

# KS WRITERS, INC. NEWSLETTER

MONTH OF NOVEMBER 2009

NOVEMBER 16, 2009 Volume 3, Issue 4

## JOIN US! NOV. 21, 2009 at 11:30 AM



A NOTE OF CONDOLENCES TO  
OUR KWI TREASURER,  
SHAYNE SAWYER:

ON WEDNESDAY OF THIS WEEK,  
SHAYNE LOST HER FATHER.  
WE EXTEND OUR SYMPATHY  
TO SHAYNE AND HER FAMILY  
AT THIS DIFFICULT TIME.

Kansas Writers, Inc. Members

2009 KWI BOARD  
MEMBER AND OFFICERS:

Advisor to the

President, Past President:

Tish Glasson

President: Lynne Dillon

V-Pres: Morgan Chilson

Secretary: Paula Myers

Treasurer: Shayne Sawyer

Membership: Open

Newsletter: Jean Wilson



**IMPORTANT DATES: NEXT  
KWI MEETING—**

**\*\*November 21, 2009: Our social  
Holiday meeting will be at First  
Congregational Church, 1701 SW  
Collins, at 11:30 AM; Food, Gifts,  
and Fund Raising! Bring a food  
dish, and a gift for raffle. Lots of  
Fun For All Members! Happy  
Holidays to all KWI Members! Please  
join us for our November Meeting,  
which serves as our Holiday  
Celebration. We start at 11:30 and  
everyone brings a food dish. If you  
could email Morgan at:**

**([morgan@exactlywrite.net](mailto:morgan@exactlywrite.net)) to let  
her know what you're bringing, she'll  
make sure we don't have any big  
gaps in food. That usually isn't a  
problem -- the food is always  
delicious! Along with food, please  
bring (if you can,) an unwrapped gift  
for the raffle. Gifts vary widely every  
year! (NO DECEMBER MEETING!):**

**This is lots of fun.  
The unwrapped gifts  
vary each year from  
nutcrackers to  
jewelry, birdhouses,  
and candles. You  
pay \$1 for each time  
you put your name  
in the raffle. At the  
church, we meet in  
the basement. Look  
for stairs to the left.  
There is an elevator  
down the hallway to  
the left. Hope to See  
you All, at our  
Holiday Celebration!**



KS Writers, Inc.

Meeting Minutes

October 24, 2009

Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library, 1515 SW 10<sup>th</sup>, Topeka, KS

No Business Meeting: 12:30 p.m. Program 1:00 p.m.

Treasurer's Report: Not available at press time.

President Lynne Dillon called the meeting to order at 12:47 to hear our guest speaker, Kimberly Killion, from St. Louis, Missouri, talk about her published books. She traveled to Topeka to speak plainly about the difficulties she went through to get published. Attendees introduced themselves and signed in, revealing a great crowd with several new visitors. Later in the day many joined Kimberly and our own KWI member, Angela Johnson at their book signing at Barnes and Noble Book Store. It was an exciting and rewarding time for everyone.

**PLEASE NOTE: NO KWI MEETING FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 2009.**

*Remember to email or mail any submissions for our KWI Newsletter, covering educational articles, personal writing successes, etc. to Jean Wilson at [adwritinghouse@yahoo.com](mailto:adwritinghouse@yahoo.com), or mail her to arrive at her home by the 7th of each month.*

From Morgan:

The January meeting will be a critique meeting. Anyone interested in submitting 10 pages for critique, please email those pages to me ([morgan@exactlywrite.net](mailto:morgan@exactlywrite.net)). I will match everyone up so that you're critiqued by at least two other people. This is a terrific opportunity to get some feedback on your writing.

\*Bloggers are needed for the website. Send your submissions to Morgan at [morgan@exactlywrite.net](mailto:morgan@exactlywrite.net).

**GOOD NEWS!**

Harlequin Enterprises Limited, a leader in series romance and one of the world's leading publishers of women's fiction, has just announced the launch of Carina Press (TM), a digital-only publishing house that will operate independently of their traditional publishing businesses.

<http://finance.yahoo.com/news/Harlequin-Launches-prnews-3894456163.html?x=0&.v=1>

Members: Have any of you looked at the NEO? It is a small take on the traditional laptop computer, but with Up to 700 hours use with just three AA batteries. It is very rugged and lightweight—easy to take anywhere for \$219.00 Each, and easy to write on for your newest book while traveling, riding the bus, or on an airplane.

We always keep the “good” Writer’s Digest issues, but did members keep the great May/June 2009 issue?

On page 54 it begins a listing of 101 Best Websites For Writers: from word challenges to critique groups to hot markets. Some good sites for general resources are babynameworld.com for names, sfwa.org/beware which has guides to avoid getting scammed, facebook.com for social networking, and twitter.com for allowing posts of 140 characters or less to send to family, friends, fans, and potential fans.

**For Challenges and Creativity**

Go to ourecho.com, canteach.ca/elementary/prompts.html for personal writing prompts, and nanowrimo.org, which during the month of November, is holding a month-long challenge to write 50,000 words in 30 days.

**For Agent Blogs:**

Go to blogqueryshark.blogspot.com, which posts lots of examples of what many writers are doing right and wrong. Try this wealth of resources at jetreidliterary.blogspot.com. Another agent blog that is very good is nathanbransford.blogspot.com for small contests and important industry news.

**For Publishing Resources:**

Go to aaronline.org for FAQ’s about what an agent can and cannot do for you. Or try agentquery.com—a free searchable database of agents. Another good agent website with a chart of prices is: Booksandtales.com/pod/index.php; but remember, prices change! Use for gauge or reference.

**For Jobs and Markets:**

Go to absolutewrite.com, duotrope.com, ed2010.com, helium.com for freelancing, and another good one is marketlist.com, listing a database of markets and contests with strong pay incentives.

**For Children’s Magazines: kidmagwriters.com**

**For Fiction: fictionfactor.com.**

**For Fantasy or Science Fiction: sfwa.org**

**For Horror: horror.org/writetips.com**

**For Poetry: jpicforum.info for feedback on your poetry.**

**For Romance: freshfiction.com, romancedivas.com, romancejunkies.com**

**For Scriptwriting: Moviebytes.com.**

**For Spiritual: christianstoryteller.com or host-a-jewish-book-author.com.**

**For Fun: bookmooch.com to redeem books you want**

**For needed writing motivation: online-stopwatch.com**

**Writing Communities recommended: bookglutton.com or try alongstoryshort.net who reply to every author’s query and offer free suggestions on how to improve your work.**

## Education

### Query Letter Format Block Style

Format your query letter like a professional business letter in block style, which means that all lines are flush left with no first line indentation, single-spaced, with one additional space between paragraphs. You can *justify* your right margin or not, whatever your preference. A justified right margin is one where all lines of text are flush right. This right margin format is not to be used for manuscripts but may be used for a query letter.

**Date:** In keeping with the formality and format of a business letter, type the date of your letter at the left margin. Spell out the month, provide the numerical date, and use the full year. Example: January 1, 2000. If you resubmit this query in the future, make sure you change the date in your computer's saved information so the publisher will think this is a fresh, new idea and not one that's been collecting dust.

**Heading:** Address your query to the editor's name that you found in your reference book's publisher information. Your submission will probably not land on that editor's desk initially, unless of course the publisher is extremely small. The manuscript will instead start out on the desk of one of the readers for that editor who will then pass it up the chain of command if they feel it a worthy submission. But, by addressing it to the editor, your manuscript will get as close to that editor's desk as it possibly can and won't be floating around in the wrong editorial department until they figure out where it belongs, that is, if they ever bother to figure it out.

Also, make sure you spell everyone's names correctly: the publisher's name, the editor's name, the street name, the city name, and so on. If you spell anything incorrectly, especially the publisher's name or the editor's name, it shows you as inattentive in your research. If you spell ordinary things like street or city names incorrectly, it shows your carelessness in your proofreading. If the reader or editor doesn't make it past the heading of your query letter, you lose!

**Salutation:** The salutation of your letter should be formal. Since this is a professional letter, use a colon instead of a comma following the name. And don't use the editor's first name only unless you have developed a relationship with that person.

**If the editor's name is John Brown:**

**Use:** Dear Mr. Brown:

**Don't Use:** Dear John:

**If the editor's name is Mary Brown:**

**Use:** Dear Ms. Brown:

**Don't Use:** Dear Mary:

**If the editor's name is Pat Brown:**

**Use:** Dear Pat Brown:

**Don't Use:** Dear Pat:

Don't guess the gender of the editor with an ambiguous name. Half the time, you'll probably guess wrong. It's better not to antagonize an editor by using the wrong gender in your salutation. Believe it or not, if the editor is in a bad mood, that may be a reason for rejection, because you didn't bother to take the time to research your information properly. A generic first and last name salutation does not insult anyone.

**Body:** The body of your query letter is comprised of several different components. They are usually provided in the following manner, but you should provide them in their order of importance. The context of your manuscript is usually the most important piece of information, but your experience may be the selling point instead. For instance, if you are an unknown with no professional recommendations, your idea will be the selling point. If however, *John Grisham* recommends you send your work to his editor, include that information in your first sentence. Other items may also be of more significance than your writing. For instance, if this were the case, write your first sentence something like this, "I wrote *Gone with the Wind*. Or, if this were the case, you simply state, "I am Jerry Seinfeld." That is all it would take. But, for most of us, it takes more than that.

Use the first paragraph or so of your query letter to effectively introduce your idea to the editor. But don't simply tell them, in essence, with your words, "This is the beginning, this is the middle, and this is the end." Because that's boring! If you bore them here, you're done.

## EDUCATION—Continued

**Explain to the editor the difference between your idea and the millions of other similar things already in print. What you are writing about is probably not a new idea. There are really very few truly new ideas. Most writing is just a variation of an idea already written about.**

**Make sure that your writing is different enough to make it an interesting addition to the bookshelf or magazine rack. If what you've written is a story about a boy and his dog, tell them what's different about this story. Indicate why there should be one more story about a boy and his dog. Give them the difference in your story—the different angle, the different point of view. The different climax, or the different ending. Convince them that there should be one more story about a boy and his dog.**

**Also, indicate the length of your manuscript so the reader or editor knows right away if this is something they may buy and use as is or if they must edit it dramatically for length.**

**One technique almost guaranteed to grab the editor's attention in your first paragraph or two is to describe part of the climax of your story. If they read an exciting part of your work, their curiosity may get them to turn the page and read your manuscript, just to find out what happened. Another idea is to tell them what is timely or relevant about what you wrote in terms of its marketing appeal to the public.**

**In the next paragraph, describe your qualifications for writing this particular piece. If you are writing an article about caregiving for people with Alzheimer's disease, let the potential editor know that you have been caring for your mother for the past 10 years while she's been progressing with this disease, or that you are a physician specializing in the treatment of people with Alzheimer's disease. Tell the editor about your education, your work experience, your research, or your life experience that makes you the person who should be writing about this subject matter.**

**A student in one of my classes several years ago showed me his query letter about a crime story he had written. It was a murder mystery, and the manuscript centered on how the police solved the crime. When I told him he failed in his query to include information about his crime research for the novel, he asked if it would be pertinent to let the editor know that he used to be a lieutenant in the police force. Yes! That's exactly the kind of information they are looking for.**

**If an editor thinks they will have to do any drastic fact checking or a lot of research before they publish your work, they probably won't bother to read your manuscript. The editor wants to know that you know what you are writing about.**

**In the next paragraph, describe your past writing credits. Write this in paragraph form, putting in information about your best credits thus far. It does not need to be a chronological listing. If you have any major credits, make sure you include them in this paragraph. If you have any credits that relate to what you are sending in now, make sure you include them too.**

**If the only credits you have are the initial beginner's pieces, such as a filler or a letter to the editor, use these to your advantage. Remember to use your skill as a creative writer to make whatever credits you do have sound as though they are wonderful credits. Eventually these pieces will fall off the bottom of your query letter, never to be seen again, because you have better credits to use. But if that's all you have, use them effectively. If you don't have any publishing credits at all and if you are not even willing to send in that easy-to-get-published letter to the editor, just leave this entire paragraph out. That's all you can do. Maybe they won't notice!**

**In your last paragraph, be polite and cordial. This is where you tell the potential publisher you appreciate them taking the time to look at your work and that you look forward to hearing from them. Realize that, after you submit your work, you won't be contacting them; they will be contacting you. The old "*Don't call us, we'll call***

## EDUCATION—Continued

*you,"* really applies here.

Make sure you type your name at the bottom of your query, four lines below your closing. Don't just sign the letter; the publisher may not be able to read your writing clearly, and a typed name is the proper format for a business letter. Here is an example of an actual query letter that worked:

In order to prove to the Grant Governing board that they are close to producing a libido suppressant, scientists Laura Manning and Jay Cutler must use themselves as guinea pigs. Jay fulfils his role by injecting himself with the serum. Laura's role requires candlelight, soft music, and silky lingerie. Her job is to entice him.

This story, *Pleasure Control*, was a finalist in Lori Foster's contest.

I am published with Ellora's Cave under the pen name, Cathryn Fox. I am a member of Romance Writers of America, served two consecutive terms as Secretary for Romance Writers of Atlantic Canada, and President of the Annapolis Valley writers group. I was a finalist in the Toronto Original Golden Opportunity Contest, semi-finalist in the Heart of Denver contest, and winner of the RWAC Query letter contest.

I've enclosed three synopses, three completed manuscripts, and a marketing plan.

I look forward to hearing from you.

This book sold to Avon.

#### Printing, Proofreading, and Signing

Once you write and type your query letter, make sure you proofread it as carefully as you would your manuscript. If there are errors in your query letter, the editor will assume there are errors in your manuscript as well. If that's the case, no matter how interesting your idea, the publisher may reject your manuscript anyway because of your carelessness.

When printing your query letter, the same rules apply as with your manuscript. *Letter quality* is the only Acceptable method of printing. An unpolished query letter will reflect on your writing; they probably won't read your writing anyway if your query is typed unprofessionally.

Last, but not least, once you write, type, proofread, and print your manuscript, don't forget to sign your name between the closing and the typed name. If you send one query letter, you will probably remember to sign your name. If you send 15 query letters out at the same time, you may forget to sign one or two of them, and that may indicate to a publisher that you have sent this to more than one publisher. You never want them to think that they are not your first choice!

**Closing:** One of the last steps to preparing a professional query letter is to close your letter properly. Type your closing flush left, two lines below the last line of your letter. The best closing to use is, *Sincerely*,. This is always the best choice, since this is the most professional closing. You don't ever want them to question your professionalism. *Sincerely* is never objected to, whereas other choices like *Warmest Regards* or *Love* or anything else could be interpreted as unprofessional and give them a negative opinion of you. Why risk making a silly error by choosing the wrong closing?

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By Morgan Chilson

Hi, all KWI writers!

I'm giving my first real attempt at nanowrimo this year. (I'm choosing to ignore a failed, "signed up and wrote 3,000-some words attempt" several years ago!) It's been an exciting experience and what's even more fun is that all three of my children heard me talk about this and decided to do it themselves. It is such a joy to see my three – ages 6, 10 & 12 – plucking away at the computer. Their dedication to getting their daily word count has been inspiring to me. To see the 6-year-old, who has little concept of typing, hunting and pecking to get his 100 words per day, humbles me when I'm feeling too "lazy, tired, busy, swamped, crazy" to want to work.

One of my vows to myself in the past few months as I've attempted to grow my freelance business was to read one or two "good" books a month. I'm famous for my two-book-a-week escapist reading. So I plunged into looking for motivational, writing and books that will help change my life for the better.

In that motivational reading, I've been reminded how wonderful our brains are and how what we think changes our lives. I've been doing a lot of reading on neuroscience for my journalism business and can't believe what they're finding now that they can image the brain. It is so important to be positive – quit saying, "If I finish my book. . ." and start saying, "When I finish my book. . ."

What we put into our brains affects what we output into our lives. Good, positive inputs can inspire creativity, create wisdom and generally change our lives.

Two of my favorite finds in my reading journey were by the same author, Andy Andrews. For those who heard me talk about Orlando, he was one of the speakers there. His books, *The Travelers Gift* and *The Noticer*, were wonderful and full of simple wisdom for life. For those with teenagers, there is a *Young Travelers Gift* that I am reading with my teenage Sunday School class. I was worried about sharing a book with them – and they moaned, "Oh no, we're reading?!" But they have been so enthralled with this book that they've even stayed late to finish parts of our readings. One girl asked if she could take the book home and finish it because we were going too slowly in class. I highly recommend both books.

As we approach the crazy holiday season, I hope you all find time for the important things in life – family, friends, whatever your Higher Power may be and, of course, reading. What's a snowy day without a book?

Best wishes for your writing life!

Morgan

VP of Programs



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KS WRITERS, INC. Is On The Web As:

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

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Scene and Sequel:

The idea behind scene and sequel is pretty simple, and it's fairly easy to imagine implementing it. At the simplest level, just write seven sentences in the correct order, and you're done. Of course, things can get a lot more complicated than that. For example, how long is a scene? As long as it needs to be. Goal, conflict, and disaster could take place in a single sentence or take up an entire chapter. And how long is a sequel? Like a scene, as long as it needs to be. Emotion, thought, decision, and action could also take place in a single sentence or an entire chapter. It's also possible that after the decision in the sequel, the action is, well, nothing. In other words, the character may decide not to act. Regardless of what the character decides to do, the action that ends a sequel doesn't necessarily have anything to do with the goal of the scene that follows. The end of the sequel is a logical time to jump to another location, another time, or even a different viewpoint character. Another important point about scene and sequel is this: *Every element of a single scene and sequel pair applies to the same character.* If you're writing in third-person limited or first-person viewpoint, this is a moot point, because everything in your story applies to only one character. But if you're writing in the omniscient viewpoint, you must be careful to not mix one character's goal with another's disaster and another's emotions. That simply doesn't work. Now that you've completed this lesson, you're well on your way to writing that novel or play using the professional author's best-kept secret: scene and sequel!

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*It is November and our baby deer has grown enough and joined his elders in the forest. Man cannot replace the true environment of our animals. Everyone is seeking a warm place during the cold winter months. Here, Mr. Raccoon is checking out one possibility—KWI MEMBERS, KEEP WRITING DURING THIS WINTER!*