

WRITER'S VOICE !



"...I recite my composition concerning the king; my tongue is the pen of a ready writer." Psalms 45:1 (NKJV)

Spring 2008

Volume 4, Issue 2

From the Editor ...

Greetings in the mighty name of **Jesus**.

And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables. Exodus 32:16

The above scripture is the theme of CWGSB's 12th Annual Writers Conference to be held October 18, 2008, at Westmont college. There are so many benefits to attending writers conferences. We will have the full schedule of events in the next issue of *Writer's Voice!*

I drove down to Irvine recently with our newest member, Pauline Sexton, for the Spring Writers Day 2008, hosted by Orange County Christian Writers Fellowship. What a powerful day. We came home full of new knowledge, new revelation, new friendships, renewed relationships from the past, but the very best was to see and hear with our spiritual eyes and ears the mighty work God is doing through His chosen ones.

No matter what the genre, the love of God is being spread throughout the world, fulfilling the Great Commission.

In this issue you'll find part two of Larry Skahill's article "Educational Options for the Aspiring Writer," which may help you develop your own educational action plan. Also, Katie Cushman has taken time out from polishing up her second book to bless us with her article "Rewrites and Oxen." How's that for a wake-up title? Look for Katie's new book, *Waiting for Daybreak*, Bethany House Publishers, in October.

My article "To Market, To Market" should also be a wake-up call for many of you. This writing business is big business. Get your education so you can enjoy all the Lord has planned for you.

Enjoy your summer and write, write, write!



Opal Mae Dailey
Editor-In-Chief

**NOTE: New
Date !**

Points of Interest ...

Educational Options P-2

Part Two: Plan your future ...

Rewrites and Oxen P-3

Doing your best ...

To Market, To Market P-4

Business Opportunity ...



Calendar ...

CWGSB Monthly Meeting:

2nd Thursday

12:00 p.m.

IHOP Restaurant

1701 State Street

Santa Barbara, CA

May 2-3, 2008: Antelope Valley

Christian Writers Conference

www.avwriters.com

September 26-27, 2008: San Diego

CWG Fall Conference

www.sandiegocwg.org

October 18, 2008: 12th Annual
Santa Barbara Christian Writers
Conference at Westmont College:

cwgsb@sbcglobal.net

(805) 682-0316

Educational Options for the Aspiring Writer, part two . . .

Lawrence G. Skahill

Previously, we covered the first two steps of the four step process of career planning: “Goal Setting” and “Self-Assessment.” We also looked at a quick start guide (including a brief look at “Options”) for those anxious to begin. Today we will cover the last two steps, “Options” and “Action Plans.”

Step Three: Options

1. Read, read, read! Study the writers you most strongly admire or with whom you identify. Why do you like their writing? Can you incorporate their strengths in your own writing? Contrast this with writing you do not like. Examine why these pieces don’t work for you and try to avoid the same mistakes in your writing.

2. Study DVDs. Specifically, consider the director’s and writer’s comments in the special features as you watch your favorite movies. Screenplays pack all the action, emotion and drama of a twelve hour read into a one hundred minute movie. Talented directors and writers will give you tons of tools in a few minutes. Don’t waste time with commentaries that are merely a reunion party for the film’s cast and crew.

3. Check out online resources. Of the multiple websites I visited, www.writersdigest.com and www.writers.com both have excellent lists of free and inexpensive resources for writers. Additionally, many publishing houses’ and literary agencies’ websites have advice for aspiring writers. Perform an online search for the specific topic(s) you want to study.

4. Join the CWGSB! Attend our monthly meetings where you’ll find support, advice and friendly critiques from your peers. At \$20 a year, this is a bargain and will help you to establish important relationships with other writers.

5. Get a good “how-to-write” book. For a mere \$20, you can learn a lot from the right writer. Find an editor or author who speaks to your writing style and stick with him or her. Avoid advice that quenches your voice – your uniqueness as a writer. Steer clear of how-to books that feature

multiple authors who often contradict each other. One author advised: “Research first, and then write.” In the same book, a second expert said: “Research is limiting.” Join the Writers Digest Book Club at writersdigestbookclub.com and commit to one book a month while saving money.

6. Invest in Sally Stuarts *Christian Writers’ Market Guide*. Retailing for \$39.50, this book is an indispensable, information-packed guide to the market for Christian writers. The voluminous listings of resources for writers alone make the guide worth the price.

7. Enroll in a writing course. Check out local adult education programs; your local community college; university extension courses; online sources such as www.writers.com (highly recommended by *Writer’s Digest Magazine*) and awpwriter.org; lastly, the Masters of Fine Arts curriculum from a local or online university.

8. Attend a writers’ conference. Other than the great deal offered by our own October conference, most conferences are an expensive option. The right conference, though, can definitely be worth the money. Not only can you improve your knowledge and skills, you will connect with editors, agents, and other writers. For those seeking publication, these networks are arguably as important as your writing skills.

Many conferences also offer mentoring sessions as a part of the general conference or at dedicated mentoring conferences. Our own Katie Cushman enthusiastically endorses the fiction mentoring courses she took with *Christy Award* winner James Scott Bell.

Step Four: Action Plan

In order to decide amongst your options, you need to review the short and long term goals of your educational plan. Make sure the given options clearly accomplish an improvement in your knowledge, skills, and abilities

Next, accurately estimate and budget your time, money, energy, and support from significant individuals in your life. What do you have the time and funds to accomplish? What is the best time of day for you to study?

Write a table with columns for each of the options and the pro and cons for each. Alternatively, perform a cost-benefit analysis in order to get the biggest bang for your buck.

Prayerfully consider, list, and prioritize the tasks you want to accomplish. Among these, develop and chart out on graph paper a critical path: activities that are essential for the attainment of your educational goals. Think of the critical path as a road-map, with each city on the journey representing a task on your path. If you have trouble figuring out where to start, try working your way backward from your end goals. For inspiration and accountability, place your chart where you can see it every day. Highlight the completed tasks as you go. Periodically review all four steps of the process and adjust your chart accordingly.

And remember, “Writers write.”



Rewrites and Oxen . . .

Katie Cushman

After more than a year of writing, tweaking, re-writing, and tweaking some more, I finally finished my latest book. The plot flowed, the time line gelled. My hard work was ready to move forward.

So, I sent the first hundred pages to my critique group and waited anxiously for the next week’s conference call. My critique group is encouraging but tough: they nitpick, they question character motives, they argue sentence rhythm. But, this time, I had worked so hard and for so long, I was ready for something along the lines of “well done, our good and faithful critique partner.”

Unfortunately, that’s not what I heard.

There was one particular scene about forty pages in, which the group unanimously agreed did not work. The tension fell off, there was too much telling, and it didn’t hold their interest. When I looked over the scene through fresh eyes, I realized they were right.

But...

It was going to take SO MUCH work to take that scene out. Almost every other scene would have to be tweaked at least a little or the plot wouldn’t make sense. It would take hours and hours of tedium. I didn’t want to do it.

I got off the phone, ate some chocolate, and spent the afternoon walking through the fog of frustration. Over and over I said, “I don’t want to do all that, the story is *good enough* without making that change.”

Later that evening, something from a previous Bible study began to ping around in my mind. The thought wouldn’t go away, so I went to 2 Samuel and reread the story.

The Lord had told David to buy a certain threshing floor and make a sacrifice to Him there, in order to stop a plague. So, David went to Araunah, the man who owned the threshing floor, and offered to buy it.

Araunah didn’t want to sell it, he wanted to give it to David. After all, David was his king. Besides, it was in his best interest to get that plague stopped, too.

But the king replied to Araunah, “No, I insist on paying for it. I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing.” So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen, and paid fifty shekels of silver for them. 2 Samuel 24:24

I realized then, if I am truly writing for God and His glory, then my writing is my offering. If I only write when it’s easy, if I don’t try to improve mediocre work, is that an acceptable offering?

I sat down that night and began the long process of another re-write.

Since then, my book has gone through two more rounds of edits. A yellow index card sits beside my laptop every time I start to work, bearing the words of 2 Samuel 24:24 as a reminder. My offerings don’t cost fifty shekels of silver, they cost time, frustration, and sometimes a sixteenth, seventeenth, or twentieth draft.

Do I really want to present my God with anything less?

To Market, To Market, part two . . .

Opal Mae Dailey

The Lord gave the Word: “Great was the company of those that published it.”

Let’s assume your book is now written and published, or soon will be. You’ve come a long way, but it’s just the start of a whole new business, or even more than one business. The one big mistake most people make is thinking our product is a book. No! Our product is “words.”

The Bible shows us that God created the world with His Word:

- God the Father spoke it.
- God the Son created what the Father spoke.
- God the Holy Spirit reveals what was created.

Anywhere “words” are used we can find a profit center.

Webster’s Dictionary defines author as (1) one that originates or creates, (2) God, (3) the writer of literary works (as a book). In this society of information and the entertainment age, the opportunities for authors go far beyond books. We are limited only by our own imagination.

We are made in God’s image; let the world be your platform, for in Christ nothing shall be impossible.

To quicken your imagination, here is a list of possibilities for you to use words. Remember, Saint Paul told us to “stir up your gifts.” Which niche market is for you?

- Author: selling information to other publishers
- Desk Top Publishing: self-publishing for self and others
- Public Speaker: selling information from the platform
- Personal Coaching: selling personalized, one on one information
- TV Producer: selling information via television infomercials and/or shows
- Newsletter Editor: selling information in periodic format

- Freelance Writer: selling to magazines or ghost writing
- Online Expert: producing online services and products (your own ebook, for instance)
- Product Designer: selling information on t-shirts, mugs, posters, etc.

This is only the beginning, but I pray this list has stirred-up your imagination and that the creative juices are flowing! Happy marketing.

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We welcome your input: ideas, suggestions and article submissions. Please use the addresses above.

Note:
New box
number

“...everything in life is writable about if you have the outgoing guts to do it, and the imagination to improvise. The worst enemy to creativity is self-doubt.”

~ Sylvia Plath