will accompany local favorites like DNA Expert Dan Fahnstock, Chief Deputy District Attorney Kim Parker and Sexual Assault Nurse Diana Shunn.

On the "Fiction Track" we're honored to have four New York Literary Agents: Miriam Goderich, Loretta Barrett, Stephen Barbara and Debbie Carter — plus Arielle Eckstut from the West Coast. With the agents, we're bringing in the editor of *Alfred Hitchcock Magazine* Linda Landrigan, Writing Coach and Book Doctor David Sterry, and Suspense Writer Larry Brooks who will give a three-session seminar on writing suspense. And we can't forget our own local favorites; Bestselling True Crime Author Robert Beattie and Crime Novelist Gaylord Dold.

Seating is limited. You can't afford to miss this one. Be one of the Good Guys at the Scene of the Crime!

For more information, check the KWA website at [www.kwawriters.org](http://www.kwawriters.org) or contact me at 316-208-6961 or [gordon@gordonkessler.com](mailto:gordon@gordonkessler.com).

## Scene of the Crime 2006

### October 20-22

### Holiday Inn Select, Wichita, KS

## Analyzing the First Sentence

By Starla Criser

At writers' conferences we are being told more and more that it has become very important to grab your reader, editor, or agent on the first page. Actually, the editors that I've heard speak this year at two of the larger conferences are stressing that you need to grab their attention within the first couple of paragraphs. Some even mention that a manuscript's first sentence plays a big part in whether they will read more of the work.

A manuscript's first sentence can be used in a number of ways to draw your reader into the story. The following are some types I've become familiar with, and possibly there are more. I've tried to provide some examples for easier understanding of each type's purpose.

### Types of First Sentences

#### Action Hook

A quick descriptive sentence about some kind of action that draws the reader immediately into the heat of a tension-filled moment.

For example: *Heart pounding in desperation, she turned slightly and thrust her left elbow back into the man's gut with all the force she could muster.*

For example: *"We demand to see Mr. Campbell right this minute!" a woman angrily voiced while the front door of the office flew open, banging against the wall.*

#### Setting Details

A descriptive sentence that paints a brief image of the setting for the reader.

For example: *Seagulls screamed in the blinding heat of the morning sun reflecting off the sails as the Fortune's crew eased her slowly away from the quay.*

For example: *Thunder rumbled, elephants roared, monkeys screeched, and lightning seemed to flicker through the heart of the lush vegetation in the Rainforest Café.*

#### Informational

A sentence that gives some type of information to the reader that is necessary to the story and will be explained more later on.

For example: *A high gloss brochure of a Bahamas cruise lie on the middle of Elizabeth's desk, right next to an invitation to her high school graduating class's tenth reunion.*

#### Character Introduction

A sentence that briefly begins describing a character relevant to the story.

For example: *She worked according to three rules: 1) listen before you act, 2) plan carefully, and 3) pass the dangerous tasks on to her partners.*

For example: *Sam slowly awakened with a hard on due to the warm, naked woman who smelled of roses and sex partially draped over his body.*

#### Emotional

A sentence that describes an emotional setting detail, reveals a character's emotions in that moment, or draws on the reader's own emotions.

For example: *Bradley Shaw looked down at his horribly battered daughter in her hospital bed in the ICU and tears stung his eyes.*

For example: *"You sonofa—" Lacey McAdams bit out, walking into the kitchen and finding her husband locking lips with another woman.*

#### Question

A sentence that raises an immediate question in the reader's mind, or begins the story by asking a question.

For example: *"Did Tony DeMarco really die from a heart attack?"*

For example: *"So, ma'am, how much to buy you out?"*

For example: *Reaching into her wardrobe, Danielle Desmond pulled out a vibrant red gown, her trembling fingers gently moved over the soft velvet.*

## Entering Writing Competitions

(Cont'd from pg. 4)

*Voice of Poem:* Is the poem expressing its own individuality, its own emotion? Is the voice strong?

*Creativity/Originality:* Is it fresh? Does the poem evoke an emotional or intellectual response? Does the poem set itself apart from others in a positive way?

*Ending:* Is it fulfilling? Does it satisfy? Does it successfully conclude the development of the poem? If the ending is a surprise, is it logical?

## President's Letter

By Conrad Jestmore

August's meeting was a two-parter, and the turnout suggested just how interested and involved our members are in both writing and the desire to enter contests.

First, Misti Maynard from Kechi Playhouse talked to us about playwrighting and how the physical requirements of the theatre dictate what a writer might be able to accomplish. She also dealt with venues for trying to get a play heard, seen and published. Her enthusiasm and high energy sparked many questions from the audience, and brought a high level of involvement from both regular members as well as first-timers.

After a brief social break, Colleen Kelly Johnston (who also provided our homemade cookies for the social time, and I will personally attest to how good they were), discussed the many and varied facets of how to best maximize your chances of winning contests you enter. She also talked about the KWA contest that is now open for entering. Her handouts on dos and don'ts should give many of our members an advantage as they enter future contests.

I would like to remind all of our members of the exciting events that are coming up in the near future. September's meeting will prove useful to just about all genres of writing, as Joseph Campbell's concept of the Hero's Journey can be applied to novels of any genre, short stories and non-fiction. In October, the Scene of the Crime Conference will have opportunities galore for writers. Check it out on our website and get registered. And don't forget, the KWA contest is now open, so get your best writing entered.

## Bad Submission Ideas

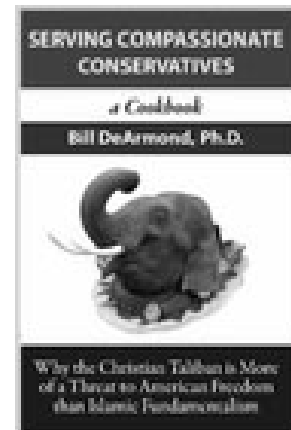
As mentioned by Kensington editor Kate Duffy at a recent writers' conference

- Manuscript wrapped up in handcuffs or chains
- Manuscript wrapped up in a silk scarf
- Manuscript with \$1 bill inserted every 10 pages
- Manuscript for a vampire story with blood dripped off and on throughout the pages

## Member News

**Starla Criser**, aka Kay Starr, has sold her latest novella, *Loving Valentine*, to her publisher.

**Dr. Bill DeArmond**, Professor of Mass Communications and Film at Southwestern College in Winfield, has released his latest book *Serving Compassionate Conservatives—a Cookbook: Why the Christian Taliban Is More of a Threat to American Freedom than Islamic Fundamentalism*. It is available at [lulu.com](http://lulu.com) and contains a chapter on the influence of the Religious Right in Kansas. Two collections of his stories, *Hail, Freedomia! And Other Tales* and *Visions of Shadow and Light* are also available from Lulu Publishing. Additionally, his poem "The Prisoner" appears in the fourth volume of the Meridian Anthology of Contemporary Poetry.



## Announcement

Novel Writing Made Simple class is being held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Butler Community College, Butler of Andover on Saturday, **September 23** (NC 315) and at Butler of El Dorado on Saturday, **September 30** (NC 210).

The class is designed to help beginning writers understand the basics of novel writing, and includes topics such as storytelling techniques, characterization, imagery, dialogue, manuscript formatting, resources and the publishing industry. Gordon A. Kessler is the Instructor. Fee is \$35.

For more information contact Gordon at [Gordon@gordonkessler.com](mailto:Gordon@gordonkessler.com). To sign up or for registration questions contact Butler Community College 316-322-3193 or 733-3193 (Wichita area). Limited seating — sign up today!

## KWA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## Newsletter

Please send all newsletter submissions of articles, member news, or encouraging quotes by the 25th 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.org](http://www.kwawriters.org)

## Our Mission Statement

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

## KANSAS WRITERS ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 2236

Wichita, KS 67201

ADDRESS CORRECTION  
REQUESTED

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