

The Just Write Life



Our First Edition

Thank you for reading the inaugural edition of *The Just Write Life*, a quarterly newsletter created for the online (and at-large) chapter of the League of Utah Writers. We are resurrecting the wonderful newsletters Ann Gordon used to provide, with articles, resources, and quotes. However, In these quarterly newsletters, we will include member publication announcements and member spotlights. If you don't want to be featured in the member spotlight you may opt out; however, we encourage you to participate as it will be nice to get to know each other. We will email you in advance to let you know you've been chosen for the spotlight. If you accept, you can either send a new photo and bio, or we can pull what we have from our chapter website.

If you have recently published a book, short story,
(Continued on page 2)

Inside This Issue

New Members-----	2
Member Spotlight -----	3
Article -----	4
Who's Penned What -----	5
Upcoming Events -----	7
Resources and Inspiration -----	7
Critique Session Info-----	8

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(Continued from page 1)



article or poem, please email Ann or Lisa with the details (title, genre, tagline, and a thumbnail of the cover if applicable). The same goes for writing awards. We will then include your information in the next edition of the newsletter. These can be traditionally published works or those you've self-published. We will also include this information on our chapter website.

Each issue will also feature an article penned by one of our members on the writing life. This is a great opportunity to share your knowledge and insight with the chapter.

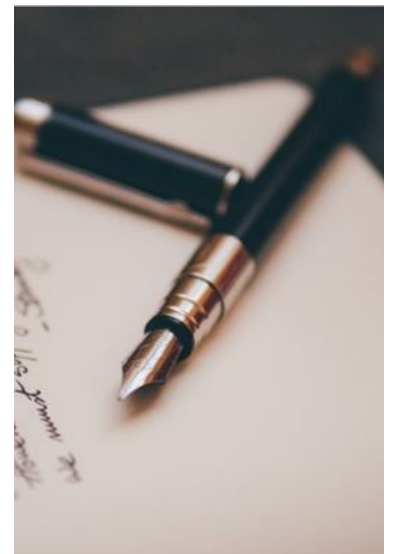
Finally, the newsletter will contain submission rules and guidelines for our critique sessions. Many of you are seasoned in this process, but others may need a reminder on how it all works. We invite each members to join us in these bi-weekly sessions.

"Write while the heat is in you. The writer who postpones the recording of his thoughts uses an iron which has cooled to burn a hole with." —Henry David Thoreau

New Members

We would like to welcome the following new members to Just Write:

- Marilyn Rockelman
- Bonnie Moore



Member Spotlight: Shawn Pollock



Shawn was bitten by the writing bug at an early age. English was his favorite subject all through school, especially creative writing classes. He contributed to and helped compile his high school's literary annual, "Roads Less Traveled." His short story, "Hats," won The New Era magazine's fiction contest in 1993.

More recently, he has buckled down to writing every day, producing short stories and novels as he works to learn the craft. He published his debut novel, "The Road to Freedom," with Cedar Fort Publishing in 2017. Short fiction publications include "The Specimen" in Flash Fiction Magazine, and "Salt Creek Range" in Frontier Tales. He has also delved into independent publishing with his novelette, "A KO for Christmas."

Shawn's favorite books are the "Holmes on the Range" mysteries by Steve Hockensmith, and the Kenzie and Gennaro mysteries by Dennis Lehane. Both have inspired him to try his hand at writing mysteries of his own, an exercise he alternately considers "maddening" and "lots of fun," depending on how the day's writing goes. He currently has two mysteries in various states of completion. He is also working on a faith-based novel set during and after the Vietnam War.

When asked why he writes, Shawn stated, "Writing is one of those activities that shouldn't work to a person's well-being. It comes with so much self-doubt and insecurity, but when you power through the hard moments and find the muse ready to surprise you, it's a fantastic feeling. Sometimes I wish I was a painter instead, so I could just paint a picture and hang it somewhere, but I'm a writer. Simply put, I have to write."

Shawn grew up in Cache Valley, Utah and graduated from USU with degrees in Professional Writing and Instructional Technology. He works as an instructional designer and writes at night. He's been a faithful and valued participant in our critique sessions for many years.

He documents his journey as a writer on Facebook at @authorshawnpollock <https://www.facebook.com/authorshawnpollock/>

How Long Does It Take to Write a Novel?

By Ann Gordon

When I first read this blog title I thought of the old non-answerable question: “How long is a piece of string?” Well, a piece of string is as long as it is. For me, that’s a fitting response for how long it takes to write a novel. I mostly finished a YA novel 24 years ago, yet I’ve still never actually finished it. I admit, that’s a ridiculous amount of time to have a manuscript in the closet.

Some people swear they can finish outlining a novel in a week (they must have novel confused with novelette) while most professional, best-selling novelists, like Scott Turow, say it takes months to plot their next book and the rest of the year to write it. That’s why most of these well-known novelists produce one book a year. Remember, we’re talking about fiction here.

As a tech writer and mostly non-fiction author, I know non-fiction takes less time to write than fiction. Much less. On one contract, I outlined and wrote a 300-page technical manual in 90 days. And those were 8.5 x 11 pages that I printed and kept in a 3-ring binder. Non-fiction is easier from the onset because the writer knows the subject, outline, and conclusion before starting. Tech manuals and how-to books follow a logical progression from start to finish.

But fiction is nothing like that, well not for me. I start a story with a few characters, a pretty good idea of the setting, and one or two troubling situations for the characters to resolve. From then on, the story seems to take on a “life” of its own, which sounds easier than it is. As we humans know, “life” is often illogical and certainly doesn’t always progress forward. The author may have Plan A in mind but the story’s characters end up battling with Plan B. That’s what makes reading fiction more entertaining than non-fiction, but it also means a lot more work for the author.

I found two entertaining articles about this subject and thought I’d share them with you.

This delightful article is from Huffington Post: <https://www.huffpost.com/entry/how-long-does-a-novel-tak b 5359814>

This article offers an educational trek through a writers process: <https://thewritepractice.com/how-long-to-write-book/>

She began with: “Writing the first draft of a book is a grueling, intimidating process. But it doesn’t have to be a slow process.” That’s promising!

Write on,

Ann



Who's Penned What

A list of recently published books by our members.

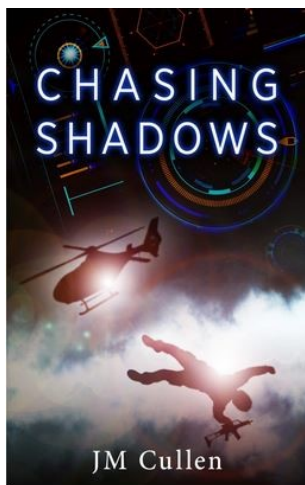
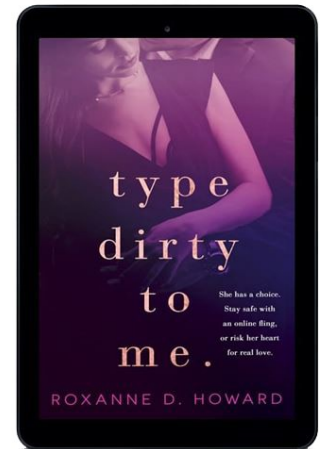
TYPE DIRTY TO ME.

Haley Cavanaugh (writing as Roxanne D. Howard)

Genre: Romance

She has a choice. Stay safe with an online fling, or risk her heart for real love.

[Buy it on Amazon](#)



CHASING SHADOWS

John Cullen (writing as JM Cullen)

Genre: Science Fiction

Navy Seal Lt. Adam McIntyre battles shadows, shades, zombies, and spirits from beyond space and time, as he overcomes his own inner demons to protect the world from his own dark past.

[Buy it on Amazon](#)

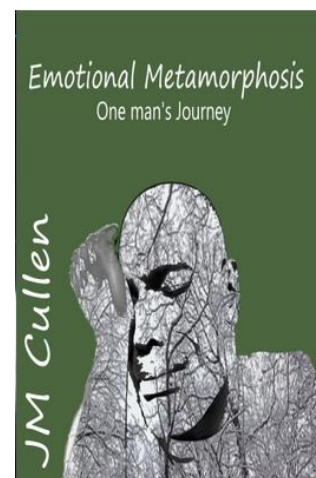
EMOTIONAL METAMORPHOSIS: ONE MAN'S JOURNEY

John Cullen (writing as JM Cullen)

Genre: Psychological Fiction

In a battle for his soul, Dan Johnson knew the truth would cost him everything. If he could do nothing but save himself, he was worth it.

[Buy it on Amazon](#)



(Continued on page 6)

Who's Penned What

(Continued from page 5)



THE TWENTY-FIFTH MAGICAL MANUSCRIPT OF SEVERENCE MCGEE

Lisa Vickers (writing as Lisbeth Adamson)

Genre: Fantasy (Short Story)

A disgraced wizard types his greatest failure into a triumphant story. Will Severence McGee finally catch the break he's been waiting for?

[Buy it on Amazon](#)

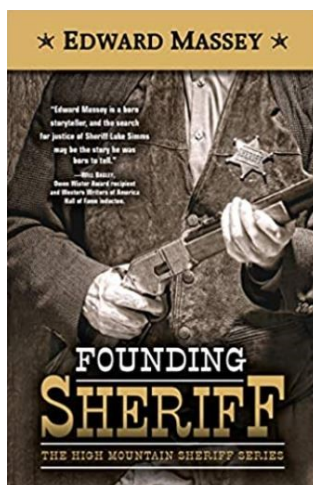
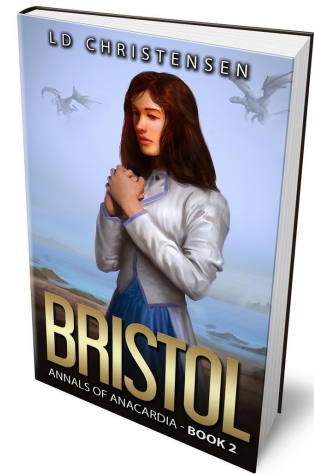
BRISTOL (ANNALS OF ANACARDIA BOOK 2)

Lance Christensen (writing as LD Christensen)

Genre: Fantasy

As war rages in the distant lands, Olivia Wheeler begins a new life in the sprawling city of Bristol. Turban Odenkirk flees to a foreign land, seeking revenge as he abandons Amiethest's shores. Robert Alton struggles for the affections of the girl he loves, who seeks to remain true to her betrothed in Siden. The secrets of the Mithrail return to haunt them as ancient enemies seek advantage in the war-torn lands of the Bali Valley.

[Buy it on Amazon](#)



FOUNDING SHERIFF

Edward Massey

Genre: Historical Fiction

Immigrant cooper named sheriff investigates a girl murdered in her bed and tracks her husband who escaped in Grandma's buggy. Indian troubles, vigilantes' murderous justice, and a railroad hell-on-wheels town threaten the founding sheriff's promise to the murdered girl's mother.

[Buy it on Amazon](#)

Upcoming Events



LUW Pre-Quill Conference

Saturday, April 17, 2021 9:00 AM—7:00 PM MDT

****ONLINE ONLY****

Register [here](#).

Just Write Chapter Meet and Greet

Date: Summer 2021, TBD

Location: TBD

Watch your inboxes for more details...



Resources and Inspiration: Writing a Series

Are you wanting to write a series but don't know where to begin?

- Reedsy offers five tips to get you on your way: <https://blog.reedsy.com/how-to-write-a-series/>
- Author and writing instructor K.M. Weiland suggests outlining the overarching story upfront. “The whole point of outlining, whether you’re working on a standalone or a series, is that you discover the story’s end, so you can then appropriately set up the beginning. This is even more true of a series, in which the big-picture resonance of the overall plot and theme will be even more hotly anticipated by patient readers, who sometimes wait *years* for the payoff in the end.”

Read the rest of Weiland’s article here: <https://www.helpingwritersbecomeauthors.com/how-to-outline-a-series/>

It is a delicious thing to write . . . to be no longer yourself but to move in an entire universe of your own creating.

—Gustave Flaubert



Critique Sessions and Submission Guidelines

Critique sessions run twice a month. Invitation emails are usually sent the first and sixteenth of each month; these invitations include an RSVP deadline. Once the deadline has passed, the spreadsheet with current group information is sent. Each session is generally divided into two or three groups with three to six participants each, depending on how many members participate.

Submissions are then emailed to each member of the participant's group and returned by the end-of-session deadline, usually the fifteenth or the last day of the month. If you want to read a submission from someone in a different group in addition to those in your own group, you may request their work, but please do not expect them to read yours in return.

Fiction and non-fiction chapters, short stories, articles, and poems are all welcome in our critique sessions...query letters too.

Submission Guidelines

- 3,200 words or less (not including any synopses at the beginning)
- Include a synopsis if there are chapters/sections prior to your current submission
- 12-point or larger serif font (such as Times New Roman or Cambria)
- Double or 1.5 spaced lines
- Word document format (.doc, .docx)
- Include your name or initials in the filename
- Submit within two days of receiving the group spreadsheet

Critiquing Guidelines

- Please make at least six suggestions or comments in your reviews
- Be honest, kind, and encouraging
- Corrections and comments are made using the "Track Changes" and "New Comment" features under the "Review" tab in Word
- Include a note at the end of the document with an overall review or comment
- Ideally, return your reviews by the last day of the session



Wishing you a happy and safe
St. Patrick's Day.
Sláinte!