



# WRITERSTALK

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Monthly Newsletter of the South Bay Writers Club™

MAY SPEAKER ALEJANDRO ADAMS

## Screenwriting and Video Production

by Kelly Gomez

Alejandro Adams, professor of media studies at San Jose State University, knows how to write for motion picture films. For a number of years, he has been involved in Cinequest San Jose, where he has been interviewed as the director of his screenplays. His films include *Around the Bay*, *Canary*, and *Babnik*.



Alejandro Adams

Adams began his career in fiction writing, but discovered a larger market for screenwriting and video production. Since then he has focused primarily on screenwriting and teaching. He teaches university level classes on film history, business, and screenwriting technique. At the May South Bay Writers general meeting, he will discuss how to write for film and how to publish screenplays.

Whatever you write — novels, memoir, poetry — screenwriting and motion pictures have much to say to you. Many movies begin with a scene that shows the setting. Then the picture zooms into an action leading into the story. Sometimes you are introduced to the main character and a problem he needs to resolve.

Your piece must have a setting, and you must picture your scene and what your characters are doing in order to write about them. Think about how the scene is set with its rich visual and auditory elements and visualize your zoom-in. Now you have the beginning of your chapter. Your other chapters follow suit if you pretend you are watching a movie as you write them.

Come to hear Alejandro Adams and think about how you can profit from learning about screenwriting technique.

Many of us have heard of J. R. R. Tolkien, J. K. Rowling, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Stephen King, and William Shakespeare. Those great writers have one thing in common: their books have been made into motion feature films.

If we were to ask those novelists whether they believed their newly published books would soon become a major motion picture, initially, most would say no.

At some point, however, those successful writers had published something so meaningful that turning it into a movie became the next most logical step.

As a writer, how many times have you thought of the possibility of turning your novel into a major motion picture? What would it take to transform your writing?

If the idea of taking your story to the next level to win an award at the next Cinequest Film Festival sounds exciting to you, please come to our next meeting at Harry's Hofbrau at 6 pm on May 8. — WT

RECAP APRIL SPEAKER DANNI BURTON

## What Compels Us to Keep Reading or Listening?

by Karen Sundback

Ever find a book that you can't put down? What is it about certain stories that grab us?

At our April meeting, Danni Burton offered some tricks of the storytelling trade. She is a preservationist — preserving the wisdom and wit of everyday people through stories. All very well, but how does she guide her storytellers to weave a tale so compelling that we can't turn away?

She stressed the importance of an engaging opening. A paragraph that grabs your reader will keep him/her reading. Burton offered four approaches. Here we found examples used with literature's great opening paragraphs:

- **Intrigue.** From *A Tale of Two Cities*: "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness..."
- **Sense of purpose.** From *On The Road* "...Before that I'd often dreamed of going West to see the country, always vaguely planning and never taking off."
- **Heroism.** From *Moby Dick*: "... With a philosophical flourish Cato throws himself upon his sword; I quietly take to the ship."
- **Provocative.** From *American Tabloid*: "America was never innocent. We popped our cherry on the boat over and looked back with no regrets."

*Continued on Page 6*

# President's Two Cents

Pamela Oliver-Lyons  
President, South Bay Writers



## Hidden Figures

"Look beyond the numbers. Around them. Through them."  
— from the movie *Hidden Figures*

"Look beyond the numbers. Around them. Through them." Al Harrison, the character based on Robert C. Gilruth, head of the Space Task Group at Langley in the 1960s, advises in the Oscar nominated screen play written by Allison Schroeder. The script is based on the book *Hidden Figures* by Margot Lee Shetterly. For those who haven't seen the movie, it's about the untold story of mathematician Katherine Globe (married name Johnson) the only "computer" and black woman allowed to work in the control room of the Friendship 7's mission in 1962 Virginia. The movie includes her critical contributions to the launch and recovery, in addition to the supporting experiences of her friends and an entire department of "computers" as they overcame the challenges of adversities experienced living in the segregated south, gender biases within NASA, and the pressures of the space race itself.

In 2015 President Obama presented the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Katherine for her lifelong achievements.

But how much really happened? Did John Glenn really ask for "the girl" (Katherine) to verify the IBM mainframe's calculations before he got on board? How much of the book and the screenplay are true? Schroeder said, "Adjustments to fit the truth into a narrative structure" were made. She "shifted the timeline around ... to add dramatic stakes in some places ... Nothing went that far astray, though ... Those title cards at the end are true. We are always building towards them."

Yes, the story was true, with the exception that it took Katherine 1.5 days to do the calculations and not a few minutes as the movie showed. And yes, her calculations matched the mainframe exactly to the last digit. The rest is history.

Next month the last Pres 2cents (June 2017) will give a synopsis of the SBW "Hidden Figures" for 2016 - 2017. "Math is always dependable," Katherine would say when her environment was the most demanding. I think this approach is a rational way to gain a perspective on the SBW year in review.

In the meantime, June is our election month and we have a full slate of excellent candidates! But that doesn't mean an attending member can't still nominate from the floor "any time preceding the election with consent of the candidate" as our Bylaws (approved June 2010) allow. (Refer to Article IV: Elections). — WT

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California Writers Club  
South Bay Branch  
www.southbaywriters.com

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### SBW Events

Open Mic—Bill Baldwin  
WABaldwin@aol.com  
TalkShop (closed)—Carole Taub  
hospitality@southbaywriters.com

### 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 \$42.50 for membership effective through June 30, 2017; this includes a one-time \$20 initiation fee. Dual membership, \$25; student membership, \$20. 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](mailto:newsletter@southbaywriters.com)

### Managing Editor

Marjorie Johnson

### Contributing Editors

Chess Desalls  
Carolyn Donnell  
Sayantika Mandal  
Sally Milnor  
Karen Sundback

### Deadline

Submissions are due by the 15th of the month.

### Submissions

SBW encourages writers at all levels of expertise to submit their creative works for publication in *WritersTalk*. All submissions should be sent to the above email address in the form of text or an attached MS Word file (sorry, no hard copy submissions can be accepted). 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, with separate instructions for placement in the submission if placement is important.

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)

**In My Opinion** (300 words)

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

### Creative Works

Short Fiction/Memoir (1800 words)

Poetry (200 words)

Essay/Nonfiction (1000 words)

### Reprints

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.

### 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* cannot accept advertising of events or services that benefit an individual. Also, we cannot accept political advertising of any kind.

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Marjorie Bicknell Johnson  
Managing Editor



## Plot Potholes and Pitfalls

Many members of South Bay Writers list novels or short stories as their main writing interest. This column is devoted to identifying some problems you may have with your plot or story line.

You have finished the great American novel, the most memorable memoir, or the winning short story, but something's wrong: it just doesn't pop. Maybe you have dropped into a plot pitfall. Here are six traps for you to avoid.

**It's a predictable or a familiar plot.** If your readers know what's going to happen, maybe you have some overused plot points. Are you telling your own story or retelling someone else's?

**It's all action.** If your protagonist never has any time to think and reflect, you're writing an account of a marathon race, not an interesting story. Great books have pace and rhythm.

**It's too shallow.** Do your words evoke emotion, or do you create beautiful prose and perfectly formed sentences? Readers would rather read a fantastic story written in plain prose.

**It's illogical.** Do your events follow a logical time sequence? Make sure the timeline has an inner logic that flows through the whole book. Make an outline, one sentence for each chapter; are the events in the right order? Does your character put on his shoes before his socks? Do you hop from 1999 to 2003 and then back to 1997? Are your transitions smooth?

**It's too farfetched.** Do you stretch your readers' suspension of disbelief too far? In science fiction, you can go a long way without readers calling you out on the details, but you will hear about it if you get the science wrong. When Andy Weir first published *The Martian*, he had to rewrite the story based upon readers' input on the science. However, you can be too farfetched without writing sci-fi. Would attorneys really act like that in court? Could a cop really take the law into his own hands without consequences? Would a single mother truly take on that much responsibility or that many risks? Sure, it's fiction, but above all, it has to be believable.

**It's too complicated.** Do you have too many characters or too many subplots? Can you describe your storyline in one or two sentences?

If you can add to this list of common plot or story pitfalls or suggest how to climb out of such traps, please share your wisdom with us in an article for *WritersTalk*. — WT



South Bay  
WRITERS

Silicon Valley's Premier Writing Group

Second attempt to show our new logo. Grayscale and light blue do not print well. Also, a high resolution original would help.

## View From the Board

by Trenton Myers, SBW Secretary

The April Board Meeting was held on April 4 at Mariani's in Santa Clara and was attended by President Pam Oliver Lyons, VP Kelly Gomez, Treasurer Bill Baldwin, Secretary Trenton Myers, Newsletter Chair Marjorie Johnson, Membership Chair Sally Milnor, Policy Co-Chair Dave LaRoche, Hospitality Co-Chair Carole Taub, Member-at-Large 1 Carolyn Donnell, Member-at-Large 2 Janet Patey, and guests Kimberlie Ingalls and Sherri Johnson.

**Website Redesign:** John Barry has started working on the website redesign and a club member has stepped forth to become the web editor. An ad hoc committee is being formed to work with the recently hired consultant working on a website update.

**B&N Eastridge Book Fair:** March 12 SBW Book Fair sales totaled \$420. The next B&N Book Fair will be held Saturday, June 24, from 11:30 am to 5:00 pm. Call out for SciFi/Fantasy published authors. Contact [pres@southbaywriters.com](mailto:pres@southbaywriters.com).

**Nonfiction Writer's Conference (NWC):** The NWC 7th Annual teleseminar has once again partnered with SBW and therefore, we received publicity and a 33% discount.

**Awards:** The Jack London Award will be awarded to the selected member at the July meeting of California Writers Club NorCAL.

**May Speaker:** In May, our members will have the enjoyment of listening to Alejandro Adams discussing his success as a Movie/Film Producer/Writer/Editor. His focus is on how to turn your book into a movie, from manuscript to screenplay.

**Next Board Meeting:** The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 2nd, 6:30-9:00pm at Mariani's Inn & Restaurant, 2500 El Camino Real, Santa Clara. — WT

## South Bay Writers 2017-18 Slate of Officers

by ArLyne Diamond

President: Bill Baldwin

VP: Kelly Gomez

Treasurer: Trenton Myers

Secretary: Karen Sundback

Member-at-Large 1: Janet Patey

Member-at-Large 2: Tatyana Grinenko

This is a tentative slate; nominations will be accepted from the floor per SBW Bylaws. — WT

## Prospective Officers Bios

No bios from prospective officers were received by the deadline for appearance in May *WritersTalk*.

Come to the May 8 SBW meeting where the prospective officers will be introduced. — WT

## New Members

by Sally A. Milnor



Sally Milnor  
Contributing Editor

I am happy to introduce two new members.

**George Catano** joined us online and attended our April meeting. George's primary area of interest is in writing science fiction novels. On his membership questionnaire, George said, "I am constantly amazed by the mystery of life. What is it? Where did it come from? Is there a purpose to it? Science explains much, but I feel there is much more that we don't know about. Still hidden from view are great mysteries, and that inspires my stories." He also said, "I work in marketing but took a year off to focus on writing. I think of it as an apprenticeship to a future career in writing."

Doug Fortier is a dual member with CWC's Mendocino Coast Branch, and he writes fiction. On his membership questionnaire, Doug said that his interest in writing is fueled by the creative process, to write and revise an engaging story that the reader wants to finish. His work has appeared in NOYO River Review, 2014, p. 84, short story, "Today"; CWC Mendocino Coast UP-DWELLING Anthology, 2014, "Shoe Shine Magic"; and CWC Mendocino Coast MENDOCINO Anthology, 2017, "Voodoo Taboo." Doug's web page is [dougfortier.com](http://dougfortier.com).

To Our New Members: We wish you a warm welcome and hope your membership brings you inspiration and enjoyment. To all of our South Bay Writers: We appreciate and need your continuing presence and support. Thank you, again, for helping to keep our Club flourishing.

See you at our next meeting on May 8th. — WT



## It's Time to Renew

Due to the quirks of the California Writers Club fiscal year, your membership in South Bay Writers expires on June 30, 2017. That means that, every current member of South Bay Writers needs to renew for 2017-18. Yes, even if you have a half-year membership because you joined in January or February or March or April.

To renew for 2017-2018, please pay \$45 by check written to South Bay Writers at the SBW meeting May 8 or pay \$45 online at [southbaywriters.com](http://southbaywriters.com). Do it now so you won't forget and so you won't be annoyed by repeated notices to renew.

To sweeten the pot, a special prize will be awarded to a lucky SBW member who has renewed by 7 pm, May 8. — WT

## TalkBooks Interviews

### Judith Shernock:

*Sammi the Seahorse*  
by Inga Silva

### Story of a Seahorse

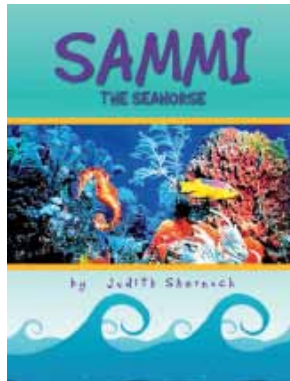
After a visit to the Monterey Aquarium featuring seahorses, writer Judith Shernock became so enthralled by the exhibit that she decided to write a children's book about these fascinating creatures.

Shernock researched these seahorses and learned more about the particulars of the way they live in the ocean life, which she shared at the last Talkbooks presentation. There are 39 to 40 varieties of seahorses, and they are sometimes called the pipehorse. Seahorses like to rap their tales around things so they don't get blown away, which puts them at risk when fishing vessels put down their nets, especially in the China Sea. There are also many interesting historical facts about seahorses; for example, in the 1600s in China, seahorses were used to make medicine to treat such ailments as asthma, whooping cough, high cholesterol, and even impotence. In addition, Shernock also researched the octopus and continues to learn about different sea creatures.

The pictures beautifully illustrate the seahorses. Pictures of the characters are superimposed on real photos taken in

the ocean, revealing pictures of the sea characters that children will enjoy both seeing and reading about. These delightful characters would catch any child's eye: Sammi a male seahorse, Yammi a female seahorse, Piper the pipefish, Dawdy & Lolly who are the offspring of Sammi and Yammi, and last but not least, Sir Wonderpus, an octopus. Without giving away the content, the story reveals one of the most interesting facts about male and female seahorses.

Judith Shernock is also an accomplished psychotherapist who has worked mainly with children. She received the first-place award from the Pacific Book Awards for Best Children's Book for ages 1 - 5 in 2016 and also received a positive review by United States Review of Books for this work. — WT



Judith Shernock

### About the Author:

After viewing the seahorses at the Monterey Bay Aquarium, Judith Shernock was inspired to write the story of Sammi and Yammi, hoping that this book would move children to explore the fascinating world under the sea. Her husband Don added charming artwork that greatly enhanced the story.

Judith was born and grew up in Brooklyn, New York, and she lived in Israel for twenty years. Her career as a psychotherapist began in Israel and continued in San Jose where she worked for the Bureau of Drugs and Alcohol of Santa Clara County for many years and in private practice. She has contributed numerous articles, stories, and poems to California Writers Club newsletters and many other publications. — WT



Seahorses in Love

## Recap: Danni Burton

Continued from Page 1

A good opening can pull in an audience, but how do you keep them?

Burton suggests surprise, humor, and keeping things light. She offered this philosophy from one of her collaborators: There are four kinds of males—those that believe in Santa Claus; those that don't; those that dress as Santa; and finally those that look like Santa.

Burton's latest project is conserving the stories of "vintage" storytellers. One audience member thought that our elders are the forgotten voices of our society and lauded her efforts to collect these stories before they are gone.

Danni Burton can be reached at [dbandco@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dbandco@sbcglobal.net). — WT

## SBW Member News

### Staff

On April 10, Wilderness Travel posted a promotional travel blog about **Marjorie Johnson** and her new book, *Lost Jade of the Maya*, at <http://photoblog.wildernesstravel.com/unlocking-the-secrets-to-the-maya/>

**Penelope Cole** has been invited back to Eastridge Mall B&N for a children's book event Sat. May 20, 11am -5pm.

**Penelope Cole, Jac Fitzenz, Pam Oliver Lyons, and Carole Taub** attended the April 22 CWC Tri-Valley Writers Conference in Pleasanton. Penny was awarded first place for her story, "Ma and Pa," which appeared in *WritersTalk* in January. See Penny's picture below.



**ArLyne Diamond** will give an all week workshop, and her fifth book is with the editors.



Center left, Clare Mullin; Center Right, Carolyn Donnell

## Colorful Journeys of Success: Deeper Colors with Carolyn Donnell

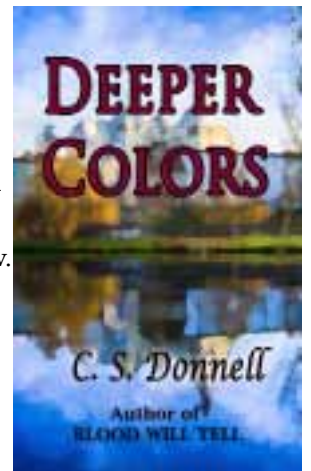
by Carolyn Donnell

Last October, Clare Mullin, producer of the *Colorful Journeys of Success* series hosted an interview with me as the guest. An hour-long interview included many questions (many!) not only about myself and my writings and life, but also about organizations in the area that help writers and various possibilities for publication and contests, etc.

My books are *Deeper Colors* and *Blood Will Tell*, and Clare billed me as an author, an artist, a poet, a musician, and a writers' supporter.

The interviewee (me) was very nervous, but Clare helped me keep on track, and I ended up sounding like I actually knew something. This program was aired on KMVT15 Community Media on March 8, 2017. See at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yj8qjLXSRJw>

KMVT15 Community TV in Mountain View is a local TV station that provides access to cameras, computers, and software, and gives training in video production and media literacy. Shows are created by the public and aired on their public channel 15. — WT



**Carolyn Donnell's** TV interview aired on KMVT15. See picture and story above on this page.

**Valerie Frankel** was on a panel at Comicon April 22.

**Robyn King**, writing as R. L. King, announced that the ninth book in her series *The Alastair Stone Chronicles* has been published and is available on Amazon.

**Dave M. Strom** was on the super-

heroines panel at Comicon on April 22. [Davemstrom.wordpress.com](http://Davemstrom.wordpress.com)

As far as the mystery-person Staff knows, the above items were announced at the April SBW meeting. If we didn't get it right, please send a note to [newsletter@southbaywriters.com](mailto:newsletter@southbaywriters.com)

In fact, if you would like to announce your writing achievements and news in this column, please send an email to [newsletter@southbaywriters.com](mailto:newsletter@southbaywriters.com) — WT



# South Bay Writers Club April 2017



Collage and Photos by Carolyn Donnell

## Roamer's World

by Penelope Anne Cole

L'Iam breathed deeply and surveyed the rapidly changing view from his captain's chair. Or his engineer seat, since Roamer was more like a train than anything else. *I wonder where we'll end up today.* L'Iam seldom gave orders to Roamer – preferring the titillation of a surprise destination. It didn't matter to him, or his on-board women and progeny, where they ended up. Everywhere they went there'd be family.

From his vantage point, L'Iam watched as Roamer roared through forests, down valleys, across deserts – diving under lakes and rivers. It didn't go under the sea – too deep even for something so massive. The sea surrounded and circumscribed their world.

*It's been awhile since we've visited La Forêt de la Mer – and Liliana.* L'Iam closed his deep set blue eyes and luxuriated in the mental image of Liliana, a pale forest maiden. Together they'd wandered by the sea. *She should have had her twins by now.*

He didn't know or care how much time had passed. Time was irrelevant to him, to this life. He pictured Liliana's dark haired babes playing in the sand.

"Yes, it would be good to see Liliana of the Sea," he announced to the empty cab.

In this world, travel was entrusted to Roamer, an invention that spanned generations. No one knew when in the past it had been created. It was virtually indestructible with an ever growing human-like intelligence. It ran on solar and kinetic energy. Roamer knew every overland and underground route. Perhaps there were vestiges of roads, tracks, tunnels, or GPS coordinates that it followed. Who knew or cared as long as it functioned. It was a means of transport, a way of connecting L'Iam with each human community – each settlement he had sired and nurtured. Indeed, without L'Iam and Roamer there would be basically no civilization to speak of.

Nearing nightfall, Roamer slowed and stopped by a sea, glimmering in the setting sun. *Did it read my thoughts? Did it know my desires?* Such questions briefly

popped into L'Iam's head but were overtaken by the business at hand – disembarking and reuniting with their people. Already the children were milling about calling for their sisters, who shyly emerged from the forest.

The women shepherded the children through the darkening woods to the meadow where evening fires had been set and food preparations begun.

Once the travelers were assembled, tasks were given out. Then L'Iam hunted Liliana in earnest. She was at the far end of the encampment.

Even from a distance, he could see the two infants nursing, first one and then the other, as was their custom. Liliana did not look up, though most certainly she had heard their boisterous arrival. Roamer was soundless on a long smooth stretch, but starts and stops generally required loud bursts of energy – not a quiet arrival.

L'Iam knelt at Liliana's side and picked up the larger of the two babes.

Liliana met his questioning gaze with a slight shake of her head. Then her attention returned to the task of feeding these two – girls, yet again – only girls. – WT



### Sad Waters

Water we drink  
In water we sink  
Blood turns to pink  
In water

By sea water we met  
Our bodies so wet  
A clever dare set  
Deep water

Steep rocks we found  
Our dives made no sound  
Death spun you around  
Raging water

Our souls lament  
This elegiac event  
Thus, life is spent  
Silent water

– Judith Shernock

## Inspiration from Pearl S. Buck

by Jamal Khan

Below is an inspiring quote for your consideration.

Pearl S. Buck, (1892-1973), recipient of the Pulitzer Prize in 1932 and of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1938, once said, "The truly creative mind in any field is no more than this: A human creature born abnormally, inhumanly sensitive.

To him...

a touch is a blow,  
a sound is a noise,  
a misfortune is a tragedy,  
a joy is an ecstasy,  
a friend is a lover,  
a lover is a god,  
and failure is death.

Add to this cruelly delicate organism the overpowering necessity to create, create, create – so that without the creating of music or poetry or books or buildings or something of meaning, his very breath is cut off from him. He must create, must pour out creation. By some strange, unknown, inward urgency he is not really alive unless he is creating." – WT

"To find joy in work is to discover the fountain of youth."

– Pearl S. Buck

### Not Today

write a poem today  
that's the challenge, they say

I have excuses galore  
let me think of some more

start with late rising  
no lack of surmising

the house is a mess  
when I'll clean is a guess

have plenty of time  
to think of more rhymes

will I ever succeed  
I guess I just need

inspiration to come  
but now I have none

not today.

– Carolyn Donnell



## Water, water everywhere – and not a drop to drink next year!

by ArLyne Diamond, Ph.D.

Why after all these years does California still think its Camelot and that it only rains a few hours in the middle of the night – each night?

*The rain may never fall till after sundown  
By eight, the morning fog must disappear  
In short, there's simply not a more congenial spot  
For happy-ever-after-ing than here in Camelot*

I've been living here since the sixties and note that some years it rains a lot and others not enough. You'd think the legislature would figure this out themselves.

You'd think money would be allocated for more dams and reservoirs, which would save the over-flow of water in the flood years.

Instead, we allow it to flood. We allow huge losses of water as well as huge losses of property. We even allow people to be injured because of over-flows.

What are we thinking?

We probably are spending far more money on repairs and reimbursements for damage instead of being pro-active and creating what we need to collect and use the water in the drier years.

When I chaired the Infrastructure Committee for the San Jose-Silicon Valley Chamber of Commerce, I learned that people only wanted to pay taxes to support what they thought were new and sexy projects.

So, it was OK to spend millions of dollars on the Light Rail – which wasn't what we needed – instead of repairing roads, bridges, dams and reservoirs.

How come we are spending millions of dollars on bike lanes before we fix the potholes and increase the ride ability on our highways? Sure, it would be lovely to have bike lanes, but what are our priorities? Do we do the new and sexy and ignore what really needs to be accomplished?

Over and over again we complain about the lack of water, the potholes and other infrastructure damage – but we refuse to pay taxes to make all these repairs. Why is that?

Do you do that at home too? Do you buy new clothes and stuff instead of making household repairs? Have you let the re-caulking go because you just bought a new vase?

What about the organizations you support? Do you donate your time and money to keep it afloat – or think others will do it and let things go?

In the past Americans were known for their volunteerism. Today, we expect the other guy or the government to do it. What happened to us? Why are we entitled without giving back?

JFK said, "Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country."

NARRATOR INTERFERENCE



*"If she told him once, she told him a thousand times."  
Humpty Dumpty, don't climb on that wall.*

Doesn't that idea apply to our willingness to support fixing our infrastructure? Doesn't that idea apply to volunteering on committees and boards?

One of my favorite quotes:

*Those Americans are the most peculiar people in the world.  
You'll not believe it when I tell you how they behave.  
In a local community in their country a citizen may conceive of  
some need which is not being met. What does he do?  
He goes across the street and discusses it with his neighbor.  
Then what happens?*

*A committee comes into being and then the committee begins to  
function on behalf of the need. You won't believe this, but it's true;  
all of this is done on behalf of the need.*

*You won't believe this, but it's true; all of this is done without  
reference to any bureaucrat.  
All of this is done by private citizens on their own initiative!*

*Americans of all ages, conditions, and all dispositions consistently  
form associations to give entertainment, to found seminaries, to  
build inns, to construct churches, to diffuse books, to send out mis-  
sionaries.*

*The health of a democratic society may be measured by the quality  
of function performed by private citizens.*

– Alex deTocqueville

So, I ask, "What happened to our can do – will do – want to do spirit? What happened to our prioritizing those things that are more important to us? Why don't we fix the infrastructure, build dams and reservoirs – and support our associations by volunteering to be on committees?"

I greatly fear the answers are "Let the government do it" and "Let the other guy do it." – WT



Albatross Selfie

## The Last Selfie

Until I took one too many steps backward,  
closer to the edge of the Hoover Dam bypass,  
it had been a good life.

What an odd moment to recall an albatross  
being the oldest bird, that is, per a scientist  
stationed on the Midway Atoll.

And the last movie that made me cry,  
For the Love of the Game, when Billy Chapel  
pitched a perfect game, then retired his arm  
from the boys of summer.

Oh my, I'm still falling – against the wind –  
guess it's going to be another one of those days.

I wonder how old that albatross is?  
They didn't say.

– Leslie Hoffman

(**Wisdom** is a 63-year-old Laysan albatross  
believed to be the oldest wild bird in the world.  
Her latest chick hatched at the Midway Atoll  
National Wildlife Refuge near Hawaii. Experts  
believe the bird could have raised as many as 35  
chicks in her life.)



Albatross Mother and Chick

# Three Haiku

## California

California  
Golden Poppies soak sunlight  
I stare forever

– Stephen C. Wetlesen

## Minimalism

King David's haiku –  
it only takes one pebble  
to kill Goliath

– Stephen C. Wetlesen

## Word Painting

Jet contrails crisscross  
Wide bird flock intercepts them  
Holy Week begins

– Stephen C. Wetlesen

## Immigrants Come

immigrants come  
gain citizenship  
their stream continues to run fresh and bubbling  
adding daring colors to our steaming stew

immigrants come  
we encourage them to live with us, enliven us  
to use, to nurture, to improve our country  
even if our home is not and will never be  
completely home to them

immigrants come  
they appreciate  
the things America has managed to do well  
even if their own ways remain deep inside  
and their savory spices waft in the air around them

immigrants come  
I know one of them  
she likes central heating, good roads, police diligence,  
people helping her when she's lost  
lack of corruption, rule by fair and reasonable laws  
sure, America is not of one mind, never has been  
but we are a good people of generous hearts  
our laws and behavior welcome them  
and in their restaurants we taste their curious food

immigrants come  
they come to our land  
the land of opportunity  
where jobs can be found and scarcity is scarce

immigrants come  
and twenty years later  
the immigrants' children work and play  
make money, spend money, have kids  
they worry like we sometimes worry when  
out their windows they look and see

immigrants come

– Richard Allan Burns

# Poetry Page



**Blossoms and Mustard**

*Photo by Karen Hartley*

## Blossoms and Mustard

Driving that day I almost passed by  
the yellow and white  
and the ominous  
grey sky  
The clouds objected  
to Spring and  
still had a last  
Winter punch inside  
The white blossoms on  
the trees  
the yellow mustard  
carpeting the ground  
I stopped  
grabbed my camera  
got out of my car and  
walked in a ways  
I stepped softly somehow not  
wanting to make a sound  
I put the lens to my eye  
Shot one, shot two, shot more  
than I knew  
Moved back to view  
the scene  
Took one last photo then  
had to go  
It would be weeks or so  
before I'd know what  
I had captured

Blossoms and mustard  
in the field  
and thunder clouds grey and ominous  
ready to pour out  
the contained water for  
the thirsty trees  
Back in the car those  
clouds let loose  
Again I delayed –  
Watching the blossoms  
lift up – I thought –  
they know  
they can drink now  
And the mustard  
all those little yellow flowers below  
also perked up  
as if they knew  
they too could now sup  
Happily I drove away that day  
And the best of those photos  
hangs in my home today  
– Karen Hartley

## Class Time ... Or Not

The time has come to saunter off to class  
to learn of sonnets, lyric voice, and style  
But I could stay and visit with my lass,  
since midterms won't be here for quite awhile  
But what of Pico, Sidney, More, and Donne?  
My mind should thirst to know their wit and ways  
Yet, in my mind, there's really only one  
whose beauty sets my loving heart ablaze  
Should knowledge, more than lust, my passions heed?  
Or is this time I truly can afford  
to visit with the one I love and need,  
the one who, for a year now, I've adored?  
Although it's not the way that things should be,  
more happiness my loved one gives to me  
– Kevin Carroll

## Poor Phone is dead

Poor Phone is dead  
Poor Phone fried and dead  
All gather round its casing now and cry  
It had an Intel heart  
Back when it was so smart  
Oh why did such an iPhone have to die?  
Poor Phone is dead  
Poor Phone fried and dead  
It's lookin' oh so shutdown and serene  
It's all laid out to rest  
With its earphones on its chest  
Its data files have never been so clean  
– Carolyn Donnell  
(“Pore Judd is Daed” from *Oklahoma*)

## May You-Noise

May I this, May I that ...  
May in all vocabularies  
Attempts to hide, to cover varies  
Of desire for something, or sometimes, to scat  
With something of yours?  
Or much better,  
Suggestions polite to the letter  
While reading your publishing scores!  
– Pat Bustamante

# Tweets and Tips

by Michael Lunsford

Want an online break from your writing that still feels productive? Check out these suggestions.

1. **Twitter WIP Tweets:** If you're on Twitter, tweet excerpts from your completed work or Work in Process any day of the week using these hashtags: #MuseMon; #2bitTues; #1LineWed; #Thurds or #ThruLineThurs or #3WordThurs; #FP or #FictFri or #SciFri; #SlapDashSat; #SunWIP

Most have an optional weekly theme, typically announced the night before. (To find the theme for #MuseMon, do a Twitter search for "#MuseMon Theme" Sunday night.) Some, like #SlapDashSat, are open-ended: no weekly theme.

It's fun to see how many "likes" you can get and it helps to build your Twitter Followers list. This is also a great morale booster, as it reminds you how many gems you've written, but forgotten.

2. **Follow South Bay Writers on Twitter:** The club's username is @SouthBayWriters.

3. **Twitter Pitch Contests:** Tweet 140-character pitches to be viewed by agents and editors. If an agent or editor "likes" your pitch, that's an invitation to submit to them directly — one way to get past the slush pile.

4. **April deadline:** 4/25: #DVPit — Children's/Teen/Adult Fiction/Nonfiction pitches about or by marginalized voices. Pitch your manuscript using #DVPit between 8am and 8pm EST.

5. **Upcoming deadlines:**

5/15: QueryKombat — Tournament competition where 64 query letters and first pages are matched against each other until only one is left. Agents request from the entries.

6/8: #Pitmad — Open to all genres. Pitch your manuscript using the #Pitmad hashtag between 8am & 8pm EDT. Only pitch 3 times per project.

6/22: #PBPitch — Open to picture books. Pitch your manuscript using the #PBPitch hashtag between 8am and 8pm EST.

6/28: #FaithPitch — Open to inspirational, faith-based, biblical worldview or Christian works, Picture Book through Adult categories. Pitch with #FaithPitch 8am to 8pm CST. — WR

## Great Beginnings YA Book Club for Adults: Hicklebee's

Hicklebee's has launched a new Young Adult book club for adult readers, led by YA author Parker Peevyhouse. Membership is now open. We will meet the second Thursday of every month at 7 pm at Hicklebee's Bookstore, 1378 Lincoln Avenue, San Jose to discuss our featured book. First meeting: April 13. See hicklebees.com — WT



Photo by K. O. Llewellyn

## Yahoo and gmail Hackers

Staff

"Yahoo and gmail Hackers," *The Mercury News*, March 16, 2017, within a first page article "Hackers Indicted," had an important sidebar, "How to Protect Your Data."

Cyber-security expert Adam Levin, founder of data-protection firm Cyber Scout, offered these tips for keeping data safe:

- Use long, strong passwords that are unique to each site. Never replicate your user IDs or passwords. Consider using a password manager.
- Enable two-factor authentication whenever and wherever possible.
- Don't click on links in email or social media. You may be downloading malicious software onto your device.
- Never trust someone who contacts you by email, phone, or text asking for sensitive personal or financial information and claims to be a representation of a government agency or trusted commercial institution. Always verify. Hang up the phone. Delete the email or text.
- If your emails have contained any credit card or bank account information, check your credit and bank accounts or sign up for ongoing, transactional monitoring.

Here's wishing you safe and happy web surfing. — WT

# Contests and Markets

by Carolyn Donnell



Carolyn Donnell  
Contributing Editor

**86th Writer's Digest Annual Writing Competition:** One Grand Prize winner will receive: \$5000 in cash and an interview with the author in *Writer's Digest*, one on one attention from four editors or agents, a paid trip to Writer's Digest Conference, and a one year subscription to Writer's Digest Tutorials. First through tenth prizes in 9 different categories will receive cash prizes. Final deadline, June 01. Enter at: <http://www.writersdigest.com/writers-digest-competitions/annual-writing-competition>

April was **National Poetry Month**. Did you write any new poems? (or dig out old ones?) Here are a few places to submit. Most publications want unpublished poems (or unpublished books - but individual poems included could be previously published. Read all guidelines thoroughly.) Learn more about poetic forms at *The Writer's Digest Guide to Poetic Forms eBook*, <https://tinyurl.com/lflfxu9>

**Comstock Review 2017 Poetry Contest:** First Prize: \$1,000 (The Muriel Craft Bailey Memorial Award); Second Prize: \$250; Third Prize: \$100. Deadline: July 15 (postmark) See details at: <http://comstockreview.org>

**Boulevard:** a literary journal. **Poetry Contest for Emerging Poets:** \$1,000 and publication awarded for the winning group of three poems. Must be postmarked by June 1, 2017 or submitted online by midnight CT. See details at <http://www.boulevardmagazine.org/poetry-contest/>

**P Violet Reed Haas Prize For Poetry:** This one says they accept previously published work. Prizes: \$1,000 and publication. Deadline: August 31. Entry fee: \$25. <http://www.snakenationpress.org/submission-guidelines/>

A poetry prize list gathered from **Poets & Writers with deadlines in May:**

**Breakwater Review: Peseroff Prize.** Cash \$1,000; Entry Fee: \$10; Deadline: May 15

**Georgia Review: Loraine Williams Poetry Prize.** Cash \$1,000; Entry Fee: \$15; Deadline: May 15

**Ruminate Magazine: Janet B. McCabe Poetry Prize.** Cash, \$1,500; Entry Fee: \$20; Deadline: May 15

**American Poetry Review: Stanley Kunitz Memorial Prize.** (for a poem by a poet under the age of 40). Cash, \$1,000; Entry Fee: \$15; Deadline: May 15

**New Letters Literary Awards.** Cash \$1,500 (3); Entry Fee: \$20; Deadline: May 18

**Southern Poetry Review: Guy Owen Prize.** Cash: \$1,000; Entry Fee: \$20; Deadline: May 31

**Crab Orchard Literary Prizes.** Cash: \$1,250 (3); Entry Fee: \$12; Deadline: May 31

**More poetry opportunities** at <https://www.pw.org/grants>

For writers of children's books, there's a list from **Authors Publish:**

**28 Traditional Publishers Seeking Children's Books:**

<http://www.authorspublish.com/28-publishers-seeking-childrens-books/>

*The Writer Magazine* has a free downloadable *Summer Guide to Writing Contests* guide available at <http://www.writermag.com/summer-writing-contests/>

*Publishers Weekly* has listed some fast-growing independent publishers: *Cottage Door Press*, *Calisto Media* (in Berkeley), *Diversion Books*, *Graywolf Press*, and more. See at <http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/publisher-news/article/73281-fast-growing-independent-publishers-2017.html>

Have a self-published book or one from an independent or small press? Nominate the book for the 2017 Summer Indie Book Awards (SIBA).

<https://metamorphpublishing.com/2017-summer-indie-book-awards/>

Be sure to refer to the list in previous issues of *Writers Talk* of sites that list ongoing competitions. — WT



## The WT Challenge

**What is it?** Once a year in October, awards will be 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. (Eligibility limited to members of South Bay Writers.)

### Genres:

Fiction: 500 – 1800 words

Memoir: 500 – 1800 words

Essay/Nonfiction: 500 – 1000

Poetry: 20 – 200 words

**Judging Periods:** Work published in *WritersTalk* in 12 months preceding the October SBW general meeting. (2017 only: work published Jan. – Sept. 2017. Work published Oct. – Dec. 2017 goes into next judging period.)

**Prizes:** Two winners will be selected from each genre. First prizes, \$50 cash, 2 free entries into the next CWC *Literary Review*; second prizes, \$20 cash and one free entry into *Literary Review*.

**Judging:** Judging will be done by *WritersTalk* contributing editors and other club members. — WT



## News from California Writers Club

### Ads in CWC Bulletin

by Bob Isbill (760) 221-6367

Want to increase your visibility? Sell your service? Promote your book? Increase speaker engagements? Pump up your web traffic? Or just send a greeting?

Each issue of *The CWC Bulletin*, published three times a year, reaches 2,000 published and aspiring writers in 21 CWC branches throughout the state and is published on [www.calwriters.org](http://www.calwriters.org)

Now we are accepting writing-related advertising from businesses, CWC members, and individuals who wish to reach our target market at reasonable prices. See [calwriters.org](http://calwriters.org) for details and how to format your ad. -WT

### You may advertise in the CWC Literary Review or The CWC Bulletin

Go to [www.calwriters.org](http://www.calwriters.org) for details

### BookExpo New York

by Donna McCrohan Rosenthal  
[pr@calwriters.org](mailto:pr@calwriters.org)

The CWC has arranged for an exciting member discount, approved by the Central Board at its January meeting – a discount of 52% for the BookExpo New Title Showcase exhibit, June 1 – 4 at the Javits Convention Center in NYC. The New Title Showcase is an official exhibit of BookExpo. We are working with the Combined Book Exhibit who manages the New Title Showcase for BookExpo, the major book industry event in the US.

CWC members will display their books at a significant discount: A print book display will cost \$150 (published rate \$315); an ebook display at \$150 (published rate \$315); or a combo rate of \$210 (published rate \$525). The cost includes the physical display of your book with full cover showing, a fully searchable online catalog and database, and listing in the New Title Showcase print catalogue and/or ebook electronic display. To participate, members will register and pay directly with Combined Book Exhibit, [https://secure.combinedbook.com/cbe\\_reseller/cwc/](https://secure.combinedbook.com/cbe_reseller/cwc/).

Registration deadline: May 13. – WT

## 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](http://cwc-berkeley.org)

**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. [cwcmarin.com](http://cwcmarin.com)

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

**Mount Diablo:** 11:00 second Saturdays, Zio Fraedo's Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. [cwcmtdiablowriters.wordpress.com](http://cwcmtdiablowriters.wordpress.com)

**Napa Valley:** 7:00 second Wednesdays, venue is changing. [napavalleywriters.net](http://napavalleywriters.net)

**North State:** 6:00 third Mondays, Butte County Library-Chico Branch. [northstatewriters.com](http://northstatewriters.com)

**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, Sequoia Yacht Club, Redwood City: check website <http://cwc-peninsula.org/>

**Tri-Valley:** 2:00 third Saturdays, Four Points by Sheraton, 5115 Hopyard, Pleasanton. [trivalleywriters.org](http://trivalleywriters.org)

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## Conferences

### National Nonfiction Writers Conference

The Seventh Annual Nonfiction Writers Conference returns May 3 – 5, 2017. As a reminder, this is a virtual event featuring 15 speakers over three days, all conducted by teleseminar (no travel required!). As one of our partner associations, South Bay Writers will be provided a special 33% off discount code, plus a scholarship for one attendee. The code will be sent to SBW President Pamela Oliver Lyons.

You can learn more about us at <http://NonfictionWritersConference.com> and <http://NonfictionAuthorsAssociation.com> – WT



Send information on conferences of interest to writers to [newsletter@southbaywritrs.com](mailto:newsletter@southbaywritrs.com) for consideration for inclusion on this page.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 6:30p SBW Board, Mariani's, Santa Clara	3	4	5 7:30p Open mic Barnes&Noble Almaden, San Jose	6
7 10A Our Voices	8 2p Valley Writers 6:00p SBW Dinner Harry's Hofbrau	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 2p Valley Writers D e a d l i n e WritersTalk	16	17 7:30p Open mic SF Peninsula, Reach and Teach, San Ma- teo	18	19 7:30p Open mic SJ Rosegarden Library, 1580 Naglee Avenue	20
21 10A Our Voices	22 2p Valley Writers	23	24	25	26	27
28	29 2p Valley Writers	30	31	<b>May 2017</b>		

#### Future Events:

SBW Board meets Tuesday, May 2: Mariani's  
SBW Dinner Meeting, Monday, May 8, Harry's

**SBW/CWC Events  
appear on this calendar page.**

## 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 April 4, 2017: 6:30 PM dinner; Board meeting 7-9 PM, Mariani's Restaurant, 2500 El Camino Real, Santa Clara. RSVP for member guests.

### Open Mics

**South Bay Writers Open Mic:** Read from your own work, from your favorite authors, or just come to listen. First Friday evenings, B&N Almaden. Third Friday evenings, Willow Glen Library or Rosegarden Library. 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 is on sabbatical. 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 or  
The CWC Bulletin**

Go to [www.calwriters.org](http://www.calwriters.org) for details  
and/or see page 14.

### Poetry Readings

**Poets@Play:** Meets at Markham House History Park, 1650 Senter Rd., San Jose, Second Sundays most months, 1 – 4 PM. [poetrycentersanjose.org](http://poetrycentersanjose.org)

**Poetry Center San Jose:** Meets Willow Glen Library, 1157 Minnesota Ave., San Jose, 7 PM Third Thursday, 408-808-3045 [www.poetrycentersanjose.org](http://www.poetrycentersanjose.org)

**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](http://www.pcsj.org)

### SBW Recommends ...

If you know of a regularly occurring event for writers, send an email to [newsletter@southbaywriters.com](mailto:newsletter@southbaywriters.com).



**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  
May Regular Meeting**

**6 pm, Monday, May 8, 2017**

**Harry's Hofbrau  
390 Saratoga Avenue, San Jose**

## Screen Writing and Video Production

**Alejandro Adams,  
Professor SJSU**

*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.