



WRITERSTALK

Volume 24
Number 12
December 2016

Monthly Newsletter of the South Bay Writers Club™

December Meeting South Bay Writers



Saturday, December 3, 2016

4:00 – 8:00 pm

For location and to RSVP:

email Carole Taub hospitality-meetings@southbaywriters.com

Potluck

Bring a dish according to your last name

A – G Appetizer, Salad, Side

H – N Main Dish

O – Z Dessert

White Elephant Gift Exchange

Please bring a \$20 wrapped gift to participate

President's Two Cents

Pamela Oliver-Lyons
President, South Bay Writers



Tis the Season for Shopping & Selling

South Bay Writers (SBW) is developing a relationship with Barnes & Nobles Eastridge Mall to hold meet-and-greet book fairs and fundraisers quarterly during 2016-17. Our first event will be held Saturday, December 10, 2016 and will feature SBW young-adult and children's authors Chess Desalls, Penelope Cole, Marjorie Johnson, Eboni Harris, and Judith Shernock. We've selected these categories for the holiday season due to December's gift giving traditions focused on youth. There will be additional opportunities for SBW members in other genres as the year progresses.

Promotional activities for members' work are based on the analysis of data collected from membership applications. A more complete set of data results in more informed decisions. A bar graph on Page 13 shows the raw results from our data file as they relate to club members' writing interests. If you do not see your genre or writing category, then it is important that we receive your information. Some members may have outdated information, and writers often change their interests over time. If you think your writing category doesn't fit anywhere on the chart or in more than one genre, let us know, and please be as descriptive as possible. There are large self-identified categories that have been generalized. For example, novels is the largest category, but it does not include genre-specific information (i.e., mystery, romance, science-fiction, fantasy). The same is true for nonfiction, which could fall into various subcategories. Literary fiction also doesn't appear on the chart, although many members participate in the *CWC Literary Review* and other literary journals.

In order to offer effective programming and services, the Board of Directors needs to have the data revised. We need your help. Please email pres@southbaywriters.com and update your information regarding your current genres and writing interests. Include your author name and the genres in which you have published, including literary fiction. Please recheck your spelling to help us avoid the transmission of incorrect or missing information.

What are the general differences between genre and literary fiction? There is a great deal of conflicting discussion within the writing and publishing communities as to whether literary fiction is a subset of genre or part of a nondescript category. For our purposes, literary fiction will be considered a genre. There is not enough space here to go into all the interesting twists and turns given by the opposing sides given self-publishing technology's impact on the writing markets. If you are curious, consider visiting electricliterature.com and annagenoese.com for a quick and superficial thumbnail look.

How do I identify which genre(s) I'm in? A quick way to do that is to look at those authors writing similar work and find out in what genre they are listed or where the local bookstore shelves them. If your book appears in online bookstores, check to see which categories are listed beneath your book's description.

Why are genre and category description important? Whether a self-published genre writer or a traditionally published writer of literary fiction, genre can be a significant part of the writer's brand. And brand is important to sales. SBW's mission is to help promote, educate and support writers at all levels to succeed.

This is why I am encouraging you to contact me so I can cross check the data and update where needed. Seasons Greetings! —WT

Ed: Genre is needed only for books. Novel is too general as a genre. Please indicate thriller, romance, or sci-fi, for example; for nonfiction book, historical, self-help or [your] topic.

California Writers Club
South Bay Branch
www.southbaywriters.com

— o —

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TalkShop—Carole Taub
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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 or sign up online at southbaywriters.com

WritersTalk

The monthly newsletter of South Bay Writers, the South Bay Branch of the California Writers Club

email: newsletter@southbaywriters.com

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Marjorie Johnson

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Sheena Arora
Chess Desalls
Carolyn Donnell
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Sally Milnor
Karen Sundback

Our Mission

Encourage writers at all levels of expertise to showcase their skills in the craft of writing and to submit their creative works for publication in *WritersTalk*

Deadline

Submissions are due by the 15th of the month.

Submissions

All electronic submissions should be sent to the above email address as text or an attached MS Word file. Please prepare your work as carefully as you would for an agent. Use Times New Roman 12-font; no tabs; no colors; no page breaks. Send graphics separately as jpg files.

Authors retain all rights to their works. *WritersTalk* gratefully acknowledges the authors' permission to publish their works here. Contact individual authors for permission to reprint.

All submissions will be copyedited. Managing Editor reserves the right to selection.

Suggested word limits (less is more):

Member Achievement / News (200 words)

News Items (400 words)

Letters to the Editor (300 words)

Creative Works

Short Fiction/Memoir (1200 words)

Poetry (200 words)

Essay (900 words)

Announcements

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.

Advertisements

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

Change of Address: Send changes of address to membership@southbaywriters.com

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Marjorie Bicknell Johnson
Managing Editor



The DIY Edit

"I have rewritten – often several times – every word I have ever published. My pencils outlast their erasers."

– Vladimir Nabokov, author of *Lolita*

Many of you accepted the challenge to write 50,000 words during the November event, NaNoWriMo, National Novel Writing Month. Some of you write novels; others, nonfiction or memoir. Members of South Bay Writers work at all levels, from beginner to seasoned professional. So, then, my challenge is how to choose words of writing advice for this column.

All of you must next do some editing of your formatted rough draft. First, read it out loud to yourself and resolve all the typos you can find. Reading aloud forces you to slow down and notice details. Check spelling as well; if you type, "Ant Em is form Kansas," Spellcheck will give you a thumbs-up. Too many typos slow down your reader and make it harder to concentrate on content.

Now you have something to share with a friend or a critique group. See "Organizing a critique group," November *WritersTalk*, page 13. All back issues of *WT* are available on the SBW website, southbaywriters.com

Next comes Do-It-Yourself editing. The NaNoWriMo website recommends *Revision and Self-Editing for Publication* by James Scott Bell. I like *Getting the Words Right: 39 Ways to Improve Your Writing*, a down-to-earth DIY creative writing course by Theodore A. Rees Cheney; or, a second good book, *Editor-Proof Your Writing* by Don McNair.

If books on writing don't do it for you, then read aloud for friends. They will help you find places where your writing is unclear. Ultimately, many successful authors hire an editor.

I am often asked, "Where do I find an editor?" Two places are in the classified ads and web pages for *Writer's Digest* and *Poets and Writers*. I recently spoke to two members of South Bay Writers who do content editing: Carey Giudici, betterwords4you@gmail.com, and Kymberlie Ingalls, kymberlie@rainfallpress.com; and Pat Bustamante is an excellent proofreader (no email but I can introduce you at a SBW meeting). *Caveat emptor: WritersTalk* cannot endorse anyone. Come to a meeting and ask around.

In any case, keep on writing, and share your short pieces with SBW here at *WritersTalk*. – *WT*

Geese fly overhead,
their trumpet calls so gentle.
It has been too long.

– Stephen C. Wetlesen

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View From the Board

by Bill Baldwin, SBW VP

Our November Board meeting was held on Tuesday, November 1 at the Original Hickory Pit in Campbell and included President Pam Oliver-Lyons, VP Bill Baldwin, Treasurer Carole Taub, and Members-at-Large Sheena Arora and Carolyn Donnell. Also *Writers Talk* Editor Marjorie Johnson, Membership Chair Sally Milnor, Hospitality Co-Chair Alfred Jan, and guests Kymberlie Ingalls, Steve Lyons, and Sherrie Johnson.

Pam distributed announcements including info about judging for the Scholastic Art Award and info about the Poets & Writers Live event in San Francisco.

Special guest Mike Koller from Barnes & Noble spoke about types of events we might partner on, such as author panels and fundraising book fairs. The board decided to begin genre-based quarterly events beginning in December.

Kimberly Malanczuk was approved as Public Relations chair. Inga Silva and Harli Rabow were approved as co-chairs for SBW TalkBooks with other committee members, Marjorie Johnson and Pamela Lyons.

Kymberlie Ingalls suggested possible events on social media, how to get published, and panels on editing and publishing. The board discussed future speakers and possible workshops on promotion/marketing/publishing.

The January 10 meeting will host speaker Nils Peterson, a renowned poet and retired San Jose State English professor.

The Holiday Party will be held in Portola Valley on December 3 from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

The Board reaffirmed its policy on disruptive behavior at SBW events.

Dick Amyx has been appointed our SBW backup person for MRMS (the CWC statewide membership database).

The next Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 3 at Grill 57, 57 Los Gatos-Saratoga Road, Los Gatos. —WT

SBW TalkBooks Resumes

by Marjorie Johnson

In 2017, Inga Silva and Harli Rabow will be leading SBW TalkBooks, a discussion group focusing on books written by SBW members. TalkBooks will meet at the Sycamore Room, Santa Clara Library, 2635 Homestead Road, Santa Clara, on the last Thursday of the month, resuming January 26, 2017, with author Kymberlie Ingalls and her novel, *Branches*.

SBW authors' books appear on Goodreads within our group, South Bay Writers TalkBooks. To visit our books, just click Goodreads on southbaywriters.com. To add your book, first join Goodreads; then contact publicity@southbaywriters.com

SBW TalkBooks interviews our authors about their books. Interested persons are invited to attend and to enter into the discussion. If you would like to receive email notifications about Talkbooks or if you would like to be interviewed about your book, please send an email to Marjorie at newsletter@southbaywriters.com —WT

Barnes & Noble Book Fair

by Marjorie Johnson

Save the dates: December 10 – 15!

Are you giving any books for holiday gifts this year? South Bay Writers joins forces with Barnes & Noble Book Fair, December 10 to 15. If you purchase anything in-store at any Barnes & Noble Bookseller or online at www.BN.com using Book Fair ID 12045738, South Bay Writers will benefit by receiving a percentage of the sale.

On Saturday December 10 at 2 pm, at the Eastridge Barnes & Noble, South Bay Writers will be featured in the South Bay Writers Club Children's Author Showcase. Participating authors will present and sign their books sold by the bookstore: E Ardell (Ebony Harris), *The Fourth Piece*; Penelope Anne Cole, *Magical Matthew*; Marjorie Bicknell Johnson, *Lost Jade of the Maya*; Chess Desalls, *Travel Glasses*; and Judith Shernock, *Sammi the Seahorse*. (See Page 7.)

Please support Barnes & Noble, and South Bay Writers as well, by attending the meet and greet on December 10, purchasing your holiday books from Barnes & Noble during Dec. 10 – 15, and using the Book Fair ID 12045738.

This is the first of a series of quarterly events at Barnes & Noble in which authors from SBW will feature their books. If you would like to have your book considered for inclusion, send the title of your book and its genre to Pamela Oliver-Lyons, pres@southbaywriters.com —WT

December Member News

Staff

Richard Burns has published a book of his selected best G-rated poems, *Poems on a Hillside*, available on Amazon. He also has a collection of edgier pieces, *Poems on Rocky Terrain*.

Penny Cole reports she had her biggest sale day ever at The Villages Holiday Faire by giving librarians and teachers a "buy one, get one free" discount for her children's books. Her first coloring book, *My Grandma and Me*, is coming out in November.

Carolyn Donnell's novel *Deeper Colors* received a 5-star rating from a professional review from Readers' Favorite. She has proudly affixed the badge RF gave her to the cover of her book.

Carolyn Donnell, Marjorie Johnson, Judith Shernock, Valerie Whong, and Beth Wyman went to the grand opening of the independent bookstore, BookSmart, in Morgan Hill on November 12. BookSmart is adjusting to the changing publishing industry by providing strong community ties compared with online and big-box stores. They offer a more personal experience which customers love and they showcase new authors. Website: www.mybooksmart.com

Louise Webb and her memoirs class presented Luanna Leisure's new release, *Best of Our Memoirs*, featuring Louise Webb, on November 30 at the Saratoga Senior Center. Louise has taught the memoir class for 17 years.

New Release from **Dick Yaeger**: *Walls of Wilusa*. October 29, 2016: Kindle and paperback on Amazon.com. —WT

A Remembrance of Barbara Truax

by Dave LaRoche

Barbara Truax has died this recent October 31st. She succumbed to “massive heart failure,” a condition she would not have been accused of during her life. She maintained a presence we all admired and left us a vacancy few can fill. She had an opinion about everything, often right, and just as often, not too amenable. But, the one thing we can say without fear of argument: she was exceptionally generous of heart.

Gone from our sight, she has left us a cartload of memories. She was a stalwart advocate for the California Writers Club, holding a number of offices: president, treasurer, and others at state level with as many or more in her branch. She worked on the *Literary Review*, allowing the authors her opinions about pieces she’d read—always persistent and effective, promoting high standards in our medium for creative expression. She represented Marin at our NorCal Group meetings, providing substance told with clarity and precision. And of course she wrote—memoir and fiction, two pieces published in the *Review* and other publications as well. To say she was “active” in this club is beneath, by miles, the reality of her engagement.

I made first contact with Barbara at a Central Board meeting—our eyes crossed, mine burned for an hour after she made her presence known individually to everyone at the table. She was the treasurer then and controlled every penny. If an idea was worthy, she energetically supported the spending. If not passing her hurdle of value and benefit, don’t bother to bring it up. I watched her in action. I marveled at her effectiveness and attempted to emulate—always on point, and generally right, if occasionally contentious. With helm in hand, she was courageous, outspoken, and fit for battle if need be; and on a personal level a lovely, insightful soul.

I will miss her. We all will miss her guiding our ship. The best we can do in her absence is an attempt to sail on with good purpose and Truax sensibility. Rest well, Barb, we will try in each moment to keep your legacy intact. —WT



Barbara Truax in a joyful moment

—Photo source unknown



BookSmart Grand Opening November 12, 2016

l to r: Marjorie Johnson, Valerie Lee, Judith Shernock, Beth Wyman, Carolyn Donnell

—Photo by Sue Brazleton, BookSmart

Your Book Announcement Could Go Here

Send a jpg of your cover and a short blurb about your recently published book to newsletter@southbaywriters.com. Please send jpg separately and put your paragraph into a Word document attachment: Times New Roman 12, no fancy fonts.

Writers meet Readers at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library

Link from Kathy Boyd

Local Lit /Writers Meet Readers @ King
Sunday, December 4, 2:00pm to 5:00pm
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library, 2nd
Floor, Room 225/229 150 E. San Fer-
nando St. San José, CA 95112

Meet and support 26 local Bay Area Authors. Listen to tales of inspiration and the writing process. Learn about publishing, both indie and traditional. Select from fine gifts for the holidays. Attend and learn about this annual event. Read more at https://events.sjpl.org/event/local_lit_writers_meet_readers_king

The 2016 list includes two members of SBW: Betty Auchard and Robyn King. Sign up for next year’s event, and you could be included in December 2017.

—WT

WRITE-A-PALOOZA

NaNoWriMo, WINFIN, and More



Siegfried ... er ... Bill sings



Pen and tablet,
Prez and VP



Catherwood, NaNoWriMo South
Bay Region Leader



Lone writer



Another lone writer



NaNoWriMo officials next to Dave



South Bay writers writing, contemplating, and having fun

WriWhaYoDaWePleMo

by Carolyn Donnell

Ta dum ta dum ta ta. Dum ta dum ta ta. Can you hear Siegfried (alias Bill Baldwin) calling for the opening of writing night for NaNoWriMo at the South Bay Writers November 14 meeting?

NaNoWriMo stands for National Novel Writing Month. The goal: write a 50,000-word novel in one month, November. That's about 1,667 words a day, about the number of words you can read out loud in ten minutes – the time allowed for each reading at one of our SBW Open Mics, Bill reminded us. "Hint, hint."

But suppose you write nonfiction? Can you write tonight, too? Of course. Sieg ... er ... Bill told us that our own Nina Amir conceived National Write Nonfiction Month in 2007, later renamed to Write Nonfiction in November, or WINFIN. Bill suggested we make this Write Whatever You Darn Well Please Month: WriWhaYoDaWePleMo.

Bill started the session by telling us to write something down. "Anything. Write what's floating around in your head. Possible names for characters – weird names you've run across." He ended with "Get on your mark! Get set! Write!"

Keyboards clicked, pencils scraped. Twenty-five minutes later Bill signaled for the writers to stop. "So, how did it go?" he asked. "Did you get a lot of words written?" Then he asked how many had tried NaNoWriMo before and if anyone had any advice: "Turn off all the editors, software and internal."

But most of all, and most important, keep writing. If you didn't make it to 50K, you still have a lot more than you started with. Keep writing! – WT

2016 Italian Film Festival

On November 18, five members of SBW, Pamela Oliver-Lyons, Steve Lyons, Carolyn Donnell, Dave Strom, and Marjorie Johnson attended the screening of *Seconda Primavera*, part of the 2016 Italian Film Festival of San Francisco, at Santa Clara University. They had an opportunity to talk with the film's director/writer, Francesco Calogero, who had traveled here from Italy. – WT



Nov. 18, 2016: Film Producer Mia Arfuso and Director/Writer Francesco Calogero with Dave Strom and Marjorie Johnson
– Photo by Steve Lyons

Barnes & Noble Events

BN.COM/events

South Bay Writers Club Children's Author Showcase

Saturday, December 10, 2pm



E Ardell
The Fourth Piece



Chess Desalls
Travel Glasses



Penelope Anne Cole
Magical Matthew



Judith Shernock
Sammi The Seahorse



Marjorie Bicknell Johnson
The Last Jade of The Maya



Barnes & Noble Eastridge, San Jose
Present Bookfair ID 12045738 prior to checkout

Follow Us to Learn About Events & More

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Visit bn.com/bookfairs to support South Bay Writers online from 12/10/16 to 12/15/16 by entering **Bookfair ID 12045738** at checkout.

A percentage of your Barnes & Noble purchases will benefit South Bay Writers.

Do your Christmas shopping online.

Buy your Christmas books at Barnes&Noble.com and benefit South Bay Writers as well.

Yellow Snow Cones

by Chess Desalls

I turn up the heat in the car and flip through radio stations until I find one that doesn't play holiday tunes. Today wasn't so bad, but I could care less about reindeers with abnormal noses or snowmen come to life. They can jingle their jolly at millions of other listeners who started rocking their bells before Thanksgiving.

The snow that lines the sides of the road is caked with mud and ash. I'm surprised we had work today and that the snowplows had made it through. Schools closed and so did daycare. Poor Ma.

I yank the steering wheel to the right to make the turn on Ma's street. I hope to find her all in one piece after spending the day babysitting Anna.

After parking in her half-hidden driveway, I grab Ma's shovel from her front porch. I dig out a path from the porch to the car so that it will be easier for Anna to walk back with me. When I reach the car I look back at the driveway and sigh. *Might as well shovel the rest of the driveway too.*

Finally, I prop the shovel back on the porch and ring Ma's doorbell. The wreath on the door stares back at me as I wait for someone to answer.

Ma opens the door. "Come on in, Michael." Her hair sticks out all over her head like she forgot to pull a comb through it. But she's smiling.

"You two have fun?" I say.

"Oh yes, we're in the middle of making snow cones."

"Sounds like something Anna would like in the dead of winter," I say. Who needs a warm fire and a mug of cocoa when you can burn the chill from the inside with more ice?

Ma leads me to the kitchen where Anna sits pouring yellow liquid over small bowls of shaved ice. Anna wears matching socks and her pigtails are wrapped with ribbons; it's an improvement over what she looked like when I dropped her off this morning.

"Thanks, Ma," I mutter.

"Daddy!"

"Hey, what are you making over there?"

"Lemon snow cones. They're so yummy!" she says, swirling yellow all over a fresh bowl.

"You know what that looks like, don't you?"

I blanch at Anna's blank, innocent look. "Huh?"

"Never mind. Let me guess, lemon?" My lips pucker before I can hide my expression.

She wrinkles her nose at me. "Yup."

"Why not cherry or sugarplum or gingerbread mocha? Don't you think that would be better? More Christmassy?"

"But I looove lemon, Daddy!"

I shake my head. She's too much. "Why do you love lemon?"

"Because it's yellow. And I looove yellow because it's the color of sunshine and ducklings and school buses and dandelions aaand..." She pauses. Her large eyes are opened in round circles, and her chin's pointed up at me like she expects an answer.

"And lemons," I say, squinting down at her.

"Yes, lemons! I looove lemon!"

Love and circular arguments aside, what type of kid likes lemons? Consider jelly beans, hard candies, and lollipops. Cherry and orange go first, followed by grape—when available—leaving the sad little lemons and limes last. They wait, like the last two kids waiting to be chosen for a kickball team and hoping to avoid the embarrassment of being the last one standing.

Not Anna, though. Not my kid who *loooves* lemon.

How do I explain that lemon is an underdog flavor, unwanted and unsupported, and that her snow cones remind me of a dog taking a leak on the side of the road? I think quickly, before she has a chance to ask me to taste anything.

"Anna, let's go for a walk."

"Okay!"

Ma looks at me like I just made Ebenezer Scrooge cry. I'm no Tiny Tim, so I figure maybe I'm Marley or one of the ghosts—the one that looks like the grim reaper, maybe.

"Come on," I say. "Grab your mittens and boots. We'll be right back to clean up the mess, Ma."

Once outside, I point out the different types of snow. "See that, Anna. That's fresh, white snow. And that over there is brown. That means it's dirty. You don't want to eat that."

Anna giggles. "Eww."

It isn't long before we come across a patch of yellow snow—a big, round splotch that dips in the center.

A mitten-covered hand tugs at my coat. "What happened over there?"

I look at her, right in the eyes. "That's where a dog peed," I say, smug with adult knowledge about such things. "What do you think of your lemon snow cones now, huh?"

Her left brow crinkles before her eyes fill with tears. Before I can ask what's wrong, she starts sobbing. "I didn't m-make them for me. I m-made them for Mommy to p-put by her grave."

The sensation of blood leaving my face overwhelms me and makes me dizzy. I sink to the ground, kneeling to be on eye-level with my daughter. "Anna," I say, wrapping her in my arms. "I'm sorry, but I don't understand. Why would you want to make lemon snow cones for Mommy?"

"I wanted to make something that I could keep in the snow, that wouldn't melt all winter. And in her favorite color."

My mind spins with memories. Joni, my late wife, had loved the sunshine, springtime, and buttercups. Bugged down by the season and the cold, it was as if I'd forgotten her and her favorite color. Several years had passed since her death. I hadn't made the connection.

But Anna had.

"I'm sorry," I say again, wiping Anna's eyes. "Let's go back to Grandma's house and get the snow cones. We'll take them to your mother's grave tonight. Forget what I said about the yellow snow. It was stupid."

"Okay, Daddy." She sniffles and nods her head. "Is it still okay for me to like lemon?"

"Of course," I say. "You've made me love it." —WT

Aunt Sissy's Christmas Tree

by Janet S. Patey

On Christmas Eve 1943, my Aunt Sissy came to visit us. Aunt Sissy and our uncle had no children. She and my uncle lived on the top floor of his mother's house just a few blocks from our home in Ridgewood. Since my father's death in February, our grandfather, my mother, and Aunt Sissy's father decided to spend Christmas Eve with us, but Sissy would not be with us. Sissy came by to give us our gifts so we would have them to open that evening; she would spend Christmas Eve with my uncle's family.

We lived in a very German neighborhood. We always opened our gifts very late on Christmas Eve as our families in Germany had always done. My sister and I gathered around my aunt full of questions. How large is your tree this year? Do you have lots of lights on it? Did you put up all the old ornaments from Germany? When can we come and see it?

To our amazement, Aunt Sissy replied, "Your uncle and I decided not to have a tree this year." No tree? That was unthinkable to a twelve- and eight-year-old. How could you have Christmas without a tree? My sister and I went into our bedroom away from the adults in the living room. Arlene, my older and wiser sister said, "I have an idea. We haven't bought Aunt Sissy and Uncle Yitzie a Christmas gift yet. Let's surprise them and buy them a tree."

"Do we have enough money to buy a tree?" I asked.

"I have twenty cents left from my allowance. How much do you have?"

"Twenty-five cents. Is forty-five cents enough to buy a tree?" I asked.

Arlene thought for a moment. "It's Christmas Eve," she said. "One of the boys in my class sells Christmas trees every year. He told me they give the trees away that they can't sell on Christmas Eve."

"We'll get one for free," she said with all the optimism of a twelve-year-old at Christmas. We hurried out to the living room and whispered our plans to our mother. She smiled at us and told us not to forget our hats and boots because it was snowing and be back in two hours for dinner.

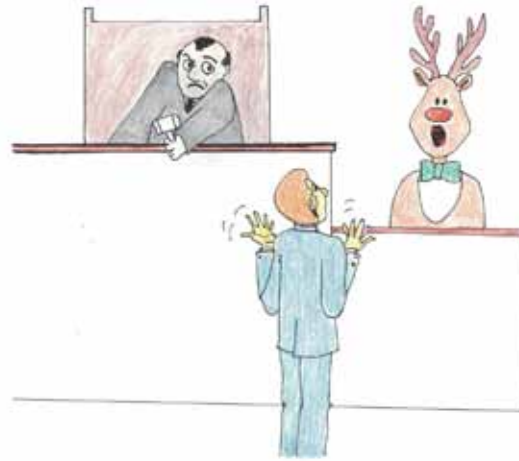
It was already dark but our neighborhood was very safe back then. Everyone knew us as Johnny's little girls. We rushed across the street to the *Konditorei* (bakery shop) where the smell of freshly baked Christmas *stollen* made us stop and look at the Christmas cookies in the window. The street was filled with last minute shoppers. Around the corner from the *Konditorei*, two men were selling Christmas trees.

Arlene asked one of the men, "When do you give the trees away, please?"

"Give the trees away?" The man laughed.

"Emil, *die Kleinen* want to know when we give the trees away." They both laughed.

Off the Shelf — Edie Matthews



"How could you run over Grandma?"
"But I wasn't driving the sleigh."

Emil handed Arlene two peppermint canes and said, "*Liebchen*, come back at midnight. Then we give the trees away."

My sister thanked him for the candy canes and took my hand. "Don't worry," she said, full of confidence. "We'll find someone who gives their trees away before midnight."

We trekked up and down the streets asking all the tree sellers. Always the same answer: laughter, and come back at midnight. Didn't they know little girls could not be out at midnight?

Tired and cold, we went into the drugstore and spent some of our precious money on a hot cocoa.

"What are you two little ones doing out on Christmas Eve?" the woman behind the counter asked.

We explained that we were buying a tree for our aunt. She handed us our cup of cocoa to share and said, "Now, we know you two can't stay out until midnight. After buying this cocoa, how much money do you have left?"

Arlene looked up at her over the cocoa cup. "I have ten cents and my sister still has a quarter. That makes thirty-five cents."

The woman smiled. "Guess what? We're having a sale on "Evening in Paris" perfume. I bet your aunt would like that a lot more than a Christmas tree." She took us over to a counter, and there in a purple satin box was a little heart shaped bottle. It was so beautiful we both just stared at it.

"It must cost a hundred dollars," we said in unison.

"No," the woman said. "It's on sale for thirty-five cents."

Arlene and I looked at each other in disbelief. "We'll take it!"

As we left the drugstore clutching our precious gift, all wrapped in shiny red wrapping paper complete with a big silver bow, the woman called to us, "*Frohliche Weihnachten und Gute Nacht.*" (Merry Christmas and good night.)

So, that's the story of Aunt Sissy's Christmas tree. She didn't get one, but she had an "Evening in Paris." — WT

Shellebrity

by Judith Shernock

I was shocked by the news headline: "Rare Snail Finds Love After Global Search." Were they talking about that *icky* creature that eats my plants and that I enjoy crushing with my Crocs?

It seems they were.

The snail in question, one named Jeremy, is indeed a garden snail. But this fellow is a "lefty" snail. That is a one in a million characteristic of a snail whose shell swirls counter clockwise rather than clockwise. His sex organs are on the wrong (left) side of his head as well. This is a mirror image of other creatures of this species whose shells swirl to the right and sex organs are also on the right side of their heads.

Therefore Jeremy couldn't mate and became depressed: he wouldn't come out of his shell. He needed someone whose sex organs aligned with his.

Literary Sculpture

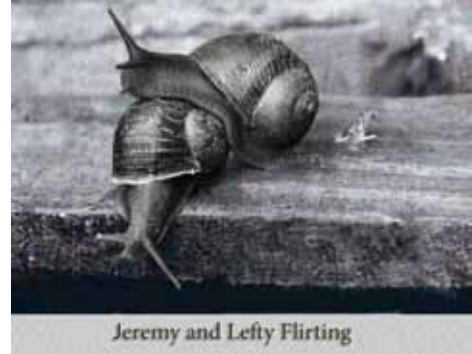
This image appeared on the cover of November *Fresh Ink*, the newsletter of the Inland Empire Branch, California Writers Club. It's a literary sculpture formed by linking metal letters. The sculpture, by Jaume Plensa, is in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Photo by Kathryn Wilkens, Member, CWC Inland Empire Branch.



—Photo by Kathryn Wilkens

Scientists began a worldwide search for a mate for Jeremy and found two matches. The first was Lefty from Ipswich U.K. and owned by a man who kept snails as pets. The other from Majorca, Spain was owned by a farmer who also ran a restaurant. As you probably guessed, the main dish he served was Escargot.

Scientists studying this problem chose Lefty as the superior candidate.



Jeremy and Lefty Flirting

For those unfamiliar with snail procreation, let me explain. Their "act" is known as "traumatic insemination" and is accomplished by the two mutually stabbing each other with live darts, tiny calcium spears that transfer hormones. The darts are on their heads. When enough hormones have been passed they develop eggs in calcium shells that feed the babies after they are born.

All snails are hermaphrodites so both will give birth, each laying about one hundred eggs. Snails can live up to twenty-five years but most die after about fifteen years. With those long lifetimes, they give birth many times.

Scientists are curious to find out if Jeremy and Lefty's offspring will twist to the right like normal snails or to the left like their parents. The outcome may shed some light on human anomalies as well.

While researching this article, I came upon some interesting trivia. There are those who believe that Cupid's darts were inspired by the "love darts" used by snails in procreation. Also, in days gone by, Muricedal snails were the source of purple dye. The extreme expense of extracting this secretion made it available only to the ultra-rich and led to the color purple being forever associated with wealth and power.

In the future when I see a snail eating my favorite flower, I will think twice before crushing it with my Crocs. —WT

Late Breaking Contest News

The Women's National Book Association is accepting submissions for its Annual Writing Contest. Fiction, 3,000 words max; Memoir, personal essay, 2,500 words max; Poetry, 3 to 5 pages max. Previously published work accepted. Deadline: 01/15/17. Submit at <https://wnba.submittable.com/submit>

'D' Drought Gone, December?

It's hard on all creatures, no water, too warm
I hope this is over, please end the harm
In fact, shortest day, we should dance to please
Our winter's day: oh let it release
All bad humors and give back good
Making snow or rain is what this month should!

— Pat Bustamante



Christmas Haiku 2016

Real World Fantasia

Moonlight glitter frost.
 Real world fairyland Yule trees
 distantly reflect Christ.

God born as infant.
 Celebrate with twinkling lights -
 immortal fireworks.

Birth of Messiah -
 Opulent feasts commemorate.
 Angel children sing.

We give of ourselves -
 gold, myrrh and frankincense show
 love within wise hearts.

Childhood snow men,
 tinkling carols and glow trees
 welcome Messiah.

Golden angels fly
 just beyond eyesight corners?
 We see Christ dimly.

Santa sure sounds like
 God the Father in disguise.
 He gives us His Son.

Tinsel and glitter,
 fairyland frost and glow lights.
 Bethlehem Child Star.

Angelic harpists.
 Children with gold angel wings.
 Real world Christmas scenes.

Home made ornaments.
 Children create popcorn strings.
 Pine cone Advent wreaths.

Once, candles lit firs.
 Now, electric lights are safer.
 Baby Jesus shines.

Yule candle carols.
 Disciples spread light to all.
 Some things never change.

Midnight gatherings.
 All is firelight and deep love.
 Peace Child born to us.

— Stephen C. Wetlesen

Poetry Page

It Can Disappear

Early morning sun rising
 Wheat swaying in the breeze
 Stems bowing to natures call
 Tractor discs glisten
 Melody of a country song
 Playing in the farmer's ear
 Plowing deep in the earth
 Hoping
 Dust bowl forming
 They look and listen
 Weather not taken lightly
 No rain
 Fields are the farmer's canvas
 Ripe red strawberries
 Orange pumpkins standing out
 Purple lettuce leaves
 All basking in the sun
 Bring memories of corn rows
 Getting lost in the maze
 When I was young
 Before the fields are empty
 Before the farms are gone
 Before the farmer has to sell the family farm
 Before we all let what's precious go
 Do your part
 Before you shake your head and wonder
 Where did it all go
 Remember it can disappear

— Karen Franzenburg

Use Simplicity It Works

You want things to work out? Use simplicity
 You want things to work out? No complexity
 You want things to work out, is a simple thing
 You want things to work out OK never a sting

We should use simplicity for getting through
 We should use simplicity, for things you do
 We should use simplicity, for and to everyone
 We should use simplicity, and it will be done

Whenever you go on, it's using simplicity too
 Whenever you go on, it's using smart for you
 Whenever you go on, it's using go get it now
 Whenever you go on, it's using a saying wow

Use simplicity, it does work so don't deny it
 Use simplicity, it does work could be the hit

— Clarence L. Hammonds
 Poem Number 2,721



The Orchid Sisters

Identical Cattleya orchids
 seemingly looking
 at me

Beautiful, pink and
 so vibrant
 With petals
 perfectly posed
 as if they know I'll
 take their photo

They look like twins
 centers and darker petals
 contrasting with the
 lighter tones

Their look is dignified
 steady and strong
 It's like they are aware
 they last a long, long
 time

The Orchid Sisters
 look proud and stately
 in the midst of all
 the others

Bright colors and happy
 petals seem to
 welcome all who
 look at them

Other flowers are pretty
 but the Orchid Sisters
 are queens of the
 scene

— Karen Hartley

Supermoon

Bright light supermoon.
 As though never seen before,
 it looks different.

Supermoon searchlight
 sheds glow brighter than ever.
 Yet no glitter frost.

— Stephen C. Wetlesen

Judith Gerard: Intrepid Hollywood Reporter

by Alfred Jan

By the mid 1930s, Harry Donenfeld's Culture/Trojan publishing empire had consolidated its girly pulp stable to include *La Patee Stories*, *Pep Stories*, *Gay Parisienne*, *Tattle Tales*, *Spicy Stories*, and *Snappy: Illustrated Fun and Fiction*. This last title stood out among the rest because of its women-playing-sports cover images and inside features foreshadowing those in later men's magazines like *Playboy*. The truly unique aspect of *Snappy* was Judith Gerard, possibly the only girly-pulp series character, who appeared in six stories from May to October of 1935. The author, Rex Roberts, described himself in the "As Seen By Himself" sidebar (September, 1935) issue: born in 1900, having a black mustache, being divorced, and living in Hollywood. His hobbies: fast cars and fast women. Roberts wrote, "Seriously, I'm getting a wallop out of writing the 'Judith Gerard' series for *Snappy*. Judith represents my ideal girl—the one I dream about on the nights when I sleep alone. Of course I don't get a chance to dream about her very often."

Roberts' creation, Judith Gerard, was a reporter for the *Hollywood Herald* on assignment to cover Altamount Pictures on location shoots around the world. The series debut story, "Judith Intervenes," finds her Honolulu bound on the *Malawaii* luxury liner, where bold Altamount star Betty Brent has her diamond necklace stolen during a dance. To complicate matters, Judith's rhinestone pin is stolen at the same dance. The two chief male characters include Johnny Allen, the ship's detective, and Steve James, a passenger Judith finds attractive. Both men lust after her, but she dislikes Johnny's crude physical overtures. Both guys had danced with both women, so who stole whose jewelry?

Judith likes Steve so much that she "intervenes" by sneaking into his cabin to recover the necklace (just in case he stole it). In the dark, she encounters a man professing to be Steve, yet his groping tells her that he is Johnny. She later exposes Johnny by finding loose diamonds in his pocket; Johnny had planted the setting in Steve's cabin, intending it to be found later in a search, thus framing him. Steve James turns out to be a private investigator hired by the ship owners, who've suspected their detective of thievery. James gets the drop on Allen when Judith retrieves the diamonds from his pocket. But who stole the reporter's pin? James did, as an excuse to see her again later while "returning" it, but readers aren't expected to anticipate that, especially since Allen had hinted earlier that James was a notorious jewel thief.

In the second story, "Jeopardy For Judith" (June 1935), our heroine arrives with the Altamount crew in Honolulu, their first stop on a worldwide filming expedition. This time, an Altamount actress is kidnapped, and the two main male characters are Hal Foster, a tanned muscular assistant director, and nerdy, needy cameraman Billy Grove. But Roberts short-circuits reader expectations by casting Judith's favorite, Foster, as kidnapper and Grove as the hero who saves her from harm after she rescues the actress. Production chief Dave Levinson is portrayed in negative Jewish stereotype as oily, fat, and dark, his "pig-like" eyes lecherously undressing Judith when she requests his help in clearing Grove, arrested earlier by police with false evidence on him.

Subsequent stories chronicle exploits in various cities. "Judith Poses" (July 1935) takes place in Shanghai, where the reporter breaks up a Japanese espionage ring. She helps smash a Singaporean white-slavery organization in "The Crimson Envelope" (August 1935), and in "The Ruby Buddha" (September 1935) she solves the theft of the titular statuette in Rangoon. Finally, she exposes a Calcuttan subversive separatist leader in "Judith Dances" (October 1935). Nowhere in these stories do we find her typing up news stories to send to her paper (although Roberts probably allowed us to assume that), so it seems that her real calling is detective/adventurer, especially when she declares in one story, "I crave danger!"

So who was Judith Gerard as a person? To begin with, she was a native Californian whose body was tantalizingly described in the "spicy" tradition by author Roberts in



this passage from "Judith Dances": *From the tips of her tiny high-heeled slippers to the jaunty toque hat perched on her soft wavy black hair, she was a dream-picture of feminine perfection – a symphonic tone poem in feminine curves and contours. Her summery frock clung intimately and revealingly to the lyric arches of her hips, the cream-smooth lines of her svelte thighs. Through the frock's tight-fitting bodice bulged the glorious mounds of her breasts – twin magnificent hillocks of nubile flesh, firmly pliant and arrogantly jutting. No brassiere cupped or imprisoned those proudly solid charms; through the frock's thinness their dainty pink tips were almost visible.*

But she has brains as well as beauty! An independent woman who loves her job, Judith refuses to settle down with a man. Inevitable offers come at every story's end, but they are consistently rebuffed; instead, a short sexual dalliance is coyly promised before she departs to the next location. After Calcutta, her next stop was to be Constantinople, but Roberts (or his editor) ended the series before she got there, denying her fans closure by having the Altamount production unit return to Hollywood. For all we know, Judith is still on a perpetual journey around the world, having adventures.

Note: For more examples of short detective and mystery fiction from the pulp magazines of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, see my two anthologies and three single author collections on my Amazon author page. — WT

Contests and Markets

by Carolyn Donnell



Carolyn Donnell
Contributing Editor

I have collected several contests for you that have December deadlines.

Fault Zone: Deadline extended to 12/31! Call for submissions from our sister branch, San Francisco/Peninsula. Submit at <http://cwc-peninsula.org/fault-zone/>

Romance Me: Open call for writers of romance novels. Cannot be previously published by a traditional publisher even if it is out of print. Self-published acceptable. Free registration through Dec. 15 at <https://www.authors.me/romance-contest/>

The Writer: There are a couple of contests with December deadlines at *Writer Magazine's* website <http://www.writermag.com/writing-resources/contests/>

Love Poem Poetry Contest: Check out <http://www.fanstory.com/contestdetails.jsp?id=103464>

See **other ongoing lists** at:

<http://www.pw.org/grants>

<http://www.writermag.com/writing-resources/contests/>

<http://thewritelife.com/27-free-writing-contests/>

<http://www.writingclasses.com/contests>

<https://winningwriters.com/the-best-free-literary-contests>

Have fun, and let us know if you score. – WT

Writing Dangerously

by Linda Judd

On the theme from the movie *Year of Living Dangerously*, I found this 2013 NaNoWriMo poster, "Year of Writing Dangerously," Women of Mystery, www.womenofmystery.net – WT



Oregon Coast Children's Book Writers Workshop

July 10 - 14, 2017
Oceanside, Oregon
www.occbww.com

Our class is right beside the ocean overlooking giant rocks where sea lions lounge and snort. Eagles circle overhead. Last summer from the patio we watched a pod of whales spout. The town is exquisite and low key and inexpensive. It's the real old Oregon before all the souvenir shops moved in.

The full-time instructors are five accomplished authors of children's books, two editors from major houses, and a children's book agent. All are immersed in writing, covering all genres. The course is available for graduate level credit. – WT

Writing Residencies Available

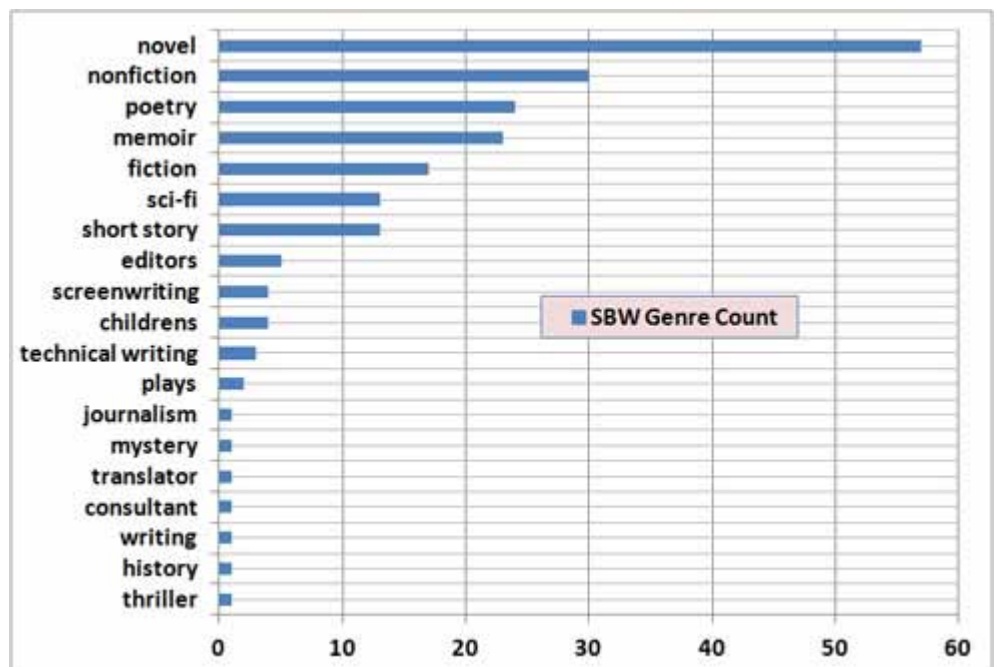
by Donna McCrohan Rosenthal, CWC P/R Director

The visionary 1888 Center has launched a residency exclusively for Californians, and they've asked us to get the word out to our own California Writers. Surely this is right up our alley.

These are "three two-week residencies in the mountains of Lake Arrowhead where the creative environment will nurture your craft and help carry on the tradition of the California voice. Finished work will be included in 1888's *The Cost of Paper* anthology." Submissions will consist of a CV or narrative bio, a statement of intent, and a writing sample. The submission period: 01/01/17 through 02/28/17; \$25 entry fee. Three residencies from April 1 through May 15. All applications must be submitted through "Submittable" at <http://1888.center/cwr/> (which see for further details) after on January 1. – WT

SBW Writing Interests Count

Continued from Page 1



News from California Writers Club

CWC Central Board

by Bill Baldwin

The Central Board met on July 24, 2016. SBW gave our proxy to Evelyn LaTorre of the Fremont Branch.

This past year, with David George as President of California Writers Club, we created two new branches, Coastal Dunes and North State, and in November we will charter another new branch, San Joaquin Valley.

The new CWC President is Joyce Krieg of the Central Coast Branch. VP is Donna McCrohan-Rosenthal; Secretary, Elizabeth Tuck; Executive Member-at-Large, Jeanette Fratto.

Joyce Krieg's vision for the coming year is to clarify and improve the relationship between the Central Board and the local branches; move forward with the idea of a CWC Scholarship; make greater use of social media; and clarify Jack London's role in the founding of the California Writers Club.

The next meeting of the Central Board will be on January 29, 2017, location to be determined (San Jose, San Francisco, or Oakland). – WT

Shelf Life –Maddie McEwen



Angela Agent read the query but stopped at "Dear Sirs."

Guess what? Agents come to writers' conferences.

CWC Around the Bay

Published meeting locations and times for other CWC branches in the greater San Francisco Bay Area. If you want to attend one of their meetings, first check their websites for details.

Berkeley: 2:00 third Sundays, Oakland Public Library Main Branch. cwc-berkeley.org

Central Coast: 5:30 third Tuesdays, Point Pinos Grill, 77 Asilomar Boulevard, Pacific Grove. centralcoastwriters.org

Fremont Area: 2:00 fourth Saturdays at DeVry University, 6600 Dumbarton Circle, Room 120, Fremont. cwc-fremontareawriters.org

Marin: 2:00 fourth Sundays, Book Passage in Corte Madera. cwcmarin.com

Mendocino Coast: 6:00 third Wednesdays, Mendocino Hotel. writersmendocinocoast.org

Mount Diablo: 11:00 second Saturdays, Zio Fraedo's Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. cwcmtdiablowriters.wordpress.com

Napa Valley: 7:00 second Wednesdays, venue is changing. napavalleywriters.net

North State: 6:00 third Mondays, Butte County Library-Chico Branch. northstatewriters.com

Redwood: 2:30 first Sundays, Flamingo Conference Resort & Spa, 2777 Fourth Street, Santa Rosa. redwoodwriters.org

Sacramento: 11:00 third Saturdays, Cattlemen's Restaurant, 12409 Folsom Blvd., Rancho Cordova. cwcsacramentowriters.org

San Francisco/Peninsula: 10:00 third Saturdays, Redwood Yacht Harbor: check website <http://cwc-peninsula.org/>

Tri-Valley: 2:00 third Saturdays, Four Points by Sheraton, 5115 Hopyard, Pleasanton. trivalleywriters.org

Conferences

Poets & Writers LIVE

San Francisco, January 14 – 15, 2017

Join Poets & Writers at the San Francisco Art Institute (in Russian Hill near Fisherman's Wharf) for two days of sound advice, practical information, and inspiration. P&W has put together a celebration of creativity that includes readings, lectures, multimedia presentations, panel discussions, and writing workshops.

Presenters include US Poet Laureate Juan Felipe Herrera; best-selling novelist and author of *Purity*, Jonathan Franzen; author of *The Orchid Thief*, Susan Orlean; acclaimed poet Kay Ryan; writer and activist Ishmael Reed; and renowned poet Jane Hirshfield. Publishing professionals include editors Ethan Nosowsky, Jordan Bass, Steve Wasserman, and Rusty Morrison; and agents Danielle Svetcov, Anna Ghosh, and Jennifer March Soloway.

Don't miss it!! Go to Poets & Writers' website www.pw.org/live – WT

San Francisco Writers Conference

Mark Hopkins Hotel, San Francisco, February 16 – 19, 2017

www.SFWriters.org

This is our biggest local conference--your chance to meet an agent and take in-depth classes of interest to writers. Free events, including Jon Agee Children's books session. 100+ presenters--authors, editors, publishers & literary agents from New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco Bay Area.

2017 San Francisco Writing Contest is NOW accepting entries.

Yes, it's expensive, but you get what you pay for. Substantial early discounts and special room rates. Attend with a friend and split cost of hotel room.

For event/class details and online registration, contest rules, and subscription to SFWC Newsletter, go to www.SFWriters.org today. – WT

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
December 2016				1	2 7:30p Open mic Barnes&Noble Almaden, San Jose	3 SBW Jingle Bash 4 - 8 pm
4 10A Our Voices	5 2p Valley Writers	6	7	8	9	10 B&N Eastridge SBW Authors' Showcase, 2 pm See Page 7
11	12 2p Valley Writers	13	14	15 Deadline <i>WritersTalk</i>	16 7:30p Open mic Wil- low Glen Library, 1157 Minnesota Ave	17
18 10A Our Voices	19 2p Valley Writers	20	21 7:30p Open mic SF Peninsula, Reach and Teach, San Mateo	22	23	24
25	26 2p Valley Writers	27	28	Happy New Year		
Future Flashes						
SBW Board meets Tues., Jan. 3, 2017 Grill 87, Los Gatos Check website	Monday, January 9 6:00p SBW Dinner Harry's Hofbrau		Barnes & Noble Book Fair Dec. 10 – 15. See Page 7			

Ongoing Events

Critique Groups

Our Voices: Meets at Bel Bacio in San Jose and various places every other Sunday 10 AM. Genres: Fiction, memoir, nontechnical nonfiction. Contact: Dave LaRoche at dalaroche@comcast.net

Valley Writers: Meets at Valley Village Retirement Center, 390 N. Winchester Blvd, Santa Clara, Mondays 2 PM. Marjorie Johnson, marjoriej358@comcast.net

Your Critique Group: Send info to newsletter@southbaywriters.com

Do you belong to a critique group? Please send details to *WritersTalk*.

SBW Board Meetings

Board meets in the week preceding the dinner meeting. Contact Pam Oliver-Lyons at pres@southbaywriters.com.

Details Jan 3, 2017: 6:30 PM dinner; Board meeting 7 - 9 PM, Grill 87, 87 Los Gatos-Sunnyvale Road, Los Gatos.

You send it. We calendar it.

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

CWC SF Peninsula Open Mic: Third Wednesday of every month, 7:30 PM at Reach and Teach, 144 West 25th Ave., San Mateo

Ongoing discussion groups

TalkShop: Group is full.

SBW TalkBooks: discussion group focusing on books written by SBW members. TalkBooks will resume in January. Contact newsletter@southbaywriters.com

Facebook Group: Members of South Bay Writers can join our Facebook group—South Bay Writers Club.

You may advertise in the *CWC Literary Review*.

Go to www.calwriters.org for details.

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

Well-Red Poetry Reading Series: Second Tuesdays, 7 – 9 pm, at Works San Jose, 365 South Market Street. Featured reader followed by an open mic, if time allows. www.pcsj.org

SBW Recommends ...

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



California Writers Club
South Bay Branch
P.O. Box 3254
Santa Clara, CA 95055
www.southbaywriters.com

MAIL TO

Address Correction Requested

South Bay Writers
No December Regular Meeting

South Bay Writers
Jingle Bash
Saturday, December 3
4 to 8 pm
See Page 1

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.