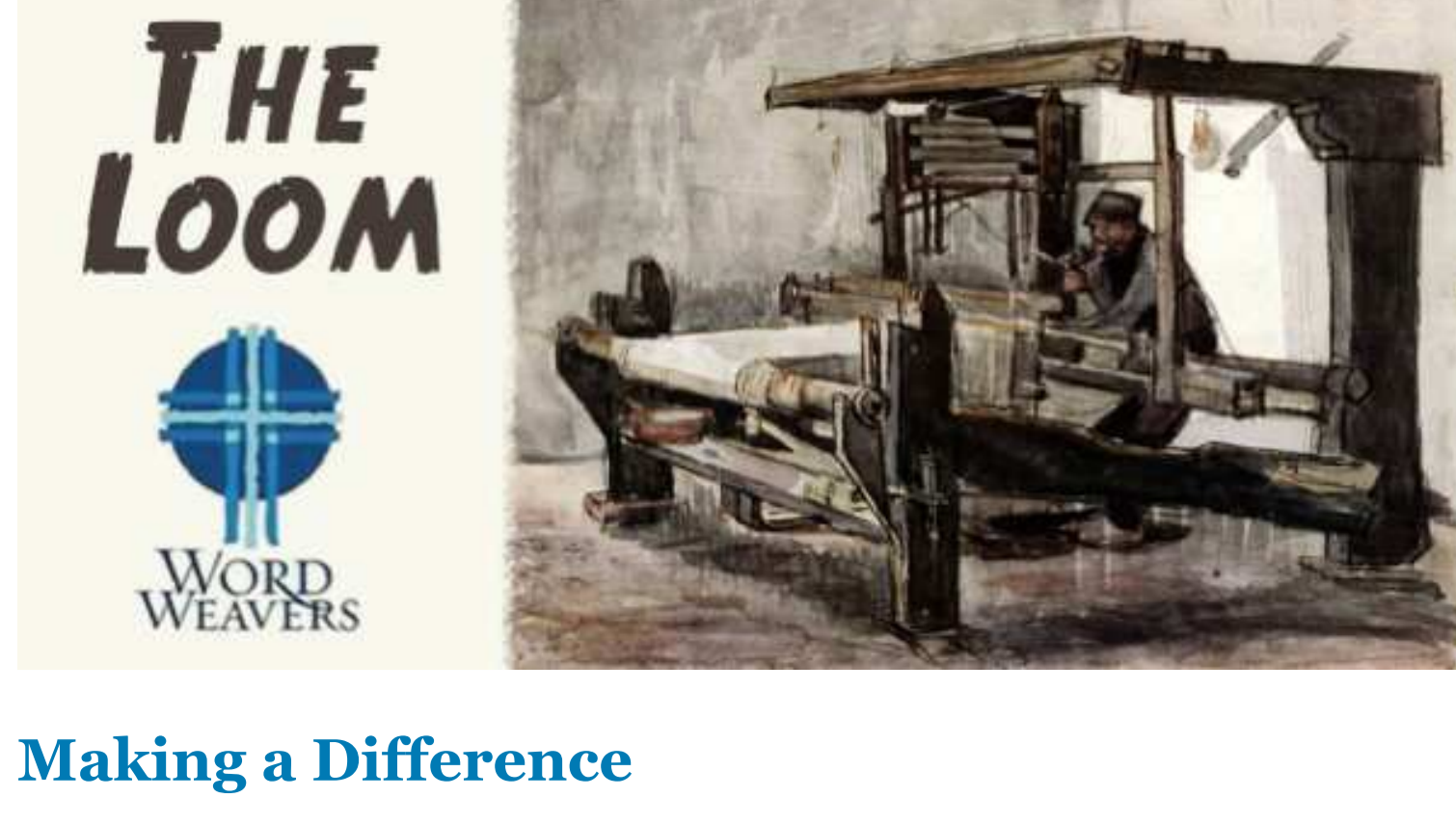


Conferences, Critique, Craft, and Community. The Loom helps you apply the 4 C's and glorify God with your writing skills.

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Making a Difference

by Andrew Opritz

Not too long ago, I stumbled on an article about a man walking along a sandy beach. As he walked, he saw a boy repeatedly bending down, standing up, and then extending his arm as if throwing something into the ocean. The man, curious, approached the lad and realized the boy was picking up starfish and throwing them back into the ocean beyond the incoming crashing waves. The man then introduced himself to the boy and asked him why he was throwing starfish back into the ocean.

The lad calmly replied as he continued throwing starfish back into the ocean over the roaring waves. "The sun is up and the tide is going out, so if the starfish remain on the sand they will die."

The man was amazed and said to the boy, "There are thousands of starfish all over the beach. Will saving a few starfish make any difference?"

The lad then picked up a starfish and threw it far out into the ocean over an incoming wave, and turned to face the man. "It made a difference to that one."

Yes, the wise lad taught the inquisitive gentleman a lesson—that even a child can make a difference and save lives. Later on, the day after reading that story, I couldn't stop thinking and wondering how many persons would have cared enough to stop and save an innocent marine creature as the young lad did? He truly made a lifesaving decision for a little starfish—he made a difference!

There is no question that most people would admit they would feel good if they could do something that would 'make a difference' in the world, but many would then sheepishly smile and say, "If I could." But if that same person happened to be a mother or a father or a caregiver, they certainly are making a difference of immense value, doing so on a daily basis for their children as they grow and become adults. Yes, that lad on the beach with the starfish was so wise, he did make a difference for that one starfish. The difference the lad made for the starfish may have been small in the scheme of things, but it was of immense value for that one starfish.

Interestingly, the decision for making a difference isn't a compelling need for most folks early in life, because most folks are intent on fulfilling their own destiny. However, unknowingly, they truly make a difference by just doing mundane, everyday activities. Of course, it goes without saying, the phrase making a difference can be a two-edged sword because making a difference should always be for good, not evil.

The Story of an Ancient King

Many years ago, King Do-good decided to test his subjects by placing a huge boulder that blocked a commonly used main dirt road to see if someone would move it off the road. He then hid by the side of the road to observe.

Soon, he witnessed many travelers approaching the boulder on the road and watched as they simply walked around it, saying "Let someone else move it off the road."

Eventually, a poor elderly peasant approached the boulder, paused, and then struggled mightily to move the boulder off the road. After he had moved it, the man saw a purse that was laying under the huge boulder with a note and a purse with gold coins from the king. The note said "You made a difference, you have earned many gold coins."

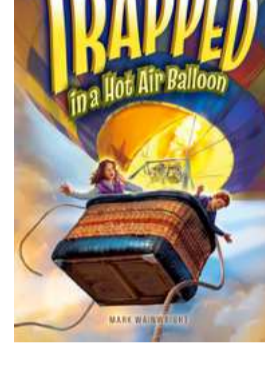
The moral of the story, well, there really isn't one except to say that we all make mistakes in life, but if we learn from our mistakes, we will make a difference by simply doing what is possible and reasonable.

My thoughts raced back to a time when the getting stage of life was of paramount importance. It was important not only to win the marble game but to get all the marbles. It was important to obtain an education, to receive love—not give it. It was a time of lime/us and not you/they/them. Later in mid-life, I found most of the questions that were so tormenting during those early years were never completely answered but, to some degree, became tolerable and in some circumstances, even comfortable.

Finally, in my fading elderly years, the need for accumulation had long passed, and my need to help others was of greater importance. I reached a contented compromise with those unanswered, nettlesome youthful questions. I had entered the ethereal phase of life when the need to 'make a difference' was so important. It has been said that learning from our past mistakes enables us to avoid future errors. Yes, the turbulent seas of life are a constant source of new danger. In the final analysis, we must all be the captain of our ships of life.

If you'd like to submit a guest essay on an interesting writing topic for *The Loom*, please contact Lauren, lcrews9005@gmail.com.

New Releases



- **Trapped in a Hot Air Balloon** by Mark Wainwright (Page 5 Word Weaver)
- **Publisher:** Abeka (<http://www.abeka.com/>)
- **Genre:** Juvenile Christian Fiction
- **Audience:** Middle Grade to Young Adult
- **Summary:** When a hot air balloon ride goes terribly wrong, siblings Jenny and Cole find themselves soaring thousands of feet into the cold Colorado sky. In the basket of the enormous balloon, they must overcome their differences and safely land the runaway hot air balloon. Join Jenny and Cole on their trip of a lifetime as they learn to overcome fear, exercise faith, and extend forgiveness.



- **Fresh Scar** by Donna Mumma (Tampa, FL Word Weavers)
- **Publisher:** Firefly Southern Fiction, an imprint of Iron Stream Media (www.ironstreammedia.com)
- **Genre:** Southern Fiction seasoned with Suspense
- **Audience:** readers who enjoy a good mystery in the south, family drama, with a touch of psychological thriller
- **Summary:** Two sisters, Asia Butler and Ivy Butler Morelli just want to ignore the past, but can't when they each receive a letter from Veronica's attorney promising much-needed cash if they will fulfill their abusive mother's dying wish and consent to cleaning out their childhood home. Asia and Ivy reluctantly return to their hometown of Emerson, Florida, only to discover the house is a hoarder's nightmare filled with strange mementos and clues hinting that they were not the only victims of Veronica's sadistic nature. Can this new pain be the path to their healing, or will they be able to choose forgiveness over resentment?



- **Girl with a Black Soul** by Jennifer Odom (Ocala, FL Word Weaver)
- **Publisher:** WordCrafts Press (<https://www.wordcrafts.net/>)
- **Genre:** Mystery/Suspense
- **Audience:** YA to Adult
- **Summary:** When the highly talented teen Chad Montgomery is targeted by a bully after his father's death, he takes the wrong fork in the road. Will his praying mother, his shifty new girlfriend, or the temptation to bury his talent prevail? *Girl with a Black Soul* brings the Black Series to a twisting, turning, and unexpected conclusion.



- **Plague** by Marian Rizzo (Ocala, FL Word Weaver)
- **Publisher:** WordCrafts Press (<http://wordcraftspress.net/>)
- **Genre:** information not provided
- **Audience:** Adult
- **Summary:** Follow John and Rosie Gallagher, a husband-and-wife medical team who are striving to keep the people of their village safe and well during a worldwide pandemic of the "Spanish Flu." Ultimately, influenza kills more than 50 million people worldwide, and possibly as many as 100 million. Many similarities (and differences) to Covid will have adult readers pondering their own trials while coming through yet another virulent pandemic.



- **Price of Grace** by Debra Shelton (Western Slope, CO Word Weavers)
- **Publisher:** Broken Yoke Publishing (<https://brokenyokepublishing.com/>)
- **Genre:** Contemporary Fiction/Inspirational/Suspense
- **Audience:** YA to Adult
- **Summary:** Lives collide when veteran drifter Eli Walker, a homeless man, and brokenhearted vet tech Dani Rossellini, come to the aid of kidnapped teen, Grace McConnell. A chance encounter or has God placed them there for such a time as this? A story of redemption and budding romance.

We want to help launch your book! If you have a new book coming out, please e-mail Taryn Souders at tarynjoy@souders.net. Include a jpeg of your book cover, genre, the publisher's name and website, the intended audience, and a two-to-three-sentence summary of your book. We will shorten your summary if it is longer than the maximum—please don't make us do that. **If you omit any of this information, we can't post it.** Also, please let us know what chapter you belong to!

Curating Lighting

by Susan Holt Simpson

Writerly Quote: "The difference between the almost right word and the right word is really a large matter—is the difference between the lightning bug and the lightning." – Mark Twain

Summer evenings in Kentucky are magically enhanced by lightning bugs. Catching them can be tricky. You must be still and ready at the same time while watching for a nearby flash. Chase the too-brief gleam, swoop a hand, and hope you end up cradling a bioluminescent creature. Pop a few in a jar and you've got a wonderful collection for an hour or so.

As writers, we seek powerful "lightning" words that Mr. Twain refers to. And we must be ready to swoop when unique inspirations cross our paths like elusive fireflies: unusual character names, article topics, or clever turns of phrase.

But where do you keep them? Some scrawl these flashes of inspiration on receipts and napkins, church bulletins, and softball schedules. Others use voice recordings, note apps, or even photos to snatch and store bits of brilliance.

How do you curate your collection of lightning words? Email your methods to SimpsonCircle@gmail.com, and I'll share them on the Word Weavers International Facebook page.

Writerly Gift Idea: As the grateful inhabitant of a small home, I curate inspirations on [this](#), in a bathroom-wall sort of style. They fold up and slip away, allowing me to keep my office space uncluttered.

Online Group Hot Tip: During a full online group meeting, use a timer to make sure everyone gets an equal critique. Put extra comments, encouragement, and suggestions in the chat window.

Quick Tips

Did you know that most conferences have contests that anyone can enter? Consider looking into the different conferences that are listed in this newsletter to see if you'd like to submit an entry. Winning an award for your writing helps get you noticed!

As someone who's heading off to an in-person conference, here's my packing list so far: business cards, one nice outfit, one-sheets for pitching, pens, and a notebook, spending money, my Bible, clothes/PJs, comb/hairbrush, personal supplies, swimsuit, earplugs, notecards, book/Kindle, journal, phone/camera/cords, and books to be signed by my fav authors on faculty.

I also discovered there are pre-conference events online, especially for first-time attendees, so I'm adding those to my calendar as well as the appointments I've made and classes I've chosen for the conference.

Upcoming Conferences/Retreats 2021-22

*Please note most writing conferences have contests to enter

■ [Oregon Christian Summer Writers Coaching Conference](#)
August 2021 Conference CANCELLED
2021 Cascade Awards, Aug. 18 at 6 pm PDT goes virtual (all welcome)

■ [Ridgecrest Path to Deep](#)
August 22–27
Ridgecrest, NC
Limited to 40 participants

■ [Colorado Christian Writers Conference](#)
August 26–28
Friend to writers and best-selling author Cec Murphey is providing a limited number of full scholarships to the Colorado Christian Writers Conference. *Deadline for applications is August 1, available on a first-come basis.*

■ [American Christian Fiction Writers Virtual Conference](#)
September 10–11

■ [Mountainside Novelist Retreat](#)
September 19–22
Black Mountain, NC

■ [Getaway With God Personal Retreat](#)
September 24–25
Mundelein, IL

■ [Your Time to Write Virtual Summit](#)
Capital Christian Writers Fellowship
October 6–9

■ [Florida Christian Writers Conference](#)
October 19–24
August 15 Contest Deadline
Leesburg, FL

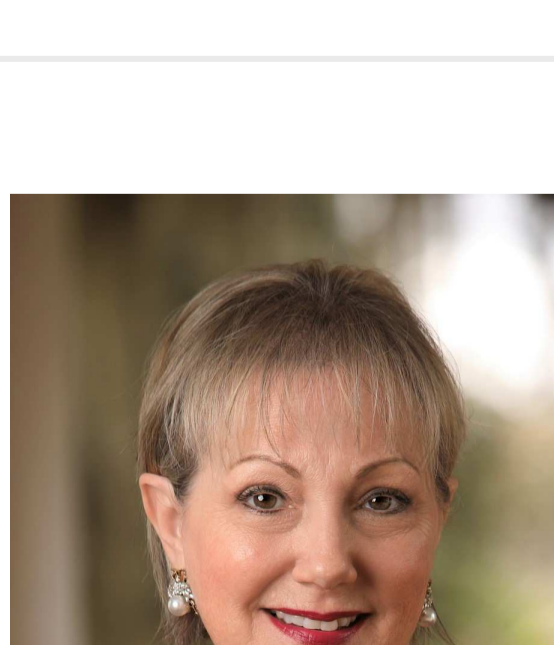
■ [Northcentral PA Christian Writers Conference](#)
Sat. November 6, 10 am–3 pm
Watsonstown, PA

■ [Asheville Christian Writers Conference](#)
February 18–20, 2022
Asheville, NC

■ [St. David's Christian Writers' Conference](#)
June 21–15, 2022
Grove City, PA

■ = Online Conference
■ = In-Person Conference

If you know of a conference that should be on our list, please send that information to Editor-in-Chief Lauren at lcrews9005@gmail.com or Assistant Editor TLC Nielsen at astdanceband.tracey@gmail.com. Thanks!



The Last Word

I'm getting more and more excited. Not just because, soon, summer will come to a close and usher in the cool and colorful autumn of the year, but because that also means [FCWC](#) is right around the corner. I'm also getting a little anxious. I always do about this time in the year. I start to think about and pray for the conferees coming in. The interactions. The workshops. The interactions and the fun we always have. But, this year I'm especially excited because this is our first year in which we offer "something different."

As many of you know, last year's first annual retreat (Kidz Lit was set for 2020, Fiction Writers for 2021, and Nonfiction Writers for 2022), didn't happen "because of COVID," a phrase I believe should be put on a tee and other paraphernalia. We initially thought we'd have Kidz Lit in 2021... but the conference center closed down, was re-purchased but was not available until 2022. So then we thought we'd have a day-long Kidz Lit mini-conference/intensive on Wednesday before FCWC officially begins on Thursday. If this worked, we said, we'd do it again next year, but with fiction, and so on.

The idea was a hit! And we're so excited about the number of you who are coming in this year to listen and learn and grow in your journey as children's books writers. We have some of our industry's best coming to lead workshops in everything from board books to YA. Is that not exciting? If you've been wondering about whether or not you'd like to be a part of this, we still have room available, but I wouldn't delay too long. As with last year, we are only able to have so many people staying onsite. Once that number is reached, we will have to look at other options.

In other news: we now have a Word Weavers International YouTube channel. There you can learn more about FCWC and you can listen as I chat with the experts about this and that. FMI: [\(1\) Word Weavers International - YouTube](#)

Eva Marie Everson, President
Taryn Souders, Vice President
WordWeaversInternational.com



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"The Loom" monthly newsletter

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