

WRITELINE

Norman Galaxy of Writers, P.O. Box 5581, Norman OK 73070 Vol. 44, No. 3 • March 8, 2025

“No tears in the writer, no
tears in the reader. No
surprise in the writer, no
surprise in the reader.”

—Robert Frost

MARCIA PRESTON



March 8, 2025, 10 a.m.-12 Noon
210 South James Garner Avenue, Norman, OK
(ZOOM Available)

Marcia Preston has been a high school teacher, freelance writer, magazine editor, and public relations director. Her third book in the Chantalene mystery series, *Speaking to the Unseen*, was released in 2024.

A previous title, *Song of the Bones*, won the Mary Higgins Clark Award for suspense fiction. She writes women's and literary fiction, as well as mysteries. She has eight traditionally published novels.

Marcia is a member of Sisters in Crime, Mystery Writers of America, and Tornado Alley Chapter of SinC. She's a past president and honorary life member of both Oklahoma City Writers and OWFI.

THE MISSION of Norman Galaxy of Writers is to provide a venue for published and non-published writers to develop and refine their writing skills through quality educational programs, mentoring, and networking with other professional writers.

MARCH PROGRAM

GALAXY MEETING MINUTES

The Well—210 S. James Garner Ave
February 8, 2025

1. President Mary Payne called the meeting to order and welcomed our guest, Cameron Richards. Those attending in person: Kaylee Gordon, Nikki Gragg, Melissa Hearn, Dan Snell, Letty Watt, Jenny Raney, Vickie Riggs, Lee Hester, Gwen Agiapal, Dale “Ravi” Hall, Mary Spaulding, Judy Nystrom, Bob Macfadzean, Carol Shearer, and Jim Nichols. Helen Duchon attended by Zoom.
 2. The minutes of the January 2025 meeting were approved with no corrections.
 3. The November and January 2025 Treasurer’s Reports were approved with no corrections.
 4. Announcements.
 - A. Galaxy dues became due on January 1, 2025.
 - B. Critique-a-Thon. We had a good group for our Critique-a-Thon on Jan. 25. Twelve people including Naveen’s daughter and Jackie Strange, a teacher from Moore, who helped Ilisha. The next Critique-a-Thon will be Sunday, March 30, from 1-3 p.m.
 - C. The Tornado Alley workshop is on March 22. Information to register is in the WriteLine.
 - D. Central Library. The library administration sent out an email this week asking for public input for a location to open a central library. The deadline for suggestions is February 15.
 5. Reports.
 - A. Program Chair—Mary Spaulding. Marcia Preston will be our speaker in March and Peggy Doviak in April.
 - B. Membership—Mary Spaulding. Barbara Shepherd has been ill. Helen Duchon has had an accident.
 - C. Write Line—Mary Payne. Remember to send brags and other submissions by the 26th of each month.
 6. Old Business. Deliberations on our website will be postponed.
 7. New Business. Contest: Melissa Hearn has volunteered to be the Contest Chair for 2025. A proposal was offered to raise the contest entry fee from \$2.00 to \$3.00. Bob Macfadzean made the motion we approve raising the fee to \$5.00. No objections were made. The new fee of \$5.00 per entry was approved by acclamation.
 8. Meeting adjourned. After a break, Mary Spaulding introduced our speaker, Kris Lackey.
- Respectfully Submitted, Jim Nichols, Secretary

FEBRUARY TREASURER'S REPORT **by Linda Basinger**

PREVIOUS BALANCE: \$
1,349.06

INCOME

Kris Lackey, 2025 Dues	25.00
Vickie Riggs, 2025 Dues	25.00
Mark Robinson, 2025 Dues	25.00
Raney, Donation	15.00

TOTAL INCOME **90.00**

SUB TOTAL \$
1,439.06

EXPENSES

Kris Lackey, Feb. Speaker, Ck #1694	25.00
Basinger, Reimbursement for Renewal of Galaxy URL	22.17

TOTAL EXPENSES **47.17**

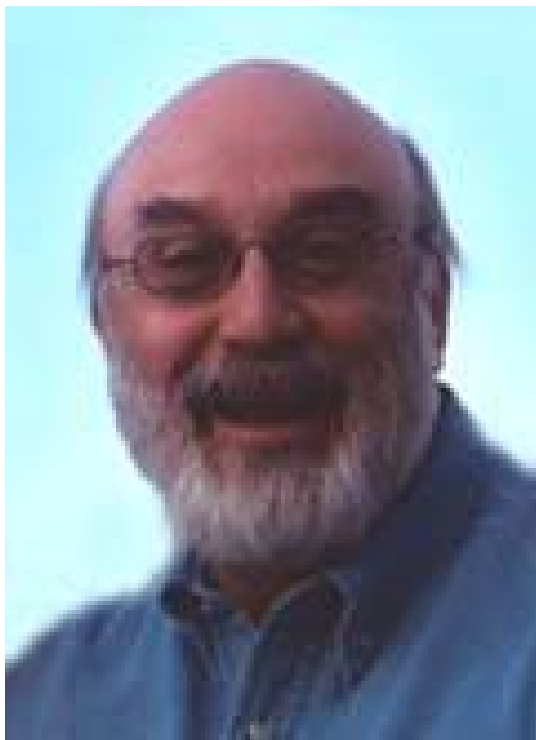
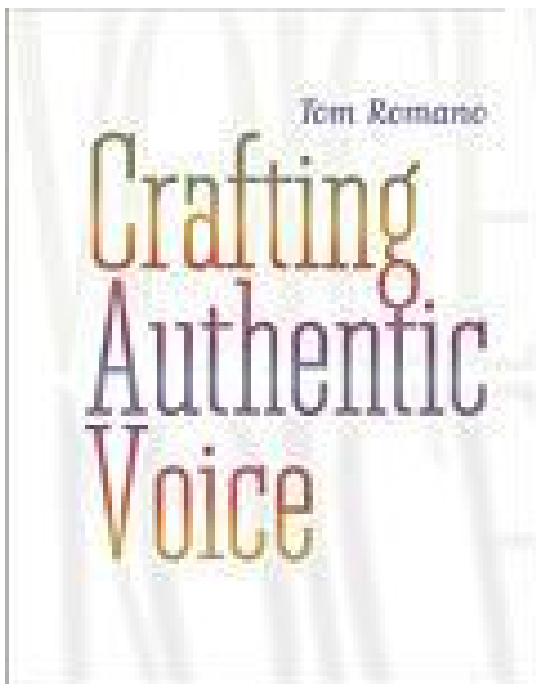
CURRENT BALANCE \$
1,391.89

Membership Dues!

Galaxy dues for the membership year 2025 are \$25 and they become due on **January 1, 2025.**

Mail dues to: Galaxy Treasurer, P. O. Box 5581, Norman, OK 73070.

If you have any questions, please contact Treasurer Linda Basinger at beammeuptoo@icloud.com



Tom Romano

The Write Line deadline for the April issue is March 26, 2025. Please send Mary Payne any pictures, brags, columns, articles, puzzles, and what-not to her email address, marpayne@netscape.com before that time. Also, if you are changing your email address, please notify her, so you won't miss a single issue.

THE WRITER'S BOOKCASE

CRAFTING AUTHENTIC VOICE

By Tom Romano

Tom Romano has been teaching teachers how to teach writing for over 30 years at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. All of his books exhibit his unique voice, explaining the nuts and bolts of writing for students, both old and young. He is clear, concise, and he tells great stories. He wrote in his class syllabus "I'm a little crazy...(about) class attendance...I become agitated. I don't exactly break out in hives, but I am personally affronted." Even his syllabus has voice!

Romano writes that voice is the writer's presence on the page—the sense that another person has actually written what we are reading. It's sometimes called juice, stance, embrace, or web. He uses quotes from things his students have written to highlight his points. [He said at the beginning of each semester he passes out index cards and asks the students to write down a person in their life who is not likely to move. He must have had a premonition that he'd need to contact students for their permission to use quotes from their work for his books!]

Crafting Authentic Voice is so much more than just a voice. But then, maybe voice is everything in our writing. He suggests writing from a place of passion and "trusting the gush." That's the first draft. Then we go back and craft the voice we want the reader to hear and to "weed the garden," taking out all extraneous words and information.

One of his most useful suggestions centers around "placement and payoff." He says authors should decide what is the most important word of a sentence or a paragraph—and put that last. He quotes Anne Lamott about an interview she had with a monk when she wanted to know the name of the wire thing on top of a champagne bottle. "That would be the *wire hood*." Note: it's the end of the sentence!

Another of Romano's maxims is to use verbs with muscle. Cut out is, are, were, etc. and use words like riddle, bedazzle, vanish, bumfuzzle and other unique words.

The author also goes to great lengths to write a paragraph and then edit the same paragraph, so readers can see the difference and how just one or two changes can make the words shine.

If you're looking for a book to up your writing game, you can't go wrong with *Crafting Authentic Voice*. It's one of my favorites. Kudos to Tom Romano!
—Review by Mary Payne

“The scariest moment is always just before you start.”
— Stephen King

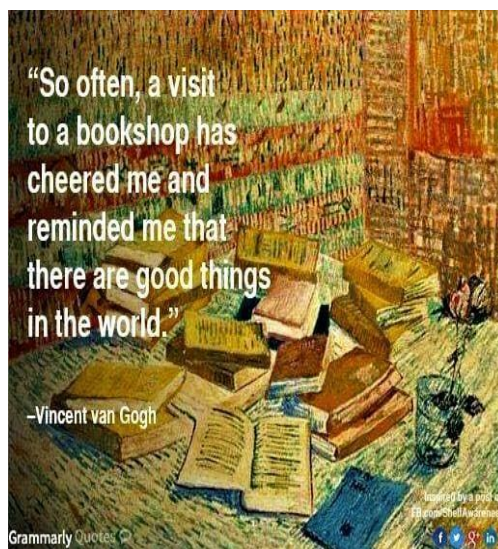
BRAGS:

LISBETH MCCARTY has worked hard to restore our website's address. Cyberspace critters had changed the Galaxy address to something about blogspot. It's now fixed and that's a feather in Lisbeth's cap. Our address:
<https://www.normangalaxyofwriters.com>. YAY!
SANDRA DARK has moved to Auburn, New York, to research her upcoming who-dun-it novel. This next week she will move to Brattleboro, Vermont, to continue her exploration. Congratulations to her for acting on her adventurous spirit!

NAVEEN KUMAR/CHAWLA was featured in a *Norman Transcript* article (2/13/2025) about the hidden dangers of embedded bias in AI and the lack of oversight. Congratulations, Naveen!

HANK PHILLIPPI RYAN, Tornado Alley's keynote speaker on 3/22, will have a book signing at Full Circle Books (OKC) at 7 p.m. on Mar 21.

SAD NEWS. Carol Shearer's husband, Michael Rory Shearer, passed away January 11, 2025. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Carol and her family.



OWFI 2025 WRITING
CONFERENCE
'CONJURING THE MYSTERIES OF
WRITING'
May 1-3, 2025
Embassy Suites
1815 S. Meridian Ave., Oklahoma
City
For more info: <https://www.owfi.org>, then click
on "events."
Early-bird pricing expires March 15.

Answers to Lisbeth's Puzzle on page 6:

- 1) yummy, yucky; 2) algebra; 3) endnote; 4) gushing; 5) kinfolk;
- 6) lateral; 7) newborn; 8) twinjet; 9) grinning; 10) recliner; 11) tenement; 12) transplant; 13) abracadabra; 14) deprogrammed; 15) seasickness; 16) aroma; 17) diamond; 18) window; 19) madam; 20) Alaska.

NORMAN GALAXY OF WRITERS' CRITIQUE-A-THON

**Sunday, March 30, 2025
1 – 3 p.m.**

**Norman West Library, 300 Center Ct.
(the old Borders' bookstore)
Bring 5 copies of up to 8 pages of your
manuscript.**

**We'll beta read each other's work and you'll
get immediate feedback! Come join us. We'd
love to have you.**



KRIS LACKEY

**FEBRUARY SPEAKER
NOTES — 2/8/25
by Jennie Raney
“Kris Lackey”**

Norman Galaxy of Writer's February meeting featured local author Kris Lackey, who regaled the club with the circumstances surrounding the optioning of his

Chickasaw Nation mystery series to a major Hollywood studio. It all started when Lackey learned about the Chickasaw Lighthorse Police. Intrigued by the idea of tribal detectives, Lackey researched all that he could find about the Chickasaw language, culture, and history—always aided by tribal members. Combining this research with beloved characters from his past, he created the Native American crime solvers, County Deputy Hannah Bond and Policeman Bill Maytubby. Over the years, Lackey's books have captured a worldwide readership, as well as the attention of filmmaker Steven Paul Judd, who just happened to overhear Kris describing his stories to a friend over lunch at the Paseo!

Judd, a well-known screen writer of both Choctaw and Kiowa ancestry, offered Lackey a one-dollar shopping contract for the right to shop, or pitch, the Light-horse series to various studios. Three studios were interested in the idea. Judd believed Universal would be the most likely candidate to develop Lackey's stories into a television series and went with them.

After Universal Studios expressed interest in Judd's “Lighthorse” project, Judd and his writing partner entered into a contract with Lackey. In it, Lackey received thousands of dollars for the right to make his books into a television series over the course of an eighteen-month period.

Although Lackey already had a book agent at this time, he was forced to obtain a second book agent with the connections and know-how necessary to navigate option contracts. These specialized agents receive all the monies from the studios, take their small percentage off the top, and file the necessary paperwork and taxes on their client's behalf. Lackey says that “they act as a funnel.” However, even after all this work (writing, pitches, screenplay adaptations, and agent's negotiations) there is still only a ten percent chance that the “Lighthorse” series will be greenlighted for production.

Under the terms of his ‘right to option’ contract, Lackey can't work as a writer on the project, but he will serve as a story consultant. It's the screenwriters who will transform Lackey's books into a television pilot, which

may or may not advance towards production. Lackey, however, is not concerned with being part of that process. He says that you have to leave screenwriting to the professionals. Screenwriting's a different art form from a novel. "You have to be prepared to let things go." We at Galaxy wish to thank Lackey for all the information he shared with the group and, most importantly, we hope he gets a greenlight for the "Lighthouse" television pilot.



HERE'S A LIST OF SOME OF THE WRITING CLASSES offered by the University of Oklahoma's Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication

<https://ou-public.courseleaf.com/courses/jmc/>

Anyone age 65+ may audit a course for free if there is room and if they have permission from the instructor. Younger people who audit must pay for the classes. The forms for each are available from Enrollment Services, 1000 Asp Avenue, Buchanan Hall, Room 230. Administrative Assistant Debbie Blevins will walk you through the process.

JMC 0123. Fundamentals of Writing for the Media. 3 Credit Hours.

JMC 1013. Introduction to Media. 3 Credit Hours.

JMC 2033. Media Writing & Storytelling. 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: 1013 or concurrent enrollment; passage of the school's writing skills test, and permission of instructor.

JMC 3003. Multimedia Journalism. 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: 2033.

JMC 3023. Feature Writing. 3 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: 2033 and 3003.

JMC 3504. Introduction to Professional Writing. 4 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: [JMC 1013](#), [JMC 2033](#), [JMC 3011](#) or concurrent enrollment in [JMC 3011](#), and instructor permission.

JMC 4493. Social Media Strategies. 3 Credit Hours. (Slashlisted with [JMC 5493](#)) Prerequisite: Permission of Instructor; [JMC 1013](#), [JMC 2033](#), and [JMC 3413](#).

JMC 4514. Writing the Novel. 4 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: 1013, 2033, 3504 and 3514; or permission.

JMC 4524. Writing the Short Story. 4 Credit Hours. (Slashlisted with [JMC 5524](#)) Prerequisite: majors only; [JMC 1013](#), [JMC 2033](#), [JMC 3504](#) and permission of instructor or department.

JMC 4533. Mystery Writing. 3 Credit Hours. (Slashlisted with [JMC 5533](#)) Prerequisite: [JMC 3504](#).

JMC 4543. Sci-Fi & Fantasy Writing. 3 Credit Hours. (Slashlisted with [JMC 5543](#)) Prerequisite: [JMC 3504](#).

JMC 4563. Category Fiction. 3 Credit Hours. (Slashlisted with 5563) Prerequisite: 3504 and 3514, or permission of instructor.

JMC 4573. Theories of Professional Writing. 3 Credit Hours. (Slashlisted with [JMC 5573](#)) Prerequisite: majors only; [JMC 3504](#). **JMC 4573. Theories of Professional Writing. 3 Credit Hours.** (Slashlisted with [JMC 5573](#)) Prerequisite: Junior standing; [JMC 1013](#) and [JMC 2033](#) or permission of instructor.

JMC 5594. Writing the Commercial Nonfiction Book

JMC 4593. Young Adult Fiction Writing. 3 Credit Hours. (Slashlisted with [JMC 5593](#)) Prerequisite: [JMC 3504](#).

JMC 4723. Horror Writing. 3 Cok. 4 Credit Hours. Prerequisite: graduate standing and permission.

That's Puzzling by Lisbeth L. McCarty

(Free monthly newsletter at: at <https://lisbeth.substack.com>)

Fill the blank with a word that has the same first and last letter. (Answers on page 4)

1. Izzie's cooking does not taste _____. It tastes _____.
2. Regarding math, Marianne liked geometry, but she did not like _____.
3. Alicia preferred an _____ rather than a footnote.
4. The editor who loved Jerry's story was _____ over all the words.
5. Candy's family reunion was a place to see all of her _____ again.
6. Jalen threw a great _____ pass.
7. The _____ baby had colic.
8. The aircraft had a _____ engine.
9. Joseph was _____ from ear to ear.
10. When Jane watched TV, she liked to sit in her _____.
11. Anne lived in a _____ in NYC.
12. Ginger's health improved after she underwent a kidney _____.
13. A common magic term is _____.
14. After Lily left the cult, she needed to be _____.
15. On the cruise, Rhonda became dizzy when she suffered from _____.
16. When Charles bakes, the house is filled with a wonderful _____.
17. Phillip gave his fiancée a _____ ring.
18. Some people say eyes are the _____ to the soul.

19. One palindrome is, “_____, I’m Adam.”
20. We traveled to the U.S. state of _____ to see the Northern Lights.

**IN MEMORY OF LONGTIME MEMBER ANNE CHAMPEAU, HERE’S A
MARKETING ARTICLE SHE WROTE FOR THE WRITE LINE IN 1995.**

Although the article is old, the advice is still relevant for today.

Wanting something will rarely get it for you. Wanting something enough to do whatever’s required to get it often will. Suppose you want to write an article for a particular magazine. Do you have the potential to do that? Sure you do, but there’s some preliminary work to be done.

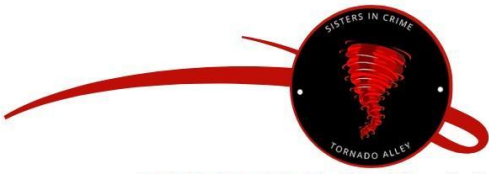
Send for a copy of the publication and the writer’s guidelines. Read the magazine thoroughly. Know which type of articles they use—which writing style they prefer. Become familiar with it by:

1. Reading the titles. Do certain words jump out at you, indicating the kinds of articles wanted?
2. Determining your chances of acceptance by the number of articles written by freelancer writers. (If the author’s names are not listed in the magazine’s masthead, they are freelance writers. Staff writers are listed.)
3. Counting the words in the articles and keeping within that number for their publication
4. Knowing who buys the magazine. Writers buy writers’ magazines. Sportspeople buy sports magazines. Young people buy certain ones, seniors buy certain ones, and children like magazines written for children.
5. Learning what kind of articles the editors want. Profile? Interview? Informational? Educational? Nostalgic? Personal Essay? How to? Humor? Travel?
6. Knowing the editor’s preferences for beginnings. Newspeg? Newspegs are birthdays of noted people, anniversaries of important events, familiar items in the news. Example: “One hundred years ago this month—” Statement of Purpose? This lead is when the writer tells immediately why he is writing the article. Summary? The writer summarizes what he is going to tell you. Striking Statement? A beginning intended to shock the reader into wanting to read the article. Anecdote? A one or two paragraph story that illustrates the theme of the article. Question? Quote? Statistics? Dialogue? Description? Description is used to make the reader aware of the mood of the article. This is used especially in travel articles.
7. Examining the subject presented in the articles. Are they intellectual, emotional, conversational, folksy, matter of fact, sarcastic, inspirational?
8. Looking at the advertising. What kind of reader is the advertising trying to reach? Woman, men, families, children, couples, seniors, working women, full-time homemakers, blue-collar men, executives, college students?

After answering these questions, you will know not to send folksy articles to magazines geared to intellectuals, or you will know how to slant your articles to the reader of the publication you’re submitting to. Aim to please the reader and you’ll please the editor.



A Great Big Beautiful Life by Emily Henry will be available for purchase on April 22, 2025. It’s the story of two authors who vie for the opportunity to write the biography of a famous heiress. One author is an optimist, the other a pessimist. It sounds like sparks will fly between the two of them. If this sounds interesting to you, check out Amazon, where you can read a more thorough summary.



TORNADO ALLEY WRITERS CONFERENCE

**MARCH
22** 9:00-4:00 **CST**

Where: ST. THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC CHURCH,
NORMAN, OK



LUNCH, SNACKS, AND SOFT DRINKS AVAILABLE



Hank Phillippi Ryan
Lead Speaker



Peggy Doviak
Tornado Alley Author



Mel Odom
Guest Speaker

WRITERS' PANEL

THE ARTIST VERSUS THE PROFESSIONAL- A BALANCING ACT



Alicia Dean



Mary Coley



Mark Edward Jones



Dianne McCartney

[more information](https://www.tornadoalleysinc.wixsite.com)
www.tornadoalleysinc.wixsite.com

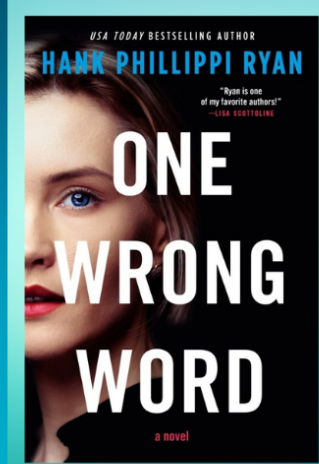
COST:
Members & Zoom
Attendees \$35
Non-Members \$45



SCAN HERE

CORRECTION: THE WEBSITE ADDRESS IS TORNADOALLEYSINC.ORG

Tornado Alley Sinc Conference



Saturday, March 22, 2025

Best-selling author and journalist, Hank Phillippi Ryan, will give a reading at Full Circle Books on Friday, March 21, 7 p.m. She will also be the headline speaker for the Tornado Alley SinC 2025 conference in Norman, Oklahoma, Saturday, March 22. See *WriteLine*'s page 8 or tornadoalleysinc.org for details. SinC stands for Sisters in Crime.



Tiffany Yates Martin

Tiffany Yates Martin will share her presentation, “Irresistible First Chapters,” during a Writer’s Digest webinar on March 27, 2025. The cost is \$89.99, but it looks phenomenal. Check it out here: <https://writersdigestuniversity.mykajabi.com/irresistible-first-chapters>

Re-Branding

Jane Friedman is re-branding her newsletter, “The Hot Sheet.” It will be known as, “The Bottom Line.” She feels the name change is more in keeping with her goals. If you have a subscription to the Hot Sheet, it will be transferred to The Bottom Line. Nuggets from the paid version will be incorporated into a new unpaid version of the newsletter. Both of them will be sent from Friedman’s website. She has long been a source of information for authors about the publishing industry.

PERHAPSING —

Using the words *perhaps* and *maybe* in your manuscript will let the reader mull things over.—Lisa Knopp, English prof., University of Nebraska, and the author of seven nonfiction books.

INDUSTRY NEWS

WANT MORE PUBLICITY?

THINK ABOUT HARO, NOW CALLED SOS

HARO stands for “Help a Reporter Out.” Developed by Peter Shankman in 2009, the free service linked media outlets with people who could supply information a reporter needed to complete an article or media package. HARO was sold to another company who closed the service in December 2024. Shankman received so many calls to restart the list, he did! It’s called SOS, “Source of Sources.”

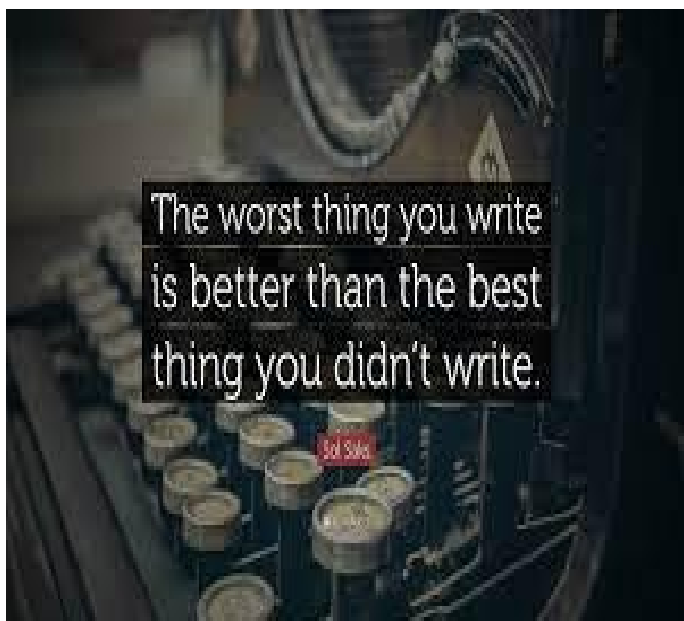
This is how the system works. Reporters send Shankman a description of the kind of expert s/he needs. Shankman puts the listings on a daily email going to every writer or expert who is registered with him. All anyone has to do to be on his list is to request it. You can find him at sourceofsources.com.

“I read the daily listings, just waiting for something that works for me,” said Mary Payne

A few of the 20,000+ companies who use his service are *NPR*, *Washington Post*, *People*, *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Psychology Today*, etc.

The daily listings are not for hobbyists, but if you find a listing that is right up your alley, then certainly you can query the reporter. However, if someone makes a query off-topic and Shankman hears about it, he will automatically throw that person off the list.

These gigs probably don’t come with any pay, but if you are quoted, it will raise the public’s awareness of you and what you do.



NEXT GALAXY MEETING

APRIL 10, 2025

at “The Well”

210 South James Garner Ave.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BLURBS

In a blog post, Nathan Bransford shared that Simon & Shuster announced this week they will be cutting back on ‘blurbs’—the quotes from authors and other public figures extolling the virtues of a book on its back cover.

It will be interesting to see if it makes any difference. Do you read the back cover blurbs before you buy or read a book?

Here’s a quick blog ‘on blurbs’ by Jami Atherton: https://1000wordsofsummer.substack.com/p/on-blurbs?mc_cid=a7669aba6e&mc_eid=4af3d9a4ce

If you plan to use Ingram-Sparks for print-on-demand, their prices will increase April 14, 2025. –from Darcy Pattison, Indie Kids Books

The early-bird deadline for the Austin Film Festival Script Competition is March 25, 2025. For more info, see <https://austinfilmfestival.com/about-aff-script-competitions/>

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