

Staggered entry deadlines set for Spur Award competition

From Staff Reports

Entry deadlines for WWA's Spur Awards will be staggered, based upon publication dates, beginning with the 2020 competition for material published or released for the first time in 2019.

Material first published or released between January 1 and August 31, 2019 must be received, along with entry forms, by the category judges and Spur chair no later than October 1. For material first published or released between September 1 and December 31, 2019, entries and entry forms must be received no later than January 15, 2020.

WWA's board of directors unanimously approved the deadlines during a teleconference January 31. The decision was made to ease the burden of volunteer judges.

Entries received after either deadline will be disqualified.

Rules and entry forms are scheduled to be published in the August issue of *Roundup Magazine* and posted on the WWA website, WesternWriters.org, in August.

Winners and finalists will be announced in March 2020 and honored during the 2020 WWA convention in Rapid City, South Dakota.

The WWA board also:

✓ Approved the 2019 James Ersfeld Memorial Symposium for September 27-28 at the C.M. Russell Museum in Great Falls, Montana. Scheduled panelists include Chris Enss, Nancy Plain, Erin Turner, Andrew Patrick Nelson and Kat and Larry J. Martin.

Symposiums were started in 2015 to encourage people in the writing field, with a focus on the Western genre. The symposium is named after WWA's assistant director, who died in 2011 in Albuquerque,

New Mexico, at age 62.

✓ Appointed Rachele "Rocky" Gibbons and Plain

to proceed with a proposal for TwoDot Books on a nonfiction anthology for middle-grade readers.

✓ Reappointed Pete Simpson and Candy Moulton to terms on the Homestead Foundation board, which oversees the charitable 501(c)(3) foundation that provides award-giving and educational functions for WWA.

✓ Approved a \$500 payment for an analysis of health insurance coverage options by the Authors Coalition of America's health care insurance committee.

The board's next meeting is scheduled for June 19 during the 2019 convention in Tucson, Arizona.



10 tips on using social media for self-promotion

Let's face it, self-promotion stinks. No one likes to do it. The word itself sounds egotistical. But is book promoting really self-promotion? I like to think

of it as "sharing."

Isn't this what we are doing?

We are sharing our writing, our thoughts, our world. Engaging with an online community is not selfish. We are

simply sharing what we have written and where to find it. We are connecting. We are answering questions, having conversations and sometimes providing opinions on other subjects we are passionate about. Don't think of it as "self-promotion." Think of it as sharing and connecting with your readers.

Here are 10 tips for connecting and sharing on social media:

1: Be findable: Social media accounts are free, and millions of people are on

social media. Your author accounts and profiles will help people find you and get you in the search engines.

2: Be in the right place: Don't worry about having to spend time on every social media platform available. Use what works for you.

3: Be consistent: Think of your author brand. Keep your profiles clean, consistent and up to date.

4: Be connected: Connect your social media accounts together and with your website. Use hashtags to help your posts get noticed by people searching for keywords and topics.

5: Be engaging: Create events and invite readers. Create questions, contests and encourage interaction. When your friends and followers engage with you by liking and commenting, their connections also are engaged which further increases your reach.

6: Be supportive: Like, comment and support other pages including book stores, writing organizations, fellow authors, arts organizations and commu-

nity pages.

7: Be interesting: What can you give your reader, either information or entertainment? Write for them. You want to be a valuable resource to people

8: Be accessible: Give fans behind-the-scenes glimpses. Share your writer's life and writing process and give them insider access.

9: Be thankful: Post a thank you to the book stores, organizations and events you are involved with.

10: Be authentic: The more human you can be, the stronger the connection and loyalty.

As you build your reputation as an author, every interaction you have with a reader is a win. Give your readers a positive experience, and they will value the interaction and attention you give them. Take advantage of it, account profiles are free. Share away.

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