

KWI: Kansas Writers Ink

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February 2013

KWI'S 2013
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Morgan's Musings

In the past few months, I've been smacked in the face with the way that my experiences in life have created a very narrow world view. I like to skip airily through my day thinking that I'm open minded and pretty aware, but the reality is that we each see the world through the prism of our own experiences.

Being a reader, I've comforted myself with the knowledge that books open my mind – taking me into worlds of sadness and joy I could never imagine. Of course, I still believe that. I am a much better person for going into the minds of characters who see the world differently than I do. For reading about heartbreaking realities – imagine the recounting of Auschwitz – and tales of overcoming that are inspirational.

I don't know that there's really a way to be open to the world and to see all viewpoints. It's not possible – we are limited by the experiences of our lives, our families and their histories, our work choices, our education, our financial security . . . and on and on.

Recognizing the inherent restrictions of our way of thinking is critical to writers. I've floundered when writing male characters, abused grandmothers, and five-year-old children. I tend to focus on how would they phrase things, what type of language they would use, or

how they would move their bodies. What I forget to consider is their completely different world view.

Did you know that people who grow up in dysfunctional families often don't like to sit with their backs to a room? They aren't comfortable when they can't see what's coming at them – and this is not just physically abused people, but people who grew up in unstable homes where there was no abuse. When I learned that, my mind leaped to all the things I DON'T know about how people think and respond to their environment and how my narrow view is reflected in my writing.

Of course, if we try to learn everything about any given situation, we'd spend all our time researching and never get anything written. Still, to make real, heartfelt stories, it's important to dig deep into those characters. To know their backgrounds, their personalities, their physical traits – but to really know how they view the world and why they view it that way.

It's a bit of a scary responsibility. If we fall into the trap of portraying characters in a stereotyped way, we perpetuate that stereotype with our readers. Depending on the kind of fiction we're writing, portraying characters as too real may make

the reader uncomfortable. (I tried to write a romance scene one time where it was "that time of the month" for the character, so she was avoiding sexual advances. My critique group just didn't like it. A little too much reality. I do think it would now fit in some of the chick lit fiction.) I have to be thankful for these situations that arose recently that made me step outside my comfort zone. Deeper thinking about my job as a writer is always going to benefit me. It's making me take a second, closer look at my characters, with an eye toward strengthening who they are and leaving behind some of the trite situations I've created for explaining their characters.

And it's made me want to push myself outside that comfort zone more often. Shaking up your world – even just by reading opposing viewpoints to something you feel strongly about – can be a positive.

Happy writing!
Morgan

KWI Guest Speaker: Tom Mach



KWI's Guest Speaker, Tom Mach, to present at February meeting.

“How vain it is
to sit down to
write when you
have not stood
up to live.”
—Henry David
Thoreau

The title of my talk will be "What I've Discovered That Will Help Improve Your Novel."

If you're like me you probably are thinking that you already have written a novel, so why this workshop? Well, the answer is that we can always improve and perfect what we already know about it. I will do this by using my latest novel, *Angels at Sunset*, as a tool for giving you concrete ideas on how to improve your novel--or even how to write a novel in the first place. Among the items discussed will be:

- The extreme importance of having a profes-

sional editor for your book

- How I had to create a better back and front cover
- Why I had to constantly rewrite my synopsis for this book
- How I was able to create three-dimensional characters
- How I learned to sneak foreshadowing into my novel
- How I found it possible to seamlessly weave fictitious characters with historical figures
- How I determined to use just the right amount of detail for my settings
- How I used flashbacks without falling into a pitfall some writers exhibit
- How and when to rein in your characters vs.

when to let them take over How I never lost sight of my goal for what was the heart of the story that I wanted to convey (It's so easy to get side-railed.)

This is one presentation you won't want to miss. I have put in many years of writing and rewriting and conference material and numerous book references to learn the finer points of writing fiction. You will benefit from this talk whether you have never written a novel or have written several but still want ideas on how to make it even better.

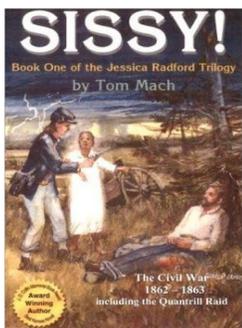
Author Bio: Tom Mach

Tom Mach wrote three successful historical novels, *Sissy!*, *All Parts Together*, and *Angels at Sunset* (his most recent work). In 2011 *Sissy!* and *All Parts Together* were listed by the Kansas State Library as worth to be included among the 150 best Kansas books (which would include authors such as Truman Capote and Laura Ingalls Wilder). *Sissy!* won the J. Donald Coffin Memorial Book Award while *All Parts Together* was a Best Books Award Finalist. *Angels at Sunset* received 5-star reviews and was nominated for the Nobel Prize by a teacher of history and English at an Easter college. On March, 2012,

the state of Kansas issued a proclamation honoring Mr. Mach for his help in recognizing the 100th anniversary of the 1912 passage of Kansas Suffrage by proclaiming 2012 in honor of his book and officially calling it the "Kansas Angels at Sunset Centennial."

His poetry collection, *The Uni Verse*, won the Nelson Poetry Book Award, while *Sissy!* won the J. Donald Coffin Memorial Book Award. Mr. Mach has written numerous other books as well--including a collection of short stories entitled *Stories to Enjoy*.

Tom was a former copywriter, editor of two magazines, conducted writing workshops in Ohio, California, and Kansas, and taught writing at KU's Continuing Education Program. In addition to numerous articles he has authored in national and regional publications, he was past president with the California Writers Club and the Kansas Authors Club. He won the Jack London Award in California and a Service Award with the Kansas Authors Club. He currently resides with his wife in Lawrence, Kansas--where he is also involved in volunteer work to help children with their writing skills.



J. Donald Coffin Memorial Book Award winner, *Sissy* by Tom Mach.

Writer's Workshops by Angela Johnson

March Workshops Online

Becoming a Brand: Using Social Media to Become a Household Brand

Date: May 9 – 13, 2013

FMI, <http://www.lirw.org/class.html>

Social Media for Writers and Authors

Date: March 1, 2013

FMI, <http://www.rwamysterysuspense.org/coffin.html>.

Whodunit? Building a Mystery, Choosing a Sleuth and a Crime

Date: March 1, 2013

FMI, <http://www.rwamysterysuspense.org/coffin.html>.

Writing Great Historical Fiction

Date: March 1–15, 2013

FMI, <http://www.oirwa.com/forum/campus/#MAR4>.

Alphas: Leaders of the Pack

Dates: March 1–29, 2013

FMI, <http://lowcountryrwa.com/workshops/all-workshops/#MAR>.

BDSM in Romance

Dates: March 1–29, 2013

FMI, <http://lowcountryrwa.com/workshops/all-workshops/#MAR>.

Killer Openings

Dates: March 1–29, 2013

FMI, <http://lowcountryrwa.com/workshops/all-workshops/#MAR>.

Sexy Synopsis

Dates: March 1–29, 2013

FMI, <http://lowcountryrwa.com/workshops/all-workshops/#MAR>.

Lord of the Isles

Dates: March 1–30, 2013

FMI, <http://www.celtichearts.org/workshops>.

The Book Factory: Producing Multiple Novels in One Year

Date: March 1–31, 2013

FMI, <http://www.oirwa.com/forum/campus/#M>

AR2.

Witches, Faeries and Wizards

Dates: March 1–31, 2013

FMI, <http://www.oirwa.com/forum/campus/#MAR1>.

Writing with Scrivener

Date: March 1–31, 2013

FMI, <http://www.oirwa.com/forum/campus/#MAR3>.

Finding Words/Killing Words: Bringing Your Manuscript in at the Right Word Count

Date: March 4, 2013

FMI, <http://crw-rwa.ning.com/page/2013-onlineworkshops>.

Flesh is Meant to be Enjoyed, So Why is Mine So Dry? Writing with All Five Senses

Date: March 4, 2013

FMI, <http://crw-rwa.ning.com/page/2013-onlineworkshops>.

How to Design and Teach an Online Workshop

Date: March 4, 2013

FMI, <http://crw-rwa.ning.com/page/2013-onlineworkshops>.

I'm Back From Writing Conference: What Do I Do Now?

Date: March 4, 2013

FMI, <http://crw-rwa.ning.com/page/2013-onlineworkshops>.

Navigating through the Mechanics of Writing Dialogue

Dates: March 4–17, 2013

FMI, e-mail neorwaonline@gmail.com or visit <http://www.neorwa.com/index.php/Workshops/Workshops>.

Cop Characters: How to Make Them Click and What Makes Them Tick

Date: March 4–29, 2013

FMI, amyvil1@yahoo.com; <http://www.marylandromancewriters.com/workshops/#online>.

Got High Concept?

Date: March 4–29, 2013

FMI, <http://www.passionateink.org/workshops/>.

****Deep Story Technique I**

Date: March 4–30, 2013

FMI, visit <http://www.starrwa.org> or e-mail carolhenry@frontiernet.net.

Stretching, Mixing, and Transforming Sentence Recipes (Patterns) to Create a Memorable Story

Date: March 11–April 5, 2013

FMI, <http://www.ocrwa.org/onlineclasses.html>.

Cracking the Romance Code: Unlocking Storytelling Secrets for Writing the Quintessential Romance Novel

Date: March 1 – 31, 2013

FMI, <http://www.carolinaromancewriters.com/online-workshop-schedule.html>

Self – Publishing & Branding

Date: March 18 – 28, 2013

FMI, <http://www.carolinaromancewriters.com/online-workshop-schedule.html>

Be Your Character's Life Coach

Date: March 4 – 31, 2013

FMI, <http://romance-ffp.com/page/workshops>

Beyond Hero's Journey

Date: March 4 – 31, 2013

FMI, <http://romance-ffp.com/page/workshops>

Goggles & Corsets

Date: March 11 – April 7, 2013

FMI, <http://romance-ffp.com/page/workshops>

Avoid the Rough: Turning Your Story Idea into a Workable Plot

Date: March 18 – 25, 2013

FMI, <http://romance-ffp.com/page/workshops>

PTSD, Victims, Psychology

Date: March 18 – 25, 2013

FMI, <http://romance-ffp.com/page/workshops>

Urban Fantasy

Date: March 18 – 31, 2013

FMI, <http://romance-ffp.com/page/workshops>

Free Workshop: How to Write a Romance Novel

Date: TBA, 1 Week

FMI, <http://www.coffeetimeromance.com/ReadersGroups.html#Seminars>

****Angela highly recommends the workshop, Deep Story Technique 1. She took it several months ago, and was amazed at the depth and volume of story plotting taught in the course.**

Financial Report
by Carey Kennedy

January Beginning
balance: 3,391.36
Receipts: 260.00
Disbursements: 474.00
Ending balance: 3,177.36

www.kansaswritersinc.com
www.kansaswriters.wordpress.com

Submissions for the blog go to
Tish, bearwmn@aol.com

Please send all submissions for
the newsletter to Romie Chavez.
romualdorchavez@gmail.com

Kudos

KWI member, Cheryl Swayne self published two non-fiction books and they are now available through Amazon. The books are a guide and a workbook that will be used as part of her Funafter50 life coaching program. Cheryl will also be certified in Social Media Internet Marketing by the second week in March. She has offered to help any KWI members design or set up their social media accounts. For members that need help with creating a test or assessment, she used Inner Medicine to create her Recreation Assessments. Cheryl highly recommends them because of the fantastic job they did with her business. She also had success with using Fiverr.com to do design work, marketing videos, and book covers.

KWI President, Morgan Chilson-Rothenberger, will be giving a lesson in how to edit your work here at the library March 12th 7:00pm-8:00pm.

KWI members, Romie Chavez, Carey Kennedy, and Billie-Renee Knight, are participating in the TSCPL 2nd Annual Community Novel Project, entitled Speak Easy. Good luck to them.

Secretary's Report



Saturday January 26th, 2013

Topeka Shawnee County Public Library.

President Morgan Chilson opened the meeting at 12:35pm. Attendees: Romie Chavez, Billie-Renee Knight, Leslie Gallbriath, Carey Kennedy, Shayne Sawyer, Mark Bouton, Angela Johnson, Ian Hall, Reed Holwegner.

Minutes:

Minutes from last month to be amended to include the correct name of the bank we use.

Correspondence: None

Treasurers Report was not reviewed.

New Business:

Carey and Morgan to be added

as signees to our bank account while all others are to be removed.

Question posed at the meeting: Should we buy tapes/CD's from the RT conference?

The RT conference is in KC this year. Dates May 1-5th Morgan is looking into volunteering activities in exchange for a reduced entry fee.

Old Business

March Retreat: Prices at the Elms have skyrocketed and it no longer fits into our budget (meeting room price has increased from \$50 to \$500) Reed and Morgan are looking into other options.

First Line Contest: Deadline is March 1, 2013. Please send

your entries to Bear, bearwmn@aol.com.

Have a great idea for a program? Send it to Mark, markbouton@msn.com

Reminders: Have you come across a great writing website or found an informative newsletter? Then Share your findings with the rest of us.

Check out our websites!

www.kswriters.com and our blog
www.kswriters.wordpress.com and our Facebook page, Kansas Writers Inc.

Meeting was closed at 12:55pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Tish Glasson, Secretary.

Next meeting:
February 23rd, 2013
@10:00 AM- 2:00 PM

Location: Topeka
Shawnee County
Public Library