



Mid Michigan Writers, Inc.

June 2020  
Volume 2, Issue 6



# THE INK DROP

## Greetings and Salutations:

We are living history right now and lots of things are happening. It is a great time to flex those writing muscles and take advantage of the fodder being provided by all the events, people, and conflict taking place in the world. I am not a fan of facebook or social media and although I have an account I have never used it for anything except checking up on family. Since all this upheaval and agitation has been going on I was frustrated by not having an outlet to express my opinions and thoughts. I am a conservative activist and a liberal society has no place for us. Since I am not adapt at verbal communication I decided to start posting on facebook. I am happy to report I have written at least 500 or more words almost daily and have enjoyed it. Thirty-one articles now occupy my space. There are on varied topics, researched, and MY OPINION. Not only has my writing improved, but I have been surprised at how much I have learned about myself and the writing process. The time worn admonition to put your butt in the chair and write every day is true and it does work.

The Summer Workshop held at Laura's home was attended by seven of the members. Chris was kind enough to write an article for the bulletin and both she and Laura presented classes. Handouts are available, ye have but to ask. I also came across a chart on the types of conflict that will go along with what using it to build characters.

Ernie is a fan of YouTube videos on writing and sent me an email that I might consider suggesting their use to the group. Writers Digest has several webinars that have been given and are posted on demand so wander over to their website and check them out. Let me know what you think.

Hope you liked the Inkspots for the quarter and found it informative and will also find the Inkdrop useful as well. Thanks for your support,  
Donnie

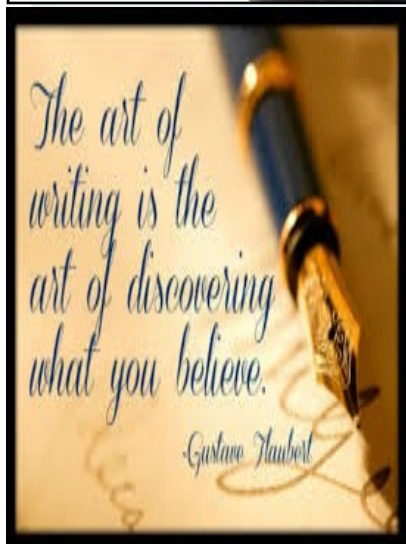
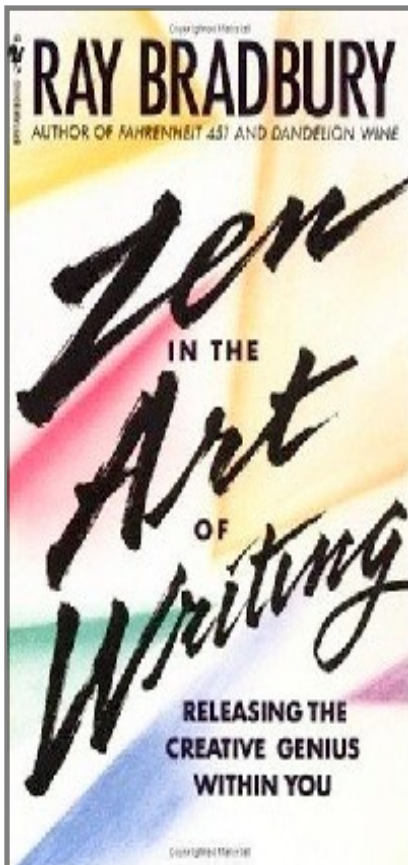


## North Street Book Prize for Self-Published Books

You've got 13 more days to enter our contest for self-published books. We'll award \$5,000 in cash to the grand prize winner. Six category winners will each receive \$1,000. All seven top winners will receive additional benefits from our co-sponsors, BookBaby and Carolyn Howard-Johnson, to help market their books. Everyone who enters will receive a free digital copy of Ms. Howard-Johnson's handy guide, *How to Get Great Book Reviews Frugally & Ethically*.

**Please mail your entry or submit it online by June 30.** Choose from six categories: Mainstream/Literary Fiction, Genre Fiction, Creative Nonfiction & Memoir, Poetry, Children's Picture Book, Graphic Novel & Memoir,

Our contest is "Recommended" by the Alliance of Independent Authors. Any year of publication is eligible. **Entry fee: \$65 per book.** Multiple entries welcome. Submit online via Submittable or by mail. **Click to learn more about our guidelines, past winners, and judges' remarks.**



## MMW Summer Workshop, Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup>

Seven members of Mid Michigan Writers met high on a hilltop outside West Branch at Laura's. We missed our fearless leader, Ken, who was sidelined with a bum knee.

Chris, Ernie, Kay, Marylou, Pam B. and Rikki listened and learned as Laura presented a workshop on "The Dynamics of Conflict for Character Development." She provided hand-outs with items to consider when developing characters for a piece of fiction –whether it be flash, novella, short story or novel.

There was a lot of good information to consider. She discussed the threat to the needs, interests, concerns and stability of the story character, positive and negative consequences of dealing with conflict, the root cause of the main conflict, empowerment, how that changes from beginning of the story to the end; anger, respect, negative emotions, and the personal style of dealing with conflict.

As a bonus, Laura gave each of us a "Personal Conflict Style Inventory" that we could use for ourselves, our characters, or both. This inventory would provide insight into whether a person uses avoiding, competing, collaborating or accommodating approaches and your (or your character's) level of compromising in terms of commitment to the relationship involved, and the commitment to each person's goals in relation to the issue at hand.

This was a very informative, enlightening and interesting presentation that should be very helpful in developing believable characters' – emotions, actions and reactions, thoughts, and dialogue –throughout your story. We took a break for lunch and a short walk around some of the spacious property.

Chris presented a workshop entitled "How to Write a Prose Poem Using Detail." She provided hand-outs; the first showed examples from various famous poets. Members took turns reading aloud poems that demonstrated the use of details, rhyme, free verse and the range of subjects authors chose to spotlight. Discussion followed.

Each attending member was asked to bring written details on several items (of their choice.) Chris asked them to choose one item and write a descriptive paragraph about it. Volunteers read these aloud. Then work continued determining the main focus of their paragraph, eliminating words off-topic or vague and focusing on more detailed descriptors. We discussed this as questions arose. Sometimes this also involved re-organizing the ideas; deciding what will be the first lines and so forth. Participants were asked to write their description in short lines in poetry style. We promised to share our creations online as we needed to continue honing our emerging poems. We look forward to seeing the revisions, and crafted poems.

The day provided a wonderful opportunity to share ideas, create new ideas and be together. The weather cooperated, providing plenty of sunshine.





## How Reading Out Loud Can Make You a Better Writer

Victoria Otto Franzese

Study after study shows that reading aloud to children provides a multitude of benefits, including sharper focus and better comprehension. Many of these same advantages occur when you read your own writing out loud, which is why doing so can be an important tool for editing your work.

Researchers who have found differences between reading silently and reading aloud suggest that by *hearing* words in addition to *seeing* them, your brain becomes more actively engaged, which triggers enhanced cognitive abilities. In other words, you are a smarter, more astute editor just by virtue of voicing the words you have written, instead of scanning them only with your eyes.

While there seems to be an overall advantage to reading aloud as part of your editing process, I have found that some kinds of mistakes are far easier to spot when you hear them than when you see them. For example, your eyes often fill in the blanks when there are missing words in your manuscript, especially small, every day words like “the” and “in.” Word processing software does not always catch these omissions either. But when you read aloud, you will easily spot these errors. Similarly, you may not notice unnecessary repetition of a word or phrase within your story until you hear it. The same holds true for using common clichés and the individual pet phrases that every writer has.

Awkward sentences become painfully clear when you hear them. If you find yourself stumbling to speak something you have written, you will immediately recognize that it is time to rework that section of your piece.

Find yourself getting out of breath as you read? That is a clear sign that something is wrong. Look for missing punctuation marks or a poorly constructed paragraph. Strong writing always includes natural pauses. If there is not one, you will want to figure out why. Good writing is always clear, crisp, and concise—and your ear will tell you when you have got it right.

Once you see the advantages of reading your writing out loud to yourself as a critical step during the editing process, you may want to take things a bit further and have someone else read your document aloud to you. If you include humor in your copy, this step can be especially useful, since you may discover that your words aren’t as funny or even as lively as you had intended when your reader doesn’t employ the same intonation and inflection that you do.

Over time, you will find that listening to language (whether just in your voice or also in someone else’s) makes you a better writer. Not only will it improve your self-editing as you hear mistakes that you might not have noticed visually, but you may find yourself including euphonic literary devices in your text, such as alliteration and onomatopoeia. You will hear the value in alternating long sentences and short ones. And you will create a rhythm and flow to your words that make reading your writing a pleasure.

**Bio:** Victoria Otto Franzese owned, operated, and wrote for a successful online travel guide for 15 years before selling it to a major media outlet. Now, thankfully, all her travel is purely for fun. Her s, articles and stories have appeared in a wide variety of online and print publications.



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## 3 Tips

*for Starting Your Writing Project*

1. Write down your idea
2. Write down what you want your reader to know
3. Write down the points in between

Word Wise at [www.nonprofitcopywriter.com](http://www.nonprofitcopywriter.com)

# 6 Types of Story Conflict



## Person vs Person

Character conflicts, whether between heroes and villains or sparring lovers.



## Person vs Society

A character is victimised by society, e.g. Hester's public shaming in Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*.



## Person vs Nature

E.g. when two lovers are separated by a hurricane in *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston.



## Person vs Technology

Characters face the ominous results of science moving beyond our control. E.g. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.



## Person vs Self

Conflict between a character and their inner struggle. E.g. Rodion's violent fantasies in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*.



## Person vs Supernatural

The source of conflict is supernatural, e.g. the shape-shifting 'It' that terrorises children in Stephen King's novel of the same name.



## 4 Free, On-Demand Writing Webinars



The word *free* has a nice ring to it, especially when writers are involved. While there are an inexhaustible number of workshops, retreats and conferences targeting authors and budding writers, most will do a number on your wallet. If you're not in a position to fork over a couple hundred dollars, you may feel there are no resources available to you. Fortunately, that's not the case.

One of the best ways for writers to self-educate (without leaving the house) is through webinars. As the name implies, a webinar is a sort of seminar held online, usually some cross between a slide show and audio presentation. While many come with a price tag, there are a number of webinars available at no cost. Another great perk: many of these have already aired and have been archived away, ready for you to hit play at your own convenience. That means you can decide when you want to learn and move at your own pace. Whether you want to get updated on new technology or refresh your memory on old techniques, there's something available right now online that can add to your writer's toolbox. We've scoured the Internet for the best free webinars aimed at writers, and below we've compiled a list of our favorites. Happy learning!

**1. Writer's Digest: Secrets of Successful Self-Publishers** Here's a great tutorial on e-book publishing and marketing. You'll learn the basics of formatting and design, distribution, and selling strategies for Amazon. This webinar aired in October 2013 and is available for viewing whenever you want!

**2. Houston Writers Guild: Building an Organized, Supportive, Successful Writers Community** A number of wonderful, free (or cheap) webinars are available online thanks to the Houston Writers Guild. The topic of creating community among writers is particularly important and rarely discussed, which is why we were thrilled to discover this fantastic free webinar. It's already been uploaded and ready to view whenever the mood strikes you. While you're at it, check out Houston Writers Guilds' other free webinars.

**3. Grant Space: Proposal Writing Basics** While the thought of writing a grant proposal may not tickle your fancy, it's a skill that's highly sought after and could land you a job. Grant writing is an excellent way to translate your writing abilities into a full-time career. If you'd like to get a better grasp of what it's all about, this is the webinar for you.

**4. Script Magazine: How to Write a Screenplay** Get insider tips on structuring your movie script and tailoring it for your audience. You'll also learn how to market your screenplay using a logline, your one-line pitch. If you're interested in screenwriting or looking to broaden your knowledge base, you can access this webinar for free and watch it on-demand.



As a writer  
you try to listen  
to what others  
aren't saying...  
and write about  
the silence.

- N.R. Hart

