



WritersTalk

A South Bay Branch
Writers Club Monthly

Volume 13, Issue 12, December 2005 Non-member subscription \$20 per year

Page 1

Holiday Bash

THE BIG NEWS IN DECEMBER IS OUR HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

For those who have not attended in the past, it's truly a gas... Bring merriment and find it, enjoy the warmth of the season, hobnob with friends and fellows and be pulled into the pleasure of giving.

We know those who have attended won't miss it.

Wednesday, December 14, 2005, 6 - 9 pm

Betty Auchard's house
115 Belhaven Drive,
Los Gatos 95032,
408-356-8224

For the potluck, If your last name begins with:

- A - H Bring a Salad or Side Dish
- I - R Bring a Dessert or Appetizer
- S - Z Bring a Main Dish

Beverages are provided

For the Gift Exchange, bring a gift in the \$10 range

**Please RSVP: RSVP@southbaywriters.com or
call Edie at 408 985-0819**

Meet Marty Sorensen

New Member and
Editor of The Sand Hill Review
By Una Daly



"My son got me interested in writing. When he went away to college, I used to write him long rambling letters," explained Marty Sorensen, CWC South Bay member. Upon receiving a newspaper

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

WIN AWARDS AND RECOGNITION WITH YOUR SHORT FICTION, POETRY, MEMOIR, ESSAY.

*** See insert on p 12 for "WritersTalk Challenge" and our masthead for submittal information ***

A Look Ahead:

- Dec 2&16 Open Mic,
- Dec 7 Board of Directors Meeting
- Dec 19 Editors Mtg, Orchard Valley Coffee, 7:30 pm
- Dec 144 **Holiday Bash**

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President's Prowling — by Bill Baldwin



"Trying Something New"

Was it the French poet Baudelaire who wrote about "seeking the New?" I'm not sure, off the top of my head. But trying something new can be stimulating, so...

Don't be afraid to take risks. Give yourself some time when you just try all the things you normally don't do, all the things you tell

yourself you shouldn't do. Do it at least for yourself -- to see what it's like, to see how it feels, to see how it works or doesn't work. Maybe you will be surprised. Maybe you will discover something you didn't know. If it doesn't "work," no one ever has to see it. So you might as well try.

Suppose you split that prepositional phrase just one time. Suppose you split an infinitive! Suppose you actually "tell" instead of "show." What does it feel like? What impression does it make that is different from the regular way of doing things?

Or - switch from first person to third person. Try something in the present tense instead of the past. Fictionalize something that you would normally write as memoir. Instead of writing narrative, try writing something entirely as dialogue. Or write it as a snippet of a screenplay or stage play.

Give yourselves a holiday treat this year. Write something just for fun, just for kicks. Write something totally different from what you usually write. Try reading something you normally never read. Try a new kind of movie, a new kind of music. Eat at a different kind of restaurant. Just be different, for fun. What happens might surprise and delight you.

In any event, you can write about it afterwards!

Happy Holidays!



California Writers Club South Bay Branch

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Join Up

We have a membership category that fits you, dues are \$45 per year plus a *one-time* \$20 initiation fee.

Contact our Membership Chair
Diana Richomme

GET PUBLISHED - IN 3 EASY STEPS
by Diana Richomme

Do you dream of being published? Seeing your work in print is entirely realistic. Following the three steps below might not make you rich, but your chances of getting published are great.

1. Write what you love. Passion is much more attractive than knowledge alone. If you aren't an expert, interview those who are.
2. Get feedback. Even the most widely published authors request input from others. Have your piece critiqued by people who read similar published work and are willing to be honest with you.
3. Submit to periodicals likely to publish new writers:

Memoirs - Send to community newspapers in the area where the story took place. Include pictures if you have any.

Movie Reviews - Be the first to send to an on-line review site.

Recipes - Club or organization periodicals that publish recipes, exp. www.cookingclub.com.

Poetry & Short Stories - *WritersTalk* and other non-profit literary and writers organizations that publish similar work in their newsletters and periodicals.

Articles - Non-profit organizations you are a member whose periodicals publish similar articles. For example, school, homeowners association, political organizations, churches, synagogues, etc.

Each story in print takes you one step closer to the becoming the widely published author you dream of becoming. DR



Editors Itch

One of the challenges we face is “getting off the dime.” I researched this phrase and found nothing so I’ll rely on my own interpretation. I’ve heard it (the “dime”) enough.

It has to do with the beginning, the getting started—overcoming inertia and moving into momentum. I have difficulty beginning even the things I enjoy.

Of course it relates to “doing”, not thinking about doing or planning a “do” or engaging others in contemplating a group “do”, but the actual “doing”.

I’ve had some failures associated with not leaving the “dime” or not leaving it early enough. What is it about the “dime” that makes it so difficult to ‘get off’? In my successes, a few, I hardly remember it being there—what “dime?”

Planning is easy for me—imagining, envisioning, considering, even talking it over...no “dime”. It’s the execution that calls for getting off, and that’s where the rub is. Ordinarily I like the “doing” as that’s where the real fun begins: the achievement, the payoff and feedback. So why is it so difficult to get that ball rolling... rolling *off* the dime?

Some might say it’s procrastination that serves inertia—the unavoidable interruptions and loose ends needing tying. But I believe the sticky “dime” follows the nagging “P”. It’s when I’m absolutely clear to go that I don’t seem to be able.

However, when it comes to writing, I’ve developed a process and so far it’s working. I wake up to an idea, take a walk and think on it. The idea morphs and dissects, its elements move about, find compatible connections, join up and slough off, and when what’s remaining coagulates, I record it on a pocket recorder—my get-off-the-dime recorder. I transcribe, organize, edit, and before you can say “stuck”, I’m enjoying momentum.

Of course occasionally I engage my Jiminy Cricket, pack him generously with guilt and let him have at me. DLR

WritersTalk

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Submittals are invited:

Guest Columns

— *Almost Anything Goes*

Regular Columns

to Una Daly

News Items

Letters to Ed—*In My Opinion*

to Andrea

Literary Work

Announcements and Advertisements

To Dave

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Contact Dave LaRoche

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November Nine – An Inspirational Experience

By Dave LaRoche

Animated talk among writers, flatware rattling on empty plates, glasses clinking (some a strange burgundy color), and official interruptions from the PA system, all lent their acoustics to our warm and familiar reassembly.



Some News & Announcements: About 62 writers and friends attended, six walking off with “non-raffle” prizes—a DVD player, a suede lined briefcase and a custom-sewn tote bag—grossing the non-raffle affair about \$203 in enthusiasm. Way to go Cathy!

Carolyn Downey received the coveted Jack London



Award, honored by the Club for her dedicated service including four years of South Bay newsletter publication—Congratulations Carolyn!

Beth Proudfoot, East of Eden Conference Chair, reminded us to anticipate and join in the ever brightening

EOEC to be held again at the Steinbeck Center in September—eighth thru the tenth. The conference features speakers, tutorials, personal time with an agent and extraordinary socializing in Salinas... with discounts available for members and early-bird tickets available to June one.

Eddie Matthews announced upcoming events which include

- December 14: Christmas Bash, bring a \$10 gift
- January 22: April Kilstrom – Workshop, “Write a Book in a Week.”
- February 8: Jill Lublin *Guerilla Publicity*. Practical Strategies to Increase Visibility; and *WritersTalk* Challenge awards.

And then, after satisfying servings of Bar-B-Que and brownies by bakery chef extraordinaire Susan Mueller, our speaker was introduced by Edie, VP and Programs Chair—and, I must say here, after each of our meetings I think, ‘She’ll be hard pressed to improve on this one,’ and with each next meeting I am surprised at my earlier naiveté.

Joel ben Izzy

When Joel ben Izzy stepped up to the mic, the din subsided and except for the laughs, you could hear a pin drop or rather a coin rattle as, playing life’s beggar king, Joel held us spell-bound: in the court of King Solomon; on the streets of Budapest, Paris and Jerusalem and in his hospital bed where a curse of silence became a blessing.

“Writers do absolute magic, turning something so fragile as an idea, yet at the same time so powerful, into these treasures... into these stories, these books—it’s mysterious... an alchemy,” he told us early and he got my attention.



(CONTINUED ON PAGE 5)

(MEETING FROM PAGE 4)

What is a story? he asked and we answered: Evokes interest; Solves a problem; It's memory re-expressed; A piece of your heart on paper (*which is why we end up writing in blood*, he inserted); It's an expression of a moment; A tale of experience; A journey; A story is something that builds suspense and has resolution; It's events in life and the people who cause them; an entity made of words... And then he gave us his own definition by telling one... and another... and another

He began with what I perceive is his hallmark, about an old woman beggar in Jerusalem, who enjoyed the morning smells from a bakery but without buying the bread. However, the baker felt cheated, as he provided the aroma without compensation, and hauled the beggar woman into court. The King (wise Solomon), when hearing from the beggar that the charge was certainly true, asked how many shekels she



might have in her cup. Though surprised he should ask, she shook her cup and only a few coins rattled for them to hear. The

wise King then asked of the baker, "Did you hear the few coins?" The baker eagerly said yes. The King replied to the baker, "You are then well compensated, as listening to the coins is good payment for smelling the bread."

As to an answer to the earlier question, Joel said that a story is "a problem described in an interesting style up to a moment when time stops to create and shape silence. And then... there is resolution." He allowed that telling a story, like writing, is also a bit of magic. One might say that Joel, himself, was a bit of magic.

"When an elder dies, having never told his stories, it's like a library burning down." Alex Haley said this Joel ben Izzy remembered, and has integrated and expanded the notion well.

Issy became bored with study while in college and decided to travel and for 15 years he was a student of life—in Europe, the near east and China—collecting stories and their related material. He did study mime in Paris, he told us, but was not good as "he like too much to talk" and, in fact, was the only mime thrown off the



Paris streets for making noise.

When the Turkish Nasrutin, relaxing on a pile of bananas, was asked what made happiness? he responded: "bad judgment... which leads to experience which leads to good judgment which leads to happiness."

And when in China a man lost a beautiful white horse he had just bought with the bulk of his money, it was deemed a curse by the villagers. But when the horse returned with 21 additional gorgeous wild horses, the curse became a blessing. His son was thrown from one of the wild horses and broke his leg, a curse, but he avoided conscription and death in a silly war, a blessing. So, Izzy confided with an elfish grin, if something good happens, well... that's good, and if something bad happens... you can make it into a story

His most compelling curse-to-blessing story was the loss of his voice through an operation on his throat that left him unable to speak for years—definitely a curse for a story teller. For a long time he was obliged only to listen... which, he said, deepened his knowledge and broadened his perspective. And the listening; to his friends, his internal voice... *and his wife*, helped him write his very

successful book—*The Beggar King*. And there was the blessing.

Did his voice return—obviously but he wasn't disclosing the when or the how that night.

He did, however, offer the answer in an autographed copy of his book for \$26—no doubt, more of the blessing. DLR



C'mon guys, this is interesting!

(SORENSEN FROM PAGE 1)

with old, lurid family headlines from a cousin, Marty wrote to his son who suggested that he write a novel about it. Thus began the novel, *The Madrones of Magnolia Bluff*, and the writing bug has been going strong ever since.

Retiring last year from SLAC where he worked in finance, Marty is glad to have more time to devote to his writing. In addition to starting a new detective novel, *Union Street*, which should be ready for next year's conference, he is also working on a romantic novel, *Charlotte: I Once Was Lost But Now Am Found*.

"Imagine a movie scene where a modern jet takes off from SFO and then in sepia tints an older plane lands at La Guardia", said Marty describing the plot involving three generations of women. Charlotte is estranged from her mother, but finding a lost grandmother in France ultimately lead to reconciliation with her mother.

Marty is also the editor and publisher of *The Sand Hill Review* at Stanford, an annual magazine of fiction and poetry. The review is available online at <<http://www.stanford.edu/~sandhill>> and at Amazon.com with issues dating back to 2000. He is really looking forward to submissions from CWC South Bay fiction writers.

"The support of my wife Charleyne and 90% perspiration," are what makes Marty a successful writer. He confesses that the creative process of coming up with the next scene and next paragraph are very hard. Rewriting is what he really enjoys but starting that too soon can hold up the work in progress.

Joining the CWC club last spring, Marty enjoys the excitement of meetings and encouragement from others. Following speaker Mitch Berman's advice, he sent his best short story to the top ten magazines on Mitch's list, and also posted web links to their sites and submission guidelines at <<http://www.stanford.edu/~sandhill/MagSiteList.htm>>.



This column brings a series of brief grammar lessons by Pat Decker Nipper, a writer, a former English teacher, and a member of SouthBay CWC...

Nipper's Nits

By Pat Decker Nipper

Lesson 9. Farther vs. Further

These two words, when used as adverbs, have been considered rather interchangeable. However, where distance is concerned, you should use "farther": "The older I become, the farther away Europe seems to be," or, "How much farther is the beach?"

"Farther" can also be an adjective, as in, "San Francisco is the farther city."

Use "Further" for quantity, time, or degree: "The engineers progressed further on their code than they'd anticipated," or, "That statement couldn't be further from the truth."

"Further" can also be used as a sentence modifier: "Further, the consultant will be coming next week." Another meaning for "further" is addition, as in, "She needed no further advice."

Contact Pat at pat@patdeckernipper.com for comments or questions.

Writers that Marty admires include Cormac McCarthy and John LesCroart, one of CWC South Bay's featured speakers last year. UD





SUMMARIZING, via POETRY
THE CALL OF THE WILD
 by JACK LONDON

Clarence L. Hammonds
 (Historian)

Chapter 1 I will now begin my summarization
 The story is about Buck, a dog and much action
 He could never know of the trouble lurking ahead
 Trouble for longhaired strong dogs. Enough said?
 Buck, was loved by Judge Miller and his, family
 It was a big house; location the Santa Clara Valley
 The gardener, Manuel kidnaps Buck, it's no good
 Buck bit Manuel as they traveled the man's a hood
 Buck was choked, locked in a crate and no eating
 A man, in a red sweater has a club for dog beating
 Beating Buck of course. Buck was sold to Perrault
 Buck and Curly are dogs, bought to avoid an assault

Chapter 2, Buck is in the wild. Curly is no more
 Buck is hooked with dogs who pulled sleds before
 Soon, there was a team of nine dogs, ready to pull
 Buck learns how to sleep. Dig a hole to get in full
 Buck and his team, now goes forty miles each day
 This kind of traveling was every day, every way

Chapter 3, another dog Spitz, Buck's competitor
 Spitz took Buck's sleeping hole, a fight? Sure!
 The team together, fought off, wild hungry dogs
 These hungry dogs, began eating like wild hogs
 In this chapter, the team covers more than a mile
 It was 400 miles or more, before stopping, a rife
 Dolly, one of the dogs, went completely insane
 Was killed by Francois, with nothing to explain
 Buck was very tired, after Dolly had chased him
 Other dogs beset Buck; but Francois beat them

Chapter 4, Buck and Spitz's fight is over, we go
 And Buck is ready to take over the lead, for show
 Francois tried to harness another dog for the lead
 Perrault told Francois, Buck is in lead take heed

Later, two new large dogs were added to the team
 These dogs were a welcome sight, as a new beam
 When the team reached Dawson, things were well
 But, the dog Dave was too weak to go on and fell
 He was then fell with a gun, the other dogs knew
 Dave was gone. Buck was here with the AM dew

Chapter 5 Here they go, selling the dogs again
 The dogs wanted to rest at Skaguay, but in vain
 Little rest, over fifteen hundred miles, is Buck,
 Sold to Charles and Hal, no sledding so no luck
 They overloaded the sled, beat the dogs, I read
 Some dogs died they were overfed and underfed
 When they arrived at Five Fingers, no dog food
 Some type of horsemeat was given, not too good
 Buck had to pull and pull until he was subdued
 They whipped Buck, and him they also clubbed
 Good things happened at John Thornton's camp
 But, another team died and there was no revamp

Chapter 6, I call *One dog a man's best friend*
 Thornton, is the reason, Buck's life did not end
 John Thornton in Dawson, Buck was very good
 "Black" Burton attacks; Buck attacks he would
 Town People, loved Buck, defending Thornton
 From this event, Buck earned a good reputation
 Thornton's boat overturned and Buck was there,
 Swam to Thornton, men rescued them no fanfare
 Matthewson bet John about Buck, pulling flour
 At one thousand pounds. Buck did it with power

Chapter 7, the thousand dollars won by, Buck
 Enough for Thornton to pay off bills, no muck
 John and Buck set out looking for the lost mine
 John and Buck were looking for gold, to refine
 Money was plentiful toward gold, in those years
 Buck, lonely, I suppose, he sought other cheers
 He wandered from John Thornton, the first time
 But, he returned and went away the second time
 However, when he returned to camp, he saw Nig,

Seeing many arrows in Hans, Buck attacks the Yeehats
 He killed some, saw John dead, he joined the pack like bats
 He gained respect from them after beating more than three
 Buck joined the pack. For years Buck's ghost they did see

For Authors Who Have (published) Books: If you have a book published and are interested in the possibility of selling and signing at the Los Angeles Festival of Books April 29-30, 2006, please contact
Kathryn Madison at 408-376-3560, or kathrynmadison@sbcglobal.net.

We are looking for authors willing to share the expense of a booth at this very large book festival.

Reminder

CHRYSALIS

Struggling to exit that cocoon.
Working hard, don't get out too soon.

I could help, slit with a knife.
Cut it open, try to help that Life.

Yet if I do, it's all in vain.
Butterfly, a caterpillar remains.

Without the striving, more heavy rain,
The strength to live is never gained.

When your life struggle seems too much,
remember the chrysalis you didn't touch.

Strength needed for future life
is formed inside the current fight.

—by Carolyn Donnell

CWC's Sam Marines wants interviews with Bay Area parents who have adult-aged offspring.

It is part of research for his non-fiction book about the importance of the relationship between parents and adult children.

His urgent needs are parents who are foreign-born, or have only step children, or gave up their children to adoption but later established contact.

You may find book information at
www.agapeguypress.com/

Contact information may be found at
questions@agapeguypress.com

You may be able to help

Bill Brisko— back in a little while

Seldom Do I Whistle When I Walk

Filling in for Bill—by Dave LaRoche

My walking is a serious thing for me—it's time alone for thinking. I nod "hello" to passers by and stoop to pet a dog but otherwise prefer to stay aloof. Oh, I remain aware of my surroundings but do not think out loud or sing or hum, and seldom do I whistle as I walk.

Now this morning I did try to help a little white mouse as she desperately ran north then south in her attempt to jump the asphalt curb of Gaelin Drive and flee into the fields. It was a berm too high for a mouse her size to scale, even if to escape a speeding car or the fatal clutch of a predator. But she remained determined and continued to strive in face of the physical odds and now, she had inadvertently brought me to her aid. Together we scurried back and forth, me trying to put her into the field, she trying to flee my grasp. The scrambling went on. At a point, she froze momentarily in her frantic attempts, stiffening and shivering with fright... and it saddened me that she may have thought that it was me she had to escape.

Gaelin wanders through an undeveloped bit of town—leading we foot-bound travelers from our subdivision homes to a lovely park. A wide street and empty, it traverses open fields and a creek along its way. I was surprised to see this little mouse there, appearing as out for a

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 9)

Terse Verse —by Pat Bustamante

"Dec"

"Dec the halls
While bowing to folly,"
A pun! So-solly!
But, break out the 'brolly,
Pennies from Heaven, bygolly!
I sold a poem!!!
Fala lalala, lala lala...

(WHISTLE FROM PAGE 8)

morning turn, though darting nervously, following the sniffs of her tiny pink nose, keeping a whiff of a tail to the ground.

Last night a heavy coastal storm had struck in a rage and, with its abusive winds, dropped inches of frigid water, assuredly some on this mouse. Her look was fittingly disheveled—feet black covered with adobe and the nap of her coat as random as the previous night's blow.

White mouse on a black asphalt road—she was easy to spot. And as she scampered the pavement, I wondered what misfortune had put her there and from what benign status she must have departed; more onerous, what end she might come to—noting the hawks always perched in the cottonwoods next to the creek.

In the field, she might have a chance, I thought, as we danced through the puddles, my lunging out right then left to lift or startle her over the curb. No luck so I added a call, “Hey mousy ...mousy mousy,” more solicitous? “Here... here mousey” and when she froze again, with exhaustion I assumed, I reached out quickly to remove her to safety. But this only increased her considerable panic and she trembled in what I perceived a very dis-associative way. Reflecting some, after failing my efforts, I thought better to leave her to her own devices than to kill her outright with fright.

On into the park I walked, and around it, wondering who would abandon a mouse so small. Some little girl, whose poorly designed crate had opened accidentally or maybe she was a jettisoned pocket pet from a kid with a bike and some dam-building skills. I tried to think of her as a field variety—acute and cunning, capable of survival, but couldn't conceive of a *white* field mouse, or *any* mouse that would intentionally be out for a stroll on wet Gaelin Drive.

In the pond, in the park, there are ducks of variety and occasionally I bring them their lunch. And there are coots and gulls to make dinning interesting and children drawn in to engage in the squabble. There was an egret, in the rushes near the head-water, looking for a treat, and a big blue heron asleep in the

shallows near the willow—likely digesting one. Up in a tree, a turkey hawk and above another circling—not too far from Gaelin Drive I thought.

It's half an hour to round the park—today a little less for me. And, as I looked ahead down Gaelin Drive, my eyes bounced anxiously from curb to curb seeking confirmation of the white lady's escape—enjoying relief with each empty visual oscillation. She's made it into the field to safety I concluded, scrambled over the curb, I let myself believe—even if a valiant effort for this mouse. And as I continued along, noting every vacant puddle, empty island of mud and patch of blackened sand along the road, each step brought assurance and a lighter heart.

Now, through the field, I am certain she has escaped and I walk on easily into the tract looking to new interests, but ahead to the right, dirtied with road wet, was a still clump of mottled white. Damn... she's in the gutter... hit by a car... no movement. My spirits crashed as I hurried to validate the dreaded finality.

When I was close enough to see well... it was only a crumpled tissue matted by the rain, and I smiled inside, picked up my pace and begin to whistle as I walked. *DLR*



Whatever Happened To...

JOHN D. MACDONALD

—by Adrea Galvacs

John Dann MacDonald, using the name John D. MacDonald, was a writer best known for his detective stories with Travis McGee as the main character.

MacDonald was born in Sharon, Pennsylvania, in 1916, he dropped out of the Wharton School of Finance in that state and went to New York to do menial jobs. He returned to school, though, married Dorothy Mary Prentiss in 1937, and earned a B.S. degree from Syracuse University in 1938 and an M.B.A. degree from Harvard the following year. He served in the Office of Strategic Services, the forerunner of the CIA, as well as in the Far East from 1940 to 1946.

His literary career began by chance while still in the military, in 1945. With the intention of amusing his wife, he wrote and mailed a short story to her but without his knowing, she submitted it to *Story* magazine and it was published.

Upon his discharge he dedicated himself completely to writing a phenomenal number of short stories, all of which were rejected. Finally, after five months, the *Dime Detective* pulp magazine bought one of them for \$40.- and his career was set in motion. He continued to sell short stories to detective, mystery, adventure and science fiction publications and when paperback novels came into style he switched to longer fiction. His first novel “The Brass Cupcake” was published in 1950, followed by “Wine of the Dreamer” in 1951 and “Ballroom of the Skies” in 1952.

MacDonald used fiction to comment on moral and social issues, such as racism, political corruption and

real estate scams. Most of his plots take place in Florida, where he lived, but he also spent some time in Mexico and as a result of his experiences there, he wrote “The Damned” in 1952, “Border Town Girl” in 1956 and “Dress Her In Indigo” in 1971.

The titles of MacDonald’s detective series united a color with the story. Under pressure to create a regular series character, he invented Travis McGee. He was going to call him Dallas McGee, but the assassination of president Kennedy in Dallas changed his mind. The character Travis McGee is a veteran of the Korean war and former football player who dropped out of conventional society. He drives a 1936 Rolls Royce and lives in Fort Lauderdale on a houseboat called “The Busted Flush”, because he had won it in a poker game. McGee begins his adventures in 1964 in “The Deep Blue Good-by”, the title alluding to a mood and to Raymond Chandler’s “The Long Goodbye” (1953). In “The Girl In The Plain Brown Wrapper”, published in 1968, McGee wraps a cadaver in brown paper. The author never used black or white and “The Lonely Silver Rain”, which appeared in 1984, was the last in this series.

He wrote science fiction as well and these novels include “The Girl, The Gold Watch And Everything” (1962) and “Ballroom Of The Skies” (1952). Among his non-fiction publications are “The Houseguests” (1965) and “Deadly Drug” (1968).

Several of MacDonald’s stories were made into films. “Darker Than Amber” was made for the theaters with the character Travis McGee played by Rod Taylor in 1970. “Travis McGee: The Empty Copper Sea” was made for television in 1982, starring Sam Elliott.

John MacDonald died in 1986. He received many awards, among them the Grand Prix de Littérature Policière in 1964, the Mystery Writers of America Grand Master Award in 1972 and the American Book Award in 1980. *AG*



Epicenter Literary Magazine

is “open to a wide variety of styles and subjects and appreciate the non-depressing.”

This Riverside-based literary magazine publishes poetry, short stories, essays, and art from all over the world.

For submission guidelines, visit
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E=MC² · BUMMER.

By Marty Sorensen

“In the far, far future, essentially all matter will have returned to energy. But because of the enormous expansion of space, this energy will be spread so thinly that it will hardly ever convert back to even the lightest particles of matter. Instead, a faint mist of light will fall for eternity through an ever colder and quieter cosmos.”

So ended a New York Times piece recently. It's not looking good for the human race in the very, very long run. Granted, nobody is worrying too much about it right now. But, you see, that's the problem. Sure, it's long, long way away, but it will take a long, long time to correct the situation.

Think about it, here we'll be when it's pretty cold outside and that's because of the enormous expansion of space. It's just like camping. You're a whole lot warmer when you are sharing a sleeping bag with someone else. Not only are two heads better than one, two bodies are warmer than one. That's a proven scientific fact, too. And a proven fun one. Penguins know it well.

The solution, then, hits you pretty much right in the face. We've got to keep the celestial bodies closer together. And, since we're supposed to think globally but act locally, that would be the earth. It's very, very heavy, granted, but remember, we have a very, very long time to get this done.

The simplest solution, and a very practical solution, to nudge the earth ever closer and closer to other celestial bodies as the universe gets colder and colder, is to jump on it. You know, stomp. All together, bit by bit. Now, of course, for that to be happen, most of the people have to be on the same side of the earth. Which isn't true at this moment.

But wait – over time, what is actually happening? What are you reading, demographically? That everybody is moving to California. It will only take a few billion years for there to be enough people in the Golden State to be able to start nudging the earth closer to the other celestial bodies. And when you think that everybody's getting fatter, things are already looking up for the human race.

Here's the hard part: it's up to you, each and every one of you. To start jumping, to keep the home fires burning, so to speak, to get the ball rolling. You have to get everyone jumping. You can do it. And keep in mind, if you do, you can change $E=mc^2$ back to $m=E/c^2$. You, yes you, can actually do the math. MS

WARRIORS RETURN

Back he comes to the USA, back to his city by the bay.
Back from the heat and shifting sand, back at last from a foreign land.
Back from hell to tell his story, back to his friends and Old Glory.
Back to his family by the sea, back to the land where all are free.

Back she comes to the Golden Gate, back to those who do not hate.
Back from the desert and it's glare, back to where she can wash her hair.
Back from living in a communal tent, back to paying a sky high rent.
Back to the love that she had to leave, back at last with time to grieve.

Back they come to pick up the past, back to being just part of the cast.
Back to trying to make a living, back to a country that's always giving.
Back with time for reflection, back to ponder their selection.
Back and happy at their arrival, back and thankful for their survival.

John H. Wilson

MY FRIEND

Unbidden, unasked you accept every chore,
no thought of self you are ready for more.
No price or bill do you ever tend,
how lucky I am to call you my friend.

You share family and friends with pleasure and grace,
on good days and bad days you put on a face.
Your humor and laughter, a force to contend,
how lucky I am to call you my friend.

Year after year you have done your best,
from parents and family you take little rest.
No breaking here just maybe a bend,
how lucky I am to call you my friend.

The time has flown by in the blink of an eye,
life's joys and trials bringing smiles and a cry.
Honest and caring with no need to pretend,
how lucky I am to call you my friend.

John H. Wilson

WritersTalk Challenge

Creative Writing Awards

Genres:

Memoirs <1000 wds
Short Fiction <1500 wds
Poetry <300 wds
Essays <700 wds

Awards:

Twice yearly, Feb 15 and Aug 15

First Prize - \$60

Second - \$40

Third - \$25

An **East of Eden Scholarship** will be awarded in February and then regularly, once every two years.

And always, **Honorable Mentions**

Entrants:

Limited to (all) work in the genres above, published in WT during the preceding six months although the first awards will cover the period from Jan 05 thru Feb 15, 2006.

Judging Standards:

Will be established by WT Editing Staff. Editors are excluded from participation in awards.

Judging: To be done by genre-related critique groups, headed by Club members, overseen by the WT Editors

Judging approach: Ten points are available for each piece. These will be allocated to each of several categories of grading in each genre, i.e., in fiction, 1.5 might be allocated to imagery, 2.3 to suspense, etc. The allotments will be determined in consultation with respective critique groups.

The three pieces with the highest scores will win (regardless of genre)

When you submit to *WritersTalk* and are published in the genres above in the word allotment indicated, you are entered. You need do nothing else.

Note: Publishing in *WritersTalk*, excluding ads and announcements, is limited to members of the Southbay Branch of the California Writers Club

Accolades —by Jackie Mutz

Instead of *Here's Johnny* it's *Here's Jackie!* Yup, the **Accolades** column is back to congratulate CWC members and guests for their writing accomplishments. Kudos to:

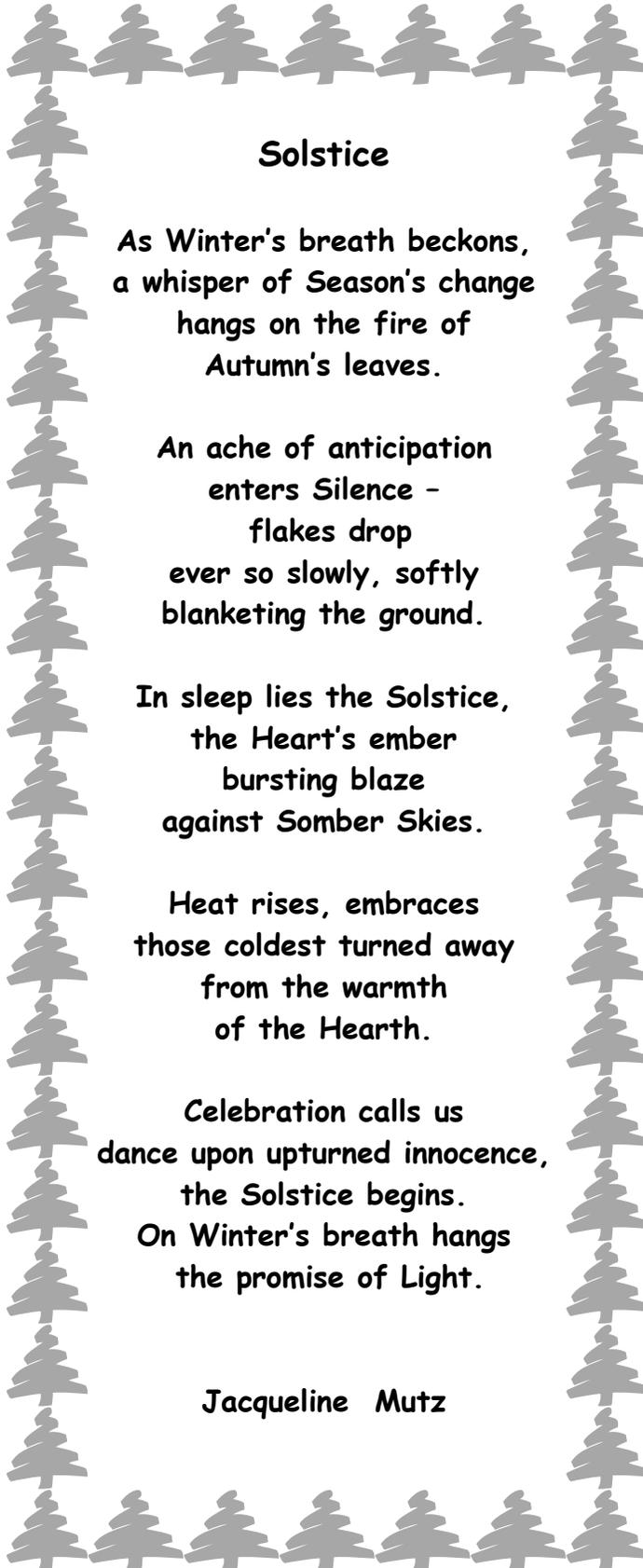
- Emily Jiang, who read an excerpt from her novel, *Paper Daughter*, a work in progress, at the APTURA Literary Night on September 23, 2005.
- Rita Derbas, on winning First Prize in the First Chapter of a Novel category of the 2005 Focus On Writers contest sponsored by the Friends of the Sacramento Public Library. She received her award at the conference, on Saturday, November 5, 2005.
- Bob Garfinkle, who is doing book reviews for a weekly newspaper that is distributed in the Newark, Union City, and Fremont area. His first was on *Dancing in My Night Gown* by Betty Auchard.
- Betty Auchard, who has sold out her first printing, 3000 books, and is now back at the press for another run. Ain't a writer's life grand when they're flyin' off the shelf?
- Carolyn Downey, who is contributing to text books - conversational English "and getting paid!" she added with a grin.
- Marty Sorensen, who publishes an anthology called Sand Hill Review, is asking for stories. Submittals or inquiries can be sent to www.stanford.edu/~sandhill/

Quite a busy time for our members and with the Holidays right around the corner! Do you have a writing accomplishment you would like to share? Email me at either

newsletter@southbaywriter.com or
writerstalk@comcast.net

so others can bask in your success. My **Accolades** column only runs when you have good news! So go ahead, toot that writing horn! *JAM*





Solstice

As Winter's breath beckons,
a whisper of Season's change
hangs on the fire of
Autumn's leaves.

An ache of anticipation
enters Silence -
flakes drop
ever so slowly, softly
blanketing the ground.

In sleep lies the Solstice,
the Heart's ember
bursting blaze
against Somber Skies.

Heat rises, embraces
those coldest turned away
from the warmth
of the Hearth.

Celebration calls us
dance upon upturned innocence,
the Solstice begins.
On Winter's breath hangs
the promise of Light.

Jacqueline Mutz

South Bay's January Writing Workshop

Attend our January workshop and learn to write
a book in a twinkling... OK, maybe not a real
twinkling but in very short order.

Instructor:

April Kilstrom - renowned author

What you will learn:

"How to Write a Book in a Week."

When it will happen

January 22, 2006, Sunday 9 AM -3 PM

What it will cost:

**\$60 members, \$75 non-members
(Includes Continental Breakfast Lunch)**

Where it will be held:

**Lookout Bar & Grill
605 Macara Ave.,
Sunnyvale (at Sunnyvale Golf Course)**

Who to contact:

www.southbaywriters.com

Or call

Susan Mueller, (650) 691-9802

Mail check to:

**CWC, South Bay Branch
PO Box 3254
Santa Clara, CA 95055**

Note:

**THERE WILL BE NO REGULAR JANU-
ARY MEETING!!! (Save the \$15 and apply it
to the workshop— hell of a deal!)**

GOOD GUYS WIN

—By Susan Mueller

Let me start by saying I am a low techie. If it isn't easy to use, I don't. This is about the hated SPAM. I don't get much but there were a few that took forever to download and were useless. A friend told me about Vanquish.com or VqME. I am not paid to write this.

This SPAM eliminator works differently from all SPAM filters. A SPAMMER can send 300 million messages out for practically nothing. You don't need a low cost home refinance if you rent an apartment. Your 13 year old nephew isn't going to buy a motorcy-

But all those many pain-in-the-neck advertisers are blocked.

cle this year. You get the picture.

Know that vqME knows your address book and reads your mind. If you have business with AMAZON and/or other vendors who send you confirmation notices, they can get past the filter. Your 18 year old nephew frequents the motorcycle sales sites so that information gets through.

But all those many pain-in-the-neck advertisers are blocked. They are held in a hold file for you to review. As you scroll through the held list you can check off those to release, those to block or those to delete. You don't even have to do this. The hold file is eliminated every three days. But you could scroll through it and discover your Aunt Nettie is on-line now or the boy/girl you dreamed of in high school found you in a reunion notice.

One colleague told me that of almost 1300 messages a week, only 21 were legitimate and VqME let those through. For \$24.95/year this is a good deal.

BUT HOW DOES VANQUISH DO IT? This perfect system penalizes the sender. Hence, the bad guys lose. or more precisely, they cannot sidestep filters by disguising their mail as desirable commercial contact, unless they can afford the risk of many individually empowered recipients. That's right! Each recipient using vqME or using any mail service that is powered by this technology gets to decide if a message is spam after the fact. But don't worry. In practice, you never need to exercise such vengeance. Your power to

punish the sender is enough to ensure that the bad guys won't bother you! Viola! Magic. If a spammer sends messages which are of no value to you (the apartment dweller example) spammer is penalized financially. Even 1/2¢ penalty for 300 million spams is too gigantic for the sender to sustain. They will take you off their list. You are not involved in this loop. It just happens behind our scenes.

What about tech support? It is the owner. He talks to you in ordinary English, he is patient, he is readily available. He is one of the good guys. I am thrilled with this and plan to keep it forever. SM



Mark your calendars:

Our biannual *East Of Eden Writers Conference* will be held September 8 – 10, 2006 in Salinas, California. Please see our website at www.southbaywriters.com for more information in the coming months about scholarships, contests, Early Bird discounts, accommodations, etc.

We will have special discounts and scholarships for South Bay Branch members. So, stay tuned, put a red circle around **September 8, 9, and 10, 2006**, and tell all your writing friends!

Announcements Announcements Announcements

The Editors of WritersTalk wish you all the best of the Season and one superlative next year.



Bankruptcy is a legal proceeding in which you put your money in your pants pocket and give your coat to your creditors.

—Sam Goldwyn



Write a column—
Anything Goes (Almost).
That's the name of the space and we mean it. Your ski down Mount Whitney, your first PGA tournament, your thoughts on the "book table" or the arts community in Nepal. Opinionated, informational, persuasive...
Email it to Una Daly, by the 16th of the month.

newsletter@southbaywriters.com

The **BOOK TABLE**
at Club Meetings
hosts experienced reads and
new adventures

Bring in your seasoned books—pick up new readings por nada. It's a great deal and the return policy is quite lenient.

Every monthly meeting, the Book Table is set.

The Saturday Poets

present their reading series featuring Robin Ekiss followed by an open mike on Wednesday, January 18, at 7:00 p.m. at the Il Piccolo Caffè, 1219 Broadway, Burlingame.
Contact Amy MacLennan at amy.maclennan@saturdaypoets.org / 650-631-5732 or www.saturdaypoets.org.

Filling up with wisdom

I went on a diet, swore off drinking and heavy eating, and in fourteen days I had lost exactly two weeks.

—Joe E. Lewis

Having a family is like having a bowling alley installed in your head —Martin Mull

"In each human heart are a tiger, a pig, an ass, and a nightingale. Diversity of character is due to their unequal activity." —J. Holobom

GOT NEWS?

Know of an event that needs reporting—one coming up or happening now. Email Andrea—She'll hop on it or appoint one of her huge staff.

- Book Reviews
- Committee Meetings
- Critique Groups
- Reading Fourms
- Book-store openings
- Conferences

If it's of interest to writers we want to publish it.

Andrea Galvacs

newsletter@southbaywriters.com



South Bay Writers Open Mic

First Friday each Month
7:30 — 9:30 pm
Borders Books
50 University Ave, Los Gatos

Third Friday each Month
7:30 — 9:30 pm
Barnes and Noble
Pruneyard in Campbell

Read from your own work, from your favorite authors, or just come to listen. For a spot at the podium, contact Bill Baldwin

(408) 730-9622 or email wabaldwin@aol.com
or reserve at

www.southbaywriters.com

A little incompatibility is the spice of life, as long as he has income and she is patable.

-- Ogden Nash



California Writers Club
South Bay Branch
PO Box 3254
Santa Clara, CA 95055

Stamp(s)

ADDRESSEE

[Empty rectangular box for addressee information]

Address Correction Requested

SAVE THESE DATES

Board of Directors
Dec 7

General Meeting
No Meeting in Dec

Open Mic
Nov 2, 7p
Borders, Los Gatos
Nov 16 7p
B&N in the Pruneyard

WritersTalk Inputs
Dec 16

Editors Pow Wow
Dec 19, 7:30pm
Orchard Valley Coffee

**Holiday Bash
At**

**Betty Auchard's
115 Bslhaven Drive
Los Gatos**

See Map Below

