



ASJA Pacific Northwest Chapter

March 2026

**For ASJA members in
Alaska, British Columbia, Idaho, Oregon and Washington**

<https://asjapnw.org>



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Our Next Meeting

M. Carolyn Miller is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Time: Wednesday, March 18, 2025
11:00 AM Pacific Time (US and Canada)
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87898612924>

Meeting ID: 878 9861 2924

Coming up in April

April 15, 11am

Social media expert Liz Smith has presented to us in the past, and she's kindly agreed to give us an update on what's going on with social media, including what's relevant to writers, and how we can use it for our reader audiences, B2B, or connecting with our colleagues.

Come hang out and learn the latest.

From the President

M. Carolyn Miller



Looking Back to Move Forward

When I first started out as a writer, I often spent hours at the Tattered Cover Bookstore in Denver. It was “home” to writers and readers, myself included. You could sip an espresso, snuggle into a comfy chair to read, or talk with knowledgeable staff when doing research. I never imagined that its owners would one day sell out to a chain store.

But in 2024, several owners and too many locations later, that’s exactly what happened. Barnes & Noble bought its first independent bookstore in the U.S., the Tattered Cover. I was heart-broken. It was the beginning of the end, I thought.

Not so, if former Tattered Cover CEO Kwame Spearman has his way, I learned recently. In an interview with *The Denver Gazette*, he [admitted](#) his mistake. He had too large a vision and too little capital. Now, he’s out to make things right. The result is the [Denver Book Society](#), complete with a manageable vision, an innovative business model, and a mission to create the sense of community I remember from the original store.

Spearman’s story reminds me not only to reframe my failures as valuable lessons learned, but also, to think deeply and carefully about the kind of life and livelihood I want to create for the next chapter as my agent pitches my book. Like Spearman’s grand but faulty vision, “fame and fortune” is a myth I’ve been taught to reach for as a writer. Now I know better.

I know too that, like Spearman's vision to recreate an earlier version of the Tattered Cover, what I wanted when I first started as a writer hasn't changed. I want only to make a decent living doing the work I love, fame and fortune be damned. That is my starting point.

M. Carolyn Miller, MA, spent her career designing narrative- and game-based learning. Today, she consults and writes about narrative in our lives and world, the inextricable link between the two, and the critical role of self-awareness in transforming both. www.mcarolynmiller.com

An Editor's Note

Randy Stapilus



After the big changes to the newsletter last month, I thought briefly about suggesting another big change.

Very briefly. As in a few seconds.

I thought it might be worth mentioning, though, because it might open a few thoughts about how to use the alternative means of delivery involved: Substack.

You're getting this newsletter (I presume) by email. That is what Substack does: From a user's standpoint, it is in largest part an email delivery system with a blog program attached, along with a collection of media options, including video and podcast delivery.

I started using it in an at least semi-serious way almost exactly a year ago, as means of delivering my columns, newsletters and occasional other writings to people who want them; and I have shifted away from using regular email and my website for delivery (though I do still use them for some things).

My audience has more or less tripled during that time, and I've even gotten some paid subscriptions (an option many Substack writers use) to bring in some revenue.

So far it's been a positive experience, nearly all upsides and not much negative.

Which led to the thought: Why not use Substack to deliver the PNW-ASJA newsletter?

Well, we could do that, sort of. As I mentioned, I use Substack for delivery of a weekly newsletter I produce.

But overall, the tools and materials don't match up well.

Substack works best for delivery of mid-length (as in newspaper column length) or longer essays and similar material, that's sent out on a regular and frequent basis. You could take this newsletter and turn it into something that looks like a blog, with many sections (the articles each of us write), but it wouldn't be easy to store or transmit to other people.

And the frequency, just once a month (and there's some talk about reducing the frequency to half that) doesn't really work the way most Substacks do.

For now, we'll stick with our current approach.

But if you have ideas for changes or improvements, drop me a line.

Randy Stapilus is editor of the ASJA Pacific Northwest Chapter newsletter. He is a writer and publisher based in Carlton, Oregon, and contributes a weekly column to the [Oregon Capital Chronicle](#). He can be reached at stapilus@ridenbaugh.com.

Using AI for Copy Edits



Bruce Miller

A friend working on a novel recently shared the results of an AI report on his first three chapters. Spell checkers have been helping with copy editing for a long time. AI can do the same, and more. AI can be used as one more tool to assist a writer. My friend used Claude and this is the prompt he used:

You are a literary agent evaluating my manuscript. I'm going to upload the summary, chapter 1, chapter 2 and chapter 3.

1.- Flag any punctuation or grammar errors

2.- Give me an honest assessment of the chapter. I will be submitting to an agent and need your help to get it ready.

What he got back from Claude was a 15-page report that flagged – and did not correct, but did suggest – typos, punctuation, and grammar errors. The review also included these sections: "Repetitive Language; Minor Logical Gaps Suggested Revision Priorities".

AI can be a tool to help you review your material, not write it.

As with any AI service, you should take into consideration the possibility that anything you upload could become publicly available. To keep your work private, it is important to carefully review the AI's method of operation. NotebookLM on Google, for example, keeps everything private unless you actively share it.

Seattle writer Bruce Miller also works as a database administrator.

Extracting Information from an Archive, Fast

Bruce Miller

Recently, I wanted information from 12 years of weekly ASJA newsletters. An archive exists here:

<https://www.multibriefs.com/briefs/asja/>

The Multibriefs search engine could not do what I wanted. My goal was to download all the newsletters to my local drive and upload them into my paid NotebookLM.google.com account.

When I decided to do this, there were about 691 weekly issues. I could have clicked through each year and month, downloading each issue one at a time manually, but that would have taken far too long. Instead, I looked at the source code for Multibrief's archive page and saw that all the file names were in the source code, and every issue followed the same URL pattern.

I copied the source code, pasted it into a text editor, and removed all the extra code before and after the file names.

Next, I pasted all the file names into an AI agent and instructed it to compile a list of file names ending with .php, one per line.

With this list, I performed a search and replace to turn each file name into a stand-alone URL. From this list, I could automate the download process.

I asked an AI service to create a download script that would retrieve each file (essentially the web page) and preserve the file name. The AI engine created a Windows PowerShell script that used a separate text file containing all the URLs. I ran the script, and in about six minutes, I had downloaded 691 web pages.

Next, I needed to rename all of the files using a different naming convention—YYYYMMDD—so they could be sorted quickly and easily by date. Again, AI created the script I needed, and this step took about five minutes.

Once renamed, I copied all the files to a new directory and changed the file extension from .php to .txt to accommodate NotebookLM.

I then separated the 691 files into four smaller groups to ensure that no group had more than 300 files, which is the maximum number of sources per notebook in a paid NotebookLM account.

After uploading all four groups (the 691 files) into NotebookLM, I was able to ask questions such as, “Compile a list of all the committees mentioned in the source files.”

This entire process took me about 70 minutes. Without AI, it would have taken me days.

Washington State resident Bruce Miller appreciates the ability to process a large number of files quickly

Tech Tip: Beat the Limit

Bruce Miller

Many websites with a paywall will give you a limited number of free articles. The Seattle Times is one such publication. I am an off-and-on subscriber – depending on the deals I can get.

When I'm off I run into the limit. Because these limits are frequently dependent on browser cookies I open up a Windows Sandbox and use the browser contained therein. No cookies, no blocking.

Member News and Announcements

This isn't an ASJA event, but it may be of interest to people who live in or near Portland ...

The Independent Book Publishers Association, a national organization, has scheduled a national education event May 14-16 at Portland. It said on its website, "IBPA Publishing University 2026 will be held at the Hyatt Regency Portland at the Oregon Convention Center starting with Think Tank for Established Publishers, afternoon workshops, and an evening cocktail reception on Thursday, May 14, 2026 and concluding Saturday, May 16, 2026."

More information is [available on the IBPA website](#).

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