



Quill de Ville

www.WritersLeagueofTheVillages.com

Writers League of The Villages Newsletter

April 2023

Vote on your favorite limerick- pages 5-6

The limerick packs laughs anatomical
Into space that is quite economical.
But the good ones I've seen
So seldom are clean
And the clean ones so seldom are comical.
Anonymous

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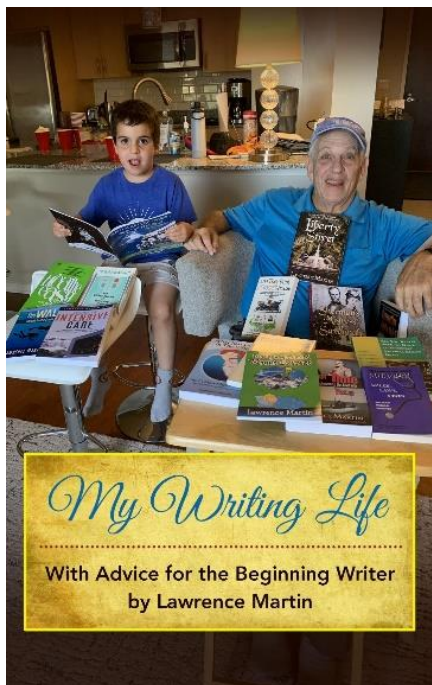
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Message from Your Newsletter Editor

Larry Martin
drlarry437@gmail.com



Vote for your favorite limerick.

We had 13 entries for the Newsletter Limerick Contest. They are numbered 1-13, on pages 5 and 6. **VOTE FOR YOUR FAVORITE.** Any criteria you wish to use. The winner will have his/her limerick published in next month's newsletter, along with publicity for the book of their choice.

Send me the email with your vote, address above. Make sure to sign your email. Unsigned email votes will not be counted. This is to assure that only WLOV members vote. Not that any entrant would ever ask his or her 200 best friends to vote for their limerick – of course not. But a gentle reminder to your thousand-member social club that your limerick is in the WLOV newsletter?

So, just to be fair to all entrants...sign your email vote. It's a members-only vote. I have no problem if entrants vote for their own limerick...if it's truly their favorite. The deadline for receiving email votes is April 21st.

The Appendix this month includes a chapter from my not-yet-published-and-may-never-be-published memoir/autobiography/hodgepodge, *My Writing Life: With Advice for the beginning Writer*. It's the first of two chapters on Critique Clubs. If you would like to post a comment about *your* critique club for the next Newsletter – anything you think will be of interest to our members, one or two paragraphs – send it to me, drlarry437@gmail.com.

Two other notices you should check out: Francesca Boroden's call to place your book in *The Villages Magazine*, [page 7](#); and Julie Feingold's invitation to become a beta reader, [page 9](#).

Upcoming Events

APRIL 2023

Thursday, April 6, 6:30-8:30 pm. Wine & Words, Riverbend Rec Center is **CANCELLED**, due to use of room for Camp Villages. Wine and Words will resume in May.

Saturday, April 8, 2 pm. Barnes & Noble in Lake Sumter Landing for our Kick-off gathering for 2nd quarter books by WLOV authors.

Tuesday April 11, 11am - 2pm. All Booked Up book signing on Tuesday, April 11th, will be with Doc Honour, Bill Hurst and Jeanne Rogers.

Upcoming Events (cont.)

Wednesday, April 12, 9-11 am. WLOV General Meeting. “Your Book: When is it Finished? Panel discussion with Steve Burt, Leigh Court, Paula Howard

Saturday, April 15, 11 am-2 pm. Book signing by Marsha Shearer and Susan Dwyer, Wildwood Antique Mall, 364 Shopping Center Drive, Wildwood.

Sunday, April 30, 7 pm. Club member Susan O’Halloran presents a one-woman show at Studio Theater, Tierra Del Sol, titled “Mothers and Other Wild Women.” Her show will be repeated Monday, May 1st, at 2 pm and 7 pm. Tickets are \$20, online at www.TheSharonStudio.com.

May 2023

Thursday, May 4, 6:30-8:30. Wine & Words, Riverbend Rec Center. Speakers to be announced.

Tuesday May 9, 11am - 2pm. All Booked Up book signing; authors to be announced.

Wednesday, May 10, 9-11 am. WLOV General Meeting. Program is “Growing Your Writer’s Brain: Insights and Techniques,” by WLOV member Tweet Coleman

Saturday, May 13, 11 am-2 pm. Book signing by Doc Honour and Cleo Simon, Wildwood Antique Mall, 364 Shopping Center Drive, Wildwood.

President’s Message

Your Book – Getting from First Draft to Final Version

By Frank A. Lancione, flancione@verizon.net



I hope you’ll be able to attend our WLOV Monthly General Meeting at Laurel Manor on April 12th. We are going to have a panel discussion on how successful writers navigate that treacherous journey from their first draft into a final version. Our panelists are WLOV members Steve Burt, Leigh Court, and Paula Howard. Steve and Leigh are very successful authors with a slew of awards and books currently selling on Amazon. Paula is an author and publisher who works with many of our WLOV members.

In deciding how to introduce the panel and the topic, I thought it would be helpful to provide a framework for thinking about the draft to final process. I decide that one way to model that process was to conceptualize it in terms of the different types and levels of editing. Think about it. Whether you hire an editor or do the work yourself, there are a series of steps you need to go through to polish and refine your book to a finished form. I reviewed a range of articles and handbooks on editing and developed the following model:



Essentially, it's an iterative process in which you are continually enhancing the language, structure, linguistic style, and factual accuracy of your work while simultaneously enriching your story, characters, and overall writing style. Along the way, you may be asking reviewers to give you feedback on how your work will be viewed by specific groups of readers ("Sensitivity Reading"), as well as giving you overall assessments of what is strong/weak in your plot, characters, and overall story ("Overall Editorial Assessment").

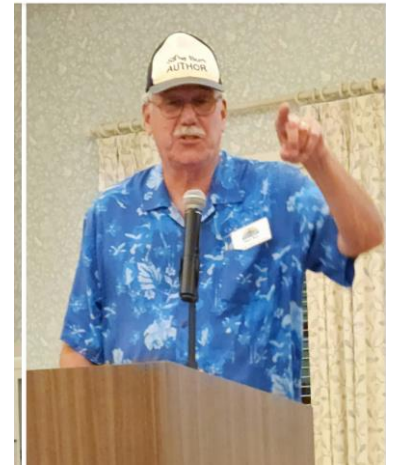
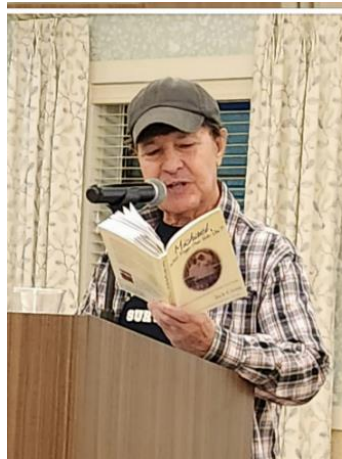
Our WLOV club is where you will find kindred spirits happy to share their experience on this draft-to-final journey and to learn from yours. Tune into our Thursday afternoon Writing Master Class Zoom sessions. Join one of The Villages critique groups. Listen to the speakers and special programs at our monthly general meetings. Take part in club-sponsored marketing events like our Barnes and Noble kick off presentations, book signings at the All Booked Up bookstore and the Wildwood Antique Mall. Be a presenter at a Wine and Words monthly literary event. Participate in unique club activities like our annual Book Expo and Scholarship Fundraising event.

However you describe your process for getting from your initial draft to your final version, it's clear that it's a monumental journey. The good news is that because you are an WLOV member, it's not one you have to make alone.

Wine and Words March 2, 2023

By Frank Lancione

At this meeting Jack Ciotti and Steve Burt read from their books. The April 6 meeting has been cancelled due to the Rec Center being used for Camp Villages. W & W will resume on May 4th.



Jack Ciotti, Steve Burt, Frank Lancione

13 Limericks, pages 5 and 6. Deadline for voting for your favorite limerick is April 21, 2023.

Remember to sign your email vote.

Submitted Limericks: Vote on your favorite one.
Send me your top choice by number, to drlarry437@gmail.com

1.

There once was a mom who one night
Sat down and started to write.
While her thoughts took wing,
the words began to sing,
And the creativity in her soul took flight

2.

There once was a woman named Pam
Whose computer was full of spam.
She headed for Texas in a hurry,
Feeling rather weary,
And pledged she will never cook a ham.

3.

The pokey driver given his cue
Sped up with a siren and flashing blue
Pulled over the jerk
Who passed with a smirk
And wrote him a ticket, now due..

4.

There was a young man from Tennessee
Who joined the military to be all he could be
When he got there
They took his hair
And made him fill a mason jar not with
moonshine but pee!"

5.

A poet who lives off of Morse
Lassoed rhymes while bucked on a horse.
"Why pen on a stallion
In your hat of ten gallon?"
"Cause It's a Wrote-E-O," he retorts.

6.

A refusenik resolutely refused,
To remit her WLOV dues.
So, she missed all the fun
And meeting everyone
And at writing did not have a clue.

7.

There once was a kitten named Rocky,
Who was into physical sockey,
With a very strong paw,
I was hit in the jaw,
And was propelled from the couch like a
jockey.

8.

There once was a man who liked to drink.
His life really started to stink.
In recovery he quit.
No more drunken fits.
From then he was able to think!

9.

On St Patrick's Day I play Irish music on
my harp
While waiting for the annual Leprechaun
parade to start.
As they march by I cheer
While drinking a big green beer
Bagpipes, marching bands, and fire brigades
all take part.

10.

There once was a woman from McNatt
Who had triplets named Matt, Pat, and Tat.
It was fun in the breeding,
But not in the feeding,
For she found she had no tit for Tat!

11.

There once was a girl named Paris
Who had a good looking friend named
Harris
The other girls were desperate
They were all kept separate
The girl was last seen dancing on the
terrace.

12.

There was a cute miss from Duval
Who wanted to find a new pal
She hoped for a lad
And answered an ad
But all she got was a gal!

13.

There once was a cat named Pat
Who always wore a fancy hat
She strutted down the street
With pride in her feet
And left all the other cats flat.

**NEWS ARTICLES ABOUT MEMBERS –
FACEBOOK ALBUMS**

WLOV members continue to make news. Here are the links to find news articles written about members January-March, 2023.

JANUARY FACEBOOK NEWS ARTICLES POSTED

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.551846676982994&type=3>

FEBRUARY FACEBOOK NEWS ARTICLES POSTED

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.575057707995224&type=3>

MARCH FACEBOOK NEWS ARTICLES POSTED

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.593976442770017&type=3>



The Writers' League of The Villages
222 likes • 253 followers



VILLAGES MAGAZINE COORDINATOR - DAN KINCAID

By Rita Boehm



For over four years, beginning in January 2018, Dan Kincaid has been our contact with The Villages Magazine. Thanks to Dan, many of us have had our books promoted in the magazine's monthly *Villages Author Spotlight* column. Dan developed the author questionnaire, collected the submissions, and then, on a monthly basis forwarded the information to the magazine. As a result, through March 2023, 46 WLOV members have been spotlighted. A list of those who had been spotlighted through December 2022 was printed in as an Appendix in the January Newsletter.



Now that Dan has decided that it's time to hand off the baton, on behalf of the WLOV Board of Directors and the entire membership, I'd like to thank him for developing this relationship with the magazine and doing such a stellar job. **THANK YOU, DAN!!**

We are not abandoning this wonderful promotional opportunity for our members. Francesca Boroden has agreed to become our new Villages Magazine Coordinator, effective with the August edition. Dan will help Francesca transition into this role. I'm sure she'll do a wonderful job.

Welcome aboard, Francesca!

THE VILLAGES MAGAZINE – AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT OPPORTUNITY

By Francesca Boroden, franceboroden@gmail.com

Our current list of authors for *The Villages Magazine* Author Spotlight column will be exhausted this summer. If you are interested in having your book featured in the magazine, please complete the attached questionnaire and forward it, along with a hi-resolution head-shot photo and a picture of your book cover **NO LATER THAN MAY 31, 2023** to me at franceboroden@gmail.com.

The information you provide may be edited by the magazine in accordance with its editorial guidelines.

Authors will be selected at random from submissions received by May 31, 2023. Since only one author is selected per month, it could take several months before your book appears in the magazine. You must remain a current WLOV member to be part of the program.

NOTE: If you've been featured in the magazine's "Villages Author Spotlight" in the last 4 years, your name will go to the end of the list behind newcomers. Please send the following to franceboroden@gmail.com.

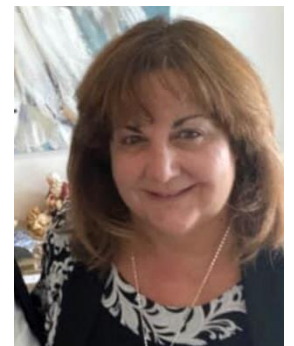
- a) **A high-quality image of your book cover**
- b) **An author headshot**
- c) **The following information, either as part of your email or as an attachment**

Your Name:

The Village you live in:

Book title and genre:

1. A brief synopsis of your book (approx. 1-2 paragraphs)
2. What prompted you to write your book?
3. What do you hope readers take away from your book?
4. What clubs, activities and hobbies do you enjoy?
5. Where may readers purchase your book?
6. Any other pertinent information you wish to add.



BARNES & NOBLE – HAPPY 2nd ANNIVERSARY TO US!

By Rita Boehm

Join us on Saturday, April 8th at 2:00 at Barnes & Noble in Lake Sumter Landing for our 2nd Anniversary celebration. Six of our featured authors will have an opportunity to tell you about their books. The remaining six will be featured at our May 20th kick-off event.

In April 2021, four WLOV members were part of a two-week, single genre pilot program at Barnes & Noble. From those shaky beginnings we've established a more solid relationship—and Barnes & Noble has become more welcoming of local authors.

Twelve WLOV authors are now featured in the store for three-month periods, initiated by kick-off events introducing the featured authors. These events are usually well attended by standing-room only crowds. We've come a long way!

To date, 100 WLOV members have been offered an opportunity to participate in our Barnes & Noble events—and over 400 books have been sold.

On March 31, the Villages Daily Sun, page C1, gave a nice notice of our 2nd anniversary (see above). To celebrate this milestone, we invited back the authors from April 2021. This time, instead of two weeks, they'll have an opportunity to have their books featured for a full three months. The remaining spots have been filled by members whose books have not yet been featured in the store.

Note: Starting with our Q3 event in July, we'll begin a selection process which includes a random selection of authors whose books have already been featured while giving preference to members who have not yet been given an opportunity of a Barnes & Noble experience.



General Meeting March 8, 2023

By Paula Howard

Scott McKnight, currently president of the Blue Knights Motorcycle club in The Villages, was the speaker at our March general meeting. He spoke about the numerous jobs he had growing up as a young beach patrol lifeguard, then casino host, fireman, public educator, arson inspector, and an elected official for a New Jersey Board of Education, then later as a city councilman. He gave a look behind the scenes of his eclectic work career and answered questions from the audience.



Book Signing held at All Booked Up Tuesday, March 14

By Bill Pullen - (352) 430-3006 or billanita@att.net

L to R:

Lisa Vincent-Morrison (*Lent Life*)

Jamie Goeske (All Booked Up proprietor)

Tom LaBaugh (*Make A Powerful, Positive Impact*)

Susan Dwyer (*Strangers Saints and Sinners*)



WLOV Books for April in All Booked Up, Colony Plaza

- “Strangers Saints and Sinners” by Susan Dwyer
- “Marooned in 1799” by Bill Hurst
- “Not Like Us” by Doc Honour
- “Make A Powerful, Positive Impact” by Tom LaBaugh
- “Lent Life” by Lisa Vincent-Morrison
- “The Gift of Sunderland” by Jeanne Rogers.
- The WLOV Villages Magazine author for April: John Howard, “The Deacon and the Shield”

The All Booked Up book signing on Tuesday, April 11th, will be with Doc Honour, Bill Hurst and Jeanne Rogers.

We All Need Beta Readers - Don't We?

By Julie Feingold, juliesdesk47@gmail.com.

You've finished your book—or you're pretty close to finishing. If you're in a critique group, you may have had help honing each word. Are you ready to publish? Maybe not. Your work may benefit from a beta reader.

A what? A beta reader is someone who gives the author feedback—advice and comments—from the point of view of an average reader.

Beta readers are **not** professional editors. They are generally people who read extensively in a given genre. They may provide insight into story disconnects or other issues that you'll want to address—before the book is published.

We sometimes ask family and friends to be our beta readers. This approach might work for some. However, too often our family and friends aren't quite as honest as we need them to be.

WLOV would like to offer our members another option by compiling a list of beta readers who are willing to provide honest feedback in a constructive, managed, and anonymous manner. We will be developing sign-up sheets with more specifics. However, for now, we'd like to get a better idea of who might be interested in both being beta readers and having beta readers.

Tips for Getting the Most from a Beta Reader

1. Be specific in what you want from your beta reader. For example: you may want them to identify areas of your book that aren't really working; or identify aspects that are confusing, unclear, or in conflict with another section. You may want them to tell you if the characters are memorable, etc.
2. Remember, beta readers are not editors.

Tips for Being a Good Beta Reader

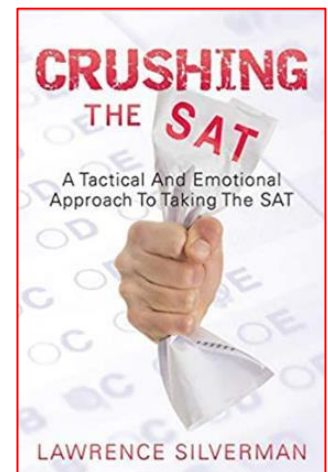
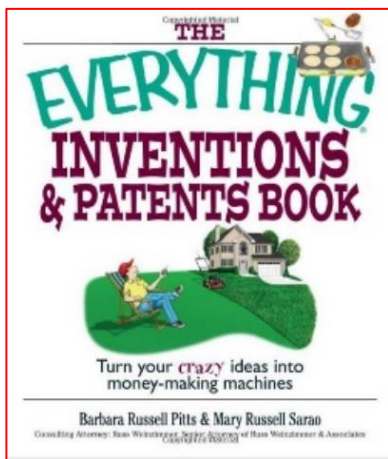
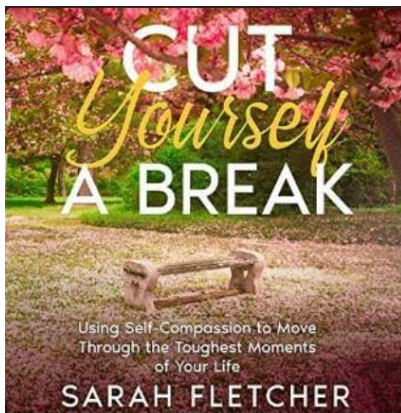
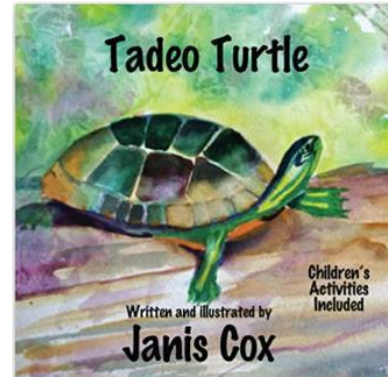
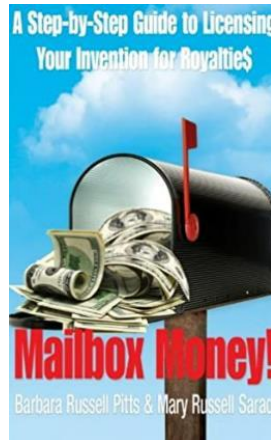
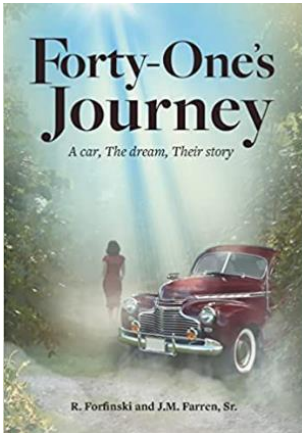
1. Read in a genre you like.
2. Take Notes. Be honest. Be specific – and be constructive in your comments.

If you'd like to learn more about the program, please email me at juliesdesk47@gmail.com.

New Books in WLOV Book Catalog

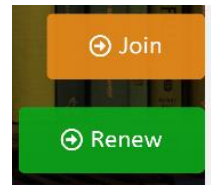
www.writersleagueofthevillages.com

To place your new book in the catalog, send the cover, a blurb and Amazon link to WLOVwriters@gmail.com



Recurring Items of Interest

- **Facebook page: Writers League of The Villages**
<https://www.facebook.com/The-Writers-League-of-The-Villages-162776817086391/>
- **Members-only FB Group for posting: WLOV Group**
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2456384291302772/>
- **Master Class Writing Videos:** Thursdays at 4 pm. WLOV members will receive an email notice from Paula Howard prior to these videos; if you don't get one, email her at pfhoward777@gmail.com.
- **To review past WLOV newsletters,** go to <https://writersleagueofthevillages.com/> and click on Newsletters in the top banner.
- **Pay 2023 dues online, \$20.** You can pay via credit card or Paypal. To join or renew, go to www.writersleagueofthevillages.com. Click on "Join Now" then choose Join or Renew. If you encounter any problems email WLOVwriters@gmail.com.
- **Village Neighbors Magazine**
If you'd like to be featured in Mark Newhouse's monthly Writing Bug column in Village Neighbors Magazine, email him at mark@newhouse.net.

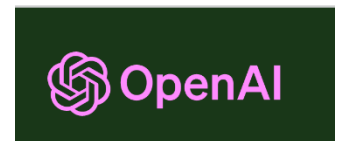


The Current State of Writing and AI

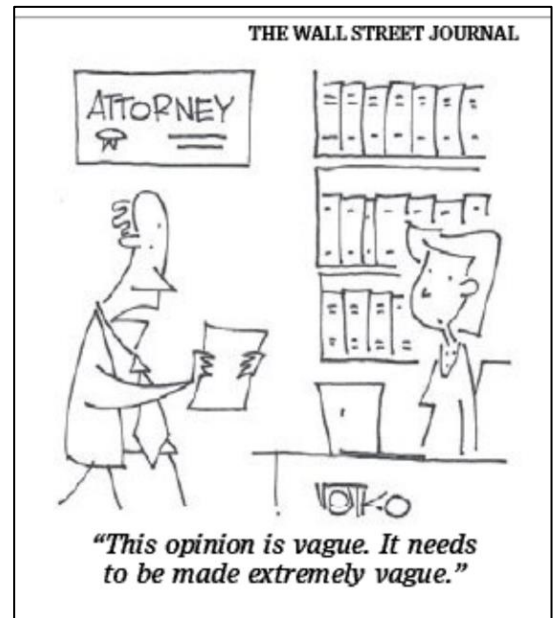
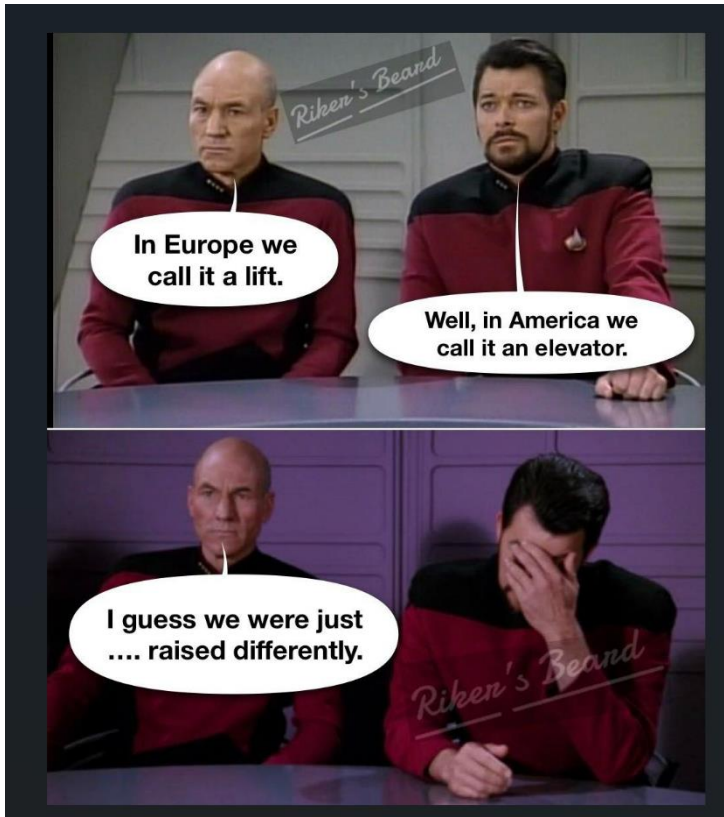
<https://authorspublish.com/the-current-state-of-writing-and-ai/>

This link is to a brief online commentary about perhaps the most significant event in the history of writing/publishing since the computer and word processing. Expect to hear a lot more about artificial intelligence and writing in the months and years ahead.

Have you used anything written by AI for any purpose? If so, and you would like to share your experience with our members, send me a short review for the newsletter; drlarry437@gmail.com.



Cartoons...and More



UNPUNCTUATED

Righting Rules

- Prepositions are not words to end sentences with.
- And sentences should not begin with a conjunction.
- Shy away from clichés like the plague.
- Absolutely always avoid annoying alliteration.
- Be more or less specific.
- Parenthetical remarks (however useful) are (usually) unnecessary.
- Contractions aren't helpful and shouldn't be used.
- One should never generalise.
- Comparisons are as bad as clichés.
- Abandon ampersands & abbreviations, etc.
- Cut out commas, that are, not necessary.
- Parenthetical words however should be enclosed in commas.
- Never use a big word when a diminutive one would be sufficient.
- Don't overuse exclamation marks!!!!
- Take care to use you're words appropriately.
- Its important to use the apostrophe in it's proper place.
- Who needs rhetorical questions?
- Exaggeration is a billion times worse than understatement.
- Proofread carefully to see if you any words out.
- The spell cheque is knot always write.

Punctuation & creative writing challenges
www.monsterpunctuation.com



From *The New Yorker*



Appendix:

Critique Clubs – Part 1

By Larry Martin, WLOV Newsletter Editor

This chapter is from *My Writing Life: With Advice for Beginning Writers*

www.lakesidepress.com/MyWritingLife.pdf

Critique clubs or groups are an excellent way to get feedback and have helped me immensely. So many errors can crop up in your writing, and you won't know it without some feedback. The *Gravity* picture book was my most egregious mistake, but there have many lesser gaffes.

In one critique club session I read part of my third Civil War Savannah novel, *Liberty Street: A Novel of Late Civil War Savannah*. In this scene, the heroine is making tea for her lover.

“The tea is ready.” She poured the boiling water over tea bags in the cups, and handed one to him.

As soon as I finished the reading one member said, “Larry, I don't think they had tea bags in 1864.”

I looked it up. He was right! Tea bags weren't available until 1903. When you write historical fiction, it's okay to create new characters and invent dialogue, but not okay to misstate basic facts out of ignorance.

Here's another item that caught me by surprise. In my novella about travel to Mars, the spaceship crew begins a toast to their long voyage. The trip commander states:

“We will celebrate with a bottle of California's finest champagne. We cannot use glasses like on Earth, so I will pour out some and we will try to swallow the liquid before it floats away.”

After reading that scene I was quickly set straight. “Larry, Champagne is only from France. There's no such thing as California Champagne. Choose a different toast.”

Oh? I didn't know. I changed the line, to “...bottle of California's finest sparkling wine.”

Everyone makes these kinds of mistakes, and we point them out to each other. When one club member read a story that mentioned a doctor giving penicillin to a patient in the 1930s, I explained that penicillin wasn't available until the 1940s. The reader was grateful for my correction. Here is an example from my blog post, “How *Not* to Write Medical Scenes in Fiction.”

<https://drlarry437.medium.com/how-not-to-write-medical-scenes-in-fiction-ced87e7dea0f/>

Backstory

Dirk McGirt tried to kill his business rival Sam Simpson in New York City. Despite being shot with three bullets, Simpson lived. After life-saving surgery, Simpson is transferred to the hospital's ICU, in “critical condition.” McGirt reads this information in the next day's newspaper and agitates over how to finish the job, worried about being implicated if his victim survives to talk to the cops. McGirt calls the hospital to check on Simpson's status. He is transferred to the ICU, where a nurse picks up.

Scene

“Hello, can I help you?”

“Yes, this is George Simpson, Sam Simpson’s brother. I’m in Chicago and just learned my brother is in the hospital, in intensive care. What is his status? Is he going to make it?”

“So far, your brother is stable,” she replies. “He’s on life support, but the doctors think he’ll pull through.”

“Life support?”

“Yes, a mechanical ventilator breathes for him. We’re hoping he can get off the machine in a couple days. Will you travel here to see him?”

“I’ll be there tomorrow. When are visiting hours?”

Critique

It’s not realistic, given the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), common knowledge among all health care workers. Medical information is *not* divulged to strangers, and certainly not over the phone. Assuming the nurse is not in on the plot to kill Simpson (which she is not), it’s a mistake that weakens the developing story.

Here is another medical error, one not so obvious but nonetheless significant. In the story, a male patient is being counseled by his female psychiatrist. After the session they both stand, and she gives him a big hug, with words of encouragement.

Not realistic. For this action on the part of the psychiatrist to be plausible, it would have to be explained in some way. Either she’s a fraud, a looney tune, or they are having an affair, all plausible plot points. But none of those characterizations were built into the story; the author meant her to be just a normal psychiatrist. That is not how a normal psychiatrist behaves. (My wife, a psychiatrist, assured me of this point.)

My advice in writing medical scenes in fiction: be realistic. If you want to be unrealistic, that’s okay, but unrealistic actions need to be explained, made part of the character’s persona or the plot. You can give penicillin to a patient in the 1930s, just get it there via a time machine.

Then there are the movies. While streaming movies during Covid, I became aware of how common it is for them to mess up facts and get away with it. You can’t get away with it in writing fiction, at least not if you seek feedback from a good critique group. But in movie after movie, I found that facts don’t matter, you can make stuff up. One of many examples I found is in the Netflix series “Away.” A space crew is on their way to Mars. Millions of miles from Earth, the spaceship commander speaks to her daughter back on Earth *without any delay in transmission*. Not possible. If I read that in my critique group I would be slammed.

In another Netflix series, “The Politician,” a high school student who thinks she has cancer has blood drawn for testing, and later is told “the blood test shows you have no cancer.” Nonsense, medically. No such test. If someone read this in our group, I’d be all over it.

From binge watching movies during Covid, I came across many more examples, to the point I decided to write about this difference between books and movies. The result was the purposely highfalutin-titled “The Dichotomy of Verisimilitude between Books and Movies.” My favorite example in this essay is from a famous 1959 movie. Imagine someone reading this bit of narration in a writing critique group.

On Miami Beach, Marilyn Monroe approaches Paul Newman who is sitting in a beach chair. They banter a bit, clearly charmed by each other. In the distance, beachgoers are frolicking in the surf, and across the bay, clouds hang close to the low mountains.

As soon as the reader finished with that paragraph:

“Uh, excuse me, you said this was Miami Beach?”

“Yes. Why?”

“There are no mountains anywhere near Miami Beach.”

Oh, but there must be. See the 1959 film “Some Like it Hot,” starring Newman and Monroe. Repeatedly, in the movie we are told the setting is Miami Beach. But of course, it was filmed at San Diego’s Hotel Coronado, with the backdrop being the rugged Point Loma peninsula (arrow). No one complained back then (as far as I know). But don’t write this in your book. There is a dichotomy of verisimilitude...



The “Miami Beach” scene from 1959 movie “Some Like It Hot”



Now for some of the more common issues encountered in critique group readings. I divide them into two broad categories: Should Revise and Must Revise.

Should Revise. Writing that is grammatically and syntactically correct, but calls attention to itself, making the reading tedious and obstructing the story flow. Common reasons are excess use of prepositions, pronouns, and/or adverbs; and excessive use of passive voice. Examples:

Excess prepositions: In the building, out of the rain, I placed the coins into the designated box, out of which spewed the ticket into my hand.

Suggested change. Inside, now free of the rain, I bought my tickets from the automated box.

Excess pronouns: **He** passed many fast-food joints, none of which interested **him**, until **he** came upon the one **he** was looking for.

Suggested change: He passed many fast-food joints until he found the one he wanted.

Passive voice. He walked into the room and was shocked by what he saw; the painting was defiled with soot and the frame was all askew.

Excessive use of “was” is the problem. Suggested change: He walked into the room and gasped at the mutilated picture: soot splattered over the paint and the frame all askew.

Must Revise. This is the case if the writing is hopelessly confusing to the reader, is grammatically screwed up, or does not convey the author's intent. Examples:

John sat at the table and Bill dealt the cards. Both men put on a poker face, John holding two aces, Bill with two pairs. John threw down two ten-dollar chips, and Bill matched him. "Well, this is getting interesting," he said.

In this example, who is "he"? It's unclear; could be either card player.

After removing the table from the car, Jack sold it.

Did Jack sell the car or the table? Unclear, so needs revision.

In a 1500-word first chapter of a memoir, the author mentioned he went on a trip with Barbara, but never stated who Barbara was. When questioned after the reading, he replied, "Oh, she's my wife." That information was in his head, but not conveyed to the reader.

For more on this common mistake, see <https://drlarry437.medium.com/another-nonfiction-writing-mistake-not-telling-the-reader-whats-in-your-mind-1be2011263eb>

Wrong word choice.

During the king's rein there were incessant wars.

Should be "reign."

Through the telescope he honed in on Venus.

"Hone" is to sharpen; should be "homed" in.

On January 6th they stormed the capital.

Should be "capitol," as it refers to the building, not the city.

Missing comma:

Nathan held up his glass. "Let's drink Carol."

Without a comma after drink, it reads that Nathan wants to drink Carol.

I met up with my sister Jill and Jane.

Is the sister named "Jill and Jane"? For clarity, need a comma before and after Jill.

Common mistakes are common. We all make them. Have your writing critiqued by other writers before publishing.