

Pen In Hand

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Submission Deadlines

Submissions should reach the editor by the **fifteenth of the month**. Please send your comments, ideas, and submissions to PO Box 142, Annapolis, MD 21404 or batonblue@yahoo.com.

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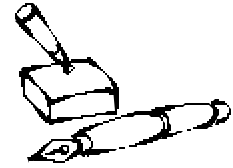
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From the President



Hello, fellow members!

Summer's here, and the time is right for...preparing a manuscript for the Maryland Writers Association writing contests. Every year, the MWA novel contest and short works contest draw entries from all over the country and a few foreign nations as well. We award cash prizes and certificates in several categories. First prize awards in one of our contests has been the first step toward publish success for several authors. You could be next. The short works contest winners will be announced at our annual conference in May and the novel contest winners will be announced at our June meeting. It's not too soon to start polishing that short story, essay or novel.

I believe that the selection of judges is the most crucial factor in our contests having the level of credibility they have attained. Entrants have often said that the critiques they received from the contests were really the most valuable prizes. Selecting great judges and coordinating the entries is the job of the two contest coordinators. And that may be where you can help your association this year.

After several years of coordinating the novel contest, CJ Cooper is stepping away from that responsibility. Ms. Cooper has recently had a spy thriller accepted for publication and will be spending much of her time promoting her book when it is released. Last year's short works coordinator, Sonia Linebaugh, is now MWA vice

president. Between that and teaching a writing class at Anne Arundel Community College, Sonia's free time is in danger of disappearing entirely. Therefore, we need volunteers willing to take on these very important, almost-year-long duties.

Both these ladies will be happy to help their replacements. So, if you have good administrative skills, can work with a group of judges and are not shy about expressing an opinion, you may be the person we need. Interested people should e-mail through our web site (www.marylandwriters.org) for a more complete explanation of what's involved.

Good luck and keep writing!
Austin

Baltimore Book Festival Reminder

Baltimore Book Festival

September 29 - October 1, 2006
Friday, 5:00 - 9:00 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday, 11:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.
Mount Vernon Place
600 Block North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD
www.baltimorebookfestival.com

If you would like to help out at the MWA booth—either answering questions or selling books—please contact Scott Morrow at scottdmorrow@hotmail.com or 410-

To receive only the electronic version
319-9487 Pen In Hand, email
ePIH@comcast.net

Are You an MWA Contest Winner?

Please Submit Your Winning Material To MWA's First Ever Publication of Writers

MWA always strives to help members make contacts that lead to publication and encourage writers to reach their full potential. In light of that portion of our mission, we are looking to collect the very best of our members' work and publish it in an anthology. This anthology will be a professional publication available through Amazon.com, selected local bookstores, and of course, from the Association itself.

We are now accepting submissions for an anthology of poems, fiction, memoirs, and essays written by MWA members. We will also consider broader editorials about literature, literary culture, education, and writing. We are open to genres that are explored creatively and intelligently. As with all submissions, we're looking for:

- * a compelling, focused, sustained narrative that is well-structured,
 - * makes sense and conveys meaning
- traditional and non-traditional poetry that has an effective use of line

breaks and exhibits an economy of language

- * well-written prose, rich with detail and a distinctive voice

Submission Deadline: December 31, 2006.

Guidelines

1. All materials must be submitted electronically attached as a single Microsoft Word document. If you are submitting more than one short story or poem, please include them in one attached document, clearly titled.
2. PLEASE DO NOT send your submission written in the body of an e-mail.
3. Name the attached document with your first and last name: (Ex. JaneDoe.doc).
4. At the top of your submission, please include your:
 - a. Full Name
 - b. E-mail address

c. Titles of the submissions (genre for each)

5. A brief bio (approx. 70 words) that may be used if your work is chosen for publication.
6. Please be sure to correct all spelling/grammatical errors before submission. Manuscripts with excessive errors will be discarded.
7. Simultaneous submissions are permissible, but if your piece has been accepted by another publication while we are considering it for publication, please contact us.

All submitted work must be the author's own. Previously published work may be submitted provided it does not conflict with the original publisher's reprinting policy. Any work restricted by copyright will not be accepted.

Please email submissions to MWAEditor@aol.com today to make sure your work is included. More information on submissions is available through our website.

For the Great Writer Within Us All: Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest

A retired mechanical designer for the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory is the winner of the 24th running of the Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest. An international literary parody contest, the competition honors the memory (if not the reputation) of Victorian novelist Edward George Earl Bulwer-Lytton (1803-1873). The goal of the contest is the essence of simplicity: entrants are challenged to submit bad opening sentences to imaginary novels. Although best known for "The Last Days of Pompeii" (1834), which has been made into a movie three times, originating the expression "the pen is mightier than the sword," and phrases like "the great unwashed" and "pursuit of the almighty dollar," Bulwer-Lytton opened his novel Paul Clifford (1830) with the immortal words that the "Peanuts" beagle Snoopy plagiarized for years, "It was a dark and stormy night."

The contest began in 1982 as a quiet campus affair, attracting only three

submissions. This response being a thunderous success by academic standards, the contest went public the following year and ever since has annually attracted thousands of entries from all over the world.

While the Winner parodies hard-boiled detective fiction, the runner-up toys with perhaps the most famous piece of dialogue from Clint Eastwood's "Dirty Harry" movie. In keeping with the big-nitude and high seriousness of the Contest, the Grand Prize winner will receive a pittance. Other winners must content themselves with becoming household names.

Winner

Detective Bart Lasiter was in his office studying the light from his one small window falling on his super burrito when the door swung open to reveal a woman whose body said you've had your last burrito for a while, whose face said angels did exist, and whose

eyes said she could make you dig your own grave and lick the shovel clean.

*Jim Guigli
Carmichael, CA*

Runner-Up

"I know what you're thinking, punk," hissed Wordy Harry to his new editor, "you're thinking, 'Did he use six superfluous adjectives or only five?' - and to tell the truth, I forgot myself in all this excitement; but being as this is English, the most powerful language in the world, whose subtle nuances will blow your head clean off, you've got to ask yourself one question: 'Do I feel loquacious?' - well do you, punk?"

*Stuart Vasepuru
Edinburgh, Scotland*

Reprinted with permission from Scott Rice. You can find more information about the contest and winning entries at <http://www.bulwer-lytton.com>.

Website Ideas for Writers: Part 1—Your Domains

Ginny Stibolt

For many reasons, writers are often on their own when designing a savvy plan for their websites and other online marketing. There are some obstacles to overcome: 1) technophobia, 2) lack of funds, and 3) limited time. What I'll try to accomplish with this series of articles is to strip away some of the mystery.

Let's start with some self-defense vocabulary:

A domain or URL (Uniform Resource Locator) is a unique address on the World Wide Web. The complete address of a website might be: <http://www.yourdomain.com>. One way to find the website connected with the domain is to type the address in your web browser.

The *http://* part of the address indicates that the resource at this address is a website—quite often your browser understands this part, and you don't have to type it in. The *www.* part means that this resource is on the World Wide Web. The last part is the domain name.

Take control of your domains

No matter what your situation is, you need to buy or take control of your own domains. Do NOT delegate this task. It's easy to do, and then, you are the master of your internet address. This is your name or your

book's title. No one else will care as much about it as you do. You don't want someone else holding your internet address hostage. Domain disputes can take months to settle.

I know one case where an author's domain was forwarded to a real estate company in his town after a dispute with his web designer. It took three months of wrangling before he could gain control over it. I also know of a book publicity person whose personal website was not only out of date, but the web designer had put a drop-dead date in the code of April 1, 2003, so it didn't appear in the search engine results. When I contacted her in 2006, she said the web designer had died the year before, and she didn't know what to do about the old site. Hmm...and this person is a so-called expert in book publicity?

A domain should not cost more than \$10 per year. There are several good companies that sell domain names, but I recommend www.godaddy.com for their good prices and their great support.

Domain names should be simple – no tricky spelling or abbreviations. You should buy your name and pseudonyms with *.com* ending if possible. Even if you have your author information on a group site like

www.authorsden.com or a free site, you can forward your domain to that page. This way you can advertise www.maryqsmith.com on your bookmarks and business cards instead of ww.geocities.com/~authors/s/maryqsmith. It's just too hard to remember, and later, when you move to your own site, people will still have the correct address.

You may buy more than one domain and forward each of them to land on various pages within your site. You could purchase the title of your book www.nameofyourbook.com, which would forward to a page on your site about that book. You may wish to place your book's domain on the cover, but if you do, make sure that someone who already owns your book will find something interesting on that page.

Next time, we'll talk about developing an appropriate focus for your website. Until then, spend some time looking at other writers' sites and make a list of what you like or dislike about them. Let me know if you have a question by emailing gstibolt@sky-bolt.com.

Ginny Stibolt has a mission to help authors maximize their web presence through practical design and innovative marketing. She's been known to contact perfect strangers with ideas for their webpages. www.websiteideas4writers.com

July Board Meeting Summary

During the July 16 board meeting, the following issues were discussed:

- * The 2007 Novel and Short Works Contests need leaders! Anyone interested in coordinating either of these popular events, contact Austin Camacho at ascamacho@hotmail.com.

- * To save our president a long commute from work in DC to monthly meetings in Baltimore and then back home to Virginia, Vice President Sonia Linebaugh

and Secretary Cindy Gallagher have agreed to share "emcee" duties in Austin's stead.

- * Conference Coordinator Cathy Wiley is hard at work planning next year's conference. It looks like we're going to have a very special keynote speaker, so make room in your spring calendars!

- * Membership Director Pam Moats reports a total membership of 412, 11 of which are new members.

- * Upcoming monthly meeting speakers include Steve Lubs, who will speak

at the September meeting on "Non-Linear Writing." Our semi-annual Poetry Cafe is slated for October.

- * Festivals: all members are invited to sell their books at the MWA booth at the Baltimore Book Festival on Friday, September 29, through Sunday, October 1, and at the Laurel Riverfest on Saturday, October 14, in Laurel, Maryland. For more information on these events, contact Scott Morrow or Cindy Gallagher.

Upcoming Events

Second Wednesday of each month
7:30-9:30 p.m.
Chesapeake Arts Center
annex building

Monthly Meetings—Each meeting features a guest speaker from a writing-related field. Past speakers have included writers of mainstream fiction, romance, science fiction, historical fiction, poetry, plays, nonfiction books and articles, screenplays, advertising, and children's books. Accountants, editors, publishers, attorneys, agents, and computer experts have also addressed the group. MWA's relaxed, informal meetings give you the opportunity to ask questions of speakers, chat with MWA members, and share news and tips.

Meetings are free to members and first-time guests. Nonmembers who have already attended once are asked to pay \$5.00 at the door.

Wednesday, August 9, 7:30-9:30 p.m.
Chesapeake Arts Center
annex building

Maturing as a Writer **Under Frank McCourt**

Lauren Eisenberg Davis, a senior computer systems analyst at The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, was a creative writing student of Frank McCourt at Stuyvesant High School in New York. McCourt, the Pulitzer-winning author of *Angela's Ashes*, wrote about his own classroom experiences in his latest

memoir, *Teacher Man*. Ms. Davis will discuss how his tutelage helped shape her as a writer.

Lauren Eisenberg Davis is a serious hobby musician and author of a privately-published family history book, *Autumn Leaves*, and is currently working on her memoir. She served as research coordinator for the Kielce-Radom Special Interest Group Journal, a journal of Jewish genealogy. She has published numerous technical papers, one of which was presented at a NATO Symposium in France. She is active in her community through her synagogue and has three grown sons.