



Valley Byliners Newsletter

Harlingen, TX

July 20, 2009



Note From Our President

Let's assume that you submitted a story to the Saturday Evening Post – or Redbook or True West, etc. Assume further, your story was accepted and the editor notified you that to publish your story you must join their little club for a fee of \$20.

Would you accept these terms just for the satisfaction of becoming a “published author?” Maybe. Maybe not. The analogy is not perfect but it illustrates a situation within our own Valley Byliners. If a non-member submits an item for inclusion in a future Byliners publication that person must join the Club before that person's accepted piece is published.

In my opinion, such an arrangement is non-typical in the publishing industry. Usually the publishing entity pays the writer. An exception is when a writer submits a contest entry. (At this time, I do not advocate that the Byliners pay its authors, but the idea has a certain merit and might increase the current rate of submissions.)

I suggest that membership in the Byliners not be a requirement for Valley authors. After all, the Club is the *Valley Byliners* and any works produced should represent the literary talents of all Valley authors and not just a handful of faithful attendees. According to the current financial statement, the Club does not need the money that acceptance/membership fees bring in. Judging from the sales performance of *Tales Told at Midnight...*, sales of the new book will probably far exceed any acceptance/membership monies. Therefore, I recommend that membership in the Byliners be optional for Valley authors who contribute to a Byliners publication. (During the past few weeks, I've met many authors whose work should be highlighted in an all Valley publication.)

This subject was discussed briefly during a recent meeting. However, I feel imposed author membership should be re-visited with a more thorough examination of the pros and cons.

Think about it. Then answer the following question:

Should Byliners membership be a requirement for Valley authors whose submitted work is accepted for publication? Yes. No.

Please forward your responses and opinions, if you wish to express any, to byliners@gmail.com. Then the Board can accumulate the results and recommend an appropriate course of action.

Cheers!
Don

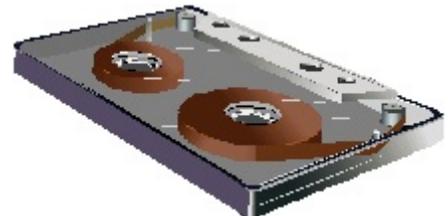


Congratulations to Verne!

Verne Wheelright had an article published last May in *FUTURES RESEARCH METHODOLOGY* (Jerome C. Glen and Theodore J. Gordon, Eds., 2009). This is a book of methods that futurists use, and my article was one of 39 chapters. This is the third edition of the book, which is distributed on CD, mostly to futures practitioners and educators worldwide. The chapter is titled "Personal Futures."

Marianna's Minutes

Marianna Nelson was kind enough to send in a report on the presentation made by Jeff Harris and the authors at the June meeting.



Jeff Harris launched the program with an overview of different ways to publish books. His PowerPoint presentation covered traditional publishing, self-publishing, and Internet-driven publishing such as e-books, Web sites, blogs, and 'blooks'. A blook, a shortcut term for "looks like a book," is based on a blog.

Panel member, Don Clifford, started the discussion recounting his experiences using Outskirts Press to self-publish his novel, *Ben Solomon, A Bastard Prince Denied His Throne*. "Publishing your book is expensive," Don said. "Every service you add costs money."

The discussion continued with Carolyn Ross commenting on lulu.com, which was used as a printing service for the book *Fun N Sun Then N Now*.

The editors from the Writers Group at Fun N Sun had asked Carolyn to prepare an electronic file of the book and its cover according to lulu's exacting specifications. The group was pleased with the outcome and the cost. Lulu charges no set-up fees to print books.

Marianna Nelson presented a summary from Marge Flados, who published her memoir, *The Road From Spink*, through AuthorHouse. Marge noted that a major, unplanned expense--a second galley--resulted from expecting too much from the publisher and not submitting a near-perfect manuscript. "Their main shortcoming was their unwillingness to advise me in areas about which I knew little."

When submitting the Byliners' manuscript *Tales Told at Midnight Along the Rio Grande*, Jeff Harris said he had no problem adapting it to the format iUniverse required to publish the book.

The main lesson learned was summed up by Marge, "The word SELF in self-publishing means exactly that. Submitting a correct and error-free manuscript is the author's responsibility." Also, the old word-processing adage "What you see is what you get (wysiwyg)," certainly applies to self publishing.



____FYI

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I am looking for ways to get the word out about our unique brief-residency Master of Fine Arts in Writing Program in Louisville, Kentucky. I was wondering if your writing organization has a newsletter or listserv in which you might include an announcement. If so, here is the announcement.

Spalding University's four-semester, brief-residency Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing combines superb instruction with unparalleled flexibility. At the beginning of each semester, students and faculty work together at a 10-day residency (in Louisville or abroad), after which they return home to correspond one-on-one through an exchange of 5 packets between the student and the faculty mentor for the rest of the semester. Study fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, writing for children and young adults, screenwriting, or playwriting. Request brochure FA35 by email: mfa@spalding.edu, by phone: (800) 896-8941, ext 2423, or see our website: www.spalding.edu/mfa.

If you do not have a newsletter, but you are interested in information, please let me know because I can send brochures for your group meetings or events.

Thank you for considering my request.



Byliner's Program on September 12

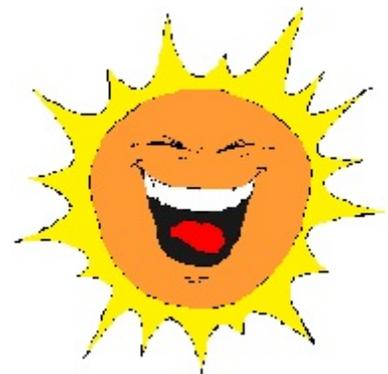
Carlos Cisneros, Brownsville attorney and author, will speak at the September meeting. On May 28, 2009, his first novel, *The Case Runner*, which is set in the lower Valley and was published by Arte Publico Press, won "Best Mystery Novel in English" at the 11th International Latino Book Awards. At the meeting,

Cisneros will present his perspectives about writing and publishing including his experience of writing a first book, finding a publisher, and advice to writers aspiring to publish their books.

Next Meeting

Our next meeting is on August 8, 2009 at the Harlingen Public Library, 1:30 PM.

We will be discussing the stories and poems we submitted and distributed at the June meeting and voting on our favorite piece.



At the June meeting we discussed doing a writing challenge. This exercise is a wonderful way to test our creative abilities. The challenge consists of a setting, an event, and three or four items (or as many as you want). The event could be something as simple as a letter dated two years ago is delivered. The setting does not have to be a specific geographic area, but it could be. The items should be diverse and instill a bit of fun in the challenge.

Each participant crafts a short story that must have the challenge elements in it. We will be discussing the idea of a writing challenge, its components and the other related logistics at the next meeting.



Editor's Note

Thanks to all of you for your great submissions. Please keep the items coming. The newsletter is what the membership makes it. I just put it together.

Janet Wilder

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