

WISE WOMEN WRITE™

SOARING LIKE THE EAGLES

BY DIANE AMENTO OWENS

Lately I've been into bird watching. Perhaps it's more apt to say I've been bird noticing. They've always been around, flying overhead, singing outside my window, hopping around in the trees. I just hadn't slowed down enough to notice.

From the gorgeous and rare peach-faced lovebirds to the often-seen scurrying quail, I've become a bird fan. Since I stopped to notice these creatures of flight, I've wondered about the question of an owl whooping outside my bedroom door, heard the eerie, scary-movie sound of four hawks perched atop a streetlight, observed pigeons fly in beautiful formation, and admired ducks honking and veering their way overhead.

But recently two eagles in my family room caught my attention as my husband watched *Nature* on PBS. Since eagles aren't something I'm likely to see here in my backyard, I sat down to watch the tail-end of the spotlight

on these spectacular birds. Check out this [sneak peek](#) from the show, just in case you haven't seen any eagles up close lately.

The image of the two fledgling eagles learning to fly particularly fascinated me. After 7,000 new feathers had replaced their downy coat, the eaglets practiced their flying skills within the confines of the enormous nest. Using the nest bottom as a trampoline, each one bounced up, flapping enormous wings a bit, and landed. They took turns doing this pre-flight maneuver over and over until they were ready to push off from the nest and soar. And unlike what I'd previously seen and heard, the mother didn't push the eaglets out of the nest. It was all about the fledgling readiness routine.

My kids accuse me of thinking up too many metaphors so bear with me. I can't help but compare Wise Women Write to eagle training grounds. Whether it's Wise Women Write or the

newly formed Wise Women Write Books, women come to the group to test out the wings of their story, feeling safe within the group and its soft landing place. They read their piece out loud. Jump, flap, flap. Listen for feedback. Higher jump, soft landing back down. Receive encouragement from the group. Bigger and bolder jump. They gather confidence that their writing works and gain awareness of needed revisions. Faster flapping. Then, armed with this supportive feedback, they are almost ready to fly.

After some revision, it's finally time to push off from the nest and soar. A quick stroke of the send button, and off the piece goes, out into the world to wing its way to its rightful place. So the writer can find *her* rightful place in the world.

So she can say, ah yes, these wings work really well. I AM a writer. -Diane

AUTHOR DIANE AMENTO OWENS BRINGS WOMEN TOGETHER TO WRITE, SHARE, AND BLOOM.

VISIT [WISE WOMEN WRITE](#) TO READ DIANE'S BLOG AND GET INFORMATION ABOUT NEW WRITING GROUP OPPORTUNITIES.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

GREAT NEWS TO SHARE!



Wise Woman **Betsy McPhee**'s hilarious essay, "**Barbie Envy**," was published this month in *Long Story Short*. Click [HERE](#) to enjoy this story yourself.

BOOK NEWS! Scottsdale author and Wise Woman **Jennifer Fabiano**'s new project, *Savor the Love*, an inspirational memory journal filled with bits from Jennifer's own family, will be published soon by WestBow Press, a division of Thomas Nelson Publishing. This highly anticipated gift book is the first in Jennifer's upcoming series. More details next month!



Multitalented freelance writer and Wise Woman Write facilitator **Trish Dolasinski** was featured with other spectacular Arizona educators in the January edition of *Raising Arizona Kids Magazine*. Trish shares her education knowledge and expertise with an article in this month's *Tragen & Associates, LLC Newsletter*.

Multi-published essayist and short story writer **Maryann McCullough** won third place in December's Whispering Tree Essay Contest with her short memoir, "**A Black and White Christmas**."



NEW WISE WOMEN MEMBERS!

Welcome to:

ADELE RESMER
CYNDI ERHARDT
and **SUZANNE WILLIAMS**

THANK YOU FOR SHARING
YOUR TALENT,
TIME, AND WORDS!

WISE WOMEN WRITE BOOKS, TOO!

Want to know whose byline you'll be seeing on those bookstore shelves next? The newest branch of Wise Women Write is a dynamic team of novel writers studying the art of pitching manuscripts while banging out new chapters each month. Meetings include an exchange of writerly resources, critique sessions, and lots of laughing. Stay tuned for publishing success from **WINDY LYNN HARRIS, RENEE RIVERS, LINDA WILSON, RUDRI BHATT PATEL, ALYSSA LAMPE BAUMAN, AND SUZANNE WILLIAMS**. Want to know what they're writing about? Just ask--they've been working on their elevator pitches all month!

CORNER THE MARKET

A monthly column by freelance writer Windy Lynn Harris

It's February, my writer friends, time to think ahead to the blooming flowers of springtime and the fresh opportunities for success that await you there. Wise Women Write groups are working at capacity, bursting with creativity and spectacular prose. This is the time to plant the seeds of publishing triumph.

SEND YOUR BEST PIECE OF WRITING TO AN EDITOR TODAY!

It takes weeks, sometimes even months, for an editor to have a chance to read and fall in love with your poem, essay, or short story. Upon acceptance, your piece will be scheduled for publication sometime within the next month, or even later. That's where this springtime theme fits in: plant a seed now, get a byline by spring!

My Six Steps to Publishing Success:

- 1) Send in your **BEST WORK**. You know it's your best because you wrote several drafts before workshopping it with other writers and then rewrote it again.
- 2) Research appropriate magazines to find one where this prose fits perfectly.
- 3) Follow the **Writer's Guidelines** exactly as you see them.
- 4) Write a dynamic query letter.
- 5) Format your manuscript.
- 6) Press that **SEND** button!

The last bit of advice I can add is **BE PERSISTENT**. When an editor sends you a "No Thank You Note" (rejection letter), jump back up to step #2 and try again! You **CAN** find a happy home for your creative writing in 2010.

All it takes is that one little seed. -Windy

Windy Lynn Harris' short stories and essays have been published over 60 times in magazines, newspapers, and anthologies all across the country. Learn how **YOU** can find publishing success at one of her upcoming workshop events:

February 8th in Chandler
February 20th in Phoenix
March 15th in Glendale
May 26th in Scottsdale



[Details to all upcoming events here!](#)

SPINNING A GOOD YARN

A book review BY TRISH DOLASINSKI, ED.D.

"Don't make stuff up," says Lee Gutkind, creative nonfiction writer and author of [**The Art of Creative Nonfiction: Writing and Selling the Literature of Reality**](#). Gutkind is emphatic that creative nonfiction is about real people, experiences and events.

He divides his discussion into two distinct parts, "The Creative Part," and "The Nonfiction Part." He says "The Creative Part" demands the writer have an immense passion for people—real people—so the reader will be compelled to enter into the character's life with a deep sense of the human experience.

Other key components of good creative nonfiction include detailed description, dialogue, story structure and a definite focus of attention. Both subjectivity and objectivity by the writer are also necessary. Gutkind says the writer must have an ability to express emotion while giving facts—just the facts, ma'am. Creative nonfiction writers turn to this genre because they have a strong sense of their personal truth regarding a particular person or experience. He cautions, however, that the reader also has had

many life experiences. Therefore, the story must teach the reader something significant about the experience. Reach out and touch your reader in a subtle, but real manner, explains Gutkind, but always stay focused on the theme or main message.

In "The Nonfiction Part" of his book he describes the transfer of information in order to make a global connection with the reader. The greatest mistake writers make in this area, according to Gutkind, is that they "talk too much about themselves" and the writing becomes too egocentric. Second, many creative nonfiction pieces fail because they do not present information that teaches the reader a global truth or understanding about the person, concept, experience or situation. "Essays that omit the needs of the reader," says Gutkind, "will never be published."

For more tips on developing your creative nonfiction writing expertise, the five appendices at the end of Gutkind's book will provide excellent guidance. -Trish

Visit Trish's blog, [**"SPINNING A GOOD YARN,"**](#) each week for journaling tips YOU can use. This month Trish offers writers the tools to take steps toward those 2010 goals. Want to move forward in your writing life? Come join the fun!



RETURNING THE FAVOR

A monthly column by author SUSAN POHLMAN

YOU HAVE AN AGENT, NOW WHAT?

Picture this: You landed an agent who sees the brilliance of your work. She can't wait to WOW the public with your keen insight and cutting humor. Unfortunately, before that can happen, you must do the impossible. You must WOW the publishing world. And that, my friend, will take work. It took more hours and tears than I ever thought possible to wrestle my manuscript into something good enough to sell to an editor.

As my agent repeated to me between rewrites, "You only get one chance to be read. It must be perfect. Publishers are a tough bunch."

"Won't they see the potential, even if the writing isn't perfect?" I would ask.

"No."

"Surely they will know that I will rewrite according to their specifications."

"No."

"Fine. What's next?"

"Take your entire book and rewrite it in the past tense."

"Excuse me, what?"

"Yes, that whole present tense thing isn't working."

"Do you have any idea how many verbs I will have to change?"

"Then we'll get to work on the real rewrite. Here's a list of editors to interview. Pick one."

"How much will that cost?"

"Depends on how much the manuscript needs."

"My stomach hurts."

"Call me in a week."

However painful, this portion of the writing process is critical. Your openness to manuscript critique and hard work is part of the mix. Put on a brave face and listen to those who have walked this path before you. Remember, those publishers are a tough bunch. -Susan



JOIN US HERE EACH MONTH
AS SUSAN POHLMAN
REVEALS THE SECRETS TO
HER PUBLISHING SUCCESS.

SUSAN'S DEBUT MEMOIR,
"HALFWAY TO EACH
OTHER," IS AVAILABLE NOW
IN BOOKSTORES
EVERYWHERE!



MEET THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF AMERICAN PEN WOMEN

Pen Women are a community of professional artists, writers, poets, composers, and arrangers who believe in the power of words, art, and music to illuminate the human experience, fire the imagination, and nourish the soul. We invite you to come visit our local Scottsdale branch. Email member [Windy Lynn Harris](mailto:WindyLynnHarris@penwomen.org) for information and upcoming dates.

THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF AMERICAN PEN WOMEN IS THE OLDEST ARTS ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN IN THE COUNTRY.

Arizona Consortium for the Arts

The consortium provides support for Arizona artists as well as fostering free access to the arts for the general public by providing information, hosting cultural, performing arts and arts events and networking. Visit www.artizona.org for membership details.

Contact the Newsletter Editor

Do you have something you'd like to add to the Wise Woman Write monthly newsletter? Got great news to share or an opportunity for writers? Send newsletter editor Windy Lynn Harris an [email](mailto:WindyLynnHarris@penwomen.org) anytime!



HALFWAY TO EACH OTHER

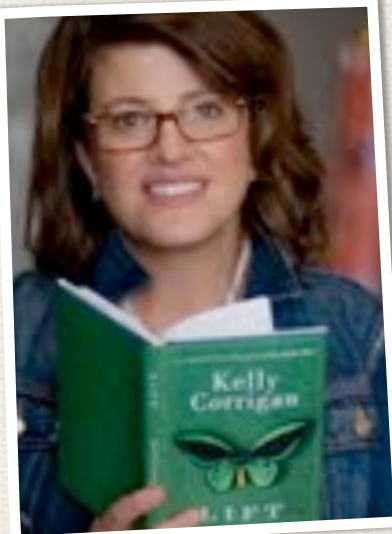
HAVE YOU READ SUSAN POHLMAN'S AWARD WINNING MEMOIR YET? THIS DYNAMIC AUTHOR HAS BEEN INTERVIEWED ALL ACROSS THE COUNTRY AND MOST RECENTLY APPEARED ON THE PAT MCMAHON SHOW. FIND OUT WHY EVERYONE IS TALKING!

[GET YOUR COPY HERE](#)



TRISH DOLASINSKI READS WORK

Trish Dolasinski was invited to read her short story, "Above and Below the Board," at a December literary event hosted by The Arizona Consortium for the Arts. Trish's story was recently published in The Blue Guitar Magazine.



MEET AUTHOR KELLY CORRIGAN

SPEND AN EVENING WITH NY TIMES BEST SELLING AUTHOR KELLY CORRIGAN ON MARCH 25TH, 7PM, AT THE XAVIER PIPER CENTER. TICKETS ARE \$35 AND INCLUDES A BOOK.

FOR TICKET INFORMATION, CONTACT:

DeeDee Mittelstaedt
Xavier Mothers' Guild
Phone: 602-240-3147

BECOME A BETTER WRITER

Learn new skills, send your query letter, and get published!

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES:

ASU's Piper Writer's Studio ([workshops and classes](#))

Arizona Author's Association ([workshops and seminars](#))

Cup of Comfort ([workshops and anthology opportunities](#))

Phoenix College ([creative writing classes](#))

CONTESTS:

Memoirs Ink Contest ([essays and creative non-fiction](#))

Glass Woman Prize ([personal essays](#))

Glimmer Train [Short Story Prize for New Writers](#)

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS:

The Blue Guitar and The Blue Guitar Jr. are now accepting submissions for the spring issue. ([poetry and prose](#))

Long Story Short ([1000 words or less, essays and short stories](#))

Raising Arizona Kids Magazine ([articles and essays](#))

Poets and Writers Magazine ([anthology opportunities](#))