



# WRITERSTALK

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Monthly Newsletter of the South Bay Writers Club™

JANUARY SPEAKER: KYMBERLIE INGALLS

## Blogging and Branding: Why Aren't You?

by Jenni Everidge

How many times have you heard someone say that every writer needs a blog? Or a twitter account? Or some other social media outlet that makes you squirm?

I'll be honest. If you've talked to me for any length of time, you have probably already heard it at least once or twice. And I stand behind that: I think that writers today need to be present on social media, and they should want to interact with their readers in some form, or else they probably won't be as successful. Why not social media? How else are we going to do it? The author-reader relationship has changed, and we have to face it.

But what social media works for you? Not everyone can express themselves in 128 characters. Not everyone feels comfortable blogging about his breakfast, or boasting about his process. If you look at the whole mass of social media tools as a big headache that isn't worth your time, fair enough. I won't try to change your mind. But I will urge you to consider it. Think about getting your feet wet. If you are willing to stick even one toe into social media, specifically the delicate art of blogging, then you'll want to come to our January meeting for a presentation by Kymberlie Ingalls, "Blogging and branding: why aren't you?"

Kymberlie Ingalls knows the importance of character and identity. With her added experience in marketing, she prefers taking chances and finding new ways to get from one place to the next. Her current network of blogs began in 2009, featuring genres of personal essay, memoir, opinion, and short fiction. She writes in themes of love, loss, humanity, and her struggles with amnesia.



Kymberlie Ingalls

On January 11th, she will present the idea of blogging as purpose before commitment. This won't be an instructional on how to create a blog or another lecture on why you need social media. We'll be talking about what to do with it once you're there, and how to present yourself to the world.

I want to reiterate that my goal for this club has been to build community among other writers in our area. It's time to start extending that to our readers. If you're willing to ponder how a blog might help you do that, then I hope you'll join me on January 11 at Harry's. — WT

## SBW Donates to NaNoWriMo

by Jenni Everidge

In November, South Bay Writers hosted its first write-in to benefit National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo). Members were encouraged to bring their laptops and write for the time normally allotted for the speaker.

We had an impressive turnout and awarded many door prizes to those who attended. Each ticket to the write-in generated a donation to the nonprofit in charge of NaNoWriMo, The Office of Letters and Light.

South Bay Writers donated \$175 to benefit National Novel Writing Month, an organization that facilitates the challenge of writing a novel in a month in schools and libraries, for all ages and in many countries around the globe.

Thanks to all who attended and for the members who helped the write-in run smoothly. — WT

## SBW Holiday Bash

Thank you, Carole Taub, for hosting another successful South Bay Writers holiday party. Events like these help South Bay Writers build community and writing networks. We appreciate you opening your home to us.

Sheena Arora's pictorial report on this special evening appears on Page 7.



Happy New Year

Feliz Año Nuevo

# President's Perspective

by Patrick McQueen  
President, South Bay Writers



## New Year's Resolutions

Do you have any plans for this year?

I do. I want to write and publish a book. I've got a few ideas on how to reach this goal, and I would love it if you would join me in at least one of them.

I'm putting together an anthology. It's about a one-dollar bill that has magically circulated in and out of people's lives since 1963. With enough stories taking place at any point in the last 50 years, we can get this anthology published by the end of the year. For more information on this prompt, check out our website at [southbaywriters.com/wordpress/writing-prompts/](http://southbaywriters.com/wordpress/writing-prompts/).

I'm also going to write stories on my own. For these, I am going to need beta readers and editors. I know I can turn to the list of beta readers right here in *WritersTalk* to help me with that need. I've already read for a few others while being on this list, and I am confident the others on this list will be there to help when I need them.

As I approach my deadlines for these publications, I will need guidance from trusted allies. That's where the network of friends I have made at SBW comes in handy. I trust that you, my experienced and published friends, will be there for me when I need a helping hand approaching today's professional writing markets.

Whether you are brand new to South Bay Writers or you have been with us for a while, I encourage you to leverage our website at [southbaywriters.com](http://southbaywriters.com), and peruse this monthly newsletter, as packets outlining our intent, available opportunities, the club's organization, and our upcoming plans. If you have any questions not answered in these publications, please email me at [pres@southbaywriters.com](mailto:pres@southbaywriters.com). —WT



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#### SBW Mission

Educating writers of all levels of expertise in the craft of writing and in the marketing of their work.

#### Join Us

We have a membership category that fits you. Dues are \$45 per year plus a one-time \$20 initiation fee. Dual membership: \$25. Contact Membership Chair, Sally Milnor, or sign up online at [southbaywriters.com](http://southbaywriters.com)



## WritersTalk

is the monthly newsletter of the South Bay Branch of the California Writers Club.

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Linda Judd  
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### Submissions

Members of the South Bay Writers Club are encouraged to submit their creative works for publication in *WritersTalk*. Please prepare your work as carefully as you would for an agent. All submissions will be copyedited. The Managing Editor decides which submissions to publish.

Submission deadline is the 15th of the month.

Suggested word limits are not absolute; shorter preferred. Electronic submissions should be text or attached MS Word file sent to newsletter@southbaywriters.com. Use Times New Roman 12-font; no tabs; no colors; no page breaks. Send graphics separately as jpg files.

**Anything Goes—Almost** (300 words)

**News Items** (400 words)

**Letters to the Editor** (300 words)

### Creative Works

Short Fiction (1200 words)  
Memoir (1200 words)  
Poetry (300 words)  
Essay (900 words)

### Member Achievement and News:

newsletter@southbaywriters.com

### Announcements and Advertisements

newsletter@southbaywriters.com

An announcement is information of interest and value to writers that does not provide direct economic benefit to its originator and is published free of charge.

Advertising of workshops, conferences, and events is accepted from other Branches of California Writers Club. Because California Writers Club is a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation, *WritersTalk* is not accepting advertising of events or services that benefit an individual. Also, we cannot accept political advertising of any kind.

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### Our Mission

Encouraging writers at all levels of expertise to hone their skills in the craft of writing

**Change of Address:** Send changes of address to membership@southbaywriters.com or use MRMS

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# Words from the Editor

by Marjorie Bicknell Johnson  
Managing Editor



## The “Singular They”

According to [www.mentalfloss.com](http://www.mentalfloss.com), *The Washington Post Style Guide* now accepts the *singular they*, as explained below.

“What do you do when you run into your friend on their birthday? You wish them a happy birthday, of course! Or wait—you wish ... him or her a happy birthday? When you run into your friend on ... his or her birthday? That’s how you’re supposed to say it if you want to avoid using they to refer to one person, but it’s a bit wordy and awkward. You could use just him or her alone, but what if you don’t want to be specific about the sex of the referent? You could make it plural—“what do you do when you run into friends on their birthdays”—but that sounds a bit strange.

“Anyone who writes for a living runs into this situation all the time and must go through all kinds of contortions to avoid the easiest solution—the *singular they*. In everyday speech, the use of they or them to refer to one person feels completely natural. But in more formal contexts, and in writing, that usage has been frowned upon since the production of grammar books in the 19th century.

“However, the *singular they* has been used in English for centuries. It’s in the King James Bible. Authors like Chaucer, Shakespeare, Swift, Austen, ... used it.”

*WritersTalk* defers to *The Chicago Manual of Style*: a pronoun must agree with its antecedent in number, person, and gender. About the “singular they,” several SBW members said, “Hurray!” while grammarian Dick Amyx said, “This is nuts.”

I just fix it silently. For example, I would automatically write, “What do you do when you run into your friend on his birthday? You wish him a happy birthday, of course.” In my opinion, *he*, *his*, and *him* are generic third-person pronouns to refer to a member of the human family and are not markers of gender. However, using *he*, *his*, and *him* as common-sex pronouns is now widely considered sexist, and one should write the rather clunky *him or her*.

To my eye, using *him/her* is an abomination. I think all that hogwash about *him/her* comes from reading too many articles about women’s lib. It wouldn’t surprise me if their next battle cry is to use *her/him*.

However, I am a grouch because I am suffering from severe lack of sleep. For the opposing point of view regarding sexist remarks (and terms hurtful to other groups), see ArLyne Diamond’s article, “Sticks ‘n’ Stones,” on Page 12. —WT

## Dan Poynter 1938-2015

On November 1, 2015, the Writing/Publishing world lost one of its giants. Dan Poynter, author of over 130 books, and the acknowledged Guru of Self-Publishing, passed away at the age of 77. South Bay Writers was fortunate to have him appear twice, January 2014, and a workshop in 2008. Dan was as charming off stage as he was on and he was generous with both his knowledge and his time. He leaves a priceless legacy at his website: [parapublishing.com/sites/para/](http://parapublishing.com/sites/para/)  
Dan Poynter will be greatly missed and fondly remembered. —WT

## Member News

by *WritersTalk Staff*

**We applaud and celebrate your writing successes.** Please send news for this column to [newsletter@southbaywriters.com](mailto:newsletter@southbaywriters.com). *WritersTalk* deadline is always the fifteen of the month.

**Betty Auchard** announces that Robertson Press will be the publisher for her third memoir, *Living with Twelve Men: A Mother in Training*. She hopes to hold it in her hands by March, 2016.

**Richard Burns'** poem in this issue of *WritersTalk*, "Before I Shut My Eyes," appears in his new book of poetry, *Glimpses--Thoughts through a Lifetime*, available on Amazon.

**Marjorie Johnson's** "The Dream-Walk-While-Awake" and **Dave M. Strom's** "The Sinister Soul Surfer!" appear in *Fault Zone: Transform*, an anthology of stories by the San Francisco/Peninsula Branch of California Writers Club. The cover photo is by **Donald Shernock**. – WT

## California Writers Club: Branch Membership Rank

As of September 1, California Writers Club had 1,869 members. The branches are ranked in the first column and the third column gives each branch's membership.

1	Redwood Writers	284
2	South Bay Writers	188
3	Sacramento	152
4	Mt. Diablo	137
5	Central Coast	132
6.5	High Desert	103
6.5	SF/Peninsula	103
8	Tri-Valley	97
9	Berkeley	96
10	Writers of Kern	87
11	Mendocino	71
12	Marin	66
13	San Fernando Valley	63
14	Napa Valley Writers	59
15	Fremont Area Writers	58
16	Long Beach	56
17	Orange County	49
18	Inland Empire	41
19	East Sierra	27
20	North State Writers	(new)

South Bay Writers is second in membership; otherwise, second to none. – WT

## Breaking Down Walls of Fear and Hate

by *ArLyne Diamond*

People have different points of view. Each person is sure that his perspective is the only right and good one; but honorable people, highly educated and dedicated, can and do disagree with each other as to the right way to do something.

We need to learn to listen. Not to automatically disagree and attack back.

We need to be more careful before we lump all people of "a certain kind" as one and consider them the enemy. Yet, we also need to protect our country – it's a tightrope.

On a smaller level, when I work with clients who are dealing with horrible levels of conflict, I know that the things that go unsaid need to be said in order for them to be dealt with. I am reminded of the sign that was on the wall of Dr. Mike Schmidt with whom I worked when I started out as a therapist. It said:

*The truth shall set you free  
But first it will make you feel miserable.*

For those who always plaster a smile on their face and only say the negative things they believe in a whisper behind their hand, I say wrong! Nothing can change until and unless we talk about it.

To break down the walls of fear and hate, we need to talk about what we believe, feel, have assumed, and have been told. Talk, share, listen. And change. – WT



## Happy New Year from the WritersTalk Staff

**Chinese:** Gung hay fat choy  
**Danish:** Godt Nyttår  
**Dutch:** Gelukkig nieuwjaar  
**Farsi:** Aide shoma mobarak  
**French:** Bonne année  
**Gaelic:** Aith-bhliain Fe Nhaise Dhuit  
**German:** Gutes Neues Jahr  
**Greek:** Kali hronia  
**Hungarian:** Boldog új évet  
**Indonesian:** Selamat Tahun Baru  
**Italian:** Buon Capo d'Anno  
**Norwegian:** Godt Nyttår  
**Polish:** Szczęśliwego Nowego roku

## Blog Post 1: SBW Authors and Books

by *Linda Judd*

Featured: Marjorie Bicknell Johnson

Book: *Jaguar Princess*

Blog: <http://drjacbooks.com/wp/interview-with-marjorie-bicknell-johnson/>

Posted: November 6, 2015

Excerpt:

Dr. Jac: I want to go back to your flying experiences in a minute, but first tell me what it is that you find so fascinating about the Mayan culture. I've read *Jaguar Princess*, and it's a compelling story.

Marjorie: I first learned about Mayan mathematics in 1961, when I took a course on the history of mathematics at San Jose State. The Maya discovered and used zero for place value at a time when the European world computed using the abacus and recorded their results in Roman numerals. Can you imagine doing long division, using only Roman numerals? Fibonacci introduced zero and the concept of place value in his 1202 book, *Liber Abaci*, in which he showed the European world how to do all the basic computations of arithmetic using Hindu-Arabic numerals. Of course, now children do that by eighth grade, but in 1202, that was a scientific breakthrough.

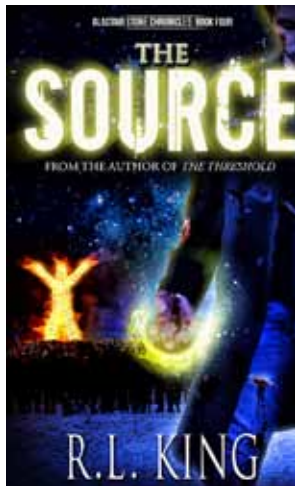
Read more online. – WT



**Portuguese:** Feliz ano novo  
**Romanian:** La Multi Ani  
**Russian:** S Novym Godom  
**Spanish:** Feliz Año Nuevo  
**Swedish:** Gott Nytt År  
**Welsh:** Blwyddyn Newydd Dda  
**Yiddish:** Gut Yor

[www.enchantedlearning.com](http://www.enchantedlearning.com)

## Book Announcements



### *The Source*

by Robyn King

On December 15, R. L. King released *The Source, Book Four* in the *Alastair Stone Chronicles* urban fantasy/paranormal thriller series.

The portals are closed. The Evil have lost their pathway between their home and ours. No longer does humanity need to worry about extra-dimensional body snatchers with a thirst for pain and terror pouring through to wreak destruction on Earth. So that means Stone, Jason, and Verity can rest for a while, right? Yeah, maybe not.

*The Source* concludes the *Forgotten* trilogy within the series. You can find it at Amazon. The author's websites are [rlkingwriting.com](http://rlkingwriting.com) (join the Inner Circle mailing list for two free ebooks and series updates) and [magespacepress.com](http://magespacepress.com).



### *Faith and Moonlight*

by Mark Gelineau and Joe King

Mark Gelineau and Joe King announce that their fourth novella, *Faith and Moonlight*, is now available on Amazon. Their website is [gelineauandking.com](http://gelineauandking.com).

Roan and Kay are orphans. A fire destroys their old life, but they have one chance to enter the School of Faith. They are given one month to pass the entry trials, but as Roan excels and Kay fails, their devotion to each other is put to the test.

They swore they would face everything together, but when the stakes are losing the life they've always dreamed of, what will they do to stay together? What won't they do?

## Got Book?

If you are a member of South Bay Writers who has a published book, send a jpg of the cover and a descriptive paragraph to [newsletter@southbaywriters.com](mailto:newsletter@southbaywriters.com). We will publish your book announcement. Also, be sure to join the SBW group on Goodreads and ask to be interviewed by SBW TalkBooks. It's easy: establish your Goodreads account and then join our group; the administrator lets members in.

You may also publish your photo and biography in our "Members Gallery" on the South Bay Writers Web site at <http://southbaywriters.com/wordpress/>. Go to the menu bar and click "Members." In the drop-down menu, click "Update Biography" and enter your information. If you have any questions, contact Web Editor Kimberly Malanczuk at [WebEditor@southbaywriters.com](mailto:WebEditor@southbaywriters.com). — WT

## Got TalkBooks?

TalkBooks is a book club that selects books written by SBW members for its monthly group reads. TalkBooks has a presence on Goodreads where members can discuss books online. Goodreads offers networking opportunities through blogs and social media. Many authors have blogs in need of something to talk about; TalkBooks will help get that conversation going. Sharing leads to more sharing, as well as book buzz among readers whom an author might never reach alone.

TalkBooks meets at 7:30 PM on the last Wednesday of each month at the Santa Clara Library on Homestead in Santa Clara. To be added to our mailing list, send an email to [newsletter@southbaywriters.com](mailto:newsletter@southbaywriters.com). — WT

## Blog Post 2: SBW Authors and Books

by Linda Judd

Featured: Mark Gelineau and Joe King

Book: *A Reaper of Stone*, the first novella in the *Echoes of the Ascended* series.

Blog: [ChessDesalls.wordpress.com/interviews/](http://ChessDesalls.wordpress.com/interviews/)

Post: December, 2015

Excerpt:

Q: How do you get your book reviews?

We did a few things to help us out here, but mainly, we just asked people who bought our book, "Hey, love it or hate it, we'd really love a review." In our experience, the hardest part is just asking people. The length probably helped too, as far as people's investment in time. Here are a few things we did.

- We gave the book away for free at launch and let people know it was available through websites, emails, and going into local stores/groups.
- We contacted the amazing web blogger community and asked if they'd be interested in doing objective reviews.
- We did Goodreads and similar giveaways to reach more people.

Ultimately, I think people are wonderful about wanting to leave honest reviews if given the chance. We just tried to remove as many barriers as we could by giving people that chance. With that in mind, if anyone would like to do an objective review of our work, please contact us: [joe@gelineauandking.com](mailto:joe@gelineauandking.com)

Read more online about their publishing a novella a month plans. — WT

## Genres: South Bay Writers Who are we?

Members indicate their genres when joining South Bay Writers. Here is the SBW genre count as of September 1: novels, 80; fiction, 20; short story, 19; nonfiction, 44; children, 4; poetry, 24; and memoir, 13. No, you can't add them together to find how many persons were on our membership list on that date because a few people list no genre and some list more than one. The membership list included 188 names. — WT

# Writing Dialog

by Michael Bracken  
SBW Workshop Presenter

"Dialog is difficult to write," I said.

"Why?" An attractive young writer, eager to learn the secrets of my success, sat across from me. This wasn't the first time we'd met to discuss writing.

"Because it must be realistic without being real."

"I don't understand."

"Well, um, I'm not sure I can explain it, but—let's see—real people, like, they stop and start and, um, they st-stutter and talk in run-on sentences. Or incomplete sentences. And they don't always think before they, um, open their mouths and stuff. You know?"

"That was bad."

"Wasn't it, though?" I said. "I hear people talking like that every day."

She leaned forward. "So how do you make dialog realistic without being real?"

I considered for a moment before continuing. "Take out the fluff. Don't start sentences with 'well.' Eliminate the 'um's and 'er's. Eliminate throwaway bits such as 'by the way.'"

"That sounds easy enough, but that can't be it. There must be more."

I reached across the table and patted her hand. She didn't pull away. "There's much more, but perhaps we should order a drink before continuing. You game?"

After she said she was, I called the waiter over, ordered a pair of frozen margaritas, and watched him walk away. Then I continued. "That was a good example."

She appeared bewildered. "Of what?"

"Of knowing when to write dialog and when not to."

"I still don't understand."

"I could have written, 'I called the waiter over. He introduced himself, 'Hi, I'm Bob. I'll be serving you today.' 'Hi, Bob,' I said. 'What will you have?' he asked. 'Two frozen margaritas,' I told him. 'Is that all?' 'Yes, Bob, that's all,' I said. Then I watched him walk away before I continued.'"

"That wouldn't have advanced the plot at all, would it?"

I smiled. She was beginning to understand. I said, "Not at all."

"Anything else?"

"Avoid long blocks of 'dialog' where a single character does all the talking. Once a character has said more than three consecutive sentences, you're in danger of writing a monolog or a soliloquy. Even worse is when each of your characters speaks in long, uninterrupted blocks. That creates alternating monologues."

"That was four sentences."

"You could have interrupted me and broken it up a bit."

"No," she said. She licked salt off the rim of her glass. "I like listening to you."

I liked what her tongue was doing but I couldn't allow myself to be distracted. I had much more to teach her.

"The info dump should also be avoided," I told her, "especially in dialog."

"What's an info dump?"

"An info dump is when the author needs or wants to convey information to the reader and chooses to do it in a block of text rather than parceling it out in bits and pieces as the story progresses." I took a sip from my margarita and realized she'd already finished half of hers. "It's especially bad when one character tells the other character something they both already know."

"Give me an example."

"As you know, we're sitting in the bar of Bonita's, a place you once described as your favorite Mexican restaurant. Bonita's was opened in 1910 and is still owned and operated by the same family. It started as a hole-in-the-wall and has grown significantly since then. What makes Bonita's unique is that the founding family—the Fitzpatricks—are Irish. It's the best place in town to celebrate St. Patrick's Day and Cinco de Mayo."

I saw a twinkle in the young writer's eye. Maybe it was my charm. Maybe it was just the alcohol. "I did know all that. So why did you tell it to me?"

"Info dump."

"Will it be important later in the story?"

"I doubt it."

She caught the waiter's attention and ordered two more frozen margaritas. I

had barely finished my first one when he arrived with the fresh margaritas.

"What else?" she asked.

"Avoid blathering."

"What's blathering?"

"When one character asks a question that can be answered simply, but the second character uses it as a jumping off point to ramble on and on."

"For example?"

"What's your name?" I asked.

"Jo," she said. "I was named after my uncle Joe, but my parents dropped the 'e' to make my name feminine. My uncle Joe was a cool guy. He taught me to hunt and fish. Well, my uncle Joe and my Dad did. They took to me to Clauson's farm every summer. The Clausons were my mother's cousins. My mother never went out there with us. She liked to stay home. She said she enjoyed having a little time to herself. She ..." The young writer stopped and looked at me. She had beautiful blue eyes. "I'm blathering, aren't I?"

I smiled and repeated something she'd said earlier. "I like listening to you."

This time she reached across the table for my hand and our fingers entwined. Then she wet her lips with the tip of her tongue and looked deep into my eyes.

I cleared my throat. "Of course, most of these rules can be broken if the story warrants it. Sometimes you need a character who stutters or one who blathers. But just one."

She stroked my palm with the tip of one finger. "What else?"

"Always have a good line to exit the scene."

Jo lowered her voice. "And what do you have?"

I already knew her answer, but I asked because it was the best way to end the scene. "Would you like to go to my place and see my manuscripts?"

*Michael Bracken, author of 11 books and more than 1,100 short stories, visited us November 14 for the day-long workshop "Write Short Fiction for Fun & Profit." Learn more about Michael at [www.CrimeFictionWriter.com](http://www.CrimeFictionWriter.com) and [CrimeFictionWriter.blogspot.com](http://CrimeFictionWriter.blogspot.com). He lives and writes in Texas.*

You can contact him by email:  
[Michael@CrimeFictionWriter.com](mailto:Michael@CrimeFictionWriter.com)



## Six Words Plus

by *Meredy Amyx*

**Book:** *Hild*, by Nicola Griffith (2013)

### Six-Word Review:

Violent medieval politics frame noblewoman's youth.

### Expanded Review:

Beautifully realized fiction of life and war in Britain's early Middle Ages, as seen through the eyes of the child Hild as she matures into a powerful, far-seeing young woman in the court of her uncle King Edwin of Northumbria.

Nature, nurture, and self-discipline shape her subtle mind as observer and interpreter of both natural phenomena and human behavior, weaving them into patterns that reveal hidden connections and future directions. As the king's seer she must counsel and advise while protecting her own interests and those of her loved ones. Alone among the women of the court, she bears weapons of battle and serves the king in both armed and diplomatic conflict among petty rivals for control of all Britain.

This novel falls short of top marks for me largely because of the pacing, which made the scope and complexity difficult to follow. I came close to letting it go after a hundred pages, mainly because I was feeling impatient while waiting for it to grab me. It seemed to be setting the stage for a very long time, setting an enormous stage with so many characters and so much backdrop that I couldn't track it all. In time it was the character of Hild who held my interest; but I gave up on trying to remember who all those were who surrounded her and guess which ones I'd want to hold in mind for future reference. Sometimes the interval between mentions of a character who was going to turn out to be important were so long that I didn't realize I'd ever met him or her before, and the author didn't remind me. The ease of confusing similar-looking names added a level of challenge to this aspect.

The author's not to blame for the language patterns and naming customs manifested in historical seventh-century personal and place names, but I'd have found a reference list or index extremely helpful. I shouldn't have to leaf back through hundreds of pages to locate the first mention of a character's name and get a reminder of who the person is. From one day to the next I had difficulty remembering the roles and relationships of many of the characters.

I also wished that Griffith would remind us from time to time of Hild's age. I lost track sometime around the age of twelve and really had no idea of how old she was by the end. Fifteen? Thirty? I had no markers to go by.

The references that were provided were indispensable. I turned to the family tree, the map of old Britain, and the glossary many times in the course of each sitting. However, they were insufficient. Many more unfamiliar terms (for instance, "torc") appeared than were glossed in the back or explained in text. Place names (for example, "Less Britain," which does not appear on the map) occurred without prior

mention, treated as significant but not explained. Epithets such as "Twister" cropped up suddenly, as if they'd been part of the author's character notes all along but she'd forgotten to mention them.

In fact, I had the feeling repeatedly that Griffith was in possession of such an overwhelming mass of material, some of it factual and very much of it invented, that it often threatened to swamp the story. At times I did feel swamped.

Yet when we came down to the last fifty pages, all of a sudden it seemed extremely rushed. Seasons and events were dispensed with in a line or two, and the dramatic unfoldings that we'd been building to—political outcomes, results of intrigues and machinations, fateful deaths—either remained in the future or swept past with barely a nod. At that point I also realized that one of the big questions I had hoped to see answered—namely, how did the main character bridge the gap between the old religion and the new Christianity so well as to become Saint Hilda?—was going to be left hanging.

I don't consider that a spoiler because the jacket blurb and promotional reviews tell us that this is the story of a saint-to-be. It seemed reasonable to expect that something in this narrative would point to how that transformation came about, especially since when Christianity invades the lives of these Woden-worshippers young Hild seems none too convinced. But to be fair, the book itself does not make that promise. Perhaps a sequel will unveil that mystery; in a note at the end, the author says she is working on the next part of Hild's story.

Meanwhile, one of the great virtues of the present narrative is the author's rendering of young Hild's sensitivity to the natural world. Griffith's lush and often tender descriptions of landscape and animal life employ evocative language in delicate brushstrokes that are as confident as they are fine. Two examples randomly chosen:

One evening she stood with Cian on the wooden walkway at the highest corner of the stockade and watched the sun setting over the white fields like a winter apple, small and shrunken, staining the snow with its tired juice. The air smelt of iron and brine. (page 317)

Slowly, carefully, like an orphaned foal folding itself down on the straw by a cat and her litter, Hild tucked herself alongside Begu and laid her head on her shoulder. (page 496)

The same hand delivers brutal battle scenes and acts of violence without flinching, refusing to turn away just as young Hild refuses, yet without savoring them or forcing gratuitous grue upon us. She even brings freshness to scenes of love-making and affords us glimpses of a private mind that feel intimate rather than voyeuristic.

I'll willingly follow Hild's story into another volume. I hope that when it comes the author will supply sufficient cues to bring the dense context of this narrative to mind so that I miss no part of the patterns she so expertly weaves.

*Rating: 4 stars out of 5. — WT*

*To the eighty SBW novelists out there:  
Try your hand at writing a book review.*



## Getting Away

by Patrick McQueen

"I just want to get away from the chaos – to shut out everyone else for a solid half hour – and just read my book while sipping on a hot latte," Sally told the cashier.

Sally took her latte to a small table by the window where she flipped open her new book.

"Sally? Sally Winters?"

Sally looked up to see an unfamiliar woman smiling down at her. Sally's face contorted slightly before she smiled back.

"Heather Long," the woman said, evidently noticing Sally's lack of recognition. "We went to high school together."

"Heather. Yes," Sally lied. "How have you been?"

Heather talked for several minutes before finally excusing herself, never asking Sally any questions.

Once again alone, Sally opened her book and reread the opening line.

"No, you can't have that. Put it down." The command was immediately followed by a crash. Sally turned to see a woman yank a boy away from a shattered mug. The woman cursed the child and swatted him on the butt.

A man in line made a comment Sally couldn't hear, and the mother extensively lectured him about the freedom to raise her own child, throwing profanities at the man throughout. Unable to get a word in, and unwilling to endure any further verbal abuse, the man turned around and left the coffee shop without ordering a drink.

The mother stood near Sally's table where she lectured her child about how stupid the man in line had been.

Sally could not drown out the mother's voice, and finally gave up on her book.

Out in the parking lot, a car had parked so close to her driver's side that Sally was unable to open her door wide enough to climb in without hitting the other car. Releasing a heavy sigh, she opened her passenger's door and awkwardly climbed over the center console.

As Sally turned around to back out of the parking spot, her car shook as something slammed into her door. She turned to find the boy from the coffee shop had opened the passenger door of the car next to hers and was climbing inside. Metal scraped against metal as the boy pulled his door closed.

She considered jumping out to discuss the issue with the boy's mother, but the memory of the man in line getting lectured to his wit's end changed her mind. She did not want to endure a lecture. She just wanted to go home without further incident.

With the car in reverse, Sally took her foot off the brake and let the car roll back. She hit something and heard a scream before she realized she wasn't even looking behind the car as she backed up.

Setting the parking brake, Sally leapt from her car without concern about slamming her door into the passenger side of the

## Off the Shelf

— Edie Matthews



"Emily, eat your vegetables."

"Broccoli, how do I hate thee. Let me count the ways . . ."

car still parked beside her. She found Heather curled up on the ground behind her car, nursing her leg.

"Are you okay? I'm so sorry. I didn't see you. What happened?"

"I wanted to give you my card so we could catch up some time." Heather cringed and clutched her leg tighter. "I think it's broken."

Just then, the man who had been lectured by the mother in the coffee shop approached holding a phone to his ear.

"I saw the entire thing," he said. "I'm calling the police. I think she hit you on purpose."

Heather and Sally shared horrified expressions.

"I didn't," Sally said, but Heather had already turned away, weeping. That's when the voice of the angry mother reached her.

"Oh my god," the mother said. "You've hit my car. You're going to pay for that." Her son climbed from their car, once again slamming his door into Sally's. The woman continued, "Do you see this, son? Stupid people are everywhere. You can't avoid them, no matter how hard you try."

Sally turned to tell the mother that her son had hit her car with his door several times, but all that came out was a burst of tears. Stuck between accusations and standing over the woman she had accidentally hit with her car, Sally could not breathe. She walked to a nearby curb where she sat with her face buried in her hands. She wept and waited for the police to arrive. — WT



## KayKay's Dress

by Pat Bustamante

You think it's all roses and sweet stuff being fourteen years old? Think again. That was the year I got to have my *Quincianera*, my so-called "Sweet Fifteen Birthday Party." Mama said it would be real special: party dresses and a decorated ballroom.

There are eight people living in our house; me, my bratty older sisters Ciela and Janny, Uncle Max and Aunt Lena, my Mom, my stepdad Rafi who came from El Salvador, and in case you are counting, that is seven.

But my real Dad lives there in my heart. Rafi, he's OK, but he's not my real Dad.

Anyways the party wasn't until November. This dress thing happened in July, baking hot and our house was too small for seven people. For three people it would be just right. That would be me, Mama, and my real Dad and he would have seen to it that I got the dress I wanted, the pretty pink one, not that skanky green thing that was on sale! I was hoping to grow out of it so it wouldn't fit me in November.

That may sound mean to Mama because she had all these people to support, being the only one of us working. "KayKay you know I am the only one with a job!" If I heard that once I heard it a hundred times.

Aunt Lena has this disease in her lungs. She'd been my babysitter back when I

was a little kid and my father Carlos was still with us. She was given space in my bedroom. Coughing all night. Uncle Max, he seems to get money somewhere but where? He visited us once at Christmas and he was all "Oh this place is paradise!" He kept saying he never wanted to go home and guess what: he never did.

So Uncle Max took over Ciela's bedroom because sleeping on the sofa was too hard and now Ciela became the fourth person in MY bedroom. Four—some of whom snore.

So you see why it was the pits that year: My worst year ever.

Mama had promised I could have a room of my own when we bought this house and I could decorate it and have my own phone and—she was such a liar! It's Mama who likes green. I have never wanted a green dress in my life.

Couldn't she give me credit for being a good teenager: good grades, did all my chores, and cooked for six people because Mama was always at work? Max and Rafi must have thought I was Cinderella: they wouldn't lift a finger. It was, "KayKay, how come there's dirty dishes in the sink? KayKay, bring me a glass of cold water."

At first I liked our new house. My stepdad, without having a real job, suddenly had a lot of money. Mama was like, "We can't afford to buy a house." But he kept saying we could and guess what: he talked her into it. Three bedrooms, we never had three bedrooms before. The floors were real wood, not linoleum. There was

a family room and a living room and two bathrooms.

But it's a good thing for me that my best bud Teresa lived close by because Aunt Lena was always in MY bathroom being sick and Janny, Ciela, Max and Rafi raced for the other one and I had no chance. So I'd go to Teresa's. She is the only one who knows my heart was broken over that green dress. I hated that ugly yellowish-green! And it didn't even have puffy sleeves.

Teresa has a grandmother living in her house and two uncles and three younger sisters so she didn't make much of my crowded conditions at home. Always saying, I am much luckier than her; her house was smaller; she liked dogs but her mama wouldn't let her have one.

I brought Sporty, our chow-chow, over sometimes so we'd throw balls or sticks and Sporty fetched. One afternoon there were clothes drying on the clothesline behind Teresa's house. Sporty loved seeing things move with wind so he jumped to see if he could catch a shirt or dress. I grabbed Sporty's collar and called, "Goodbye, Tee, I'll come back later."

Nobody paid attention when I carried the new green dress out the back door, Sporty at my heels. I hung that dress as low as possible and the inevitable happened!

"Mom—You have to buy me a new party dress!" I sobbed.

"Oh Mom, please," silently adding, "and it better be pink!" — WT

## What is a Diamante?

by WritersTalk Staff

A *diamante*—pronounced dee-uh-MAHN-tay—is an unrhymed seven-line poem. The beginning and ending lines are the shortest, while the lines in the middle are longer, giving diamante poems a diamond shape. "Diamante" is the Italian word for diamond, so this poetic form is also known as a "diamond poem."

The diamante was invented just 40 years ago by the American poet, Iris McClellan Tiedt. There are two different types of diamantes: synonym diamantes and antonym diamantes.

The seven-line diamante poem has only a few rules:

- The first and last lines have only one word, a noun.
- The second and sixth lines each have two words, adjectives.
- The third and fifth lines have three words, verbs.
- And the fourth line has four words, four nouns.



Here's an easy way to write all three rules:

Noun  
Adjective, Adjective  
Verb, Verb, Verb  
Noun, Noun, Noun, Noun  
Verb, Verb, Verb  
Adjective, Adjective  
Noun

Who will be the first to send a diamante to *WritersTalk*?

Experiment and send us your diamond. — WT

# January Terse on Verse

by Pat Bustamante



Pat Bustamante  
Contributing Editor

## Jan. You Win

The real deal, didn't have to steal;  
Beginning this year is the best,  
So far, I'm ready to look at the rest.  
My ship is ready to sail, the keel  
Cutting sharp into published success,  
Perhaps I will now become known.  
I want the BEST publisher, nothing less,  
The seeds of my writing career are sown!  
OOPS, my eyes are opened wide –  
Is this some daydream as they say?  
'Fraid so. New sad story to tell today:  
I dreamed it all. I write fiction, can't say I lied.

– Pat Bustamante

Interesting how the moon and the sun dictate our calendar, isn't it? I'd like to hear opinions, writer, about "finishing that up." Whatever it is you are creating, do you have trouble writing the last line, or is it easy for you to announce: "It's complete! Time to celebrate!"

At the end of the old year, we celebrate the new year. Okay, it makes sense to feel relief and joy for life's continuance. Just having a personal birthday isn't enough; we also celebrate a birthday for our dear old Earth. How is the new life coming along for your creations? My wishes to you are that you proudly hold out your pages to a world that reads and understands you.

New year, new success: WONDERFUL things to come. – WT



## Daly City

Painted houses all in a row  
up on the hill and down below

You may recall that lilting song -  
Pete Seeger sang it long ago:  
"... little boxes made of  
ticky tacky..."

and they all look the same

Today you can see them from  
a car or from a train  
They haven't changed since 1945  
Hard to conceive they  
still survive



Post World War II  
suburbia came  
housing tracts were born  
the middle-class began  
to conform  
and suddenly everything  
looked the same

Today houses are more unique  
and those inside don't even  
speak of "ticky tacky"  
some don't even know  
but it still survives on that hill  
in Daly City  
in rainbow colors:  
"there's a green one  
and a pink one  
and a blue one  
and a yellow one"

And you can still hear Seeger's song  
about the boxes made of  
"ticky tacky"  
that still  
all look the same

– Karen Hartley

## A Will to Live

Glance and Listen  
Hear their song  
Look in their eyes  
Poetic Soul

White hair like an angel  
Character caressed cheeks  
Lines of life's experience hidden beneath  
Poetic Insight

Sculpted curve of yesterday's youthful spine  
Escorted now in the shiny wheeled chariots  
Eating not from the silver spoon once theirs  
Poetic Messenger

A smile can light their world  
A song can lift their spirit  
A story can entertain  
A hug says someone cares

Poetic Spirit  
Enlighten A Life In A Nursing Home  
With A Moment Of Your Time  
A Will To Live

A Poet Can Give  
Poetic Enlightenment

– Karen Franzenburg



## Before I Shut My Eyes

Before I shut my eyes  
Before the last time I say goodbye  
Before I'm done  
And old friends recount my crimes

Weeping at their erstwhile friends departure  
Recounting the parts that I got right  
Grieving at the brevity of life  
And the loss of my double-edged spirit

Before you kiss my hairline  
For the last time

I need you to tell me soft  
What I haven't heard in thirty years

Dwell not on the parts that we got wrong  
The time for blaming innuendos is past  
Be kind and forgive me  
Before I shut my eyes

– Richard Allan Burns

From *Glimpses--Thoughts through a Lifetime*

## Sticks 'n' Stones will break my bones But words will break my heart

by ArLyne Diamond, Ph.D.

Remember the old children's retort, "Sticks 'n stones will break my bones, but words will never harm me?" Children would chant it in an attempt to deal with the pain of insults, slurs, teasing and other verbal taunts.

Did it work? A little bit.

Acts of bravado do indeed make us feel a little bit better about ourselves but, and this is a very important but, they never do erase the pain and humiliation we experience when others call us names or say bad things about "our kind."

In this age of expediency, pragmatism, and political-correctness, we seem to have lost some important social truths! It is hurtful to say things about a person—or parts of their anatomy—or a group of people—that leaves them embarrassed, humiliated, or diminished in any way. Although beauty may be in the eye of the beholder, insults are in the ear of the receiver.

So, if the other person, or group of people, believes a word, phrase or symbol to be ugly, demeaning, threatening or insulting, it is. It is because it is to them.

The bottom line is if you don't intend to hurt others, please pay attention to and respect the requests of the group or individuals who ask us not to use certain descriptors or symbols. —WT

### FICTION

## Fly on the Wall

by John D. Animotti, an anonymous SBW Member, for reasons which you will soon discern

I prefer to be the Fly on the Wall than the Elephant in the Room, it being better to observe without being seen: the core principle of duck hunting applied to fishing for stories.

I want to eavesdrop on private conversations without discovery. To study people in the natural form. For people change behavior when aware they are being watched. They become something else. Less real, more artificial, like actors in a play listening for audience reaction.

I want to peek behind closed doors and listen to the whispered words of lovers in trouble. Or overhear an argument between two thugs up to no good. If I could hear the prayers of children at Christmas I would shift through their dreams searching for a gem. A beautiful story to tell, a story that would be retold three hundred years from now.

But first, I hear, I need a *nom de plume*,

which is French for pen name, and apparently I need one even though I write with a pencil. Especially since no one will ever believe my name really is Abel Wurdsmythe.

I need something catchy like Kilgore Trout, or snappy like Mark Twain. But nothing too old fashioned or dated. Something that will fit me and my voice like a pair of well-worn jeans with holes in the knees. Something short and sweet, yet still macho with lots of mojo; all true components of COOL.

I always thought that Zane Grey had a neat ring to it. Zane Grey. Luke White, Zack Black, Duke Brown.

I'm even more confused than when I started. My name is Mud. Your newsletter advised me to network. I'm asking anybody with suggestions and the inclination to please write me.

A. Wurdsmythe, Inmate 195397-69420, Soledad, CA 95432

P.S. Don't panic if I don't write back immediately. Sometimes they put me in solitary. —WT

## Announcements

### Book Buyers Author Talks

by Carolyn Donnell

Book Buyers Author Talk Series! is looking for local authors to speak in their series. Typically the presentation takes place on a Tuesday or Thursday at 7:30pm, though times and days are flexible. As of December 15, 2015, they were looking for someone to fill a slot in the first half of January (sometime between the 4th and 15th). Otherwise, the next opening would be in March.

The best way to contact them regarding the Author Talk Series is to fill out their form online: at [bookbuyers.com/about-us/events-classes-author-talk-series/](http://bookbuyers.com/about-us/events-classes-author-talk-series/)

Questions can be directed to Elizabeth@BookBuyers.com or call the store at (650) 968-7323. (Store location: 317 Castro Street, Mountain View 94041.) —WT

### Nelson Algren Contest

Nelson Algren Literary Awards is an annual short story contest hosted by the *Chicago Tribune*.

Unpublished stories (fiction), 8,000 words or fewer. One grand prize, \$3,500; four finalists, \$1,000 each; five runners-up, \$500 each. Total of all prizes: \$10,000. Maximum 2 entries. No submission fee. Deadline: January 31, 2016, 11:59 p.m.

The grand prize winning story will be published in the *Chicago Tribune*.

Visit [Algren.submittable.com](http://Algren.submittable.com) to complete an entry form and take the link given there for complete rules: [chicagotribune.com/lifestyles/books/chi-2016-algren-award-rules-20151201-story.html](http://chicagotribune.com/lifestyles/books/chi-2016-algren-award-rules-20151201-story.html) —WT



### Expose Your Fiction

[www.flashfictionforum.com](http://www.flashfictionforum.com)

The first Flash Fiction Forum of the New Year will happen at 7 PM, January 13, 2016, at Works/San Jose, Art and Performance Center, 365 Market Street, San Jose. Come and be literary! —WT

The road to Hell is paved with adverbs.  
—Stephen King

# Contests and Markets

by Carolyn Donnell



Carolyn Donnell  
Contributing Editor

**Writer's Digest Annual Writing Competition** opened on November 1, 2015 and has a deadline of May 31, 2016. Get busy with your stories. Many categories. See [writersdigest.com/writers-digest-competitions/annual-writing-competition](http://writersdigest.com/writers-digest-competitions/annual-writing-competition) for complete rules.

**Chicken Soup for The Soul** has many categories, such as stories about teachers and teaching. There isn't a single one of us who doesn't owe something to a teacher. They are the unheralded heroes of society. **Chicken Soup** asks for your stories about the great teachers who changed your life. And if you're a teacher, tell us about the kids who changed yours, who motivated you to keep on teaching, who showed you that it was all worth it. We'd love to share your best advice with other teachers as well – what works, what doesn't, how you stay enthusiastic about your jobs. What advice do you have for your colleagues? Tell us the funny stories too – we know you have lots of those. The deadline for story and poem submissions is June 30, 2016. Check it out on [www.chickensoup.com](http://www.chickensoup.com).

**Freedom With Writing** is a website that posts various opportunities with multiple publications for articles, essays, short stories, and tutorials. [freedomwithwriting.com/freedom](http://freedomwithwriting.com/freedom)

**Sci/Fi, Fantasy or Dark Fantasy?** Quarterly contest. For new and amateur writers. Prizes \$1,000, \$750, and \$500 and Grand Prize, \$5,000. Enter online or via snail mail. Details at [writersofthefuture.com/Contest-Rules-Writers/](http://writersofthefuture.com/Contest-Rules-Writers/)

## 2016 Next Generation Indie Book Awards

Indie book authors and publishers who have a book in English released in 2014, 2015 or 2016 with a 2014, 2015 or 2016 copyright date. Over 70 categories and more than 70 Awards with 70 monetary prizes totaling more than \$10,000. Entry Deadline for the 2016 awards program, February 12, 2016. [www.indiebookawards.com](http://www.indiebookawards.com)

## Women's National Book Association 2015-16 Writing Contest

Submit between September 15, 2015, and January 15, 2016.

- FICTION: Short fiction, novel excerpts, flash fiction; 3,000 words max.
- NONFICTION: Memoir, personal essay, commentary. 2,500 words max.
- POETRY: 3 - 5 pages

Winner announced May 1, 2016; winning entries published in *Bookwoman*, the official publication of the Women's National Book Association. Member submission, \$15; nonmember \$20. See more at [wnba.submittable.com/submit](http://wnba.submittable.com/submit)

If you hear about an intriguing contest, market, or event, please share at [newsletter@southbaywriters.com](mailto:newsletter@southbaywriters.com). – WT

## SF Writers Conference Writing Contest

**HURRY!** The deadline for the 2016 San Francisco Writers Conference Writing Contest is January 8. Easiest and quickest way to enter: upload your submission at <https://sfwriters.org/2016-writing-contest-entry/>

You do not have to register for the conference.

If you are paying by check use the PDF form link, SFWC Mail in Form, at the above URL. Print out the completed form and mail it with your check to: 2016 SFWC, P O Box 326, Oakley, CA 94561. Make check payable to "SFWC Writing Contest" and on memo line write 2016 SFWC. You will not be entered until they receive the completed form, your entry, and payment (\$35.00 entry fee). All documents must be received (or postmarked) by the deadline of January 8, 2016.

*ED Note: Carolyn Donnell won first place in the SF Writers Conference Writing Contest last year.* – WT

## WRITERSTALK Challenge

### What is it?

Twice a year, in February and August, awards are given to contributors to *WritersTalk*. You need take no special steps to enter this competition; if your piece in one of the designated genres is published in *WritersTalk*, you are a contestant in the Challenge.\*

### Genres

- Fiction, 500 - 1200 words
- Memoir, 500 - 1200 words
- Essay/Nonfiction, 500 - 900 words
- Poetry/Haiku

### Judging Periods

January 16 through July 15

July 16 through January 15

### Prizes

One winner will be selected from each of the eligible genres. Each winner will be awarded a cash prize of \$40.

### Judging

Judging will be done by *WritersTalk* contributing editors and other Club members whom the contributing editors may ask to assist. Judges will not judge a genre in which their work currently appears.

\* Eligibility for the *WritersTalk* Challenge is limited to members of the South Bay Branch of the California Writers Club. – WT



## The Literary Nest

by Pratibha Kelapure, Editor

*The Literary Nest* is an online magazine of literary fiction, poetry, and visual arts. I invite all of you to submit to the next issue to be released in January, 2016.

If you missed that deadline, send us your stories for the next issue.

Go to [theliterarynest.com](http://theliterarynest.com) for submission guidelines. While you are there, check out the previous issues. We seek work that is edgy and pushes the boundaries. We appreciate and favor understated elegance in writing. – WT

## Beta Reader Listing

You have finished a writing project. It's had the benefit of critique and careful copy editing. But is it a good read?

Your Beta reader finds story distortion and missing or excessive passages. He looks for that certain appeal that keeps readers turning the pages. The Beta reader does not copyedit—his only interest is story.

To be listed here, send your interest in participation in an email to [newsletter@southbaywriters.com](mailto:newsletter@southbaywriters.com)

### Members willing to read:

David Strom: anything  
[dave.strom@gmail.com](mailto:dave.strom@gmail.com)

Dick Yaeger: Fiction, no poetry  
[dyaeger@aol.com](mailto:dyaeger@aol.com)

Jenni Everidge: Fiction  
[everidge.jenni@gmail.com](mailto:everidge.jenni@gmail.com)

Mike Freda: anything; fiction preferred  
[freda.mike@gmail.com](mailto:freda.mike@gmail.com)

Patrick McQueen: any genre  
[droidpat@gmail.com](mailto:droidpat@gmail.com)

Reader and author will establish all of the details between themselves. — WT

## SBW Underground

by Bill Baldwin

Last year, a few of us discovered we were interested in less “mainstream” literary writing. We started meeting monthly to learn more about such traditions and encourage one another in our own endeavors. All the while other SBW folks have been asking: “What is this Underground Thing?”

Over time we suggested various definitions of “The Underground” (see below) and discussed how “The Underground” connects with our own writing interests.

If your own interests/perspectives veer a bit off the standard fare, you may want to drop by. We currently meet on the third Tuesday each month, at 7:30 pm, at The Coffee Society, 21265 Stevens Creek, Cupertino (in The Oaks, across from De Anza College).

As for “What is The Underground,” here are some possibilities:

It's those writers and artists who may someday become enormously influential—but are unknown today because they are “too different.”

It's the creative minds who either aren't

## CWC Around the Bay

These are published meeting locations and times for other CWC branches in the greater San Francisco Bay Area. If you're thinking about attending one of their meetings, be sure to check the website first for details.

**Berkeley:** 2:00 third Sundays, Oakland Public Library Main Branch. [cwc-berkeley.com](http://cwc-berkeley.com)

**Central Coast:** 5:30 third Tuesdays, Point Pinos Grill, 77 Asilomar Boulevard, Pacific Grove. [centralcoastwriters.org](http://centralcoastwriters.org)

**Fremont Area:** 2:00 fourth Saturdays at DeVry University, 6600 Dumbarton Circle, Room 120, Fremont. [cwc-fremontareawriters.org](http://cwc-fremontareawriters.org)

**Marin:** 2:00 fourth Sundays, Book Passage in Corte Madera. [cwcmarinwriters.com](http://cwcmarinwriters.com)

**Mendocino Coast:** 6:00 third Wednesdays, Mendocino Hotel. [writersmendocinocoast.org](http://writersmendocinocoast.org)

**Mount Diablo:** 11:30 second Saturdays, Zio Fraedo's Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. [mtdiablowlriters.org](http://mtdiablowlriters.org)

**Napa Valley:** 6:30 second Wednesdays, Napa River Inn. [napavalleywriters.net](http://napavalleywriters.net)

**Redwood:** 2:30 first Sundays, Flamingo Conference Resort & Spa, 2777 Fourth Street, Santa Rosa. [redwoodwriters.org](http://redwoodwriters.org)

**Sacramento:** 11:00 third Saturdays, Cattlemen's Restaurant, 12409 Folsom Blvd., Rancho Cordova. [cwcsacramentowriters.org](http://cwcsacramentowriters.org)

**San Francisco/Peninsula:** 10:00 third Saturdays, Belmont Library, 1110 Alameda De Las Pulgas, Belmont. [sfpeninsulawriters.com](http://sfpeninsulawriters.com)

**Tri-Valley:** 11:30 third Saturdays, Four Points by Sheraton, 5115 Hopyard, Pleasanton. [trivalleywriters.com](http://trivalleywriters.com)

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## Children's Book Writers Workshop

We proudly present the fourteenth Oregon Coast Children's Book Writers Workshop in Oceanside, Oregon, July 11 - 15, 2016. The course is available for graduate level credit.

The full-time instructors include five accomplished children's book authors, two full-time children's editors from major houses, and a full-time children's book agent. Check them out on our website. All instructors are immersed in writing, covering all genres, and they'll spend the week giving their best.

The course is not only lectures, but lots and lots (and lots) of one-on-one with instructors everyday. This course really works for all levels of experience.

If you are ambitious to publish a children's book (or simply adore children's books) this is the workshop for you. You can connect directly with authors, editors, and agents. If you are writing a picture book, check out our online course, [www.publishpicturebook.com](http://www.publishpicturebook.com), also available for graduate credit.

*Oregon Coast Children's Book Writers Workshop:* [www.occbww.com](http://www.occbww.com) — WT

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interested in fame or money, or intentionally refuse to commodify or commercialize their work—for whatever reasons.

It's those who create their art for their own satisfaction, not for others. It's those who break the “generally accepted” rules of creation—because those rules don't work for them; or they don't accept the currently popular aesthetic.

It's writers who refuse to become clichés. “Underground” artists may *feel* that they are alone, but they are *not* alone—they have one another. And they have examples of past underground creators to inspire and motivate them.

Pick your favorites! Mine include Van

Gogh, Nietzsche, Dostoyevsky, Poe, Picasso, Wagner, Gertrude Stein, Virginia Woolf, Henry Miller, Walt Whitman, Christopher Isherwood, Kerouac, Ginsberg, ... and many more.

These people inspire us to follow our *own* visions, to find our *own* rules, to write *what we need to write*, not what other people *tell* us to write.

It helps to know that *other* people are struggling with *their own* visions—non-standard, individual; and even though we may all have *different* visions, we can all encourage and support one another!

If the thought of this inspires you, drop by some third Tuesday. — WT

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>January 2016</b>					1	2
					7:30P Open mic B&N Almaden, San Jose	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
11A Our Voices	1:30P Mystery Circle 2P Valley Writers	7:30P SBW Board Lyon's Restaurant 4233 Moorpark, SJ				
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	2P Valley Writers  6P SBW Dinner meeting Harry's				7:30P Open mic Willow Glen Library, 1157 Minnesota Ave	Deadline <i>WritersTalk</i> was yesterday
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
11A Our Voices	2P Valley Writers	7:30 PM SBW UNDERGROUND		7P Poetry readings Willow Glen Library		
24/31	25	26	27	28	29	30
	2P Valley Writers	7P TalkShop	7:30P TalkBooks Santa Clara Library			
Future Flashes February 2, 2016 SBW Board Meeting February 8, 2016 SBW General Meeting at Harry's						

## Ongoing Events

### Critique Groups

#### Our Voices

Meets at Le Boulanger in the Pruneyard in Campbell every other Sunday 10 am. Genres: Fiction, nontechnical nonfiction, memoir. Contact: Dave LaRoche at dalaroche@comcast.net

#### Valley Writers

Meets at Valley Village Retirement Center, Winchester Blvd. in Santa Clara, Mondays 2:00 to 4:00 pm. Contact: Marjorie Johnson, marjoriej358@comcast.net

#### Emperor's Mystery Circle

Meets at Emperor Norton's, 7508 Santa Teresa Blvd, San Jose, 1:30 pm., first Mondays. Mystery genre. Contact Pam Oliver-Lyons, polpap@prodigy.net

#### Your Critique Group

For consideration, send information to newsletter@southbaywriters.com

### SBW Recommends ...

If you know of a regularly occurring event for writers, send an email to newsletter@southbaywriters.com.

## Open Mics

**South Bay Writers Open Mic:** Read from your own work, from your favorite authors, or just come to listen, first and third Friday evenings. See calendar for schedule. Contact Bill Baldwin (408) 730-9622 or email WABaldwin@aol.com

## Ongoing discussion groups

**TalkShop:** Discuss topics of interest to writers—challenges, problems, and tips. Meets last Tuesdays, 7 pm. Contact Carole Taub at 777777ps@gmail.com

**SBW Underground:** Come to exchange ideas on non-mainstream art and writing, past and present. Meets at Coffee Society, Stevens Creek Blvd, across from De Anza, 7:30 pm, third Tuesdays. Contact Bill Baldwin (408) 730-9622 or email WABaldwin@aol.com

See Underground article on Page 14.

**TalkBooks:** New SBW discussion group focusing on books written by our SBW members. We will read and discuss books written by SBW members. Meets last Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. For information, send email to newsletter@southbaywriters.

## Poetry Readings

**Poets@Play:** Meets at Markham House History Park, 1650 Senter Rd., San Jose, Second Sundays most months, 1 – 4 pm. poetrycentersanjose.org

**Poetry Center San Jose:** Meets at Willow Glen Library, 1157 Minnesota Ave., San Jose, Third Thursdays, 7 pm. poetrycentersanjose.org 408-808-3045

**Words Drawing Music:** Ongoing open mic opportunity at Works San Jose, 365 South Market Street, on second Thursdays, 7 to 9 p.m. Information at workssanjose.org

## SF Writers Conference

2016 San Francisco Writers Conference, February 11 – 16, Mark Hopkins Hotel in San Francisco. www.SFWriters.org



**California Writers Club**  
South Bay Branch  
P.O. Box 3254  
Santa Clara, CA 95055  
[www.southbaywriters.com](http://www.southbaywriters.com)

## MAIL TO

Address Correction Requested

**South Bay Writers**  
**January Regular Meeting**  
**6 p.m. Monday, January 11**

Harry's Hofbrau  
390 Saratoga Avenue, San Jose

## Blogging, Branding: Why Aren't You?

**Kymerlie Ingalls**  
**January Speaker**

*WritersTalk* deadline is always  
the 15th of the month.

Regular dinner meetings are  
second Mondays 6 – 9 pm  
except July and December.



### **Harry's Hofbrau**

From Highway 280, take Saratoga Avenue North.  
Harry's is on your right near Stevens Creek Blvd.