

WISE WOMEN WRITE™

Summer 2010

Local author and Wise Woman Write founder Diane Amento Owens brings women together to write, share, and grow.



Writing Your Reinvention by author Diane Amento Owens

Last month I attended *More Magazine's* Reinvention Convention in Chicago, hoping for some transformative ideas on aging as I approach my 60th birthday. The event turned out to be more like a writing convention. As in, take your story and turn it into a book. Of course, it helps getting said book published if you are a woman in the public eye.

Many inspiring women spoke: Dara Torres, Lee Woodruff, Kris Carlson, Dana Delaney, Jenny Sandford, Nancy Brinker—just a few of the presenters at the daylong event. My biggest challenge was deciding who to listen to and who to miss. Mostly I opted for inspirational in lieu of financial and sagging skincare sessions. Admittedly, both my finances and skin sag, but because of the work I do with Wise Women Write, I opted for the presentations of those women who would boost my spirit.

Lee Woodruff set the tone when she said that writing, something she'd always done, was her response to her husband-newsman Bob Woodruff's traumatic brain injury because, she said, "Writing is therapy." She's now two books past that trauma.

My biggest realization was that many of the women had been invited to speak because they had survived and written about a trauma. Writing helped them get through the bad stuff. In Kris Carlson's case, the sudden loss of "Small Stuff" author-husband Richard Carlson was very bad stuff. Jenny Sandford, whose governor husband went missing in Argentina with his mistress, realized that writing a book would help her not only survive but thrive.

Before I attended the convention, I wouldn't have considered writing as a reinvention tool. Certainly Lee Woodruff, Kris Carlson and Jenny Sandford used it that way. As published authors, writing transformed their lives as well as the lives of their readers. A transformative example is found in Kris Carlson's wise words from *Heart-Broken Open*: "When we open to the moment, every day holds surprise—the incoherence of sorrow, perhaps, but also the appearance of joy. Each day I tried to remain an empty cup waiting to be filled."

The women I meet in Wise Women Write usually don't share "evening news" stories like Lee Woodruff, Jenny Sandford and Kris Carlson share in their books. Yet our ordinary stories are all extraordinary. And they're even more extraordinary when we share them in a group of supportive women. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "The invariable mark of wisdom is to see the miraculous in the ordinary." Our stories are all miraculous statements of who we are and where we've been. When we write and tell each other our stories, miraculous things happen.

Yes, indeed, wise women write. -Diane

For more information on the books Diane mentions, check out her [blog](#).

GREAT NEWS TO SHARE



Award-winning author **Susan Pohlman** has done it again: Her memoir *Halfway to Each Other* earned two places in the 2010 Next Generation Indie Book Awards. She was the finalist in the Memoir category and took the top prize in the Relationship category. You can read the full list of winners [here](#).

Multi-published poet Lauren Dixon has eight more poems coming out this month, all published in the summer edition of *The Blue Guitar Magazine*.



Windy Lynn Harris' short story, "The Closet," earned second place and a cash prize in the annual Abilene Writers Guild writing contest.

Betsy McPhee's story, "A Watch of My Own," will be published in the November edition of *Patchwork Path: Treasure Box*.



Returning the Favor

by author Susan Pohlman

Join us here each month where award-winning author Susan Pohlman reveals her path to publishing success!

Part Six: They ALL Passed on the Manuscript

I sat in my office reading publishers' notes well past midnight, the desk lamp throwing angled shadows across the walls.

"Needed more emotion."

"Wasn't completely drawn into the writing."

"...the heart could be there..."

I knew that the acquisitions editors would be a tough bunch, but I did not know that they possessed magic reading glasses. Not only could they read the words I had written, they could read the ones that I had not.

This is when I realized that writing is an act of courage. To tell a story you must be willing to

open your heart and surrender its contents to the page, tears and all. Of course there was more to tell, but was I willing?

Faith and family are deeply personal subjects, and memoir is a tricky animal. It is vital to respect others' privacy in the process. To stand just this side of the fine line where one's story ends and another's begins.

After working on the manuscript for years, I could hardly see myself walking away, but I knew that it would not be an easy fix. I was looking at months of more hard work. It made me physically ill.

Two weeks and much soul searching later, I sat down with page one and began to delicately layer in the truth. It felt good. It felt real. If this one didn't sell, then the story was not meant for the world.

Suddenly, I was okay with that. -Susan

More great news: Susan's memoir *Halfway to Each Other* will be released in Russia this year, followed by the U.S. release of the paperback edition in October.

2010 Next
Generation
Indie Book
Award
Winner!



MORE GREAT NEWS



Trish Dolasinski, Ed.D. is now a feature writer for the monthly Blessed Sacrament Sunday Bulletin, writing about social justice needs globally and at home.



Maryann McCullough's short story, "The Day I Prayed Out Loud," earned Honorable Mention in the recent Desert Dwellers Writing Contest.

Coming Soon! Jennifer Fabiano's first book, *Savor the Love*, will be published later this summer. Details to follow.



Spinning a Good Yarn

a book review by Trish Dolasinski, Ed. D.

This month's book:

***A PRIMER FOR BEGINNING
AUTHORS: WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW
THAT YOU DON'T KNOW***

author: Kris Tualla

"Trying to get published is not the place to build self-esteem . . . if you can't handle the criticism, quit now," said Kris Tualla, author of *A Primer for Beginning Authors*. She goes on to suggest that famous best-selling authors are more often than not rejected dozens of times and for many years. (Janet Evanovich was turned down for ten years before getting published. Now she travels with an entourage.)

Tualla suggests making your writing time your *work* time; if you don't take the task seriously, no one else will either. Also, Tualla says to write, write, write—get the story down on paper. Don't take time to rewrite in the beginning. Just get the words out. Additionally, determine the genre of your writing. Join a novel writer's group with those of similar genre interest and writing focus. Google is a great resource for that.

"As an author, how you keep from disappearing down the rabbit hole of information," said Tualla, "is critical." Plot is first and foremost. As much as you are fascinated with a perspective, an era, and/or background details, save the "info dumps," and tell the story. Keep the **GMC** (not a four-wheeled vehicle) in mind. This includes a main character with **goals** (what does she/he want to accomplish?), **motivations** (why is it necessary to accomplish the goals?), and **conflicts** (what stops her/him from achieving their goals?). Lastly we must see **character arcs**, the transformation of the principal characters as they move through the storyline.

Of course, she addresses the dreaded use of passive voice (no "was...ings"; or, "had...ed"), in addition to chapter and full novel word lengths, genre-related writers' groups, conferences, and Web sites to support her recommendations for ongoing learning experiences. She also talks about revisions and re-readings.

Remember, she says, if your readers don't *get it*, "It's not their problem, it is yours—fix it!" This 95-page read is a gold mine, dear friends. -Trish

You can order a copy today at the Dog Eared Pages Used Book Store
www.dogearredpagesusedbookstore.com

Be sure to stop by the cozy corner of [Trish's journal writing page](#) and become inspired to Spin a Good Yarn.

Join the conversation by leaving Trish a comment!



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Diane invites you all to a special Wise Women Write tour of the Sojourner Center this fall. Did you know that one in three women in Arizona will be a victim of domestic violence? Would you like to get involved in even a small way? The women at Sojourner Center need spiral notebooks and pens as they journey to new lives. Please [email Diane](#) if you are interested in touring or donating notebooks and pens to the Center.



Welcome new Wise Women member Mary Holden! Mary is a freelance writer and professional editor. She will be working on her latest project, a novel, with the Wise Women Write Books team. Pop over to her [Web site](#) and say HELLO!

GET PUBLISHED!

Do you want to get those short stories, essays, and poems off your desk and into the arms of a viable magazine editor? Don't know where to begin? Check out Windy Lynn Harris' "Submission Coaching" classes [here](#). Only a few spots left in the summer session. Reserve your spot today!



The Arizona Consortium for the Arts is now a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit charitable organization. The consortium provides support for Arizona artists as well as fostering free access to the arts for the general public. They provide information, host cultural performing arts and arts events, and offer networking through their [Web site](#). Membership is free. Join today!