



# The Write Word

The Newsletter of the Society of Southwestern Authors

## Upcoming Wordshops

### Dan Baldwin, November 16



Dan is the ghostwriter of more than fifty published books. His presentation, *I'm Not the Author; I Only Wrote the Book* will cover such topics as contracts, copyright, unexpected benefits, the value of verbal contracts, and finding and keeping clients.

He will also share some personal horror stories related to his career as a writer. Under his own name he has written fifteen novels and short story collections with awards that include multiple citations from the New Mexico-Arizona Book Awards

Competition, Best Book Awards, National Indie Excellence Awards, and the Society of Southwestern Authors competitions. His current novel is *Sparky and the Beard*, a thriller taking place in Cuba the week Fidel Castro took control of that island.

Dan is also a prolific blogger and frequent contributor to *The Write Word*. (See p. 4) Join us for a wide-ranging exploration of the business of writing.

### A Celebration of Our Writing Successes! December 21

Many among our diverse membership have successfully published books, articles, commentary, and blogs, among other things, but we don't often get the opportunity to brag about our successes to one another. Even reaching your word-count goal or finishing your manuscript is reason to celebrate.

Our holiday gathering in December is your opportunity to do some sharing along with bragging. Bring books, business cards, and promotional items to show off and share with your colleagues.

We'll have a large poster along one wall where you can post information about your writing and publishing success. Invite others to browse your books and, if you're lucky, maybe you'll make some exchanges or a sale or two.

It's a perfect way for our community of writers to celebrate the holiday and the coming new year.

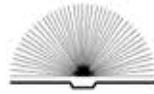


## CONTENTS

- Upcoming Wordshops..... 1
- Recent Wordshops ..... 2
- Students at Wordshops.. 3
- What's in a Name?..... 4
- Successes ..... 5
- New Members ..... 5
- Editor's Corner ..... 6
- President's Message ..... 6
- Writing Prompts ..... 7
- Santa Cruz Valley News ..... 7
- Executive Council ..... 7

*This edition of The Write Word can be found online at [Issuu.com](http://Issuu.com). Please share it with writer friends.*

Unless otherwise announced, all Wordshops are at the Girl Scout Complex, 4300 E. Broadway (at Columbus on the southeast corner behind the main building).



## Recent Wordshops

### Kris Neri, Capturing a Sense of Place

*Solomon Cantanio*

In her presentation, Kris Neri gave us lots of things to think about when we write. For example, whatever exists is less important than how it appears. Put another way, perception is reality. Writers should define the purpose of a scene, character, or setting in terms of advancing the narrative. Why is it there? What happens to the story if it's removed?

Atmosphere is created by ascribing meaning and intention to objects. Character, action and tone are more important than setting but if you don't convey the setting, it can't help you entertain the reader. Whenever you describe in detail something common, familiar, or which has a real-world equivalent, focus on what makes it distinct.

Writers need to engage all the senses but activate only the most appropriate ones to describe any given scene. It's probably not relevant that the sidewalk has a flavor unless, for example, someone is grinding a character's face into it with the heel of their old leather boot. Maybe the sidewalk tastes like home-made ice cream which melted in the summer sun and fell from its overcrowded perch atop a broken waffle cone. It was a glorious day for the ants! ... and then it rained. Weather can convey mood as well as affect story and characters' behavior.

Show surroundings, actions, emotions, and thoughts. It's impossible not to reveal something about a character based on their choices, but no one choice tells the whole story about anyone. Readers also form conclusions based on a person's attire, for example.

Props unite setting and character through action. It's important to establish the existence of a prop before it becomes relevant to the action. The more important a prop is, the more you must weave it into the story. Characters can't, or at least shouldn't, grab items from "just off-screen," that is, something that has never been seen before. If you're going to use an object in your story, you must mention it beforehand. If you include some peculiar object in the opening, what purpose does it serve? However, if a prop is overemphasized, it can become a MacGuffin (a plot element or other device used to catch the audience's attention and maintain suspense, but whose exact nature has fairly little influence over the story line). If you're sneaky, you can plant something early in the story the reader will forget until the right time.

Keep in mind that establishing a clear sense of place goes beyond just describing the setting. Done well, it is far more complex.



**Save the Dates**

**Dan Baldwin**

**"I'm Not the Author; I Only Wrote the Book"**

**November 16**

**1:00-3:00**

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**A Celebration of Our Successes**

**December 21**

**1:00-3:00**

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**Girl Scout Complex, 4300 E. Broadway**

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**Members: Free  
Non-Members: \$5  
Students Free with Student ID**



*The space of sky above us was the colour of ever-changing violet and towards it the lamps of the street lifted their feeble lanterns. The cold air stung us and we played till our bodies glowed. Our shouts echoed in the silent streets.*

~James Joyce, *Araby*

## Kermie Wohlenhaus, *The Writer's Life & How to Create an Easy & Professional Book Trailer*

Sharon Miller

As Kermie defined them, book trailers are similar to movie trailers in that they provide a preview of the book which can be a powerful marketing tool. For the content of a trailer, it is important to provide insights into the setting and the tone of the story, as well as a glimpse of the main character and his/her struggle. It is not necessary to have narration because the visuals should tempt readers to want more.



Ideally, your trailer should be about thirty to ninety seconds long. It should contain a photo of the book cover and information about where to purchase the book and how to contact the author—email address and/or website address. You can include quotes from the book along with excerpts from good reviews.

Your trailer can be shared on your website as well as on various social media platforms. Additionally, it can be used as part of your pitch to agents and bookstore owners. And, of course, it can be uploaded to YouTube for free. The advantage of YouTube is that you can use multiple channels to promote your books with trailers. You can set up multiple accounts based on the book titles or for your various genres.

There are book trailer apps you can subscribe to, such as, Animoto (\$8 a month), Photoshow (30 days for free then \$39 a month).

This, of course, brings us to the question of how you will create your own trailer. Kermie says it is much easier than you might think. She has found that Apple computer's photo storage component has excellent capability to putting together a trailer from your own photos and videos. However, she pointed out that if you do your own videos, be sure to use a tripod so your movie doesn't look shaky.

You can add a music track to your trailer, but you need to be sure that it is copyright free. You can't just pick a song from your favorite singer or rock band because that would be illegal, and purchasing the rights to even a few seconds of someone's music can be very expensive. You can search YouTube or Google for "royalty-free music" or "public domain music" and you'll find a wide selection to choose from.

Kermie concluded her presentation with tips on how to have your own writer's retreat.

[Editor's note: See the July-August *Write Word* for the article, "Finding Images and Illustrations" which provides a wide selection of websites that provide royalty-free images, videos, and music.]

## Good News: Writers Helping Student Writers

Bobbie Herring

The SSA Board of Directors voted unanimously that all students of public school, community college, and university are invited to attend Wordshops for free with student ID. Tell your student friends they can attend presentations devoted to improving the writer's craft and meet with professional authors to discuss the writing process, tips, and publishing. They can bring their questions and share their aspirations with other writers. Just show up with ID in hand. Guests are welcome, but if they are not students, registration is \$5. For queries contact Mary Ann Carman, SSA President, at [macarman6@gmail.com](mailto:macarman6@gmail.com) or Bobbie J. Herring at [bherr10155@me.com](mailto:bherr10155@me.com).

**Stay Tuned!!**  
**2020 SSA Writing**  
**Contest Details**  
**Coming Soon!**



## What's In A Name?

Dan Baldwin

I was stunned recently at hearing how much time a young author spent in coming up with names for characters in her novel. From the way she groaned about the effort I deduced that coming up with a Goldilocks “just right” name bordered on obsession.

My advice: loosen up, Goldie.

Names are important, especially the principal character names. I'm not sure readers would have gotten too far past 007's self-introduction if it had been, “Wilmer, Delwhinny Wilmer.” Still, James Bond is a pretty tame name all things considered. I know a lot of us would have pondered, pounded our heads, and pulled out something far more dramatic such as Derek Stiletto, Dirk Sabre, or Dex Stacked. But all that excessive amount of time spent on naming a character is time taken away from writing that character. I have a better solution. I cheat.

My Ashley Hayes thriller trilogy employs a secondary plot involving the illegal theft and sale of Native American artifacts. To come up with character names I took out my handy dandy Guide to North American Artifacts and named my folks after projectile points. The Ashley and the Hayes are two delicate, yet deadly true arrowheads. My villain, Clovis Bassett, is named for the very ancient Clovis point and the historical Bassett dart tip.

The original name for Caldera in my western trilogy of that name was McKenzie, named after his dad. I got tired of writing “Mr. McKenzie” and “Young McKenzie” and I just couldn't go with Biff, Scooter, or Tad for a Western hero. The novels are set in and around the Superstition Mountains which was formed from a caldera—a volcano that collapses in on itself. Caldera—a perfect description of my young hero. That just popped into my head and the amount of effort involved in using it was no more than striking Find and Replace on my computer.

My current work-in-progress, *Sparky and the King* involves persons associated with the JFK assassination. Their names came from a city map of Dallas, Texas, and streets around Dealey Plaza. The story takes place primarily in 1959 Cuba. Most of the principals are named after land features in that island. I used the same technique (with topological maps) for naming characters in *A Stalking Death*, *Bock's Canyon*, and other Westerns in which characters are named after canyons, washes, rivers, mountains and so on.

Bottom Line: Invest a reasonable amount of time naming principal characters. Spend a few moments with your street map, field guide, or newspaper obit page to name the secondary characters. Then, get to work and let those characters speak.



In *Lord of the Rings*, Frodo Baggins' name derives from the Old English word, *Fród*, which roughly translates to “wise by experience.”

In *Game of Thrones*, Katniss is named for a plant in the genus *Sagittaria*, which translated from the Latin means “the archer.”

In *Star Trek, the Original Series*, Nyota Uhura's full name, when translated from Swahili, means “Star Freedom.”

In *Star Wars*, Darth is a variant of “dark,” and Vader, roughly translated from Dutch, means Father. Makes perfect sense.



A writer died and was given the option of going to heaven or hell.

She decided to check out each place first. As the writer descended into the fiery pits, she saw row upon row of writers chained to their desks in a steaming sweatshop. As they worked, they were repeatedly whipped with thorny lashes.

“Oh my,” said the writer. “Let me see heaven now.”

A few moments later, as she ascended into heaven, she saw rows of writers, chained to their desks in a steaming sweatshop. As they worked, they, too, were whipped with thorny lashes.

“Wait a minute,” said the writer. “This is just as bad as hell!”

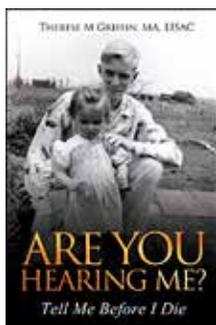
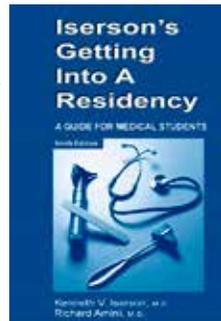
“Oh no, it's not,” replied an unseen voice. “Here, your work gets published.”

<https://letterpile.com/humor/Funny-Jokes-and-Quotes-about-writers>



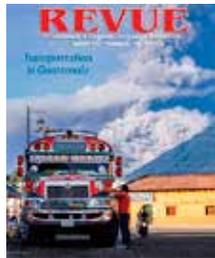
## Successes

**Kenneth V. Iseron**, [kvi@email.arizona.edu](mailto:kvi@email.arizona.edu), published the ninth edition of his book, *Iseron's Getting Into a Residency: A Guide for Medical Students*, a step-by-step guide through the process of selecting a medical specialty and obtaining a residency position that has been a vital tool for generations of medical students.

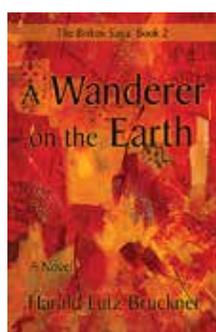
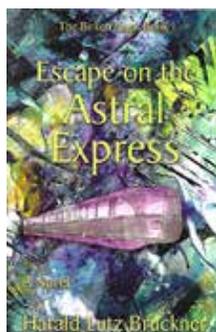


**Therese Griffin**, [theresegriffin-author@gmail.com](mailto:theresegriffin-author@gmail.com), has released *Are You Hearing Me? Tell Me Before I Die*, a memoir of overcoming a reading difficulty that no one, not even her teachers, understood. She overcame this, as well as family problems of alcoholism and went on to earn her BA and MA in addictions counseling, become a motivational speaker, and recovery/spiritual retreat facilitator.

**Mark Walker's**, [mark@millionmilewalker.com](http://mark@millionmilewalker.com), essay, "Hugs Not Walls: Reuniting the Children" is a finalist in the Arizona Authors Association Literary Contest. Also, his essay on immigration in Central America "Trouble in the Highlands" which was published in the Summer issue of *World-View Magazine* has been reissued in this month's *Revue Magazine* along with his "Yin & Yang of Travel" article, "Traveling with a Chapina" making six articles in that publication.



**Hugh L. Beykirch a.k.a. Harald Lutz Bruckner**, [kirski@cox.net](mailto:kirski@cox.net), recently published the Birken Saga: A Trilogy consisting of *Escape on the Astral Express*, *A*

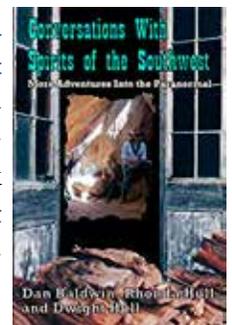


*Wanderer on the Earth*, and *The Born-Again Phoenix*. The Birken Saga traces the life and times of Hektor Birken during his early and formative years in Germany (1931 to 1948) and continues in the second and third books (1948 to the present) depicting failures and successes in the New World.



**Duke Southard**, [duke@dukesouthard.com](mailto:duke@dukesouthard.com), is up to his neck in contest honors. His short story, "Surviving English," is a finalist in the Arizona Authors Association Literary Contest, along with *Final Tipping Point* and *Fallacy of Closure* in the published fiction category.

**Dan Baldwin's**, [baldco@msn.com](mailto:baldco@msn.com), book, *Conversations with Spirits of the Southwest*, co-written with Dwight and Rhonda Hull, is a finalist in the New Mexico-Arizona Book Awards competition. Additionally, it was also a finalist in the National Indie Excellence Awards competition.



## New Members

### Professional

**Lynn Nicholas**, [ldnicholas@comcast.net](mailto:ldnicholas@comcast.net), has been elevated from Associate Member to Professional status. She is awaiting the release of the e-book, *Dancing Between the Beats*, published by Wheatmark. The first chapter of this novel earned an Honorable Mention in the 2018-2019 SSA Writing Contest.

**Kathy McIntosh**, [Kathy@KathyMcIntosh.com](mailto:Kathy@KathyMcIntosh.com), has begun her newest series, Adventure Calls with the publication of book one, *Murder, Sornoran Style*, on April 27, 2019, by Dogged Kat Press. Other titles include *Mustard's Last Stand*, book one in the Havoc in Hancock Humorous Suspense Series and *Foul Wind*. Learn more at her [website](http://website).

### Associate

**Marcy Kline**, [marcykline@live.com](mailto:marcykline@live.com). Her goals are to be part of a writing community to improve her skills and to find kindred souls.



## The Editor's Corner

### Book Design

If you plan to design your own interior for your next print book, please be aware there are things you need to know. The most important thing is that if you want your book to be taken seriously, it's important to take book design and layout just as seriously.

**Blank Pages and New Chapters:** Did you know that in non-fiction new chapters begin on the right-side page, while the left side is blank (although it may have an illustration)? In fiction, you don't need to worry about that; chapters can begin on either page.

But what happens if, in your non-fiction masterpiece, your previous chapter ends in the middle of a left-side page? You certainly don't want a blank right-side page preceding a blank left-side page (making two in a row). Under no circumstances (EVER) do you want a blank right-hand page. One solution is to adjust the size and spacing of your text—which might look bad and simply move the problem to another place in the book. You could center an illustrative quotation or artwork on that otherwise blank right-hand page at the end of the previous chapter, but that's not always appropriate. If the chapter has illustrations throughout, you might resize some of them.

**Numbering Pages:** Some pages must be numbered, but others NEVER have printed numbers. Remember to turn off page numbering for the title page, the copyright page, any blank pages, and any advertising pages at the end of the book. Look at a professionally published best seller for guidance.

Microsoft Word makes pagination a nightmare. You need to find a good tutorial on creating headers and footers *and* breaking your book into sections. Sections are important because you can't just delete numbers on a page that must not have a number because without sections all of your numbering will disappear. Headers and footers need to be designed separately for each section and page numbering is included in the header or footer design. Here's a handy [tutorial](#). Page numbers in the header are always toward the outside edge of the page; in the footer, they can be centered or on the outside of the page.

**Odd-numbered pages on the right:** Just think about this for a moment. When you begin reading a book, the very first page of the story is page one (1) and it MUST be on the right. This is an ironclad rule in book layout: all odd-numbered pages in your book should be right-hand pages. Make sure you get this right.

**Summary:** There are other ways your book might inadvertently signal that you're a design "amateur," but these errors are easy to avoid. You want your book to stand out for your great writing, thoughtful arguments, or the tremendous value it brings to readers, not because it looks unprofessional. Your best avenue is to hire an expert.

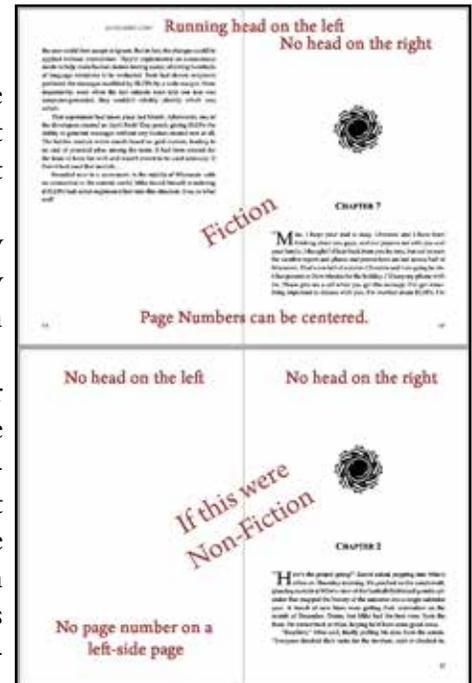
But if you are determined to do your own design, it is a good idea to search for and download (or purchase) book design templates that already have these design elements in them along with instructions for using them.

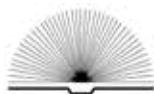
(Thanks to [Joel Friedlander](#) for much of the advice here. In a future issue, we'll learn about headers and footers.)

## President's Message



The holidays are creeping up on us as we finish the year 2019 and get ready for the New Year of 2020. For the November Wordshop, Dan Baldwin will discuss some of his ghost-writing experiences, as well as other topics in his presentation. His strategies will help you throughout your writing career. Then, in December, we'll have *A Celebration of Our Successes!* Yes, the December Wordshop is all about you! Start thinking of your writing and publishing successes and your dreams. You are invited to write your successes on large posters so everyone can see how you've made your writing and publishing dreams come true. It will be a very informal Wordshop where you can openly discuss your successes with others in a networking format, as well as your dreams. Remember, Never Stop Dreaming!





## Writing Prompts

from *Cassandra Lipp, Writer's Digest*

Write a scene or story:

- that includes a monster or another character from a horror movie.
- that includes a character wearing a disguise or costume.
- in which your protagonist faces an obstacle. What is this obstacle? How does it stand in the way of your character and what they desire? How does your character respond to this obstacle?
- that includes a character receiving an invitation, or showing up to an event that they were invited to. What was the invitation for? What ensues after the invitation is accepted? Does the character feel like a fish out of water when they attend the event?
- that includes food. What type of food is it? How does it taste? Why is the character eating it? Was it prepared a special way or only eaten on special occasions?
- set during an apocalypse. What does the world as we know it look like when it faces certain doom? What unlikely heroes step in to save it? What obstacles do they have to overcome?
- that includes “sound words” that set the scene. What is going on? What do the characters hear, or what sound waves do they feel?
- that begins with the sentence “If you look back far enough, you can see ...”.

## Santa Cruz Valley Chapter Green Valley Holiday Book Fair



Whether you're looking for your next thriller, searching for a humorous memoir, or hoping to find a children's book for your little

ones, this event promises to satisfy your desires.

The Santa Cruz Valley Chapter of the Society of Southwestern Authors invites you to browse the offerings of dozens of authors. Find the perfect book for yourself or to give as a gift, and have it signed by the author.

This year's Book Fair will be held on December 7 at the recreation center of The Villages of Green Valley homeowners association located at 400 W. San Ignacio in Green Valley, 85614. Works of every genre will be sold and there will be readings by select authors.

For more information or to register as an author, contact Bonnie Papenfuss at: 520-625-3764 or email: [lbpape@cox.net](mailto:lbpape@cox.net)



### SSA Executive Council

<p><b>President:</b> Mary Ann Carman macarman6@gmail.com</p> <p><b>Vice-President:</b> Sharon Lashinger srlashinger@hotmail.com</p> <p><b>Treasurer:</b> David Gilmore lacroixpublishing@gmail.com</p> <p><b>Recording Secretary:</b> Solomon Cantanio scantanio@gmail.com</p> <p><b>Membership:</b> Sharon Lashinger srlashinger@hotmail.com</p>	<p><b>Members at Large</b></p> <p>Natalie McGee socrates.plato76@gmail.com</p> <p>Bobbie Herring bherr10155@me.com</p> <p><b>Member Development</b></p> <p>Bobbie Herring</p> <p><b>Writing Contest/Write Word</b></p> <p>Sharon Miller sharon@bucksinbooks.com</p>	<p><b>Webmaster</b></p> <p>Mike Rom mike_rom@hotmail.com</p> <p>See <a href="http://ssa-az.org">ssa-az.org</a> for information on SSA Chapters outside of Tucson (Valley of the Sun, Wickenburg, and Santa Cruz Valley)</p> <p>Minutes of Executive Council meetings are available to members who send a request to the Recording Secretary.</p>
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**The Write Word**  
**Society of Southwest Authors**  
**P.O. Box 30355, Tucson, AZ 85751**

The Society of Southwestern Authors is a nonprofit association of writers, and other publishing professionals, founded in 1972. Its objective is to conduct a program of activities designed to:

- Promote mutually supportive friendship among writers.
- Provide recognition of members' achievements.
- Encourage and assist persons seeking to become published writers.

SSA offers Wordshops each month featuring authors, publishers, editors, photographers, illustrators, and other working professionals in the industry. If you know any potential presenters, invite them to contact Mary Ann Carman, 520-444-8253 or macarman6@gmail.com. If you know anyone looking to network with working writers, please invite them to attend.

Wordshops are held on the third Saturday of the month from 1-3 pm.  
 \$5.00 registration from non-members is accepted at the door (cash or check only).  
 SSA members are free. College/University students are free with student ID.

**REMINDER**

Now that you are getting a PDF copy of *The Write Word*, you will be getting a yellow dues card each year from the SSA [Treasurer](#). If you do not pay your dues within a reasonable time, you may have to pay the \$30 initiation fee again, along with your dues. If you have questions about your membership, please contact the [membership chair](#) or send snail mail to the address below.

Membership Renewal = \$30 per year

Send check to: SSA Treasurer, P.O. Box 30355, Tucson, AZ 85751

DO NOT include Wordshop fees on renewal check!

New Professional and Associate Members: \$30 initiation fee + \$30 dues. [Get Membership Applications here.](#)

**Follow SSA on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).**

**Advertising in *The Write Word***

Do you offer a product or service related to writing? Share the word with 600 potential customers. Place an ad once or get a discount with multiple insertions. Submit clear, camera-ready copy with full payment. The copy can be changed for each insertion, but must remain the same size. Make checks payable to SSA and mail to the address above. An accepted advertisement does not constitute an endorsement.

SIZE	1 issue	3 issues	6 issues	Measurements
Business Card	\$30	\$80	\$140	2 x 3.5 in. (P/L)
Quarter page	\$40	\$100	\$180	3.75 x 4.75 in. (P/L)
Half page	\$60	\$160	\$300	7.5 x 4.75 in. (L only)
Full page	\$100	\$280	\$540	7.5 x 9.5 in. (P only)

P = Portrait; L=Landscape; P/L=Portrait or Landscape acceptable.

**Submitting Articles or News**

Please send your articles (500 words max) or news of success to: [writeword@ssa-az.org](mailto:writeword@ssa-az.org) (Pictures should be sent separately as jpg or png.)

**Submission Deadlines:**

- October 15 for November-December
- December 15 for January-February
- February 15 for March-April
- April 15 for May-June
- June 15 for July-August
- August 15 for September-October

The editor reserves the right to edit submitted articles for language conventions and usage, as well as for length. The editor also reserves the right to reject advertising or articles deemed inappropriate.