



# Writer's Block

A C I N D Y B A U E R B O O K S N E W S L E T T E R



**Author Cindy Bauer**

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**August 25th**

**CONTEST WINNER**

**A. Weaver  
Indiana**

**Congratulations!**

## AUGUST 2007 UPDATE

Well, I must say a lot has happened to me since I put out last month's issue. And I can't say that it was all good, either.

I was informed that my dad has bladder cancer and as if that weren't enough for one person to swallow, we were devastated when one of our pets passed away suddenly. Samantha, our cat, was only two years old. She was a feral that we adopted when her mother literally dumped her under the bushes outside the front of our house. After some research, we discovered that you could domesticate a feral cat in time, so we gave it our best shot and it actually worked. She was really becoming a terrific pet and boy, what a mouser! Samantha was serious about her job to protect us from the evil little rodent, the field mouse. You see, we live in the country. She would behead them, eat the heads and then proudly leave their bodies behind for us to see what a marvelous job she had performed for us.

On Sunday, July 8th, Samantha decided she wanted to

stay outside that night. And once she's decided that, there is no getting her to come in to her room, an enclosed front porch. Sometime during the night, something got a grip on her and I found her under my car the next morning. The vet thought it was a Tom Cat, but we believe it was the huge and very old "Hoot Owl" that comes every night. I consider it huge as you can see it sitting in the yard from the house windows and it looks like a small turkey. That's pretty big! Four days later, she passed away. We were and are still very sad and will miss her dearly. She touched our hearts, even if only for a short time.

But I'm going to keep my chin up as I tackle this experience we all must endure...the experience called life.

On the blessing side of things, we do still have our other family pet. Shadow is almost fourteen now. The poor dear was recently diagnosed with diabetes, a disease I was not aware of that dogs could get, though I did know they can get a lot of the diseases we do.

She was diagnosed a month after my hubby was. The vet told us that this is actually very common, for a pet to get the disease if one of its owners does. She developed it due to her weight problem, a factor I sadly hold hubby and I responsible for. You see, Shadow loved Meaty Bone Dog Biscuits and scraps from our meals.

However, her diabetes cannot be treated with diet as a human's can, so she now gets insulin shots twice a day and we had to change her diet from dry food to canned. The disease caused her to get cataracts and now she is blind. But she's been a little trooper about this actually and she has managed to figure out how to get around in the house, as long as we don't move anything! You "gotta" love her!

But one good thing has happened! I submitted *Shades of Blue* to my publisher and it is in production! I'm guessing it will be out in late November.

Hurrah! Yippee! Drats...still have to finish book #3 in my trilogy. Well the vacation was nice while it lasted! Back to work!  
—Cindy

## AUTHOR SHOWCASE SPOTLIGHT



## Sharlene MacLaren

<http://sharlenemaclaren.com>

Born and raised in west Michigan, Sharlene MacLaren attended Spring Arbor University. Upon graduating with an education degree way back in 1971, she traveled internationally for a year with a small singing ensemble, then came home and married one of her childhood friends. Together they raised two lovely daughters, both of which are happily married.

Recently retired after teaching elementary school for 31 years, 'Shar' enjoys reading, writing, singing in the church choir and worship teams, traveling, and spending time with her family, which now includes her very wonderful, adorable, precious grandson.

A Christian for over forty years, and a lover of the English language, Shar has always enjoyed dabbling in writing—poetry, fiction, various essays, and freelancing for periodicals and newspapers. Her favored genre, however, has always been romance. She remembers well the short stories she wrote in high school and watching them circulate from girl to girl during government and civics

classes. "Psst," someone would whisper from two rows over, and always with the teacher's back to the class, "Pass me the next page."

Shar is a regular speaker for her local MOPS organization, is involved in KIDS' HOPE USA, a mentoring program for at-risk children, counsels young women in the Apples of Gold program, and is active in two weekly Bible studies. She and her husband, Cecil, live in Spring Lake, Michigan with their lovable collie, Dakota, and Mocha, their lazy, fat cat.

### From Shar's website:

Q – How did you get your start in writing?

A – I have always loved writing, but it wasn't until the year 2000 that I began to have a recurring dream—I know, this sounds a little weird—that I had written a book. At first, I thought, how silly, but after having the dream at least three or four times I began to wonder if God was trying to tell me something. Shortly thereafter, I sat down at the computer to see if I could get beyond the first page. I did! And my first-ever novel (along with my writing passion) was born. In fact, I wrote about 90,000 words in three weeks! My husband kept me watered and fed, bless his heart. By the way, I will never write that fast and furiously again!

Q – Why do you write?

A – Precisely for the reason stated above. God gifted me with a passion and I simply can't stop! It is my heart's desire to write for His glory and honor. Therefore, I pray about all my plot lines, and when I "get stuck", as every writer does, I go to my knees in prayer and ask God to renew my spirit, refresh my mind and heart, and redirect my thoughts. He has never failed me!

Q – What message would you like your readers to walk away with

after reading one of your books?

A – I try to weave my Christian faith into each of my stories, and so it's my desire that, while entertaining, my novels will also carry a message of God's divine love and forgiveness. He wants to have a relationship with each of us, so I pray that people will come away from my books with a clearer knowledge of that eternal hope.

Q – What is your favorite Bible verse?

A – My all-time favorite verse is Romans 8:28, which says, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." This verse really speaks to me—tells me that no matter what trial or heartache I might have to suffer, God is right there in the middle of it, carrying me, guiding me, lending me strength. And that in the end, he's going to take that rough circumstance, turn it around, and make me stronger for it—make me thankful that I had to experience it.

Q – What advice do you have for new writers?

A – Follow your passions. Never give up! Don't let discouragement or disappointment keep you from pursuing your dream. If God has planted a seed of yearning in your heart to write, it won't go away. Be assured he will use that passion if you 'give it back to him'. Also, involve yourself with others who share your enthusiasm, join a writers' group, attend writers' conferences, read books about how to improve your craft, and above all, PRAY!

Then prepare yourself for what God will do through you!

## SHAR'S BOOKS



**Courting Emma** [\(Coming to stores March 2008 - Third in the Little Hickman Creek Series\)](#)

Twenty-eight-year old Emma Browning has experienced a good deal of life in her young age. Sole owner of Emma's Boardinghouse, she is "mother" to an array of beefy, unkempt, often rowdy characters. Though many men would like to get to know the steely, hard-edged, yet surprisingly lovely, proprietress, none has truly succeeded. That is, not until the town's new pastor, Jonathan Atkins, takes up residence in the boardinghouse, affecting not only her with his devout faith and strong convictions, but her clientele as well. Emma clings desperately to her stubborn ways, refusing to acknowledge God's love—until all of Little Hickman witnesses a miracle—the conversion of her abusive and alcoholic father, Ezra! Only then will Emma begin to experience God's power at work.

**Retail Price**  
**\$9.97**



**Sarah, My Beloved** [\(Coming to stores October 2007 - Second in the Little Hickman Creek Series\)](#)

Sarah Woodward has come to Kentucky as a mail-order bride, only to learn upon her arrival that "her groom" is betrothed to another! Does God have a back-up plan? She feels certain He led her for a reason, so with her usual stubborn determination, resolves to stay put until she discovers that reason. Rocky Callahan, an embittered widower has recently been saddled with the responsibility of his young niece and nephew and is desperate for help. Upon meeting the fiery Sarah Woodward, he proposes the answer to both their problems—a marriage in name only. Can Rocky let go of the pain of his past and trust God with his future? As for the marriage "in name only"—will it hold up, or does God have other ideas?

**Retail Price**  
**\$9.97**



**Loving Liza Jane** [\(First in the Little Hickman Creek Series\)](#)

When Liza Jane Merriwether rides into the town of Little Hickman Creek, Kentucky, her first thought is, "Oh, Lord, what have I done?" Kentucky is much different from her native Boston. But the town's new schoolteacher isn't easily discouraged, so she determines to roll up her sleeves and dig in with all her might. Soon she is beloved by all, including Benjamin Broughton, the handsome English widower with two young children, one of which is Liza's student. Despite the growing attraction between them, though, Liza shies away. After all, her contract clearly states that any contact with the opposite gender will result in immediate termination of her position. What's a girl to do? Will she soon discover that with God, all things are possible?

**Retail Price**  
**\$6.97**



**Through Every Storm**

Struggling through the tragic loss of their child, Maddie and Jeff Bowman experience the immense pain and grief caused by a broken heart and a marriage so severely strained that divorce seems imminent. Will life ever be normal again? Enter Timmy, Maddie's seven-year-old cousin. His innocent spirit and precocious nature helps to rekindle a flame in both their hearts, leading them on a path back to God and challenging them to look at their marriage through different eyes—God's eyes. And in the looking, they will discover healing they never thought possible.

**Retail Price**  
**\$10.39**



**Spring's Promise**

Elation turns to despair when Jake Evans' twin brother is killed in a tragic ski accident. What will happen to his brother's widow? Can Jake help Raychel overcome her loss despite the history between them?

**Retail Price**  
**\$24.95**

**Available at Amazon and Barnes & Noble. Get your copy today!**

## AUTHOR INTERVIEW SPOTLIGHT

Cindy Bauer Interviews: *Author Christopher M. Lawson*

**Christopher M. Lawson**

<http://authorchristopher.tripod.com>

CB: No More Lonely Days is for ages 18 & up, yet Hello...and Goodbye is for ages 12 & up. Why did you choose to write for different ages groups?

CL: When I was writing *Hello...and Goodbye*, I didn't intentionally set out to write for 12 and up. However, when I look back at it, it reads very much like a Judy Blume novel, whose style influenced mine during that time and previously, as a beginning writer. So therefore, when 1stBooks Library (now AuthorHouse) asked me what age group I felt it fit best in, that was when I chose young adult. Really, though, anyone can read it. My 15-year-old cousin loved it and my 79-year-old grandmother loved it; I suppose it's because the language was simple and easy-to-read, and Dudley Gerstenberger was no less an extension of my own personality.

With *No More Lonely Days*, I consciously chose to write an adult novel. Over the course of the next few years after the publication of *Hello...and Goodbye*, which was November of 2002, I started reading everybody from Stephen King to James Patterson; mostly the books or authors who appeared on the *New York Times* best-

seller list. I moved away from the young adult authors because I was growing up and wanted a challenge in my writing. So I would say that as I matured, so did my reading tastes and my writing matured. I actually like writing for adults better, because adults read more than kids do, with the exception of maybe Harry Potter.

I'm currently writing a novel that is going to be a thriller/love story and it is even more adult than even *No More Lonely Days*. Stylistically, it's darker and it's become an ambition of mine to write something like this and an "edge-of-the-seat" book. It is definitely going to be a reflection of how far I've come as both a reader and a writer. So we shall see.

CB: Why did you choose to self-publish your first book, *Hello...and Goodbye*?

CL: I didn't really think anyone would buy *Hello...and Goodbye* and I was looking for a publisher who would accept my novel *as written*. At the time, I felt it was the best I could do with it and I was pleased with it. In retrospect, I wish I could have put more time and effort into it, as well as go through the experience of mailing the manuscript or a query letter to agents or other publishers. Nevertheless, my attitude of this at the time wasn't as clear. I didn't want to change a word. Now I look back and think, maybe I could have used some better judgment...and saved \$600.

CB: Your website states: **Did You Know....** Chris is a descendant of Amherst, Massachusetts, poet Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)? This fact is very intriguing! Briefly explain how you are related to Emily Dickinson:

CL: Thank you, it's one of my few bragging rights. (smiles) From what I understand, my paternal grandmother's mother's great-aunt was Emily Dickinson. My great-grandmother's maiden name was Dickinson and in fact, my great-uncle owns a genealogy of the Dickinson family in

which Emily is mentioned in. Alas, I have not been privy to peruse it. Maybe someday, I can get the facts straight...

CB: Are there any other members in the family line re: Emily Dickinson, whom are also writers?

CL: Aside from my sister submitting a poem to one of those poetry contests and getting it published within, and my dad's younger brother having some poems published as well, I am the only published novelist. However, recently, it occurred to me that I *could* in fact be related to Charles Dickens and Jane Austen, considering that my paternal great-grandfather's surname was Austin. This has not been verified, though.

CB: Were you actually sued for using someone's name who actually does exist in your first novel, *Hello...and Goodbye*?

CL: (laughs nervously) Fortunately no. I think it shocked him more than anything. I did use a few real people's names in the book, particularly teachers and guidance counselors. They were flattered. The one who mentioned about the lawyers was not very kind toward me, even though I respected him.

CB: With all the spotlighting on "identity theft" these days, don't you worry about listing your name along with your date of birth and birthplace right on your website?

CL: You know, it never occurred to me. My website was modeled after [www.nicholassparks.com](http://www.nicholassparks.com) and he does mention being born in Omaha, Nebraska, and his birthdate, as well as his family's. I suppose I could be a little more careful and not as revealing, but to tell you the truth, I feel that as an author, I want to develop a kinship with my readers and want them to know me. I'm a pretty open person in some regards. Among one of my other "bragging rights", if you will, I like thinking and telling others I'm from the same city that gave us Dr. Seuss and

Robert B. Parker (the "Spenser" series), as well as Kurt Russell, among a few other well-known people.

CB: Besides comedy actors, what other types of television shows do you like?

CL: I really don't watch a lot of TV, not like I used to. However, I sometimes watch *Biography*, sometimes *CSI: Las Vegas*- I used to have a crush on Jorja Fox, but not anymore, and *The Waltons* before Richard Thomas left the series was another show I was crazy about. How could you go wrong with that family, especially when the main character is an aspiring novelist? (laughs)

CB: What are your goals in becoming an author? ie: what kind of reading audience do you hope to entertain and why?

CL: I'm hoping to remain an adult author, in other words, writing for an adult audience. As I mentioned before, I find it more challenging and a lot more liberating, as well. I am also in the process of keeping in touch with the Palmer Public Library's director about getting an author reading, as well as get some book signings at Walden-Books in Springfield, MA, and Barnes and Noble in Holyoke, MA. There is also this quaint little bookstore in Springfield called Edwards Books where national best-selling novelist Suzanne Strempek Shea sometimes works and the store loves local authors, so I'm going to get in touch with them. I am sort of limited in terms of my appearances right now, considering I don't have a license or permit to drive, but once I get that underway, I can hope to make more appearances, if anyone is interested.

CB: What obstacles have you had to overcome to become a published author?

CL: Aside from *Hello...and Goodbye* losing money, the biggest obstacle was to not give up. *No More Lonely Days* had been rejected many times and even now I really don't have an answer as to why. My theory is that I didn't write a "whiz-bang" query letter, even with the books I'd devoured on

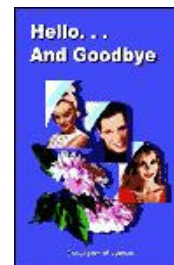
how to write one. I was quite disheartened, because here I have this fabulous novel, I felt, and no one would read it. PublishAmerica, God bless them, saw something in it that no other agent or publishing house did and I am thankful for that. I don't think we'd be sitting here now and talking about it, if I had given up back in March of 2007. My life has definitely changed because I feel like I really am a published author now!

CB: What obstacles have you run across in marketing your books and how have you overcome them?

CL: The greatest challenge for *Hello...and Goodbye*, I think, was getting the word about it out. I mean, I did have a very nice article in *The Journal Register* (Palmer's local newspaper), but most of the people who saw the article would say "Hey, I saw you in the paper" but not buy the book. Regrettably, I didn't have a website at the time either, believe it or not. My dad did try to push me to get one done at the time, but I didn't feel the book was strong enough, even if I was proud of it at the time. Sometimes people did tell me that they'd buy the book, but when the royalty checks came in or the reports were e-mailed, I'd be dismayed to see that no one bought it. With this new website, I think it's bringing new life and interest to the book. People who are interested in *No More Lonely Days* are now taking notice of *Hello...and Goodbye* and buying it for their kids to read, while they buy *No More Lonely Days*.

I haven't done much marketing for *No More Lonely Days* as of yet, other than my website and telling friends about it, and the PublishAmerica message board, a great idea of theirs I will add. Once the book is available throughout, I am going to make an effort to get my website out and mentioned, as well as keep up to date with any free promotional websites and blogs, etc. I'm very excited about this book and I know that it can do well. (smiles)

[Email: cmlawson725@comcast.net](mailto:cmlawson725@comcast.net)



Getting through senior year can be hard enough. When nineteen-year-old Dudley Gerstenberger learns that his new next door neighbor is a young woman that he had encountered on a few occasions in his past, he finds himself reliving these memories that he has retained. When he is going day by day, she is all that he ever thinks about. Only one problem: Jackie Goodwyn is a few years older than Dudley. Then there is Tina Scott, also a senior, who appears to be trying to get Dudley's attention on her. Can Dudley survive senior year and remain true to himself and those around him?



"Life is about choices. Making them, having them thrust upon you, or feeling the impact of what others have done." Kathryn Galen is thirty-two years old and has a sixteen-year-old daughter named Tracy. After spending her whole life living in a trailer in Belleville, Massachusetts, she decides to move out and into a house in hopes of making a new start. What she doesn't expect is to find love. Gary Rappaport has been a widower for sixteen years, raising his eighteen-year-old daughter Laurie almost entirely on his own. He has not married since losing his wife in a fatal car accident. It would take a woman to move into the house across the street to bring back feelings he thought lay dormant. A novel of unflinching romance and riveting suspense, *No More Lonely Days* will tug at your heart and allow you to believe in the power of love.

## AUTHOR RESOURCE INFORMATION

Okay then, last month I listed several links to assist you in your marketing endeavors. I will list some more here for you in a moment. But first, let me update you on a few changes to my website, as they pertain to last month's issue of Writer's Block.

I eliminated the Author Message Board for one thing. No one was using the darn thing to promote their books, events and broadcast their news announcements. Oh sure, some of you were and for that, I do want to thank you! But in general, it just wasn't going over as well as I thought it would, so I eliminated it.

Next, I changed my author link pages to give your books a better chance by separating them by genre! Some of you haven't given me your genre's, so you are listed on the OTHERS page. When you supply me with some kind of genre, I will be happy to move your book to its appropriate page, where readers who like to read books in your genre can find you! Some of those who did not reply to my email or I did not contact (don't ask), I was able to figure out a genre and put you on that page, but if you find I have put you on the wrong page and want it moved to another genre page, let me know, I'll be happy to do that for you.

You will also note there are some "special" placements on my website such as Shirley W. Mitchell, Lynn Emery and Gail Gaymer Martin. I will be adding two others by the way and they are Roxanne Rustand and Lena Nelson Dooley. These authors are so well published or promoted, they needed a page of their own and I'm happy that I met them all through Shoutlife.com, a wonderful online Christian owned and operated networking community. Shirley's agent invited me on her internet radio talk show, [Aging Outside The Box](#), and I was a

guest on August 1, 2007. The show is archived and you can listen to it by visiting my events page and clicking on one of the links I've provided there.

Talk about surprised! I couldn't believe it when O.E. "Cruiser" Small asked me if I had ever done a television or radio interview before and would I consider doing one with Shirley and him on her show. Well, of course my answer was yes! It was a full hour and I was nervous as can be at first, but Shirley is so easy to talk to that I was quite comfortable talking to her and I quickly felt at ease. So ask me why I was so nervous. Come on! Okay, since you insist!

"Cruiser" called me on Monday, two days prior to the show to talk to me about what to expect on the show. Then just before we broke our connection, he added, "Don't worry, you'll be fine. Don't even think about the fact that the show airs in 74 countries and has a listening audience of 15 million people. You're just talking on the telephone like you would talk to a friend." EGADS!!!!

Okay, now for those resources. I've run across several new links for you to check out and one I mentioned already earlier: [shoutlife.com](#).

Another good resource website is another author's site and that would be Gail Gaymer Martin. Gail has information on how to write proposals and inquiries to agents and publishers, plus much more! So when you have some time to do research and learn, visit her website at [gaimartin.com](#).

Okay, now for some others. Did you know about Google Alert? I'll bet not and then again, maybe you have. It's another service Google provides to email you updates of the latest relevant Google results based on your choice of query or

topic. With Google alert, you can stay on top of the game! Just go to [google.com/alerts](#). Another good one to check out is [fictionfactor.com](#). Free classifieds! Check out [topix.com/classifieds](#) and list your book in any city in the US for free!

And here are some others you may want to check out:

[doteasy.com](#)

[christianreviewofbooks.com](#)

[advancedfictionwriting.com](#)

[musesreview.com](#)

Okay, now for some things to avoid! I had never heard of "link farms" before, had you? **DO NOT** go for those **web rings** or sites such as [linkferrel.com](#). They are link farms and you will suddenly be targeted for a BUNCH of junk mail! Also, the search engine robots don't like them and will just pass you on by!

Don't forget to contact your local library to do signing events! And send press releases to every town you've ever lived in or have relatives living in. Make sure your release lists the "local tie-in" to their town. For small towns, longer press releases are better as they love to promote their own! For large cities, shorter press releases and good luck on those, most won't give you the time of day unless you happen to live there!

Donate to schools, libraries and hospitals. One copy, come on! What better way to get the word out? Make flyers and put them in your car windows. Everywhere you go, so does your advertisement for your books and website!

**Don't forget to enter my contest!**

**Okay, that should keep you busy for another month. Until next time! God Bless! —Cindy**