

# CRIME TIMES

NOVEMBER 2008

## Arizona Mystery Writers

To promote the writing of fiction in Southern Arizona, with focus on the mystery genre.

Our next meeting is November, 8, 2008. It is filled with Mystery from earth and beyond.

### Workshop-

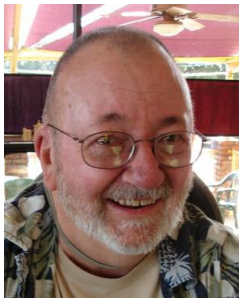


Mike Alvarez, published author and Pima Community College writing instructor, will guide us through the November workshop: Developing Memorable Characters.

There are many ways to create memorable characters in fiction. Mike will review several techniques, as outlined in *Structuring Your Novel* by Robert Meredith and John Fitzgerald. These methods have been proven to be extremely effective for writers who wish to create fictional characters who will be remembered by their readers long after they've finished reading the book. Join us for this fun-filled, enlightening workshop.

### SPEAKER- Sam Turner

A native of Arizona, Sam grew up on the South Rim of Grand Canyon. He is a graduate of Pepperdine College and received his M.Ed. from the University of Arizona. He served with the *Arizona Education Association Innovative Teaching Techniques Cadre as a Trainer of*



*Trainers in Facilitating* and retired from a thirty-five year teaching career (TUSD) in 1995.

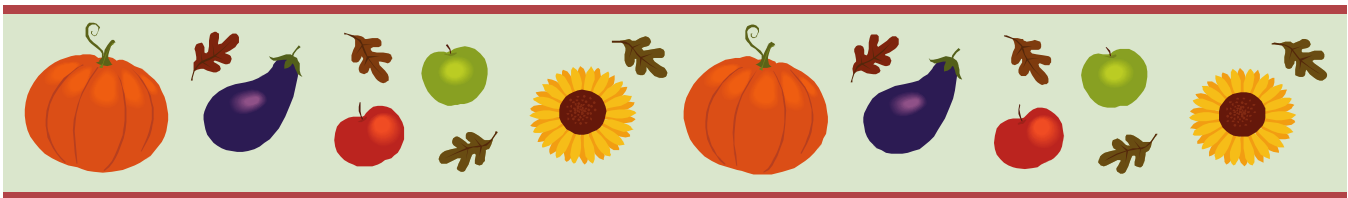
He is a freelance writer contributing to *Arizona Highways* and *The Aviation and Business Journal*, and teaches **memoir writing** and **beginning astronomy** through Pima Community College.

He and his wife, Phyllis, are co-editors of *Walking this Valley*, the monthly newsletter for the Tucson Chapter of The Compassionate Friends offering

guidance, comfort and hope for parents who had experienced the death of a child. Their son, Robert, died of a sleep disorder July 2, 1997 at age twenty-three. They have three surviving children.

Sam and Phyllis have published *This Might Help, A Three-Year Walk Through The Valley With The Compassionate Friends*. The book is a compilation of monthly columns published in the Tucson Chapter newsletter.

RSVP If you are attending- [azmysterywriters@comcast.net](mailto:azmysterywriters@comcast.net), or 577-7270 (Mary)



### **October 13- Query Writing, A workshop given by Mary Bellin**

by Jan Pope

You've struggled for months, maybe years, to get your book finished and ready to go. But now that you're there and isn't it wonderful that you are? How do you contact editors and publishers to let them know about this wonderful treat you have for them?

The first step after you have researched which people or companies might be suitable for your work is to write a query letter. Since this letter is the first time those people who can help you get published will “meet” you, it may be the most important letter you will ever write in your life as an author. This is the point at which Mary Bellin's excellent workshop steps in to guide you. With the help of the ten-page summary she gave each of us, we were to write a one-page query letter consisting of three concise paragraphs with which to introduce the agent to your work and (briefly) to you. Your book, not you, is the attraction, or will be if do your job correctly.

*Paragraph One* is the Hook, that perfectly written sentence or sentences which will grab his attention and make him think hmmm, this might be a good one. You can set up the hook by describing era and location, introducing your main character, or describing the action which begins your story. Maybe, if you are very clever you do all effectively—and in a very short paragraph.

*Paragraph Two* is a mini-synopsis where you describe your entire novel in one paragraph. Sound impossible? It's not but you may have to try a few times to get it done. Do it; it's worth the effort.

*Paragraph Three* is a brief biography of you. If you've won scads of prizes and had lots of

publications, list them. If none of that applies just say something about your own life, anything that is interesting. Keep it as short as you want, especially if you need a few extra words for the mini-synopsis.

Everyone at the meeting tried his hand at doing this one page query and some were quite successful. I would like to give you examples of what they did, but the truth is I was so busy trying to write my own one-page query letter that I did not take notes on what others wrote. Forgive me, but I have to say my efforts were worth it as it got me to think in a new way about queries. I always knew they should be short, but the form that Mary gave us, namely three specific types of paragraphs got me to thinking about queries in a new and helpful way.

We thank Mary very much for doing this interesting and helpful workshop.



## **October Meeting – AMW MOVES INTO THE FUTURE**

**Written by Mary Ann Hutchison**

A lively and spirited discussion replaced the usual informative speaker at last month's meeting. The agenda was ambitious, and was meant to cover next year's Board elections, ideas for workshops and speakers, AMW By-Laws, the Endowment Fund, and participation in the Tucson Festival of Books. The latter two items took up all the meeting time, but it was definitely time well spent.

By a vote of 14 to 2, it was decided that the Endowment Fund, now totaling \$755.00, would be used solely to sponsor a writing contest open to students of all branches of the Pima Community College Creative Writing Classes only. Prizes for stories in the mystery genre will be in the form of scholarships. A contest committee will be appointed at a later date, unless there are volunteers?

Led by Publicity Chair Carol O'Mahony, AMW's participation in the Tucson Festival of Books, now set for March 13-15, 2009 was vigorously discussed. The Festival, co-sponsored by the Arizona Daily Star and the University of Arizona, is expected to draw a crowd of 50,000 or more, over the two-day plus period. The cost for a non-profit organization booth is \$375.00.

The following reasons helped the group to make the final decision to spend the money to purchase Festival booth space: we are unique in the community, we offer something no other writing group does, we need to grow and the Festival is a great way to give us the publicity we need. Carol O'Mahony, Elizabeth Gunn, Erik Hertwig, Karen MacLeish comprise the Festival Committee. We will need "bodies" to make our participation a success! If you love AMW, I mean if you REALLY love AMW (shameless plagiarism), be prepared to lend a hand.

Other information: A committee, consisting of Jan Pope, Rae Schlesinger and Mary Bellin, is working hard to create By-Laws that are unique to us. Molly McKinney is researching the cost of a new sound system to replace the system we have.



Ellie Nelson, who writes under the name Eleanor Whitney Nelson, received third place in the Society of Southwestern Authors' writing contest in the memoir/personal essay category. Her story "Kangaroo at My Door" describes life in the outback of Western Australia circa 1970 and her relationship with a wild kangaroo. A second story, "May Day," has been published in *OASIS Journal 2008*. Another short memoir about her relationship with wild animals, this story recounts her experiences raising an orphan mustang.

Molly McKinney's short story, "Life Insurance", received a Commendations Award in the Society of Southwestern Author's 2008 Writing Contest presented October 19.

Mike Alvarez wrote -

I wanted to share some good news with all of you. My short story that was selected for inclusion in a Christmas anthology last year will finally be arriving at bookstores this fall. The publisher decided to delay publication—for reasons that only made sense to the publisher. :-) Below is the email I received from the anthology editor, Helen Polaski. Mike

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Hello and congratulations!

Michael,

Your story has made the final cut and will be featured in my anthology titled, *Christmas Through a Child's Eyes*, which comes out in late September.

Paul Harvey—yes, the radio announcer we've been hearing on the air for the past 50 years—loves our books and personally called me to ask if he could see my next manuscript for a possible endorsement! And true to his word, Mr. Harvey sent me a glowing endorsement—a quote on both the front and back covers.

Helen Polaski

Upcoming events-



Star Cactus is for writers of Speculative Fiction, including but not limited to

science fiction, science fantasy, urban fantasy, sword-and-sorcery, classic ghost and horror stories, as well as mysteries with supernatural plot lines. The group will be limited to nine members. Publishing credits appreciated but not required. Must have at least one complete first draft of a book manuscript or three finished short stories. No poetry. Interested people should contact me through email, and I'll be happy to send them a flyer via surface mail with more complete information.

Katherine Rambo

[kbrambo@comcast.net](mailto:kbrambo@comcast.net)

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**News-** AMW now has an official post box.

Arizona Mystery Writers  
P. O. Box 35591  
Tucson, AZ 85740

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### **Board member information:**



Please contact me at [AZmysterywriters@comcast.com](mailto:AZmysterywriters@comcast.com) while I'm working on the new website, some of the email accounts haven't been working.

Mary  
Chair-Mary Ann Hutchison,  
Workshop-Jan Pope,  
Speaker- Karen MacLeish,  
Newsletter-Mary Bellin,  
Publicity-Carol O'Mahony,  
Treasurer-Rae Schlesinger,  
WebMaster-Mary Bellin,

**MEETING INFO:** Second Saturday of the Month- HomeTown Buffet at the northwest corner of Oracle and River roads.

**TIMES:** AMW business meeting for all members 10:00 – 10:15 am, workshop 10:15 - 11:45 pm, Lunch 11:45 – 12:30, Speaker 12:30 – 2:00 pm.

**Cost:** Exact change or check is appreciated, Speaker, Workshop and lunch = \$12.00. Workshop or Speaker Only, no lunch, \$5. Yearly Dues are \$25.

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