

*Purple Pros*

*The Official Newsletter of*

Southeastern  
Writers

writers helping writers



PURPLE PROS -- SOUTHEASTERN WRITERS NEWSLETTER -- APRIL 2022

**-- Register Today --**

**SWA Writers Conference**

**June 10-14, 2022**

**Epworth by the Sea**

**St. Simons Island, Georgia**

**Attend small group sessions -- enter writing contests with cash prizes -- sign up for manuscript critiques -- open mic night -- great food -- enjoy one-on-one with instructors -- meet fellow writers**

<https://www.southeasternwriters.org/swa-workshop>

<https://www.southeasternwriters.org/copy-of-conferences-1>

# SWA Vice-President's Letter

## What kind of writer are you?

This is a question commonly asked, and most authors when answering, tend to think in terms of genre, style, or by referring to their most successful publications.



When I considered that question, I thought about my journey which has led me to become a life long student of word-smithing. It began at an early age when my mom or grandparents read books to me such as the *Bible* or *Fun with Dick and Jane*. Because when I began listening to stories and

realized those funny looking marks on paper meant something, I began using my developing imagination to create my own stories.

As I continued to grow and learn how to write (or in today's world, use a computer to write), in grade school and going forward, everyone was given the opportunity, alas, sometimes required by a teacher, to create compositions of their own. Some welcomed that opportunity while others despised it. Thus, the chasm began in the classroom between those who got excitable pleasure in writing and those who labored over having to complete anything resembling a story.

For most of you, I believe you fit into the former group instead of the latter. Some are so taken, they pursue their life's work in pursuit of the written word. I have the upmost admiration for those who have chosen editing as a career. They truly develop expertise in being able to aggregate words to elicit the most effective responses from the readers. But there are also many, many other occupations which also require a measurable amount of those skills to communicate in today's world, and which also create the reader's interest. Most of us know we are unlikely to be as successful as James Patterson or Janet Evanovich, but can use our writing skills in many ways.

Throughout my life, I have been an eclectic reader and writer, but my career required me to concentrate on a structured format in my reports. Foolishly, I came to believe I was an accomplished writer, when actually I became an accomplished composer of reports.

So, when I retired, I had this idea that in case of my early demise, my grandchildren might like to know what Pappy did in his life. I decided that with my huge repertoire of writing skills, I could easily write my memoir.

I wrote a straight-line book beginning day one in my life and ending my retirement day. I was so fortunate to have a friend suggest I join Southeastern Writers Association (SWA) before I try to publish the book. Had I published my first draft, it would have been a disaster, I'm certain. Instead, I have already sold over five hundred books and it is still selling. Needless to say, without the education received through SWA, I am certain I would now be questioning my decision to write my memoir.

Attending my first SWA conference was a big eye-opener for me. I thought POV meant privately owned vehicle instead of point of view. I was soaking up information that I had never heard before, and realized I REALLY needed an editor before even thinking about publishing my memoir. I enlisted one of the faculty to copy-edit my book. He did a wonderful job because, as well as editing the book, he put suggestions in the margins I could use when writing my next book. More importantly, I learned that if I wanted to be an accomplished writer, I needed to learn from those who have been writing their whole lives, subscribe to writing magazines, continue to attend writing conferences, and to read many different genres and books by different successful writers.

What kind of writer are you? Do you want to improve your skills? Take a look at where you are in your life and career, and where you are as a writer. And then decide on your publishing goals. Finally, I suggest you continue to come to SWA's annual conferences. Why is that important? Because, every year, you will hear something new which is almost guaranteed to benefit you and make you a better writer. And the knowledge gained from interacting with professionals who have devoted their lives to the art and business of writing can be some of the most helpful information you will need and use in accomplishing your goals.

Jim Furry, Vice-President  
Southeastern Writers Association

# 2022 SWA Conference Sessions



**Harold “Buzz” Bernard**, an alumnus of Southeastern Writers Association, will be one of the evening speakers.

Bernard has a background as a meteorologist, but his last three books have been about something completely different. He is the author of two books

in a series about World War II pilots – *When Heroes Flew* and *The Shangri-La Raiders*. Book three – *The Roof of the World* – will be released this summer.

Bernard will speak about his writing journey and share some of his SWA memories. <https://buzzbernard.com/>

**Piper G. Huguley**, the author of *Sweet Tea* by Hallmark Publishing, is a two-time Golden Heart® finalist and author of two historical romance series: “Migrations of the Heart”, about the Great Migration, and “Home to Milford College.”



**Huguley will teach the following sessions:**

- **How to Start Writing Your Historical Fiction Novel**
- **Part 1, Filling in the Blanks: The Boom in Diverse Historical Fiction Novels**
- **Part 2, Filling in the Blanks: The Boom in Diverse Historical Fiction Novels**
- **What’s in a Name? Everything!**

Huguley blogs about the history behind her novels at <https://piperhuguley.com>.

**Steve Kistulentz** is the author of the novel *Panorama*, (Little, Brown & Co., 2018) and the forthcoming novel, *The General Secretary*. He has also published two award-winning collections of poetry, *Little Black Daydream* (University of Akron Press, 2012) and *The Luckless Age* (Red Hen Press, 2010), winner of the Ben-

jamin Saltman Award.

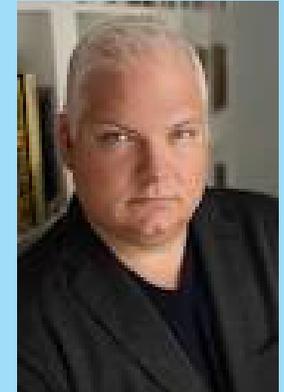
Kistulentz will teach the following sessions:

– **Learning Not to Flinch: Understanding Why We Must Write the Ugly Truth**

– **The invitation: How Personal Material Expands the Audience for Your Poems**

– **Why Tell What Happened? Liberating Ourselves from Our Own Experience**

**Michael Lucker** is a professional screenwriter and professor of screenwriting with 20 years’ experience writing for major studios and 10 years’ experience lecturing at major universities.



A renowned instructor in screenwriting, Lucker serves as lecturer at University of North Georgia and Emory University, mentor in Reinhardt University’s Creative Writing MFA Program, advisor to the Georgia Film Academy, and founder of Screenwriter School.



His book on screenwriting – *Crash! Boom! Bang! How to Write Action Movies* – is available wherever books are sold. His debut novel – crime thriller *Rule One* – is scheduled for release Fall 2022.

**Lucker will teach the following sessions:**

- **Breaking the Book**
- **Writing the Screenplay**
- **Selling the Screenplay**
- **Making the Movie**

**Val M. Mathews** is a big-hearted, fun-loving editor at The Wild Rose Press, the kinder and gentler publishing house in New York. She accepts pitches for everything from Romances to challenging Sci-Fi.

**Mathews will teach the following sessions:**



- Part 1, Creative Tools to Jumpstart Your Writing
- Part 2, Creative Tools to Jumpstart Your Writing
- Part 3, Creative Tools to Jumpstart Your Writing

**Mathews teaches courses in structural editing** and copyediting for Queens University in Ontario, Canada, and developmental editing for the Editorial Freelancers Association in New York. She also freelances on the side.

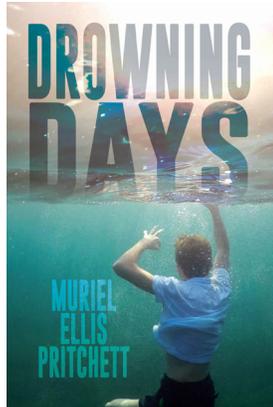
## SWA Member News



The third book in **Sheila S. Hudson's** Crimes From the Crypt Series -- *Grave Consequences* (Gordian Books) -- was released March 4, 2022. What do lacquerware, twins, and mummies have in common? It will all be revealed in this cozy mystery when Nadia, Sadie and their new ginger-

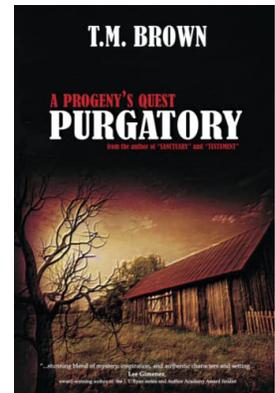
headed friends start to investigate bizarre happenings in Alto. The fourth book in this cozy mystery series -- *Casket Chaos* (Winged Publications) will be published this fall.

**Muriel Ellis Pritchett's** first middle grade adventure book -- *Drowning Days* (Black Rose Writing) -- was released March 31, 2022. Luke is the coolest kid in the 6th grade until his dad dies, leaving the family heavily in debt. He is forced to leave his school, his friends, and the only home he has ever known, to move to Grandma's house in coastal Georgia. Here he is the loser new student, gets bullied and beaten up by his cousin, almost drowns while mullet jumping on a moonless night, and finds himself kidnapped by wild-hog-poaching pirates. *Drowning Days* received the SWA Hal Bernard Memorial Award for Novel.



The third book in **T.M. Brown's** Shiloh Mystery Series -- *Purgatory, A Progeny's Quest* (Blue Room Books) -- was published February 20, 2022. Retired publishing executive Theo Phillips must solve another mystery, when an orphaned teenager is

dropped at his door, a mobster hits town intent on stealing a classic limo, a dead body is found floating in Shiloh Creek, and two citizens of Shiloh are kidnapped. Theo and friends must show the bad guy he can't mess with folks in a small town. <https://tmbrownauthor.com>



**Lynne Hesse** recently recorded an interview with the Wild Women Who Write Podcast in Lilburn and has a pending date with Opal Writer Authors' Podcast. She has an article about her writing in the April issue of *Opal Writers Magazine*. In addition, Lynne reports that April 16, she will dance in a piece on the Beltline with Beacon Dance about "Who Decides Who Belongs" on White Street, near the West End Brewery off Lee Street.



**Leah Miller's** humor piece, "Dream On," was published in *The Florida Writer* in February. "Kissing Kismet," her poignant experience about trying to save a dying man, was published in October in *Footprints*, the Florida Writers Association's 13th anthology collection, and was a semi-finalist in their 2021 Royal Palm Literary Awards. In December, "Snakebit" won SFWA's 1st place (Essay) and "Terror in December" won 2nd place (Memoir). In 2020, "Living in Guatemala" won a 1st place Royal Palm Literary Award.

# How to Win a Contest

by Sheila Hudson

(with Joe Bunting of *The Write Practice*)

I came across this very helpful website on how to win contests and how NOT to win contests and found it helpful. That said and with credits to Joe, I'm going to emphasize what is pertinent to SWA and our contests.

**1. Recognize you are human** – you can only do so much. But in our case, for the price of our conference you can enter ALL the contests instead of paying for each one separately. That's a deal, my friends.

Stephen King once said, "To write is human, to edit is divine." But instead of the word "edit," you could substitute the phrase "judge writing contests," because editors and writing contest judges play a similarly godlike role. Pin

To scrutinize the actions of the judges of a writing contest is impossible. Writing is subjective. A judge attempts to say, "This story is good," or, "This story is bad," but really, they are just choosing based on their own idiosyncratic taste. Winning comes down to a judge's experience—and luck.

What is the writer to do, then? Submit your piece, pray it wins, and then go write your next story (and find a new contest to submit to). Nothing else can be done for a creative writing competition. When you see who is judging the contest, you could do a little research and even see what entries have won in the past. It's worth a shot.

Cash prizes or an honorable mention isn't the only reason you should enter a writing contest (although it's a pretty good reason). There are other benefits like getting constructive feedback and giving yourself a time commitment that will motivate you to finish writing your story.

**2. Create fascinating main character.** Feature contrast and conflict. Light vs. Darkness. Good vs. evil. A good character trait for a hero battling

the evil in the world. A normal person battling the evil inside themselves. An evil person drawn, despite themselves, to a moment of goodness. Life vs. death. A woman's struggle against cancer, against a villain that wants to kill her, against the deathly banality of modern life. Male vs. female. Neat vs. messy.

Contrast fascinates readers. Does your main character have contrast? If you want to win a writing contest, they should.

**3. Surprise ending.** Everyone loves surprises, especially judges. True surprises - not of the blue endings or those that just STOP and don't END. A

good surprise ending can be predicted from the very beginning, but the author skillfully distracts you so that you never expect it (the traditional method of distracting the reader is to use red herrings). Bad

writing is creating a surprise ending that cannot be predicted and feels like the writer is simply trying to give the reader something they would never expect. Instead surprise the reader but provide clues to this ending earlier in the story.

**4. Repeat with a twist.** In the last few lines of your story, repeat something from earlier in the story with a twist. This echoed ending will reverberate with your reader giving closure and emotional power. For example, you might repeat the opening image. If the snow is falling in the first lines of the story, you might say, "As night closed, the snow continued to fall. He thought it would fall for all his life." You might repeat an action. If your character is eating at a diner with his wife in the first scene, perhaps in the last scene he is eating alone at the same diner all alone. You might repeat a character. If your heroine has a meet-cute with an attractive man early in the story, you can end the story with him unexpectedly showing up at her workplace.

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The editor is always right. The corollary is that no writer will take all of his or her editor's advice; for all have sinned and fallen short of editorial perfection. Put another way, to write is human, to edit is divine.  
—Stephen King, *On Writing*”

Repeating with a twist gives your ending an artful sense of unity.

**5. Write what you know or want to know.**

Ursula Le Guin said this about the advice to write what you know:

I think it's a very good rule and have always obeyed it. I write about imaginary countries, alien societies on other planets, dragons, wizards, the Napa Valley in 22002. I know these things. I know them better than anybody else possibly could, so it's my duty to testify about them.

**Note:** There is, of course, no guaranteed way to win a writing contest. All you can do is write your best piece, follow the rules of the contest, and

submit. Unfortunately, there are no shortcuts. All that's to say, don't over think this. But enter every contest that is offered, you never know what the competition is or what the judge will decide. So go for it.

## *Literary News & Events*

Submissions are now being accepted for the **2022 Al Blanchard Award**. Deadline for submissions is April 30, 2022.

The prize includes \$100 cash award, publication in the 2022's Best New England Crime Stories anthology, free admission to the Crime Bake Conference, and a handsome plaque.

The New England Crime Bake Committee established the award in memory of Al Blanchard, who was MWA-NE chapter president and a member of Sisters in Crime when he and then-presi-

dent of Sisters in Crime New England Gin Mackey seized the initiative to organize a regional mystery conference for New England. He then served as co-chair for the first three New England Crime Bake conferences.

The winner is not required to attend the New England Crime Bake, Annual Mystery Conference for WRiters & Readers.

For guidelines and submissions requirements, go to <https://crimebake.org/al-blanchard-award/>

### **SWA 2021-2022 Board of Directors**

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