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THE WRITE STUFF

Northwest Ohio Christian Writers

May 2010

“THE ACCIDENTAL AUTHOR”

May 28, 2010 – 10 a.m.

**Dayspring Church – Assembly of God
17360 N. Dixie Highway (Rt.25)
(just north of Bowling Green)**

(See the end of the newsletter for directions)

Come and hear local author, **Mary Helen Wright**, as she tells how she used her lifelong love of writing to finally put her family memoirs down on paper. She has written five popular books that have been selling well in the area since she published the first one in 1995. She says she has used facts from her family history, embellished with a few fictional touches to make them more interesting, and written the books in a style that appeals to all ages.

All of us have memories to preserve, so you don't want to miss this interesting presentation.

**BUSINESS MEETING AND PROGRAM – 10 A.M.
LUNCH – NOON – BROWN BAG OR NEARBY FAST FOOD
CRITIQUE SESSION – 1-2 P.M.**

(please bring several or more copies of what you want critiqued)

EXTEND AN INVITATION

If you have friends interested in writing, tell them about us. We meet on the fourth Friday of January, March, May, July, and September. And don't forget to mention the October seminar that features experienced speakers who share their writing and editing expertise. Members get a price break on this.



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BOOK SIGNING = BOOK SELLING

At our March meeting, Shelby Stein, manager at Borders Books in Toledo, provided us with good ideas and information on how to have a successful book signing. Borders sponsors frequent author events and plans are underway for a Local Author Day this summer. Experience shows bookstore traffic heaviest on Saturdays, so that's generally when signings are scheduled. Shelby has seen the gamut of signing from flops to sellouts. Some highlights of her many suggestions follow.

- Before calling to schedule a book signing, sit down and think outside the box. Are there other venues that may serve you as well as a bookstore? Specialty consignment shops? Pet stores? Craft shows? Plan an attractive display. The bookstore only provides a table and a chair or two.
- Have information ready to share with book signing scheduler – once you've made sure they have time to talk to you. Telephone contact is best or stopping in to chat. Information needed: book title and ISBN, publisher, your pen name if you have one, two to three sentences about your book.
- Don't be discouraged if they don't say 'yes' right away. Sometimes book sellers know what types of books sell best when.
- After you've scheduled a signing:
 - Two weeks before:** Call the store. Make sure they have the books. Invite friends and family.
 - One week before:** Drop off attractive promotional flyers. Provide a large poster with a picture of your book. Write up a SHORT punchy promo announcement for store use during the signing.
 - Day of signing:** Arrive an hour early. Dress casually. Bring your own pens. After your signing, be sure to touch base with the manager.
 - Day after signing:** Send a thank you note to the manager.

Although Borders does have some restrictions/rules about their signings, they DO permit self-published authors to have signings. The author supplies the books and splits the price 60%-Borders, 40% author. That's an industry standard, so price your books accordingly.

BOOK VENUES - AN AUTHOR'S VIEW

(Kathy Douglas)

Whether you've self-published your book or been fortunate enough to land a contract with a royalty house, assorted venues for book signings and sales abound. For your consideration:

CHRISTIAN BOOK STORES

Sorry, these make the worst venues. There's a host of reasons, but here's the biggie: "Christian Book Stores" is a misnomer. These shops are Christian GIFT stores. People go there for jewelry, art, Bibles, VBS supplies – and maybe a book.

RETAIL BOOK STORES

True book stores like Borders and Barnes & Noble fare better. Their clientele want books. Book stores serve authors well for signings, sales, and exposure. The downside? The store *rightfully* gets a big share of the take. Unless your book is a royalty title, as author you won't be rolling in dough.



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CRAFT SHOWS

Like true book stores, good craft shows may offer authors a great venue for sales. If the table charge is reasonable and sales are good, the bottom line is excellent. Price your books reasonably and inexpensively. At my last craft show I priced my work-for-hire books at 50% of their retail sales price. I still garnered a good profit and sold almost two dozen books in five hours.

No site is a sure-fire venue. What does work best in every one is a smile and a readiness to listen. Chocolate freebies don't hurt either.

SEMINAR WILL BE ANOTHER HUGE SUCCESS!

Bowing to popular demand, Dr. Dennis Hensley will be back for our seminar on **October 30**, bringing a new program with his special brand of humor, Christian dedication, and just plain good information. You won't want to miss him this time! **So mark your calendar!**

BALLOONING OUT

"Ballooning out" doesn't bode well when spoken of our physiques, but our **2010 Retreat at Lial** had us flying higher and farther than helium-filled balloons in a hurricane. "Balloons" served as our theme and a great writing prompt.

Friday started with an interactive devotional by Chuck Miller called REVPSALMS. What a balloon of blessing that was! Christy Harner blew us away with some very useful info on Internet blogging and more. She would know. She admitted to having nine websites! Linda Tippet and Mary Jo Bosch demonstrated that, just as there are wrong and right ways to inflate a balloon, there are wrong and right ways to interview. We "practiced" on one another afterwards, reaping the additional benefit of getting to know one another better.

Judy Redenbo enlightened us about writing for or as caregivers. Sometimes we write for others, sometimes for ourselves. Sometimes for those whose balloon have popped, or for those developing slow leaks. Kathy Douglas tried to deflate our knowledge balloons with some of the changing and changeless rules of English grammar. Ruthann Sielkin's insightful and entertaining devotional and Sharon Moenter's always-inclusive drama skit brought our Friday to a finish as colorful and fun as a bunch of big circus balloons.

Not to be outdone come Saturday, Tim Warrick started us off with another super devotional based on the Genesis account of Joseph. Shelley Lee provided a closing fun and informative topic on the use of Buffoonaloonery: humor in writing.

Admittedly, we didn't critique as well as we could have in our critique sessions. What everyone wrote or shared about balloons or their interviews kept us riveted. The "Balloon" writing prompt produced everything from a poignant, true story about a surgically-inserted feeding balloon to Tim Warrich hilarious, fictional Balloonville story.

And in case anyone thought the only thing Martha Willey could do was arrange GREAT meals throughout the event, she closed the retreat with a superb devotional allegory about Writer Block and his friends, Editor, Interruption, and Don't Have Time.



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We booked our retreat for Lial in May of 2011, and left our 2010 Writers Retreat like newly-released weather balloons. We're recharged and ready to let winds of creativity take us to new heights! (By Kathy D.)

STILL LOOKING FOR SUBMISSIONS

We'd like to feature one of our members in each issue of our newsletter. If you'd like to submit a piece, just email to me. First come, first published. Please limit your word count to 125 words. We're waiting.....

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Remember that our group is a member of ACW – American Christian Writers. If you want to attend any of their conferences, or receive any of their magazines, you get a 10% discount. Our group's chapter number is #3080.

- **AMERICAN CHRISTIAN WRITERS SEMINAR – “YOU CAN GET PUBLISHED”** – Saturday, June 5 – Columbus, OH. All day only. For more information, call 1-800-21-WRITE (Remember the discount!)
- **WRITE-T0-PUBLISH CONFERENCE** – June 9-12 - Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL – Chicago area
Covers many topics with a large faculty. To get registration information, visit www.writetopublish.com
- **GREATER PHILADELPHIA WRITER CONFERENCE** – August 12-14 -
Taking registrations now – www.writehisanswer.com/Philadelphia
(Shelley Lee attended this last year)
- **ST. DAVIDS CHRISTIAN WRITERS' CONFERENCE – June 22-26**
Grove City College, Grove City, PA. More information – stdavidswriters.com
- **TAKE NOTE:** We were saddened to hear that the magazine *Cross and Quill* has unexpectedly gone out of business. Unfortunately, subscriptions are non-refundable.

The July-August issue of *Writer's Digest* is doing a feature entitled, “Write and Sell Your Memoirs”. It'll be a good follow-up read after our May speaker's talk.

- **WHITE ROSE PUBLISHING** is looking for “entertaining Christian romances.” Check it out at www.whiterosepublishing.com
- The new **CHRISTIAN WRITERS' MARKET GUIDE** is out. Be sure to order your copy of this valuable resource.



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- **ACW(American Christian Writers)** hosts free seminars in churches to “help church attendees learn how to develop a ministry of writing”. A church in the Toledo area is giving consideration to hosting such a seminar. We’ll keep you posted on developments.
- **THE FIRST LINE** – a quarterly writers contest. They create a line which must be the first line of a short story. Winners get published in their quarterly and win some cash, too. See their web page www.thefirstline.com

ONLINE OPPORTUNITIES

SOME NEW WEBSITES TO CHECK OUT:

www.writergazette.com

www.writersweekly.com

www.worldwidefreelance.com

www.writerincome.com

All these have helpful information and are worth looking into.

CHRISTIAN BOOK VIDEOS - a recently launched site as the one-stop viewing place for Christian book videos on the Internet. They’re also called book previews or Book Trailers and are video ads for Christian books – a handy shortcut to find the kind of book you want to read. Now Christian booklovers can go to one website and view book videos for their favorite authors as well as find new ones. www.christianbooksvideos.com

CAPSTONE FICTION – a new inspirational fiction publishing house, newly listed in the 2008 Christian Writers’ Market Guide. Check it out www.capstonefiction.com

CHRISTIAN STORY TELLER – A nonprofit website of Christian authors for Christian authors by Christian authors. It highlights up-and-coming authors and books, and offers marketing seminar and education for Christian writing. Publishes an interesting newsletter. Get details at www.christianstoryteller.com

INTERESTING AND INCREDIBLY VARIED WEBSITE of writing helps, book recommendations, articles, contests, publishing news, and Christian inspiration. www.aprilboyer.com This is really worth a look. She works out of Ashland, OH.

FREE NEWSLETTERS

Children’s Writer & Illustrator’s Market – www.cwim.com

Poet’s Market – www.poetsmarket.com

Guide to Literary Agents – www.guidetoliteraryagents.com



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MEMBERS' MEMOS

Kathy Smith of Findlay recently received news that her article, "How to Avoid Losing People in the Cracks, MIA Prevention in the Church" was accepted by Messenger Magazine of Joplin, MO for their September issue. It's about effective Pastoral Care Ministry in the church.

Kathy Douglas is a contributing author in the newly released *Blissfully Blended: 365 Devotional Readings for Stepmoms* from Barbour Publishing.

Keep the news coming about your successes!

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DON'T FORGET TO CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE...www.nwocw.org

ALMOST THE LAST WORD

"The difference between the right word and the nearly right word is the same as that between lightning and the lightning bug"

-Mark Twain

UPCOMING EVENTS

**May 28 - The Accidental Author – writing family memoirs-
Local author, Mary Helen Wright**

July 23 – Marketing Brainstorming – Shelley Lee, Betty Winslow

September 24 – Crossover Writing – Christy Harner

October 30 - Annual Writers Seminar – Dr. Dennis Hensley

Send newsletter information to andamija@bex.net or to 5679 Monroe St. #109, Sylvania, OH 43560.

DIRECTIONS TO DAYSPRING CHURCH : The church is located a couple miles north of Bowling Green on Route 25 (North Dixie Highway). From the Toledo area take the Perrysburg exit south off I-475/23 on to Route 25. Church will be on the left. Church phone number is 419-352-0672

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