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PWC Monthly Meetings

Phoenix Writers Club meets every 3rd Saturday of the month.

NEXT MEETING: Saturday, August 20 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m. via Zoom.

Members: No fee. Guests: Two meetings free, then membership required for further attendance.

RSVP to Navissa Kaiser at navissak@hotmail.com, call or text (480) 200-5191.

August Speaker

In August, we welcome Tim Storm!

Tim Storm is a freelance editor and writing instructor based in Madison, Wisconsin. He is an award-winning short story writer, with work in several anthologies and journals, including *Black Warrior Review*, *Copper Nickel*, *Jellyfish Review*, and *Literary Hub*. He's also an award-winning teacher with over 20 years of experience. He offers courses at stormwritingschool.com.

Tension talk description: Tension is one of the main drivers of reader engagement in storytelling. But what do we mean when we talk about tension and how do we create it? Tim Storm identifies tension types and sources in this talk.



Member Spotlight

Congratulations to Mark D Walker. Peace Corps Worldwide highlighted his new book, *My Saddest Pleasures: 50 Years on the Road*, on May 31st, 2022. It rolled out June 1st. Here is the link <https://peacecorpsworldwide.org/my-saddest-pleasures-50.../>

Susan Pohlman of the Writers Network said, "...Mark Walker celebrates fifty years of wandering the globe from isolated areas of the highlands of Guatemala to the highest reaches of the Andes to his present home in the desert Southwest. In his engaging and informal style, Walker shares his trials and tribulations. Whether you're an armchair traveler or a seasoned one, Walker's life and travels will be an inspiration!"

The editor of the Arizona Authors Association Katy Cook said, *"In this glorious little travel chapbook, Mark relays his epic journey through life in a vivid, emotional, humorous and insightful account. His remarkable passage through dangers and delights gives witness to the fact that, whether traversing precarious depths or astounding peaks, he has always truly lived, unlike many armchair adventurers. Mark evidences the fact that you don't need money or connections to travel the world. All you need is courage, fortitude, and a yearning to experience all the different flavors of life. Mark was obviously blessed with those gifts in abundance, as well as one more: an incredible wife. His description of Ligia evokes a deep respect in me. She's the kind of woman I'd love to know as a friend. In fact, I'd love to meet both of them and revel in their myriad and fascinating stories, and perhaps share a round of that intriguing "tiger milk." Until then, I'll keep reading all of Mark's wonderful tales."*



RPCV/Author One Hundred Fires in Cuba, John Thorndike says, "...Not every day runs smoothly but his bright portraits are an inspiration to those who recently have been dragging their feet!"

And, June 1st, his latest essay for Revue Magazine came out and it profiles the life of local poet Earl de Berg, "Allegro for Guatemala: An Expatriate Journey Through the Land of the Eternal Spring." This will be his 17th essay in this publication which emanates from Antigua, Guatemala.

A Note from the PWC President

"Deep summer is when laziness finds respectability.

Sam Keen (American author, professor, and philosopher)

Summertime is an especially good time to stay in your air conditioning or lounge by the pool with a cool drink. So PWC is taking a 'vacation' in July so we can lollygag about instead of having our July 16th meeting. We will be back on Zoom on August 20th with another knowledgeable and inspiring speaker and his info is included on the front page.

BUT we are excited to be having an **in-person social gathering on August 6th at 11:30 at Duck and Decanter**, 1651 E. Camelback Road, Phoenix.

This is not an official meeting, just a time to get together to see each other with nosh and schmoozing (and see if we can identify each other from our Zoom mugs). At Duck and Decanter, you order and pick up at the counter and take your food to a table. We will meet upstairs. Since this is not a reserved space, please let me know if you will be attending. This will be a rough estimate so we can push tables together beforehand. By 12:30 I would like to have us introduce ourselves to all.

For any questions, thoughts, messages to cool off in the summer or RSVP, email me at writeoncindi@gmail.com.

Look forward to seeing your talented selves in August!

Write on,
Cindi Reiss

Miss Out? June 2022 Meeting Minutes

By Secretary Bernadette Inlan

President Cindi Reiss opened the Phoenix Writer's Club meeting at 12:30 p.m. Twenty-two writers participated, including welcoming the following new members and guests: Patti Meis, Joe Gibbs, Stella Pope Duarte, Susan Corey, and Beth Johnson.

Guest Speaker

Cindi flipped the meeting around and went first to our guest speaker, Amber Royer, who was introduced by Speaker Chair Susanne Brent. Amber writes the *Chocoverse* comic telenovela-style foodie-inspired space opera series, and the *Bean to Bar Mysteries*. She also teaches creative writing and is an author coach. Visit her website <http://amberroyer.com/> for a complete listing of her works.

Amber began her presentation with clichés which can be so overused that the idea the cliché is trying to convey no longer has vividness. She used the example of "a stitch in time saves nine." When this cliché was first noted, it made sense because apparel was expensive. By fixing a little break, before the whole fabric ripped—that was new, it was novel and made sense to everybody's mind. However, the intensity of using that cliché now does not work similarly. While we can still visualize fabric tearing, the "translation" moved to that part of the reader's brain and is lost in translation. When we write a character who speaks in clichés, we don't get to know the person and the character can be seen as negative. Amber quoted the novelist Peter Selgan, "writers put themselves at risk if they're drawing from cliché." When you use a trope—a commonplace, recognizable plot element, theme, or visual cue that conveys something—you have the opportunity to build off the ordinary or the common and make it positive. We should take the time to build a character who's a unique individual that allows us to connect—to feel their pain and allows us to hope for their success.

Amber followed with, how do you start to understand characters as humans? You begin by spending time in their head. Use free writing from your character's point of view. She loves character interviews, so she becomes a journalist. If you can get yourself in this mindset, Amber claims you can do some exciting things with a character. Take your character into an empty white room in your mind. Talk freely and ask questions that are hard to hear. For example, who would mourn you if you didn't survive? Who would give your eulogy? What would you die to protect? Allow the character to have an emotional response to these questions. You'll find some interesting answers. Later in your plot, this will avoid inconsistencies with your character.

Amber talked about story analyst and speaker Lisa Cron, author of *Wired for Story*, who has several books on brain-wired psychology. According to Cron, the reader enters into that scenario where they can reread a book and still hope it will end differently because the brain is putting them in that suspension of disbelief space where the characters are the only thing in front, and they can feel are absolutely real. Our brain has difficulty differentiating between our imaginary friends on the page or in a show, especially if it's a series with 25 books in it and we know the character well. If your character becomes inconsistent, this is a big problem. Amber gave an example of this with a Star Trek captain who was all over the place with a prime directive and wound up in the whole mess because she wouldn't violate the prime directive.

Next, Amber moved to character archetypes, which are complex with usually one dominant archetype. If

you look at the archetype for your protagonist in your antagonist, sometimes they will be the same, e.g., two characters you believe both to be heroes; two characters who are both rebels, then you have that mirror going on which psychologically can be very satisfying. This is where you get the whole Batman and Joker thing. They're both hero rebels. They fit the same archetypes, but they've made different decisions. One becomes a hero; one a villain hero with strength, courage, stamina, faith, challenges, arrogance, and delusions of grandeur. Anytime you design a character, they need both strengths and drawbacks.

If you're writing and the antagonist, who is a true villain at heart, but you feel like they're the hero—flip this so that the challenges, the arrogance, and the illusions of grandeur are stronger. It's a sliding scale between the positives in the negatives. Give them the arrogance of illusions of grandeur. They think they know the only way to fix things. But remember that underneath, that courage, that faith in whatever it is, they believe they possess the willingness to compete against all odds that are still there. And that is what will make them complex and feel like real people. When you hit that against your hero, the antagonist is willing to compete against incredible odds. Make a strong enough character to stand up against your hero until the end of the book.

A question was asked: When developing characters do you tend to work from archetype ideas into character or begin creating a character and then use the archetype to go deeper? Amber responded that she does the second for major characters—creating a character and then using the archetype to go deeper. If there's a minor character and she needs them to fill in a place, she gives them a name and an archetype, and the personality comes later. But, if it's somebody she's going to spend a lot of time with, she does a lot of character interviews to see what archetype they fit.

Amber said at the end of her presentation that sometimes it's the type of plot the writer will have to write that helps determine the qualities the characters should have.

Amber invited participants to her regular weekly Topic Saturday Night Write which begins at 4 p.m. She closed her presentation to attend her next Zoom group.

Cindi asked the new members and guests tell something about their writing. She closed the meeting at 2 p.m. The Board meeting followed.

August's speaker will be Tim Storm.

Write On Writers (WOW) News

You are always welcome to join us at our Write on Writers (WOW) group after the general meeting. This is a fun general meeting to ask questions about printing, finding an agent, and other questions that often arise with writers. Email Cindi Reiss at writeoncindi@gmail.com for more info.

PWC Critique Writing Group

Our critique workshop meets via Zoom every 2nd and 4th Friday of the month (a change). The July workshops will be on July 8, 6-8 p.m. and July 22, 6-8 p.m. Email Bernadette Inlan at bsbincoin@aol.com for information.



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Local Writing Activities

Central Phoenix Writing Workshop – check their website—they have several workshops scheduled
https://www.meetup.com/CentralPhoenixWritingWorkshop/?_cookie-check=mzzcOalgDI-tuB9n

Write Here, Write Now, Virtual pop-up workshops each month, hosted online, co-presented by Phoenix College and ASU's Piper Center for Creative Writing . Go to Changing Hands to register. 6:30-8:00

Writing Workshops, <https://writingworkshops.com/>, lists all sorts of upcoming workshops for writers.

Writing Smarter with Focus that will Save You Time, July 23, 1:30—3:00, <https://www.authortinawheeler.com/events/no-live-events-at-this-time>

Book Pre-Launch Success Masterclass: Get Paid To Publish — online or Deer Valley, July 5, 4-7, <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/book-pre-launch-success-masterclass-get-paid-to-publish-deer-valley-tickets-371190008307>

Writing Tips & Tricks

Dim the lights, sit back with your favorite beverage, and have your computer read your story to you. It's amazing how many errors you may detect by hearing the spoken words.

In MS Word, open your story, go to Review, and click on a button called "Read Aloud". To stop the reading, click on the button again. You can also select individual sentences or paragraphs to be read.