

Melanie's Writing Newsletter - September 2008

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Dear Friends,

What a difference a month makes! On the first day of school I started a part-time job as a para-educator at Holmes Junior High in Davis. I'm working with students who have emotional disturbances, but are also identified as gifted. It's a very interesting group of kids. I still haven't ironed out the kinks of balancing my new job with writing projects, but I'm figuring it out.

LOVED the Sacramento State Summer Writer's Conference that I went to a few weeks ago. Find tips from the conference below.

Presentations/Classes

1) Starting tonight!: My course through [UC Davis Extension](#) *Getting Published: The Business of Non-Fiction Writing*. The class trains participants in the basics of publishing their non-fiction work. We'll prepare query letters, cover letters, book proposals, an article outline, and learn about other aspects of professional writing such as contracts, taxes, and working with editors and agents. I've also lined up a professional literary agent to come speak to the class.

The class is held on eight Tuesday nights, September 16th through November 4th, from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m at the Sutter Square Galleria in Sacramento. Please [email me](#) with any questions about the class or if you'd like a preview of the syllabus.

Enrollment is found at the [Extension](#)

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2) My four-hour workshop *Get Your Articles Published!* will next be held on Saturday, September 27th, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Veteran's Memorial Center Game Room in Davis (note new location).

Go to the [City of Davis site](#) for class and registration information or email me if you have questions. Deadline to register is Wednesday, September 24th.

3) Still waiting to confirm when I will be speaking to the Sacramento chapter of the [Direct Selling Women's Alliance](#) this fall. The topic: Write and Promote Your Business. Look for details in the next newsletter.

Sacramento State Writers' Conference

I've gleaned some of the best tips from the two-day conference below.

1) [Dinah Lenney](#), author, teacher, and actress (she plays Nurse Shirley on ER!) spoke about memoir. Her memoir *Bigger Than Life* is about her relationship with her father and his murder. I'm determined to read soon.

She talked about the importance of finding your unique voice and said: "Voice is what keeps us in the room, in the story. Your first goal [with memoir] is honesty, then to engage the audience."

2) Judie Panneton, co-author of [The Breast Cancer Book of Strength & Courage](#), advised writers to take baby steps in your writing by following these tips:

- *stop obsessing and write
- *shift your attention if your blocked
- *stop comparing yourself to others and

*recognize that publishing is a business

On rejection, she said:

*all writers experience it [so true!]

*rejection is not personal

*value criticism and

*get out of your own way

3) Freewriting exercises from **Bob Stanley**, director of Room to Write writers' studios. Freewriting is not to produce completed work, but to generate rough and unfiltered ideas from which other writing may spring. Set a stopwatch for five minutes for each exercise:

- Freewrite about anything, no editing, just keep your hand moving.

- Look over what you've written and find a character (the character can be yourself). Then write a scene with that character in it.

- Using the same character, write something new with short sentences of five words or less.

- Write about what the process of shifting modes for the exercises was like for you.

More next time!

Writing Updates

for sale and am happy to write a personalized message to the recipient.

If you are anywhere near Hurricane Ike, I hope you and your family are safe. I'm sending you good thoughts.

Thank you to all for subscribing to the newsletter. As always, let me know if there's a writing topic you'd like to see covered here by sending an email to melaniebowden@earthlink.net

Bye for now,

Melanie Bowden

Author of *Why Didn't Anyone Tell Me?*
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