

Board Members

2021-2022

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Kansas Writers, Inc.

February 2022 Newsletter



Ponderings and Smackerals:

Greetings, fellow writers,

I hope February is treating you well. Sorry I missed y'all last month. I understand that the new meeting format worked well. We will be continuing with this going forward. If anybody has any suggestions for programs they would find interesting or useful please let me or anyone on the board know. We want to provide information that will make the meetings worth your time!

How is your writing going this month? Please bring something for critique this month if you are looking for feedback, or some help brainstorming. I really enjoy hearing what our members are working on. It's inspiring.

This month we'll be at Blue Moose and discussing query letters and synopses. Hope to see you there.

As always, I wish you words.

Bear

KWI Meetings

Future Meetings

When: February 26,
2020

Where: Blue Moose
Restaurant

Topic: TBA

Future Meetings

When: March 26, 2022

Where: TBA

Topic: TBA

Meeting Format

Program: 10:00am

Board Meeting: 11:00

Critique: 12:00pm

February Meeting/Program

The February meeting will be held February 26 at the Blue Moose, 3030 SW Wanamaker Road, Topeka. We will begin with a 10 a.m. program. Here is the link to the program on how to write a synopsis in case you are unable to attend. <https://youtu.be/t3D6k7B6U3E>



From the Slush Pile

HAVE YOU LOOKED AT REEDSY?

For as long as I've known about the Reedsy platform, I've been a big fan girl. Based in London, England, they've gathered from across the globe, publishing industry professionals who offer their expertise to writers of all stripes.

One of several free services Reedsy offers is writing courses given by their professionals. These courses are accessed through their blog.

blog.reedsy/learning/courses/writing

Some of the free courses on offer:

- How to Write Mind-Blowing Fantasy Fiction
- How to Master the 'Show Don't Tell' Rule
- How to Turn Up the Heat in Your Romance
- How to Write for Middle-Grade Readers
- How to Write YA That Sells
- Understanding Point of View

Financials

January 2022

Beginning Cash Balance:
\$3,502.13

Income: \$98.00

Expenses: \$0.00

Ending Cash Balance
\$3,600.13

There are courses in Design, Distribution, Editing, Marketing, Publishing, and more on Writing. Also, Reedsy hosts free monthly Podcasts with their editors on a variety of craft and publishing related topics.

Happy writing, friends

Shayne Huxtable

February Online Writing Workshops

There are many genre-based organizations that offer online workshops and educational articles. It's a good way to distract us from a dreary February. Here are a few. Let us know if you have others.

Romance Writers of America www.rwa.org

Historical Writers' Association www.historicalwriters.org

Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America www.sfwaw.org

Sisters in Crime www.sistersincrime.org

Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators www.scbwi.org

National Association of Memoir Writers www.namw.org

February's Featured Member

This month we are featuring Julie Nischan, author of "The Substitute Cook."

Q: Tell us about your book, "The Substitute Cook," and how you came to write it.

A: I didn't plan to write a cookbook! I love to cook and have amassed a large collection of cookbooks and recipes over the years. My husband and I were watching MasterChef reruns and one of the prizes for the winner is their own cookbook. I told my husband - "What's the big deal about that? Every church women's group puts out their own cookbook!" so he asked, "Could you write a cookbook?" And the idea took off from there! The whole process took about 4 months from idea to publication.

Q: A non-fiction cookbook is different than writing fiction. What challenges or rewards did you encounter doing non-fiction?

A: The Substitute Cook is actually my second non-fiction book. Misspent-My Life in Retail” is creative nonfiction, the stories are true but names were changed. I think non-fiction (at least what I have written) is much easier as I didn't have to create characters or a story, it was all there. That makes the process much faster. The cookbook was really fast to put together because I already had all the recipes that I have made many times. That was the easy part!

Q: What were the hardest part and the easiest part of doing the book (research, writing, editing, the self-publishing process, etc.)

A: I have self-published both my books and, boy, was it a learning curve! I tried to do as much research as I could while still writing and preparing. Self-publishing sites are an inexpensive way to get your book out there, but you get what you pay for in customer service-meaning I had to figure out what I was doing wrong myself. For “Misspent” I used IngramSpark and for “The Substitute Cook” I used LuLu. I found LuLu easier to navigate but had fewer options. But I went with LuLu so I could have a spiral binding; Ingram didn't offer that option.

The biggest pain in the butt for both books was the formatting. Font size, page breaks, chapter headings/numbering and cover size were completely different for both sites. Formatting recipes on the pages was a nightmare! My husband is my tech support and tried 6 different options for me, and then I made my own. It was lots of trial and error! I used a professional editor for “Misspent” that I contracted with through Reedsy. I did my own editing on the cookbook (a cardinal sin, I know) and cringe at the errors I find now. For my future projects I will use a professional editor again. It was the most expensive part of getting my first book published but I feel it was worth it.

Q: I love the cover art. You relayed an interesting story about it. Please tell our members.

A: The cover art! I have a friend who has a degree in graphic design that I asked to do the covers for both books. She did a great job and she accepted baked goods as payment, so we were both happy! I drew a very rough sketch on a post-it note and texted it to her and she did the rest. I wanted a play on words for the cover of the cookbook and thought it would be funny to have “substitute” have a dual meaning to do with food and math. I even got my sister to send me some examples of math problems as she has a doctorate in mathematics. I felt that if I was going to include some math problem on the cover it should at least be a real equation. She suggested the pineapple divided by a pine bough equals the apple I used. I made sure to give her credit in the book which is a huge family joke since she hates to cook.

Q: I prepared your Oven Brisket recipe for Christmas brunch. It was delicious. Have you received other feedback?

A: I'm always glad when someone gives me feedback on a recipe. So far it has all been positive. A few women at my work bought the cookbook and now when I bring in cookies and such they all ask how to make them and I just say -it's in the cookbook! All the recipes are tried and tested by me for my family and friends, so I was confident about publishing them for anyone to try.

Q: Anything else you want to share about the research or writing? Or about your next writing project?

A: I am happy to share what I have learned self-publishing with anyone who has questions. As for what is next, my goals for this year are to publish my next nonfiction book of short stories and poetry inspired by my childhood on our family farm. I'm ready to start working with an editor on it and plan to self-publish this summer. My other goal is to finish my first draft of my novel, a fictional romance, by the end of the year.

Q: Last, where can readers find your book?

A: "Misspent-My Life in Retail" is available on Amazon in paperback or eBook. I also have copies of it for \$10. "The Substitute Cook" is only available through me and is also \$10. I always bring a few copies to our meetings if anyone is interested in buying or just looking at the finished product.

Editor's note: Here is the link to "Misspent" (Control Click to open)



Kudos

Connie Beckett has signed a contract with Next Chapter publishing for her middle-grade novel, “Nana Belle Wins the Lottery.”

If you have published a book, received a writing award, appeared on a Podcast, or other such reason to celebrate a success, please let Connie know at conniebeckett942@gmail.com. We would love to feature you in an upcoming newsletter.

