

# ROCKY MOUNTAIN WRITER

The monthly newsletter of Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers,  
dedicated to supporting, encouraging, and educating writers seeking  
publication in commercial fiction.



ROCKY MOUNTAIN FICTION WRITERS

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## How Do We Know If Our Writing Is Good Enough?

Charles Senseman



As I walk from the crisp fog into the tall black doors of the hotel on the first morning of the 2014 Colorado Gold Conference, I find the lobby filled with bursts of laughter, nail biting, shared hugs, wide eyes, and wrinkled brows. The expressions on faces reflect goals and expectations as unique as the souls that hold them. Many are wondering if their writing is good enough this year to get a request, especially those attending a conference for the first time.

Receiving a request from an agent or editor is thrilling, and for many the fulfillment of a dream, but ultimately the proof is in the mail. A request is only an opportunity, as easily squandered as seized.

So how do we know if our writing is good enough?

Don't submit your work until it's ready, we are told.

That's like telling teenagers they don't know it all. They don't know what they don't know. In grad school, the more I learned, the more I realized I didn't know anything. If writing is like any other discipline, then writing is like an onion. As we perfect a skill and peel back a layer, we discover a new set of deficiencies.

How do we know if our writing is good enough?

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## Editor's Note

Angie Hodapp



RMFW's Colorado Gold Conference isn't the only game in town. Oh, don't get me wrong; it's pretty great. But our state is home to dozens of great organizations who sponsor hundreds

of wonderful events and educational opportunities each year. (Check out the Calendar of Events on page 23 for a sampling.) Get out there and meet new people! Learn new things! Get involved!

This past month, I enjoyed the **Castle Rock Writers Conference** (October 4), where I taught a workshop and attended another, presented by **Aaron Michael Ritchey**. I caught up with fellow RMFW members **Karen Albright Lin, Mike Befeler, Anne Randolph, Chris Mandeville**, and more. **Jean Jacobsen** and crew do a fantastic job putting this one-day conference in motion.

Then, October 24-26, I attended **MileHiCon 46**, where I served on several panels and had a lot of fun. If you write speculative fiction, then make it a point to attend this annual convention. The panelists are accomplished authors, scientists, and professionals, and you can sit in on discussions about everything from dragons and mythology to epigenetics and speed-of-light space travel to climate change and interplanetary colonization. It's a smart con that also offers a lot of fun. Among the RMFW members you'll be sure to run into are **Jeanne C. Stein, Mario Acevedo, Warren Hammond, Carol Berg, Betsy Dornbusch, Robin D. Owens, Thea Hutcheson, Travis Heermann, Quincy Allen**, and **F. P. Dorchak**. Put this one on your calendar for next year!

Angie

It doesn't take long to understand that feedback is subjective. One person loves your work while another wants to line the birdcage with it. Whose opinion is correct?

It's important to have confidence in our abilities and not to let the others' perceptions define us. But overconfidence is a killer. Writing is about learning, and learning about listening. If a writer doesn't have listening skills, it's likely he or she has little understanding of the human condition, which precludes good writing. The problem with riding through life with tunnel vision is that a tunnel often ends in the sewer.

How do we know if our writing is good enough?

I still ask myself that question, but not so much as I used to. Approaching the doors of my first conference last year, I felt like Snoopy

and expected to miss the *No Dogs Allowed* sign. To my pleasant surprise, there was no gatekeeper and no one threw me out. Everything was available, and I could add anything to my bowl that I wanted.

For me, the question is no longer if, but when. The formula for good writing is not kept secret; it's shared readily at conferences, in critique groups, and in books. Agents and editors fill their websites and blogs with their desires and expectations.

When the excitement of this year's conference fizzles, the job of writing awaits. In my opinion, what determines if our writing is good enough is how well we do our job. And what's more important, while we pursue that coveted publishing contract, is how well we enjoy doing it. ♦

Charles Senseman is a writer of fantasy novels, an ecocentrist, and a self-proclaimed dork. His brain is usually in La-La Land conceiving alternate worlds and civilizations, which is why he has to explain to his wife why he left the garage door open again.

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# COLORADO GOLD CONTEST

## Meet the 2014 Colorado Gold Contest Winners!



**Kevin Wolf**

*The Homeplace*  
Action/Thriller

**Tell us about your winning entry, *The Homeplace*.** Disgraced NBA player Chase Ford hasn't been home in sixteen years. Not even for his father's funeral. On his first day back, the body of the farm town's high-school basketball star is found on the prairie. The boy is stark naked and surrounded by four dead buffalo.

**What is your history with writing contests?** I am an unapologetic contest junkie. Five different manuscripts in four categories have finaled at RMFW, Crested Butte, Pikes Peak, SouthWest Writers, and Pacific Northwest Writers Association. I've won at RMFW (twice), CB, and PNWA.

**What was the best comment you received from a contest judge?** From a 2008 third read that eliminated me from the final round: "The score is lower than I want to give you, but don't look at it and think, this judge doesn't think I'm doing anything right. You have the right start, but you have many of the right elements you need to expand." I took the challenge.

**How long have you been writing fiction?** I got serious in 2004. I joined RMFW in 2005.

**What do you do when you're not writing?** Writing is a good escape from my career in professional sales.

**What else would you like us to know about you or your writing?** The Littleton Writers Critique Group has helped me more than I can ever explain. The folks in the group are good writers and better friends. ♦



**Kara Seal**

*The Shuvani's Spell*  
Young Adult/  
Middle Grade

**Tell us about your winning entry, *The Shuvani's Spell*.** When Romani gypsy Lumin performs an illegal spell, Pa accepts blame and is arrested—under penalty of execution. Blind brother in tow, she seeks aid from the legendary Shuvani witches, who are hiding while plotting against the Crown. Asked to join the rebellion, Lumin gets more than she bargained for.

**What is your history with writing contests?** I've entered the Sandy contest twice, but didn't final. I've entered Colorado Gold twice and made the finals twice. I've also entered various Twitter contests and won query critiques and other small prizes.

**What was the best comment you received from a contest judge?** Last year I received comments from the Colorado Gold judges that my voice felt too young for YA, which led me to rewrite the manuscript as middle grade, and my writing has clicked ever since.

**How long have you been writing fiction?** Since I could hold a crayon, but I've been writing seriously for about seven years.

**What do you do when you're not writing?** If I'm not writing, I'm either reading or hanging out with my awesome husband and our two dogs. My day job is with the Programming Department of a public library, where I help plan author visits and the Summer Reading program.

**What else would you like us to know about you or your writing?** My favorite stories to write have high stakes and unique character perspectives. Speculative fiction will always be my first love. Find me online via Facebook or Twitter @KRwriter. I love connecting with other writers! ♦



## Mary Birk

**The First Cut**  
Mystery/Suspense

**Tell us about your winning entry, *The First Cut*.** Lord Terrence Reid, an uncompromising Scottish police superintendent, struggles to find out who killed his informant, only to find his real enemy lurking much closer to home. When his pregnant wife goes to work for his chief suspect, Reid faces one of the most challenging cases of his career.

**What is your history with writing contests?** I entered the Crested Butte contest a couple of years ago, but I did not final or win. In 2012, I entered my novel *Mermaids of Bodega Bay* in Colorado Gold, but neither finalized nor won. I revised it and re-entered it in 2013, along with another entry, entitled *Golden*, in the mystery/suspense category. *Mermaids of Bodega Bay* finalized, and the scores for *Golden* were very close behind, so I was encouraged. I entered *The First Cut* in 2014, and it won!

**What was the best comment you received from a contest judge?** I'm paraphrasing, but basically, "Stretch out the tension."

**How long have you been writing fiction?** I wrote a legal treatise that was published in 2008 and realized I could use those same blocks of time to start writing fiction seriously. When the nonfiction book sold out, and the publishers wanted me to do a new edition in 2010-2011, I had to pause my fiction writing, but then I got back to it after the treatise was finished. So, by my rough calculations, I've been writing fiction seriously for six years.

**What do you do when you're not writing?** I practice law full time. Also, I garden, read, cook, and spend time with family and friends. In the fall, I watch the Broncos.

**What else would you like us to know about you or your writing?** Writing is the most fun thing I've ever done, but it's also the hardest. I learn something new every day, and every day I realize how much more there is to learn. ♦



## Monica Comas

**The Cookbook**  
Mainstream

**Tell us about your winning entry, *The Cookbook*.** When Lena Blake receives a handwritten cookbook from her grandmother's estate—along with the instructions that she read it with her estranged sister—the 35-year-old undertakes an emotional project that forces her to reconcile sweet childhood memories with her soured adult existence, forever changing the course of her life.

**What is your history with writing contests?** This is my first time entering a contest as an adult. When I was in high school I received an honorable mention in some national contest for a short story I wrote—although it was so long ago I don't remember the contest!

**What was the best comment you received from a contest judge?** There were so many helpful comments, but one that really struck me was maintaining a consistent point of view. Sometimes my protagonist knows what others are thinking...which doesn't work if you're writing in first person.

**How long have you been writing fiction?** Since I was in high school, but only seriously and consistently in the last few years.

**What do you do when you're not writing?** Stress about what I'm not writing (I kid). I find running and Bikram yoga to be tremendous help when I need to clear my head or work out something about a story. I'm also an avid cook. It should be mentioned that I'm entirely subservient to my 12-pound shih tzu, which takes up more time than you'd imagine.

**What else would you like us to know about you or your writing?** I was a journalist for a decade, then a financial editor and ghost writer. I still start my day reading the news, seeing what the market is up to and what former colleagues have written. But then I spend my day immersed in my fiction. Any musing that doesn't fit in a story ends up on my blog: monica-comas.com. I can also be found @MonicaRivCom. ♦



**Janet Baltz**  
*Beloved Foe*  
 Romance

**Tell us about your winning entry, *Beloved Foe*.** Set in Virginia during the Revolutionary War, the British Captain Blackwell quarters his dragoons on the plantation of a young widow, Madeline Westville, staying long enough for a tumultuous romance to blossom. Madeline is pulled into dangerous intrigues as the British move toward Yorktown, testing their love against all odds.

**What is your history with writing contests?** Last year, I entered *Beloved Foe* in Colorado Gold and the Heart of Denver Romance Writers' Molly contest. I was a finalist in both contests...and I'm a finalist in both contests again this year!

**What was the best comment you received from a contest judge?** The best feedback I got last year was that perhaps I had not started the story in the right place, as my character was too churlish in that particular scene. So I moved the story back a couple of days, introduced the heroine and all the local characters in the early scenes, and pulled some crucial information forward. It seems to have done the trick!

**How long have you been writing fiction?** I have been writing stories and poems since grade school. I won a short story contest in junior high and, in high school, I was one of 18 winners state-wide for my poem "Hunt." Then college and life happened, taking me away from writing. In making a big return to the art, I decided to try a novel, and *Beloved Foe* is my first attempt.

**What do you do when you're not writing?** When I'm not writing, I am part time coordinator of a research study on heart surgery techniques. I've also coordinated the Heart of Denver Romance Writers published author contest, the Aspen Gold, for the past two years. I love photography, hiking, skiing, camping and exploring anything outdoors. These forays frequently inspire poems, personal essays and interesting photos. ♦



**Michael Carson**  
*Beauty Is for Suckers*  
 Speculative Fiction

**Tell us about your winning entry, *Beauty Is for Suckers*.** Eighteen-year-old Iris Greene became a vampire to fix every flat-chested flaw. But when the bite only kills her on the inside, she must team up with a clueless vampire slayer to find the man who sucked her dry and complete her transformation.

**What is your history with writing contests?** This was my first time entering Colorado Gold and any writing contest for that matter.

**What was the best comment you received from a contest judge?** The most valuable comment from the judges was that they'd found my story funny. Humor is subjective, so writing an entire book with the goal of making readers laugh can be challenging. You're constantly worried if others outside your family and friends will find it funny. To know I'd made people I'd never met before laugh was extremely rewarding and a big confidence booster.

**How long have you been writing fiction?** I've been writing fiction for ten years.

**What do you do when you're not writing?** I love movies, especially so-bad-it's-good movies; always great for a laugh. I also enjoy mountain biking and making cardboard sculptures of whatever crazy thing pops into my head.

**What else would you like us to know about you or your writing?** I write to take readers on an adventure that has them smiling the entire way. Laughter is infectious and nothing makes me happier than spreading that infection to as many as I can possible. Wait, that didn't sound right. ♦

**Want to enter RMFW's Colorado Gold Contest in 2015? Start now!** Our website contains a wealth of information about how to get your entry in winning shape. And don't miss Contest Chair Chris Devlin's workshop in the spring; watch our events page for details!

**Work Your Writing****Three New Critique Groups Seek Members****Belmar Open Critique Group**

Open to all genres, the Belmar Open Critique Group meets every Thursday, 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm, at the Panera Bread in Belmar (650 S. Wadsworth Blvd., Lakewood). Email James Norris at [jnorris@wamego.net](mailto:jnorris@wamego.net).

**West Denver Open Critique**

RMFW members interested in helping launch an open and all-inclusive critique group in the Golden/Lakewood area (modeled after the successful and popular Southwest Critique Group), please contact Sean Curley at [sean@curley.me](mailto:sean@curley.me).

**Online Middle Grade/Young Adult Critique**

Mariko Layton is seeking three to four RMFW members who are experienced middle-grade or young-adult writers for a new online critique group. Guidelines and processes will be decided by the group. If you're interested, email Mariko at [mlpurebliss@gmail.com](mailto:mlpurebliss@gmail.com).

**Help Other Writers****Start a Critique Group**

Any RMFW member may start a new critique group. For information and support, email [critique@rmfw.org](mailto:critique@rmfw.org). Your critique group can meet in person or online. Announce your critique group here and on our website. Email [newsletter@rmfw.org](mailto:newsletter@rmfw.org).

**Miserable Antagonists**

Karen Albright Lin



On a recent cruise, my husband and I were assigned two couples as nightly tablemates. Aussie couple number one was fun, warm, and interesting. The second couple was a two-headed toxic force. They detested each other and didn't keep their unhappiness to themselves. They fogged the entire table with their gloom and spite. They were argumentative, boasting, and unabashedly rude. They even took it

upon themselves to become the manner police. They took turns lecturing me on my faulty use of a fork. My cut-switch-scoop etiquette didn't fit with their Australian protocol.

Guess who Wen and I discussed as we headed to our state room, wide-eyed and in total disbelief, every night?

Mr. and Mrs. Negative were verbally abusive, needing to get a reaction. But their behaviors and dispositions

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**Conflict born of misery leaves a big impression.**

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illustrate a nuanced point about storytelling: It's the misery in us that makes us oppositional, depraved, unscrupulous, or evil. Conflict born of misery leaves a big impression. It's certainly more engaging than harmony.

Human weakness plays a role in stories like Annie Proux's "Brokeback Mountain" and Alan Ball's *American Beauty*.

Characters are forced into secret and forbidden lives because of antagonists' prejudices. Wonderfully flawed characters often can't face what they believe to be the aberrant parts of themselves.

In *Jaws*, Mayor Larry Vaughn refused to close the beaches, even though he understood he was putting tourists at risk. You could sense that the mayor was conflicted, dejected, and scared. You sensed that the town would truly suffer financial troubles if tourist season was interrupted. You even sensed that the mayor might have been bullied and blamed as a child. We don't need

these bits of backstories spelled out in any detail, but we sense them.

A fascinating storytelling device was used in *The Dark Knight*. Initially we thought we were getting on-the-nose background about the Joker and what turned him to the dark side. Instead, he blabbed his backstory at various points in the movie, each time claiming his cut-smile was the result of a different event. That unusual approach was one of my favorite features of the script.

Men don't have a monopoly on the wretched. Think Warden Louise Walker (Sigourney Weaver) in Louis Sachar's *Holes*. Or *The Odyssey's* Calypso. Or Annie Wilkes in *Misery*. Black Mamba. The Wicked Witch of the West. The detestable Nurse Ratched in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Glenn Close as the twisted Alex Forrest in *Fatal Attraction* is about as despicable as they come, even going so far as to boil her target's pet rabbit. We also see how lonely and mentally ill she is. Even monsters aren't exempt. Even in *Aliens*, we witnessed understandable ill will from protective matriarch monster.

Karen Albright Lin is a freelance editor and coach for both traditionally published and self-published authors. Her award-winning clients have hit the top 10 in their Amazon categories and have stayed there for months. She's a ghostwriter, produced screenwriter, and award-winning author of novels, screenplays, short stories, and cookbooks. Her work is regularly published online and in literary journals, trade magazines, and newspapers. She presents workshops at various venues, including on cruise lines. [Visit her website.](#)

The least likely scenario is that an antagonist was born cold-hearted, unless you are talking about the Grinch who was born with a heart too small. Even then, his misery was a result of an unfortunate disability.

Antagonists are typically miserable. We sense it. A rotten string of luck has left them without the

educations or jobs they expected. They've been abused, or their families or lovers have died tragically.

If we avoid conjuring painful undertows, we'll populate our books with bland, affable

people or bad-guy caricatures. We must be psychologists and design not mere characters, but *people*, knowing what their baggage is and how it will affect their actions. If we understand them, we won't have to spell out their backgrounds in obvious ways.

Characters aren't oppositional and threatening in isolation of their earlier experiences. Antagonists are miserable. And miserable characters make for great storytelling. ♦

**If we avoid conjuring painful undertows, we'll populate our books with bland, affable people or bad-guy caricatures.**

### Celebrate Success

## Share Your News

Email your news about upcoming book releases, launch parties, signings, or other writing-related successes to [newsletter@rmfw.org](mailto:newsletter@rmfw.org) by the 25th of each month to make the following month's issue. Also send a **headshot** and your **book's cover image**.

### See Your Name in Print

## Write for the Newsletter

Would you like to write for the newsletter, or do you have ideas for articles or recurring features? This newsletter is published on the first of every month, and content is due to the editor on the 25th of the previous month. Email ideas and submissions to [newsletter@rmfw.org](mailto:newsletter@rmfw.org).

# OCTOBER PROGRAM RECAP

## Writing a Series That Sells

Tracy Brisendine

Joan Johnston’s workshop, “How To Write a Series That Will Sell—Endlessly,” was co-hosted by the Arapahoe Library



District and held at the Southglenn Library October 18. Joan is a New York Times and USA Today bestselling author with more than ten-million copies of her books in print. She was very approachable and more than happy to share with us what she has learned throughout years of publishing.

Thirty-eight of Joan’s fifty-six published novels are linked through family ties. As an added bonus, Joan gave a copy of Texas Bride: A Bitter Creek Novel to everyone in attendance. I don’t think I was the only one who was impressed. For the brand-new writer sitting next to me, receiving a book signed by the author was beyond cool. It was obvious Joan’s generosity earned her some new fans.

So let’s jump in to what she had to say. Why would we as authors write a series? Well, if you’ve done it correctly, readers will want to know what happens to your characters after the book

**Writing a series also has the potential to provide you a consistent income for years, if not decades.**

ends. They’re utterly invested in your hero’s plight and want more. Writing a series also has the potential to provide you a consistent income for years, if not decades. With every new book, you strengthen your reader base and grow your audience. A series allows readers to deeply connect with your characters, and in turn readers will be buying/reading your work for a long time.

Joan recommends setting up a series in one of three ways. One, your series can center on a family and its various siblings and/or offspring. This isn’t as limiting as it might sound. Families are





dynamic and ever growing and evolving. Two, a main location or setting can be used throughout the series to easily ground your readers. Several RMFW authors use this approach, and their books always seem to take place in the rugged backcountry of the Colorado plateaus or a picturesque mountain town. Three, a single continuing character can also be the glue that holds your series together, like Lee Child's Jack Reacher series.

The name of your series should be connected to each book. It doesn't necessary have to be included in the title, but the overall series name should at least appear on the cover. Each book's plot and characters must be able to stand on their own. They also should tie into the prequel and the book(s) thereafter. Resolve the central question or conflict in each book, but allow your character arcs and plotlines to connect the series as a whole. Don't forget to keep your brand in mind as you label and market your series.

There are disadvantages to writing a series as well. You will be spending years, if not decades, in

this world with these characters, so you better really love them. If for whatever reason your first book doesn't sell, then you'll have a pile of fireplace kindling. Grab the five-book deal first before spending too much time on the future drafts. It's possible you can build a rut for yourself. Your readers will fall so madly in love with your world and characters that it will be a challenge for you to break out of that mold. Also keep in mind, the longer the series, the more details you have to keep track of, and nothing is as distracting to a reader as continuity problems.

So go get your spreadsheets, character bios, setting diagrams, and plot arcs, and get started creating a series that will sell endlessly! ♦

Tracy Brisendine serves as RMFW's Publicity Chair. She lives in Denver with her husband and snaggle-tooth dog named Max. She worked in law enforcement for seven years and has a bachelor's degree in sociology with a concentration in criminal justice from Colorado State University. Currently, Tracy works as a locate investigator for the City of Denver and writes urban fantasy as TJ Valour.

**Share Your Knowledge****Teach for RMFW**

Would you like to teach an online class or present a monthly program for RMFW? Or would you like to see a certain topic covered or a particular speaker invited to present? Let us know! Email [education@rmfw.org](mailto:education@rmfw.org) (online classes) or [programs@rmfw.org](mailto:programs@rmfw.org) (monthly programs).

**Publications Directory****List Your Books on RMFW's Website**

RMFW has created a new online directory of members' published works. Now, we just need you to add yours! Both traditionally published and self-published books, novellas, and short stories are eligible for listing.

**How do I list my stuff?**

- Go to [rmfw.org](http://rmfw.org) and log in. You must be logged in to add a book to the directory.
- Fill out the [online form](#). Take care to enter everything correctly! Once you click submit, you cannot make changes.
- Wait 1-2 days for a volunteer to approve your listing and for your works to appear in the directory.
- Email [website\\_liaison@rmfw.org](mailto:website_liaison@rmfw.org) with any questions or changes you need made to any of your listings.

## A Cook's Guide To Writing: Everything Is Better With Bacon

Sue Duff



I like bacon. Scratch that. I *love* bacon. There's something about it that attacks and binds all five of my senses in a perfect marriage. The aroma permeates the entire house, and my taste buds tingle while it stirs my stomach in anticipation. The sizzling beads of cholesterol-screaming fat that bubbles to the surface is music to my ears as it heats to a glistening, crisp perfection in my pan. The second it hits my tongue, the salty, smoky flavor, with a hint of sweet chasing after the savory, rejoices in my mouth.

I toss it in everything. Well, not *exactly* everything because then it would run the risk of becoming commonplace and lose its appeal. I love my bacon too much to abuse it. Let's face it. It doesn't belong in Grandma's eggnog anymore than my arteries.

Bacon, or in this case tapping into our five senses and painstakingly describing everything, brings our writing to life, but too much of it slows your story's pace to a crawl. Use it to draw your readers into a setting or a moment of unexpected emotion. Use it to rev up tension, to savor the taste of victory or crumbling defeat. If you love bacon like I love bacon, you'll find that special moment to use it: when your readers need to be drawn in with it. Otherwise, toss in bacon bits here and there as needed.

Now go drag out that frying pan. You know you want some. ♦

When not saving the world one page at a time, Sue Duff is a speech therapist. She enjoys taking her octogenarian dachshund for strolls and stretching her creative juices in the kitchen. *Fade to Black, Book One: The Weir Chronicles* is her first novel.

## Educational Opportunity

## The 2014 Colorado Writing Workshops

The organizers behind the Homeric Writers Conference are pleased to announce [The 2014 Colorado Writing Workshops](#), two full-day “How to Get Published” writing events in Colorado: **Friday, November 14** in Boulder, and **Saturday, November 15** in Denver. (The schedules for both full-day events are identical.)

Either workshop offers a full day of classes designed to teach you how to get published. We’ll discuss publishing opportunities, queries, pitches, marketing, what makes an agent/editor stop reading your manuscript, and more. No matter what genre you write, these classes will help point you in the right direction.

Attending literary agents will be Sara Megibow, Rachelle Gardner, Erin Buterbaugh, Shannon Hassan, Alex Barba, Sandra Bond, Sarah Freese, and Renee Nyen. **Chuck Sambuchino (below)** of Writer’s Digest Books is this year’s presenter/instructor. Visit [coloradowritingworkshop.com](http://coloradowritingworkshop.com).



## Mark’s Monthly Podcast Pick

Mark Stevens



### This month’s pick:

**The Moth** ([Link](#))

“True stories told live.”

That’s the tag line for *The Moth* podcast—real people on stage, telling stories. No notes.

For us writers, inspiration in abundance. A few recent examples:

- A Detroit native learns the danger of trusting others.
- A flight attendant reveals the old-school way of dealing with in-flight disruptions.
- A woman makes a series of discoveries about her family’s past.

That last one is a doozy—long-held secrets and ugly truths reshape a woman’s view of her father’s past affiliations, to put it mildly.

Most episodes run in the 15-to-20-minute range, but *The Moth* often releases hour-long shows that compile four or five stories in one. Yes, *The Moth* can be spotty. But that’s the beauty of podcasts—go ahead and skip to the next. However, most click. *The Moth* offers a chance to listen in on a high-stakes moments. Inspiration abounds. Got a podcast to recommend? Email me at [mstevens@ecentral.com](mailto:mstevens@ecentral.com). ♦



Mark Stevens is the author of the Allison Coil mystery series, the third of which, *Trapline*, will be published November 2014 by Midnight Ink. He is an active RMFW board member, currently serving as the programs chair, and former RMFW president. He is also the vice president of the Rocky Mountain Chapter of Mystery Writers of America.

# BOOKS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

## Holiday Opportunities To Buy and Sell Books

November 14-16

### Colorado Authors' League's Holiday Mart Book Booth

Following last year's success, the **Colorado Authors' League** (CAL) will once again sponsor a booth at the Denver Junior League Holiday Mart, November 14–16, at the Marriott Tech Center. Holiday Mart attracts thousands of shoppers every year, and this year, both CAL members (\$100) and non-members (\$150) are invited to [register](#) to sell books at the CAL booth. CAL volunteers will handle all transactions, leaving authors free to meet readers and sign books. **The deadline to register is November 10.** Please direct questions to Mike Madigan, [madideasllc@gmail.com](mailto:madideasllc@gmail.com), 720-334-4864.

Now through November 28

### Buy Your Buddy's Book Campaign

Friends and family of indie- and small-press-published authors often say, "I'll buy your book when it's finished" or "I can't wait to read it." But once the final product is released, for one reason or another, they don't get around to it. Buy Your Buddy's Book aims to act as a widespread social-media campaign to remind indie authors' loved ones to make a purchase that probably costs less than a latte.

In the weeks leading up to Black Friday (November 28), Buy Your Buddy's Book will disseminate pre-designed and user-submitted memes as well as customizable graphics for individual titles on Facebook and Twitter. On Black Friday, participants will be encouraged to tweet about their purchase, using the hashtag #BoughtTheBook. Download customizable memes at Google+ and [www.facebook.com/BuyTheBookNOW](http://www.facebook.com/BuyTheBookNOW), and receive campaign updates on Twitter at @BuyTheBookNOW. For more information, email Mari Christie at [BuyTheBookBlackFriday@gmail.com](mailto:BuyTheBookBlackFriday@gmail.com).

November 29

### ABA's Indies First Campaign

Begun last year by author Sherman Alexie and continued this year by Neil Gaiman and Amanda Palmer, the **American Bookseller's Association's Indies First** campaign seeks to encourage participating authors to partner with their local independent bookstore(s) by volunteering to act as guest booksellers on November 29, also known as Small Business Saturday, two days after Thanksgiving. To see how you, too, can help support locally owned, independent bookstores, [click here](#).

December 7

### RMFW Benefit at Barnes & Noble

Please join Colorado writers **Cricket McRae, Shannon Baker, Jeanne Stein, Julie Kazimer, and Pam Nowak** on Sunday, December 7, at the Glendale Barnes & Noble between 10:00 am and 3:00 pm. Any purchases (not only of books written by these authors) during that time will benefit Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers—at *no additional cost to you!* Stop in and show off your ugliest Christmas sweater...or just say hello.



Support  
RMFW!

**Get Involved****Volunteer with RMFW**

Volunteering with RMFW is a valuable opportunity to support fellow members, learn new skills, and form friendships. We are always looking for volunteers! Contact Judy Matheny at [volunteer@rmfw.org](mailto:volunteer@rmfw.org) today to learn how you can get involved.

**RMFW Leadership****Board of Directors****Executive Board****President** Pam Nowak**Vice President** Victoria Rubin**Secretary** Christine Jorgensen**Treasurer** Shannon Baker**PAL Liaison** Bonnie Ramthun**Chairs****Anthology** Nikki Baird**Conference** Susan Brooks**Contest** Chris Devlin**Critique** Monica Poole**Education** Vicki Law**Historian** Elizabeth Ferber Reder**Hospitality** David Kelley**IPAL Liaison** Sean Curley**Membership** Saytchyn Maddux-Creech**Newsletter** Angie Hodapp**Programs** Mark Stevens**Publicity** Tracy Brisendine**Retreat** Angie Hodapp**Volunteer Liaison** Judy Matheny**Website** Wendy Howard**Western Slope Liaison** Vicki Law

ROCKY MOUNTAIN FICTION WRITERS

**Fun Facts****Reading, Writing, and the Brain**

Why is a story so much more memorable than bare facts?

When we listen to a PowerPoint presentation about a topic in bullet point form, the only parts of our brains that are activated are the parts that turn words into meaning, but nothing else.

However, when we are being told a story, these parts of our brains are activated, *as well as* the parts associated with experiencing the story's events. For example, if a story includes action such as kicking or running, our motor cortex lights up. If a story contains details such as "hands like leather," our sensory response lights up. Our brains reacts as if we are experiencing the story first hand.

Scientists have also found that telling a story can plant emotions, thoughts, and ideas into the brains of listeners. Researchers at Princeton University even discovered that the brain activity of a woman telling a story and the brain activity of her listeners went into sync.

This means that writers have the ultimate power to influence others with powerful, evocative stories.

[From [bestinfographics.co](http://bestinfographics.co), "Amazing Facts on Writing and How It Affects Our Brain"]

**Get Social****Connect with RMFW****Website** [www.rmfw.org](http://www.rmfw.org)**Facebook** [www.facebook.com/RMFictionWriters](http://www.facebook.com/RMFictionWriters)**Twitter** [www.twitter.com/RMFWriters](http://www.twitter.com/RMFWriters)**Blog** [www.rmfw.org/blog](http://www.rmfw.org/blog)**Yahoo Group** [rmfw-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:rmfw-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)**Pinterest** <http://www.pinterest.com/rmfwriters>**Get in Touch****Contact RMFW****Hotline** 303-331-2608**Snail Mail** PO Box 711

Montrose, CO 81402

**Email** Find email for each board member at [rmfw.org](http://rmfw.org).

# 2015 RMFW RETREAT



It's time to start getting ready for RMFW's annual writing retreat! (See the ad below for details.) **Registration for the 2015 retreat will open November 30** and will be processed on a first-come-first-served basis. So if you're interested in attending, keep an eye on our website's retreat page for the registration link to go live that day.

This will be RMFW's third-annual writing retreat, but it will be the first at the YMCA in

Estes Park. It's so inspiring up there! Past attendees have used their time at the retreat to start or make progress on first drafts, polish finished manuscripts, dust off old manuscripts, brainstorm ideas, create story bibles, outline new projects, and work on query letters. The camaraderie that develops among the attending writers is palpable, and the amount of writing that gets done is really quite stunning.

Have you ever just wanted a few days to focus on nothing but your writing? Then come write with us! Questions? Email me, Angie Hodapp, at [retreat@rmfw.org](mailto:retreat@rmfw.org).



## 2015 RMFW Writers Retreat

March 11-15 • YMCA of the Rockies • Estes Park, Colorado

*Four days to just be a writer...*

RMFW is thrilled to announce our third-annual writers retreat. We hope you'll join us!

<b>Cost</b>	\$607	4 nights, single occupancy, two-queen room, private bath (\$151.75/night)
	\$346	4 nights, double occupancy, two-queen room, private bath (\$115.33/night)
	\$259	4 nights, triple occupancy, three-twin room, private bath (\$86.33/night)

### Included

- Four nights' lodging
- Critique workshop with agent Shannon Hassan of Marsal Lyon Literary Agency
- Craft workshop with Anita Mumm of Mumm's the Word Editing and Critique Services
- Optional Yoga for Writers session with master yoga instructor Marco Di Ferreira
- Fireside Chats about craft and publishing; after-dinner open-mic readings
- Extensive library of writing books and resources
- Access to the cabin's full kitchen and to the YMCA's vast grounds and amenities
- Minutes-away access to Estes Park, the Stanley Hotel, and Rocky Mountain National Park

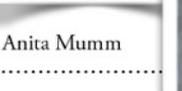
**Limit:** 16 or when all bedrooms have been booked, whichever is first

**Registration opens November 2014.**

Email [retreat@rmfw.org](mailto:retreat@rmfw.org) or visit [rmfw.org](http://rmfw.org) for more information.



Shannon Hassan



Anita Mumm



Marco Di Ferreira



# DENVER PROGRAM: NOVEMBER

Denver-area monthly programs are free to both members and non-members. They are typically two hours long on a Saturday morning or afternoon. Topics vary. Check our website for up-to-date information. Email questions to [programs@rmfw.org](mailto:programs@rmfw.org).

## Saturday, Nov. 8

1:00 pm –3:00 pm  
Standley Lake Library  
8485 Kipling Street  
Arvada, CO



## Are You an Innie or an Outie?

### Kathy House

Are you an introvert or an extrovert? This two-hour interactive session will focus on how your natural attitude influences your writing. You'll even learn how to exploit the extrovert/introvert dynamic for inherent character conflict. Writers are good observers, but can an extrovert really understand an introvert or vice versa? Find out what motivates your opposite type and discover how to make your characters to ring true. Introverts, come prepared to share your darkest secrets. Extroverts, just be yourselves! ♦

Kathy House writes mystery and fantasy. A longtime member of RMFW's Southwest critique group, she worked in both public relations and technical writing for more than 25 years. Kathy has master's degrees in English and psychology and completed a study of writing and personality types for her psychology degree. In addition to being a qualified Myers-Briggs trainer, she studied with the Colorado Jung Institute for several years.

### Save Our Stories

## RMFW Historians Need Your Help

Do you know how long RMFW has existed? Or who had the chutzpah to create it? Or what the organization's original intent was? When did the Colorado Gold Conference and the Contest initially kick off? Who attended the first conference and what are they up to today? What key moments in our history created: our critique groups? The anthology series? Writer of the Year? The Jasmine and PEN Awards? Ever wonder about the Rick Hanson Simile Contest? What's the story behind this organization for storytellers?

RMFW's board has initiated a History Project to research and answer these questions and much more. If you have something to add— anecdotes and stories, old photos or documents— please email Elizabeth Reder at [elizabethreder@msn.com](mailto:elizabethreder@msn.com).

### Announcement

## General Notice

*Rocky Mountain Writer* is the official newsletter of Rocky Mountain Fiction Writers (RMFW). Not all information presented herein is endorsed by RMFW, and not all views expressed represent the views of RMFW as a whole. Editors and contributors make every effort to present accurate information. All submissions are published at the discretion of the editor, who reserves the right to edit for style and accuracy. Please direct errata, suggestions, submissions, and reprint requests to [newsletter@rmfw.org](mailto:newsletter@rmfw.org).

# WESTERN SLOPE: NOVEMBER

Wester Slope bi-monthly programs are free to both members and non-members. They are typically three hours long on a Saturday morning and include breakfast. Topics vary. Check our website for up-to-date information. Email questions to [education@rmfw.org](mailto:education@rmfw.org). RSVP required.

## Saturday, Nov. 8

Breakfast: 9:30 am

Workshop: 9:45 am – 12:30 pm

Business Incubator Center

2591 Legacy Way

Grand Junction, CO

RSVP: [vruchhoeft@gmail.com](mailto:vruchhoeft@gmail.com)



## Character Relationship Maps: Get All the Conflict You Can Out of Your Characters

James Norris

Learn how to use [LucidChart](#), an online diagramming tool, to create, modify, save, and print character-relationship maps. Get the most conflict as possible out of your characters!

James will discuss the importance of conflict, recalling the 5 W's (who, what, where, when, and why) as well as the 6th W: Who is your character beyond his/her name, and what is his/her relationship to the other characters? He'll also discuss using relationship maps to ensure a balanced cast of characters whose relationships will naturally hint at story conflict.

James will show a LucidChart in action, including how to create character icons, make relationship links between character icons, and add notes to relationship links. He'll show how LucidChart works for both right-brained and left-brained writers and demonstrate LucidChart's easy click-and-drag interface as well as other uses for LucidChart that writers might find handy.

James will take volunteers/examples from the audience, so be ready. Bring paper and pencil or your laptop or tablet. (Note that we are starting 30 minutes later than usual to give our Montrose and Moab contingents an extra half-hour of sleep.) ♦

James Norris has been a member of RMFW since 2010, attending the Southwest Plaza (now Littleton) Writers Group. He pays the bills as a freelance web designer and tutor in topics ranging from philosophy to physics, topics in which he has masters degrees. Suffering from SQUIRREL, he's got five different novels in various stages of non-completion. Of late he's been writing—and completing—short stories, and his current focus is on writing a pilot teleplay (he wrote four spec scripts for *Star Trek: The Next Generation*) for a show he describes as *Supernatural* meets *X-Files* meets *Ghost Hunters*.

# DENVER PROGRAM: JANUARY

Denver-area monthly programs are free to both members and non-members. They are typically two hours long on a Saturday morning or afternoon. Topics vary. Check our website for up-to-date information. Email questions to [programs@rmfw.org](mailto:programs@rmfw.org).

**Saturday, Jan. 17**

Time and Location  
To Be Announced



## Thinking in Scenes: Projecting Your Fiction on Your Reader's Mental Movie Screen

Angie Hodapp

“Show, Don’t Tell” is a phrase so often tossed around among fiction writers that it has almost lost its meaning. Critique partners and line editors encourage us to work more “show” into our sentences through word choice and phrasing. Good advice, when it comes to improving our prose...but is that all “show” really means?

In this workshop, you’ll learn what “show” means on a much larger scale. You’ll learn how to think in scenes—like a movie director rather than a novelist—and how to evaluate each scene in your story for both visual appeal and effectiveness at driving plot. We’ll cover techniques for:

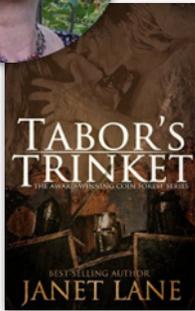
- Plotting (and fixing) novels through scene lists.
- Expressing both external and internal conflict in active, visual terms.
- Using symbols (scene props) as visual cues to convey characters’ thoughts, emotions, and growth.
- Revising (better yet, deleting) zero-tension scenes in which POV characters sit alone in a room (on a park bench, in a car, on a porch, etc.) and do nothing but think.

Come learn how to craft spellbinding stories by projecting compelling scenes onto your readers’ mental movie screens! ◆

Angie Hodapp holds a BA in English education and an MA in English and communication development. She is a graduate of University of Denver’s Publishing Institute and has taught at Writer’s Digest University and various writing conferences. A Colorado Gold Contest winner and Writers of the Future semifinalist, she works at Nelson Literary Agency. She serves as RMFW’s newsletter editor and retreat chair. She and her husband, novelist Warren Hammond, live in Denver, Colorado.

# MEMBER NEWS

RMFW members are encouraged to announce releases, awards, nominations, signings, and other book- or writing-related events in this newsletter. Email your news to [newsletter@rmfw.org](mailto:newsletter@rmfw.org).



▶ **Tabor's Trinket** by **Janet Lane** earned Amazon bestseller status in October in three categories: Medieval Historical Romance, Medieval Historical, and Action & Adventure Romance.

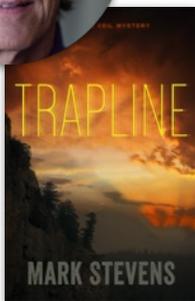
▶ **Tales in Firelight and Shadow**, an anthology of science fiction and fantasy stories, is now available from Double Dragon Publishing. Editor **Alexis Brooks de Vita** contributed "The Savant," and **Patricia Stoltey** contributed "Three Sisters of Ring Island."



Electric Spec

▶ The new issue of **Electric Spec**, edited by several members of RMFW, will be released November 30, wrapping up the online publication's ninth year!

▶ **Waking Up Joy**, a work of women's fiction by **Tina Ann Forkner**, was published in October by Tule Publishing Group.



▶ To promote the release of **Trapline**, the third novel in his Allison Coil mystery series, **Mark Stevens** will launch a ten-stop book tour November 21. Between then and December 14, he will be signing at bookstores in seven cities in three states. See tour dates and details [here](#).

▶ **Kara Seal**, winner of the middle grade/young adult category of our 2014 Colorado Gold Contest (see p.3), is now represented by Shannon Hassan of Marsal Lyon Literary Agency.



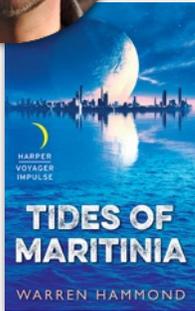
# MEMBER NEWS



**Reckoning**, the second book in the **Fallen Siren series** by **Jeanne C. Stein**, writing as **S. J. Harper**, was published October 7 by Penguin.



**Mario Acevedo** signed with WordFire Press for the publication of **Rescue From Planet Pleasure**, book six in his Felix Gomez detective-vampire series.



Part science fiction, part spy novel, **Tides of Maritinia** by **Warren Hammond** will be published December 2 by Harper Voyager, an imprint of HarperCollins.



**Travis Heermann** sold his short story "**Branches of Infinity**" to the anthology *Weird and Wondrous Work*, to be published spring 2015 by World Weaver Press.



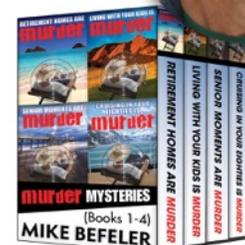
**Chuck Greaves** will be a volunteer bookseller at Maria's Bookshop in Durango November 29, aka Small Business Saturday, as part of the Indies First campaign (see p. 12).



On October 11, **Edward Massey** was interviewed on [Voices of the West](#) radio, hosted by 2014 Western Writers of America Lariat Award winner Emil Franzl.



**Mike Befeler** has released the first four books in his Paul Jacobson Geezer-Lit mystery series as an ebook boxed set on Amazon. Included are **Retirement Homes Are Murder**, **Living With Your Kids Is Murder**, **Senior Moments Are Murder**, and **Cruising in Your Eighties Is Murder**.



**More Member News**



## MEMBER NEWS



**Royal Regard** by **Mari Christie** writing as **Mariana Gabrielle** will be published November 28 in both print and ebook editions by Whaley Digital Press.



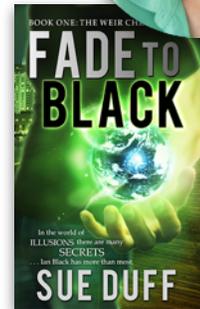
**This Time Justice**, book one of *The Oracle* suspense series by **Liz Roadifer**, was released October 20 through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Smashwords.



View **Teresa Funke's** video [Art Giveaways for Newsletters](#) on YouTube. Then sign up for her newsletter and your chance to win Teresa's November giveaway.



**Sue Duff** will be signing **Fade to Black, Book One: the Weir Chronicles** Sunday, November 30, 1:00 to 3:00, at Changing Hands Book Store in Tempe, Arizona.



## Bet You Didn't Know

## 10 Curious Facts About Your Favorite Childhood Authors

1. The first book by **L. Frank Baum**, author of *The Wizard of Oz*, was about raising chickens.
2. **R. L. Stine** was a comedian before he wrote the *Goosebumps* series.
3. *Charlotte's Web* author **E. B. White** reluctantly worked at *The New Yorker*, only going into the office one day a week.
4. **Neil Gaiman**, author of *Coraline*, gave up journalism because he didn't like that newspapers were making things up and getting away with it.
5. **Roald Dahl**, author of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, was a spy and WWII flying ace.
6. **Carolyn Keene** is not a real person. Ghostwriters wrote the *Nancy Drew* series, earning as little as \$125 per book.
7. **P. L. Travers**, author of *Mary Poppins*, hated Walt Disney's adaptation of her work.
8. **C. S. Lewis**, author of *The Chronicles of Narnia*, was suspected of having a "thing" with his buddy's mother, 26 years his senior.
9. **J. M. Barrie**, author of *Peter Pan*, impersonated his dead brother to console his mother.
10. **Hans Christian Andersen** loved both men and women, but remained loveless for much of his life.

# CONAN THE GRAMMARIAN

## Writing Is Easy, Description Is Hard

Writing descriptions that readers don't skip, descriptions that more than merely decorate, descriptions that readers remember, can be a dicey proposition. Yet we novelists are expected to describe everything in our stories from how characters look to where they live to how they feel, think, and react. *Useful* description is an essential tool many writers often struggle to write well.

Conan has some ideas how Careful Writers can improve—and some advice from writers much further along than Conan himself. Since description is a huge topic, this month we'll examine how to limn characters. Next month, we'll consider description of place or setting and other elements.

Conan's first hint should be obvious: Avoid clichés. The worst cliché is the POV character describing himself by looking in a mirror. No, no! When *you* look in the mirror, what are *you* looking for? Whether you trimmed your soul-patch evenly; whether your hips have gotten too, er, wide for that short blazer; whether you have old food

stuck between your teeth. You're not thinking, *this blue shirt and tie bring out my midnight-blue eyes*; you're not thinking, *the sun-bleached streaks in my blonde tresses make me look younger*. Be honest—you're not. Neither will a believable character.

---

The worst cliché is the  
POV character describing  
himself by looking in a  
mirror. No, no!

---

Trust Conan: Mirror self-descriptions are zombies, done to death. And by mirror, Conan means any reflective surface, be it window, water, knife blade, or any other contrivance you clever CWs can think of, because it's, well, *contrived*.

Equally trite, and more deathly boring, are the too-common character descriptions known as laundry lists. Laundry lists catalogue the usual suspects—eye and hair color, height, build, age, brief assessment (“beautiful” or “hot” or “handsome in a rugged way”)—all in a string. Yawn. Entirely unmemorable.

The *author* needs to know laundry-list elements so the hero's eyes don't change from blue to brown midway through the book. For *readers*, at the start of a book, it's helpful to know the sex, approximate age, and perhaps race of the characters on stage, but give such information organically. For example, merely stating the character's name, Jim, provides his sex. (If you write about another culture, the names likely *won't* provide clues to most readers, so you'll have to work harder.) Jim's reactions and inner thoughts help flesh out the rest: *Every time her stilettos tapped across the floor, the rhythm of Glenn Miller's "Pennsylvania 6-5000" rang in Jim's head*. That's a signal that Jim is likely an older guy. Good writers think of ways to show aspects like this.

Some genres demand full physical descriptions; slip them in organically, bit by bit. But what readers need most to know is the character's fundamental *character*: not how a character looks but who a character *is*. Consider aspects other than outward appearance. Is the hero confident, uncertain,

# CONAN THE GRAMMARIAN

cocky, a deep thinker, someone whose appearance matters to him? How does his inner self affect how he appears to another character? If the heroine is petite, how does that affect her interactions with the world around her? A blonde can be as “fiery” as the cliché redhead, so who is your character *inside*?

Or, as two-time Man Booker winner Hilary Mantel says, “Description must work for its place. It can’t be simply ornamental. It...is more effective if it comes from an implied viewpoint, rather than from the eye of God. If description is coloured by the viewpoint of the character who is doing the noticing, it becomes, in effect, part of character definition and part of the action.”

A description characterizing both the observed *and* the observer is hard-working prose indeed. The example below shows both characters at once, viewpoint Nick and newly met Desi:

*Desi seemed the definition of a gentleman: a guy who could quote a great poet, order a rare Scotch, and buy a woman that right piece of vintage jewelry... Across from him, I felt my suit wilt, my manners go clumsy. I had a swelling urge to*

*discuss football and fart. (Gone Girl, Gillian Flynn)*

Not a book Conan admired, yet its prose was excellent. This description is memorable. The reader doesn’t care about Desi’s eye color but picks up on the undertones. Nick’s attitude evokes both men as real people.

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**If you find yourself reaching for the meaningless words beautiful or handsome or perfect face, think harder.**

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Attitude implicates all aspects of description, for attitude is personal to the individual character. If you find yourself reaching for the meaningless words *beautiful* or *handsome* or *perfect face*, think harder. What constitutes “perfect” to your POV? What about a character’s hands or voice or way of laughing? What about body carriage? All of these should affect how the POV sees the guy. Look at Mary Stewart’s introduction of her hero by moonlight in *The Ivy Tree*, all mood and emotional take, because he was the POV’s lover long ago:

*His features were blanched and dramatized by the white slanting light, but even so it was apparent that some violent emotion had*

*drained his face to a mask where the flesh seemed to have been planed from the strong-looking bones... The eyes looked very dark, and the brows made a bar of black across them. I could see the deeply incised lines down his cheeks, and the thin line of a mouth schooled in reserve or patience.*

In other words, *Don’t talk of stars / Burning above; / If you’re in love, / Show me! / Tell me no dreams / Filled with desire. / If you’re on fire, / Show me!* (Alan Jay Lerner, “Show Me,” *My Fair Lady*). Showing matters greatly to description, and description comes through the POV, not the writer.

Always keep in mind who the POV is. Margaret Atwood offers important advice: *Little girls are cute and small only to adults. To one another they are not cute. They are life-sized.* A child won’t describe others the way an adult would, just as a cop won’t describe a person loitering on a street corner the same way a neighbor might. What your character should notice is what affects him at the story’s present moment, and that will depend on what’s happening in the plot. Remember that, and you won’t write laundry lists. ♦

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS



Denotes events  
sponsored by RMFW.

## Sat., November 1\*

**RMFW Board Meeting**, 1:30 to 3:30, Woodbury Library, Denver. *Any and all RMFW members welcome to attend.*

## Sat., November 1

**Lit & Art Lecture Series**, 10:00 to noon, Lighthouse Writers Workshop, 1515 Race St., Denver.

## Wed., November 5

**Open Critique**, Pikes Peak Writers, 6:00 to 8:30, Cottonwood Center for the Arts, Colorado Springs.

## Thurs., November 6

**Finding Your Voice** (voice coaching to improve your presentations) with Gabriella Cavallero, hosted by RMMWA\*\*, 6:00 to 8:00, \$10, RSVP required.

## Fri., November 7

**Fly-By Writer's Project** with Rebecca Makkai, 6:00 to 7:30, Lighthouse Writers Workshop, 1515 Race St., Denver. RSVP required.

## November 3-28

**Great Beginnings/Getting to the End** with Becky Martinez, online class through Colorado Romance Writers.

## Sat., November 8\*

**Are you an Innie or an Outie?** with Kathy House, RMFW free monthly program, 1:00 to 3:00, Standley Lake Library, Arvada. See p. 15.

## Sat., November 8\*

**Character Relationship Maps: Get All the Conflict You Can Out of Your Characters** with James Norris, 9:30 to 12:30, Grand Junction. See p. 16.

## Thurs., November 13

**An Evening with Former Prosecutor Moreley Swingle**, hosted by RMMWA\*\*, 6:30, Denver Press Club, Denver, \$20/\$25, RSVP required.

## Fri., November 14

**The 2014 Colorado Writing Workshop**, 9:00 to 5:00, Boulder Inn, Boulder.

## Sat., November 15

**The 2014 Colorado Writing Workshop**, 9:00 to 5:00, Ross Cherry Creek Branch Library, Denver.

## Sun., November 16

**12-Hour Write-a-thon**, 8:00 to 8:00, Lighthouse Writers Workshop, 1515 Race St., Denver.

## Tues., November 18

**What You Need To Know About Marketing, Book Launches, and Platform Building** with Sue Mitchell, Deb Courtney, Jessica McDonald, Jennie Marts, and Ashley Bazer, presented by Pikes Peak Writers, 6:30 to 8:30, Penrose Library, Colorado Springs.

## Wed., November 19

**The Soul of a Story** with Chris Eboch, online workshop through Delve Writing, 6:00 to 7:30, \$30/\$40.

## Sat., January 17\*

**Thinking in Scenes: Projecting Your Fiction on Your Reader's Mental Movie Screen** with Angie Hodapp, time and location TBA. See p. 17.

## March 11-15\*

**RMFW's Third Annual Writers Retreat**, YMCA of the Rockies, Estes Park. See p. 14.

## March 27-28

**Northern Colorado Writers Conference**, Fort Collins.

## Sat., April 11\*

**Workshop with David Morrell**, *NYT* bestselling author of more than 30 novels, including the *Rambo* series. RMFW is collaborating with the RMMWA\*\* and Colorado Authors' League to bring you this opportunity. \$75/\$90. Stay tuned.

## April 24-26

**Pikes Peak Writers Conference**, Colorado Springs.

## September 11-13\*

**RMFW's 2015 Colorado Gold Conference**, The Westin, Westminster.

\*\*RMMWA = The Rocky Mountain Chapter of Mystery Writers of America