



Minnesota Christian Writers Guild

Instruction—Inspiration—Fellowship

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February 10, Amy Lyon, Journalist and Author “Crafting a Lead and Structuring Articles”



Community newspapers and magazines are often an overlooked market for writers aspiring to see their work in print – whether it’s for the sheer joy of a byline or to advance their writing career with solid clips. The lead (first sentence or paragraph) is the foundation on which writers build a compelling story. Weekly newspaper editor Amy Lyon will share the secrets of crafting a strong lead that

grabs an editor’s attention, while following up with a story format that fits newspaper style. You’ll also learn how to

query editors with story ideas such as events happening at local churches or profiles about inspirational people in your community.

Amy will provide handouts with examples of captivating first sentences and paragraphs and help define newspaper terms, such as “feature story,” “guest commentary,” “profile,” and “event preview.”

Amy Lyon is the editor of the Savage Pacer newspaper. She has worked in the field of journalism since 1996 as both a reporter and editor. She has written for weekly and daily newspapers, as well as magazines and specialty publications. She is also the author of the memoir, “Only God Knows Why: A Mother’s Memoir of Death and Rebirth,” published in 2012 by Chalice Press.

Upcoming Guild Meetings

March 10, Charlene Patterson, Bethany House editor
Christian Fiction Trends

April 12, Spring Seminar, David Sheets, marketing
All About eBooks

April 14, MCWG Member Panel hosted by Joyce K. Ellis
Practical Insights for Today’s Christian Writer

May 12, MCWG 60th Anniversary Celebration
Jonathan Friesen: *Writing for the Generations*

**2014 MCWG Annual Writing Contest Topic:
NEWS ARTICLES**

See page 2 for details on entering the 2014 Minnesota Christian Writers Guild Annual Writing Contest.

2013-14 Theme Verse

2 Corinthians 3:2-3 ESV

*You yourselves are our letter of recommendation,
written on our hearts, to be known and read by all.
And you show that
you are a letter from Christ delivered by us,
written not with ink
but with the Spirit of the living God,
not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.*

Spring Seminar

All About eBooks, Publishing & More

Make plans to attend MCWG’s Spring Seminar on Saturday, April 12, 2014. The full day seminar, *All About eBooks*, will be held at Bethlehem Baptist.

David Sheets, Chief Sales and Marketing Officer for Outlaw Sales Group LLC, will describe technology changes in publishing, trends in self-publishing, how publishers sell books, and how authors build a marketing strategy. He will discuss publishing strategies that do not work and talk about eBook publishing options.

Brochures for the seminar, containing full details, may be picked up at the Guild meeting.



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2014 MCWG Writing Contest Guidelines

NEWS ARTICLES



Bev's PEN ~ By Beverly Snyder

Promote, Encourage, Network

Basic Elements of a News Article

News articles for the 2014 MCWG annual contest must contain a headline, location, lead, and body. For purposes of anonymity, do not include a byline. Articles should be factual and of interest to the Christian community within the Twin Cities' greater metro area.

This year there is a \$5 entry fee to cover the judging costs.

- All entrants must be members of MCWG.
- Manuscripts must be typed, double-spaced, and previously unpublished.
- Maximum word count is 700 words. Word count must appear at the top left of the manuscript on page one.
- Attach a cover sheet with your name, address, phone number, and e-mail. Do not include this information on the manuscript itself (this retains confidentiality during the judging process).
- Deadline: Monday April 14, 2014 at 9:00 pm (by the end of the Guild meeting).
- Submit entry article and \$5 entry fee in person or by mail to Lotis Key-Kabigting, 1586 Sussex Drive, Minnetonka, MN 55345.
- Only manuscripts accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope will be returned.
- The decision of the judge is final. The judge will remain anonymous.
- Winners will be announced and prizes awarded at the May 12, 2014 meeting.
- 1st prize is \$100. 2nd prize is \$75. 3rd prize is \$50.

Every type of writing has its own style and form. News articles tend to have a more impersonal style with slightly more formal vocabulary than everyday conversations. Below are listed brief definitions for news articles that help describe their form.

Headline: The title of the news article should be short and catch the readers' attentions. Although the headline may summarize the main idea or subject of the article, it does not include a great deal of detail. Typically the title is not a complete sentence, but the major words are capitalized.

Location or Placeline: The purpose of the location or placeline is to tell where the story originated. It is usually printed in bold and placed at the beginning of the article.

Lead: The lead sentence or paragraph briefly gives the most important information and quickly answers the "who," "what," "where," and "when."

Body or Supporting Paragraphs: The body supplies additional information in the form of explanations, quotes, or other details. It develops the ideas introduced by the lead.

Things to remember: The purpose of a news article is to relate information that affects or is of interest to the public, and to report the facts of a current event, problem, or situation. News articles are factual, tell the truth, and are objective. They do not reflect the personal opinions of the journalist, but do provide simple, true statements about what happened. Witnesses on the scene or experts on a subject may be quoted. Quotations retell, word for word, what someone actually said.

2013-2014 Officers

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Meeting Schedule

Meetings are the second Monday of each month, September through May, 6:30-9 p.m. in the lower level Youth Room at Bethlehem Baptist Church, 720 13th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55415. The meeting room is handicap accessible.



Parking for Guild Meetings

Bethlehem Baptist Church is located in downtown Minneapolis, between South 7th and 8th Streets. Free parking for Guild members/visitors is accessed off South 8th St. When full, parking is available across 7th Street for a nominal cost. Entrance doors adjoin the main parking lot. If attendant at main doors is unavailable, please call Delores Topliff at 612-356-8281.

Come early. Share a ride.