



Write ON!

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF THE
WOMEN'S FICTION WRITERS ASSOCIATION

Spring 2016

MARKETING, SOCIAL MEDIA, and CONNECTIONS



MARKETING 101

THE SECRETS OF SUCCESS

THE MAKING OF A MOVEMENT: #MSWL

BEHIND THE TWITTER PHENOMENON

PUBLISHER Q&A: WYATT-MACKENZIE

MARKETING A WOMEN'S FICTION CATALOG



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President's Note



A few years ago, I learned two valuable lessons while I was green and queasy, lying in the middle of a catamaran off the west coast of Costa Rica. A kind crewmember named Luis took pity on me, handing me some crackers and soda. My kids nearby watched for wildlife off the side of the boat—happy as could be—since I had given them all seasickness pills before boarding.

I am a pretty seasoned boater and assumed I wouldn't need help on this trip into previously untraveled waters. Luis, the experienced crewmember, strongly suggested I think twice about that. Lesson number one: Don't be stubborn and assume you know best all the time.

The second lesson came as I sipped a Coke while Luis watched with an attentive smile. I was so very grateful for the small, simple gestures on the part of a stranger. "Thank you, Luis. *Gracias*."

Before he could respond, one of my kids asked "How do you say 'you're welcome' in Spanish? It's *de nada* right?"

Luis scowled. "No, no. That's not what we say here. *De nada* means 'it's nothing.'" He practically spit out the words "*de nada*" and "nothing."

"Here, in Costa Rica, we say '*con mucho gusto*.' It means 'with much pleasure, much happiness.' So much better—no?"

My kids all nodded and parroted with exuberance as they faced the open sea, "*Con mucho GUSTO!*"

Luis turned back to me, his kind smile returning. "*Con mucho gusto, Señorita*. Eat your crackers. You

will feel better soon."

He was so right.

I carry these lessons with me everywhere but especially this year as we travel new terrain in WFWA.

With record-breaking membership and attendance numbers, the Board and I have been brainstorming constantly about how to best accommodate our membership. I have the great honor of heading up this group, but I am not stubborn. I don't pretend I know best, of course, and have been soliciting advice from members who have been involved with smaller and regional writing groups. They have taught me things that have worked and things that haven't. They have helped unlock ideas I couldn't quite articulate.

Together, the Board and I are exploring more programming, regional programming, and harnessing the immeasurable talents of an 800+ group of engaged and creative working writers. I think you will be as excited as I am about some of the programming and projects in the works.

Considering the second lesson I learned on that catamaran: I live with the great honor that comes from working with a completely volunteer-run organization. So many step up continually and constantly to offer their talents—in critique groups, in workshops, with weekly newsletters, and to produce the newly revamped Industry News. Members have anonymously sponsored retreat attendees and judged courageous entrants of our contests. Members share stories, experience, and insight daily in the closed Facebook group.

Thank you, we say to them—to you—over and over again.

And we do not expect to hear: *de nada*. Because it is not nothing.

I know that you do it with pleasure. With happiness. With much love for this organization and its exciting future.

Just as I do.

Con mucho gusto.

XO

Editors

FEATURES EDITOR

Erin Bartels writes copy for a living, but she writes novels for a life. She has worked in the publishing industry for fourteen years and has been a finalist in WFWA's Rising Star Contest and in the *Saturday Evening Post's* Great American Fiction Contest. You can find her in her home office in the middle of the Mitten State or at www.erinbartels.com.

LAYOUT EDITOR

Sierra Godfrey writes fiction with international settings and always a mention of football (soccer) or two. She is also a graphic designer with a soft spot for magazine layout, and a staff sports writer covering La Liga for *The Stoppage Time*. She lives in the foggy wastelands of the San Francisco Bay Area with her family and can be found at www.sierragodfrey.com.

MANAGING AND COLUMNS EDITOR

Tasha Seegmiller is a mom to three kids and high school English teacher in Southern Utah. She writes contemporary women's fiction with a dash of magic. Her loves include Diet Coke, owls, chocolate and cinnamon bears. She is a founder of and contributor to *Thinking Through Our Fingers*, and can be found at tashaseegmiller.com.

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Patricia Friedrich is an associate professor at Arizona State University. She is the author/editor of six nonfiction books including the upcoming *The Sociolinguistics of Digital Englishes* (Routledge 2016), and of several published short stories. She is currently working on revisions to her first novel-length manuscript, *Artful Women*.

Write On! is published quarterly by the WFWA.

womensfictionwriters.org

f facebook.com/WFWritersAssociation

twitter.com/WF_Writers

ABOUT THE WFWA

We began this organization in 2013 with the idea to create a safe, nurturing place for male and female writers of women's fiction. The publishing industry is morphing—with new opportunities and, as yet, unknown futures. The founders of the Women's Fiction Writers Association wanted somewhere to amass and disseminate information to and about our chosen genre.

Defining Women's Fiction has proven as subjective as the types of books we prefer. For that reason, our guiding statement is broad and comprehensive:

Stories that are driven by the main character's emotional journey.

Our stories may have romance. Or they may not. They could be contemporary. Or historical. But what binds us together is the focus on a main character's emotional journey.

Write on!



Join the closed WFWA Facebook group by sending an email to:

membership@womensfictionwriters.org

READER LETTERS

Like what you've read in *Write On!?* Send us a letter! We'd love to hear your feedback and reactions on the stories and features. Email them to writeon@womensfictionwriters.org. Submitted letters are considered for publication and may be edited for clarity or space.

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Member News

WE'RE EXCITED TO SHARE THESE NEW MEMBER RELEASES
COMING OUT THIS QUARTER



MEMBER BOOKS RELEASED THIS QUARTER:

Blaming the Wind
by Alessandra Harris

The Memory of Us
by Camille Di Maio

Magruder's Curiosity Cabinet
by H.P. Wood

If you have a Women's Fiction novel being published in the next quarter (July–September), and would like Write On! to feature it, please [fill out the submission form here](#).



Blaming the Wind
by Alessandra Harris
Release Date: April 19, 2016

Sophia Douglas can't shake the fear that she's in over her head. A spontaneous elopement and a layoff from her high-paying job are stressful enough, but a plus sign on her pregnancy test sends her into a panic. Fearing her husband, Terrence, might leave like her father did, Sophia confides her insecurities to Tara, her friend and mom of three. Though Tara Fisher encourages Sophia to trust Terrence, she's hiding her own secret: a handsome attorney is pursuing her, and she's questioning her commitment to Josh, her husband of ten years.

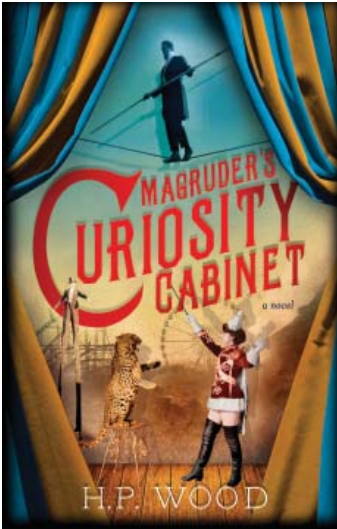
After a devastating career-ending accident, Josh has changed and so have Tara's feelings for him. When a crisis arises that threatens to destroy Sophia and Terrence's young marriage, Sophia must either overcome her fear of abandonment or lose everything she never knew she wanted. Meanwhile, as Tara is torn between responsibility and passion, her imperfectly put together life starts to unravel, and ghosts from her past resurface to haunt her. As these two couples grapple with secrets, temptation, and illness, only time will tell if their vows are strong enough to hold them together.



The Memory of Us
by Camille Di Maio
Release Date: May 31, 2016

Julianne Westcott was living the kind of life that other Protestant girls in prewar Liverpool could only dream about: old money, silk ball gowns, and prominent young men lining up to escort her. But when she learns of a blind-and-deaf brother, institutionalized since birth, the illusion of her perfect life and family shatters around her. While visiting her brother in secret, Julianne meets and befriends Kyle McCarthy, an Irish Catholic groundskeeper studying to become a priest.

Caught between her family's expectations, Kyle's devotion to the church, and the intense new feelings that the forbidden courtship has awakened in her, Julianne must make a choice: uphold the life she's always known or follow the difficult path toward love. But as war ripples through the world and the Blitz decimates England, a tragic accident forces Julianne to leave everything behind and forge a new life built on lies she's told to protect the ones she loves. Now, after twenty years of hiding from her past, the truth finds her—will she be brave enough to face it?



Magruder's Curiosity Cabinet
by H.P. Wood
Release Date: June 7, 2016

May 1904. Coney Island's newest amusement park, Dreamland, has just opened. Its many spectacles are expected to attract crowds by the thousands, paying back investors many times over. Kitty Hayward and her mother arrive by steamer from South Africa. When Kitty's mother takes ill, the hotel doctor sends Kitty to Manhattan to fetch some special medicine. But when she returns, Kitty's mother has vanished. The desk clerk tells Kitty she is at the wrong hotel. The doctor says he's never seen her although, she notices, he is unable to look her in the eye. Alone in a strange country, Kitty meets the denizens of Magruder's Curiosity Cabinet.

A relic of a darker, dirtier era, Magruder's is home to a forlorn flea circus, a handful of disgruntled Unusuals, and a mad Uzbek scientist. Magruder's Unusuals take Kitty under their wing and resolve to find out what happened to her mother. But as a plague spreads, Coney Island is placed under quarantine. The gang at Magruder's finds that a missing mother is the least of their problems, as the once-glamorous resort town is abandoned to the freaks, anarchists, and madmen.



Finding Your Place in the World . . . *Again*

by PATRICIA FRIEDRICH

Perhaps one of the most humbling aspects of writing fiction from the perspective of having had another writing career is realizing how much there is to learn. From the intricacies of storytelling itself to the particulars of character development and narrative arcs, an “expert” newcomer, which in this case is not a contradiction in terms, finds themselves facing, at best, frustrated expectations on a daily basis, and at worst, nightmares of imposter syndrome.

The best antidote to such anxiety is of course seeking new knowledge. Becoming a member of a writers’ association such as WFWA, taking courses, reading from several of the highly informative writing blogs available, and attending conferences and retreats are all sensible ways of gathering information and finding empowerment.

Some of the practical activities in which new fiction writers can find themselves learning from scratch also include establishing contacts, networking, and ultimately enlisting those professionals and peers who will help them in the path to publication and toward a fiction writing career.

Those professional writers, who come to fiction by way of nonfiction in such environments

as academic, magazine, and newspaper writing, might be surprised at, in a way, having to start their careers again. To be sure, they bring with them a facility with language, a good command of sentence and paragraph structure, the endurance necessary to write hundreds of pages, and knowledge of the stages of writing production. Yet, for the first time, they might have to search for an agent, learn about the role of developmental editors and marketing consultants, and hear the word “brand” being uttered in the same breath as “writing.”

Chances are, a senior-writer-turned-aspiring-novelist will have to acquire and fill a whole new address book. Barbara Josselson, author of *The Last Dreamer*, spoke to me about that very topic:

I was a reporter and magazine writer for many years before I began marketing my novel, and I have to say that I found these two segments of the publishing industry very different. For a fiction writer (unless, of course, you’re self-publishing) the most important contact you have is your agent, who finds the best home for your book and negotiates the best possible deal. By contrast, as a freelance magazine writer, I found markets, submitted my work, and negotiated pay all on my own. I

also found that there wasn't much crossover between the two segments—in other words, my magazine contacts were often helpful in connecting me with other magazine editors, but they didn't have relationships with agents or book editors that they could share with me.

For that very reason, the first few attempts at establishing contacts are possibly the hardest. Because writing credentials only transfer across fields to a limited degree, a writer can feel once again like they did when they were very young and looking for their first job: that first opportunity required experience and credentials, but how does one get those without a first job? Josselson continues,

So I had to start from scratch to network with fiction professionals—by taking classes, going to conferences, using social media, etc. Once my book was sold, however, I found many similarities between working with magazine editors and working with book editors. Basically, they are all trying to put the best writing out there, they want to please their readers, and they appreciate writers who meet deadlines and deliver what they promise.

Writers who were used to pitching proposals and ideas directly to editors and publishing houses might for the first time face the uncertainties of having to complete a full manuscript



before looking for representation. While this can be frightening and destabilizing at first, it can also be liberating: without having yet committed to a particular *a priori* form and content for a piece of work, writers can be free to explore and create—and change their minds.

Densie Webb, PhD, RD, and author of *You'll be Thinking of Me*, agrees that fiction writing and other forms of writing belong to different spheres of life. “For me it might as well be two different planets,” she states. In her day job, she writes scientific white papers and articles for publication in health, food, and nutrition journals, having previously done mostly consumer writing (i.e., magazines, newsletters, brochures, etc.). In those capacities, she believes that at times one feels compelled to “put on a professional act.” In fiction writing, she believes a writer is freer to “admit your insecurities, frailties, etc.” in an environment where “no one thinks less of you.”

As a result, the most important silver lining in this situation, despite the many new challenges and steep learning curve, may well be exactly that: the formation of meaningful communities of writers who support one another and share their wisdom in profoundly transformative yet non-judgmental ways. Webb continues,

For me, I feel like I've found my tribe with writers of fiction, especially women's fiction. I've found everyone to be open, welcoming, helpful, and generous with their time and input. In the science world, it's much more formal and competitive overall. Not that way at all with fiction writers.

Fiction writers in general, and the fellowship of women's fiction writers in particular, seem able to strike a happy medium of professionalism and empathic alliance-building at the same time. On the one hand, there is clear awareness that writers are working from a highly specialized and expert position, and that, however playful and lighthearted (or not) the writing may be, this is a serious occupation. On the other, there is acknowledgement that one is only as strong as one's community, and that the writing world can be one of abundance where many have an

opportunity to shine. Perhaps for these reasons, competition is not a primary concern, and in-group membership thrives.

So as parting words this time around, I offer the following: as a writer in another realm of writing, you learned to strategize, to move ahead, to draft, rewrite, and repeat. You developed a thick skin and a capacity to face critique with optimism. You decided never to give in to fear. You fell in love with the written word and found a voice. You have done it once, and you can certainly do it again. •



Patricia Friedrich is an associate professor at Arizona State University. She is the author/editor of six nonfiction books including the upcoming *The Sociolinguistics of Digital Englishes* (Routledge 2016), and of several published short stories. She is currently working on revisions to her first novel-length manuscript, *Artful Women*.

Voice, setting and dialogue: how do they impact your story?

We all begin our writing lives trying to emulate those authors we admire. Even Stephen King's early stories sound, to him, like weak imitations of the writers he read while growing up. Have you found your own unique voice, the one that says, "this could only have been written by..."?

Some people have such a way of speaking that we are compelled to lean in and listen. Their dialogue sparkles, engages and keeps us hanging on to hear what they'll say next. Characters are no different. Do you know how to make your characters' dialogue distinctly their own, and how to use it to bring your characters to life?

Setting isn't just a backdrop for our characters' escapades. Are you making the most of your stories' settings?

If you answered 'no' to any of the above questions, you're in luck. The online Women's Fiction Craft Workshop will delve into these three critical aspects of writing. **Over two weeks, five award-winning, bestselling and multi-published authors will offer a lesson and writing exercise every other business day, and feedback on participants' results.** It's a members-only event, and is limited to 75 people. The cost? **Only \$15.**

- Workshop dates: May 16 – 27
- Registration dates: April 18 – May 12 or until full capacity is reached
- Get the details, check out presenter profiles and [register here](#).



The Making of a Movement: #MSWL

by SIERRA GODFREY

Most writers are by now familiar with the #MSWL hashtag. Manuscript Wish List, as it's also known, is the popular Twitter hashtag that has grown over the past two years to become a standard in the publishing industry: for writers, agents, and editors. But #MSWL isn't just a hashtag that arose organically from the primordial soup of the Twitterverse—someone created it, and that someone was Jessica Sinsheimer, an agent with Sarah Jane Freymann Agency.

I got to know Jessica after my design partner, Mike Chen, with whom I run a boutique website design agency specializing in sites for people in the publishing industry, approached her about reworking the simple, template-based Manuscript Wish List website into something that would be fully representative of all the hashtag has to offer. In other words, an agent tweeting out what they wanted to see using the #MSWL hashtag would be able to post so much more on the website. In addition, the site would be fully searchable by agent, editor, genre, and more—plus there would be helpful blog posts.

The result was several months of feverish work in secret, and when the new site debuted in March, the flood of people actually crashed the server, which amazed and delighted us all.

I spoke with Jessica about the ideas behind this incredible resource, and her vision for the site and hashtag.

SG: How did you conceive of MSWL and when? Did you notice a hole in the market at the time for such a tool?

JS: #MSWL started because I have very broad interests—and everyone thought I only wanted books like the ones I'd already sold. After several people mentioned great ideas to me—and then said "Oh, I would have sent it to you—but I didn't think you liked projects like this!" I had



to do something. It was a problem of communication—and in this age of technology, that's no longer an excuse.

And if I was having this problem, surely other agents, and editors, were running into this issue as well. Maybe others had articulated this to themselves; maybe they hadn't. Either way, someone had to do something.

In 2013, I sent out an email to about twenty other agents on a Monday, explaining my idea—that we'd tweet what we wished was in our inbox, with that tag, on Thursday. Many, of course, said they were too busy—we're always so busy! But Thursday came around, and slowly—and then all at once—the tweets were everywhere. Soon we were trending on Twitter, I was in Twitter jail [**editor's note:** this means Twitter blocks you for a period of time if you tweet too often in a period of time], and we realized we had created something much, much bigger than expected.

SG: What was your vision for it at the start—a Twitter hashtag or a full site? Has how its evolution meshed with what you originally envisioned?

JS: I never expected it to grow so much. I thought it would be something useful, but never expected the response. It was, at first, a hashtag—it's the easiest way to get a number of people talking, at once, about the same thing. But it quickly became clear that our wishes and tastes are complex and sometimes counterintuitive and nuanced. It's hard to fit all of that into 140 characters.

When we began converting everything into a website, I thought of it as the #MSWL paragraphs, but as the technology improved it became so much more. It's now a way to find people (both writers finding agents and agents finding editors) that, much to my surprise, didn't exist before.

Now we can spend agent-editor lunches having real, present conversations instead of frantically scribbling down notes about what that editor wants. Now young editors and young agents have a fighting chance of finding the writ-

ers with projects that match their interests. You don't have to wait to sell or buy something for someone to know you want it.

It also means fewer missed opportunities—and smarter research. Agents and editors are complex people. Knowing not just what we have, but what we want, illuminates a whole new side of us—and what we'd be like to work with.

It also means fewer missed opportunities—and smarter research. Agents and editors are complex people. Knowing not just what we have, but what we want, illuminates a whole new side of us—and what we'd be like to work with.

SG: Talk about the launch of the new website. Obviously, it was different from prior iterations of the site because it's more robust and agents and editors have the capability of creating their own profiles. How else has the launch matched your vision?

JS: First of all, looking back, I feel amazed, and incredibly lucky, that everything aligned the way that it did. Mike Chen, an author who had queried me before the launch of the previous version of the site (referred to as 2.0), wrote to me one day asking if I needed help. Since 2.0 was essentially a Wordpress site, some Google coding, and a lot of crossed fingers, I wrote back (probably with a YES PLEASE WE NEED YOU tone). We'd been adding and updating everyone's profiles by hand—and, as the site grew to be in the hundreds, it was impossible to keep up, no matter how much coffee was available.

Mike encouraged me to make a list—sort of my wish list for the site—of pie in the sky features. I didn't even know how to describe some of them, or the correct terminology—but Mike, being both a word person and a website developer, helped me articulate our best options—and, amazingly, was able to build almost everything. Sierra was also able to help me translate my tastes into unfamiliar phrases—I definitely remember us discussing something fresh, modern, literary, and fun—and I think the site exemplifies that.

SG: What has been the biggest personal gain for you with MSWL? Do you know of

other agents or editors who have signed clients as a result?

JS: We've been getting about one report a week of a deal that has occurred because of #MSWL. We're thrilled to make that happen.

Yes, I'm an agent, but ultimately I'm a connector. My passion is helping writers find the people who will love and support their work.

SG: How about the writer side? What has the response been like from writers about the site and the hashtag?

JS: Honestly, it's been overwhelming. I would say a good third of my queries now mention #MSWL or the site. Suddenly there are writers approaching me who didn't, before this project, know I existed. It's humbling and exciting. #MSWL feels like more than a feed and a site—it feels like a movement of people helping each other find creative partners. I'm thrilled to be part of it. •



Sierra Godfrey is a writer and graphic designer. She is the layout editor for *Write On!*, writes women's fiction, and is also a staff sports writer covering La Liga for *The Stoppage Time*. She lives in the foggy wastelands of the San Francisco Bay Area with her family and can be found having a lot of fun at www.sierragodfrey.com.



Publisher Q&A: Nancy Cleary of Wyatt-MacKenzie Publishing

by AMY IMPELLIZZERI

I I am so thrilled to introduce Nancy Cleary, founder of the award-winning indie press Wyatt-MacKenzie Publishing and publisher of my debut novel, *Lemongrass Hope*.

Nancy and I “met” via email in 2013, and I signed with her in early 2014. I’ll never forget the day Nancy and I spoke on the phone after she had read my full manuscript. I was tortured by advice from one editor to change the ending of *Lemongrass Hope* to “make it more commercial.” Essentially the advice I had gotten previously was to give my novel a “Happily Ever After” ending. I didn’t know the term Women’s Fiction just yet—I was still learning—but what I knew for sure was that my book was not one that was supposed to end neatly and tidily, with a pretty bow wrapping up the ending. Nancy’s response after reviewing my full was: “Do. Not. Change. A. Thing.” So *Lemongrass Hope* was released by Wyatt-MacKenzie as the book I wanted it to be, and Nancy has continued to be its greatest advocate.

AI: Nancy, you’ve been in the publishing business for nearly 20 years. There’s a lot of talk about how much the publishing industry has changed over the last decade. What’s your perspective on the current climate? How can an emerging author

benefit from those changes (or can they)?

NC: Hi Amy! Well, it’s a completely new, welcoming world of opportunities with tools for intimate interactions with audiences (big and small) no matter who the publisher is—Big Five, indie, or self—and this incredible reach is what helps sell books and even big-time rights. Not much has changed for a writer aiming for an agent who can land her a major publishing contract with a nice advance, but now there are new ways to get “there” (wherever “there” may be—an eventual sale of rights to a large publisher or a film option or foreign translations).

In the current climate, if an author can make great pitches—just the right wording for just the right market at just the right time—this could be all it takes to catapult her from being an unagented-thinking-of-Kindle writer to the center of a national media blitz. We attracted a major movie producer with the announcement of *Lemongrass Hope* who wrote, “. . . it’s absolutely lovely! A real pleasure to read. Having discussed it with the rest of the development team . . .” and while they didn’t buy the film rights, it was an adrenalin rush to think of a roundtable meeting about it. A great pitch also landed *Lemongrass Hope* in an article about “upcoming romances” in *Library Journal* (a major score for an indie). A

key for writers is to take advantage of the currently receptive environment of book buyers by staying on top of the latest and greatest resources in book marketing, publicity ideas, and author branding exercises. A great pitch is only good if it's seen, so a writer needs to get herself, her message, her meme, out into the world as deeply into her market as possible.

AI: I remember when we first started putting together the marketing plan for *Lemongrass Hope*, and you reminded me that while it's exciting for authors to see their books on bookstore shelves, the real sales happen via online retailers, and any good marketing plan simply has to embrace this reality. That has really stuck with me as I have marketed *Lemongrass Hope*. How do you help your authors stand out given the reality that online retailers are driving book sales these days? Any tips you think we should share? (Wink.)

NC: Helping an author create and execute a pre-publication plan for her book is one of my top priorities, in fact it's in our contract—authors receive fifty advance review copies and a 7–9 month marketing outline to follow. We brainstorm a wish list of potential blurb writers. Amy, your pie-in-the-sky endorsement from Oprah's first Book Club author, Jacquelyn Mitchard, was thrilling! These high-profile testimonials can strengthen marketing efforts and be featured on top of Amazon to absolutely drive sales.

Post-publication I enter our books for literary prizes and indie book awards; *Lemongrass Hope* won a bronze book-of-the-year award in romance, which continues to attract attention online and in the real world. Libraries love book awards, big and small. And let's face it; we all love to add bling to our book covers. Amy and I laughed as I moved her award seals all over her cover until they landed in the perfect place for the new print run.

Facilitating these “visual” updates for covers and being collaborative with authors for years down the road is all part of my “providing an unparalleled author experience” mission statement. For example, assisting authors in running

quarterly Kindle promotions. Amy had an incredibly successful Book Bub promotion. We're having fun with group campaigns as well—we did “A Free Kindle a Day” this past summer which resulted in a little over 40,000 Kindle downloads over a 35 day period (of 35 titles). This snowballed into a slew of Amazon reviews (albeit, be forewarned that free Kindle books attract the oddest reviews from customers not getting what they “expect”), as well as record-breaking full-price sales and paid-for page reads. I'm beyond excited about synthesizing our efforts in the future with our sensational collection of women's novels.

And, here's a bookstore tip—if an author feels she must fulfill the vision of her book on a bookstore shelf, she should understand that this is fleeting and focus on a limited number of bookstores in order to drive an entire local audience to a single outlet instead of diluting her efforts. This increases the chance of success for the event and decreases returns—any books that do not sell in eight weeks or so are sent back to the distributor—the cost of returns negates an author's actual sales. It's very disappointing, especially on a multi-store scale. For Amy's event at New Jersey's famous Bookends we sent two large 2x3 foot posters which they hung in their front window. Amy looked just as “big” as Andrew Dice Clay, who had an event the prior evening.

AI: I know you get tons of submissions, and you have a wonderful roster of non-fiction authors, but what are you looking for as you cull through the fiction submissions?

NC: Actually, it's what I find when I'm not looking, when I suddenly discover I have read through the first three chapters and I am willing to abandon all of my responsibilities and rearrange my schedule to read the rest. I often don't even know how I got there; but first, I find myself engaged with an author's pitch. I am impressed by her credentials and by the status of the manuscript—which is perhaps the result of a writing retreat or working with a professional editor or has been workshopped and reviewed by peer writers. Honestly, I am not looking for a

manuscript that needs substantive editing or a writer who envisions a yearlong editor relationship. I work personally with an author, sharing my perspective, insight, and advice, and then hand over the manuscript to one of our talented editors for copyediting before ARCs, and then multiple rounds of proofreading before the final books are printed. Amy, you came to Wyatt-MacKenzie after working with the phenomenal NYT bestselling author and editor Caroline Leavitt, which was incredibly impressive and so was the readiness of your manuscript.

Get me to start reading with a short pitch that shows a savviness for positioning and draws me in with a clever and concise overview of the book, as well as clear research, some personality, perhaps a little humor, and a generous spirit, and I'll respond in kind. An online presence is often a must—my first step is running a Google search; this is what media, reviewers, customers, and others will do as well.

And then, ultimately, it's great writing. My personal preferences and our acquisitions team's choices vary from terse and poetic (like our upcoming 2017 novel *The Wrong Kind of Indian*), to sweet and sappy, to scientific and world changing. I confess—and I know this is awful!—at times I will read the first chapter and then the last chapter. When I did this with *Lemongrass Hope* the resulting, “Wait. WHAT?!” made me read the entire thing in one sitting; and I was absolutely giddy when I reached the ending the second time and immediately scheduled a call to meet you!

Sometimes it's the Lifetime/Hallmark movie that plays out in my head as I read a manuscript and I unconsciously start casting the characters. That's what happened with Brandi Granett's upcoming book, *Triple Love Score*. It was such a charming story and she pitched it to me at the time the book takes place: the holidays. So there I was, sipping cocoa under the Christmas tree alongside her main character, Miranda.

AI: If you could single out one or two of the most common mistakes or pitfalls you see from aspiring authors submitting manuscripts to you via their agents or

directly, what would they be?

NC: 1. Not properly researching a publisher, agent, or acquisitions editor.

Whether a writer is pitching me or any other editor or agent, I encourage them to do their research about the company and the person they are pitching. When there is no connection with me, my company, or one of our previous publications or authors, then there simply has to be a clear reason why the writer is pitching us. I am perfectly fine being told that a writer is pitching other publishers at the same time (not in a pressure-tactic kind of way, but it's good to know). Also, it's smart to divulge any past renditions of the story in any shape or form, as well as all of the attempts thus far to get representation.

I often have great rapport with agents once I speak with them; they appreciate my experience and the fact that we worked with a major book distributor for many years, pushing tens of thousands of books out into bookstores. However, I'm still dismayed when agents are surprised and get angry that we now utilize Ingram for distribution and work in a very “reactive” bookstore mode—i.e., the book gets publicity, peeps ask for it, bookstores order it. We can easily keep up with international orders—whether 40 or 40,000—unlike past models (which I learned is death-defyingly important when one of our authors is on TV).

2. The writer has no online savvy/presence.

How can I expect an author to be able to quickly respond to online publicity opportunities I send if they are fearful of being online? I see a writer's online activity as a clear signal that they can fulfill a marketing plan and will continue to grow with technology. A thriving social media platform is irresistible. (I understand that Facebook likes and Twitter followers can be easily purchased; it's not the number that matters, but the interactions and what shines through the writer's words.)

Insider tip: if a writer throws shade at agents, editors, and publishers online, this clearly might be someone to stay away from. On the flipside however, if I see constructive responses to rejec-

tions and an unwavering spirit, this draws me in like a magnet. What do I love to see? Years of working hard at what appears on the surface to be easy, but I understand takes commitment and time and the willingness to “put it all out there” in a public arena—this is crucial in book promotion, and the success of an author’s career.

AI: I know you recently signed another WFWA member, Brandi Megan Granett, for a fall release. Are you looking to grow your women’s fiction catalogue in the coming years? If so, how should writers submit their women’s fiction manuscripts?

NC: Yes! I am having so much fun with fiction. I’ve spent two decades packaging mostly non-fiction, and working feverishly in arenas which may or may not relate to my personal experience and tastes. My fruits of that labor are the awesome women fiction writers I am now attracting. Timing is finally perfect—a powerful collision of a newly receptive book world, gate-opening media, and so many ways for novelists to be seen, heard, and read.

Submit your concise pitch, with a great tease of the book’s plot, creative marketing ideas, any peer reviews, and at least the first three chapters to nancy@wyattmackenzie.com with all caps subject line: MAJOR RELEASE QUERY. (I have a very strong spam filter; this will help you get through.) I try to respond to all queries from two hours to two days. Admittedly, depending on what is going on, it could take two weeks or even two months, but I catch up each and every quarter. With that said, I encourage writers to follow up every two to three weeks if they haven’t received a response, since most often a delayed reply is absolutely no reflection of your query, but simply a matter of scheduling it for a proper review.

AI: Finally, many might not realize that in addition to your traditionally published authors, you help many self-published authors launch titles through your Imprint Program. Can you share some more details about that program?

NC: Oh wow, can I finally take down the “Chi-

nese Wall?” I’m kidding, I never put up this secret separation that one agent demanded I make (between a company that offers consulting and one with traditional contracts) ten years ago, before she, or any other agents, would be willing to work with us. She went on to glibly describe how I needed to have two names and two companies and two websites, and to keep all of it a big fat secret. Fortunately, those days are over. I’ve been helping women for close to 30 years, and I’ve found multiple ways to offer what I do, and frankly, it’s a damn good thing. I’ve financed my little indie with my consulting work, both sides work together to build up and promote one another, and . . . We’re. Still. Here.

Bottom line, I meet many incredible authors and entrepreneurs who I know I can help, and whether they’re not a fit for our limited traditional roster, or I wholeheartedly believe they should strategically be on their own, I created my Imprint Program for them, after determining exactly what a writer needs to do and know to publish. It used to be best suited for nonfiction, but with the evolution and democratization of book publishing, this option is the smartest way to publish and keep all of the profit and rights, and never, ever have a middleman (where there doesn’t need to be one).

One of the reasons I delineated between traditional and consulting early on was the late, great Dan Poynter who taught us: “If you pay, you are the publisher.” I’ve always held this adage close to my heart.

To date I’ve helped nearly 150 women (and a few men) to create their own little independent publishing companies (or “imprints”) under our Wyatt-MacKenzie umbrella. We take care of everything from the author’s fears and feelings, to branding, cover design, getting the imprint setup for distribution (with their own account with Ingram), creating a marketing plan, printing ARCs, and teaching how, what, where, and when to pitch and get major publicity. I share idiosyncrasies of this crazy industry that writers don’t know they don’t know and can use to their advantage.

I pour everything I have—from a degree in

graphic design, to what I've learned in publishing over eighteen years, to marketing tactics and publicity targets, and an absolute love for what I do—into each and every one of our Wyatt-MacKenzie authors and imprints. •



Publisher and designer **Nancy Cleary** saw her name credited on the colophon of a book for the first time in 1985, and she has been helping writers and entrepreneurs to design, publish, and promote their work ever since. Nancy was born and raised in Massachusetts and received her BFA from Rhode Island School of Design. After a stint as art director in California, she retreated to the forests of Oregon and ran a graphic design studio for seven years before having her kids, Wyatt and MacKenzie, and launching a publishing company in 1998. Nancy is currently completing her Masters of Professional Studies in Publishing at George Washington University.



Amy Impellizzeri is a reformed corporate litigator, former start-up executive, and the award-winning author of *Lemongrass Hope* (Wyatt-MacKenzie 2014) and *Lawyer Interrupted* (ABA Publishing 2015). A favorite with bloggers and book clubs, *Lemongrass Hope* was a 2014 INDIEFAB Book of the Year Bronze Winner, a National Indie Excellence Awards Finalist, and was named the #1 reviewed book in 2014 by *The Literary Connoisseur*. Amy is President of the Women's Fiction Writers Association and a member of the Tall Poppy Writers. Amy lives in rural Pennsylvania with her husband, three kids, and one energetic weimaraner. For more information, check out: www.amyimpellizzeri.com.

Marketing 101

by BARBARA CLAYPOLE WHITE

I'll let you guys in on a secret: my background is in marketing and publicity, and when I quit to become a full-time mom, I vowed to never go back. N-ev-er.

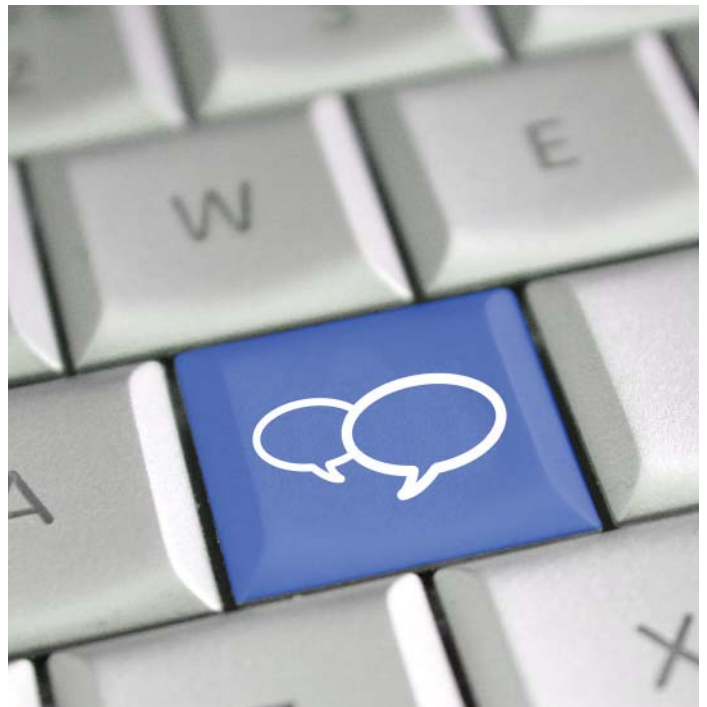
Twenty-one years later, I'm sitting at my desk hyperventilating because I'm behind on contracted novel five and my promo plan for novel four (*Echoes of Family*, September 27) isn't even a flash of heat lightning at the edge of my sight. Does anyone have a brown paper bag I can breathe into?

"But wait," I hear you say. "*The Perfect Son* was a Goodreads Choice Awards Nominee, and you're with Lake Union Publishing, which is part of Amazon! Why do you need to worry about promo?" Because promo is like my overflowing compost bin: It always needs attention. But before you scream, "Give me back that brown bag," I'll share the good news: **the best promotional tools you have are your writing and your reputation.**

See? Not quite as scary. However, marketing is a vast area, so I'm going to touch on what I like to call Marketing 101.

NETWORKING

Networking is about paying it forward and being a good egg, not about jumping up and



down screeching, "Look at me!" Be humble, be gracious, and say please and thank you. Seriously. Listen to what people are telling you and be respectful of their time. Even if you're an introvert, join groups. Online groups if you hate leaving the house. Support other writers—share their book releases, go to their events, buy their books, post reviews. Writers need readers, and the best readers are other writers. Time for a story . . .

The first time I met Karen White, I had just signed with her agency. She had an event that was sort of nearby, and I turned up with a bag

full of her backlist. (I wasn't faking being a fan.) That started our connection, and two years later I asked her for a blurb for my second novel. She agreed but had timing issues. I worked around her schedule, and my lovely MIRA editor had a special e-file of the manuscript created just for her. We used that blurb everywhere, and I sent her a thank-you gift and so did my editor. Once a year Karen comes to our area on tour and we have lunch together. She always insists on paying, and I always buy two signed copies of her new release: one for me, one for my mother.

Connect with other writers, especially those at the same stage of the journey as you. Tag people in Facebook posts; tweet local bookstore events; make noise about other people's success. One of the biggest names in women's fiction told me last week, "Everyone knows you, Barbara." This was a shocker. I am not an A-list author, but I interact with the big guns all the time. Sometimes the illusion becomes the reality.

BUSINESS CARDS

I did my first business cards at Kinkos and put a word on there in all caps: WRITER. Whatever stage of your journey, if you're part of this organization, you're a writer. Put that on a business card and glow with pride.

WEBSITE

A website is your calling card. Check out author websites and see what appeals to you. A website can cost thousands of dollars, but you can also do it yourself. Laura Drake, one of our founding members, has a terrific homemade website: <http://lauradrakebooks.com>.

I'm techno-challenged and my husband had a grad student who was a freelance web designer, so I hired him. Adam took the time to design and build a site that reflects what I write and how I write. I write about light in darkness, light through the trees. Hope. And as with my woodland gardens, my writing is messy and a little wild. Click on <http://www.barbaraclaypole-white.com> and you'll see background photos that I took of our property, a corner of rural North Carolina that inspired the novel Karen blurred. My website isn't ultra sleek, but it's me.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The best advice I ever received from the marketing team at Harlequin was this: Pick the one or two social media outlets that work for you and be diligent. If you attempt to cover multiple social media sites, you'll spread yourself too thin. I tweet, but my main outlet is Facebook. These days I struggle to keep up, but it's where I interact with other authors and my readers. To walk away from it would not be smart. (A blanket apology for all the WFWA threads I miss. I do my best to keep up.)

AUTHOR EVENTS.

Once you get your pub deal, establish what your publisher will do for you. One-size-fits-all does not apply to publishers' marketing plans. When I was with MIRA, I booked all my own events, but I discovered Harlequin would supply gigantic posters, mailed directly to the stores. Nice. At Lake Union the marketing team has the lovely attitude of, "We don't want you to worry about marketing. We just want you to write your next book." But my local indies and local book clubs have been super supportive, and I want to keep the relationships I've built with them. For *The Perfect Son* I planned a launch party at the local library that was also a book club bash. I gave away a basket of ten signed copies to one lucky book club, and I did a separate giveaway for non-book club members to win signed copies through the local indie that sold books at the event. And I provided a catered English tea. By the way, we had standing room only. In addition I booked a handful of events at my favorite local indies and stopped there. For *The In-Between Hour*, which was chosen by the southern indie booksellers as an Okra Pick, I went all over North Carolina and South Carolina. I had some successful events, but I also had total duds when I sold one book. If you want to do author events, consider the value of your time. Stay where your fan base is—or where you have friends and family who will support you. And if you really want to try out-of-town gigs, team up with another author. At least that way you'll have fun.

BOOK CLUBS

Find them, baby. Book clubs love women's fiction. I started by emailing everyone I knew to ask if they had neighborhood book clubs. Yes, that included my friends in England. (I often Skype with English book clubs.) Not published yet? No problem. Start a book club file. Every time someone mentions, "I'm in a book club," write it down.

AUTHOR PHOTOS

The moment you get a pub deal, you'll need author photos. I spent way too much money on my first author photo, and I hated it. It didn't capture my personality; it doesn't even look like me. Then I used some informal pictures my web designer had snapped. Finally I worked with a local wedding photographer who used to be my son's PE teacher, because I like her work and she's affordable. And her boyfriend/assistant brings a flask of gin to our shoots.

MARKETING BUDGET

Eventually you'll need to create a marketing budget, but mine gets simpler and simpler. I budget to buy 100 of my books to give away on blogs and at book clubs; I budget a certain amount for boosting Facebook posts and updating my website; and I budget for refreshments at my author events, plus thank-you presents for booksellers and book club organizers. And I've stared hiring an author assistant for specific promos such as designing bookmarks and setting up a street team. In the past I've done paid blog tours (TLC Book Tours <http://tlcbooktours.com> is fabulous), Google ads, and Author Buzz (<http://authorbuzz.com>).

But all this can get expensive, so if you're considering investing in paid promo, consult the hive mind on the WFWA Facebook page and get feedback. Do what works for you and your budget. And remember: the most important part of promo is writing a good book.

Write on, chaps! xox •



A Brit living in North Carolina, Barbara Claypole White writes hopeful family drama with a healthy dose of mental illness. Her debut novel, *The Unfinished Garden*, won the 2013 Golden Quill Contest for Best First Book, and *The In-Between Hour* was chosen by SIBA (the Southern Independent Booksellers) as a Winter 2014 Okra Pick. Her third novel, *The Perfect Son*, was a semifinalist in the Goodreads Choice Awards Best Fiction 2015. Her fourth novel, currently untitled, has a publication date of October 2106.

For more information, or to connect with Barbara, please visit barbaraclaypolewhite.com.

Tips for Being an Organized Professional

by TASHA SEEGMILLER

When it comes right down to it, a writing career can turn into an organizational nightmare. Whether it be trying to keep track of which agents are interested in which genres, when blog posts are due for whatever reason, or keeping up with Skype appointments, book club meetings, writing conferences, or deadlines, writers need to find an effective organizational system that is not time consuming.

For this quarterly tech tip article, I wanted to share a few ways that you can streamline *all the things*, have them easily accessible, and get back to what you like doing most: writing.

SOCIAL MEDIA

For many writers, this is the greatest thief of time. We hear of the necessity to make connections and interact with readers and stay on top of what's happening in the market and, and, and . . .

First things first—streamline.

Facebook: Just because someone sends you a friend request does not mean you have to accept it. And just because you are friends with someone doesn't mean you have to follow them. If you have that one friend who fills your feed, who posts things that make your blood boil, who always manage to get you off track, you can

simply click on their profile and UNFOLLOW. The friendship stays (in real life and virtually) but they are no longer able to infiltrate your time with their stuff.

Twitter: First, remember you don't have to follow everyone who follows you. There is a huge tendency when it comes to Twitter to focus on numbers, but quality wins over quantity every single time.



Take advantage of lists. If you organize people who you follow into lists, you are able to read just their tweets filtered out from the speedy chaos of everyone. I have lists for agents and editors, women's fiction writers, writers whom I know and support in real life, and thinkers who inspire me. If you are further in your writing career, possible lists could include independent book store owners and book blog writers.

Then, implement a program like TweetDeck or HootSuite. This allows for all your snazzy Twitter lists to show up on the same screen and allows you to easily follow hashtags for contests and, of course, what agents and editors are looking for via #mswl (manuscript wish list).

DRAFTING & QUERYING WRITERS

Start building a list of professionals you would like to work with. I highly recommend creating a spreadsheet with columns for agent name, agency they work for, what is required in the query (form, synopsis, first chapters, etc.), what their response time is, and what it means if their response time has passed without contact. In my document, I then included the dates I submitted the query, what (if any) communication I received back, critiques, or reasons for request or rejection as applicable.

WRITERS UNDER CONTRACT

While there may be publishers who will help with and arrange publicity tours for your upcoming book, it is hugely beneficial as well to have a list of your own. If you owned the spreadsheet system during the querying process, there is no reason you can't utilize this tool again in the pre-launch period.

For instance, you can start a list of book bloggers who often discuss novels similar to your own, noting whether they will accept requests to review and what their review policy is. Should you have the opportunity to participate in an Advanced Reading Copy (ARC) tour, it is again helpful to find librarians, booksellers, bloggers, and avid readers who could help spread the word about your novel. The same could be considered for a blog tour (particularly if you are setting it up on your own), complete with topics preferred,

formatting and extra add-ons required, and dates both for when the article is due and when it will be published.

ALL WRITERS

There are many people out there who say if you want your writing to be successful, you have to treat it like a job. This is true no matter what your level of experience. But it is very difficult to convey professionalism if appointments are not kept. Nearly 400 years ago, John Donne said, "No man is an island," and this is true for writers on several fronts.

We know the value of helping, know the necessity of getting help from others, but also often have to negotiate schedules that incorporate the events of people we love and care for. So, within my Google Calendar, I have the calendar that is reserved for all family events (appropriately named Seegmillers) and the one that is for things meant just for me (Tasha's Tasks). To set this up, you simply open your Google calendar, look at the "My Calendars" heading on the left hand side, and click the small downward arrow next to it. From there, you can change the settings, add calendars, even pick the colors you'd like the events to be.

Since I'm not always at my computer when negotiating what needs to be done, I have found an app—Calendars 5—where the same categories of calendars are still available. It is about seven dollars, but I love the integration it has with my calendars on both the iPhone and iPad.

This same technique could be implemented for writing deadlines, blog tour deadlines, speaking deadlines, and so forth.

The key for making quality connections is to have a quality system. If you have some tips or tricks you have used to manage each step of your writing in an organized and professional manner, send an email to writeon@womensfiction-writers.org and we would love to feature them in an upcoming issue! •



Tasha Seegmiller is a mom to three kids and high school English teacher in Southern Utah. She writes contemporary women's fiction with a dash of magic. Her loves include Diet Coke, owls, chocolate, and cinnamon bears. She is a founder of and contributor to *Thinking Through Our Fingers*, and can be found at tashaseegmiller.com.

Writers Sound Off on WFWA

“Writers can so often feel they are shouting into the void—we spend so much of our time alone, wondering if what we write matters. The WFWA community is a place of safety for writers of women's fiction: there is shared laughter, joy, empathy, as well as practical advice and professional development for aspiring and experienced authors alike. Knowing I have a place where I can share my triumphs and stumbles with writers who understand—it's a priceless resource!”

—**Julie Christine Johnson**, author of *In Another Life (Sourcebooks: 2016)* and *The Crows of Beara (Ashland Creek Press: 2017)*

“When I joined the Women's Fiction Writers Association, I had a lot to learn about the genre, and the wisdom that's been shared in the past couple years—and the wonderful writers I've met—has been priceless. The annual retreat in particular deepened my bond with the other writers in the group—and gave me the extra push to finish a draft of a WIP.”

—**Jess Bylander**

Submit your testimonial to:
writeon@womensfictionwriters.org

Carly Watters

P. S. Literary Agency



Each month we focus on an agent who represents women's fiction. This month, we're thrilled to welcome Carly Watters of P.S. Literary Agency.



BIO

All about Carly

Carly Watters is a VP and Senior Literary Agent at P.S. Literary Agency. Carly is drawn to emotional, well-paced narratives, with a great voice and characters that readers can get invested in. Bestselling and debut clients include Taylor Jenkins Reid, Karen Katchur, Andrea Dunlop, and many more. Her blog has been named one of "101 Best Websites for Writers" by *Writer's Digest* for three consecutive years.



WANTS

What are you hoping lands in your inbox right now?

Domestic thrillers, upmarket fiction, smart book club fiction, women's fiction.



LOOKS FOR

What do you look for in a debut?

Talented! But also, open to collaboration. I like a writer that always wants to get better. I'm also looking for a writer that trusts me, fits with my communication style, and agrees with my vision for their book and career. I give preference to writers who know how to navigate social media and online community building, but the writing always does come first—so it's okay if you don't have a large following if you're a fiction writer. (If you're writing nonfiction, platform is #1!)



STANDING OUT

What makes a women's fiction project stand out in today's marketplace?

The most important thing is voice. There are many stories that have been told many times, but the special thing is the voice that is brought to the topic. After voice, tackling subject matter that connects emotionally with book club and female audiences. The pace and stakes have to be hitting their mark every time. There is no room for error in structure when there are a lot of books on the market.



TIPS

What's your best tip for writers seeking literary representation? (Tips on query writing, pitching, surviving rejection, etc.)

Know how to pitch your book. A long, winding description of your book's themes is not a pitch. I need to know the plot, the stakes, and why we should be invested in your character. The number one issue with women's fiction that is pitched unsuccessfully is that it focuses too much on the internal conflict and not enough on the external conflict. Learn the difference. Make sure you have enough external momentum!



FAVORITES

Who are your favorite authors, living or dead?

Jojo Moyes, Lauren Groff, Meghan Daum, Meg Mitchell Moore, Katie Cotugno, Emma Straub, Megan Abbott, Beatriz Williams, Maggie Shipstead, Helen Dunmore, Sarah Waters



BOOKS

What book changed your life?

Just Kids by Patti Smith, *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro, and *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver.



TIDBIT

What do most people not know about you?

I am a BIG podcast fan! Here are my recommendations even though you didn't ask: *Death, Sex and Money*; *Dear Sugar*; *GirlBoss Radio*; *Women of the Hour*; *Bindercast*; *Happier*; *Invisibilia*; *Pilots*; *This American Life*; and I could actually go on and on . . .

The Dangling Modifier

by PATRICIA FRIEDRICH

Some will claim that the dangling modifier is not a big deal; that we can infer from context who the subject of a particular sentence is. However, the careful writer may agree that a text without dangling participles or modifiers looks neater and indicates care and attention by its author. Besides, editors hate them and you want your editor to love you.

Notice the following constructions:

By painting the room, it looks bigger and brighter.

While playing the game, one of the cards was missing.

As a mom, naptime is really important.

What all of these constructions have in common is a lack of a proper subject for the modifier to actually modify. That is, there is no subject in the clause in question for “by painting,” “while playing,” and “as a mom” to modify successfully. Note the difference between those constructions and the following:

By painting the room, Jane managed to make it look bigger and brighter.

While playing the game, the kids noticed that one of the cards was missing.

As a mom, I believe that naptime is really important.



In this second set of examples, “Jane,” “the kids,” and “I” provide adequate subjects for the modifiers to modify.

Of course, other edits would also be possible to correct the dangling modifier. They usually include having two separate subjects for the dependent and independent clause. For example:

Because Jane painted the room, it now looks bigger and brighter.

While the kids were playing the game, one of the cards went missing.

I am a mom, so naptime is really important. (This might be contextually accurate although I believe it does not convey as much as the previous sentence).

To spot and correct dangling modifiers, always ask who the subject of the action or the party being modified is. Remember that changing the order (between modifier and independent clause) will not solve the problem. In that respect, “One of the cards was missing while playing the game” still sounds like the card was playing the game in the first place!

Happy writing! •



Patricia Friedrich is an associate professor at Arizona State University. She is the author/editor of six nonfiction books including the upcoming *The Sociolinguistics of Digital Englishes* (Routledge 2016), and of several published short stories. She is currently working on revisions to her first novel-length manuscript, *Artful Women*.

Writers Sound Off on WFWA

“For years, agents and editors told me my writing straddled the line between romance and mainstream fiction. I didn’t know where I fit in. But joining the Women’s Fiction Writers Association felt like home. The group welcomes its members at any stage of their writing journey with open arms, an open mind, and a helping hand. The advice, the resources and the camaraderie are top-rate and available 24/7! I feel like I have a sage circle of friends, yet a professional collective voice supporting me as I advance in my career as a published author.”

—**Jessica Topper**, author of the *LOVE & STEEL* and *MUCH “I DO” ABOUT NOTHING* series (Berkley Penguin)

“I found my tribe. Kelly Hartog introduced me to WFWA; Erin Bartels offered to read my manuscript and Amy Sue Nathan affirmed my talent as a writer; Beth Havey cheered me on and Julia Carrick Dalton did too with writing accountability check-ins; Donald Maass showed me how to make my writing shine; I sipped virgin margaritas with the finest writers I know on the patio of Hotel Albuquerque and sang “Don’t Cry for Me, Argentina” with Kathryn Craft and Kristin Marie Veronica at the airport on the way home from our magical retreat, sad it was over, but grateful that it happened.”

—**Nancy Johnson**

Submit your testimonial to:
writeon@womensfictionwriters.org

