

KWA

Kansas Writers Association

all genres. all formats. ALL WRITERS.

JUNE 2010

JUNE WORKSHOP

Saturday, June 19

1:30-4 p.m.

Rockwell Library

5939 E. 9th St.

Wichita

Relationships & Characters

How do you manage the relationships in your stories? Join us for our June workshop with relationship coach and KWA member Ronda Welsh, who will share her tips for exploring any relationship system, including spouses, co-workers, family members, friends, fiction or non-fiction characters, plus relationships with editors, agents, publishers, other authors, and readers. We will play around with the top seven skills that make relationships great and the

four most toxic things that destroy relationships. Ronda will also guide us in tools and skills to learn how different people perceive and experience the relationship system. It's a great way to gain new insight for creating characters for all genres, and when dealing with editors, agents, publishers, and readers. Ronda says she's looking forward to seeing how writers experience, describe and exaggerate the top seven skills and the four most toxic things to relationships.

Ronda said she feels blessed that her career roles feed her passion of helping people with their relationships. She spent 15 years as a legal assistant, eight of which she spent helping people through divorce and custody cases. During that time she discovered she could delve further into her passion as a Kansas Supreme Court approved mediator for the divorce courts.



The next level of her journey seemed natural when she became a trained relationship coach. Her specialty is equipping singles with a dating strategy to attract the one they are meant to be with once and for all. Her relationship coaching has also benefited many couples (dating, engaged, and married) who desire to set their relationship on an unshakable foundation. Ronda facilitates multiple singles groups and has given numerous workshops and speaking presentations. A majority of her free time is spent with her grandson and nieces. Her website is www.resolveittogether.com.

Volume 14, Issue 6

Editor: Erin Perry O'Donnell

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Calendar

- June 19: **Regular Meeting.** Relationships & Characters
- July 17: **Regular Meeting.** Entering Contests

**Our mission:
to inform,
support,
encourage,
and promote
the writer.**

Member News

Gordon Kessler is offering a second round of his *Novel Writing Made Simple* seminar on Saturday, June 26, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Watermark Books & Café, 4701 E. Douglas (at Oliver) in Wichita. Registration is \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door. Gordon says, "Here we go again, Wichita! This isn't going to be your average everyday, boring lecture and lengthy, do-little writing exercises, folks. This will be an interactive workshop, guaranteed to supercharge your writing, get your prose flowing and your passion burning." Get more details at www.writersmatrix.com.

B.D. Tharp has scheduled the following readings and signings for her novel, *Feisty Family Values*:

- June 12, 2-5 p.m.: Group of authors signing at Barnes & Noble in Bradley Fair, Wichita
- June 21, 6 p.m.: Highland House Apartments, 13th & Woodlawn, Wichita
- June 26, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.: Town Crier Bookstore's 4th Annual Author Extravaganza, 716 Commercial, Emporia



B.D. Tharp signs copies of her novel *Feisty Family Values* at Watermark Books & Café in March.

Loads of Resources Online for Character Development

Need a little inspiration to bring your characters to life? Check out this sampling of articles, tools, and video available online to help guide you in character development. (Don't worry about some of the long addresses; we'll post this article on our website, kwawriters.org, with links you can click on.)

character-development.suite101.com

Suite101: Developing Memorable Characters. We really like the "45 Questions to Create Backstories," with such thought-provoking suggestions as "In what or whom does this character have the greatest faith?" and "Describe this character's mother." There are also guides on choosing character names and adding backstory without an info dump.

www.sfw.org/2005/01/you-and-your-characters

You and Your Characters by James Patrick Kelly. A fun and insightful article, reprinted on the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America website from the book *Writing Science Fiction and Fantasy*, edited by Gardner Dozois, et. al.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=LgJ809QKmas

Video: Author Joyce Carol Oates discusses how a writer develops realistic characters, using examples from her 2007 novel *The Gravedigger's Daughter*.

www.charlottedillon.com/characters.html

Building Fictional Characters by Charlotte Dillon. A compendium of links to a huge number of worksheets and other tools to help put flesh on your characters' bones.

fictionwriting.about.com/od/crafttechnique/tp/createcharacter.htm

Top 10 Questions for Creating Believable Characters, by Ginny Wiehardt, About.com Guide. A good 10-

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DWFI Conference: On Voice, Characters, and Listening to Fred



By Arlene Rains Graber
KWA Member

The Oklahoma Writers' Federation, Inc. conference this year was more amazing than ever. Six KWA members attended, completing a really "fun" KWA table.

I'll let your imagination soar as to what kind of fun.

Writing conferences are invaluable to the writer, and this one doesn't ever disappoint. A wealth of information was given, way too much to list here, but here are a few highlights that really stood out.

KD Wentworth, science fiction and fantasy writer, gave an interesting presentation on "Learning to Listen to Fred." Writing utilizes both the left and right brain. Your left brain is the editor, while the right brain is the creative spirit. Fred is the right brain. When you're stuck—turn it to Fred and accept anything he gives you, because listening to Fred is what gives your work originality.

For characters, give few visual details and then get out of the reader's way. Instead, let Fred use mannerisms and distinguishing dialogue to set your characters apart. Dialogue not only moves the story along but prevents information dumping.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

The next DWFI conference is scheduled for May 5-7, 2011, at the Embassy Suites Hotel/OKC. Visit www.owfi.org for more information.

Avoid unsympathetic characters. If your reader doesn't like them, they won't keep reading. And never use passive characters. These are the characters that things happen to—the characters that don't make things happen. Wake Fred up and let your character soar.

Another speaker, Sandra Bishop, literary agent with MacGregor Literary, spoke about the importance of voice. It comes by writing, writing, and writing some more. When you have voice, editors take notice and readers want more.

Voice is personality on paper. The best way to culti-



The KWA delegation to the DWFI Conference (left to right): Arlene Rains Graber, Gordon Kessler, Starla Criser, Tonya Cummings, Gary Cummings, Julie Anderson, and Vicki Hermes-Bond.

vate voice is to first kick the editor to the curb. Once you have your manuscript, then go back and edit. Be sure to put negative voices in a jar and screw it tight. And remember, passive voice is death to an editor.

Alice Crider, associate editor at WaterBrook Multnomah Publishing Group, left us with this simple statement: Don't let "No" or REJECTION bother you. If you do, you won't ever publish.

Arlene Rains Graber is the author of *Devoted to Traveling* and a longtime member of both KWA and DWFI.

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P.O. Box 2236, Wichita, KS 67201

Newsletter Submissions

Submit articles and member news by the 20th of the month to Erin Perry O'Donnell at newsletter@kwawriters.org or to our address above. Put "KWA" in the subject line for emails, and please send information in the body of the email, not as an attachment.

Join KWA

Get a membership through Dec. 31, our monthly newsletter, and a discount on our programs and seminars. Dues are \$20 for a mailed newsletter, \$17 for emailed newsletter, and \$10 for a youth membership (under 21). Membership forms are online at www.kwawriters.org. Renewals are due Jan. 1. Send your check to: KWA, P.O. Box 2236, Wichita, KS 67201

*The Kansas Writers Association is a not-for-profit
501(c)(3) organization.*

[<http://www.kwawriters.org> **]**

ONLINE: Loads of Resources for Character Development

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step "interview" for the people who live in your story.

www.writersdigest.com/article/developing-your-hero-and-heroine/

A Checklist for Developing Your Hero and Heroine from Writer's Digest.

Their tip: "As you answer the questions, look for points of agreement and disagreement between the characters."

www.underdown.org/mf_characters_dialogue.htm —and—
www.underdown.org/mf-powerful-voice.htm

Two articles by children's author Margot Finke. In the first, *Writing Great Characters and Dialogue*, Finke gives detailed examples for enriching dialogue, internal angst, and more. *Layering Powerful Voice to Create Memorable Characters* is a good how-to on getting to know your characters intimately and subtle self-revelation.

popwatch.ew.com/2010/06/01/100-greatest-characters-of-last-20-years-full-list/
Entertainment Weekly this month released its list of the top 100 characters of the last 20 years. Did your favorites make it?

"If there's a book you really want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it."

~Toni Morrison