



EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT CONTESTS But Were Afraid to Ask

by Valerie Gawthrop

January rings in not only the New Year but new deadlines and opportunities. Such is a time for Tulsa NightWriters to polish their skills by entering contests.

Once upon a time, the club devoted the January meeting to going over winning strategies that always put our membership in the winner's circle on awards night at OWFI. Tulsa NightWriter Bob Spraker was the originator and first sponsor of the *crème de la crème* award, and this honor was claimed by NightWriters for many consecutive years. By reinstating this New Year tradition, maybe we can reclaim our reputation as the club to beat.

Our membership is filled with talented writers who have won, chaired, and judged many contests, and they will share their experience at our January meeting. Several contests other than OWFI also have approaching deadlines, and we will cover those at the meeting.

So bring your questions and join the January roundtable to make your contest entries everything they can be.

When: Tuesday, January 18 at 7:00 p.m.
Where: Martin Regional Library
2601 S. Garnett Rd., Tulsa

The Prez Sez by Bob Avey



When asked today—actually it was yesterday, but I didn't check my email until today, make that tonight, January 4, 2011—if I'd forgotten about the president's column for the newsletter, I was left with no other excuse than to answer in the affirmative.

At the moment, I can totally empathize with Harper Lee, of *To Kill a Mockingbird* fame, who, when asked why she'd written no more books, replied, "I've nothing else to say." I don't know if she actually uttered those words or not, but the phrase perfectly describes my current state of mind.

I'll add "Learn to be president of the Tulsa NightWriters" to my list of resolutions. I'll rank it right up there with "Finish my third book." Wasn't that one of my resolutions last year?

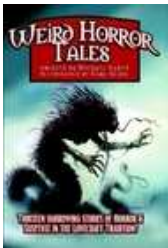
In many ways, it's a new year and a new beginning for everyone.

Let's get started!

Our members have brags



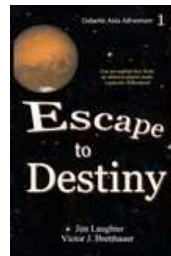
JP Jones will be speaking at a marketing and promotion conference being held in Branson, MO, on January 22. Also included will be Leon Metzger, named four years in a row as one of the top resources for authors. Attendees will have the opportunity to speak one-on-one with Metzger and other speakers about marketing and promotion specific to that writer's work. A similar, sold-out conference was held in Tulsa in August. Early bird registration is \$59 until January 15. Read more about it at www.lifeafterpublishing.com.



Michael Vance will sign the first two books of his *Weird Horror* trilogy, *Weird Horror Tales* and *Weird Horror Tales: The Feasting*, on Saturday, January 29, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Starbase 21, which is located on the northeast corner of 51st and Memorial in Tulsa. Both books are now available at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and other bookstores. Michael says the best price is from Cornerstone Book Publishers at www.gopulp.info/.



Barbara Howell's book, *Splinters: The Pain, The Passion, The Point*, was featured in the December issue of GD USA, a "Best of the Best" graphic design annual that comes out each year. The 2010 American Graphic Design Awards edition of GD USA featured a brand-new books category.



Volume 3 of **Jim Laughter's** *Galactic Axia* youth adventure series, *Space Trader*, was recently released, and volume one, *Escape to Destiny*, has been re-released with a new cover. Along with *The Horicon Experience*, *Ghost in the Dark*, and *From Victim to Hero--The Untold Story of Steven Stayner*, Jim's two latest books are available in paperback, eBook, and Kindle formats. In addition, the author is anticipating publication of his first murder mystery, *The Apostle Murders*. All current releases are available at www.jimlaughter.com, which also features an excerpt of *The Apostle Murders*. Additionally, Jim wishes to thank Tulsa NightWriters for their help and encouragement during 2010.

TNW Teaches Class



Charles Sasser will be teaching two writing classes at TCC, both of which begin in January:

"WANT TO BE A WRITER" at the TCC Metro campus, starting Wednesday, January 19th, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

"MYSTERY, SUSPENSE, SCI-FI" at the TCC Southeast campus, starting Monday, January 24th, 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Warm Up Contest Winners

There were 12 entries in this year's Warm Up Contest, for a total of \$60 in prize money! The winners are: First Place (and \$30) to Mike Koch, "A Mother's Dream;" Second Place (and \$20) to Claudia Stumpf, "The Saga of Little Sid;" Third Place (and \$10) to Gloria Shirley, "Frozen Field;" and Honorable Mention to Joan Rhine, "Maximizing Skills."

Speaking of Contests

The deadline for entries for **OWFI's 2011 Contest** is February 1st! Winners will be announced on May 7, 2011 at the Awards Banquet at the 2011 "Write Now!" conference in Oklahoma City. Visit www.owfi.org/contest.cfm for details.

In the tradition of the Bulwer Lytton Contest and the Bad Hemingway and Bad Faulkner contests, BadAusten.com presents the "**Write Like Jane**" Contest. Enter to

win a First Prize of \$250, and have your entry featured in the upcoming book, *Bad Austen*. Deadline is March 1, 2011. Find the rules here: badausten.com/rules.

TNW Officers for 2011

The 2011 officers were installed at the Christmas party:

President **Bob Avey**

(bob@bobavey.com)

VP **Valerie Gawthrop**

(VicePresident@nightwriters.org)

Treasurer **Brad Smith**

(Treas@nightwriters.org)

Greeter **Joyce Ross**

Co-Editors **Carol Johnson**

and **Jane Green**

The outgoing officers, **Carla Stewart** and **Gloria Teague Shirley**, deserve our thanks and appreciation for their many, incredible contributions to TNW. Come to think of it, so do **Valerie**, **Brad**, and **Joyce**, who do a terrific job and have agreed to continue serving as officers!

Thank you all!

Writer's Digest 101 Best Websites

When you register for the *Writer's Digest* e-newsletter, you can download WD's 12th Annual 101 Best Websites for Writers. To register, go to www.writersdigest.com. Here are some examples from WD's "Everything Agents" category:

agentquery.com

Agent Query is a free, searchable database of agents. Before you query any agent, check out its extensive article on formatting tips.

guidetoliteraryagents.com/blog

The best online resource for Q&As with literary agents, as well as new agency alerts!

Goal Setting for Writers by Joan Rhine

It's a New Year! Time to set goals for the coming writing months. I do this every year as part of my business model, and am always amazed. No matter how far I think I've stretched my potential for the coming year, I not only make my monetary goal, but usually garner at least 2 ½ percent more! Writing it down is key. Putting the card with the goals into a small frame on my desk keeps it in sight. But actually, keeping my butt in the chair and producing the substance for those goals is what calls me a writer.

Writing goals takes perseverance and a small leap of faith, sure, but that's the best way to achieve. Some people have to share goals to keep them accountable. I have a fiction accountability partner who lives in SC, and between her and my daughter my fiction feet stay to the fire. On the nonfiction side, however, the threat of guilt-provoking emails from editors and clients is enough to keep me on-track. Use whatever resources you have.

I even do 3-year and 5-year plans to keep my ideas growing and keep checks coming. And while I make most of my business revenue on nonfiction, that doesn't mean fiction writers can't utilize this method as well. Use a goal chart to schedule future books and short story ideas, or conferences to attend. Once you get a book contract, your agent or editor will want to know what books you expect to have for future publication and what the anticipated completion date is, so this extended goal chart will give the answers you need.

Whether you write fiction or nonfiction, you must find markets, and you have to schedule timeframes to fit deadlines (yes, you need to set deadlines for yourself—even if you're still pre-pubbed). Get things out

there; get a buzz going; get referrals from people who know your work and want to help.

Look for a new market each month—or even each week. Most agents and editors prefer electronic submissions now, but get a couple of submission packets copied and ready to mail out for those who prefer paper.

Join a critique group. There's nothing like having to produce regularly for a group to make you write and polish your prose. And do polish before taking it to group—this is your chance to get good information from people; don't handicapped them so they have to work through things you would have caught yourself by reading it over once more.

Sign up for a local writer's class or an online one. One of the most surprising experiences I had was when my daughter took her Freshman Comp I class at TCC and I decided to do each assignment, too. I'd been freelancing for years, but was surprised at what I relearned from "taking" that course. After all, it had been thirty years since my freshman college days. Online courses offer even more options, and come from many venues. There are the pricey ones from Harvard, Stanford, and Writer's Digest University, of course, but there are many fairly reasonable ones that hit my email all the time from venues like PASIC, www.WritersUniversity.com, and Women on Writing (WOW). To check the latest offerings at WOW (and no, you don't have to be female to take their courses), go to <http://wow-womenonwriting.com/WOWclasses.html>.

But most of all, set goals to suit you, find a schedule that works, and revel in your creative brilliance for 2011.

Markets for 2011 by Joan Rhine

The TULSA KIDS MAGAZINE is looking for writers for their annual COLLEGE PLANNER supplement. Queries should be focused on stories providing families and teens information needed to get into college, and have a good experience while attending. This is a paying market, with compensation based on the size of the article written.

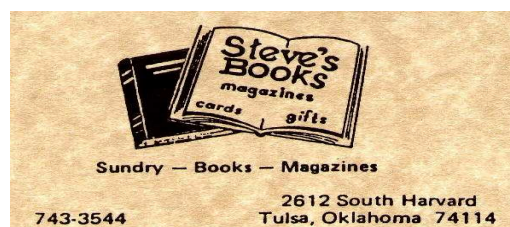
Interested writers (or anyone else interested in this information) can download a PDF version of last year's College Planner at <http://www.tulsakids.com/sites/default/files/College%20Planner%202009-WEB.pdf>. Anyone wanting to pitch articles can contact Joan Rhine by email at jmrhine@gmail.com or by phone at 341-2750. This is not limited to NightWriters, but Joan will work closer with club members who ask for additional help, and previous publication credits are not necessary.

THRIVING FAMILY focuses on marriage and parenting from a biblical perspective. Most articles address marriage and the needs of families with four to twelve-year-olds in the house. Pays 25 cents/word for columns and features. Check guidelines here: http://www.family.org/sharedassets/correspondence/pdfs/GeneralInformation/TF_Writers_Guidelines.pdf

ASTRAEA PRESS - E-PRESS will be launched in February 2011. 50% royalties on AstraeaPress.com site sales. Looking for any genre of romance or sub-genre of romance, young adult, fiction of all shapes and sizes. Not looking for erotica, gay, menage, fan fiction, poetry and non-fiction, manuscripts less than 15,000 words or more than 100,000 words, or anything you wouldn't let your Grandma Betty read.

<http://www.astraeapress.com/about-astraea.html>

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Carol Johnson introduces you to TNW Member Valerie Gawthrop



Valerie Gawthrop and I have a few things in common. For instance, we're both from Kansas. In 1969, we each apparently stood on our front porches, looked south, saw Tulsa, and said, "That looks nice. Think I'll go there." And so we did. We joined Tulsa NightWriters about the same time, Valerie a bit earlier than I. We entered and won writing contests. We benefitted from the expertise of Peggy Fielding and Bob Spraker. We worked together to facilitate one of the last TNW Bestsellers' seminars. We both returned to school in mid-life and accomplished the educational goals we set for ourselves. We're each about a cat away from being crazy cat ladies.

In one area, however, Valerie has few rivals, and certainly not me. One of her most prominent and enviable characteristics is her talent for putting up with people. Oh, I know. Some people call that "caring" for others. I guess you could put it that way. She was wife and sometimes caretaker for her husband, Don, for 25 years until his death in 2008. Her smiling face is one of the first seen by many visitors to TNW meetings. She doesn't have to be president (which she has been) or vice-president (an office she now holds), to make visitors and new members feel welcome.

In her current position interning at the Indian Healthcare Resources Center, caring is part of the job. She interacts with sick, tired people who are tired of being sick or sick of being tired, a state that's pretty high on the list of things that make people grumpy. If it were me, I'm pretty sure I'd give grump for grump, but for Valerie, caring for the sick and tired and grumpy seems to be a calling. Literally. She's recently completed training as a medical office administrator, a job that would test Mother Theresa from time to time.

So Valerie *is* caring. But she is also an excellent tolerator. Tolerant. Whatever. We should all probably be kind to the sick and tired because they have reason to be cranky. What about hungry people in a crowded restaurant with only an hour long lunch? Crankier than an out-of-gas Model T. And who do hungry, cranky people pick on? Wait staff. And yet, during her long tenure at the Green Onion Restaurant, I don't believe Valerie ever poured a pitcher of water in a customer's lap, no matter how deserving he or she might have been. Writers are annoying, too. Not only that, but we have to make sure everyone knows we're in a snit and why. Holding office in TNW often makes you a target for the snitty, but to Valerie's credit, I've never seen her hit anyone over the head with a chair, no matter how deserving he or she may have been.

Now, *that's* tolerance.