



August Tornado Alley Meeting

On Monday, August 11 @ 7 p.m. (Central), Tornado Alley Sisters-In-Crime will host its annual summer reading night. Members are invited to read aloud from their latest release or work-in-progress for five minutes. There are only two rules:

1. Your membership must be up-to-date (i.e., your dues for 2025 paid).
2. You may read for a *maximum* of five minutes. After that, you will be cut off to ensure there's enough time for all authors who registered. No exceptions.

Important: If you're interested in participating, please sign up with Dianne McCartney at d.mccartney.com. First come, first served, so get your name in as soon as possible. We hope to see you then and hear your written words!

Mystery Writer of the Month

Peggy Chambers has lived a life many of us would envy. She has climbed Chichen Itza, gone on safari in Zimbabwe (where she ate wart hog pizza for lunch), and snorkeled off the coast of Montego Bay, Jamaica. She swam with the dolphins in Mexico, and she isn't through traveling yet.

She has still managed to write 14 books, the newest of which is *Smugglers of Sandhill Island*. Her successful Sandhill series includes three novels and one novella, but she says *Smugglers* is the last. She has written children's books, young adult, suspense, pulp fiction, and comic books. After much soul-searching, she's decided to settle on the mystery/suspense genre going forward—maybe.

If that weren't enough, Peggy writes a weekly blog on her website at <http://peggylchambers.com> and belongs to the Enid Writers' Club, Oklahoma Writers' Federation, Sisters in Crime, Tornado Alley, and Oklahoma Romance Writers' Guild.



Peggy swimming with a dolphin.



She attended Phillips University in her hometown of Enid, OK; the University of Central Oklahoma; and is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma. She likes to garden (when?) and has five grandchildren.

You can find Peggy on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/BraWars>, BlueSky at (1) [@peggylchambers.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/peggylchambers.bsky.social) — Bluesky, or connect with her on Instagram at [champeggyl](https://www.instagram.com/champeggyl).

Unless, of course, she's somewhere on another continent at the time. 📖

Member News & Activities

(Send your news to marcia@marcia-preston.com for inclusion)

Brenda Thomas is taking an online course from Stanford University called Novel Workshop for Manuscripts in Progress: Plot and Structure. (She's also taking The Threat of Nuclear Terrorism from the same source!) She just learned that her thriller about an EMP (electromagnetic pulse) won first place in the unpublished, non-romance category from The National Excellence in Story Telling (NEST). She's attending the Killer Nashville conference this month and served as one of the judges for the thriller, gothic, and sci-fi fantasy contest categories.

Congratulations are in order for **Dianne McCartney**, whose novel *Whisper in the Dark* was chosen as a Judges' Top Pick in the Silver Falchion Awards from Killer Nashville.

Debbie Burkart and **Dawn Allen** are excited to attend a retreat at Dairy Hollow in Eureka Springs, AR, this month and the Unboxed Unconference in Arizona in October.

Peggy Doviak will be releasing the audiobook of *52 Weeks to Fearless* in August. Her article about making an audiobook appears below.

Faith Wiley and her husband wrote a thousand-word story for the *Chelsea Reporter* and hope to get a few other publications to pick it up.

Tornado Alley Mystery Writers Podcast #47, August 15, 2025 Interview with Merle Davenport

Merle Davenport is president of the Tulsa NightWriters, where writers help writers. He writes in a variety of genres and enjoys speaking at conferences. He and his wife collaborate on historical romance novels, turning their love story into stories for others.

His new book, based on twenty-five years of experience teaching inside prisons as well as extensive research, is titled *How Criminals Think*. Coming out this fall, this true crime book is written for authors to give them a better idea how to create authentic, 3D villains. After all, if you know how your villain thinks, you'll know how he talks and acts in your story.

This episode is available on Buzzsprout, Spotify, and Apple Podcasts.

Awesome Audiobooks by Peggy Doviak

Recently, I recorded my first audiobook. I was fortunate to meet the immensely talented Grammy-winning sound engineer/mixer, Tre Nagella, who suggested I create an audiobook version of my latest personal finance book, *52 Weeks to Fearless—What Creatives Need to Know About Money*. I knew nothing about recording audiobooks, but the opportunity was too good to pass up.

If you're like me, you are more comfortable with laptops than microphones. Still, I discovered that it's not that difficult to record an audiobook, and I want to offer you some tips based on what I just learned.



First, do you want to tape the book yourself or hire a professional reader? Non-fiction books are often read by their authors. Listeners say they enjoy hearing the author's voice and inflections. Although fiction listeners also enjoy authors reading their books, fiction is more challenging to narrate. A professional reader may better handle different characters and emotional situations. If you don't know any professional readers, talk to peers and friends, and try to select someone who reads in

your genre.

If you decide to do your own narration, invest in a quality microphone, or more easily, book time in a recording studio. Try to work with a sound engineer who has experience in audiobooks.

Before you format the segments, decide whether to be exclusive to Amazon or go wide to other markets. Amazon exclusivity gives you a larger percentage of each sale, but you may eliminate your book's presence in libraries and bookstores. Amazon's audio format is Audible. Spotify has its own distribution, while Findaway Voices serves as a large platform accessed by smaller platforms. Findaway Voices is transitioning to INaudio, but the audience reach, including libraries and bookstores, should be the same.

Although the file requirements for these platforms are similar, check them before you pay a sound engineer or format them yourself. Audible's requirements can be found at <https://help.acx.com/s/article/what-are-the-acx-audio-submission-requirements>. Spotify uses the same requirements as Findaway Voices. Spotify also controls the new platform, INaudio, so the three systems should be compatible. Those specifications can be found at <https://my.findawayvoices.com/technical-requirements-for-assets>. If that link goes dark, do an online search for INaudio, and the requirements should be easy to find.

In addition to uploading proper sound files, you also need to reformat your cover. These specifications also appear in the provided links. You need to turn your cover into a square, like an album or CD. Before you adjust your cover, ensure you own the rights. If you are with a large publisher, they will be handling your audiobook. However, a smaller publisher might not have contracted for your audiobook rights. Be sure you also own the cover art before using it. If you are an indie author, you can use your cover.

Finally, market and launch your audiobook as vigorously as you would print or ebooks. Audiobooks are a fast-growing segment of publishing, and you don't want to miss out on those listeners! 📖