



WRITERSTALK

Volume 16
Number 12
December 2008

Monthly Newsletter of the South Bay Writers Club

California Writers Club South Bay Branch

Holiday Bash

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2008 6–9 PM

(There is no December General Meeting)

POTLUCK DINNER

Please bring a dish according to your last name:

A-H Salad or Side Dish

I-R Dessert or Appetizer

S-Z Main Dish

Club will provide beverages.

GIFT EXCHANGE

Please bring a gift for the exchange in the \$10 range.



November Recap

Alice Wilson-Fried

by Bill Belew

Alice Wilson-Fried was November's speaker. Lively, funny, personable, insightful were some of the words I heard tossed about after she finished. Once we got past white pleated skirts and mentions of menopause, Alice also shared not a few nuggets about writing books, getting them published, finding inspiration, and making decisions.



Alice Wilson-Fried at SBW: lively, funny, personable, insightful.

Here's what I learned.

1. Write about what others haven't. Alice shared this tidbit: there are 586 books about menopause, all written by white men. Alice chuckled audibly. "I ain't no man, and I ain't white." And so she added her entry to the card catalog with *Menopause, Sisterhood, and Tennis*. Not many books had been written about New

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President's Prowling

by *Dave LaRoche*
President, South Bay Writers

Resolutions

It's December, and I thought, with those damnable "resolutions" just around the corner, now might be an opportune time to lay out (again) some critical needs of a writer—just in case you've forgotten.

Networking sounds so cliché (avoid at all cost), but our actions, our know-how and our ability to listen to others are high on the scale of gaining success. Meetings and workshops are good places to start. Add signings, expos, reading and critique groups, classes and conferences—there is always a place for networking. Contacts, no matter how irrelevant at the time, will aid in achieving that next rung at some point on the ladder.

Find a mentor, someone to offer hope and advice, and stretch your creative ability. I like a challenge: in order to rise, I must get off my derrière of conventional thinking and explore—that means *learning something new*. When I "play at golf," I'm disappointed to be paired with a duffer—guy with a cigar and a flask—as the value in playing is *playing better*, and I want someone I can learn from.

Write and read daily. Do all writing as if it's a submission—tame the sloth. Letters and cards, emails, diary and journal entries, annotations and reminders, all—treat them as your best effort and apply what you know about vocabulary and structure and the rest. Humor is always welcome and will improve more than writing. Every good writer will tell you to read. I remember Tod Goldberg, teacher extraordinaire, saying forget the classes and grumble (my word) of text books . . . read and read critically to become a better writer. Ask, as you read a good book, "Why do I keep reading and how did the author accomplish that—familiarity, style, suspense, extravagance? *How?*"

We've all heard "write every day." Many authors subscribe to this notion and for many it works—to sit down in your place at some appointed hour and remain through prescription, of course pen in hand. I prefer to define myself as a writer with all that I do—well, almost all—and when I'm inspired (and in this mode it's often) to sit and create. I carry a recorder or pad, and jot down whatever comes to mind. Inspiration is ubiquitous right here in our daily surrounds. Or, if you need those hands on the clock, use them. The idea is to write and write and write—every day.

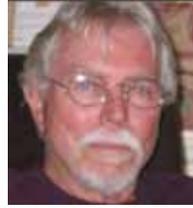
We must look for the right place to submit, be it agent, magazine, or anthology—yes, there are others. There's no point in donating to cancer research if your interest is in curing AIDS. We need to scout out our targets to find the most likely for our work. Check the web for agents, or that network we've developed; and libraries and booksellers for periodical editors that crave our kind of poetry or prose. Discover where interest is piqued, then go for it.

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Join With Us

We have a membership category that fits you. Dues are \$45 per year plus a one-time \$20 initiation fee. Contact the Membership Chair, Marjorie Johnson.



WRITERSTALK

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Submissions

Members of the South Bay Writers Club are encouraged to submit their creative works for publication in *WritersTalk*. Suggested word limits are not absolute; query the editor. Electronic submissions should be text or attached MS Word file sent to newsletter@southbaywriters.com; or mail double-spaced, typewritten copy to

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Guest Columns

Almost Anything Goes (400 words)

News Items (400 words)

Letters to the Editor (300 words)

to Andrea Galvacs
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Creative Works

Short Fiction (1800 words)
Memoir (1200 words)
Poetry (300 words)
Essay (900 words)

Accolades

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Announcements and Advertisements

newsletter@southbaywriters.com

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

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Editor's Perspective

by Dick Amyx
Editor

In My Craft or Sullen Art



Is it art? Or is it craft? Writing, that is. For a long time, my well-rehearsed answer to those questions has been that craft is the tool by which art is realized. Art may well begin with a spark of magical inspiration or imagination, but it is often first expressed hurriedly and roughly lest it be lost, and it requires the loving and judicious use of craft to render it complete. For reasons unclear to me, that concept seems to be more readily accepted when applied to arts other than writing.

It is, for example, difficult to imagine a painter who is not fully adept with line and form, brush and stroke, and color and palette creating a masterpiece. A composer who is ignorant of clef and key, staff and quaver, and chord and notation is unlikely ever to have the music he hears in his head performed for an audience.

But when it comes to spelling and grammar and punctuation and words and sound and meaning and structure, well . . . good writing is a lot of damned hard work. And after we apply those tools of the trade, we have to be able to sit back and judge what we've done honestly and critically, and then rework and rewrite as needed, kind of like going from hammer and chisel to rasp to sandpaper and then to oil and polish.

Meredy and I are reading David Wroblewski's *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle*, and we both paused to remark at these sentences:

Rain, especially, falling past the double doors of the kennel, where he'd waited through so many storms, each drop throwing a dozen replicas into the air as it struck the waterlogged earth. And where the rising and falling water met, something like an expectation formed, a place where he might appear and pass in long strides, silent and gestureless.

They're so lyrical that they could almost be broken into lines and transformed into a poem. I doubt that Wroblewski would have been able to arrange those words in just that way were he not a master of the craft of writing.

Some years ago, when Meredy was editing a club newsletter, she'd from time to time get submissions of ostensible poetry from a fellow who'd preface his work with statements something like "penned at 2:43 a.m. on February 11 by inspiration, and not a jot nor tittle of it may be altered." Suffice it to say that those *ouuvres* did not find their way into print, but that's beside the point. It seems to me that an uncomfortable number of people are of the opinion that poetry is not subject to the same rigors of craft as prose.

It is. Dylan Thomas, my favorite poet of all time, even said so, right out loud, in a poem entitled "In My Craft or Sullen Art." It's a short and straightforward poem (except for the singing light, which people are still scratching their heads about), only twenty lines in length. I'd reproduce the whole thing here if it weren't for copyright restrictions; in the spirit of fair use, the last four lines will have to suffice.

[I write] for the lovers, their arms
Round the griefs of the ages,
Who pay no praise or wages
Nor heed my craft or art.

You can read the whole poem, including brief but salient commentary, here: <http://www.cs.rice.edu/~ssiyer/minstrels/poems/476.html>, and I hope you will.

Dylan's poetry is unarguably masterful in its expression, and if Dylan can call it his "craft or art," that's all the authority I need. WT

South Bay Writers at the San Jose Book Group Expo

by Bill Baldwin

When Book Group Expo, the brainchild of Ann Kent in Santa Cruz, first came to San Jose two years ago, South Bay Writers decided to reserve a booth. It fell on a special weekend—Father’s Day or my daughter’s birthday or something. I assisted at the booth for only a few hours, but was able to hear a panel of established writers discuss their work. We did not have a booth in 2007. We had elected a new board, and the event came upon us too suddenly.

This year we were back in force. Indeed, we have developed an exceptional relationship with Ann.



South Bay Writers return to Book Expo in force: Mary Tomasi-Dubois, Bill Baldwin, Terri Thayer, Meredy Amyx, Valerie Whong, Gisela Zebroski

Book Group Expo is an event targeted to readers, especially readers who belong to book clubs or book groups (hence the name). The Expo occupies a large hall in the San Jose Convention Center. This year they also made use of two meeting rooms at the San Jose Hilton. The activities included two days of panel discussions (usually three going at any one time) and booths where book-related groups could sell or present information. Since the event is more reader-oriented than writer-oriented, we were the only writers club there. As a large membership organization, we were permitted greater access than most of the booths. This caused some logistical confusion, but I think all our participants had a great time. Several of our members displayed and sold their books or distributed informa-

Ready, Set, Go— for 2009

by Rita St. Claire

“If the body be feeble, the mind will not be strong.”

So wrote our third president, Thomas Jefferson.

In 2009, our club will offer something new: inspiration to keep our bodies healthy and strong as we pursue our literary passion.

Why do you write? Has writing changed your life?

Writing has made my life better in myriad ways. One is the sharpening of



Rita St. Claire

tion about their books, a great marketing tool.

And we attended several panels each day, heard and met well-known writers, and came back with great suggestions for future speakers at our group. I enjoyed hearing Andre Dubus III (*House of Sand and Fog*), Michelle Gagnon (*Boneyard*), Douglas Abrams (*The Lost Diary of Don Juan*), David Corbett (*Blood of Paradise*) and others. I met Erika Mailman (*The Witch’s Trinity*), whom I already knew slightly from Facebook. Our own Jana McBurney-Lin (*My Half of the Sky*) spoke on one of the panels. I met Herbert Gold (*Bohemia*) and Karen Abbott (*Sin in the Second City*).

It was two very intense nine-hour days—but interesting, entertaining, and informative.

I want to thank everyone who participated (hoping I don’t miss anyone): Jack Hasling, Marjorie Johnson, Valerie Whong, Gisela Zebroski, Beth Wyman, Jamie Miller, Marcela Dickerson, Craig Reed, Dave LaRoche, Victoria Johnson, Andrea Galvacs, Betty Auchard, Cathy Bauer, Reed Stevens, Rita St. Claire, Suzy Paluzzi, Terri Thayer, Carolyn Donnell, Mary Tomasi, Marilyn Priel, Martha Engber, Marsha Brandsdorfer, Meredy Amyx.

We are definitely interested in becoming regular participants at the Expo—we hope it will continue for many years in San Jose! WT

my experience of beauty. When I see mist rise among the redwoods, bees gather nectar from blossoms on my tree, or sunset over Lake Tahoe, I jot down a quick description. Writing saves the image. To reexperience the beauty I need only read my words.

Every member of the club has unique reasons for what we all do. The pen is our passion, helping each of us live more fully in his or her own way.

Even so, there’s a problem. To write, we sit.

My own story includes twenty-five pounds gained after becoming a writer—on top of the twenty I’d acquired over the years. Though I’ve lost at least twenty of those forty-five pounds, I have a way yet to go. Besides, there’s maintenance.

Walking, swimming, and working out are things I enjoy. You probably enjoy similar activities—movement feels good. But I so enjoy writing (and don’t forget its deadlines) that my biggest challenge is forcing myself away from the keyboard to get my body out to move. I need help! You, too, might appreciate help. In 2009, our club aims to oblige.

Look in this newsletter for occasional short articles on exercise and health targeted at writers. From time to time we’ll have a short presentation at our meetings as well. Working on this together, we can encourage ourselves and each other to develop sound bodies for sound minds.

We now move into the year-end holidays, a period when excess prevails. Enjoy what you want—you deserve a pat on the back for getting through the year. Think about the benefits you derive from writing. And, once in a while, as you sip your low-fat eggnog or sit by the fire, think of the pitfalls as well. Then make a resolution or two.

Most of all, stay tuned for next year. WT

Winter Birds

Changing leaves falling
Winter birds sing hopeful songs
New voices calling.

—Sally A. Milnor

The Journey of a Thousand Miles: What I've Learned

by Lita Kurth

I asked my students recently to outline a few areas in which their writing had grown this quarter, so it seemed only fair that I join in and tell a bit about what I've learned in my writing program. I was



Lita Kurth
Contributing Editor

astonished that, although I've been working like a dog for two and a half years (apparently not long enough to stop using clichés like “working like a dog”), it's really hard to come up with specifics. Surely there must be ten or twelve solid techniques I can put my finger on. What the hell are they?

Let's see. I've learned that writers play by a million shifting rules and that what seems guaranteed not to work does work, crazy stuff like talking about winds and airs for a whole chapter and putting in parentheses all the major actions in the novel such as most of the key figures dying (which seems like a poor plot choice). But it's all there in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*. I guess I've learned that prescriptions such as “always do this” and “never do that” are too limiting—which is very unfortunate, since I'd love to have half-mile markers for the whole thousand miles. So much depends on what you want to accomplish, whom you're writing for, what kind of mood you want, what you're trying to get across. Some writers write long, others short. Dostoevsky spends page after long page on intense philosophical debates, whole chapters of little more than monologue, and yet it's intensely vital. Some leave you wondering what the story is about. They're obscure and confusing like Joyce or Faulkner, but, once you find the key, well worth the effort. There are a thousand good ways to write and possibly more than a thousand bad ways. (Apparently I haven't learned a lot of good news.)

I *have* learned to pay close attention to verbs and nouns, to be direct and cut

the deadwood. Instead of “he was leaning,” I say “he leaned.” I cut my dialogue too, whole sentences. I don't have characters reply to everything other characters say, especially if it's predictable. Sometimes an image, I've learned, a description, can do the same work as an explanation, only better. I can quit and trust the image to work its magic instead of continuing with “and then he realized . . .”

I've tried so hard to write scenes and chapters, to see the arc in other writers' work and find one for my own. One would think this would be less difficult. God knows I've read enough books. But it continues to be excruciating. I can't always answer these simple questions: How much is enough? How much is too much? What do readers need to know? What confuses them? Where should I start? Where should I end? And then to put scenes and chapters in the right order is baffling, impossible. A novel is just one insoluble problem after another. It's like going down into a mine with neither a light nor training. I hope I'm digging up ore. I hope it's a pickaxe I'm using. For all I know, I'm digging up mud with a garden hose. Sometimes I can't tell the difference even when I bring it up to the light. It's daunting.

So what have I learned? The other day I picked up E.M. Forster's book *Aspects of the Novel*, and I understood what he was talking about. Before, to be honest, I just didn't know what he was saying. Same thing with Eudora Welty. She could say something like “the novel is the child of time” or maybe it was “time is the child of the novel” and I would say to myself, “Gee, that sounds nice. I wonder what it means.” Now I think I get most of it.

I certainly have looked closely and marveled at other authors' techniques. And I think, *How nice for them. Wow, is that ever clever and unique.* It's like watching acrobats at Cirque du Soleil. Who would even think a human being could do that?

I think I still have to learn to be rude, to stare at people who are passionately engaged with one another, slamming doors and shouting “I love you,” or hitting someone with a high-heeled shoe. Could be dangerous, but I seem to be the kind of writer and artist who needs to look at things to get them right. Without observation, all I seem to have

is clichés. How many times have I asked myself, “But what happens to this character's face when he is disappointed or furious or smitten? What does he actually do with his hands, feet, or body?” Search me.

I'm learning to dramatize important conflicts instead of trying to dramatize *talking* or *thinking* about those conflicts. In writing as in life, people prefer to be discreet, to avoid going where it's painful and dangerous, and yet readers, voracious little voyeurs that they are, usually want us to go exactly to the worst spot, and describe it truthfully while we're at it. Show the blood squirting out of the victim's jugular while the killer, who also happens to be our hero, eats a tuna sandwich and feels overjoyed that he himself is still alive.

I've learned to ask a lot of questions, and I've learned how damn many questions there are to ask. Okay, one concrete thing: I've learned how to punctuate dialogue. I've learned to keep a beady eye on adverbs and sometimes let them be. I've learned that people who don't exist can become very real to me.

On Thanksgiving Day, I heard a wonderful interview with Junot Diaz on NPR. Pulitzer winner that he is, he described his writing process as “excruciating”; it took him eleven years to write his most recent book, and along the way he suffered severe depression. It doesn't seem like a good thing that another's suffering should be so comforting, but I was very consoled.

It's a journey of a thousand miles, all right, and in addition, a journey on which you have to backtrack, a journey with confusing trails and landmarks. You don't know how far you've gone, or how much is left, or even if you'll make it. But it's a meaningful journey, and I'm not done with it.

Happy trails! WT



Accolades

by Jackie Mutz

At the last South Bay Writers meeting, guest speaker Alice Wilson-Fried told us that her grandma always said *a wagon ain't good for nuthin' less it totin' somethin'*. I find this so



Jackie Mutz
Contributing Editor

true when it comes to the writing craft. We can talk about writing all we want, about what we are going to do, how, when and why we are going to do it. But if we don't sit down and actually write, it doesn't mean much, does it? Which is why "Accolades" is important: it marks the milestones of SBW's very own writers, no matter how big or how small. Some successes this month:

- **Bill Baldwin** reported that the recent Book Group Expo in San Jose was a great success.
- **Richard Burns** submitted two short stories and two poems for the CWC State Anthology.
- **Donna Fujimoto** reached her goal of

sending out twelve short stories for publication. Way to go, Donna!

- **Bob Garfinkle** had two astronomy book reviews published recently in international journals.
- **Sylvia Howard** teaches Freelance Writing and Memoir workshops at Mountain View-Los Altos Adult Education. See mvlcae.net for information.
- **Audry Lynch** was a guest speaker at two events, giving a presentation on "The World of John Steinbeck." On November 13, she spoke at the Cupertino West Valley Welcome Club in Saratoga; on November 14, the California Retired Teachers Association at the Leininger Center, San Jose. As an authority on all things Steinbeck, she also had her book *Steinbeck Remembered* on sale.
- **Edie Matthews** and yours truly offer ongoing classes in Creative Writing at Santa Clara Adult Education; **Jill Pipkin** teaches a class in Digital Photography. Check them out at scae.org.
- **Susan Mueller** had her hilarious "plumber piece" recently published in *WritersTalk*.

- **Luanne Oleas** talked of her first NaNoWriMo writing experience; her first sentence came from words in the dictionary. Congrats on your efforts!
- **Bill Pack's** debut novel *The Bottom of the Sky*, a rags-to-riches family saga from rural Montana to high-powered Wall Street and Silicon Valley (Riverbend Publishing), will be published in May 2009.
- **Jeanine Vegh** began writing her second novel, about the 1956 Hungarian revolution, having already completed her first novel, an accomplishment in itself and an inspiration for all writers.
- **Steve Wetlesen** was commissioned to create a piece of poetic art for a WWII veteran's memorial service from São Paulo, Brazil.

So make sure that your *writing wagon is toting something*, that you fill that wagon with the words on the page, that you stretch yourself as a writer and then email your accomplishments to accolades@southbaywriters.com. You deserve the recognition, for your success is ours as well. A Merry Christmas and best of the holidays to all. WT

View from the Board

by Dave LaRoche

Your Board of Directors met November 5 with the following cogitation and progress:

- Bookmarks have been designed and printed and will be available to members and the public during the centennial year.
- January 25 is the preferred date for our workshop on characters with David Corbett. Arrangements will be made—see Dave.
- Book Expo deemed a success as many members sold books and attended salons thanks to Bill Baldwin, who supports a repeat run in '09.
- Blurb, a print-on-demand company, will print a trade-size paperback book for \$5.95 plus S&H; author designs cover. A presentation is planned.

- Clarence Hammonds has resigned as Historian because of family concerns—a new chair is needed.
- Planned programs include:
 - Holiday Bash, Dec. 9, Betty Auchard's Annex
 - Norman Solomon, Jan. 13
 - David Corbett Workshop, Jan. 25
- Future programs might include
 - Herbert Gold
 - Robin Goldberg, POD
 - Amanda Quick and Allen Rinzler
 - Erika Mailman
- Our Treasurer, Rich Burns, toiling heavily, has completed the severely detailed quarterly for October, plans to change the approach to "easier," and reports adequate cash.
- Our Central Board, on Olympus, is stirring up centennial objectives for branches, approving policies related to expense reimbursement and new branch admittance; will again support the LA Book Fair; wants a 20% increase in membership; and will distribute a Treasurers Hand-

book shortly.

- Marjorie Johnson reports 196 members for South Bay. This is slightly more than 20% of the total state membership of 17 branches. Congratulations to all.
- Open mic continues with an average of 10 readings per.
- *WritersTalk* is printed and distributed at \$1.07 per 16-page copy.
- The SBW anthology, Dick and Meredy Amyx and Ro Davis steering, is on schedule with presales of 32 copies in the hopper. The book is expected in January, thanks to the good work of all.
- Marilyn Fahey and Jamie Miller will co-chair the Young Writers effort.
- A workshop survey will be circulated at the November meeting.
- A motion to increase payment for web services, to something approaching competitive, was passed unanimously.
- Next meeting on Dec. 3. WT

Christmas on 32nd Street

by Betty Auchard

Compared to those of other families, our Christmas was usually nothing to brag about. But we always had *something* under the tree for each person even if we made it ourselves. Two of the best gifts I ever gave to my brother Bobby and my sister Patty were rolled-up notes tied with a ribbon. They were homemade gift certificates that said “20 minutes of free back tickles, no strings attached.” That was a very practical and appreciated gift. And it didn’t cost a penny. But I liked having my back tickled, too, so I wish someone had thought of that present for me.

All our gifts were practical, with no frills. Luxuries were called “extras,” and my family never bought extras. I tried not to hope for them. But I was secretly *dying* to own something extra. I turned down many corners of the pages in the big Wish Book. The Sears Roebuck catalogue was my favorite book of all time. I could have given a good book report about that catalogue. All those pictures! There were girls my age wearing lacy sweaters. Dad said, “A kid could freeze to death in a sweater like that.” I would have done dishes by myself for a month if I could’ve owned a lacy sweater, a pair of snow boots with fur around the cuffs, or a pair of pink angora socks.

Mom and Dad did the best they could for us, but their wages did not allow for fancy winter boots or silly rabbit hair socks that Dad said no one needed. In order to make his point, Dad said, “A poor girl wearing angora anklets shows bad taste.” I have no idea where my dad got such notions. I think he made a lot of stuff up.

Thank God for Auntie Marge, whom we called our fairy godmother. She believed in owning all the unnecessary stuff a person could afford. Since we couldn’t afford much, she was bound to show up near Christmas time to make sure we got some of the unnecessary things we wanted. Our auntie called Dad on the phone and said, “Bassle, at Christmas time all kids need to have ‘extras.’ I’m coming to pick them up.” For a lady who had no kids of her own, our auntie was very smart.

Right on time, the week before Christmas, I heard my favorite sound: Auntie Marge’s car wheels crunching on our gravel driveway. She climbed out of her dark green Buick wearing her fake fur coat and a hat that she said was stylish (I’m glad she told me because I would’ve never known). She came to take us three kids shopping. She gave each of us some money to stick in our pockets, and we drove to Kresge’s dime store on First Avenue and Third Street. This shopping trip was so we could buy little presents for our parents and grandparents. Patty was so up in the air that she couldn’t stop wiggling in the back seat and saying *Ohboyohboyohboy*. I was excited too, but she was so annoying that I felt like smacking her.

Kresge’s was the only place in town where a person could find anything decent for under a dollar. Whenever I got money as a gift, Kresge’s was where I spent it. One year I bought lavender-scented talcum powder for Mom and a hanky for Dad. Using multicolored thread, I sewed the letters “D A D” in the corner. I also wrote

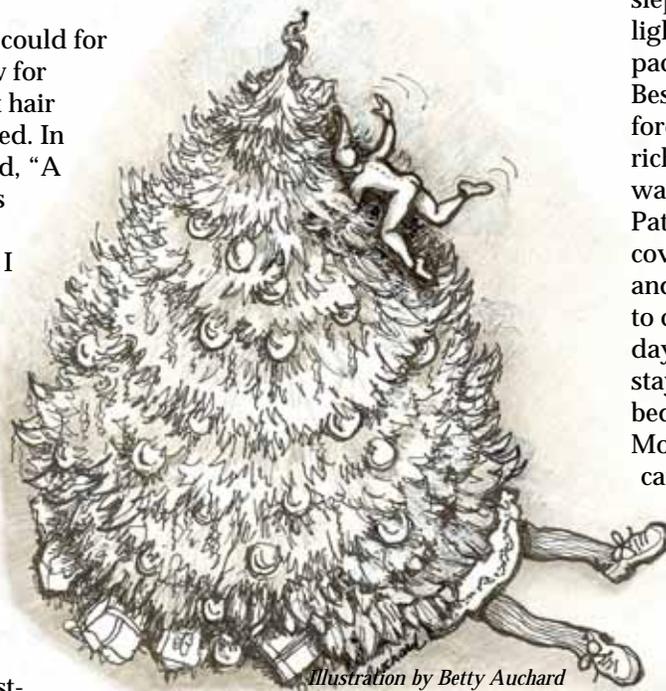
a note that said, “Dad, do not blow your nose on the embroidered letters. It will make your nose itchy and the letters full of snot.”

On Christmas Eve, after we three kids were asleep in one wintertime living room bed, Uncle Cullen gave Dad a ride to the nearest lot to pick out a little tree. Dad knew that most of the lots closed before supper, but one of them always left a sign that read “Any Tree Free. Merry Christmas.” When Dad and Uncle Cullen returned with a free tree, my parents decorated it so quietly that we never knew what was happening.

On Christmas morning, we woke up to a freezing house and squealed with delight at the sight of our most important gift of all: *the tree*. This glorious sight had appeared like magic while we slept only a few feet away. There were lights of every hue, wrinkled tinsel, and packages placed carefully beneath it. Best of all was the fragrance of the forest right in our own “bedroom.” No rich kid could have been happier than I was that Christmas morning. Bob, Patty, and I huddled close under the covers while Mom started the coffee and Dad disappeared to the basement to crank up the furnace. It was a special day and we all deserved heat. We kids stayed in bed enjoying the luxury of a bedside Christmas tree, the smell of Mom and Dad’s coffee brewing, and carols playing on the radio. Once we felt heat wafting through the vents, Christmas morning was all that we ever hoped it could be.

When the warmth seeped through the kitchen and the living room, we climbed out of bed and started stripping paper from packages that had our names on them. What a happy mess. We shared our gifts, helped smooth and fold the wrapping paper for next year, and then wore ourselves out playing our new games: Bingo, Old Maid, and Authors. The authors on each card had three names like Robert Louis Stevenson and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. I liked their pictures, but I liked their fancy-sounding names even more. When I said, “Do you have the card *Little Women*, by Louisa May Alcott,” I felt like a big shot.

When the family was occupied doing other things, I stretched out on the floor



Continued on page 9

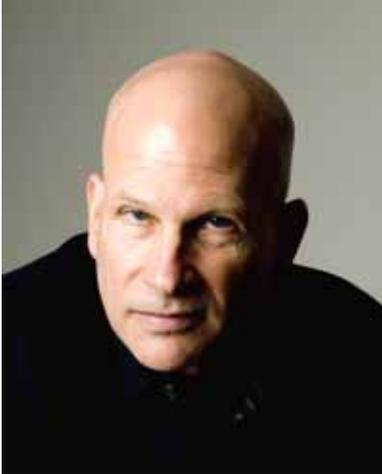
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On Experience with the Medical Profession

by *Dave LaRoche*

I have eyes that work well but I thought could be in trouble as black splotches were forming on the outer sides of each—ah shit! And how would I get to the Dutchman in St. Louis with bags in the hold now \$25 each? Of course you could hardly know that Van Meteric is a world-renowned retina specialist whom my sister had been seeing because her eyes were clouding around her optic nerve and she was having trouble with the flags from out on the fairway, and that after several visits, interrupted by a paper he delivered at the Sorbonne on the very same malady, he had told her, “I’m very sorry, there’s little I can do.”

Settling for a local ophthalmologist—a nice looking woman of Pakistani descent, sparkling beamers herself and about 50, who said to me, “Geez, I wondered what a young man like you was doing with thinning sclera, then I looked at your chart and discovered your age . . . you certainly don’t look it.” She punctuated this very welcome comment with a generous smile and a wink.

Well, I thought . . . let me go blind in her care. As it turned out, my black splotches were age driven and she said, “There is nothing to worry about.”

Interviewer during final orals: “What’s the first and overarching goal of the medical practitioner?”

Intern: “Do no harm.”

Interviewer: “When simply overwhelmed, what’s the appropriate response to your patient?”

Intern: “I’m sorry, but there’s little I can do.”

Interviewer: “Good! Very good, and what is your parting comment to patients?”

Intern: “There’s nothing to worry about.”

Interviewer: “And on leaving the lab?”

Intern: “You’re doing fine, in a week or so we’ll have the results”

Interviewer: “Yes, yes! Congratulations,

you are now ready to practice.”

And recently I’ve been staggering some. No, not so much after martinis but in the morning, right out of bed—so the doctor (mine’s from St. Louis University Medical School, about the time I went to MU, therefore to be trusted with all but those parts no one is to be trusted with . . . except maybe the ophthalmologist), he said, “Could be a tumor, we’ll do an MRI.”

I had my doubts but said “OK, please phone in a sedative . . . that’s Long’s Drugs on McKee.”

Yesterday I slid into the tube—Jesus, I hate those things.

Karen said, “Before you go in,” (she’s driving us up) “think of scenes pastoral. Think of things that bring you joy, things that calm you and bring peace of mind, and be ready with those thoughts when the time comes.”

I’m in the passenger seat and already in dreamland, Valium molecules gathering on the appropriate receivers.

In the tube, a message came through the intercom, “The first will be 3 minutes. Can you hear me, are you OK?” Then, as I smiled my nod, all hell broke lose.

A pile-driver overhead was trying to drown out a blast from the horn of a locomotive, fast approaching a crossing where children may have been walking. The engineer was laying on it hard and continuously—he’s retiring soon and wants nothing to interrupt his pension. And then, in a slightly different octave came a six minute crash, then another three, a two, some dye and another six, and so on for an eternal half hour. I tried, like never before, to encourage fantasy—something I’m normally quite good at. I brought up green meadows, rolling hills and prancing horses, Ferdinand sniffing flowers; trout fishing on the north branch; summer sailing—the ophthalmologist. None of it worked more than a second or two as the pounding continued. Then I hit on it—violence in Iraq!

I saw an old covered truck full of explosives speeding down a dirt road toward a guard shack in front of a coalition prison. A fourteen-year old boy was driving and beside him his younger sister with an AKM in her lap. She smoked a brown cigarette. (The

MRI Gatlin gun was emitting nuclear blasts.)

It was a hot arid place, with scattered trees badly crippled from thirst, mostly sand and rock. Clumps of grass that may have sprouted in the rainy season had died and were fading to colorless. The blinding sun seared my eyes as I watched the old truck rattle down the grade, moving fast toward its destination. Soiled canvas flapped off the back, exposing crates of dynamite, while dust billowed in the still air for at least a mile back. As they stopped at the guard shack, the gun was raised and a *bap-bap-bap* sent two guards to the ground. They twitched and gurgled, and leaked red in the sand. The girl tossed the gun and took a hard drag on her cigarette as the truck accelerated, grinding through its gears—young legs stretched out for the pedals. They headed straight for the gray walls of Prison Central where administrators, guards, and the torture squad were housed. They’re rolling fast now, maybe 65 or 70, and only yards to . . .

“Hey . . . Mr. LaRoche, are you all right in there? Just one more two-minute segment and you’re finished.”

I missed the big explosion and the prisoner release and wonder if they all made it. Next Monday we’ll have the results. *WT*

Christmas, continued from page 7

under the Christmas tree, lying face up with my head close to the trunk and my nose nudging the lower branches. There, I closed my eyes and inhaled the perfume of pine. It smelled so good I could taste it. I gazed straight up the center through all the shiny stuff at my warped reflection in colored balls. I became something else: one of the branches, an ornament, a bug in a forest, a girl who believed in fairies. Music in the air, snow in the garden, and lying under our tree that decorated itself had transported me to my favorite place . . . the land of make-believe.

Mom said that 11½ was too old for fantasy, so I never let her know what I was really doing with half my body sticking out from under pine branches: I was on the lookout for a Christmas elf. *WT*

Orleans by people who lived there, she told us. She wanted to write about “my New Orleans.” That inspiration served her in writing her novel, *Outside Child*.

2. Attend writing classes. Alice met the person who would become her publisher for *Outside Child* while she was attending one. Funny. We wonder why emails and letters don't just drop in on us. Thomas Jefferson once said “I find that the harder I work, the luckier I am.”
3. Sometimes you have to write about what you don't know. How else can you learn? Alice happened upon the book *Black Betty* while passing through an airport. She had a friend named Black Betty, so she bought the book.
4. Alice's voice rose and the passion burned when she said, “I want my name in the literary history mix of New Orleans literature.” I tell my writing students that the reason most people are such bad writers is because they don't have anything they want to write about. Not Alice. She has reason, and motivation.
5. When writing about black history, anything for that matter, remember—“no preachin', no teachin', and no whinin'.” These three elements are what Alice says turn readers away from reading works written by blacks and women. I ain't black or a woman, but it's a lesson I can learn as well.
6. The characters in *Outside Child* are symbolic of the black person who makes it and the black person who doesn't. Readers want to be able to identify in some way with the characters in a story. In the case of *Outside Child* think of sibling rivalry.
7. Writers can read too much. This can paralyze a writer. If you want to be a good writer, write!
8. Don't let your ignorance show. While attending a writer's conference (see # 2 above) Alice was asked to create a screenplay. She didn't let on that she didn't know how. She made it happen by taking a screenplay class. See #7.
9. Relationships are what build character, what give writers ideas for personality for their characters. I guess I need to get out of my garage

A Writer's Words of Wisdom

by Jerry Mulenburg

An interview with John Updike titled “The Writer in Winter” published in a recent issue of the AARP magazine caught my attention, and I believe that it bears sharing with the club's members, whether they are in their winter years or not.

Using a golf metaphor about older, successful writers, 76-year-old Mr. Updike cautions, “Young or old, a writer sends a book into the world, not himself. There is no Senior Tour for authors, with the tees shortened by 20 yards and carts allowed. No mercy is extended by the reviewers; but then it is

more often and interact with other folks.

10. Awards tell writers that readers “get” the characters. Alice received an award for best regional fiction. She realized then her book was “not just a black book.” I know how many awards I will win from competitions if I don't enter my work.
11. Alice already has plans for a second and third book to complete a trilogy around *Outside Child*. While some haven't written their first, Alice is already thinking a couple of volumes ahead.
12. When offered the option of \$3,500 in advance and no marketing help or marketing help, take the marketing help and forget the advance. This was the first time I heard a writer say a number when it comes to an advance, and then follow it up by saying when it should be turned down.

There were other lessons to be learned. I'd be happy to hear what others took home. For me, a dozen seemed to be about the right number of lessons to learn from Alice, who uses “this [mystery] genre to pass on some history.” Did you know that every Monday in New Orleans, no matter how good the cooking of the missus is, the husband will go home and have red beans and rice at his mama's house?

You do now. WT

not extended to the rookie writer, either.” Speaking of younger writers, Updike says, “. . . I can appreciate the advantages, for a writer, of youth and obscurity. . . . You are full of material—your family, your friends, your region of the country, your generation—when it is fresh and seems urgently worth communicating to readers.” He follows with, “No amount of learned skills can substitute for the feeling of having a lot to say . . . from your first 20 years on earth.” But, he cautions, “By the age of 40, . . . continued creativity is a matter of sifting the leavings.”

In addressing changes in technology that aid the writing profession, he cautions, “Through all this relentless advancing technology the same brain gropes through its diminishing neurons for images and narratives. . . . With ominous frequency, I can't think of the right word. I know there *is* a word; I can visualize the exact shape it occupies in the jigsaw puzzle of the English language. But the word itself, with its precise edges and unique tint of meaning, hangs on the misty rim of consciousness.”

Looking back on his earlier writings he notes, “. . . the quality I admire and fear to have lost is its carefree bounce, its snap, its exuberant air of slight excess.” “Prose,” he says, “should have a flow, the forward momentum of a certain energized weight; it should feel like a voice tumbling into your ear.” Still, he notes, “Old age treats freelance writers pretty gently. There is no compulsory retirement at the office, and no athletic injuries signal that the game is over for good.” And, later, “The pleasures . . . of book-making . . . remain, and retain creation's giddy bliss. Among those diminishing neurons there lurks the irrational hope that the last book may be the best.” WT

Dec. Deco-Art

Find a phase,
Some sign-of-times
Yet unique; then start a craze.
Make it you. So fame uplifts:
All will ape
And praise your gifts!

—Pat Bustamante

Grandpa's Christmas Tree

by Richard A. Burns



Richard Burns

I must have been about seven years old, and it was the afternoon before Christmas. Polly was fussing, trying to cook another pot of rice because she had just

burned the first one. Freshly baked biscuits, accompanied by boysenberry jam, would join the string beans next to the tough round steak she would pound for ten minutes and braise. The quart of Neapolitan ice cream was slowly melting in the ice box, even though Dad had just hefted in a fresh block of ice.

Bobby knew the location of all his presents by heart, of course, and pried back the wrapping along the seam of one of them, so eager was he for Christmas morning. Billy was trying to get two of the stockings hung in front of the fireplace to stay up, and Dad was watching "Amos 'n' Andy" on our black and white TV, its tiny picture tinted blue.

Grandpa came in the front door along with a freezing blast of unusually cold Canadian air. He began taking off sweaters.

"Where have you been off to?" I asked.

He said he'd walked over to McFadden's, our corner grocery five blocks away. He was sorry, but tarnation! he was unable to talk them down to twenty cents for a Christmas tree, he said. (Oh, it was the family's common knowledge that he was a Scot and pinched a dime until FDR squealed.) "I offered fifteen cents for one of them, a nickel more than it was worth," he complained, "but no deal," and he gave us a crooked smile.

"But, Grandpa," I said, "it's Christmas Eve. It won't do us any good to have a tree on the day after Christmas, and tomorrow we'll be playing with stuff Daddy puts . . . I mean Santa will have brought us after he comes down the chimney. These wrapped-up presents look so forlorn there on the corner of the sofa and messily spilling over to the bookshelf."

Spotting something next to the piano, Bobby ran over to get the long strings of popcorn and some petrified cranberries we had spent hours—well, it seemed like hours—stringing the night before. "What shall we hang these on? And that star, it needs a tree to go under it."

Grandpa sat heavily in his mahogany, purple-padded rocker, and crooked a gnarled finger at Bobby and me, signaling us to come closer. He slipped us a spearmint Lifesaver, picking one for himself, savoring it a moment. At last, he said, "I did manage to make a deal, though. You see, the man over at the store told me that business gets slow on Christmas Eve, and if I'd drop by after five o'clock, I could have one free if there were any left. But only after five o'clock."

So at the appointed time, Dad, Bobby, Grandpa and I rode over in the '39 black Nash, and chose our free Christmas tree from a motley, picked-over bunch of castaways.

Polly was mad because she had just reheated the biscuits to a golden brown and the steak was on and getting cold when we finally came in with the tree. Grandpa had figured out a wooden stand, sawing the tree trunk square and nailing the stand in place.

"It's ugly," she said.

Two hours after dinner, our stomachs were still stuffed with steak and string beans. Daddy lifted Bobby up to put the star in place as the finishing touch. Even cranky old Aunt Mae, my Grandpa's sister, the one who could be counted on

for the fruitcake from Woolworth's each year, had to admit that the star, the shiny balls, the silvery icicles, and the almost green little tilted tree that only faintly smelled of the forest was the prettiest thing she'd seen in eons.

Polly arranged the presents and chased Bobby away whenever he came too close. Daddy said the Rams were ahead by a touchdown with only a minute to go. Billy got the final stocking to stay up. Polly ran down the porch steps to find out if she could see our masterpiece through the window, but we could afford no lights, and she said that, from outside, she could only imagine it was there.

Later, during Milton Berle, the door blew open letting in another cold breath of winter. Grandpa craned his head around and said, "Look, kids, it's snowing," and it was, all so white and slowly floating down. We could see it because of the lights next door, white flakes continuing to come, magically gentle and silent.

It was hard to sleep that night. Polly had made no cookies for Santa because we had no eggs and the carton of milk in the icebox had gone sour. Aunt Mae suggested a slice of fruitcake but she got dirty looks from us kids (we didn't want to poison Santa). Bobby saved half his biscuit and a few lemon drops from the candy dish to leave out near the stockings, and I saved part of my glass of milk for him. It wasn't my best Christmas ever—most of them were quite good—but I do remember it, so it must have been pretty special. WT

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Two Kids

by Bill Belew

I have two kids. I am very proud of the first one. The second one, well . . .

My dad taught me something when I was very young. “The laws of physics are clear. Bumblebees can’t fly,” he said.

“Their wings are too small and their bodies are too big. But they don’t know that, so they fly anyway.”

I taught my kids about bumblebees, too.

Benjamin, the older, gave up on being a scientist to pursue a career in the arts instead. Among other pieces he plays on the piano is Rimsky-Korsakov’s “The Flight of the Bumblebee.”

However, after playing the piano from the time he was 8 until he was 20, Benjamin inexplicably gave the piano up, along with his scholarship, to pursue life as an animator. He didn’t listen to any advice to the contrary, including from me, his father. He paid little attention to his teachers. His friends proved unreliable confidants. Instead, he listened to the little voice inside that said, “You can do what you put your mind to.” He was going to follow his dream, perhaps fly like a bumblebee.

Benjamin taught himself how to draw, and, in the end, he successfully passed interviews, screenings, portfolio submissions, and tests to get accepted as a *tweener*—the person who draws pictures that hold key animation ideas together—for a large Japanese animation company, the one of *Kill Bill* fame.

Benjamin worked Japanese-hard at his animation job—from 7:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., including train commute rides. Still, in the late evenings after he came home, he played the piano. Not because he was told to, but because he wanted to.

Sometimes he called me internationally. “Papa, I’m sorry. I only practiced two hours today.” I never had to tell Benjamin to practice. I did have to tell him to take a break from time to time.



Bill Belew
Contributing Editor

Benjamin participated in a prefecture-wide piano competition in western Japan—just for the fun of it. He hoped to add any favorable results of the competition to his resume. Other contestants chose a Beethoven piece—*Moonlight Serenade*, or a Mozart concerto or a Chopin etude—something light-hearted that everyone would recognize, even non-classical music enthusiasts. Benjamin chose to perform an extremely difficult Bach toccata—two melodies played at the same time out of synch with each other.

One of Benjamin’s teachers explained to me that a genius musician or even an exceptionally talented piano player could learn a new piece in a relatively short time, within four to six hours of continual effort. Benjamin most always spent four to six hours each day for four to six days to keep up with such “geniuses.” Benjamin does not commit himself to a schedule; rather, he commits himself to learning, no matter the sacrifices he must make. His “talent” is to work hard.

First place in the open division of that prefecture-wide competition went to Benjamin. His competitors came from all over Japan, including graduates of music schools and those who had connections with the judges. Congratulatory remarks flew about and his disciplined countenance turned briefly upside-down into a smile. Someone even thought to call his teacher and congratulate him on a job well done by one of his charges.

His sensei responded, “There is no need to congratulate me. Benjamin never listens to me. He just does as he pleases.”

One of the judges remarks were overheard, “I would never play that piece in a competition.”

“Why?” countered another judge.

“It’s too difficult.”

“Yeah, and . . .?”

“I would play something easier so I would have a better chance of winning. I can’t believe that young man chose such a difficult piece.”

“Benji, did you hear what those judges were saying about you?” his best friend and mother asked.

“Un,” was his reply, in Japanese—the

equivalent of “Uh-huh” in English.

Later that evening, Benji telephoned me across the world to let me know about the results. His recount of the short exchange between the judges was followed by Benji’s telling me, “Papa, I didn’t know I wasn’t supposed to be able to play such a difficult piece in a competition. I thought I should play something I like, something I could put all of my effort into.”

“Yep, Benjamin, you should do what *you* want,” I said.

“Papa, I guess I was a bumblebee today.”

My younger boy, Micah, stings others, too. Blame it on his dad, who wasn’t there during his formative years. His mom and I separated when his age was still in the single digits. In the years that followed, he skipped school, didn’t study much, if at all, smoked, rebelled, and did not play the conformity-game in Japan, the land where “the nail that sticks up gets hammered down.” Some 10 years after the divorce, I had the opportunity to visit with him.

The block room where he stayed was one of four. The rooms sat two on each side of a large corridor with a communal dining area near one end and a kitchen beyond that. The doors of each room opened at 5:45 a.m. every day, and the residents popped out, sleepy-eyed, ready or not, to follow that day’s routine, perform drills and receive instruction.

Distance between us resulted in Micah’s and my visiting maybe twice a year. On this visit I was permitted to observe his living conditions.

His room was about 8 feet by 8 feet and had a small door to the right that led to a shared toilet area. There was a very small closet to the right that held his “uniforms,” usually a t-shirt and shorts, the same as all the residents.

His bed sat upon cinder blocks; his most personal belongings went underneath. The bedspread was a plain navy blue and lay rumpled. He had been trained to be tidier but somehow he got away the mess.

On the opposite wall from the door to the toilet room, adjacent to the closet, was a window with a black curtain. The

carpet was also black. Outside those walls people met, laughed, and came and went in their sports cars and four-wheel drive vehicles. Sometimes they tossed a ball or even hollered to the others inside. Micah couldn't participate—he was confined to his room. There was a new and prized boom box in a prime location that sat in contrast to an older one that, for some reason, he didn't want to discard. The room didn't explain and Micah was in the arena.

On the last wall, narrower than the others due to the entrance, was a small chest of drawers, a chair, and a simple desk made of plywood. On the dirty white desk sat an old computer. The Internet connection seldom worked and when it did it was very slow, like the passage of time he spent here.

Posters were permitted. Surfers' pictures reminded him the ocean was a mile away. Hanging prominently on the wall above his bed was spike-haired Hideki of X-Japan, strumming a guitar and screaming. Micah, too, was "made in Japan." I hoped against hope that the lifestyle of this punk rock singer did not have too much influence on him. The last poster I noticed indicated his real passion: Matt Biondi, America's individual record holder for the most swimming medals in the Summer Olympics. The outline of the picture was thick black and in the center was deep blue water. Wearing a cap with the Olympic logo etched on the left side, Biondi was gasping for breath mid-butterfly stroke. At the bottom was written—"Victory is when 10,000 hours of preparation meet with one moment of opportunity." It was these words that influenced the boy the most.

Later that night Micah slapped the water hard, grimaced, then let out a scream. He jumped but went nowhere because his feet could not reach the bottom of the pool. I had flown from California to Florida to see him in this agony, or perhaps ecstasy.

How happy I was to be there.

"Papa, I won!" he whispered loudly in my ear after he climbed from the and as we embraced. I didn't mind at all the wetness from his body. "I won," he repeated.

Those were wonderful days.

Speakers Needed for 2009 GWP Series on Vogler's *The Writer's Journey*

I am looking for authors to discuss mythic structure in story development for a Gilroy Writing Project three-part series featuring Chris Vogler's book, *The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Writers*. The GWP has met monthly at Gilroy Library for the last five years as a free, adult library program.

I have divided Vogler's book into three sections, read over three months, hoping to find one or two (or more) authors to talk on story development for each program. We have a limited number of copies that participants can check out at the library.

Program 1 (January 17, 2009):

Preface through page 77

Program 2 (February 21, 2009):

pages 78 through 159

Program 3 (March 21, 2009):

pages 160 through 237

This would be a great series for fantasy, adventure, mystery, or romance writer speakers, as these concepts have been used to develop storylines for *Star Wars*, *Narnia*, *Indiana Jones*, *Night at the Museum*, and many other fantasy adventure movies and books.

More information:

santaclaracountylib.org/gilroy/GIwriting.html

Contact: Catherine D. Alexander
(408) 842-8207 ext. 3413
calexand@library.sccgov.org

Micah had been participating in the national college swim championships. And he went on to win again and again and came away with quite a haul—two gold medals, a silver and a bronze. What fun!

You see, I had been hanging out in his college dorm room.

I have two kids. I am very proud of the first one. The second one, well . . . I am very proud of him, too. WT



*Best wishes for a
Happy and Productive
New Year!*

WRITERSTALK Challenge

What Is It?

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

Genres

Fiction
Memoir
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Judging Periods

February 16 through August 15
August 16 through February 15

Prizes

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

Judging

Judging will be done by *WritersTalk* contributing editors and other Club members whom the contributing editors may ask to assist.

* Eligibility for the *WritersTalk* Challenge is limited to members of the South Bay Branch of the California Writers Club; judges may not judge in any category in which they have an entry.

Directory of Experts

Do you have specialized knowledge that might help a writer bring authentic detail to a scene? If you are willing to share your expertise, send a message to networking@southbaywriters.com or to the club post office box. We will add your listing to our directory of experts.

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belew@panasianbiz.com

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GLYNCH7003@sbcglobal.net

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Rick Brost
rickpatrickb@sbcglobal.net



Prowling, continued from page 2

And, finally, submit only your best. Make this content better than the last. Rewrite and rewrite again—use an editor. Format the work precisely the way it's requested. Follow the rules. To engage well in this exchange you must speak the language.

Oh, and another item many forget is judging. When we sit on a jury and read another's work with that critical, judicial eye, we reach deep into our well and remind ourselves what good writing is all about.

And to all you other resolution makers, a Happy New (Writing) Year. WT

Engineering: Mechanical, Aero, Aerospace

Jerry Mullenburg
geraldmullenburg@sbcglobal.net

Growing Great Characters From the Ground Up

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marthaengber.blogspot.com

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Around the Bay

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

Berkeley: Meetings are held from 10 a.m. to noon on the third Saturday of each month, except for July and August. Unless otherwise noted, our meetings are held at Barnes & Noble bookstore, in Jack London Square, Event Loft, Oakland.
berkeleywritersclub.org

San Francisco/Peninsula: Meets on the third Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. to noon at the Belmont Library, 1110 Alameda De Las Pulgas, Belmont.
sfpeninsulawriters.com

Central Coast: Meets on the third Tuesday of each month except December at the Casa Munras Hotel, 700 Munras Avenue, Monterey. The dinner hour begins at 5:30 p.m. and the program begins at 7 p.m.
centralcoastwriters.org

Mount Diablo: Meets the second Saturday of each month, except July and August, at 11:30 a.m. at the Hungry Hunter Restaurant, 3201 Mount Diablo Boulevard, Lafayette (corner of Pleasant Hill Road and Highway 24).
mtdiablowriters.org

Tri-Valley: Meets the third Saturday of each month, except July and August, at 11:30 a.m. at the Oasis Grille, 780 Main Street, Pleasanton.
trivalleywriters.com

Sacramento: Meets at 11:00 a.m. the third Saturday of every month, except July and August, at Luau Garden Chinese Buffet, 1890 Arden Way, Sacramento 95815.
sacramento-writers.org

Marin: Meets on the fourth Sunday of every month at 2 p.m. at Book Passage in Corte Madera.
cwcmarinwriters.com

Redwood: Meetings are held on the first Sunday of the month (except for holiday weekends), from 3-5 p.m. at the Star Restaurant, 8501 Gravenstein Hwy, corner of Old Redwood Hwy and Hwy 116, in Cotati. redwoodwriters.org

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5 7:30p Open Mic Barnes & Noble Almaden Plaza, San Jose	6
7	8	9 6p Annual Holiday Bash Chez Auchard	10	11	12 7:30p Open Mic Borders Books Santana Row, San Jose	13 10:30A Editors' Powwow
14	15	16 WritersTalk deadline	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 	26	27
28	29	30	31	DECEMBER 2008		
Sunday, Jan. 25 Workshop with David Corbett		Tuesday, Jan. 13 Norman Solomon				Future Flashes

Stay Informed!

Sign up for the SBW Email List to receive meeting and event announcements.

www.southbaywriters.com

South Bay Writers Open Mic

Read from your own work, from your favorite authors, or just come to listen. See calendar for schedule.

Contact Bill Baldwin
(408) 730-9622 or email
wabaldwin@aol.com

For Fremont Open Mic contact
Jeannine Vegh
ladyjatbay@sbcglobal.net

or

Bob Garfinkle
ragarf@earthlink.net

SBW Poets

The San Jose Poetry Center is turning its eyes toward SBW with an interest in showcasing our poets at its monthly readings. PCSJ's host and member of South Bay Writers Linda Lappin is making a personal request. Are you a poet? Would you like to read your work? If your answer is yes, contact Linda by email at captainlappin@netzero.net and have a look at PCSJ's website, www.pcsj.org

SBW Writers' Forum

Events
Conferences
Contests
Networking
Resources
SBW Author Events
and News at

southbaywriters.com

San Jose Poetry Slam (Est. 1998)

8:00 p.m., \$6.00

First Tuesday: Open Mic with music by Rebelskamp

Second and Fourth Tuesdays: Poetry Slam with music by Jay Rush

Third Tuesday: Head-to-Head Poetry Bouts with special guests.

At The Britannia Arms
173 W Santa Clara
Downtown San Jose
www.sanjosepoetryslam.com

Poetry Center San Jose Readings

First Gallery downtown
Willow Glen Books

Cosponsored by the
Creative Writing Department at
San José State University

Free admission.

See www.pcsj.org for featured guests and details.



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

MAIL TO

Address Correction Requested

**There will not be a regular meeting
in December.**

You are all invited to attend the

Annual Holiday Bash

See the front cover for details.

January 25: Workshop with

David Corbett

Develop Vivid Characters

See page 8

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southbaywriters.com

