

'Thanks to This Great Lady,' Cherry Weiner

By Larry D. Sweazy

Cherry Weiner started her literary career as a secretary at the Robert P. Mills Literary Agency in 1974. Mills handled some of the best-known writers of the era, including James Baldwin, Jim Thompson and Ralph Ellison. The agency was better known for its science fiction authors that were also some of Cherry's favorite writers, including Ellison, Isaac Asimov and Lester del Rey.

Cherry left the Mills Agency in 1975 and started her own literary agency in 1977, after being urged by some of her former contacts to go out on her own.

"I came home from a job interview one day to see five manuscripts sitting on my front porch ... with letters from those big-name authors telling me that they had told new authors to send me their work and that I should, at least, look at it and tell them what to do if I wasn't going to do it myself. Well the rest is history," Cherry says about her start in the business. Those big-name authors were Harry Harrison, Ben Bova, Gordon R. Dixon, Alfie Bester and Damon Knight.

Cherry sold her first Western in 1988, and attended her first WWA convention in 1987 in Sheridan, Wyoming.

"What attracted me?" Cherry says about attending the WWA conventions annually. "The fact that I could go to convention and be taken to see the sites and important historical places."

One of the authors that Cherry represents is the current president of WWA, Robert J. Conley, who says this about WWA's 2012 John M. Cleary Memorial Homestead Honoree: "When the convention met in Rapid City, Cherry sold seven of my books. I don't know if that's a record or not, but it was damn great."

Incoming president Dusty Richards is also a client. "I met Cherry at the Sheridan, Wyoming, convention. I had some real bum agents. I finally sold a book and called her up and asked her to represent me. She did. I have over 106 books on the shelf, and after 2012, there will be 112. All I can say is thanks to this great lady who has looked out for me over the years. I would've never gotten here without her."

Cherry also continues to handle science fiction, and authors of other genres. Gini Koch, author of the Alien/Katherine "Kitty" Katt series for DAW Books, says, "Cherry Weiner embodies all the qualities every author wants in an agent – experience, savvy, know-how, deter-



Agent Cherry Weiner all decked out with husband Jack. Larry D. Sweazy

mination and more. She truly is the best of the best, and I can't say often enough how glad I am that she's my agent."

Born in Melbourne, Australia, Cherry arrived in the United States in 1972, newly married to her husband, Jack, after living in Israel. Cherry and Jack, who live in Manalapan, New Jersey, have two daughters (Tracy and Teri) and two granddaughters (Ashley and Giana).

Cherry continues to work tirelessly for her authors, and in a publishing environment that is challenging, she remains persistent, and stubbornly optimistic about the future.

HONORED (from page 12)

Nonfiction-Contemporary: Jim Kristofic, *Navajos Wear Nikes: A Reservation Life* (University of New Mexico Press); Rachel St. John, *Line in the Sand: A History of the Western U.S.-Mexico Border* (Princeton University Press).

Nonfiction-Biography: Louis Kraft, *Ned Wynkoop and the Lonely Road from Sand Creek* (University of Oklahoma Press); Richard D. White Jr., *Will Rogers: A Political Life* (Texas Tech University Press).

Short Fiction Story: Ray Shann, "The Great Divide" (Graywolf Press).

Short Nonfiction: John R. Wunder, "That No Thorn Will Pierce Our Friend-

ship" (*Western Historical Quarterly*); Mark Dworkin, "The Wild West's Premier Mythmaker" (*Wild West Magazine*).

Juvenile Fiction: Johnny D. Boggs, *South by Southwest* (Five Star); Nancy Oswald, *Rescue in Poverty Gulch* (Filter Press).

Juvenile Nonfiction: Jean A. Lukesh, *Wolves in Blue: Stories of the North Brothers and their Pawnee Scouts* (Field Mouse); Linda L. Osmundson, *How the West Was Drawn: Cowboy Charlie's Art* (Pelican).

Drama Script: Jonathan Raymond, *Meek's Cut-Off* (Evenstar/Film Science/Primitive Nerd); Miguel Barros, *Black-*

thorn (Rogue Pictures).

Documentary Script: No finalists.

Storyteller: Mary Casanova, *The Day Dirk Yeller Came to Town* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux); Mary Dodson Wade, *Henrietta King: La Patrona* (Big Sky Press).

Poem: Floyd Collins, "What Harvest: Poems on the Siege & Battle of the Alamo" (Somondoco Press); Larry D. Thomas, "The Red, Candle-lit Darkness" (El Grito del Lobo Press).

Song: Wylie Gustafson, "Raven on the Wind" (Two Medicine Music); Bob Thomas, "The Cowboy" (Easy Bob Music).