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2020-2021

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Kansas Writers, Inc.

October 2020 Newsletter



Ponderings and Smackeralas:

Hello, my writerly type friends!

October is rapidly reaching its end, even though I swear the first was just yesterday. November is right around the corner, and that means NaNoWriMo is almost upon us. Every year, come November 1st, hundreds of thousands of writers plunk themselves at their keyboards (or take up pen and paper if you are like my hubby) and attempt to write 50,000 words in the thirty days of November. I've been a Nano participant since 2005 and find it to be very motivating, even though I have yet to reach the 50,000 words. But even though I don't reach that goal, I do start December with more words written than I had before I begun, so I'll take that as a win.

I've always been a "pantser" (someone who sets down to write with an idea and no clear vision of where the story is headed,) but I think I'm going to give being a "plotter" a go this year, as flying by the seat of my pants is obviously not working for me. Which type of writer are you? Do you have a clear vision for your novel, or do you let the chips fall where they may? If you would like to join the November writing frenzy head over to nanowrimo.org. Sign up, announce your project, and join the rest of us in our quest to write a novel in only 30 days. Check out the forums for inspiration, pep talks, plot help—you name it. Set your home region for Topeka and connect with other local writers.

Looking forward to seeing y'all next Saturday. Until then, I wish you words.

Bear

KWI Meetings

Future Meetings

When: November 28

Where: TBA

Topic: TBA

Future Meeting

When: January 23

Where: TBA

Topic: TBA

Meeting Format

Open Writing: 9:30am -
10:00am

Critiquing: 10:00am -
11:30am

Board Meeting: 11:30am -
12:00pm

Member Meeting:
12:30pm - 1:00 pm

Program: 1:00 pm -
2:30pm

October Meeting:



We will be back in Marvin 101C for our meeting. Once again the time has shifted, so be aware of that. We will be starting at 11:00 am instead of 10:00 and the meeting will last until 3:00.

The program this month will focus on structure. So if you have trouble figuring out how to organize the different elements of your story, this meeting is for you. As always, there will also be good company and conversation to be had by all. See you Saturday!

Financials

September 2020

Beginning Cash Balance:
\$3,753.94

Income: \$00.00

Expenses: \$14.45

Ending Cash Balance: \$3,739.49

Member Spotlight: Connie Beckett

KWI Membership Chair Connie Beckett is living proof that persistence pays off. Having recently sold one of her novels, Connie's biggest piece of advice for writers: Keep Writing. That means you.

What drives you to write?

My paternal grandmother was a news reporter in the early 1900s – a rare thing for those times. As a child, back when dinosaurs roamed the earth according to my daughters, I would listen to her gripe about letters she received that had misspellings, were unclear, or had words split in the wrong place from line-to-line. I was fascinated by the craft of writing then and still am now.

What keeps you motivated?

I wish I knew the magic writer motivation spell, but I don't. I just keep nibbling at the edges of something until interest clicks in.

Who are your writing influences?

For non-fiction, I like James Michener and Tom Wolfe (particularly, *The Purple Decades*). I'm amazed how they can take real events, places, and people and make the writing interesting. For fiction, I like J.K. Rowling for taking a familiar genre (English schooling and magic) and giving it new life, and Michael Connelly for his mystery craft.

What advice would you offer to writers struggling to find a place/publisher?

I found Next Chapter by chance. I took a Writers' Digest on-line course, and the instructor was newly hired as their acquisition agent. I firmly believe indie publishing is a great way to start. Otherwise, enter contests and do self-marketing. If the writing is good, the story interesting, and the manuscript well edited, it will find readers.

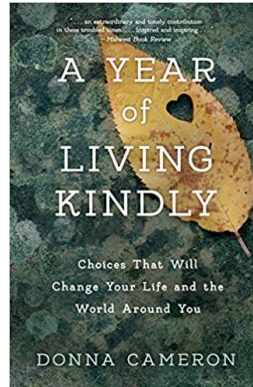
What is one book or story you think everyone should read and why?

I don't have a particular one. My advice is to read, read. Read in your favorite genre and read in a genre you are not familiar with.

Oscar Wilde's rumored last words were "This wallpaper and I are fighting a duel to the death. Either it goes or I do." What hilarious/insightful/sarcastic/irreverent last words would you like to be remembered by?

Last words? The secret formula you ask? It is: Butt in chair and fingers on the keyboard – consistently.

From the Slush Pile

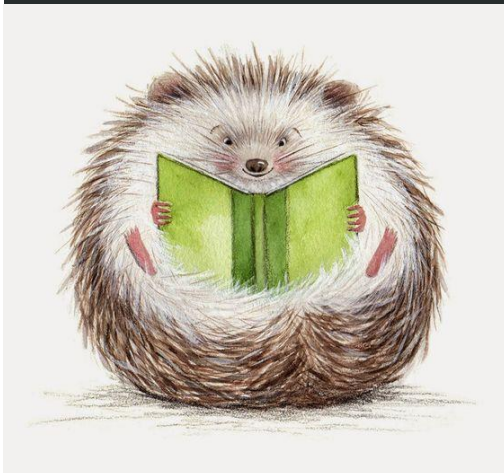


You may be thinking, WTF? This isn't a book about craft or an awesome example of storytelling.

True, but this one is an awesome example of why writers need to read widely and especially outside of the genre they write in. Inspiration can truly come from anywhere, plus it will make you a more well-rounded person (I keep being told this is important?).

This book popped up in my Pinterest feed and, shockingly, my three-size too small heart went "Why not?" Is it a little preachy and repetitive at times? Sure, but it also has some good advice. More importantly, while I was reading this, I was also working on a story with a main character struggling with some severe emotional issues. I realized that I could use some of the author's experiences and lessons to help further develop my character's...well, character. See? Inspiration from places you would never expect.

If nothing else, given the current state of affairs, it's nice to have a reminder that kindness does still exist in the world despite all evidence to the contrary.



Have an awesome read you want to recommend to our writing community? Send the info to 221bwilles@gmail.com.

Kudos

Congratulations to Connie Beckett who recently signed with Next Chapter Publishing for her novel *The Kingmaker and the Scribe*, as well as a pre-teen novel.

Congratulations as well to Julie Nischan who recently won third place in the prose category of the Kansas Authors Club annual competition. Way to go!

Alisha Davis has taken a position as a writing instructor for the adult education program at Lawrence Arts Center. She will be teaching a class on flash fiction/short fiction during their winter session and a class on utilizing music with your writing in the spring.



