

# WISE WOMEN WRITE™

March 2010

Local author and Wise Woman Write founder Diane Amento Owens brings women together to write, share, and grow. Need some inspiration? Click on Diane's [Weekly Wise Words](#) and sign up to have them delivered to you by email each week.



## JOIN THE CLUB by author Diane Amento Owens

Recently my husband suggested that I promote Wise Women Write as a writing club. I considered his idea—although my first reaction had been skeptical, since he's never experienced even one Wise Women Write group. But I listened as he pointed out that most women love to join clubs--book, bridge and garden clubs, for example.

Hmmm. Maybe Wise Women Write *is* like a writing club. We love to write, we meet to nurture common goals and affirm our identity as writers, and the bonds we form happen as a wonderful outgrowth of our time together. By sharing our writing and our stories, we become intimately connected with each others' lives. Maryann McCullough, one of the wisest Wise Women, once observed that she really knew women in her group, much more than she would if we were "just a knitting club."

Hearing a woman's story and her truth beckons you to enter into her life in a way that cannot be compared to what happens over knitting or bridge or gardening. If there's a comparison to be made, Wise Women Write groups are like sewing clubs, as the thread of another writer's story becomes intertwined within each group member's life.

I witnessed that intertwinement firsthand in last week's meeting as Suzanne shared her latest piece. By the time she had finished reading her work, I had entered her story and was steaming with some of the anger she had expressed. Then I felt the tug of Betsy's emotions as she time-traveled into her parents' attic, and I identified with Trish's connectedness to four generations of apron-wearing women.

Erma Bombeck said, "Women are never what they seem to be. There is the woman you see and the woman who is hidden." Through writing, through the power of story, in the Wise Women Write "club," we reveal our hidden woman. We don't do it over yarn or cards or flowers. We share our words.

Become part of the club by joining the Wise Women Write community on [Facebook!](#)

Want more information about Wise Women Write writing groups? Visit [Wise Women Write](#).

# \*GREAT NEWS TO SHARE\*



**Renee Rivers**, a feature columnist in this issue of *Wise Women Write*, also had an article in the February edition of *The Moon Valley Tattler*. Look for Renee's byline again in March's *Moon Valley Tattler*.

Progress on **Jennifer Fabiano's** upcoming book, *Savor the Love*, is moving ahead at a great pace. The publisher, WestBow Press, has received her final copy and Jennifer is waiting to see the cover design. More news soon!



Look for **Susan Pohlman's** latest article in the March edition of *HomeLife Magazine*.

Also, Susan will be signing her award-winning memoir at the "Authors on the Move" event in Sacramento, CA, March 6, 2010. Please see Susan's [website](#) for details.

**Betsy McPhee** has a spectacular essay featured in the latest book from the well-known Cup of Comfort anthology series, *A Cup of Comfort for a Better World*. The book will be available later this month at bookstores everywhere.



**Trish Dolansinski, Ed.D.'s** article, "S.M.A.R.T. Goals + Action Plans = Organizational Satisfaction and Success," is featured in this month's edition of the Traaen & Associates, LLC March newsletter. Traaen & Associates is a business organization dealing with human resources needs.



# A WRITER AND HER TAXES

a feature article by Renee Rivers PART ONE

This is too difficult for a mathematician. It takes a philosopher.  
–Albert Einstein on filing tax returns

A few months ago, I blew a layer of dust off the latest draft of my memoir and decided I needed to do more than work in critique groups, attend conferences, and talk to agents if I was serious about my writing. I needed to do something that many artists fear: enter the business world. This meant getting organized and keeping tax records for my writing projects.

I talked to my accountant and got good, but vague answers, most of which assumed I knew more about taxes than I really did, so I researched further. Fortunately, I caught Mary Fiore's presentation at a recent Desert Rose Meeting. Ms. Fiore is a Scottsdale-based CPA, whose philosophy on keeping tax records follows the time-proven KISS acronym: "Keep It Simple, Silly."

For bookkeeping, Ms. Fiore says you don't need fancy software or to keep track of every penny. For smaller projects, Ms. Fiore suggests using manila envelopes to file receipts. For larger projects, keep separate file drawers labeled by year. Write the category and running total on the outside of the envelope or file. On January 1st, run the total and write it on the bottom corner.

## RECEIPTS TO KEEP:

**Writing Tools** (computer, printer, ink, office supplies, books, etc.)

**Phone charges** (pertaining to agents, critique partners, editors, etc.)

**Meals and Entertainment** (hometown meals count only if you're taking an agent or editor)

**Travel** (research, conferences, workshops and classes)

**Income documentation** (copies of award checks, payment received for writing, advances, etc.)

## Other information to keep that substantiates your purpose as a professional writer includes:

\*Handouts from conferences, meetings, workshops, etc.

\*Calendar with writing appointments, including time spent writing.

\*Writing log of projects (categories can include: book, nonfiction essay, calls, market research, queries, writing event, class/workshop, misc, bookkeeping.)

Keeping good tax records as a writer means keeping track of a few details. But isn't that what we do as writers? We collect and arrange details. Despite Einstein's quip about taxes being for philosophers, it's really not that hard. Accountants like Mary Fiore understand the artist's dilemma and are willing to provide sound advice and services. Mary Fiore recommends two books on this subject: *Tax Deductions A-Z* and *The New Tax Guide for Performers, Writers, Directors, Designers and Other Show Biz Folk*.

So, after dusting off my memoir this year, I placed my writing log and a tax envelope inside my writing projects folder. When I step away from the computer, I jot down my writing time. And, when I buy books on the Internet or return from a writing event, I stick my receipt in the tax file. But like starting a new exercise routine, it takes getting into a simple routine and sticking with it. Given that writing more closely resembles philosophy than rocket science, writers may have a leg up on Einstein on this one!      Next month: TAXES, PART TWO.

Award-winning writer Renee Rivers is a mother and travel enthusiast, currently writing her memoir about coming-of-age in Alaska. Renee has taught at Phoenix College and assisted as associate editor of *Hayden's Ferry Review*. Renee's writing has appeared in *Change Your Life Through Travel*, *The Geneseo Scene*, *Raising Arizona Kids*, *The Moon Valley Tattler*, and *The Arizona Republic*.

# SPINNING A GOOD YARN

## a book review by Trish Dolasinski, Ed. D.

### TRISH'S LATEST BOOK REVIEW:

#### *Bird by Bird*, by Anne Lamott

"Take your writing bird by bird," says Anne Lamott. "It is not necessary to scale a glacier, but to see three feet ahead of you." Lamott encourages writers to focus in and allow the story to evolve. This basic premise weaves throughout her book, with lots of specifics and *how-to-dos* along the way.

In "Part One: Writing," Lamott goes into great detail about character development, plot, dialogue and set design. She also addresses the age-old writer's query, "How Do You Know When You're Done?" The answer, says Lamott, lies somewhere between "perfectionism begins with the oppressor," and "you're done when there is no more steam in the pressure cooker."

She encourages readers to "listen to your broccoli" in "Part Two: The Writing Frame of Mind." She uses broccoli as a metaphor because it is ridiculous and allows her creative juices to flow. Lamott cautions writers not to force characters or setting, but simply to wait and allow the character to naturally evolve by tuning into inner creative energy. "Rely on your intuition by finding a suitable metaphor for it,"

says Lamott. You can always turn to your more pragmatic side and critique your efforts later.

Lamott exercises empathy and support along the path, with specific strategies in "Part Three: Help along the Way." In this section a variety of tangible suggestions are offered. "We are social animals," says Lamott, "who spend a lot of time alone in a hole getting our work done." Reaching out to others in a comfortable space to share work, and attending workshops and conferences is important.

In "Part Four: Publication and Other Reasons to Write," Lamott talks about marketing one's writing, but most importantly, she touches upon the core values and reasons writers get hooked into this positive addiction. You are sure to find many savory reflections and appreciate your passion for writing even more!

As a Wise Women Write newsletter reader, you are invited to pick up a discounted copy of *Bird by Bird* at the [Dog-Eared Pages Used Book Store](#) located at 32<sup>nd</sup> Street near Bell Road. Thank you to owners Thom and Melanie for your continued support of Wise Women Write programs and all of us Arizona writers.

Visit Trish at her freelance writer [website!](#)

Be sure to stop by the cozy corner of Trish's journal writing page and become inspired to Spin a Good Yarn of your own.

Join the conversation by leaving Trish a comment!



# CORNER THE MARKET

by Windy Lynn Harris

Editing. We all gotta do it, but when should you hire a professional for the job? This month I had the pleasure of interviewing freelance writer, editor, and Wise Women Write founder **Diane Amento Owens** about sitting in the editor's chair. If you ever thought about hiring an editor for your writing project or wonder if becoming an editor is right for you, read on!



**Hi Diane! To begin, how do I know if it's time to hire a freelance editor?**

Every writer can benefit from a good editor. A writer can hire a freelance editor who can bid the project on a per-job basis.

**You have worked on several Barrett-Jackson publications, What do you do for them?**

I'm a freelance independent contractor working for the publisher, and my title is "copyeditor." I look over copy to see what writers have forgotten—punctuation and missing words. Sometimes I clarify meaning with a small improvement to the sentence structure. Sometimes I ask a question, because if I don't understand what the writer meant, then chances are the reader won't either.

**How often do you work for Barrett-Jackson?**

We do four event programs a year, and each issue takes about a month and a half of work. Two to three weeks of that time is the busiest when the writers are submitting their work. Everything is done online.

**How did you get started with your freelance editor business?**

Because I'm an ex-English teacher, I've always had an editor type of personality and just naturally edited things for people, both at home and at work. An editor must be extremely detail oriented and picky about things writers sometimes overlook. But editing isn't just about missing commas. An editor also must be sensitive to the writer's voice and not rewrite the article or manuscript so that it is no longer identifiable as belonging to the writer. I see an editor's job being like a gentle gem polisher. The raw gem is there—my job is to make it sparkle more than it could on its own.

**What kinds of editing do you do besides the big Barrett-Jackson projects?**

I specialize in nonfiction, from book-length manuscripts to resumes, and articles and blog posts like I do for fearlessflight.com. I even edit this newsletter! My husband and daughters also enlist my services, and I always tell them, "My invoice is in the mail."

**What is your favorite part of the editing process?**

I love being able to help the writer clarify what he has written. Yesterday I edited something my husband wrote for work. I marked an unclear sentence and asked him to tell me in his own words what he meant to say. Then I said, "Okay, I see what you meant, so write THAT." A good editor asks questions.

**What kind of training would you suggest for someone wanting to get into the editor biz?**

Even though I had a strong language background from ten years of teaching English, teaching didn't necessarily train me to be an editor, so I took an online editing class to improve my skills and orient me to the business end of editing.

**Do you have room for more clients?**

I'm always willing to look at new writing projects and evaluate if I'm a match—both in my skills and in the time I have to devote to the project.

Thank you for taking the time to teach us about the freelance editor's role, Diane! For more information about editing or hiring Diane for her skills, please email her [here](#).

# RETURNING THE FAVOR

## a column by author Susan Pohlman

Join us here each month as award-winning author Susan Pohlman reveals the hard-won path that led to the successful debut of her memoir, *Halfway to Each Other*.

### PART 4: WORKING WITH AN EDITOR

When my agent broke the news to me that she felt I should work with an editor to rewrite my manuscript, I was fearful. I was afraid of the cost and afraid that the manuscript would take on the voice of the editor. Luckily, both of these fears proved to be unfounded as the work continued.

After interviewing a few editors over the phone, I chose Anita Bartholomew, a former editor with Reader's Digest. Professional and direct, I liked Anita right away. We set up a per-hour fee so I could assess the process as we went along.

Anita took me through an intensive rewrite that often left me dismayed and exhausted. She cut the material deeply, suggested scene additions, and pointed out inconsistencies. I bid farewell to

some favorite words, combined long chapters into short ones, and wracked my brain for rich detail to bring the pages alive.

Like Michelangelo slowly chipping away at priceless Carrera marble, the story's shape finally emerged. Its features sharpened in a way I would have had difficulty producing on my own.

In the end, I understood the value of hiring a professional editor. Sometimes we are just too close to our own material to see the work clearly.

Coming in April: After months of hard work, the manuscript was ready to be presented to publishers, but would it sell?

Watch the story behind Susan's inspiration for her latest memoir in this clip from her guest appearance on [The Harvest Show](#) last month.

Visit Susan at her [website](#) anytime to see what she's up to next!

Susan's award-winning memoir, *Halfway to Each Other*, is [available in bookstores now!](#)



# \*BECOME A BETTER WRITER\*

Award-winning freelance writer Windy Lynn Harris will be giving a free seminar Monday, March 16th, 6:30 to 8:30 pm at the Glendale Foothills library. The topic is "Six Steps to Publishing Success" and will cover all you need to know to see your poetry, essays, and short stories published. Details [here](#).

Creative Writing classes are offered on alternating Thursdays at the Scottsdale Civic Center Main Library. The next class is on March 11th, 6 to 7:30, featuring mystery author Betty Webb--lots to learn and no cost too! Rudri, Kathie, and Trish plan to attend.

The "Write Stuff" workshop (Scottsdale Society of Women Writers) offered April 10th from 10 to 3 p.m. Cost is \$40 RSVP [here](#).

Phoenix College's popular seminar "Microburst" is scheduled for Saturday, April 17th, 9 to 12:30. Cost is \$20. Details [here](#).

Desert Dweller short story contest: [www.sirenofsuspense.com](http://www.sirenofsuspense.com)

Gemini Magazine fiction, poetry, and essay contests: <http://www.gemini-magazine.com/>

## \*COMMUNITY NEWS\*

[The National League of American Pen Women](#) will be wrapping up their monthly meetings this May. The League promotes and conducts literary, educational, and charitable activities in the fields of Letters, Art, and Music. Interested in coming to a meeting before the season is over? You are invited! Contact League member [Windy Lynn Harris](#).

[The Arizona Consortium for the Arts](#) unites, advances, collaborates, partners, and supports individuals and organizations in all aspects of arts, performing arts, literary arts and culture in Arizona. Visit their website for information about *The Blue Guitar Magazine* and how to become a free consortium member.



# \*THANK YOU\*

## Dog-Eared Pages Used Books



A huge THANK YOU goes out to [Dog Eared Pages Bookstore](#) in Phoenix. Dynamic writers/owners Melanie and Thom have welcomed Wise Women Write groups to meet in their lovely store. Visit Dog-Eared Pages to buy, sell, and trade new and used books.

# \*WRITER'S RESOURCE\*

DO YOU WRITE ESSAYS, SHORT STORIES, OR POEMS? WANT TO GET PUBLISHED?

## **MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSION COACH AVAILABLE FOR HIRE**

Award-winning freelance writer Windy Lynn Harris will teach you:

- \*Where to find thousands of markets for your work
- \*How to find the right editor for each piece
- \*How to format your manuscript for submission
- \*How to write winning query letters

There is no magic wand needed to get your creative writing published, only a professional attitude toward the publishing industry and endless determination. Show editors that you deserve to be taken seriously as a writer by professionally presenting them your best work. When you submit an edited piece of writing and an interesting query letter to the right editor, you open the door to success.

Get the information and the confidence you need to submit your work today!

**4-Week Coaching Session - \$100**

Visit [www.windylynnharris.com](http://www.windylynnharris.com) for more information.