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Writer in the Pines

Musings on Life, Insights into Writing Process, and a Series of Author Interviews, from writer Marsha Ward, who finds herself living in a rural community in the forest. Talk about serendipity!

TUESDAY, JUNE 10, 2008

➤ Author Interview: Cindy R. Williams

Today's Author Interview is with [Cindy R. Williams](#), a new author who writes children's picture books. She lives in Arizona with her family.

Welcome, Cindy. I'm glad to talk to you. How long have you been writing? What made you start?

I believe I was born a story teller. I wrote my first book when I was five or six about being a Mermaid Princess. I cut art paper in eighths and stapled them together to make a book. I used pencils and crayons to illustrate it. As time went by life events would trigger a spark and a huge desire to write. A story would just flow out, sometimes rhyming, sometimes not. Then I would get back to my daily life.



I created numerous series' of bedtime stories for my children. I didn't know what to do with my tales so they sat in my private collection for years, until it was finally my season to take the next step. I realized life is too short, so I'd best make my dreams happen now.

What is your first published book?

Chase McKay Didn't Get Up Today was published in April 2008 by Goodfellow Publishing Services, of Mesa, Arizona. I will never forget selling the first copy of *Chase McKay Didn't Get Up Today*, through my website, [cindywilliams.com](#). I was so thrilled that I looked at the sells confirmation a bunch of times, to make sure I hadn't imagined it.

Do you have any authors that inspire you?

Oh yes. Many members of American Night Writers Association (ANWA) inspire me. I see so many creative women writing and doing a million other things. They are truly incredible. I love to read. I think two authors that gave my love for magical worlds an identity as a child were L. Frank Baum, the author of the "Wizard of Oz" Series and Marian Cockrell, the author of *Shadow Castle*. There really are so many others. I have a list of books and their authors that inspire me on my

About Me



Marsha Ward
Arizona, United States

is a multi-published freelance writer, editor, workshop presenter, mentor, and consultant, and the author of two novels as well as a contributor to two non-fiction books on writing and publishing. In 2008, her essay, "Perfect in Salt, Perfect in Soda," was published in a compilation about lessons learned from mothers.

View my complete profile

Visit my website

MarshaWard.com

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Summer Book Trek 2008



For the first time, I am participating in a book-reading challenge. My books are:

[The Crayon Messages](#) - Christine Thackeray
[Season of Sacrifice](#) - Tristi Pinkston
[Heaven Scent](#) - Rebecca Talley
[Traitor](#) - Sandra Grey

website, cindywilliams.com, on the "About me" page.

What is your daily schedule like?

I am psycho for being organized. I hate to waste time. I plan my days to streamline and maximize my priorities and to reach my daily goals. My day starts with family scripture study usually at 6:15 am. After scriptures, I often write for about an hour, then get my last child off to school and do my exercises and morning chores. I take care of my various responsibilities as Mommy, Wife, House Keeper, Financier, and run my errands, practice my harp, visit teach, work on house and financial projects, volunteer at my children's schools, and rescue people and animals . . . all before lunch if possible. Then I try to spend several more hours writing until my children get home from school. I put on my "Mommy" hat again until the children are in bed. I put on my "wife" hat for awhile after that. When all are nestled in bed asleep, I usually get into my "Writing Place". This is a special place I set up with all my dragon and fairy props around me. I write until I can't keep my eyes open anymore.

Sounds good on paper, but we all know "Life Happens". One little trick that helps tons is I take my lap top with me almost everywhere. I write as I wait in doctors and dentist offices, concerts, as I am waiting for my children in the car when I am the family chauffeur. It is surprising how much time we waste waiting. Instead of being frustrated, I accomplish something rewarding by writing. If I don't have my lap top with me, I often think about my stories, and create scenes in my mind.

How do you handle life interruptions?

Sometimes I do okay with interruptions and other times, not so well. I really try to write when all my other responsibilities are fulfilled. I don't put my writing last, but I must take care of pressing tasks or my creative side isn't free to fly. I decided a long time ago, that no matter what, my family and my church callings come first, so I try hard to take care of those things, then get right back to writing. Sometimes I ignore the phone, unless I see it is one of my children calling from school, which means they really need me. If I am on a roll, and the story is flowing, I do find I get frustrated by being interrupted. I try to take care of the situation quickly and get right back to where I was. I go back a few pages and reread what I last wrote, and more often than not, the story starts to flow again. If not, then I put it aside and take care of whatever tends to be the squeaky wheel at the time.

You mentioned that you play the harp. Do you write music?

Yes, I write music primarily for my harp, and some for guitar. Both can be played on the piano as well. I tend to write songs that are a bit eerie, like being out in the shadowy night on a fairy hill dancing in the moonlight. That is why I love the harp so much. It is mystical and magic. I usually start with the melody and harmonies first, and if it strikes me, I will add lyrics. But I have found that more often than not, harp music speaks directly to the soul and words are not necessary.

I am working on my harp CD project along with my books. My goal is to have the release date coincide with the publication of *Thundertail's Tale*. Many of the songs I have written for my harp are a bit Celtic, and

I'll put up links as I review each one.

Mother's Wisdom



My essay, "Perfect in Salt, Perfect in Soda," is one of more than 50 essays written by sons and daughters in tribute to their mothers and the lessons they taught. The book is available at Deseret Book stores and [online](#).

My Personal National Anthem Project

- 🔗 [The National Anthem Project: The Campaign to Restore America's Voice through Music Education](#)
- 🔗 [2007 Grand Finale Photo Page](#)
- 🔗 [Sing Along with "The Star Spangled Banner"](#)
- 🔗 [The 1995 MENC All-Eastern Honors Ensembles \(Rochester, NY\) sing an amazing version of our National Anthem](#)

Places I Belong

- 🔗 [American Night Writers Association](#)
- 🔗 [Authors Incognito](#)
- 🔗 [LDStorymakers, Inc.](#)
- 🔗 [Western Writers of America, Inc.](#)

Blog Archive

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with my magical dragons and fairies, and will also be a great lullaby CD to play at bedtime for children and tired parents too.

What food or snack keeps the words flowing?

CHOCOLATE! I also love ice water, which I try to sip it often, and save the chocolate for rare occasions or I'm sure I would turn into a grand chocolate mound.

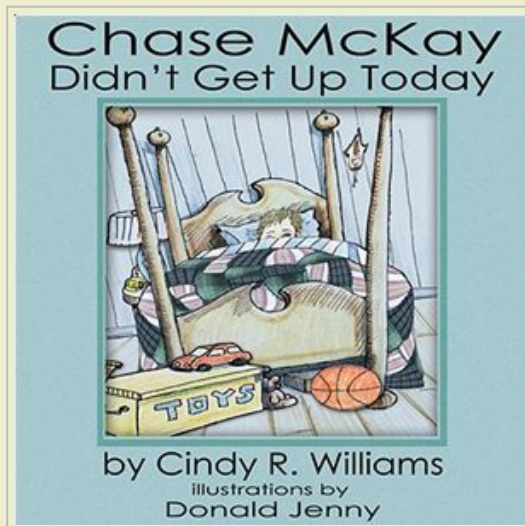
What one thing do you like most about writing? Least?

I love story telling. I love to do presentations on my book and my harp. I love to create names and backgrounds of characters. I love to write bantering dialog. I love to create tough situations then mull them over and figure out how to get my protagonist through them. I do not like to rewrite drafts. I find it so much more fun to let my imagination run free and write rather than fix things.

What is your advice for other writers?

Write and write and write and write and write. Take classes, attend seminars, take advantage of a critique group. Being a member of ANWA is a great opportunity for LDS women writers for learning and critiquing if you get in a group that understands the process. As far as writing classes go, I have been taking a series of creative writing classes locally and it has changed my world. If you live in the greater Phoenix area and are interested in taking Creative Writing Classes, email [me](#) and I will give you the information on these classes. I feel it is important to never stop learning.

We each have to believe that we have something worthwhile to say, because the world needs wholesome voices. And did I mention to write and write and write and write and write . . .



Tell us about your book.

Chase McKay Didn't Get Up Today is what I call a "Snuggle, Giggle Book." It is a rhyming story inspired by the youngest of my five children playing possum when it was time to get up for Kindergarten.

It begins with; "Chase McKay would not get up, so Mama made his bed. She straightened the covers and pulled them, right over his head. Chase McKay cannot play; he didn't get out of bed today." The story goes on to include; "his breakfast is cold, soggy and old. His chores are undone, no time for fun."

It's so nice to cuddle up with a little one and share the story. The book

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- ▶ March 2008 (18)
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- ▶ January 2008 (24)
- ▶ 2007 (85)
- ▶ 2006 (35)

Work in Progress Report

Title: *Trail of Storms*

Today is: Thursday, May 15, 2008.

May 15, 2008: Submitted manuscript of *Trail of Storms* to a couple of terrific publishers! Heard back in early June that the micro-press publisher liked the manuscript, but not enough to publish it. They are admittedly tremendously picky, and I knew that going in. Not holding my breath until I hear from the second.

Fifth and Final Draft--no, I don't know when the fourth draft was completed--finished at 7:04 p.m. on April 30, 2008. 84,886 words.

I finished the third draft of *Trail of Storms*, including several new characters, at 1:45 p.m. on January 30, 2008. 83,750 words, give or take a few pound signs that I used for scene breaks. I did the happy Dance, then decompressed on January 31.

Word count at the end of the second draft: 69,760

Characters: Jessie Bingham, her twin sisters Hannah Fletcher and Hepzibah (Heppie) Bingham, mother Charity Bingham, younger brother Luke Bingham. Hannah's husband Robert Fletcher, Heppie's beau George Heizer, George's brother Ned. James Owen.

Time spent editing and/or writing today: A couple of hours tidying up the synopsis and my bio.

Trail of Storms: 84,886 words

has a catchy rhythm, and the original illustrations by Seattle artist Donald Jenny are charming.

What is your next project?

I have several children's picture books completed. *Naptime* (working title) is currently being illustrated. My publisher has requested two more books in the "Chase McKay" series. I also have *Good Doc Flo*, *The Prankster*, *The Hero*, and *Ruffle Buns*. Some are completed and others are in the final editing stage. However, I spend most of my time on my novel, the first book in the trilogy of "Thundertail's Tales", about a boy and a dragon, magic and choices. I do have one serious novel waiting to see the light of day. It is called *Alzheimer's Antics, from the Viewpoint of a Daughter*. It is a sometimes humorous, often bittersweet book about my father, and how he and my family handled this ever-so-sad disease.

Thanks for letting me interview you, Cindy.

Thank you, Marsha, for this opportunity. You do so much to teach, lift and support authors!

Posted by Marsha Ward at 8:00 AM



Labels: [Author Interview](#)

2 comments:



Valerie Ipson said...

Very fun interview. Congratulations on your success, Cindy.

4:25 PM



Joyce DiPastena said...

Loved the interview, Marsha and Cindy! It's fun learning more about people than you knew before. :-)

6:56 PM

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The Whitney Awards



Visit [The Whitney Awards](#) for a list of the winners, or go to [ANWA's Founder & Friends](#) blog for my account of the winners. A live blog of the Whitney Awards Gala by four participants captured the night. [Visit the Whitney Awards Blog](#) for the details.

To Do Next: Take deep breaths, go watch a couple of movies Netflix probably wants back, read a Bernard Cornwell book, then get to work on my next novel. Yes, Janette, that one.

The Man from Shenandoah



Jennifer Hill-Russell of *Roundtable Reviews* says, "I found [THE MAN FROM SHENANDOAH](#) immediately mesmerizing."

Ride to Raton



Mystery and Western Author Robert J. Randisi says, "[Marsha Ward](#) must have a door to the past. She steps through it to the Old West, watches, listens, then comes back and writes about it vividly."

LDS Storymakers: Writing Secrets



Drawing on a wealth of knowledge, fourteen authors give you the answers to the pitfalls and problems faced by writers everywhere in [this comprehensive volume](#).

LDS Storymakers: Publishing