



# WRITERSTALK

Volume 16  
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Monthly Newsletter of the South Bay Writers Club

## November's Speaker: Alice Wilson-Fried

by Bill Baldwin

We are delighted to have as our November guest a woman adept at fiction and nonfiction, familiar with the Bay Area and the South, and a skilled practitioner of writing and sports. She unites the physical with the spiritual.

Alice Wilson-Fried grew up in the Magnolia Housing Project in New Orleans. After attending Grambling College and Tulane University, she worked in public relations at the Delta Queen Steamboat Company. For seventeen years, Alice has lived in California with her husband Frank. She is a mother of two, stepmother of three, and grandmother of eight. She plays tennis and is involved in the education and creative development of others.

Alice's first published work was nonfiction; a book entitled *Menopause, Sisterhood, and Tennis*. In it you can see the special role that tennis has played in her life.

*Menopause, Sisterhood, and Tennis* describes how tennis saved Alice from an early arrival in the geriatric pasture and transported her onto the tennis courts and into a future of accomplishment and fun. Once she was armed with tennis, annoyances like hot flashes, a jelly belly, constipation, and crying spells could not scare her into old age. Don't let menopause intimidate you! You needn't resign yourself to the rocking chair or the old-folks home. Read this book and prepare to party!

For her first novel, *Outside Child*, Alice returned to her Louisiana roots to craft a murder mystery set in the corrupt business world of pre-Katrina New Orleans.



Ladonis Washington thinks that success means discarding her past in the Magnolia Housing Project and making it in the New Orleans business world. But after her mentor, Tim Ganen, dies a grisly death in the paddlewheel of the company's prize steamboat, Ladonis is caught in the churning of family relationships, her own objectives, and the depths of corporate corruption. Her brother HeartTrouble understands the underbelly of New Orleans business. But he doesn't understand his sister's ambitions. So it's up to Ladonis to meet her bosses' demands and determine what happened to Tim without getting herself or

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## October Recap Swami Beyondananda

by Victoria M. Johnson

A fair number of SBW members dressed in costume for the festive October gathering. Our president, Huckleberry Finn, brought the meeting to order at 6:30. He encouraged members to submit their work to the State CWC Anthology. Edie Matthews provided an East of Eden Conference wrap-up and thanked all the dedicated volunteers who helped make the conference a success: Cathy Bauer, Marge Johnson, Bill Baldwin, and Kelly Harrison.

Andrea Galvacs announced the winners of the Writers Talk Challenge (names and pictures on page 9).

The *WritersTalk* contributing editors recognized Dick Amyx for serving as the Managing Editor for one year. They awarded him with a certificate of appreciation for his tireless efforts to create the *WritersTalk* each month.

Bill Baldwin introduced our guest speaker. Members were treated to two speakers in one. First we heard from the Cosmic Comic, Swami Beyondananda. He immediately shared cosmic words of wisdom.

We're always in the here and now. The irony curtain has come down. Our skeptic system is on overload. Laughter is healing, it lowers our blood pressure. Laughing also burns calories, so you can laugh your ass off. He wonders

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## Deadline for State Anthology Extended

The deadline state anthology has been extended from October 31 to November 16. See the Writers Forum on [southbaywriters.com](http://southbaywriters.com) for details.

# President's Prowling

by *Dave LaRoche*  
*President, South Bay Writers*

## Why We Write

Well, there's money involved in writing. I have this excess cash I need to convert into entry fees for contests and postage for queries. My editor would like a few dollars and the publicist too. Yes ... I've heard you can actually earn money writing and perhaps that's true, though *my* last revenue was when at university I wrote home for twenty bucks. Most authors have a day job. That means "Yes, yes, I'm a professional writer; three, four, six times a week, I sit at a computer composing. It's only in my off time that I sell cars."



Yes, I write because I get great satisfaction out of putting stuff gathered from my rich, exciting life down in the form of fiction; and even more out of constructing plots in which the characters I create enact those ideas that emanate from my experiences (although they often do it much differently than I—successfully). This sort of reflection gives me a boost.

I may be an egoist—unable to survive without the awareness of others. A philosopher once said if you don't hear it (another said see), it doesn't exist. I guess I kind of feel that way about who I am as a writer. I like people to read my stuff and say, "Geez Dave, it doesn't happen that way, or more action verbs, or you need conflict sooner, and where's the damned suspense?" All of these things put me right in that quite-bearable, bright light of being.

And being a writer brings permission to leave—to find a quiet place to work on your story, absent the demands of the day. It can mean sitting in the sun inside a large window that looks out to snow-covered mountains behind shimmering lakes or a ride on a train across the country, with your mind lazily open to life's visual offerings. It most often means dozing in the cradle of my favorite recliner (actively plumbing my creative mind, of course) and no one's to say there's a lawn to be mowed or paint to be slathered over hot peeling surfaces—"Shhh, David is writing and he may create something magnificent."

Some men write about themselves, for their children, their grandchildren, and great grandchildren—on into infinity. They love extolling their achievements, their thoughts and ideas and yes, their love of family: ancestors mightily remembered, current products of seed, and those who will bear the name centuries hence. These men are usually portly and boring, carry a glass of sherry in their hand and punctuate most of their many observations with "harrumph!" Fifty of these exfoliations of gravitas may be published. Forty-nine will be packaged and stored in the garage but one left on a shelf in the library, which can be pulled out along with grandmother's china for infrequent guests.

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## California Writers Club South Bay Branch

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### Executive Committee

President—Dave LaRoche  
pres@southbaywriters.com  
408 729-3941

Vice President—Bill Baldwin  
vp@southbaywriters.com

Secretary—Rita St. Claire  
secretary@southbaywriters.com

Treasurer—Richard Burns  
treasurer@southbaywriters.com

### Central Board Rep

Dave LaRoche (acting)

### Directors

Programs—Bill Baldwin  
vp@southbaywriters.com

Publicity and Public Relations—Edie Matthews  
publicity@southbaywriters.com  
408 985-0819

Membership—Marjorie Johnson  
membership@southbaywriters.com

Hospitality—Cathy Bauer  
cathy@bauerstar.com

Historian—Clarence Hammonds  
historian@southbaywriters.com

Networking—Sara Aurich  
networking@southbaywriters.com

East of Eden Conference—Edie Matthews and  
Kelly Harrison, co-chairs  
eastofeden@southbaywriters.com

Open Mic—Bill Baldwin  
408 730-9622

Webmaster—Ro Davis  
webmaster@southbaywriters.com

### 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

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

### Managing Editor

Richard Amyx  
newsletter@southbaywriters.com  
408 297-4438

### Contributing Editors

Bill Belew  
Una Daly  
Carolyn Donnell  
Andrea Galvacs (copyeditor)  
Lita Kurth  
Victoria M. Johnson  
Jackie Mutz (copyeditor)

### 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

Richard Amyx  
994 No. 2nd Street  
San Jose, CA 95112

### Guest Columns

*Almost Anything Goes* (400 words)

### News Items (400 words)

### Letters to the Editor (300 words)

to Andrea Galvacs  
lady\_angal@comcast.net

### Creative Works

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

### Accolades

accolades@southbaywriters.com

### Announcements and Advertisements

newsletter@southbaywriters.com

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

Advertising is accepted on the basis of its interest and value to writers. Advertising rates for Club members, \$7 per column inch; non-members, \$10. We will assist or insist with layout.

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# Editor's Perspective

by Dick Amyx  
Editor

## I like cooking cats and painting



In June, I talked about how English doesn't have an institution comparable to *L'Académie française* and how it's up to the practitioners of English (you and me) and bodies such as usage panels to maintain the purity of the language. In Edie Matthews' writing class not long ago, when I commented on one student's work by saying that we refer to numbers of things with *more than* rather than *over* (more than 2000 people attended the concert), another student looked at me and said, in that particular tone reserved for such pronouncements, "You must be an English major." Well, yes, as a matter of fact, I was—I graduated, even—and I take very seriously my responsibility for maintaining the purity of the language.

During the last week I read two pieces of amateur writing in which the authors barreled full speed ahead with words, untroubled by such niceties as using commas to separate conjunctive phrases or items in serial lists. Given what I said only two sentences ago, you might think that I was troubled by that stylistic element (or grammatical gaffe, depending on how you want to look at it). I wasn't. I found that the lack of commas didn't slow me down in the least and that I had to wonder why English majors were so pecky about them. I tend to think that punctuation is a bit overrated, and I have my own problems with commas (just ask my wife the editor, she'll tell you).

In addition, I am left-leaning in the matter of creativity. When I was serving as a judge for the Basil Stevens contest two years ago, the piece I thought was the most creative of the lot and one of the best got tossed out immediately by another judge because it was full of misspellings and other minuscule errors, which serves to illustrate the point that there are matters of opinion involved in making these judgments.

We do know that language changes over time—though more with the meaning of words than with punctuation—and that instant messaging is pushing the envelope in three or four dimensions. So why do we need to keep using all those commas?

I have to admit that when I read the commaless conjunctive phrases and serial lists I mentally inserted commas—slight pauses—where they belonged. I'm so conditioned to and practiced in these conventions that I repair them on the fly the same way we all unconsciously correct fractured phrases and scrambled syntax in conversation. And that, I think, provides the clue to why the commas are necessary.

I tried to imagine a time after, say, two generations, when neither parents nor their offspring had been taught about commas, phrases, and lists, and would therefore be unable to insert them mentally. Would the meaning of undifferentiated strings of words be conveyed accurately, or would ambiguity or confusion result? I had to vote for ambiguity or confusion.

This isn't to put the knock on those writers who chose not to use commas in the usual way, but to say that the only reason that that stylistic departure—and others—work is because the readers know which rules are being broken.

Hopping now off my soapbox, I'd like to thank the contributing editors for recognizing my one-year anniversary as managing editor of *WritersTalk*. Thank you Andrea, Una, Carolyn, Rich, Suzy, Jackie, Lita, Victoria, and Bill. I couldn't have done it without you. WT

### Erratum

In the October *WritersTalk*, the name of Brian Coleman's book was incorrect in both the Editor's Perspective and in a caption on page 9. The correct title of Mr. Coleman's book is *Not a Genuine Black Man*.



# Introduction to Blogging

by Bill Belew

There are at least two kinds of writers—those who write for writing's sake and those who write to be read. I am of the second kind. There are at least two kinds of writers who write to be read—those who do it for the fun of it



Bill Belew  
Contributing Editor

and those who would like to make some money doing the writing thing which would include those who have written a book or two and want to get the word out. Again, I am of the second kind. Blogging helps pay my mortgage, and I have written and had a book of my blog material published to boot.

It is estimated that there are more than 77 million blogs. The general wisdom is that if there are that many, some of them have to be good. Why shouldn't mine be one of the good ones? Why shouldn't yours?

*Blog* is a contraction for the term "web log." Frankly, the name is not very attractive. It sounds too much like blah, blah, blah. I prefer to explain what I do: I keep content current and focused on one topic on an interactive website, in a log format presented in reverse chronological order.

Too often, those who don't know what blogs can be think bloggers just blah, blah, blah about themselves, what they ate, the breakup in their relationship, or the kind of video games they like. Some bloggers do write like this. They are the ones who blahg, that is, they write for writing's sake.

Not all bloggers just blahg, though. Some make it a serious effort. For example, four of the top eight online entertainment sites are blogs. More people read blogs than read *People*, *TV Guide*, *Entertainment Weekly* or *AskMen.com* online. Often, a blogger can pass on information faster than major media sources. I wrote a couple of posts about the \$700 billion man, Neel Kashkari, as breaking news, and more than 5,000 people came to read it.

It's fun to get an immediate response to what I write and from people who don't know me. I should also admit that I don't like the feedback I get sometimes, for sure.

Blogging is a global phenomenon. I own a blog network. I have writers who blog for me who live in India, Romania, Malaysia, Bangladesh, and America. Having such a global reach is a thrill. Did I say that blogging can be fun?

Blogging can be profitable. For bloggers the average annual revenue is \$6,000. Those who can get 100,000 unique visitors a month earn closer to \$75K. That income can be generated with minimum investment and a lot of hard work. There's the rub. Blogging is easy if all you want to do is see your work on the net. Blogging is hard work if you want to make a living at it.

Blogging can be an effective way of getting the word out on your book, too. In the course of blogging I have gained more than 1000 subscribers, that is, readers who want to see all the updates of my blogs. Before I had my book, *Gee, I Wish I had Been Drinking at the Time* accepted by a publisher, said publisher was quite happy to know that I already had a likely audience as well as visitors in the thousands who came to my sites.

In future issues of *WritersTalk*, I will get more specific about blogging. I have some 250 pages of notes I have garnered from tips by other bloggers who are on networks to which I belong. For now, let me share some keys to making a blog successful. Success for the purposes of this article is defined as getting visitors to your site to read what you write and having them turn the pages—page views. Visitors, in turn, equal potential book buyers as well.

## Key #1—write less, write more.

Visitors to blogs like things short and sweet. More than three out of four Internet users read blogs and spend less than a minute at one site. A blog entry is best at 100-200 words. If a blogger has more to say, he should do a series divided into parts 1 and 2 and so on. Write less per post, but write many posts. Something magical happens at about 1,000 post entries. Traffic jumps up to double and begins to grow organically. Search engines find your blog, and readers come from all sorts of

places. My last 500 visitors to one of my sites came from 23 different countries. Did I say blogging is fun?

**Key #2—consistency.** Devote time to writing every day. Every, every day. And, if that is not possible, use the scheduler on your blog tool so it looks like you are putting up content every day. In other words, write multiple blog entries ahead of time, but have the scheduler put up one per day. I have been on week-long cruises and spent several days poolside watching my son win a national swim title, but my readers never knew the difference. I am not a slave to blogging, but I am consistent. Search engines value a consistent blog. More on that in future articles.

**Key #3—longevity.** I mentioned above that 1,000 appears to be a magical number for posts. Another magic number is six months. When the search engines learn that a blog has been active for six months, with a number of blogs being consistently posted, a page rank is assigned. The higher the page rank, the easier it is for searchers to find the blog. The higher the page rank, the easier to get new readers. I can write about a hot topic, and with a little bit of luck, readers pour in. Did I mention that it is fun to blog?

**Key #4—quality.** The writing/content still has to be good. Sure enough, you can fool some of the people some of the time, but not all the people all the time. The search algorithms of the Googles and the Yahoos can determine if a blogger is just copying and pasting material from elsewhere or putting up something original.

Write good stuff, do it regularly, for a long time, and little by little, your blog will be noticed. Those are pretty much the same rules for writing a novel, except for that last part. A blog, however, gives the writer a chance to be noticed now. And, when that book is finished, to be noticed then, too.

Oh, and did I say blogging can be fun?  
WT

*Bill Belew is owner of the CosmoFair Blog Network. He writes PanAsianBiz and RisingSunOfNihon for the b5Media network. Bill Belew has written more than 10,000 posts and his blogs have received more than 6,000,000 page views. This Bill Belew did not dress the King.*

## 5-7-5... Voila!

### A Haiku.

by *Jamie Miller*

I fell in love with haiku one summer Saturday. I had volunteered as a group escort for a kids' one-day writing camp sponsored by the Peninsula Branch of CWC, and joined them for a poetry session with a gentleman whose name I have unfortunately forgotten. He devoted just a short time to haiku, but I was hooked!

Of course, I knew about haiku. Anyone with kids in school eventually encounters it: a poem written in three lines, each having five, then seven, then five syllables. It's about the simplest formal poetry possible, but it's useful because it requires attention to syllables and words. It doesn't need rhyme or meter, and doesn't even have to mean anything. But if it lacks the lovely complexity of the dactylic hexameter in Longfellow's *Evangeline*, at least a haiku offers the possibility of seizing a thought and actually finishing the poem to go with it.

I'd had a moment like that, not long before, when I'd leaned on the railing of the railroad trestle at Capitola, trying to defeat my fear of heights by looking down at the sway of the water in Capitola Creek far below. I realized then that I had a haiku right before me:

Leaves drift with the wind.  
Ducks paddle in place.  
Downstream the tide is turning.

Nice, but the pattern is 5-5-7, not the requisite 5-7-5. I mentally filed it away.

Fast forward again to that Saturday at the kids' writing camp. The instructor talked about the traditional requirements for haiku, nature as a subject, the three-line structure, a reference to a season of the year, and the requirement for a change in mood. The last line, possibly the last two lines, should show that change. Perhaps it's an answer to the first lines, maybe a solution, or it might be a sense of anticipation or even unease about the future. He read some examples, and then gave the group time to try writing a haiku of their own to share. I recalled "Capitola Bridge" and wrote it down. He surprised me by inviting me to read mine, too, and seemed pleased with what I had.

"That's good," he remarked. "I like that."

Pessimist that I am, I had to point out the problem. "But it's 5-5-7 pattern."

"No problem. It works," he said. The elements were there: seventeen syllables in three lines, the drifting leaves suggesting autumn, and the turn of the tide intimating some unknown change to the calm scene.

That left me with a nagging question. If the 5-7-5 pattern wasn't an unbendable rule, what did define a haiku? I started by Googling the net. Haiku originated, of course, a couple of hundred years ago in Japan, and was originally the opening lines of a longer work called a *renku*. With time, the longer portion of the *renku* was commonly abandoned, leaving the current form. In contrast to the English-language three-line form, haiku was traditionally written in one vertical line. Instead of counting syllables as in English, the Japanese language traditionally counted *on*, which seem to correspond approximately to English phonemes. (So a word like "our," which we'd call one syllable, may consist of two *on*, depending on regional pronunciation.) Rather than using punctuation and capitalization as is common in English-language poetry, traditional haiku used only a *kireji* word, a sort of verbal punctuation that signals the shift from the problem setup of the first and second lines to the resolution of the last. Articles (a, the, an) were not used. And, of course, a reference to the season of the year was needed, and it was provided by one of several conventional words. So, allowing for the complexities of translating such different languages, English versions of works of the Japanese masters of the craft are often very pleasing, though the problem/resolution connection may be obscure.

old pond  
a frog jumps  
the sound of water  
(Basho, 1644-1694)

The moment two bubbles  
are united they both vanish  
a lotus blooms  
(Murakami, 1865-1938)

but sometimes detached observation of nature gives way to emotional connection:

the first cold shower  
even the monkey seems to want  
a little coat of straw  
(Basho)

Living forms evolve. Shiki (1867-1902) engaged human emotions, as in this example, translated with English-language punctuation:

Night; and once again,  
the while I wait for you,  
cold wind turns into rain.

Development of English-language haiku awaited the 1950's, when writers began to experiment with the form. One might think, on reading some current works, that the traditional rules have been abandoned totally. That's not quite true. Jane Reichold's website ([www.ahapoetry.com/HAIKU.HTM](http://www.ahapoetry.com/HAIKU.HTM)) lists over fifty rules, many mutually incompatible, of which some (or maybe none) you might (or might not) apply when you put thought to paper. And to finally see off what had seemed the basic rule of the genre, the seventeen *on*

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## New Members

by *Lita Kurth*

**Ameena Saeed**, whose novel excerpt appears in this issue, is a new member. Formerly a professional journalist writing in English in India, she now teaches Sociology at community college and has joined a Fremont novel critique group. Her email is [amnsd@yahoo.com](mailto:amnsd@yahoo.com).

**Evelyn Preston**, a transferring member from San Francisco/Peninsula CWC, is the author of a memoir, *Memoirs of the Money Lady*, based on her twenty-five year career as a financial adviser. A speaker as well as an author, she offers more information on her website, [money-lady.com](http://money-lady.com), and can be contacted at [evierp100@yahoo.com](mailto:evierp100@yahoo.com).

**Bill Pack**, whose novel *The Bottom of the Sky*, a contest finalist, will hit your local bookstore in the new year, graciously says he joined the South Bay Writers Club to find folks who write better than he does and to improve as a writer. He'd like to find an on-task critique group that reads items before meeting. He also writes poetry, songs, and short stories. Contact him at [AMontanan@stanfordalumni.org](mailto:AMontanan@stanfordalumni.org). WT

# Five Reasons to Write a Novel This Month

by Lisa Eckstein

November is National Novel Writing Month, and it's not too late to join writers around the world in the challenge of producing a 50,000-word novel in 30 days. Sign up on the NaNoWriMo.org website and commit to writing a couple thousand words a day for the rest of the month and you'll be able to claim a winner's certificate on November 30. But why would you want to?

**1. It's more fruitful to write a novel now than someday.** If you have a book that's been stalled at Chapter 1 for years, or an idea you've never even started writing, NaNoWriMo is the perfect reason to make this the month that you return to that long-neglected manuscript.

**2. You may as well get the first draft over with quickly.** Whether you compose a first draft in a month or a decade, it will be filled with scenes and sentences so horrible they will make you cringe. Finishing your novel in a month means you can move on to the necessary revision stage sooner, and a benefit of writing from beginning to end in 30 days is that you don't have time to forget what's going on and who all your characters are.

**3. Quantity before quality leads to unexpected flashes of genius.** To write 50,000 words in a month, you have to accept that your prose will often be unbelievable, ridiculous, and meandering. When you read your novel over in January, you're likely to discover that some of these ridiculous meanderings are better than anything else you've ever written.

**4. Deadlines and peer pressure thwart procrastinatory tendencies.** Writing can't wait until tomorrow if you have a word count goal to meet. Failure is worse when you have to admit it to others, so tell all your family and friends that you're writing a novel this month. They won't let you forget to keep writing, and as a bonus, you might get excused from household chores or

## Accolades

by Jackie Mutz

CWC's SouthBay Halloween October meetings are always wild. Some members come in their favorite author costumes; all are original, many hilarious. As in Bill Baldwin's "Metaphors Be with You" Darth Vader character or Vicki Wynne's Abunda dancer—"move your buns and you have **a-bun-dance**" (you get the picture)—Dr. Seuss, Mark Twain, and favorite characters Winnie the Pooh and Scheherazade were there, another important reason to attend those monthly meetings. Where else will you find such a creative group of individuals dedicated to the writing craft? Here are a few success stories for the month of October:



Jackie Mutz  
Contributing Editor

- **Betty Auchard** was a guest speaker recently at a senior center in Pleasanton to an audience of 350 persons. Her topic? Her best selling book *Dancing in My Nightgown*.
- **Dale Aycock** taught a one day poetry workshop aptly entitled *Writing Poetry: The Magic of Imagery* on October 25 at LGS Recreation in Los

tedious social obligations for the next few weeks.

**5. Writing is more fun when it's not a solitary activity.** NaNoWriMo participants in the South Bay meet at cafes throughout November to write, encourage one another, and share ideas. It may seem paradoxical, but people who attend write-ins reach 50k at a higher rate than those who stay home. The forums on the NaNoWriMo.org website also provide an opportunity for camaraderie, support, and yes, procrastination. But even when you're writing a novel in a month, there's always time for a short break.

For more information on National Novel Writing Month, and to sign up to participate, visit [nanowrimo.org](http://nanowrimo.org). While you're there, stop by the California: South Bay region to learn about local events. WT

Gatos. Check out some of her other writing classes at [www.lgs.org](http://www.lgs.org).

- **Bill Belew**, a seasoned blogger, college instructor, and fellow WT contributing editor, saw his blogs surpass the six millionth page views. Congrats Bill.
- **Lisa Eckstein** reminded everyone that November is NaNoWriMo, the write a novel in thirty days event. Seen [nanorimo.org](http://nanorimo.org) for details.
- Lita Kurth's short-short story "Heaven's Entryway" won Honorable Mention in the Tattoo Highway contest "picture worth 500 words" and was accepted for publication in their seventeenth edition, viewable online at [www.tattoohighway.org/](http://www.tattoohighway.org/) contest.
- **Dr. Audry Lynch** had one of her articles accepted for publication in the Abraham Lincoln Anthology, which will be sold at the Bicentennial in Washington, D.C. in 2009.
- **Pat Decker Nipper** had an article, "Coffee Kings of the Old West: Folger Was First, Then Arbuckle" published in the December issue of *Wild West* magazine. She commends her critique group for helping in polishing it enough for publication.
- **Suzy Paluzzi** read a selection of her poems on October 7 at the Poetry Center San Jose event *Poetry First!* Best known as an accessible poet, she has been published in *Western Writers*, *Writers Talk*, *The Santa Clara Weekly*, *The Cupertino Daily*, and on several websites. Reading one's poetry in front of a live audience can be daunting. Congratulations, Suzy!

I was glad to see that several people sent me email about their successes in writing. Remember, there are several ways to get yourself into the "Accolades" column. Stand up at a monthly meeting, fill out a success form located at the entrance to the monthly meeting, or email me at [accolades@southbaywriters.com](mailto:accolades@southbaywriters.com). I look forward to hearing from you. We all do. WT





# The Journey of a Thousand Miles: Writing Prompts, Borrowed Feathers

by Lita Kurth

I call this column "Borrowed Feathers" because it contains numerous brilliant ideas that are not my own. Stuck for inspiration this month, I reached out and queried my writers' community. They did not disappoint. Are you perchance stuck too? Let me share with you some prompts they suggested along with some of my favorites. And if you use them, by all means, members, send your results to the editor of this newsletter!



Lita Kurth  
Contributing Editor

Write an "I'm sorry" poem or story. You might begin by reading Wm. Carlos Williams' famous apology for eating some reserved plums, "This is Just to Say." Then take off in your own special direction as in "I'm sorry my spaceship destroyed your sycamore."

Write a story about a dramatic event that could happen in the room you're

sitting in. (Using a campus seminar room as my site, I created a short story about a professor denied tenure who committed vandalism followed by attempted suicide. My fellow writer wrote about a firefighter breaking into the same room, now aflame, to save a favorite former teacher.)

Write the autobiography of a tree in your yard. Make it the sexual autobiography of that tree. Make it the political autobiography. Make it the spiritual autobiography.

Start with two famous people unlikely ever to be found together and get them conversing (the source of my "Amelia Earhart Meets Jesus" story).

Write a list story or poem: How to be my Dad/Mom. Be as honest as possible.

Write a story or poem about a photo or painting whose subject is not clear and act as if it is clear (the source of my "Heaven's Entryway" and several other short-shorts).

Belletrists?

Write about sensory data of this autumnal season and ambivalence about change while embodying yearning and without ever mentioning the words "change" or "yearning." (suggested by P. Craig)

For those with a nonfiction or instruc-

tional bent:

1. Why Adverbs Suck
2. In Favor of Adverbs, She Said Peppily
3. Look! Consider Punctuation: Your Guide to Greatness.\* \*English Majors, Please Read
4. Pronouns, Or, God Has Been Referred to as Male for 5,000 Years and Enough is Enough Already. (suggested by K. Hays)

For those with a political turn (lots of Southbay Writers, it seems!):

"What about campaign signs? I went to an Obama rally yesterday (in Anchorage) where most of the signs were handmade, including one that said, "You've seen two terms of pachyderms— time to be a smart ass." ... A writer could get tons of inspiration ... Or consider the possibility of "side shows." We watched police 'manage' some spilled cement that looked suspiciously like large piles of dung." (suggested by K. Eberhart)

I'll close with something that may yield a little surprise from your unconscious, that source of so many creative gifts: Begin with the words, "What I *don't* think is..."

Again, send those prompt-inspired works to your community! WT

## Poet Laureate Reads at Montalvo Arts Center

by Suzy Paluzzi

On Thursday, October 23, in response to an invitation by Poetry Center San Jose, U.S. Poet Laureate Kay Ryan read her poetry to a packed audience of all ages at The Carriage House in Montalvo Arts Center. This was her first public appearance as Poet Laureate after her presentation to the Library of Congress.

Kay Ryan was born in San Jose in 1945, but stayed there for only six months. She grew up in the San Joaquin Valley and the Mojave Desert. She taught remedial reading and writing in the College of Marin for 30 years. Ryan says doing that work at the community college taught her not to take for

granted that an audience would automatically understand her poetry, and also explains that the students she taught challenged her to hone her metaphor skills.



U.S. Poet Laureate Kay Ryan autographs her books following her reading at Montalvo Arts Center. Photo: Suzy Paluzzi

When asked what she would say to

young people who are in English classes, Kay Ryan thought a moment, and responded, "The language we have is here because it is beautiful; if it no longer gives pleasure, it will change." She also feels "Poetry is like a gold coin. It can be buried in the ground and unearthed years later, and it will still shine."

Kay Ryan is the sixteenth U.S. Poet Laureate. Her poetry is often humorous, yet philosophical. The selections she read were brief pieces with internal rhyme. She has a definite love for the way language sounds, and a gift of making poetry enjoyable and approachable. Still, this description does not do her creativity justice. On the back cover of Ryan's poetry collection *Flamingo Watching*, renowned poet May Sarton is quoted as saying, "She (Ryan) makes it all fresh again with her highly original vision, her elegant, quirky craft." WT

*Continued from page 1*

how many fiction writers became journalists. With all the distortion, it's hard to tell what is the truth. We're inundated with BS. What is the meaning of life? Life offers a universe of infinite possibilities. People think things have already been written. When bad things happen to good



**The slightly manic Swami Beyondananda (with moosefix).**

people, Swami thinks it's because God is dyslexic. Swami believes the way to end the war on drugs is to improve reality. He shared the four required elements for life:

- 1.. The Sun
2. Food from nature
3. Love, because you can't buy happiness
4. Imagination

"Of these, imagination is the most underused." Then Swami imparted more wisdom upon us. He knew the secret to being young... reincarnation. Someone asked about the key to success. He replied, "The bad news is, there is no key. The good news is, it's unlocked." Swami left with this parting pearl, "If at first you don't succeed, redefine your definition of success."

Next we were introduced to Steve Bhaerman (Swami's alter ego) by his wife, Trudy.

Steve said he's here because of a joke. He knew he was 'chosen' when he told a joke in fifth grade and the kids laughed so hard that milk came out of their nose. Growing up we're told to be serious. At 23 years old, he had a

contract with Simon & Shuster after opening an alternative high school in Washington, D.C. and writing a book about it. He learned by doing. He didn't like writing so he switched chapters with his co-author. That was how they finished the book. He says the English language was made for word play and that's what he liked to do. He recalled when he worked on his second book and his agent couldn't sell it. At the time he was laid off from his job in the Department of Parks & Forestry in Ann Arbor, Michigan. So he finally let the book project go and started a humorous newspaper with a buddy. It was a sitcom set in the world of the Department of Forestry. Portraying each of the workers as a comical character, the newspaper became a huge hit. The workplace changed. People did things just to see themselves in the paper. The newspaper changed his life. He realized he could write humor and understood that humor gives you the power to say what couldn't be said. "With humor, you can write and say things that you normally can't. You can tell people things they don't want to hear in a way that they'll want to hear it."

Steve says there are four stages to "fool realization," which he calls the fool's journey:

1. Innocent fool. We start out as easily entertainable children who are easily fooled; for example, playing peek-a-boo. Unfortunately, when we're young and so impressionable we get tricked into believing ridiculous nonsense. Many of the world's problems are the result on the programming we got as innocent fools. Part of that programming is the belief that life is serious, and so we become serious fools.
2. Serious fool. We believe that the small things we've been programmed to be concerned about are going to have some kind of lasting influence. Then we wake up and become conscious fools.
3. Conscious fool. We understand that we've been fooled. Many comedians work with the conscious fool and remind us of the ways in which we've been fooled.
4. Conscious innocent fool. The conscious innocent fool allows the innocence to come back in. We

realize that we've deconstructed just about everything we can deconstruct and the question is what can we playfully construct in our world. Part of the Swami's mission is to weave a web of mass construction and encourage people to dare to imagine. The trick is to dismantle an old belief that we take for reality. That's the power that humor has.

Dismantling beliefs that people took for reality is what Steve did with his corporate newspaper. The newspaper, he says, was the right thing at the right time in the right place.

"Founders of this country gave us a great gift," Steve says. "We all have something to contribute. We're now divided by preconditioned beliefs and we're never going to come together until we realize we're all common cells in the body of humanity."

Steve's favorite comedic writer is H. Allen Smith. He admired Groucho Marx, the Marx Brothers, and Steve Allen. He appreciates Robin Williams because he's "kind of like this plug-in cultural generator of material."

In response to a question about graveside humor, Steve said he believes that humor is a

means of processing and relieving crippling tension. He told the story of two men in a Nazi death camp during World War II who made a pact with each other they'd find something to laugh about each day. The two agreed that if they laughed, "then there's a part of you that can't be put in prison."

Regarding writer's block, Steve believes there's no writing problem he can't solve. If he gets stuck on a project, he'll put it aside and work on something else. The next morning he'll go back to the project and say, "Oh, I know what to do."

When he made his first attempt at writing, he found that he had nothing to say—but a few years later, he realized



**The soft-spoken, scholarly Steve Bhaerman.**



## WritersTalk Challenge Winners

The winners of the *WritersTalk* Challenge for the period March 2008–August 2008 were announced at the October 14 general meeting. Each Challenge winner received a certificate and a cash award of \$40. The way to be a Challenge winner is to have your work published in *WritersTalk*.

Fiction: Vicki Wynne, for "Letter to My People"

Article/Essay: Meredy Amyx, for "Losing the Apostrophic War"

Memoir: Juliana Richmond, for "Flood"

Poetry: Richard Burns, for "Cold Temptation"



Richard Burns, Vicki Wynne, Meredy Amyx

that he had a story to tell about the school he founded, and that chronological stories are easy to write. He reminded us that writing is a process. You can't compare your first draft to a great writer's last draft. You have to dance with your muse, and she's always leading. He warned against prematurely editing a book.

Most importantly, show up, and don't prematurely edit a conclusion about yourself. Steve writes every day and never takes longer than a year to write a book.

He maintains two websites: [wakeuplaughing.com](http://wakeuplaughing.com) and [departmentofheartlandsecurity.org](http://departmentofheartlandsecurity.org).

As the Swami, Steve is the author of four books, *Driving Your Own Karma*, *When You See a Sacred Cow, Milk It for All It's Worth*, *Duck Soup for the Soul*; and his latest, *Swami for Precedent: A 7-Step Plan to Heal the Body Politic and Cure Electile Dysfunction*. WT

## Annual Costume Contest



The October 14 general meeting was the site of SBW's annual Literary Costume Contest. Here are all the costumes.

### And the winners are ...



**Most Original:** Vickie Wynn as "Abunda" (makes more sense when you see the bun dance); **Prettiest:** Edie Matthews as Annie Oakley; **Funniest (and probably best acting):** Loureen Murphy as Little Red Riding Hood; **Scariest:** Steve Wetlesen as "No Blood No Oil" (title of work in progress); **Most Literary:** David Breithaupt as "The 225-Word Genius" Theodore Geisel (Dr. Seuss)

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# the arranged marriage

by Ameena A. Saeed

“So what’s the coconut all about? Is it really holy?” A guest asked after the water from the coconut was sprinkled over the entrance of the restaurant Karma Curry.

“Its poor man’s champagne,” Professor Pundit replied, “except it has zero alcohol. For intoxication, you need to drink the real stuff. I, for one, like everything on the rocks. Gives me such a genuine robust hangover that I let it linger for as long as possible. Then I drink beer to nurse it. Hangovers tend to blunt academic frustrations, being tenure track without being tenured, tyranny of marriage, intellectual subjugation, and the futility of day-to-day monotony.”

In his class, he relished shredding the theory of Clash of Civilizations as narrow, but he was an avid observer of the Clash of Intracivilization unfolding before him at Karma Curry. He watched the celebration with a mixture of poignant sadness and cynical amusement as Devi’s parents cowered in a corner like frightened cats. He looked around the hall. People were swishing whiskey on the rocks, clinking champagne glasses, laughing out loud with panache and confidence. Women wore silk saris and expensive jewelry and carried newly acquired class with vanity. It was too much for Devi’s untouchable family. He felt sorry for them. Climbing higher in the social hierarchy spelled *anomie*. They would never be accepted into the opulent fold, and what they left behind would not accept them.

The Professor was captivated by Devi’s brother, the coarsely handsome Charu, the black sheep of the low caste family. The young man intrigued him. He was the stuff fiery Marxists are made of, hot-blooded and young, who should have been marching in the front ranks of the revolution. Here he was, looking amused but defiant, standing guard over his parents against possible class innuendos, bravely taking the assault of affluence rather than a bullet on the chest. His short life would become a legend for children who would otherwise become clerks and petty traders, or corrupt officials of a developing nation of software programmers for America’s companies. Charu was revolutionary material, blunted and battered by capitalism.

Young Charu reminded him of the brave soldier of a defeated army. What do they do after they’ve been crushed? They eat, drink, and make love to their sweethearts with self-loathing that overrides their passion for life. They had been denied an honorable death and a furious funeral.

He sipped his dry martini and looked keenly at his brother-in-law, Jyotesh Benegal. What inspired that handsome but spineless man to fall in love with a certified fallen woman? How did he muster the courage to bring her to his sister without bloodshed? Was he really in love? If that were the case, the Professor would speak to him with more respect and less compassion. But every time he watched his wife smile at Devi, he noticed a flash of sulfur. *Are the brother-sister duo up to some fiendish trick?*

Time, and time alone, would tell what was going to transpire. For now, he watched, wearily, one more successful capitalist chronicle, Jyotesh, unaccomplished scion of a brand-name family, married to an interesting, accomplished, pariah woman without the blessing of his matriarch sister. She had not said a single word about the unholy alliance. Every time he broached the subject, she changed it with a metallic smile. No one in the family was talking about the unearthly event, but he knew his wife was the queen of palace intrigue. She’d swallowed the bitterest pill of her life, however reluctantly. Why? He decided not to trust his wife.

He liked the young woman, Devi. She intrigued him. Slim, dusky, anxious, with darkly intense eyes lurking behind a laid-back countenance, she carried historical

baggage. She was accomplished and, above all, slightly devastated. His affection for her was tinged with sadness. She looked vulnerable and happy, unprepared for the vicissitudes of life that awaited her around the corner. She had chosen the seemingly easy but actually hardest path. She was going to break three thousand years of order and bear the brunt. Would she survive?

From an academic perspective, he was captivated by the drama unfolding before him. Thousands of years of culture, built on strict rules of caste inequality, held in place by the double-edged sword of religion and violence, complicated by fierce globalization, were unraveling before him. The real clash—the one between the old caste system of hereditary inequality and equal opportunity in this society—was going to play out in the premises of his home. He would not get his heart’s desire of a bloody revolution, but it could be close.

*I might be a participant observer to curbside history*, he thought, excitedly.

For now, there were other more pressing issues on his mind. Mr. Pundit, the voracious reader, die-hard Marxist, master of discreet sexual transgressions, had to look for a new professional single mother to fill the void created by a successful marriage and a large family.

He never planned to be the discreet philanderer he had become. It started with an arranged marriage he had asked for.

About a decade ago, he was in Ithaca, New York, as a student. After he graduated, he worked part time as a temporary lecturer in a community college until budget cuts terminated his teaching assignment. He was left with the assurance of a teaching job the following spring but had nothing to do in the fall and winter. He was out of job, out of money, lonely and miserable, living on a measly daily meal of beans and toast. He wanted a woman to feed his belly and warm his bed. The only way he could have all that without a home, job, or money, was marriage: an arranged marriage. He called his family in Bombay. He was coming home to marry right away, like most of his colleagues. He asked them to look for a

suitable bride for him. He would marry, spend some time with the family and return to U.S. in the spring. That was the way it had been for generations, and that was the way it was going to be. He didn't have the luxury of being a nonconformist. Besides, it was sub-zero winter in Ithaca.

His family carefully chose a bride from the same caste, sub-caste and class. Suman's father was a retired colonel; she was a graduate, the only daughter of her parents, and sister to four brothers. They were known as a "decent Brahmin family." They lived a comfortable upper middle-class existence, and were keen to send one of their offspring to the U.S. That would open the door for others. They gave some money in dowry and arranged a honeymoon in Kashmir, which was cancelled because of trouble in that state and changed to a sojourn in Bangkok.



Illustration by Betty Auchard

He arrived in Bombay on the eve of the wedding. Everything had been arranged beforehand, even to the rose petals arranged on his bed in the shape of Cupid.

There was no reason to see the bride and complicate matters. The ceremony was a happy and usual one, and he was at the center of it all. The religious ceremony where he took seven rounds of the holy fire, her sari corner tied to his long silken scarf, took about three hours. After they took vows in the presence of the priest to stay married for seven incarnations, he was gently pushed, as was customary, into the bridal chamber by a bunch of giggling unmarried, about to be married and married women. That was when he saw his bride without a veil for the first time. Moments after his public decree to be her husband for seven incarnations, he took a silent vow to lead a life of

debauchery and licentious sex.

She was sitting demurely on a bed covered with brocade and satins, wearing about a kilogram of gold jewelry. He raised her chin, pulled aside the sari pallu that acted as a veil, revealed her full visage, and reached for the armchair.

She had a presence. He couldn't deny that. She had a round, chubby face, with a thick nose that sat in the middle like a roadblock. Her eyes were half closed, heavy eyelids drooping on her pupils. Her hair was wavy and curly, and covered her narrow forehead. Her ears stuck out like two lanterns without light. He looked and looked, but could find nothing he liked, not even the mustard sized mole at the bottom of her lower lip, which could move many poets to verse. She was fair-skinned, and that might have prompted his family to decide in her favor. Most of his family members described her as cute and wholesome. Maybe she was, for many men of his age. Those were the days when thin women were considered sickly, unattractive, and from families beleaguered with domestic problems.

He looked once more, and this time her unibrow, thick and definite like an arrow, perforated his heart, causing it to murmur rapidly. He staggered.

*I am condemned to a decadent life and wanton women. I have no choice.* The thought crossed his mind many times that night, as he consummated the marriage.

No one, not even her brothers, would object to that. That was a sign of a stable and long-lasting marriage. That didn't change anything. Here was a woman he was supposed to spend the rest of his life with, and have children. And there was nothing he could do about it. Her brothers were many, and almost all of them were rumored to be ranging from mildly schizophrenic to wildly insane. He knew that when he took his bride to the U.S. she would get down to the business of sponsoring her brothers to come to the land of opportunity. He had no escape from her, or her many brothers. This was a marriage between two families, and any sign of displeasure from him would complicate matters for generations to come. And for what? Just because he did not find

her attractive? A shallow reason to let a marriage go awry. A culture doesn't survive three thousand years of invasions and carnage because it was frivolous and trivial.

It was later, much later, when he'd gotten used to life with his wife, and her brothers had immigrated to America, that he realized they were mellow and non-threatening. The rumor circulated in town about the brothers being crazy was stage managed to frighten him into domestic submission. Like a true academician, a man of learning, he took the bait, and lived his life as the henpecked husband of a wife he never found attractive.

With time and age and the fall of the communist world, he became increasingly disenchanted with an affluent and predictable life. Every time a leftist government fell somewhere in the world, he found himself filled with sadness and infrequent philandering.

They slept in the same bed, with a tacit understanding that sex would happen only when the Professor desired. He remained an eccentric when it came to conjugal bliss in the domestic environment. Because he was deeply committed to third-world internationalism, his libido would be activated by a world event that tickled his ideology. When the communist party of West Bengal, India won the election, he was beside himself with excitement. He became rapaciously desirous to copulate. He would go into a trance-like state and fail to notice that he was sleeping with his own wife who had intimidated him from day one. Their sex life remained inconsistent, but manageable, until the end of the presidency of Bill Clinton.

When President Bush came to power, their erratic sex life hit one hurdle after another. After the nation declared war on Iraq, the professor grew increasingly inconsistent. He would be quiet for days then talk non-stop for hours. Sometimes he would be sad; other times he barked like a pit bull, especially while watching the evening news. He was slowly but progressively spiraling down into depression.

One night, after he had downed a whole bottle of Chivas Regal, it struck him

*Continued on page 14*



# Leo Duell

by Darwin Mathison

These are only a few words I will relay to you, about a one of a kind, unique character I had the distinct pleasure of making acquaintance with way back in the early 1950s, soon after my folks bought a tavern in Bear Valley, Wisconsin. What a crafty unscrupled guile clad dude. You name it, or want it, old Leo had it, or could get it and I do mean anything.

He was a kind of gypsy offshoot fellow, with two sons or cronies who cavorted the local area, along with their faithful Lord Leo. I only remember the name of one of the infamous clansmen, known as Johnny Duell, however I never remember getting any firm genetic confirmation as to his family origins. All I do know for sure is he was a mild retard, or guile-wise that was the impression he chose to cast to the unwearied eye.

Leo: Well he was one of the sharpest flim-flam men I have ever had the dubious distinction of meeting. He, along with his clansmen, living in a shack down in the piney wood west of Lone Rock, Wisconsin, and I fail to remember if there existed any females present within this clan. Lone Rock by the way is known for being the coldest place in the nation, at least once or twice each year.

This crew lived right down in the Wisconsin River bottom; flooded out; hell at least three times a year would be factual. I personally never went anywhere near his place, but people told me it was a junk collector's dream, you name it; he had it, or could get the object desired.

Him and those two cronies operated a pseudo-cesspool cleaning business and for you modern dudes, a cesspool is a grease trap, kind of catch basin, trapping any grease from the house or business place that was unconnected to a municipal sewage system, thus catching this grease before it fouls this private system called a septic tank. Anyway, he or they dipped them out, with this bucket attached to a long pole, before this grease did its dastardly deed and killed off the bacteria that eat up

the digestible in this privately owned system. This system by the way worked with amazing efficiency, but stunk! You never smelled such a stench. Leo and companions dipped these stinkers out, trucking the do-do away.

Twenty-five dollars American per load and a load consisted of roughly two hundred gallons, or any portion there of, until it was cleaned out. Twenty-five bucks was not bad money back in the fifties, when the average wages for the area worker was a buck an hour or less. The three dipping those stinkies by hand. No pumps as those Porto lit people have today, only a ten-foot pole with a two-gallon bucket attached, dipping hauling dumping returning, Leo and company making an honest living.

At least that is what you were supposed to believe, when in reality this was only a ploy to get on your property so they could look around the place and see what you may have that they could cart away. If it so happened that you weren't home when those dudes came a-calling, they rifled your house along with all the properties sheds, barns and whatever to see what you had that was unattached.

I remember back in the fifties, those horse collars were all the rage, with all those up-scale city folks wanting same, you know the ones, with the brass knobs that stuck up from the top of the contraption. Well people would have a chunk of mirror cut to fit inside the collar and hang it on the wall as an ornament. I must have seen Leo and tribe cart away a hundred of those suckers, always one or a bunch hanging on that old truck tank. I do not suppose they picked up any of the rancid odor however. Naaah. In addition, they would have rocking chairs and anything you could mention that they picked up that someone was looking for or had a wild desire to obtain.

I once needed a rear axle for my 1937 Ford car and by the Gods that be; I had it the same day. Where from, whom from, how come, he had it, I had it, and five bucks delivered. Which was not all that much! The crew always had something, Chickens, ducks, pigs, calves, dogs, and sheep, always something riding along in that truck with the pack of scoundrels.

Now I cannot say for positive that he did not get this stuff honestly, but: I do remember my dad and plenty of other folks telling old Leo straight out they would fill him with buckshot if they caught him lurking around the place when no one was around.

Ma wanted one of those wood-burning kitchen stoves for the farmhouse, you know the ones, those chromium be-decked babies, and it was not a week she had one slick and shiny as new, so you know it had not sat out in the weather unused for too long a spell. Woe be to those people who were moving out of the area, ma was happy however.

I remember when the folks were gone off visiting somewhere and I would be tending bar, here they would come, every day, looking seeking questioning seeing who was moving or gone off visiting. Leo I swear had leprosy, as he always had these sores on his face that he never ceased to pick at. Furthermore, he looked like a ghoulish ghoulish and Duell do rhyme.

The trio would stop in for a few beers, a sandwich and soup, or a nibble or twain. No credit however, always cash, no use letting feelings get hurt with credit worries. That Johnny when he would have a sandwich always wanted mustard on the sucker, no matter what kind of sandwich it was and the mustard had to be that brown stuff, as he didn't want any of that yellow calf shit, or *cap chip* he called it. Hell I was always glad to see that bunch leave, never once did they come in clean. Even if it was the early morning, always stinking so you knew for a fact that to this tribe, soap and water was a definite no no.

Oh ya, I will tell you of a scheme, a major scam, he pulled back in the early fifties, when this country was experiencing this uranium craze, the government wanting all it could get of the foul stuff. Every body was a prospector. Gigercounters hell they were a dime a dozen, common as portable radios. Leo and this other dude, by the way with the last name Krook, who owned or rented an abandoned store building in Lone Rock, got themselves together hatching a hot money making idea. No one really knew what uranium was

*Continued on page 17*

# To Hypnotize a Chicken

by Marjorie Johnson

I stared at the fried chicken on my plate and twisted my fork through the mashed potatoes to move them away from the gravy. How could Daddy give my best subject to Mama to cook for Sunday dinner? I swallowed hard and announced, "I can't eat Barney."

My mother looked down and crushed her napkin in her lap. My younger sisters stopped eating and gazed at me in silent amazement. My father frowned and asked, "What's the matter with you?"

"Mama cooked Barney," I said in a doleful voice.

"Chickens aren't pets. We treat them kindly and with respect but accept their gift of meat for the table. Now sit there until you clean up your plate."

That was the rule. I chewed two peas until they liquefied and thought back two years to when Daddy brought home the first baby chickens to add meat and eggs to his World War II victory garden. He built a chicken house in the backyard and invented an incubator by putting a light bulb under an inverted aluminum dishpan held two inches above the floor by blocks of wood.

The fluff-ball chicks ran in and out from their warm incubator to get food and water, peep-peep-peeping and poop-poop-pooing. Once Daddy nursed a droopy chick by bathing it and setting it in a cardboard shoebox in the warming oven of Mama's wood burning cook-stove to dry out. Mama didn't like having a chicken in the kitchen, but Daddy said it was all part of the war effort.

Daddy followed the advice he found in USDA publications on how to raise chickens and invested in White Leghorns, Cornish Hampshires, Rhode Island Reds, and Plymouth Rocks. The Plymouth Rocks were white with black and gray speckles like Mama's feather duster but with yellow feet and red comb and wattles. Daddy told me that the White Leghorn was the best egg

layer, the Cornish Hampshire best for meat, but the Rhode Island Red was the best all around chicken. I thought so, too, from my studies in the chicken yard and because the Rhode Islands Reds were easier to catch.

I fed the flock every day. The chickens ate mash—a ground dry food that came in fifty-pound sacks—supplemented with dried corn, wheat kernels, sunflower seeds, and vegetable scraps from the garden. My father grew corn and table vegetables and sunflowers, giant sunflowers with nine-foot stalks and eighteen-inch heads, large enough that he took several blue ribbons at the county fair.

The chickens always ate the sunflower seeds first and left the mash for last. To find out why, I sampled all their feed. No wonder they weren't enthusiastic about the mash: the stuff tasted like dried alfalfa and stuck to the roof of my mouth. The corn was tough and tasteless, but the wheat developed a delicate flavor after extended chewing. However, the sunflower seeds were scrumptious and worth the time to pick them out of the dried heads that Daddy kept under his workbench in the garage.

In addition to a scientifically balanced diet, Daddy gave the hens crushed oyster shell to help harden their eggshells. I tried a few bites of it because I wanted to harden my teeth to avoid trips to the dentist. Instead, I cracked a tooth. Daddy said oyster shell wouldn't work for little girls because they don't have gizzards, and chickens grind up their food with rocks in their gizzards because they don't have teeth.

The chickens had their own house with clean straw on the floor, a closet rod for roosting at night, and nesting boxes with glass eggs in them to show the hens where to lay, but they didn't pay attention. Hens will lay eggs anywhere, singing cut-cut-cut-ca-docket outside under a bush. When one brown hen walked about cluck-cluck-clucking, feathers all fluffed out, pretending she had chicks, Daddy gave her half a dozen fertilized eggs from the feed-store. They hatched after twenty-one days, each wet naked chick pecking its way out of its shell and drying into a yellow ball of fluff.

I liked to hold a chicken just to feel its soft feathers. Afternoons after I finished

my chores, I would sit quietly amongst the chickens to observe their behavior. I named them all, even though Daddy told me not to make pets out of them. Each chicken had a distinct personality and a place in the pecking order: some chickens always ate first, and the same one always had to wait until last. Chickens like to take dust baths out in their yard and scratch everything up, looking for bugs. Afterwards, a chicken cranes its neck, almost tying itself into a knot, to reach the oil sack above its tail with its beak and then to preen its feathers.

I found a book on animal behavior in the library and wondered what chickens could learn to do. At the movies, I had watched a hypnotist who induced relaxation with a soothing voice while his subject stared at a slowly swinging watch suspended from a gold chain. How could I make a chicken with a habit of bobbing its head around all the time pay attention? I picked one up and stroked it and told it a bedtime story until it relaxed in my lap. Next, moving slowly and gently, I lay the bird on its side on the ground to prevent head movement and to force it to focus with only one eye. I hypnotized the chicken by slowly rotating my hand over its eye, then releasing the bird and moving farther and farther away. The chicken would remain prone for several minutes before stumbling to its feet, always shaking its head a few times as if asking, "What happened?" I got the same results when I rested a chicken on its breast, beak to the ground, and drew a line in the dirt outward from the tip of its beak. Teen-aged male and female chickens—cockerels and pullets—behaved in the same way; I never tested an adult rooster. My best subject was the cockerel I called Barney, but I should have chosen a pullet.

Daddy slaughtered a chicken every Sunday, usually a male that had awakened the neighbors by learning to crow. Daddy started by cutting off the head with a hatchet and draining the blood. Then he poured boiling water over it and removed the feathers and held the naked bird over a burning newspaper torch to take off any hair. Except for the yellow feet, it wasn't a chicken anymore, only meat.

*Continued on page 16*

# Book Arts Jam 2008

by Carolyn Donnell

Haven't found that agent or editor yet? Looked at POD (print on demand) publishing, etc., and didn't like the prices or the restrictions? Then maybe you should publish it yourself. So what does it take to make a book, anyway? Not the writing of the words, but the construction of the physical book itself.

Bay Area Book Artists (BABA) will help you. They are a "grassroots, volunteer-powered book arts organization founded by Jone Small Mangooian." The Book Art Jam is BABA's annual celebration of book art. Held at the Foothill College Los Altos Hills Campus in mid-October, it is a behind-the-scenes look at the creative process, tools, and techniques used by book artists.



A trail of balloons led sightseers to the various events featuring fifty book artists and craftspeople.

Events included:

- Galleries exhibited books made by BABA artists.



Exhibitors showcase presented more than forty book artists, fine press owners, letterpress printers, printmakers, and paper artists.

- Artists' talks: Members told why they make books and showed how the books are made.
- An exhibition of Foothill College led into an auditorium where visitors could take a break in comfortable

seats and view a slide show of book works by BABA and Jam exhibitors. Bay Area Book Artists meet once a



Presentations, demos, and hands-on play ranged from inkjet printing on custom surfaces and making an accordion book to Coptic endbands and eraser carving.

month and have monthly workshops at Foothill College. Their website is [bayareabookartists.org](http://bayareabookartists.org).



Print studio open house featured a letterpress class in action as well as other demonstrations.

To receive occasional information about the Book Arts Jam and other upcoming Bay Area Book Artists exhibitions and events you can join an announcement listserv for Bay Area Book Arts at [bayareabookartists.org/members/intouch.php](http://bayareabookartists.org/members/intouch.php).

Foothill College also offers printmaking and book arts courses through the Graphics and Interactive Design Department; detailed information is available at its website [foothill.edu/print\\_arts](http://foothill.edu/print_arts). An Associate in Arts Degree and several certificates are also offered. An MFA in creative writing and book art is offered through Mills College in



A bug book.



The San Jose Printers' Guild exhibit included two functional miniature platen presses.

Oakland (according to Mills College, the first such MFA in the country). See [mills.edu/academics/graduate/eng/programs/MFA\\_in\\_bookart.php](http://mills.edu/academics/graduate/eng/programs/MFA_in_bookart.php) for more information.



A dinosaur book.

The Book Arts Jam was sponsored by Bay Area Book Artists and Foothill College, and funded in part by a grant from Arts Council Silicon Valley, in partnership with the County of Santa Clara and the California Arts Council. WT

All photos: Carolyn Donnell.

## Marriage, continued from page 11

why he was so upset all the time. He had to do something while still remaining civilized. He could not live with torturing his wife and himself. That night, sloshed and whimpering, he entered his bedroom, touched his wife's feet, asked forgiveness and told her he was unable to sleep with her because she reminded him of President Bush.

He assured her that it was only a matter of two more years, that the next presidential election would revive democracy in the country, and that their conjugal life would reap a good harvest. Before he could go any further, Suman handed him a pillow and pointed towards the study.

That separation lasted two years, but the heavens conspired against him. President Bush was reelected. The Professor moved to the study permanently. WT



## *Prowling, continued from page 2*

Fame is something we all seem to seek, few know what to do with, and when occasionally achieved, most would prefer that it go away—as it's a “business” that often destroys us. Some see fame and money aligned, but the fame I am talking about is the appetite we have to see our names plastered around in conspicuous places along with favorable annotation. The fame that I speak of is akin to adoration, sought for its own sake. Politicians seek fame. They work with diligence—*Meet the Press, Saturday Night Live*, an association with big decisions. (They may write a book when they retire, though few actually take leave.) This fame is applause; popular, loud and enduring. Yes, there's another fame that seems to sneak up from behind, like that for serial killing or having your twin brother attached at the head. Blatant stupidity in an oval office seems to bring fame. Fame may not be endearing.

Many of us at retirement find we are leaving a job that we didn't intend in the first place. A tempting salary and need for a roof may have kept us in a profession where we picked up life's skills, but, in the end, accumulated experience in which we had little interest. What to do now—tools, well gathered, and no further use for them. For many, the couch is a hard sit, and threading worms on a hook may wear thin; and before you can say “memoir” we're in front of a computer experimenting. We tell ourselves a story and it goes: “I've written reports, documented processes, and dictated memos by the thousands—I know how to write! I've always wanted to be a writer and now, with life in the bank and loose time ...”

Is there something here besides a chuckle, you may ask. I remember someone saying it is good to know who you are, even if it's not whom you admire or emulate. It's good to know because it's satisfaction, not happiness or joy, that keeps us going. So, if we know who we are and we're more likely to achieve that satisfaction, does it follow if we know why we write it is more likely we'll become better authors? WT

## *Haiku, continued from page 5*

of the traditional Japanese haiku translates to about twelve English syllables. So much for 5-7-5. Then, what is left? Are the results anything that Basho would recognize?

Quite a lot of the haiku found on the internet and in books like VanDenHeuvel's *The Haiku Anthology* are as satisfying as anything from the old masters. Still, off at the fringes, contemporary writers seem to have forgotten the original objective of evoking images clearly and concisely.

pig and i spring rain  
(Marlene Mountain)

or

musty smell  
forgotten ... deep  
into the text  
(W. J. Higginson)

What are those about? Maybe there is classical nature, season, and problem/resolution, but I have trouble finding them. But loosening the traditional rules, even to the extent of discarding a reference to nature and concentrating on human emotions, and adding a title (uncommon in traditional haiku), can produce very pleasing results:

Glass balls and glowing  
lights. Dead tree in living room.  
Killed to honor birth.  
(Ron Loeffler)

or

Faceless, just numbered.  
Lone pixel on the bitmap-  
I, anonymous. (Chris Spruck)

or

DOG  
I lie belly-up  
in sunshine, happier than  
you ever will be. (unknown)

or

Zipped up  
in her jeans  
his genes  
(Jane Reichold)

I enjoy writing haiku, and even cling to the 5-7-5 format as a challenge (though admitting that it's not really related to the original form.) I'll send some of my own favorite works along to the editor in the future, if just to use as fillers. We'll see if they meet his pleasure and yours. WT

## **View from the SBW Board**

*by Dave LaRoche*

Your board met on October 8, 7pm. Absent were Cathy Bauer and Ro Davis. The following are items of interest that have not, as of *WritersTalk* distribution, come publicly to pass.

- Except this: Alice Wilson-Fried will be replacing Norman Solomon in our November program, reports Bill Baldwin.
- An action item tracking system called “powder puff” by our secretary is in place and working, reports Rita St. Claire.
- The fourth quarter financial reports have been submitted to the Central Board, reports Rich Burns.
- Our state membership dues of \$5570 has been submitted (for those on the roll as of October 1), report Rich Burns (treasurer) and Marjorie Johnson (membership).
- SBW anthology sales have begun with 21 books ordered as of October 8, Rich and Dick Amyx.
- The Central Board quarterly meeting will be held on October 19 in Ontario CA. The centennial year and some sort of “marking” will be discussed.
- We currently have 196 folks on the membership roll, reports Marjorie.
- Open mic sessions, 4/mo, are hosting about 8 readings each, reports Bill.
- The Web “Members Gallery” has been updated to remove those not renewing, reports Ro Johnson (in absentia).
- The EoE Conference put \$2000 in our club treasury, reports Edie Matthews.
- Clarence Hammonds, Historian, will maintain an archive of club notables as well as write a history of people associated, reports Clarence.
- The workshop chair position goes wanting – volunteers?
- The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:30 p.m. WT

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## **Night Stroll**

Lights splash orange pools  
on night-black streets and I, frog,  
hop from pond to pond.

—*Jamie Miller*

# Jack London—Late 1800s and Early 1900s

by Clarence L. Hammonds

I have renewed my membership in South Bay Writers after an absence, and I'd like to pick up on my poetic history of Jack London where I left off in November, 2005, and bring it to a close.

Jack London accused of plagiarism; who said so?  
Some said it happened many times, others said no  
He was a successful writer that was not a notion  
Expressions you see with me, easier than invention  
Jack wrote this to E. Hoffman, Jack was cunning?  
He bought plots from Sinclair Lewis, and no fling  
Plots were for stories with news clippings, as base  
London was smart, but for this, people gave chase  
*The Call of the Wild*, part from a book by Young  
Young said yes, Jack said no, it is source he clung  
He writes same newspaper story, papers different  
Summer 1902, McLean wrote story, same incident  
A charge by Biddle and Macdonald, is about Jack  
Eighteen parts from his *Love of Life* is no slack  
It is the same as their article that ends in "Sun"  
He's revised Biddle, said the daughter of London  
He said, "I used material from various sources."  
He turned journalism into literature, his resources.  
Jack London in a summer month, ninety-seven  
His brother-in-law, Shepard and he, to get even,  
sailed, to join the Yukon Klondike Gold Rush.

Here, success of stories, was written, not much  
While in the Klondike, his health, deteriorated  
He drank whiskey, ate a meal only if interested  
He had scurvy, and his four front teeth, he lost  
So, he recovered through a Jesuit priest, no cost  
Klondike hardships, he wrote, *To Build a Fire*,  
His best, short story, a thing one could admire.  
The story was published in 1902, later in 1908  
In the story he saw the man as himself, as fate  
There were other stories from the Klondike, too  
He left Oakland believing in a work ethic, true!  
He was active in Socialism, going for education  
He hoped to escape the *work trap*, his situation  
A way out of poverty was writing as a business  
Beating the wealthy at their own game, no mess.

Jack London (January 12, 1876–November 22, 1916), novelist, journalist, short story writer, and essayist, and one of our founding members, is of great historical interest to me. He was an accomplished writer who earned his position in literary history.

I am also resuming my appointment as Historian/Archivist for South Bay Writers. Anyone with historical information or material they feel should be added to our archives can contact me at [historian@southbaywriters.com](mailto:historian@southbaywriters.com). WT

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## *Hypnotize, continued from page 13*

Finally at the kitchen sink, Daddy gave me anatomy lessons, a different one each week: muscles, tendons, and cartilage; windpipe and lungs; entrails and a gizzard that held rocks to grind food; the liver with a gall bladder that had to be removed without spilling any bitter bile. The hens had eggs inside, small eggs not yet within a shell, and the grooming sack on the tail contained one drop of oil.

Once we looked at a chicken's tongue with a magnifying glass to see its taste buds, and Daddy said I should study anatomy. "You learn this so fast you could be a doctor someday," he said.

Mama looked up from stirring applesauce on the stove and said, "Now don't you be filling her head with fool notions. A nurse, maybe, until she gets married."

I shrugged my shoulders. I didn't care because I didn't want to be a doctor. I

was more interested in how to teach chickens than in what they had inside.

On Sundays after Daddy cut up a chicken, Mama would cook a special dinner. I usually peeled potatoes while Daddy cleaned up the mess. He dug holes in the yard for all the entrails and other leftover parts such as the yellow feet, and he mixed in poop from the chicken house to make his special fertilizer for the sunflowers. Daddy never wasted anything. Everything was reused until it was hard to say which came first, the chicken or the giant sunflower.

I should have known that Barney's turn was coming. I sat with my dinner still on my plate and watched everyone else enjoy apple pie. After my sisters were excused and my father left the table, I had a five-minute window of opportunity when my mother went into the bathroom to clean her false teeth. I

scooted out to the chicken yard and threw the gravy-coated potatoes over the fence. Then I put Barney's drumstick into a hole in the garden and hurried back to the table with my clean plate.

I felt sad about losing Barney but Daddy was right: the chickens did give us the gift of meat for the table. Maybe this was my bit for the war effort. I gave up my studies on chicken hypnosis, but I didn't eat Barney. WT

---

## Nov. Knowing

Is it worse to open your email  
Or snailmail  
And find that the message is  
Just a rejection?  
Or: to wait and to wait  
For that sure-to-come Hail  
when Editor admits  
You have sent *such* perfection!

—Pat Bustamante

other than it made bombs. But Leo and cohort got the idea that they could make a buck if they could convince people that it would cure rheumatism and arthritis plus a myriad of all those other psychosomatic ailments you possessed. Well to make a long story short. One of this crafty duality went to Arizona or Utah and got a bunch of sacks of low-grade uranium dirt. Mixed it with local stuff, rebagged it and lined the inside of that abandoned building with the mixture. Damn those Geiger counters really hummed. Yes I do think that pal of Leo's was named Krook if I am not sorely mistaken, which was an appropriate moniker.

Anyway, they called the place or whole setup a uranium tunnel. When the yearly migration of true gypsies came through in the spring, they hired the whole clan as shills. The entire group showing up with canes or in rented wheel chairs, getting miraculously cured after paying their 50 cents to sit in this uranium tunnel. My dear loving God the word spread like wildfire. They had newspaper people there from all over the country, even some from foreign countries. Publicity people galore, it worked.

Hell sometimes there was a line a block long waiting to pay their 50 cents, to sit in that dirt-clad shed. This was national news stuff and people were coming from all over the known world (maybe even an alien or two from Roswell). It did work because people came in the tavern pleased as punch, telling me about their miraculous recoveries. They had a pile of crutches twenty feet high outside of the tunnel exit.

The town of Lone Rock was like some wild-west boom town. Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, Sundays, holidays, high religious holy days when you weren't even permitted to leave the confines of your own domicile. They were there though. Yes! Yes! Yes! The money was rolling in faster than the trucks could haul it away.

However that is, until the A.M.A. got wind of the sordid scheme. Lawsuits and wrangling about practicing medicine without a license, those doctors wanting to close the place up. To hell what the people thought. Court hassles

and more publicity world wide, business was good. But the Wisconsin legislature did put the screws to it all, passing a law and closing the place up on some technicality. Ya don't suppose the A.M.A. would have had any hand in this do ya? Mr. Krook lit out with his share of the proceeds. Leaving old Lord Leo to fight the A.M.A., in the vaunted court systems of the land, which of course, as anyone with a head other than pure marble should understand, this cannot be done with even the faintest hopes of success.

Subsequently Leo was back to cesspool dipping, lost it all, but did ride the wave of success, if only for an instant. As far as I know he lived out his life dipping do-do, as I myself got out of the area in the very early sixties, with my sainted mother relaying to me the final demise of the leper. (At least I thought?) Shit he could even scam the Devil himself, so how could he worry about death? WT  
Copyright © 1999 Darwin Mathison

**Friends (Internet Age)**

How to count my friends?  
With wine glass and memories?  
Or mere Facebook page?

—Jamie Miller

**A Toast to Winter: The Warm Side of Cold**

I love weather letters from back home when kinfolk report blizzards closing schools forcing people to stay away from work. In mail I smell the cold, feel it, and hear silence white creates, recalling snow on the ground soaking up sound so it doesn't echo 'round.

Weather letters take me  
back where I lived  
in sub-zero  
winters.  
Where I  
go now  
is to my  
dreams  
snuggled  
with my love  
out of the cold,  
creating our own heat.

B e t t y A u c h a r d

**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
- Essay
- Poetry

**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.

**Inspiration**

Music of the Spheres  
Poetry Sings in the  
Wind  
Inspiration Nears

—Sally A. Milnor

**Wilson-Fried, continued from page 1**

HeartTrouble killed.

Alice is currently working on a sequel to *Outside Child*, focusing that novel on the aftermath of hurricane Katrina.

Clearly this is a writer who has learned how to write about her own life and its meaning; as well as how to take her own life experiences and use them to create vivid fiction. Her talk should be educational, interesting, enlightening, and fun! WT



# 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](mailto:networking@southbaywriters.com) or to the club post office box. We will add your listing to our directory of experts.*

## Asia, Japan, China, Russia

Bill Belew  
[belew@panasianbiz.com](mailto:belew@panasianbiz.com)

## Astrology, Singing

Sara Aurich  
[saraaurich@comcast.net](mailto:saraaurich@comcast.net)

## Astronomy, History of Astronomy

Bob Garfinkle  
[ragarf@earthlink.net](mailto:ragarf@earthlink.net)

## Character Development

ArLyne Diamond, Ph.D.  
[ArLyne@DiamondAssociates.net](mailto:ArLyne@DiamondAssociates.net)

## Character Traits

Jeannine Vegh, M.A. M.F.T.I.  
[ladyjatbay@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ladyjatbay@sbcglobal.net)

## Computer Dingus and

## Full-Time Nerd

Jeremy Osborne  
[jeremy\\_w\\_osborne@yahoo.com](mailto:jeremy_w_osborne@yahoo.com)

## Counseling

Dr. Audry L. Lynch  
[GLYNCH7003@sbcglobal.net](mailto:GLYNCH7003@sbcglobal.net)

## Death Care

Rick Brost  
[rickpatrickb@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rickpatrickb@sbcglobal.net)

## Doctors' Office Environment,

## OB-GYN

Dottie Sieve  
[pdrsieve@yahoo.com](mailto:pdrsieve@yahoo.com)

## Engineering: Mechanical,

## Aero, Aerospace

Jerry Mulenburg  
[geraldmulenburg@sbcglobal.net](mailto:geraldmulenburg@sbcglobal.net)

## Central Coast Writers Branch 2009 Writing Contest

For poetry and short stories.

Winners' awards: \$500 and publication (print and on-line) in the *Homestead Review* (Hartnell College).

Entry Fees: \$15 per short story and \$5 per poem.

Submission period: August 15, 2008 through November 15, 2008.

Guidelines and Info:  
[www.centralcoastwriters.org](http://www.centralcoastwriters.org)

## Growing Great Characters From the Ground Up

Martha Engber  
[marthaengber.com](http://marthaengber.com)  
[marthaengber.blogspot.com](http://marthaengber.blogspot.com)

## Hospital and Nursing Environment

Maureen Griswold  
[maureengriswold@sbcglobal.net](mailto:maureengriswold@sbcglobal.net)

## Internal Medicine/Addiction Disorder/ Psychology

Dave Breithaupt  
[dlbmlb@comcast.net](mailto:dlbmlb@comcast.net)

## Mathematics: Teaching and History; Fibonacci Sequence

Marjorie Johnson  
[Marjohnson89@earthlink.net](mailto:Marjohnson89@earthlink.net)

## Police Procedures

John Howsden  
[jwhowsden961@yahoo.com](mailto:jwhowsden961@yahoo.com)

## Profile Writing

Susan Mueller  
[susan\\_mueller@yahoo.com](mailto:susan_mueller@yahoo.com)

## Teaching and the Arts

Betty Auchard  
[Btauchard@aol.com](mailto:Btauchard@aol.com)

## Television Production

Woody Horn  
408-266-7040

**Adult Education Writing Classes**  
taught by SBW's Edie Matthews and Jackie Mutz will be starting November 17. See [scae.org](http://scae.org) for details.

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# CWC

## 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://sacramento-writers.org)

**Marin:** Meets on the fourth Sunday of every month at 2 p.m. at Book Passage in Corte Madera.  
[cwcmarinwriters.com](http://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](http://redwoodwriters.org)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>November 2008</b>						1
2	3	4	5	6	7 7:30p Open Mic Barnes & Noble Almaden Plaza, San Jose	8 10:30A Editors' Powwow
9	10	11 6p Monthly Dinner Meeting Lookout Inn, Sunnyvale Alice Wilson-Fried	12	13	14 7:30p Open Mic Borders Books Santana Row, San Jose	15
16 WritersTalk deadline	17	18	19	20 7:00p Open Mic Barnes & Noble 3900 Mowry, Fremont	21 7:30p Open Mic Barnes & Noble Pruneyard, Campbell	22
23/30	24	25	26	27 	28	29
<b>Future Flashes</b>		Tuesday, Dec. 9 <b>Annual Holiday Bash</b>				

## Stay Informed!

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

[www.southbaywriters.com](http://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](mailto:wabaldwin@aol.com)

For Fremont Open Mic contact  
Jeannine Vegh  
[ladyjatbay@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ladyjatbay@sbcglobal.net)

or

Bob Garfinkle  
[ragarf@earthlink.net](mailto: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](mailto:captainlappin@netzero.net) and have a look at PCSJ's website, [www.pcsj.org](http://www.pcsj.org)

## SBW Writers' Forum

Events  
Conferences  
Contests  
Networking  
Resources  
SBW Author Events  
and News at

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

## MAIL TO

Address Correction Requested

**Next Monthly Meeting**  
**Tuesday, November 11, 6:00 p.m.**

Lookout Inn  
605 Macara Avenue, Sunnyvale  
At the Sunnyvale Golf Course

**Alice Wilson-Fried**

author of  
*Menopause, Sisterhood, and Tennis*  
and *Outside Child*

Order your  
**South Bay Writers**  
**Anthology**

now!

20% early bird discount  
[southbaywriters.com](http://southbaywriters.com)

