



NAME: Sidney W. Frost

GENRES: Cozy Mystery, Women Sleuths, International Mystery & Crime, Inspirational Religious Mystery

Q & A:

What has been your most rewarding moment as an author?

My proudest moment as an author was getting my first book contract. It was a non-fiction book about computers with a limited audience. The royalties were not enough to compensate me for the time spent writing the book, but it meant I was an author. My father was James Michener's barber at the time. When Dad showed the famous novelist a brochure for my book, he signed it: "To Sidney, Good luck in your work. James A. Michener. 1984". I still have that brochure.

If you could offer one piece of writing advice to a novice author, what would it be?

Identify your readers before writing your novel and make sure you know what a novel is. When I wrote my first novel based on my experiences driving a bookmobile, I had no idea what I was doing. I took an online writing class to learn how to write. When I submitted my first draft, the class instructor told me what I had written wasn't a novel. She said it was a group of short episodes. With the help of the instructor and fellow students, I eventually converted it to a novel.

What have been some of the biggest helps for developing your writing skills? Written resources, classes or conferences, fellow writers you've learned from or have mentored you, other?

After my first book was published, I was partway through my second book when I learned about the "Save the Cat" method for writing novels. It is not easy to describe here, but there is a book you can read to get the details. Look for "Save the Cat! Writes a Novel: The Last Book on Novel Writing You'll Ever Need" by Jessica Brody.

How often do you write, and do you have a strict routine and writing plan?

The “Save the Cat” method provides a plan to follow. Rather than scheduling a time to write, I set a goal to write 2,500 words per week. That’s approximately the length of one of my scenes. If I put off writing until the last day, I have to write the whole scene then. The word goal count is a minimum. There are some weeks where I write twice that. It is easier to meet your writing goal if you work with a critique team. Peer pressure helps.

Have you ever based characters on real people? Give us a couple of examples.

Liz, the bookmobile librarian is the only character truly based on a real person. She was the librarian on the bookmobile I drove, and she was the same tough cookie in real life. She’s also the only character who has appeared in all six books. She was the main character in book five and she will be again in book seven because readers love her. I used her real last name in book one. I changed it later by getting her married. I didn’t have a name for the bookmobile driver, so I called him BD while writing. When it became time to name him, I remembered a longtime friend with the same initials. Brian Donelson. I even used some of his life.

What kind of books do you enjoy reading and how often do you read?

I’m a member of a neighborhood book club where we discuss one book a month. The books are fiction and non-fiction. I learned about Catherine Ryan Hyde through the book club and have now read all her books. I enjoy her novels because she pairs up older and younger characters and treats them as equals in the story. I’m a slow reader because I tend to study the structure and the characters as I read. I’ve read twenty-two books in the past ten months.

AWARDS: First Place in the 2007 SouthWest Writers Contest for inspirational or spiritual novels. First Place in the 2007 Writers' League of Texas Novel Manuscript Contest in the Romantic category. Third Place in the 2006 Lone Star Writing Competition.

BIOGRAPHY:

Sidney W. Frost grew up in Austin, Texas, served in the U.S. Marines in California, worked in the space industry in Los Angeles and Houston, and now lives in Georgetown, Texas.

He has a Master of Science degree from the University of Houston in Computer Science and a Bachelor of Arts in Mathematics from the University of California at Long Beach. He worked in Information Technology for many years, and in May 2011, retired after thirty years as an Adjunct Professor of Computer Science at Austin Community College. He received the adjunct teaching excellence award in 2005.

Since retiring, he has written and published six novels and edited twelve books for other writers.

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